

# The NCB News

Volume 20

Spring 2010

No. 1

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

## One Book One Nebraska 2010 Underway

In recognition of the 100th anniversary of the birth of **Wright Morris** (a native of Central City, Nebraska), the Nebraska Center for the Book has chosen **The Home Place** as the One Book One Nebraska featured selection for 2010. This “photo-text” is an account in first-person narrative and photographs of the one-day visit of Clyde Muncy to “the home place” at Lone Tree, Nebraska. A ground-breaking work, it has been called “as near to a new fiction form as you could get.”

Morris is regarded as one of America’s most gifted novelists and photographers. Internationally recognized, he received the National Book Award in 1957 for *The Field of Vision* and in 1981 for *Plains Song*. Morris utilizes his Nebraska and Great Plains boyhood experiences as themes in his work. 2010 One Book

One Nebraska is hosted by the Lone Tree Literary Society (see [www.wrightmorris.org](http://www.wrightmorris.org)) and 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.

Libraries across Nebraska and other literary and cultural organizations are planning activities and events that will encourage Nebraskans to read and discuss this story.

The Lone Tree Literary Society will sponsor

activities throughout the year to help highlight One Book One Nebraska, including the Wright Morris

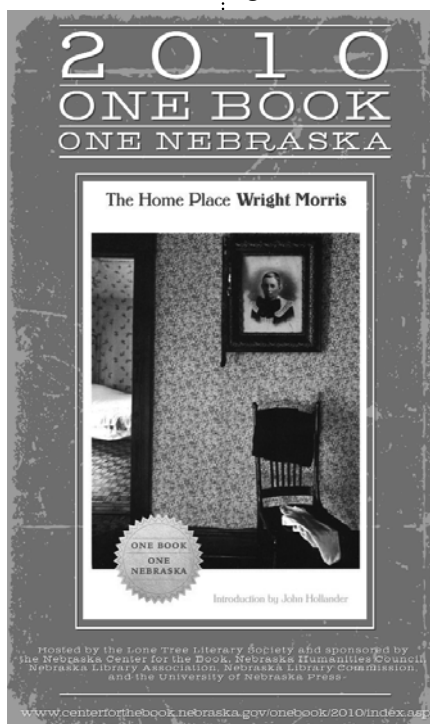
Centennial Year Conference on October 9, 2010. Support materials to assist with local reading/discussion activities and a list of upcoming events are available at [onebook.nebraska.gov/2010/get\\_involved.htm](http://onebook.nebraska.gov/2010/get_involved.htm) (scroll down).

Martha McGahan, of the Lone Tree Literary Society, recently shared, “I had a great meeting with the Brown Baggers at the Stromsburg Public Library. I used a computer-generated photo gallery of some of Morris’ photos along with some of my own photos of the Morris places alluded to in *The Home Place*. The folks were excited about the ‘local’ connections and are looking forward to planning some additional discussions.”

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.

A Website, hosted at the Nebraska Library Commission, can be accessed at [onebook.nebraska.gov](http://onebook.nebraska.gov). 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 an event in your community and how to apply for funding from the Nebraska Humanities Council for a program on Wright Morris. See [www.nebraskahumanities.org/speakers/speakersindex.html](http://www.nebraskahumanities.org/speakers/speakersindex.html) and [www.nebraskahumanities.org/speakers/hrceligibility.html](http://www.nebraskahumanities.org/speakers/hrceligibility.html) for application and eligibility requirements.

For more information contact Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Library Commission Communications Coordinator, [maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov](mailto:maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov), 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665.



Proclamation-signing ceremony featured (l. to r.) Jane Renner Hood and Erika Hamilton, Nebraska Humanities Council; Donna Shear, University of Nebraska Press; Gov. Dave Heineman; Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission; Martha McGahan, Lone Tree Literary Society.



# Next Nebraska Book Festival Set for Spring 2011

**Guest Editorial**  
by  
**Mary Jo Ryan,**  
Nebraska Library  
Commission

The date for the **Nineteenth Nebraska Book Festival** has been set. Mark your calendars for **May 21, 2011**. Thank you to all who completed the online survey, providing the Nebraska Center for the Book board with feedback about our most recent festival and help planning for future festivals. Last November's Festival was well attended and generally well received by participants and vendors. The response was extremely gratifying and it gives the board confidence in the rededication of the festival to Nebraska writers and the focus on the rich literary offerings of Nebraska. Nebraska authors with books published in 2010 will again be invited to read from their work and Writers' Workshops will be made available free of charge. Vendors will be invited to exhibit and sell their work. This event promises to be another day that motivates Nebraska readers, writers, teachers, and learners to come together to hear about and talk about the most recent work of a variety of Nebraska writers. We invite you to save the date, **May 21, 2011**, and watch for details on the evolution of the festival in upcoming editions of *NCB News*.

At the February board meeting, the decision was made to return to separating the festival from the Nebraska Center for the Book annual meeting. The annual meeting is set for November 6, 2010, and is

planned as a celebration of the winners of the **2010 Nebraska Book Awards** and the Capstone event for **2010 One Book One Nebraska: Nebraska Reads The Home Place**. Planning is underway to develop an awards-focused event that highlights and celebrates the winners of the Nebraska Book Awards and the honoree of the Nebraska Center for the Book's Jane Pope Geske Award. A short business meeting and a fun and informative program on the work of Wright Morris will be featured. We also hope to present an exhibit of Morris' photographs and first-edition copies of his books.

Thanks so much to everyone that helped to make this year's festival a success. We especially thank our sponsors: Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska State Historical Society, Duncan Family Trust, Lee Booksellers, Nebraska Arts Council, *Prairie Fire* Newspaper, Woods Charitable Fund, and University of Nebraska Press. For more information about the Nebraska Book Festival or the Nebraska Center for the Book Annual Meeting and Nebraska Book Awards Celebration, contact Mary Jo Ryan at 402-471-3434 or 800-307-2665, maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov or become a fan of the festival on Facebook.com

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Please renew your membership (form on page 3)  
to keep receiving this great newsletter in the mail.

