

The NCB News

Volume 18

Spring 2008

No. 2

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

Kent Haruf to Open 2008 Nebraska Book Festival

Kent Haruf will open the 2008 Nebraska Book Festival with an address in the Warner Chamber of the Nebraska State Capitol on Friday, October 17. Haruf, a resident of Colorado and former member of the Nebraska Wesleyan University faculty, is the author of *Plainsong* and other novels set in the high plains. Haruf's presentation will be followed by a reception at the Lincoln Woman's Club honoring all Nebraska writers taking part in the Festival.



Kent Haruf
(photo by Cathy Haruf)

The Festival will continue on Saturday in locations in downtown Lincoln. The Lincoln Children's Museum will host a program for children developed by Erika Hamilton, Nebraska Humanities Council senior program director. The program will feature storytellers and hands-on writing experiences. Panel discussions, writing workshops, round table discussions, poetry and prose readings, book sales, and other events for adult readers and writers will be hosted by the Nebraska State

Historical Society Museum of Nebraska History and the UNL College of Journalism, which are located, along with the Children's Museum, on Lincoln's Centennial Mall at 15th and P Streets.

The 2008 Nebraska Book Awards and the Mildred Bennett Award will be presented at a time and location to be announced at a later date. Book Award winners will read from their works following the awards ceremony. The Festival will close Saturday evening with a reception at the Great Plains Art Museum honoring Professor Paul Johnsgard, author of more than fifty books on birds and the Nebraska ecosystem.

The Nebraska Book Festival is sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Commission, and University of Nebraska-Lincoln. For more information contact Michael Cartwright, 800-307-2665, 402-471-4006, e-mail: mcartwright@nlc.state.ne.us, Nebraska Library Commission, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023 or see www.nebraskabookfestival.org. This site will be updated throughout the coming months.

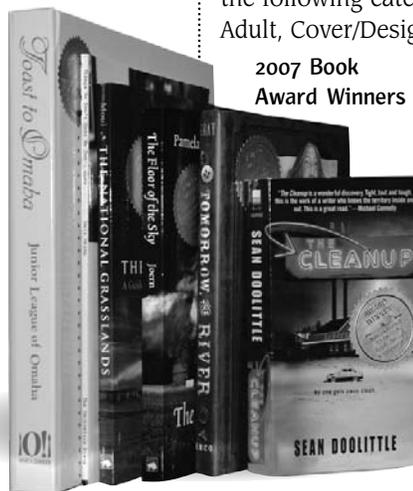
Nominate Now for 2008 Book Awards

The Nebraska Book Awards, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book and supported by the Nebraska Library Commission, recognizes and honors books written by Nebraska authors, published by Nebraska publishers, set in Nebraska, or relating to Nebraska. Submit nominations for the 2008 Competition (books with a 2007 copyright) by June 30.

Books must be professionally published, have an International Standard Book Number (ISBN), and

be bound. Books may be entered in one or more of the following categories: Anthology, Children/Young Adult, Cover/Design/Illustration, Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry. Certificates will be awarded to the winners in each category. Award winners will be announced at the annual Nebraska Book Festival on October 18 in downtown Lincoln. For more information and entry forms, see www.nlc.state.ne.us/publications/ncbawards.html.

2007 Book Award Winners



Festival Supports Nebraska Literature

Guest Editorial
by J. V.
Brummels,
Logan House
Press

From this twenty-first-century perch—a kitchen chair under bright electric lights, laptop on my knees—my rural Nebraska childhood has the distant look of frontier history. It's something I share with many, though probably not most, of the state's baby-boomers. I doubt we think of it often, though. Partly, we remember too well some grandfatherly figure endlessly recounting the miraculous changes the first half of the twentieth century wrought, and we don't wish to be dropped in the old and doddering category before our time. Partly, we're just too busy with a contemporary life with its minute-by-minute present and the demands of an uncertain future to dwell much on the past. And maybe we're too distracted by one or another of the plentitude of electronic conveniences to think often about how quickly the character of our lives has changed.

