



The NCB Quarterly

a publication of The Nebraska Center for the Book

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Loren Eiseley

Taken in his University of Pennsylvania office with his cat, "Night Country." *Night Country* is the new University of Nebraska Press publication that appeared in 1997.

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Board of Directors

The Nebraska Center for the Book is the 23rd state affiliate of the Library of Congress's National Center for the Book. The Center is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to stimulate public interest in books, reading, and the written word. The Center acts as a catalyst, bringing together individuals and organizations to build the Nebraska community of the book. The Center serves as a partner and supporter of programs, events, and unique projects which celebrate the written word. The current board members are:

Dick Allen, Treasurer	Lincoln
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Denise Brady, President	Omaha
John Butler	Omaha
Molly Fisher	Lincoln
Linda Hillegass	Lincoln
Richard Miller	Lincoln
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Rod Wagner	Lincoln
Katherine Walter	Lincoln
Dee Yost	Hastings

*F.M. Tuttle,
Executive Treasurer Lincoln

Nebraska Center for the Book Board of Directors Meetings 1997

Please note: Change of Location

The Annual Meeting of the NCB will take place at 2 P.M. on Sunday, November 2, 1997 at Gere Library, 56th & Normal Streets in Lincoln, Nebraska. Members of the Board of Directors will be elected at this meeting. Please plan to attend. Contact Dick Allen at 402-435-4052 if you need an absentee ballot.

The NCB Awards Presentation and Reception will follow the annual meeting on Sunday, November 2, 1997 at Gere Library, 3-5 P.M.

1997 Board of Directors meetings will begin by 10 A.M. on each of these dates (except Nov. 2nd as noted above). Board meetings will be followed, after lunch, by meetings of the NCB working committees. For 1997 these include: a Membership Committee, a Public Relations/Publications Committee, a Nebraska Literature Festival Committee, and a Catalyst/Networking Committee. Committee membership is not restricted to board members. Please get involved in the work of your NCB!

NCB Quarterly is published quarterly by the Nebraska Center for the Book. Subscription is free with Nebraska Center for the Book membership. We welcome your contributions and correspondence. Write to *NCB Quarterly* c/o Lincoln City Libraries, 136 South 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508.

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Denise Brady

President's Message

I encourage all members to join the Board of Directors for our annual meeting and awards presentation and reception on November 2nd at Gere Library, 56th & Normal Streets in Lincoln.

The annual meeting will begin at 2 p.m. Election of new members of the Board of Directors will take place with members present and those who have requested absentee ballots voting. (Contact Dick Allen at 402-435-4052 if you need an absentee ballot.) Your input is important. Please be involved. A brief Board of Director's meeting to elect officers and approve a 1998 budget will follow the Annual Meeting.

On behalf of the NCB Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to invite all of you to the awards presentations and reception honoring these outstanding individuals and organizations. Festivities will begin at 3 p.m. at Gere Library following the meetings I mentioned above. Refreshments will be served.

The afternoon will include a brief history of the award-winning *Prairie Schooner* and a reading from a recent edition.

In addition, Kent H. Hendrickson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Services at UNL, (formerly Dean of Libraries at UNL) and Richard J. Spellman, retired

president of Cliffs Notes, Inc., will highlight the work of Clifton K. Hillegass.

Carol Conner, Lincoln City Libraries Director, will have received the Mildred Bennett Award for her untiring efforts on behalf of books, reading and libraries in Nebraska at the Nebraska Library Association - Nebraska Educational Media Association Awards Banquet on October 30.

A reception honoring all three award recipients will be hosted by the NCB Board of Directors. I hope to visit with many of you there!

Denise Brady

New State Centers to be Announced

Proposals from Georgia and Maine have been approved for affiliation as state centers for the book. The Georgia Center for the Book, to be located at DeKalb County Public Library in Decatur, will officially begin its organizational and planning activities in 1998. The Maine Humanities Council in Portland will be home for the Maine Center for the Book which will officially begin its planning activities in October.



National Reading Promotion — 1997-2000

To remind Americans of the importance of reading to individuals and to the nation, the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress has chosen "Building a Nation of Readers" for the Library of Congress's national reading promotion campaign for the years 1997-2000.