## The *NCB News*

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### Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

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#### Awards Art Coordinator

Denise Brady

#### Letters About Literature Coordinator

Laureen Riedesel

Nebraska Library Commission Director Rod Wagner is an ex-officio member of all committees.

#### 2010 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meetings

May 22 . . . . . Hastings College

July 31 . . . . . Scottsbluff,

Western Nebraska

Community College

November 6 . . . . . Lincoln, Annual

Meeting

#### 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: maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov. [www.unl.edu/NCB](http://www.unl.edu/NCB).

The *NCB News* is published three times each year by the Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023. Subscription is free with membership.

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## Letters about Literature Winners Honored



Honorees are (l. to r.) Victoria Kolala, Megan Brookhouser, Mia Thomas, Gov. Dave Heineman, Arash Hamidi, and Haylie Roberts. Not pictured: Shawn Gasselinq.

Young Nebraska writers received Letters about Literature award certificates from **Gov. Dave Heineman** at a proclamation-signing ceremony celebrating National Library Week, April 11-17, 2010. **Letters about Literature** is a national reading and writing promotion program sponsored by the national Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in partnership with Target Stores. The Nebraska competition is coordinated by the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Commission, and Houchen Bindery Ltd.

More than 540 Nebraska students participated in the annual contest, compared to 250 entries last year. They wrote personal letters to authors explaining how his or her work changed their view of themselves or the world. They selected authors from any genre, fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. Winners were chosen from three competition levels: upper elementary, middle, and secondary school.

The Nebraska winners were honored at a luncheon, received cash prizes and gift certificates to Target Stores, and their winning letters were placed in the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska

Authors at Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln. They will advance to the national competition, with a chance to win a trip to Washington, D.C., for themselves and their parents. For more information see [www.nlc.state.ne.us](http://www.nlc.state.ne.us), search on Letters about Literature or contact Mary Jo Ryan, 402-471-3434 or 800-307-2665; [maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov](mailto:maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov).

### WINNERS:

- **Haylie R. Roberts**, Pender, for *Homeless Bird*, by Gloria Whelan
- **Victoria Kolala**, Omaha, for *Think Big*, by Ben Carson
- **Arash Hamidi**, Omaha, for *Torn Between Two Cultures*, by Maryam Qudrat Aseel

### ALTERNATE WINNERS:

- **Mia Thomas**, Bellevue, for *Devil's Arithmetic*, by Jane Yolen
- **Megan Brookhouser**, Omaha, for *The Book Thief*, by Marcus Zusak
- **Shawn Gasselinq**, Alliance, for *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, by Khaled Hosseini

*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**



**What is the Nebraska Center for the Book?**



## Review:

### *I Do Not Apologize for the Length of This Letter: The Mari Sandoz Letters on Native American Rights, 1940-1965*

Introduced and edited by Kimberli A. Lee. Foreward by John R. Wunder, Texas Tech University Press, 2009  
ISBN: 978-0-89672-666-6

**Review by**  
**Mary Ellen Ducey,**  
University of  
Nebraska-Lincoln

Having seen Kimberli Lee sit at a microfilm reader for hours on end, deeply involved in the rare experience of reading almost every letter in a manuscript collection, I jumped at the chance to review this book. I know Lee as one of the few people that has been able to read most of Mari Sandoz's correspondence and thereby gain a unique view of Sandoz and her life's work. *I Do Not Apologize for the Length of This Letter* gives us a similar advantage in reading a selection of Sandoz's correspondence. In this work, Lee provides a solid introduction to Sandoz, her writing, and its place in Native American history.

Lee has distilled materials from the vast amount available from the Sandoz Collection at the Archives & Special Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, the collections at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center in Chadron, and her own connections with the Sandoz family. She organized the letters into four areas that highlight issues Sandoz dealt with during her entire writing career: "Quest for Historical Accuracy," "Political Activism/Social Justice for the Tribes," "Campaign Against American Indian Stereotypes," and "The

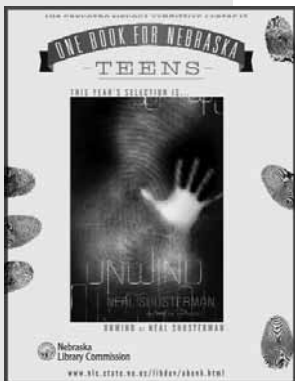
Advocate: Promotion of Native Artists and Writers." In the introduction to each section, Lee illustrates what these issues meant to Sandoz. She shows that Sandoz's vast knowledge of Native Americans, along with her life experience and her research, provided a strong foundation for her opinions. Sandoz confidently shared her perspective because she had facts and historical knowledge behind her.

Between Lee's introductory material and Sandoz's letters, the book is wonderful to read. It provides a hugely valuable glimpse into the mind of a strong, witty, and insightful writer. It is great to see that Lee's hours poring over letters every day for so many years have resulted in such a valuable work on Mari Sandoz.



## 2010 One Book for Nebraska Teens Book Kits Available

Wouldn't it be great if kids all over Nebraska were talking about books? Each year the Nebraska Library Commission and Nebraska's Regional Library Systems encourage young people across the state to read and discuss the same book. This year's book is aimed at high school-age Nebraska teens. *Unwind*, by Neal Shusterman, tells of a future America where parents can choose to have their children, age 13 to 18, "unwound" (their body parts harvested and given to others). Connor, 16, is shocked when his parents tell him they've decided to have him unwound. He runs away and strives to survive, encountering others like himself.