Through the fifties and into the sixties much that we take for granted now was rare—prepackaged food, multiple family vehicles, and passive entertainment among them. Books are now relatively inexpensive and certainly plentiful, but that wasn't the case in many post-World War II, rural homes. My mother and father didn't keep books around, at least early in my life. *Little Golden Books* were a treat we occasionally found at a relative's house, and we didn't have novels until later when Mom started to subscribe to *Reader's Digest Condensed Books* and a little later when my older brother joined the Book-of-the-Month Club. To the best of my recollection, the only books in the house were a *Bible*, a dictionary, and a few agricultural texts Dad picked up taking county extension courses on the GI Bill.

I don't want to make too much of this absence. It's not that we never saw books. Our country school had a small library that we read and re-read, and for a few years the Lincoln Public Library sent a big box of books on a regular schedule through the school year. When these cartons arrived we had the same sense of joyous anticipation we felt at Christmas. Later, after our one-room school closed, we had weekday access to both our new school's large (as it seemed then) library and the town's Carnegie library.

In this century we get our books easily from a variety of sources, including libraries, the Web, chain warehouse stores, and even the occasional independent bookseller. Clearly, a reader is better supplied with books now than fifty years ago. I wonder, though, if this easy availability has lessened for many of us the sense of the preciousness of books. Our favorite novel or book of poems is still something we cherish of course, and some books are just a pleasure to see and hold (I'm thinking of fine press editions in particular, like those from printers associated with the University of Nebraska at Omaha). Standing among or scrolling through tens of thousands of titles, though, can make a book seem less than it is, merely a commodity.

I've been present during the last few years when a difference of opinion has arisen occasionally among the members of the Nebraska Center for the Book and various Book Festival planning committees. One point of view is that the Nebraska Center and Festival should feature and support books by Nebraska poets, writers, editors, and publishers to the exclusion of others. The opposing camp argues that the Festival is

(continued on page 9)

The **NCB News**

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Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

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Letters About Literature Coordinator

Laureen Reidesel

2008 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meetings

May 31 Hastings, 9:30 a.m.
August 9 Scottsbluff, 9:00 a.m.
October 19 Lincoln, Annual Meeting
November 8 York, 9:30 a.m.

Advertising

The NCB News can accept up to four 1/8 page ads for each issue. The advertising rate is \$125 for 1/8-page. *NCB News* is issued May 1, August 15, and November 1. The advertising and copy deadline is six weeks prior to issue date. For details, contact Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023; phone 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665, e-mail: mjryan@nlc.state.ne.us. www.unl.edu/NCB.

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Young Nebraskans Win State Writing Competition

Gov. Dave Heineman honored Nebraska student writers by presenting them with Letters about Literature award certificates and signing a proclamation announcing April 13-19, 2008, as National Library Week in Nebraska (see www.governor.nebraska.gov/proclamations/2008/2008_03_13/library.html). Students recognized for their letters to influential authors were:

Winners

- Ellen Friesen, of Lincoln, for *Number the Stars*, by Lois Lowry
- Itahi Sanchez, of Lincoln, for *Please Hear What I'm Not Saying*, by Charles Finn
- Andrew Squires, of Lincoln, for *Prison Writings: My Life Is my Sun Dance*, by Leonard Peltier

Alternate Winners

- Carol Fisher, of North Platte, for *Eragon*, by Christopher Paolini
- Wyatt Nelson, of Lincoln, for *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, by Malcolm Gladwell
- Amanda Ferguson, of North Platte, for *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, by Anne Frank

Young readers across the country participated in this year's Letters about Literature competition, a reading promotion program of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, in partnership with Target Stores. In Nebraska, the contest is coordinated by the Nebraska Library Commission and the Nebraska Center for the Book, with additional support from Lee Booksellers and Houchen Bindery Ltd.

These young readers wrote a personal letter to an author explaining how his or her work changed their view of the world or themselves. They selected authors from any genre—fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. Nebraska winners were chosen from three competition levels: upper elementary, middle school, and secondary. Nebraska finalists were honored at a luncheon and received cash prizes, gift certificates, and gift cards to Target Stores and Lee Booksellers. Nebraska winners will advance to the national competition, with a chance to win an expenses-paid trip to Washington, D. C. for themselves and their parents. For more information see www.nlc.state.ne.us, search on Letters about Literature.

Student writers celebrate National Library Week as Gov. Dave Heineman (right of podium) signs proclamation.



What is the Nebraska Center for the Book?