"Today we often forget how important reading is to individual development and to democracy itself. This campaign theme is both a reminder and a goal for where we want to be in the year 2000. It continues the work of hundreds of national, state, and community coalitions formed in previous Center for the Book reading promotion campaigns and complements the Library of Congress's plans to celebrate its

own bicentenary in the year 2000. We invite schools, libraries, educational, civic and government organizations, corporations, professional associations, labor unions, and others to join us in building a nation of readers by organizing and supporting reading promotion projects that benefit all age groups."

*John Y. Cole
Director, The Center for the Book*

Ideas for Building a Nation of Readers

For Individuals & Families

- Learn about and support local literacy projects
- Teach someone to read
- Sponsor a child in a summer reading program
- Keep books and magazines around the home
- Set family reading goals
- Get a library card and use it
- Encourage a child to get a library card
- Read books, magazines, and newspapers aloud to each other
- Give books and magazines subscriptions as gifts
- Join a book discussion group
- Use television and radio to encourage reading

For Schools & Libraries

- Encourage personal recommendations of books worth reading
- Publicize and distribute lists of recommended books for readers of all ages
- Invite local authors and well-known personalities to speak about how reading influenced their lives
- Plan a summer reading program
- Use local newspapers to encourage reading and discussion of interesting topics
- Hold a Read-a-thon or Read-in
- Give awards for reading achievement
- Organize a Reading Day at a local sports event
- Designate a special time in the day to "Drop Everything and Read!"

- Create a literary map

For Organizations & Businesses

- Support local literacy projects
- Become a book fair sponsor
- Provide literacy training classes at the workplace
- Establish an employee volunteer literacy program
- Form a reading promotion partnership with a local school
- Sponsor a book discussion group
- Use your newsletter to spread the word about the importance of reading
- Sponsor Read Alouds in a designated company location
- Establish a collection of Read-Aloud children's books for employees to borrow
- Give books as business gifts



Choices for the 21st Century: Defining Our Role in a Changing World



Would you like to know more about major issues which America faces as we approach the 21st century? In 1998, the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Center for the Book will become first-time participants in a national project designed to engage citizens in an important debate over U.S. foreign policy in the post Cold-war era. *Choices for the 21st Century: Defining Our Role in a Changing World* is a library discussion program which fosters values-based reflection on such topics as The Search for Peace in an Age of Conflict; Global Environmental Problems; U.S. Trade Policy: Competing in a Global Economy; China on the World Stage: Weighing the U.S. Response; Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East; and U.S. Immigration Policy in an Unsettled World.

This scholar-led discussion series will be held in 12 Nebraska communities in the Spring of 1998. Specifically designed for the non-expert, the *Choices* program seeks to encourage more citizens to participate in public policy discussions and aims to establish the local library as an "intellectual pub-

lic commons" for civic dialogue and debate. *Choices* is an ideal way to bring together people of diverse backgrounds, ages, and ethnic groups in your community for an interactive discussion.

This national program, developed by Brown University's Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, seeks to apply a humanities-based perspective to public policy by exploring how underlying values shape different directions in foreign policy, thus emphasizing the human dimension of policy development. The national *Choices* office supplies all content and promotional materials for the library program, including a reader for each participant. In addition, trained discussion leaders will be provided by the Nebraska Humanities Council.

If you would like to be considered as one of the 12 host sites for the *Choices* program, please contact Lisa Johnston at the Nebraska Humanities Council (402) 474-2131 by October 15. The Council also welcomes your participation as we plan this program for the coming year. If you would like to participate in the *Choices* Planning Committee, please contact us as soon as possible.

See page 7 for comments from past *Choices* participants.



Peru State Gains Nebraska Trails & Tales Grant

Nebraska's rich history and literary heritage will come alive for several fortunate people next summer thanks to a \$10,000 grant awarded to Peru State College. The Nebraska Humanities Council has given PSC the grant to offer once again The Trails & Tales Tour and Institute.

Peru State will present the unique program, first offered in June 1996, next June 15-27 according to its coordinators, Dr. Sara Crook and Dr. Dan Holtz. The NHC grant will be used to cover a portion of the costs for approximately 40 lucky participants.