The Nebraska Library Commission is distributing book bags with fourteen books and discussion questions and background information. To borrow the book kits for book clubs or classrooms, contact Nebraska Library Commission Information and Reference Services, 402-471-4016, 800-307-2665, [nlc.ask@nebraska.gov](mailto:nlc.ask@nebraska.gov). For more information contact Sally Snyder, Nebraska Library Commission Coordinator of Children and Young Adult Library Services, 402-471-4003, 800-307-2665, [sally.snyder@nebraska.gov](mailto:sally.snyder@nebraska.gov). The Library Commission has many other book bags and book club kits, available for check out to schools and libraries at [www.nlc.state.ne.us/ref/bookclubkits.html](http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/ref/bookclubkits.html).

## Recommendations for Improving Access to Poetry

The Poetry Foundation recently announced the first report of the Harriet Monroe Poetry Institute (HMPI), a study to improve distribution of poetry in new media with recommendations for poets, publishers, and literary organizations. The HMPI has released a white paper intended to help poetry come more effectively into new-media outlets so that it will be more accessible to various audiences. The poetry

community can use this tool to help rethink copyright and fair use and to develop permissions practices that allow the greatest possible access to poems, while still protecting the rights of creators. The report also includes recommendations on using new media for poetry education. For more information and to download the report, see [www.poetryfoundation.org/institute](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/institute).



## Uzendoski Memorial Established

Dr. Emily Jane Uzendoski died December 7, 2009. Emily joined the Central Community College-Columbus English Department in 1978, a position she held until her death. In 1977, her bibliography, *A Handlist of Nebraska Authors*, was published by the Nebraska Department of Education. She had articles printed in *NEBRASKAland*, *A River and Its People*, and *The Journal of American Culture*; edited *The Salt Creek Reader* with poet Ted Kooser; was on the staff of *The Saltillo*; and served as co-chair of the Nebraska Writing and Storytelling Festival. Because of her long-term support for and enjoyment of the Nebraska Book Festival, the family requested that memorial contributions be sent to Nebraska Center for the Book, c/o Mary Jo Ryan, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023.

At the memorial service, Mel Krutz commented, "I knew your mom, as did many of those here today, as a treasured colleague, friend, and advocate...I grew by the pleasure of this association, and learned from her in many ways. We were a team. Our educational goals were one. Our philosophies were joined, even after I retired and she stayed on. I will miss her very much. Hers was an active mind, intellectual, analytic, and creative, evident in designing the courses she taught, and those she created for the English curriculum in general; in teaching literature on campus and delving into it in the book groups we belonged to off campus, as members of these groups will attest; and in discussing issues of concern locally and nationally. She was a researcher, a polished speaker at conferences, and a published author, well read—professionally and informally...I watched her with students exhibiting the same sharing, support and caring I felt with her...Many will hold her in their hearts with the knowing of her good teaching—that open and unrelenting sharing of information and knowledge."

Chuck Peek commented, "She graduated with many women and men of less capacity than Emily's who went on to prestigious jobs at name institutions, while Emily, our superior in many ways, had spent her entire career in the obscurity of a community college. You can never say that community colleges don't attract some top flight teachers! And there she spent a lot of her life promoting good writing, good reading, and especially Nebraska writers. She helped bring attention to so many, while she worked in relative obscurity. Her life would have been a fitting story for Cather's *Obscure Destinies* because she was a person of exceptional ability and dedication who never called attention to herself or climbed a career ladder. Her institution, her students, and her state were truly blessed by her life and work."

### *Frost Light*

by Ted Kooser

*During your last few nights, the moon  
frosted the newly harvested fields  
and the roofs of houses, sheds and barns,  
and the empty country roads that were  
not yet taking anyone away, and though you  
in your hospital bed were a very small part  
of all that moonlight, for me you were its  
center, as miles away I lay awake,  
imagining light from that cold window  
touching your face, awakening you  
to the world you were so slowly leaving,  
one moon at a time. I think that somewhere  
out there on the prairies you loved,  
even with winter approaching, a spring  
of the clearest, sweetest water is just now  
beginning to bubble up under those grasses  
bent by frost and moonlight. That spring,  
dear Emily, is you, and may you flow forever.* ❖

## Geske Award Nominations Due July 15

Nominations are sought for the Nebraska Center for the Book's Jane 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 2009 **Jane Geske Award** was presented to the **Golden Sower Award Committee of the Nebraska**

**Library Association's School, Children's, and Young People's Section.** The Golden Sower Award is Nebraska's children's choice award for literature. Thousands of Nebraska students participate in the Golden Sower Award program each year, with 66,648 children voting for their favorite reads this year.

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, rod.wagner@nebraska.gov. The 2010 Jane Geske Award will be presented at the **Nebraska Center for the Book Annual Meeting and Nebraska Book Awards Celebration on November 6** in Lincoln. ❖



# What Are You Reading?

Nebraska Center for the Book board members share their thoughts about the books they are reading:

After working and living for over 30 years near a Mennonite community, I felt at home reading Rhoda Janzen's light-hearted memoir of growing up Mennonite, leaving, and going home again (*Mennonite in a Little Black Dress: a Memoir of Going Home*). Ms. Janzen leaves the Mennonite community to marry a handsome, abusive man who deserts her for Bob, whom he met on gay.com. After a horrific accident, she returns to her parents' home to recover and regroup. Her telling is funny, sad and heart wrenching, but it is always interesting and worth the read. Her ability to cope with her situation with the presence of her very grounded, giving, and hilarious mother reminded me of people I knew and enjoyed. The Mennonites and communities like them often provide their members a very solid foundation so when life blows a tornado-like wind, the roots of the community provide a strong and accepting anchor.