The Nebraska Center for the Book brings together the state's readers, writers, booksellers, librarians, publishers, printers, educators, and scholars to build the community of the book. We are the people who know and love books, and who value the richness they bring to our lives. Our

Nebraska Center supports programs to celebrate and stimulate public interest in books, reading, and the written word. We have been an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress since 1990.

Join the Nebraska Center for the Book

Name _____ Address _____
 Phone _____ E-Mail: _____

Name/address of a friend who might be interested in NCB membership:

___ \$15 Individual Membership ___ \$25 Organizational Membership ___ \$50 Octavo Membership
 ___ \$100 Quarto Membership ___ \$250 Folio Membership

**Please send this form and a check to: Nebraska Center for the Book
 The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120 • Lincoln, NE 68508-2023**



Geske Award Nominations Due July 15

Nominations are sought for the Nebraska Center for the Book's Jane Pope Geske Award. Established in recognition of Geske's contributions to the well-being of the libraries of Nebraska, the award recognizes a Nebraska association, organization, business, library, school, academic institution, or other group that has made an exceptional long-term contribution to the Nebraska Community of the Book in regard to literacy, books, reading, libraries, bookselling, and/or writing in Nebraska. Geske, former Nebraska Library Commission Director, was a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book and a long-time, active participant in many

Nebraska library and literary activities. The Plum Creek Literacy Festival received the 2007 award.

Nominations and supporting letters must be received by July 15 at Nebraska Center for the Book Jane Geske Award, c/o Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln NE 68508-2023, 402-471-4001, 800-307-2665, fax: 402-471-2083, email: rwagner@nlc.state.ne.us.

The 2008 Jane Geske Award will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Nebraska Center for the Book on October 19 in Lincoln. ❖

Impact! Art Exhibit in Bancroft

On exhibit April 1 through May 15, a collection of the work of twenty-eight Nebraska artists is displayed in Bancroft in an exhibit of original work with a common element, the poetry of Pulitzer Prize winner and two-term U.S. Poet Laureate, Ted Kooser. Artists like Gib Neal, Carlos Frey, Don Dernovich and Julia Noyes chose a poem by Kooser and created an original piece in their particular medium. There are works in acrylic, oil, watercolor, batik, ceramic, metalwork, collage, glassware, and many combinations. The Kooser exhibit, funded by a grant from the Nebraska Arts Council, is free and open to the public.

The exhibit is part of the overall theme of the Neihardt Spring Conference scheduled for Saturday,

April 26. "The Writer and the Plains," will explore the effect the Great Plains has had on the choices of genre and style of several writers. Included in the program are poet Twyla Hansen, author Steve Kinsella, author and musician Tom May, and biographer Nancy Johnson. Wayne State College creative writing professor Lisa Sandlin will moderate. Contact Nancy Gillis, John G. Neihardt State Historic Site, 888-777-4667, e-mail: neihardt@gpcom.net, www.neihardtcenter.org/events.html, for registration information. Located at 306 W. Elm Street in Bancroft, Nebraska, the Neihardt State Historic Site hosts several exhibits throughout the year, as well as programs and conferences. ❖

American Life in Poetry: Column 157

by **Ted Kooser**,
U.S. Poet
Laureate,
2004-2006



From your school days you may remember A. E. Housman's poem that begins, "Loveliest of trees, the cherry now/ Is hung with bloom along the bough." Here's a look at a blossoming cherry, done 120 years later, on site among the famous cherry trees of Washington, by D.C. poet Judith Harris.

In Your Absence

*Not yet summer,
but unseasonable heat
pries open the cherry tree.*

*It stands there stupefied,
in its sham, pink frills,
dense with early blooming.*

*Then, as afternoon cools
into more furtive winds,
I look up to see
a blizzard of petals
rushing the sky.*

*It is only April.
I can't stop my own life
from hurrying by.
The moon, already pacing.*

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright © 2007 by Judith Harris, whose most recent collection of poems is *The Bad Secret*, Louisiana State University Press, 2006. Reprinted by permission of Judith Harris. Introduction copyright © 2008 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. ❖



Restoring the Burnt Child is 2008 One Book One Nebraska

State Poet Bill Kloefkorn records *Restoring the Burnt Child* at the Nebraska Library Commission studios.