The Trails & Tales Tour and Institute is an interdisciplinary history and literature program featuring graduate-level classroom instruction for one week and a six-day, state-wide bus tour the second week.

That tour will illustrate Nebraska's roles as a highway for the nation's rail and wagon

transportation and as an inspiration for writers such as John G. Neihardt and Willa Cather.

Dr. Holtz, Professor of English at Peru State, will teach the Nebraska Literature component. Dr. Crook, Associate Professor of History and Political Science, will teach History of Nebraska.

Students can earn up to six hours of graduate credit, with the stipends sponsored by the Nebraska Humanities Council available to teachers from the elementary through high school grades, and to personnel from institutions such as libraries and museums.

The first Trails & Tales Tour and Institute filled quickly. Interested persons are encouraged to contact either Dr. Crook (402) 872-2279 or Dr. Holtz (402) 872-2267 at Peru State for more information.

NEBRASKA ■ AUTHOR ■ INFO ■ LINK

The Heritage Room is a non-circulating collection of books and information by and about Nebraska authors. One of the services is the **Nebraska Author Info Link (NAIL)**, an online database of information about Nebraska authors, which is ultimately intended to be accessible throughout the state. You can help by providing information.

Contact the Heritage Room staff at Bennett Martin Public Library, 136 South 14th, Lincoln, NE 68508 for more information.



Book Review

Evening Class by Maeve Binchy
Delacorte Press, 1997, Hardcover \$24.95

by Linda Hillegass
Lee Booksellers, Lincoln, NE

Irish novelist Maeve Binchy has always been a writer who could make you care deeply about her characters on page one. In *Evening Class* she proves it again. She brings her reader an odd assortment of Dubliners whose lives seem unconnected until an aging and disappointed educator launches an evening class in Italian at a rundown urban school. Seemingly destined to failure, the class and its mysterious teacher magically affect the lives of a flock of students.

Each pupil comes to the class with some problem or personal sadness and each leaves the class happier and better able to handle life. Signora, the Irish native whose many years in Italy were a time of contentment in spite of personal tragedy, is the gentle catalyst for all this change. Her joy in the small things of life, her wisdom and her simplicity seem to affect her students by osmosis.

Binchy's story is a warm, cozy and wholly wonderful read.

What people have to say about Choices...

There aren't many places where you can find people you don't know talking about important issues. Most likely you hang out with people who share your opinions. these groups are a cross-section. When you sit down and listen, you see where they're coming from, and it makes you stop and think.

— Air Force captain

Very interesting viewpoints. Made me delve into what my own values really are and how my values influence my choices.

— Mediator

This isn't typical everyday conversation for 17-18 year olds. It was a good change... I can honestly say that I have learned a lot of new, important information that I never knew before.

— High school student

Just because we are called "senior citizens" does not give us a right to "set back — kick up our heels"— we need to be informed—then act.

— Retired farmer

There seemed to be an interest in our group for [continued discussions] and a perceived need to fill the vacuum of current political discourse with something more meaningful.

— Construction project manager



The Nebraska Center for the Book — Annual Awards

The Mildred Bennett Award, named in honor of founding member and first president of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Education Foundation, is presented annually to recognize an individual who has made a significant contribution to fostering

the literary tradition of Nebraska. The 1997 Mildred Bennett Award goes to Carol J. Connor, director of the Lincoln City Libraries since 1978.

Currently, Ms. Connor is

president of the Mountain Plains Library Association and a past president of the Nebraska Library Association. In addition, Ms. Connor has been a strong supporter of the Heritage Room at the Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln, which helps maintain Nebraska's literary heritage. Ms. Connor is also a leader in the Lincoln community, serving on a number of local boards, including the American Cancer Society, Family Services Board, Nebraska Art Association, Mayor's Committee for International Friendship, and the Community Advisory Committee for the Lincoln Public Schools.

The Mildred Bennett Award will be presented Thursday evening, October 30, at



Carol Connor

the Nebraska Library Association - Nebraska Educational Media Association Awards Banquet at the Holiday Conference Centre in Omaha.