**Sherry Houston**

I have just started reading Joan Silber's *The Size of the World: A Novel* and am enjoying the experience of traveling through the stories she tells. I picked this up having finished *Great Plains: America's Lingering Wild*, a collaboration between Michael Forsberg, Dan O'Brien, David Wishart, and Ted Kooser. It is a beautiful book for its illustrations, for its story-telling, for its historical context, and for the balance of reality and hope as they talk of the Great Plains environment.

**Mary Ellen Ducey**

During the school year most of my reading involves what I'm teaching my students in English class—right now I am rereading John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, always a poignant look at how society views those on the "outside," whether through poverty, old age or disability. And, I am reading Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the original vampire story. This one usually grips my students with its creepy look at the dark side of human passion, but it is also a great look at Victorian life with all its double standards—ones that stay with us to a certain degree, even today.

**Lois Meyer**

When a travelling salesman arrives in rural (fictional) Ebb, Nebraska, the community begins to change. Told through the eyes of Wilma Porter, the proprietor of the Come Again Bed and Breakfast, *In the Land of Second Chances* by George Shaffner explores Life through both humorous and philosophical lenses. Part of what we see as readers is expected—the sense of a community where everyone knows everyone else, the foibles of love, and the quirks of small town characters. Perhaps what will surprise the reader is the

intensity of community networking, the impact of economic development/downturn, the tragedies of loss with both love and health, and the ways in which we utilize our spiritual beliefs to survive the harshness of our life experiences. This novel is a quick read, but it's not a light read. The spiritual elements serve as speed bumps to slow the reader down. This spiritual aspect is not developed as traditional Christian religion, but as more of a philosophical/logical approach to whether God exists and if He is a Benevolent God. This approach provides for a thoughtful read.

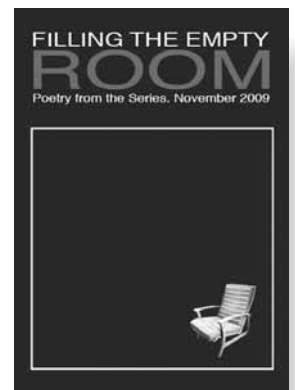
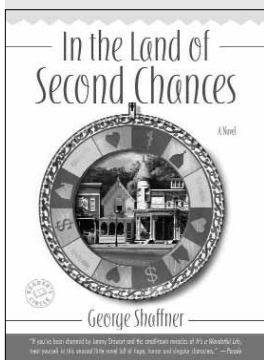
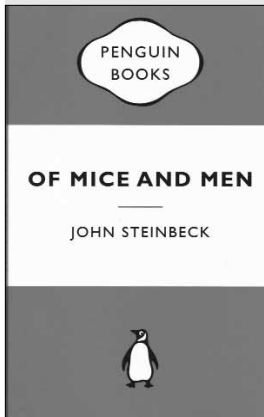
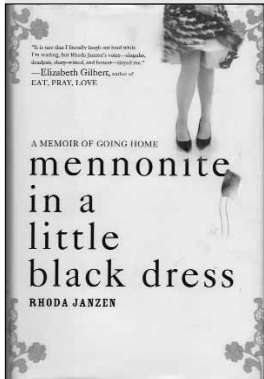
**Rebecca Faber**

Coming home the 1500 miles from Arizona, Jerry and I listened to books on CD—*The Brass Verdict* and *Trunk Music*, by Michael Connelly. Both of these mysteries made the miles fly by. My other favorite book is *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society*, by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. I have always liked the epistolary novel, and this was a delightful story. I had no idea that the Guernsey Islands were occupied during World War II. There is history and charm and intrigue—let's hope that the book encourages readers to write letters, too.

**Molly Fisher**

Right now I'm reading Dennis Lehane's *Mystic River*. I'd heard good things about Lehane's writing for years, and I was moved by the Clint Eastwood-directed adaptation of the novel. The action is set in working-class Boston, and the characters are vividly portrayed. There's plenty of tragedy here, and though it's very personal and all too recognizable in contemporary America, in Lehane's hands the tragedy attains a classical/Shakespearean level. (I'm sure I'm not the only one who sees Lady Macbeth here.) It's also something of a gangster story, and like a lot of safe, white academics I have a soft spot for those. I just received *Filling the Empty Room*, a collection of poetry edited by Matt Mason, which rose out of his decision to fill a vacant Omaha space with poetry in the month of November last year. A number of established poets are included—Neil Harrison, Lorraine Duggin, Shelly Clark Geiser, Heidi Hermanson, Bruce Kobork, Greg Kosmicki, Mel Krutz, and others—but most of the contributors are young poets. I imagine this may be the first publication for many of them. I'm very much looking forward to spending some time with it after I finish Lehane.

**J.V. Brummels** 🍷



**Review:**

**Pieces of the Plains: Memories and Predictions from the Heart of America**

by John Janovy, Jr.

J. & L. Lee Co.,  
2009

ISBN  
093-1-4904626

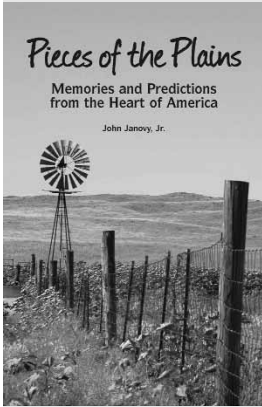
Review by  
**Oliver B. Pollak,**  
University of  
Nebraska at Omaha

John Janovy has long-since joined the ranks of America's literary natural historians that includes Nebraska's Loren Eiseley and the pioneer ecologist Aldo Leopold (*A Sand County Almanac*). Janovy acknowledges his intellectual debts to his Oklahoma roots, Louis Agassiz's injunction "Study nature, not books!" and the remarkable Oklahoma ornithologist George Miksch Sutton.