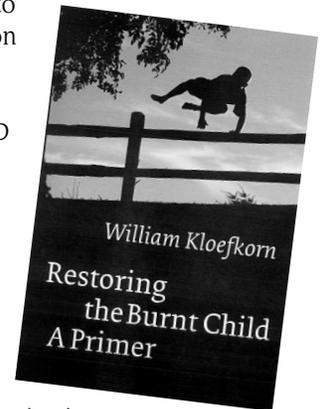
Citizens across the state are invited to read *Restoring the Burnt Child*, by Nebraska State Poet William Kloefkorn, for One Book One Nebraska 2008. Nebraska libraries and other literary and cultural organizations are planning activities and events to encourage Nebraskans to read and discuss this memoir of a small-town boy's life in the 1940s. Gov. Dave Heineman launched the statewide initiative with a proclamation encouraging all residents of Nebraska to participate by reading the book, joining community book discussion groups, and participating in local community events. The Website, funded by University of Nebraska Press and hosted at the Nebraska Library Commission, can be accessed at www.onebookonenebraska.org. It features book discussion materials, a downloadable poster and press kit to help with publicity, information for library loan of book club kits, and a calendar of events.

The site also includes information about how to schedule Kloefkorn for an event in your community and how to apply for funding from the Nebraska Humanities Council for the author to present the program, *O the Stories We Tell: Did That Really Happen?* See www.nebraskahumanities.org/speakers/speakersindex.html and www.nebraskahumanities.org/speakers/

[hrceligibility.html](#) for application and eligibility requirements.

Nebraska librarians pointed out the importance of audio and large-print versions of the book and the University of Nebraska Press graciously granted permission for the Nebraska Library Commission to reproduce the book in audio CD and large-print manuscript formats. These formats will be available for loan only through Nebraska libraries and only in 2008. Reproduction or copying of the book on CD or in large print is expressly forbidden. Nebraska libraries can borrow the book in these alternate formats by contacting the Reference/Information Desk at the Library Commission, 800-307-2665, 402-471-4016, e-mail: ready@nlc.state.ne.us or the Regional Library Systems. Nebraska public and academic libraries can e-mail: Jennifer Wrampe, jwrampe@nlc.state.ne.us to order a copy of the book on CD and/or the large-print version for the library collection. The book on CD and the large-print manuscript are free of charge to libraries, but must be returned to the Nebraska Library Commission at the end of 2008.

One Book One Nebraska 2008 is sponsored by a coalition of organizations including the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Association, Nebraska Library Commission, and University of Nebraska Press. Local libraries and other cultural organizations are participating in One Book One Nebraska events throughout 2008. A lively discussion is under way on the Nebraska Library Commission Blog. Join the discussion and post your comments at www.nlc.state.ne.us/blogs/NLC/books_reading, to the thread titled "What tools would help libraries take advantage of the One Book One State opportunity?"



Review:

Bicycling beyond the Divide, Two Journeys into the West

by **Daryl Farmer**,
University of
Nebraska Press, 2008

ISBN: 978-
0803220348

**Review by
Oliver B. Pollak**,
University of
Nebraska at Omaha

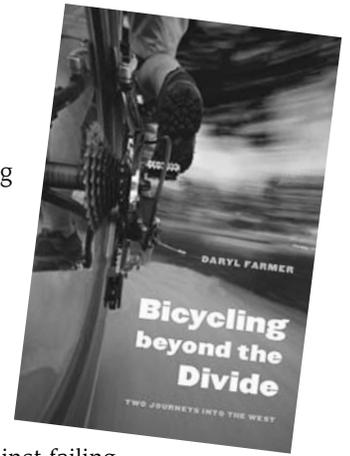
In 2005 45-year-old Daryl Farmer retraced a bicycle trip he had taken twenty years earlier. Your 64-year old reviewer drove, biked, and hiked parts of Farmer's route in the 1950s and '60s.

Cyclists are fascinated by space and destination. The long distance bicycle riding travel genre includes crossing America west to east and east to west, Kamchatka to Paris, London to Istanbul to Jerusalem, Cairo to Cape Town, and circling Australia. Riders test their metals in solitude, to raise money for charity, to satisfy midlife or approaching retirement crisis, or just because it's there.