The second award, the Jane Geske Award, is presented annually to an organization, business, library, school, association or other group which has made an exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries or Nebraska literature.

Named after the founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book and the co-owner with her husband, Norman, of Estuary Bookstore in Lincoln, this year's recipient of the Jane

Geske Award is *Prairie Schooner* magazine (Hilda Raz, editor-in-chief). *Prairie Schooner*, an international literary quarterly published with the support of the English Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Press, was founded in 1926 by Lowry C. Wimberly. Short stories, poems and essays from *Prairie Schooner* are consistently republished in the *O' Henry Awards*, *Best Ameri-*



Hilda Raz, editor-in-chief

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The Nebraska Center for the Book — Annual Awards

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can Poetry, Best American Short Stories, Best American Essays and Pushcart Prize anthologies. In 1994, *Prairie Schooner* was cited by the *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook* as one of the "Ten Best Magazines for Poetry" in the country. An accomplished poet and essayist herself, Ms. Raz has published four books of poetry, as well as numerous articles and reviews.

A new award, the Lifetime Achievement Award, will be presented this year to Clifton K. Hillegass, founder and president of Cliffs Notes from 1958 to 1983. Mr. Hillegass was born in Rising City, Nebraska in 1918 and served in the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1945. Before launching Cliffs Notes, Mr. Hillegass was employed by the Nebraska Book Company in Lincoln. He has served on a number of boards, including the Board of Trustees of Nebraska Wesleyan University and the Lincoln Public Schools Foundation Board. In 1990, Mr. Hillegass received the Entrepre-

neur of the Year Award from the University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale and has honorary doctorates from Kearney State College, Nebraska Wesleyan University, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Midland Lutheran College. Mr. Hillegass has been a long-time supporter of the Lincoln City Libraries and has made generous donations to Love Library and the Center for Great Plains Studies at UNL. While at the Nebraska Book Company, Mr. Hillegass, along with Carlton Lowenburg of the Asian Foundation, initiated a program of books for Asian students.

The Jane Geske and the Lifetime Achievement Awards will be presented at 3:00 p.m. on November 2, 1997, at Gere Library, 56th and Normal Streets, Lincoln, Nebraska. Friends of the three honorees, as well as interested members of Nebraska's community of the book, are cordially invited and encouraged to attend. For more information, call Denise Brady in Omaha, (402) 554-2773, or Dick Allen in Lincoln, (402) 435-4052.

Maybe the greatest author from Nebraska has not yet even been published!

We do know that many great authors from this state are already in print. In fact, the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors contains nearly 10,000 volumes written by over 3,000 authors from Nebraska. What a tremendous literary heritage we all possess!

The mission of the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors is to preserve and promote works by and about Nebraska authors, past and present. The collection strives to gather in one location written works by all Nebraskans. With your help, the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors can continue to preserve the literary heritage of our state.

The Nebraska Literary Heritage Association supports this room and other projects. You can become a member. Write to the Lincoln City Library Foundation, 136 South 14th, Lincoln, NE 68508 for more information.



Eiseley Program to Feature Natural History Author Paul Gruchow

Where does the landscape end—and where do we begin? Is it possible to go anywhere, even into a remote wilderness, alone? Are wilderness and civilization opposites, or are they mirror images?

Paul Gruchow asks these intriguing questions in the current on-line edition of *The Hungry Mind Review*. Perhaps he'll answer some of them, too, during his talk at the annual Loren Eiseley celebration in Elephant Hall on Saturday, October 25, 1997.

The program which is sponsored in part by the Nebraska Humanities Council will feature noted natural history writer Paul Gruchow. Mr. Gruchow has taught at St. Olaf College and Concordia College in Minnesota and is a regular guest lecturer throughout the United States.

Author of six books about humans and the natural world, Gruchow believes Eiseley is a master of the natural history essay—the kind of writing he calls “the meeting place of science and the humanities.”