Janovy's ascendancy is a story of perseverance. The writerly Janovy's *Keith County Journal* (1978) was rejected by 22 publishers before St. Martin's offered a \$5,000 advance, proving that good manuscripts can be repeatedly rejected. Perseverance and a perceptive editor willing to take a chance rescued another manuscript after 42 rejections. *Pieces of the Plains* was sought out by Lincoln's Rhonda and Jim Seacrest, retired newspaper publishers, for a Nebraska-themed series published by J. & L. Lee Company. They gave Janovy carte blanche to describe a life lived in biology and academia, meandering from the Sandhills to the interior of university department politics, mind opening ideas, problems of existence, and the environment. He asks, "What is there beneath the obvious?" – providing scientific answers for non-scientists.

Born in Oklahoma in 1937 Janovy arrived in Nebraska in 1966 and has taught at the University of Nebraska ever since. A parasitologist, he decamps in the summer with prized students to Keith County where streams, caves, birds, fish, snails (and the vital parasites they ingest), viewed under the microscope become the vehicles for wider philosophizing about existence, community and constancy of change.

Janovy reminds us of a past where the 1952 Buick had no seat-belts, bicycles had coaster brakes, and typewriters had ribbons, carbon paper, Pica and Elite font (10 or 12 characters to the inch), and he learned to make a long distance telephone call. Smells, including that of paper and books, evoked wonderful and repulsive memories. Some of Janovy's works are available on the aromaless Kindle. The not-so-sinister chapter on the insider's view of academic department politics borrows John Grisham's title, *The Firm*. *Pieces of the Plains* moved me to read *Keith County Journal*, 32 years after it first appeared. No greater recommendation can be applied to a book than it excites the reader to read earlier works. Readers will look at snails, fish and birds with a refreshed knowledge, as the parasites in their stomach and bloodstream, and droppings circulate in nature's food chain in the wild and beyond.



**Review:**

**Reach Out and Live: Reflections on Leadership in Ministry and in Sermons**

by Otis Young

J. & L. Lee Co.,  
2008

ISBN  
978-0-934904605

Review by  
**Lois Meyer,**  
Sutton Public  
Schools

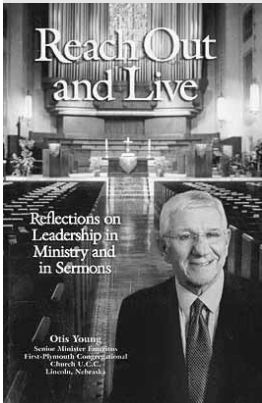
It would be difficult to pick up *Reach Out and Live: Reflections on Leadership in Ministry and in Sermons*, by Otis Young, without a feeling of positive expectation; probably even more so for people who knew him well. I knew him as a voice on the public radio show, *All About Books*, and that warm voice comes through in this compilation of sermons he wrote and delivered over his 35-year ministry at First Plymouth Congregational Church in Lincoln.

His introductory essay, entitled "What I've Learned about Leadership through Ministry" is a read worth the price of the book, in itself. I found myself wanting to share this with many people, both in or aspiring to positions of leadership.

The rest of the book lends itself to one of those books you can pick up, read a few pages, starting at the front, middle or end. Go back, re-read. Pick up

and read a few more. It will become like a good friend. You will laugh, smile and sit in reflection. I will share with you just a small taste of his words from "Stop, Look and Look Again," delivered February 10, 1985: "Frequently I've wanted to say to someone, Stop. Take a look around you. Look at what you're doing to your family with your busyness. Stop. Look at your children. Listen...Stop, look and listen. Love them. Enjoy them. Stop. Hug your spouse. Tell your friends how much you appreciate them. Stop. Open your eyes. You will see and hear things you never before noticed and your life will be richer for it. Amen."

His message is one that can touch everyone – it isn't necessary to be Christian to glean from his wisdom. I would have no problem recommending this book to any of my friends of any faith or persuasion.



## American Life in Poetry: Column 247

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



Family photographs, how much they do capture in all their elbow-to-elbow awkwardness. In this poem, Ben Vogt of Nebraska describes a color snapshot of a Christmas dinner, the family, impatient to tuck in, arrayed along the laden table. I especially like the description of the turkey.

### Grandpa Vogt's—1959

*The food is on the table. Turkey tanned to a cowboy boot luster, potatoes mashed and mounded in a bowl whose lip is lined with blue flowers linked by grey vines faded from washing. Everyone's heads have turned to elongate the table's view—a last supper twisted toward a horizon where the Christmas tree, crowned by a window, sets into itself half inclined. Each belly cries. Each pair of eyes admonished by Aunt Photographer. Look up. You're wined and dined for the older folks who've pined*

*to see your faces, your lives, lightly framed in this moment's flash. Parents are moved, press their children's heads up from the table, hide their hunger by rubbing lightly wrinkled hands atop their laps. They'll hold the image as long as need be, seconds away from grace.*

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)), publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2008 by Benjamin Vogt, whose most recent book of poems is *Indelible Marks*, Pudding House Press, 2004. Reprinted by permission of Benjamin Vogt. Introduction copyright © 2009 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.

## Nebraska Book Awards Competition Open until June 30

The 2010 Nebraska Book Awards program, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB) and supported by the Nebraska Library Commission will recognize and honor books that are written by Nebraska authors, published by Nebraska publishers, set in Nebraska, or concerning Nebraska.

Books published in 2009, as indicated by the copyright date, are eligible for nomination. They 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: Nonfiction, Fiction, Children/Young Adult, Cover/Design/Illustration, Anthology, and Poetry. Certificates will be

awarded to the winners in each category. Award winners will be presented at the Nebraska Center for the Book's Annual Meeting and Book Awards Celebration, November 6, 2010, in downtown Lincoln.