Farmer is fascinated by the west and his fading youth. In 1985 he chose a counterclockwise loop headed northwest covering Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. With his 1985 journals and the same Trek bike, he sought the west again. Aside from the spread of suburbs, the difference brought on by a twenty year span were attitudes about security and strangers, fomented by 9/11, and the national methamphetamine epidemic. Local attitudes ranged from generous hospitality to callous disregard. He lost over thirty pounds on the trip and recovered his bike stolen in Oregon.

Riding and writing are moody experiences as suggested by gasping for breath at high altitudes, insatiable thirsts, the use of occasional muscle relaxants, riding against failing sunlight, and worries about where to bed down at night. Farmer and I shared the same reading including Dervla Murphy. His edgy characterization of Tioga Pass and North Bend, Oregon took me back to road trips in 1956 and 1967. This book evokes personal memories striking at the heart of the writer-reader relationship, understanding aging and masculinity nurtured by almost one hundred days and thousands of miles in the saddle.

Daryl Farmer earned his doctorate at the University of Nebraska in 2007, and teaches at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Decatur. Check out his attractive Website, www.darylfarmer.com, which includes pictures of boy/man and bike in 1985 and 2005.



Review:

Marking Time, Nebraska's Historic Places

by **Bobbi and
Steve Olson**, with
text by **David L.
Bristow**,

Nebraska Life
Publishing, Inc., 2008

ISBN: 978-0-
9789364-2-6

**Review by
John F. Keller**,
Photography by
Keller

Nebraska natives and visitors alike will find Bobbi and Steve Olson's *Marking Time, Nebraska's Historic Places* a visual cornucopia of both familiar landmarks and images from off the beaten path. The cover image provides a taste of what lies within, although this is not a book about historical markers themselves, but the Olsons (with text provided by *Nebraska Life* Magazine's editor David L. Bristow) portray what lies behind many of those over four hundred historical markers across Nebraska. It is those very stories and images that

should give this volume a place on the coffee table or locations where this work can be showcased.

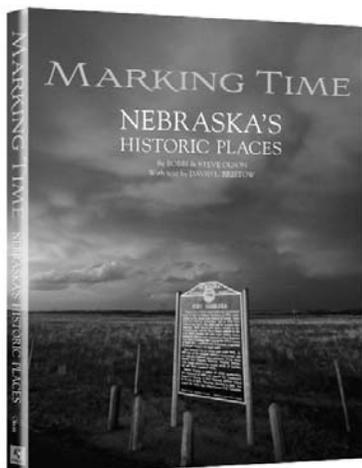
The book opens with a short introduction of what is to come in the four chapters: Wild Nebraska, Explorers and

Soldiers, Settlement, and Development. Throughout these divisions, Bristow gives a running narration of Nebraska's history, from before the Native Americans hunted and settled the prairie until technology and education gave form and substance to what we now know as a state rich in agriculture, diversity, and promise. He pays homage to the Plains Tribes whose numbers were tragically reduced by both diseases and the injustices of the soldiers and settlers of the frontier, offering the reader insight into a side of history not commonly told.

The Olsons' photography gives richness to this journey across the state, although the current limits of the dynamic range of digital imaging can be seen in some of the photos.

I suspect, too, that a few minor inaccuracies, both grammatical and in the captioning of the riverboat photo will be "fixed" in the final publication of this excellent collaboration.

Ed. Note: Bobbi and Steve Olson will appear on KZUM's BookTalk on Wednesday, May 14, 6:30 P.M. CT (89.3 FM or Web-streaming audio at www.kzum.org).





The University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference

Imagine writing like a pro.

Sixth Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference Scheduled

by Timothy Schaffert,

Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference Director

The Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference is in its sixth year of bringing award-winning, widely reviewed writers of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, as well as influential publishing professionals, to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to conduct weekend and week-long workshops. The workshops, scheduled for June 14-20, 2008, are attended by people from all across the country—writers either just beginning to find their voices, or in the process of polishing their work—many of whom return year after year for the conference's invigoratingly creative environment. Workshops, master classes, agent consultations, panel discussions, readings, and receptions are all part of this unique opportunity to write and be read.

What's NEW for this year's Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference?