Gruchow's essays, like Eiseley's, are deeply personal. In *Boundary Waters: The Grace of the Wild* he tells of his wanderings through the boundary waters of Minnesota and Ontario, a “land of dense forests and

thick bogs, of rocky ridges and deep clear lakes.” In *Grass Roots: The Universe of Home*, Gruchow “paints poignant pictures of rural life before corporate agribusiness dominated landscapes.”

His talk for us is entitled “Loren Eiseley and the Meaning of Natural History” where he will consider the natural essay in American intellectual experience. As he has said, “to me, there is no better example of this than the work of Loren Eiseley.” In the afternoon we will gather at the Nebraska Academy of Science Building (the former Schultz home) from 3 to 5 PM for a reading of Eiseley's works by Ken Finch and a nature walk conducted by Morton Stelling who is both the Academy's Associate Executive Director and a representative of the Wachiska Audubon Society.

It will be a wonderful day, so be sure to join us for a nature walk, dinner among the mastodons at Morrill Hall, and Gruchow's talk.

The program will begin at 7 PM in the lower floor auditorium of Morrill Hall. It is free and open to the public. For more information, please contact Barbara Sommer at 402-421-7176.



MADness, Censorship & Certitude

Did you ever wonder who writes the crazy articles and draws those insane cartoons in *MAD* magazine, the ones which follow EOE (Equally Offensive to Everyone) guidelines? Those attending the Nebraska Library Association pre-conference sponsored by Nebraska's regional library systems will have a chance to find out when Joe Raiola, associate editor of *MAD* magazine pays a visit to Omaha October 29, 1997 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center. Raiola will regale his audience with a history of *MAD* magazine discussing the battles of founder William Gaines with the House Select Committee on Un-American Activities and showing slides of some of the more infamous pages from the magazine. He will also share his satiric look at the First Amendment issues of today, covering attempts at regulating the Internet, banned books, and the "true" meaning of obscenity in his presentation entitled, "The Joy of Censorship."

Following Raiola's presentation, a panel of Nebraska religious leaders will share their views on censorship in society today. Panelists are Rev. Dale Phillips (Keystone Baptist Church, Hastings), Dr. Otis Young (First Plymouth Congregational Church, Lincoln), and Rabbi Paul Drazen (Beth El Synagogue, Omaha). Questions and responses are welcomed from the audience.

To register for the pre-conference (The

deadline is October 22.), send a check for \$55 to Northeast Library System, 2813 13th Street, Columbus, NE 68601. Registration at the door (if room is available) will be \$60. The program starts at 9:30 AM with registration and refreshments; the panel discussion begins at 1:30 PM and the program will conclude about 3 PM. A buffet lunch is provided and is covered by the registration cost.

Joe Raiola has presented his talk to various groups around the country including the American Library Association and the Utah Library Association conferences. He has been a member of "The Usual Gang of Idiots" at *MAD* since 1985, and he has written and appeared in seven full-length autobiographical one-man comedy shows. He lives in New York City, leads workshops in creativity, and is celebrating his 21st year in psychotherapy (and his voice mail message has to be heard to be believed).

Nebraska's six regional library systems and their headquarters are: Eastern Library System (Omaha), Meridian Library System (Kearney), Panhandle Library System (Scottsbluff), Northeast Library System (Columbus), Republican Valley Library System (Hastings), and Southeast Library System (Lincoln). For further information, or if you have any questions, you may call Richard Miller at the Nebraska Library Commission at 402-471-3175.



Calendar of Events — 1997-1998

October, 1997

- 16 John H. Ames Reading Series
John Janovy, Naturalist
- 25 Friends of Loren Eiseley
Annual Program and Dinner
- 29 Nebraska Library Association Pre-conference

November, 1997

- 1 National Family Literacy Day
- 5 Lunch at the Library (Heritage Room)
Sue Rosowski: Editing Nebraska's
Literary Heritage with Willa Cather

17-23

20

National Children's Book Week
Charlyne Berens: Leaving Your Mark —
The Political Career of Nebraska State
Senator Jerome Warner

December, 1997

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Lunch at the Library (Heritage Room)
Laurie Cox-Paul: A Frontier Army Christmas

January, 1998

9-13

18-24

New Orleans, ALA Midwinter Meeting
National Book Week

The Nebraska Center for the Book

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