The entry fee is \$40 per book and per category entered. Deadline for entries is June 30, 2010. Entry forms are available from the Nebraska Library Commission Website, [www.nlc.state.ne.us/publications/BookAwardsEntry2010.pdf](http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/publications/BookAwardsEntry2010.pdf), or contact Maria Medrano-Nehls, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, [maria.medrano-nehls@nebraska.gov](mailto:maria.medrano-nehls@nebraska.gov) for print information. Enter by sending the entry form, three copies of the book, and the entry fee to NCB Book Awards Competition, Nebraska Library Commission, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023.

The winners of the 2009 Nebraska Book Awards (books published in 2008) were presented at the Nebraska Center for the Book's Annual Meeting and Nebraska Book Festival in Lincoln on November 14, 2009. 2009 award winners honored were:

### Cover/Design/Illustration

*BVH Architects: Forty Years*

by Suzanne Smith Arney

Publisher: Omaha Books, a division of Eventive Marketing, LLC, Designer: Elizabeth Murphy,

Cover Photo: Fashid Assassi

### Cover/Design/Illustration Honor

*The Death of Raymond Yellow Thunder*

by Stew Magnuson

Publisher: Texas Tech University Press

Designer: Lindsay Starr, Cover Photo: John Vachon

### Fiction

*Exiles*

by Ron Hansen

Publisher: Picador: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux

### Nonfiction

*The Death of Raymond Yellow Thunder*

by Stew Magnuson

Publisher: Texas Tech University Press

### Nonfiction Honor

*Nebraska's Cowboy Trail*

by Keith Terry

Publisher: University of Nebraska Press

### Poetry

*Geographia*

by James Magorian

Publisher: Black Oak Press





**Review:*****The Subversive Copy Editor: Advice from Chicago (or, How to Negotiate Good Relationships With Your Writers, Your Colleagues, and Yourself)***

by Carol Fisher Saller

University of  
Chicago Press, 2009  
ISBN  
978-0-226734248Review by  
Barbara Rixstine,  
University of  
Nebraska-Lincoln

Whether you have to edit your own words or someone else's, Saller's guide to working with authors, with language and with your colleagues can be an invaluable help. A copy editor at the *University of Chicago Manual of Style*, she's lively, humorous, self-effacing and just downright honest about the craft of editing.

Here's an example: "...I will point out that being the writer's advocate is not the same as being his buddy. As long as you are handling his manuscript, your first loyalty is going to be to the reader, and there will be times when a little professional distance will make this easier."

One of the most interesting passages I found was "Is it wrong?" Writers can parse a sentence countless ways and there are innumerable style guides offering advice. So in considering what to do with a piece of writing that strikes you as incorrect you might ask, "Is it wrong, or is it just confusing?"—this latter, Saller believes, being a "lesser form of wrong."

It's that kind of detail that makes this book a great reference for word people in any stage of the publication journey. ❖

**My Ties and Cliff Hillegass**

by Oliver B. Pollak

Cliff "Cliffnotes" Hillegass, an avid art and book collector, died in 2001. An estate auction at Omaha's Old Market Embassy Suites disposed of items unwanted by the corporation, family or friends including "Ties," a black and white photograph, blue ribbon First Place Prize in Photography at the 1983 Nebraska State Fair, by then high school student Doug Striggow of Superior, that hangs above my rosewood dresser.

Despite *Dress for Success* by John T. Molloy (1975) I had gotten out of wearing ties, a casualty of the business-casual generation. Recently, perhaps spurred by the down economy and receiving Social Security, I became more formal. Dressing up conveys respect for the people you meet, and perhaps a shield against their

importunities. The clincher came when I closed in on 180 pounds and my 16-inch neck created a crinkled stranglehold between the head and shoulders.

My wife bought me a half-dozen attractive, 16 1/2 inch-neck, long-sleeved shirts. Every morning since, I enter my just a little too small walk-in closet and choose a tie. Priests, police officers, and other uniform wearers do not consider matching shirt, jacket, pants, belt and socks. My oldest tie is from the 1960s. Most are pointed; a few square cuts accompanied the passé academic leather-elbowed corduroy jacket. A couple out of colorful flower cotton were made by an archivist friend in London in 1970.

The 73 ties, encompassing 44 labels, (plus 11 bow ties) include international 20th century haberdashery style icons, Giorgio Armani, Burberrys, Pierre Cardin, Oleg Cassini, Kenneth Cole, Lilly Daché, Christian Dior, Givenchy, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Liberty,

and Oscar de la Renta. Music co-branding produced Beatles, and J. Garcia of Grateful Dead labels. Woolcrofter by Wembley represented wool, Don Loper, Beverly Hills, provided the sole polyester (microfiber, a marketing euphemism for nylon, rayon?). Some are so old and used their provenance has fallen off. No Prada. Labels evoke decades-gone shopping habits, Bullocks, Desmonds, Magnin, and May Co. in Los Angeles; Vaughn at Sather Gate, Berkeley; and Landon's, Linea, and Montage in Omaha. Hang in there Parsow's, Jerry Ryann and Rossi.

Ninety percent of the ties are silk, imported from Italy and made in the USA, France, Italy, Korea, Spain, and more recently China, considering silk's history, quite appropriate. Tie hazards include fear of the snag, victims of rough skin and hangnails, and of course embarrassing soup, sauce and wine stains, a dry cleaner's delight, and the invitation to wear the forgiving vest.

Ties represent personality, how you want to be seen. That image is controlled by my wife and sister who purchase 90 per cent without my consultation, another opportunity for shopping for the alluring bargain and the salesperson's blandishments, "this will go great with that new shirt." Learning to tie shoe laces is followed a decade later by tying a tie. My thirty-something sons occasionally ask me to help. My octogenarian father-in-law had clip-on ties. My wife ties my bow ties. An early Alzheimer patient forgot how to fasten his tie tack. Ties are an index of taste, dexterity, memory, and the times. The portrait of Cliff Hillegass in UN-L's Love Library depicts him wearing a bolo tie, and close associates do not recall him ever wearing a fabric tie.