The *Prairie Schooner* Workshops. The Conference has always had a close association with the internationally renowned literary journal *Prairie Schooner*—both the Conference and the journal are products of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Creative Writing Department. Over the years the Conference faculty has included the people behind the journal—its editor, its readers, and its authors. So we've simply named our poetry, fiction, and nonfiction courses after the acclaimed journal. Now all our conference attendees can list *Prairie Schooner* Workshops on their resumes and cover letters, and can be certain that the quality of the courses is conveyed to the editors and agents to whom they show their work. *Prairie Schooner* is one of our nation's most revered journals, and one of its oldest. The journal has a rich history too extensive to list here (its contributors have included Truman Capote, Rita Dove, Tennessee Williams, Alice Hoffman, Eudora Welty, Joyce Carol Oates, Charles Bukowski, Gregory Maguire, and Chris Ware), and its influence in the world of publishing has never been stronger. Winners of the *Prairie Schooner* Book Prize have seen great success...just check out the

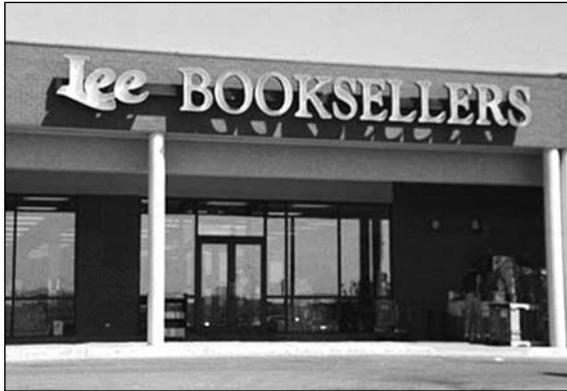
enthusiasm for Brock Clarke's new novel, ***An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England***, his first after his *Prairie Schooner* Book Prize-winning collection, *Carrying the Torch*. And we're proud to again offer a master class with Hilda Raz, the editor of *Prairie Schooner*.

The Website. The changes to our Website, <http://nebraskawriters.unl.edu>, are more than cosmetic. We're in the process of developing a conference that can serve its participants year-round, with access to special online content, wikis, extensive writer resources, and virtual workshops. Though this is all currently under construction, we have already expanded our faculty pages to better assist you in making a decision about which writer you'd like to work with—each page includes a bibliography of the writer's work, review blurbs, links to excerpts and author web pages, and an exclusive five-question interview in which the authors talk about their writing processes and inspirations. Drop a note to nswc@unl.edu with your contact information to sign up for our e-mail newsletter.

The Director. Still can't decide which workshop to sign up for? E-mail me, Timothy Schaffert (tschaffert2@unl.edu), or give me a call (402.472.0908), and I'll be happy to help you. Just a bit about me: I'm the author of three novels (*The Phantom Limbs of the Rollow Sisters*; *The Singing and Dancing Daughters of God*, a Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers pick; and *Devils in the Sugar Shop*, a Book Sense pick and a *New York Times* Book Review Editors' Choice), and I'm a former student of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's creative writing program.



Bibliofile: Featuring Two Nebraska Bookstores



Lee Booksellers in Lincoln is a Mom and Pop shop all grown up. Owned by husband and wife team Jim McKee and Linda Hillegass (both Lincoln natives), this 28-year-old independent bookstore stocks a broad selection of books for the whole family in a 5,000 square foot store. The store carries a wide selection of books for all ages and tastes. Children's books, cookbooks, mysteries, good modern fiction, and Nebraskana are specialty areas.

For the customer who doesn't find a particular book, the store offers special order service. "We do so many special orders," notes Hillegass, "that we're not sure why we call them special. They're definitely routine for us. Most special orders arrive in a week or less, and there is no extra charge for the service." The store also does a big business in books mailed out for customers. Orders mailed out within the U.S. are not charged postage or handling.

Lee Booksellers also carries a selection of side-lines including U.S. and world road maps, children's puppets and finger puppets, unusual stationery and cards, Springbok and other jigsaw puzzles for both adults and children, calendars in season, and Magnetic Poetry. The store frequently hosts authors for talks and book signings, and sponsors a number of in-store clubs, including two mystery book clubs, a cook's book club, a knitting club, and a couple of general book clubs. All store events are listed on the store's website, www.leebooksellers.com.