An earlier version of this article appeared online in UNO eNotes and is reprinted with permission. ❖



Photo courtesy of  
Doug Striggow and  
Tim Fitzgerald



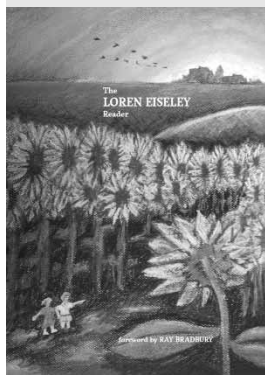
## Review: *The Loren Eiseley Reader*

*The Loren Eiseley Society and Abbatha Press 2009*

Foreword by Ray Bradbury

ISBN: 978-0-9796586-8-6

Review by Garry Alkire, Western Nebraska Community College



Loren Eiseley spent the greater part of a lifetime as a practicing new humanist who believed firmly in the triumph of rationality, although he drew deeply and often from the rich Christian tradition, many times not in specific reference to religious doctrine but rather to a sense of awe inspired by Nature, his own “mysterium tremendum” which once fostered and now tolerates the audacity and sometimes ignorance of mankind.

Recently released, *The Loren Eiseley Reader* gathers together significant essays, which sum this affiliation with nature and the quest for knowledge. As he writes in “The Slit” about mankind’s search: “We have joined the caravan, you might say, at a certain point; we will travel as far as we can, but we cannot in one lifetime see all that we would like to see or learn all that we hunger to know.” This ethic carries through other thoughtful selections in the book, such as the “Prologue” from *The Invisible Pyramid* and “How Flowers Changed the World,” “The Innocent Fox,” and “The Flow of the River.”

Inclusions like “The Golden Wheel” and “The Running Man” are autobiographical, tracing the origins of the ardent and moving introspection which fueled the cosmogony of a truly natural being. Essays selected for inclusion like “The Star Thrower,” “The World Eaters,” and “The Last Magician” describe the future integration of man and his universe, natural and cerebral. Eiseley informs, lectures, and, finally, warns mankind of the impending self-created and self-actualized doom occurring as a reaction from relentless plundering of the earth and the dismissal of natural rhythm and laws.

Although the language of most of his writing evinces traces of the formal naturalist essayists, Eiseley’s work can be interpreted as lying in the “popular” vein to the extent that he understands how to engage readers by imagery and imagination while presenting truths which

may or may not be welcome. He is an explicator of scientific fact through the world of arts and letters, and he demystifies eons of development for the average reader, without ever being condescending or reductionist. In this, Eiseley somewhat echoes the temper of other essayists like Spencer, Lowe, Bacon, and Emerson, as well as novelists like Faulkner, whose 1949 Nobel prize acceptance speech contained the assertion that “The poet’s voice need not merely be the record of man; it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.”

The new *Eiseley Reader*, compiled and released by The Loren Eiseley Society, is an important contribution to the world of contemporary letters. Designed as it is to encapsulate the geography of Eiseley’s philosophy, with an eye toward re-introducing Eiseley into the public school and higher education curriculum, the edition promotes awareness and invites reflection on the part of readers of all ages. The Eiseley Society is creating curriculum kits to accompany the books, and at least one volume of the *Reader* has been placed in every school and public library in Nebraska. The Educational Service Units have each been given complete “sets” of 25 books for checkout to school systems wishing to use the book. Containing biographical information, illustrations, and a “Map of Loren Eiseley’s Nebraska,” plus the fourteen essays, the *Reader* provides the context in which Eiseley’s intellectual platforms can be understood.

Eiseley did not write to experts in the fields of biology, paleontology, or anthropology. He wrote for ordinary people with extraordinary capacities for imaging, and this book will go a long way toward linking that ember of intellectual curiosity in all of us to a solid guide, Professor Eiseley. The Eiseley Society’s creation, *The Loren Eiseley Reader*, is an intellectual journey well worth the price of the ticket. ➤

## Nebraska Native to Speak at ALA Conference, June 27, 2010

Award-winning fiction author Dan Chaon, whose most recent title is *Await Your Reply: A Novel*, will speak at the upcoming Literary Tastes Breakfast at the American Library Association’s (ALA) 2010 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. Attendees can enjoy breakfast while authors read from their work, ruminate on writing, and sign books from 8 to 10 a.m., June 27, as a part of the Reference and User Services Association’s (RUSA) events at the Annual Conference.

*Await Your Reply* was a fiction selection for this year’s ALA/RUSA Notable Books List. This chilling exploration of the modern meaning of identity follows three people in Nebraska on the fringes of society, as they invent—and reinvent—their pasts, and face the future. The *Los Angeles Times* Book Review called the

novel “Riveting...There’s a bristling momentum that develops, as in any great tale of suspense... [Chaon] writes with an eloquence rarely seen in the world of page-turners.” *Publishers Weekly* gave it a starred review, and hailed its “Elegant prose, haunting plot and knockout literary excellence,” while *The Washington Post* called it “Mesmerizing...engrossing...hypnotic...You need to step into this work of psychological suspense completely unprepared for what lurks here....You’ll never guess.”

Chaon was the recipient of the 2006 Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. A Sidney, Nebraska native, he now lives in Cleveland, OH, and teaches at Oberlin College, where he is the Pauline M. Delaney Professor of Creative Writing. ➤

## Review:

### *The Broken Teaglass: a Novel*

by **Emily Arsenault**,

Random House  
Publishing Group,  
2009

ISBN  
978-0-553807332

Review by  
**Barbara Rixstine**,  
University of  
Nebraska-Lincoln

We know that dictionaries come equipped with words and word meanings, but do we ever think about who writes and defines those words? They're called lexicographers, and former lexicographer Emily Arsenault has devised an ingenious mystery set in a dictionary publishing firm. In this well-written and endearing mystery, dictionary words are defined with the help of "citations" that document a word's popular or technical use. When a new definition is due, the writer peruses the citation files to see if the word has changed or if a new meaning has been added to its usage list.