McKee and Hillegass launched the store in 1979 as newlyweds, naming the store after their common middle name, Lee. They are proud of their veteran sales force, including several clerks who have worked at Lee Booksellers for more than ten years, and two who have been with the business for more than twenty. Lee Booksellers is located at 5500 S. 56th Street (at the intersection of S. 56th and Nebraska Highway 2) in Lincoln. Contact them at 402-420-1919, 888-665-0999, www.leebooksellers.com, e-mail: info@leebooksellers.com.



Book Clinic, Inc. in Nebraska City was started by four women in a local church choir who wanted to go into business together. After much research, including the Book Expo book-selling school, the Book Clinic opened in August 1999. It is housed in a former medical office in downtown Nebraska City. Most local folks called the building the "clinic," and the name stuck. As an independent bookstore, fifty miles from the nearest super-bookstore, the Book Clinic strives for excellent customer service. They offer an extensive range of Bibles, inspirational titles and children's books, as well as a complete selection of fiction, non-fiction, cooking, health, and more.

In addition, the Book Clinic boasts a coffee and sandwich shop and does a brisk lunch business. The staff, now expanded from the original four to six employees, routinely special order books for customers, who come from Southeast Nebraska, Southwest Iowa and Northwest Missouri to shop.

The Book Clinic is proud of their community involvement, taking part in local celebrations throughout the year (Arbor Day in the spring, Apple Jack Festival in the fall) by hosting author signings and other special events. The city has reciprocated by closing the street in front of the store several times for popular Harry Potter parties to celebrate book releases.

The Book Clinic is located at 205 South 8th Street, in historic downtown Nebraska City. Contact them at 402-873-7660, e-mail: bookclinic@alltel.net.

Ed. Note: Bibliofile will feature independent bookstores from all over Nebraska in the coming issues of *NCB News*. To schedule an interview, contact Molly Fisher, 402-488-1240, e-mail: fisher2542@aol.com. ♦♦

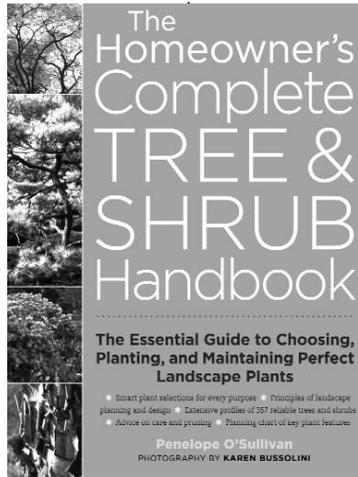


Reading about Gardening

by **Robert Trautwein**,
Columbus Public Library

What's with human nature? Last beautiful and sunny Sunday, when the temperature was above forty degrees and culverts were filled with water from the melting snow, I began thinking about gardening and lawn care. I know it's too early for those thoughts, but I couldn't help myself. I decided just where I'm transplanting my rhubarb. It's currently planted too close to the house and the stalks have always been puny for lack of water. It needs to be divided and moved to an area near the boundary with my neighbor. It's a wet spot so there will be plenty of moisture for the rhubarb stalks to grow to huge sizes. On Sunday, to take a break from preparing my taxes, I walked around the house on the sodden and grey grass. The bergenias are still brown and leathery but some green shows near the stalks. Nowhere could I find a green nub from a tulip, daffodil, crocus, or hyacinth. They all know that this winter is not like previous winters and there's more snow and cold to come.

Like my green beauties just under the soil, I ache for the drying spring winds and warm sun. We've all been in hibernation. The flowers want to spring forth in all their colorful glory and I want to be in the yard puttering about with rays of sun warming my back. For now, however, all I can do is peruse the seed and plant catalogs and flip through the library's gardening books. A new book I particularly like is *The Homeowner's Complete Tree and Shrub Handbook*, by Penelope O'Sullivan. The colored



pictures of each tree and shrub, along with the description that includes the height and width of a mature plant, makes this book particularly useful. Favorite gardening books of mine include *Gardening with Perennials*, from the editors of *Horticulture Magazine*, which has beautiful colored pictures of individual plants as well as great landscape examples.

Flower Gardening 1-2-3 is a gorgeous Home Depot book that illustrates just about every motion and every tool and piece of equipment required to make your garden dream come true. All of the *Ortho Guide* books are filled with photographs and descriptions for the gardener. *Ortho's Successful Flower Gardening* is one of several that should be studied. Eric Sawford's *Hardy Perennials, a Beginner's Guide* is also a favorite for browsing.

Last summer, I saw my first hummingbird in the garden. He was there for just an afternoon. I've already checked out the *Ortho* book, *How to Attract Hummingbirds and Butterflies*, and have learned about other plants to grow in order to bring those tiny and colorful birds back this summer to dart from flower to flower. If you like to garden (whether flowers or vegetables), now is the time to begin planning for the coming summer. Forget about the snow and the cold. Leaf through each seed catalog that arrives in the mail and make frequent visits to the library to check out more books on the subject. Before you know it, the crocus will be in blossom, soon to be followed by the daffodils, tulips, and hyacinths.

Festival Supports Nebraska Literature (continued from page 2)

for Nebraska readers whose interests quite naturally take them beyond state boundaries and to limit featured books and authors is provincial. I've always supported the first idea. As a Nebraska poet and publisher of a small, Nebraska-based press, I may have simply adopted a self-serving position. After a life spent familiarly with Nebraska literature, though, I would argue that such a focus would lend a special quality to the work of the Festival.

Nebraska's long literary tradition carries us forward. Books by Sandoz, Neihardt, Cather, and others—we know the names—form the foundation

of a unique literature at the core of the state's identity and essential to understanding America. (Where would the literature of the American West be without *Old Jules*, *Black Elk Speaks* or *My Antonia*? Could there be an America as we know it without the culture of the West?) Living poets and writers build on that tradition; their books re-imagine and articulate our culture and lives for and to us. Books that tell me more than I understood about where we come from and who we are will always be precious to many Nebraskans.



The NCB News



THE NEBRASKA CENTER FOR THE BOOK

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Calendar of Events:

- Poetry of Desmond Egan** April 23. Bancroft
Contact: John G. Neihardt State Historic Site, 402-648-3388, neihardt@gpcom.net,
www.neihardtcenter.org
- The Writer and the Plains** April 26. Bancroft
Contact: John G. Neihardt State Historic Site, 402-648-3388, neihardt@gpcom.net,
www.neihardtcenter.org
- Get Caught Reading Month** May Nationwide
Contact: www.getcaughtreading.org
- Children's Book Week** May 12-18 ... Nationwide
Contact: bookweekonline.com/index1.html
- Nebraska Literary Heritage Association Annual Meeting, with Bill Kloefkorn** May 20 Lincoln
Contact: Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, Lincoln City Libraries, 402-441-8516,
m.mcgowan@lincolnlibraries.org, www.foundationforlcl.org/NLHA
- Mayhem in the Midlands Mystery Convention** May 22-25 Omaha
Contact: Maggie Tarelli-Falcon, 402-444-4854, mtarelli-falcon@omahapubliclibrary.org, or
Sally Fellows, sallyfellows1@cox.net, www.omahapubliclibrary.org/mayhem
- Summer Reading Program Kickoff** May 30. Omaha
Contact: Linda Trout, Omaha Public Library, 402-444-4838, ltrout@omahapubliclibrary.org,
www.omahapubliclibrary.org
- Buffalo Commons Storytelling Festival** May 30-31 McCook
Contact: www.buffalocommons.org
- NE Center for the Book Board Meeting** May 31 Hastings.
Contact: Sharon Bishop, President, 402-723-4434, sbishop@esu6.org, <http://www.unl.edu/NCB>
- Willa Cather Spring Conference: Cather and Her Contemporaries** June 5-7 Red Cloud
Contact: Cather Foundation, 402-746-2653, 866-731-7304, info@willacather.org, www.willacather.org
- Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference** June 14-20 Lincoln
Contact: 402-472-0908, tschaffert2@unl.edu, www.nswc.org
- Harley Jane Kozak Reading/Fundraiser** June 18 Lincoln
Contact: Nicole Zink, Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries, 402-441-0164, info@lclf.org,
<http://www.foundationforlcl.org>
- Great Plains Chautauqua: Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties** June 25-29 Falls City
and July 2-6. Hastings
Contact: Beth McQueen, Nebraska Humanities Council, 402-474-2131,
beth@nebraskahumanities.org, www.nebraskahumanities.org/programs/chautauqua.html