New employee and editorial assistant Billy Webb finds a series of citations that indicate a murder has been committed, but by whom? And when? The citations indicate both a book, *The Broken Teaglass*, and an author who can't be found by any resource available. How did these cryptic notes get in the citation files?

As Billy and his new office friend Mona Minot pore through the citations, trying to find all the pieces (which are numbered) and understand what's happened, they become closer friends. While this doesn't particularly move the mystery along, it does give us a glimpse into why they do what they do and what part of their lives led them to the dictionary office. They are both very interesting characters.

Arsenault wrote the book to pass the time while living in rural South Africa, in a mud hut. It was time well spent.



## Nebraska Writer Named Award Finalist

Since the 1950s, the Western Writers of America has given the Spur Award in western writing. A Spur Award winner and two finalists are named in each category. *Mundy's Law*, by Nebraska author

Mike McCord was selected as a Finalist for Best Western Audiobook for 2010. For more information see <http://westernwriters.org/news.htm#2010Spurs>.

## Summer Writers Conference Set for June 12-18

by **Timothy Schaffert**,  
University of  
Nebraska-Lincoln

You may notice that we've changed our name from the Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference to the Nebraska Summer Writers Conference. Yes, we're now much slimmer in 2010 having reduced our size by one apostrophe. Over the years that apostrophe has danced around that "s," or slipped away all together, when people have written about our event. So in these sparer economic times, we'll sacrifice the possessive. And the time you save not writing that apostrophe is more time you can devote to your own fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction writing at the June 12-18 workshops.

And though we've shortened our name, we've not skimped on the programming. In addition to a weekend and a week-long curriculum of workshops with acclaimed and admired authors, we're also featuring panels on the subject of publishing in this rapidly changing industry and how authors can build an online presence. Among those contributing to these conversations will be: Mark Sarvas, who created one of the nation's most influential lit blogs; Jill Lamar, director of the Barnes and Noble Discover

Great New Writers program; Zachary Schomburg, a poet who edits both a limited-edition chapbook press and an online journal; and many other writers and publishing professionals.

We've also added a new category of workshop: the children's book. Kate Bernheimer, a children's book author who edits the acclaimed journal *Fairy Tale Review* will lead a week-long workshop. Other conference faculty includes: Sigrid Nunez and Curtis Sittenfeld in fiction; Harley Jane Kozak leading a mystery-writing master class; Benjamin Percy in fiction/nonfiction; Meghan Daum in nonfiction; Grace Bauer leading a class on the poetry chapbook; Hilda Raz teaching her popular poetry master class; and a weekend course with publishing insiders Lauren Cerand and agent Mollie Glick.

For more information and to register, visit <http://nebraskawriters.unl.edu>.

*This article previously appeared online in News from the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors and is reprinted with permission.*

# The NCB News



## THE NEBRASKA CENTER FOR THE BOOK

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2010 Chatauqua: June 16-20, Columbus  
June 23-27, North Platte

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## Calendar of Events:

- Heartland Storytelling Festival** . . . . . April 29-30 . . . . Beatrice  
Contact: Homestead National Monument, Tina Miller, 402-228-4231, tina\_miller@nps.gov,  
[www.nps.gov/home/forteachers/12th-annual-heartland-storytelling-festival.htm](http://www.nps.gov/home/forteachers/12th-annual-heartland-storytelling-festival.htm)
- Children's Book Week** . . . . . May 10-16 . . . . Nationwide  
Contact: [www.bookweekonline.com](http://www.bookweekonline.com)
- Nebraska Literary Heritage Association Annual Meeting** . . . . . May 16 . . . . . Lincoln  
Contact: Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, Lincoln City Libraries, 402-441-8516,  
[m.mcgowan@lincolnlibraries.org](mailto:m.mcgowan@lincolnlibraries.org), [www.foundationforlcl.org/NLHA](http://www.foundationforlcl.org/NLHA)
- Prairie Writers' Workshop with John Price** . . . . . May 20 . . . . . Red Cloud  
Contact: Jennifer Pankoke, [jpankoke@willacather.org](mailto:jpankoke@willacather.org), 866-731-7304,  
[www.willacather.org/jcal/view/46/100](http://www.willacather.org/jcal/view/46/100)
- Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meeting** . . . . . May 22 . . . . . Hastings  
Contact: Garry Alkire, President, 800-348-4435, ext. 6032, [galkire@wncc.net](mailto:galkire@wncc.net), [www.unl.edu/NCB](http://www.unl.edu/NCB)
- Mayhem in the Midlands Crime Fiction Conference** . . . . . May 27-29 . . . . . Omaha  
Contact: <http://www.omahapubliclibrary.org/events/mayhem/124-mayhem-in-the-midlands>
- Great Plains Theatre Conference** . . . . . May 29-June 5 . . . . . Omaha  
Contact: [www.mccneb.edu/theatreconference](http://www.mccneb.edu/theatreconference), [theatreconference@mccneb.edu](mailto:theatreconference@mccneb.edu), 402-457-2618
- Willa Cather Spring Conference: Food, Drink, and Willa Cather's Writing** . . . . . June 3-5 . . . . . Red Cloud  
Contact: Jennifer Pankoke, [jpankoke@willacather.org](mailto:jpankoke@willacather.org), 866-731-7304,  
[www.willacather.org/conferences/spring-conference](http://www.willacather.org/conferences/spring-conference)
- Exploritas/Elderhostel: Willa Cather's Window to the World** . . . . . June 7-11 . . . . . Red Cloud  
Contact: [www.exploritas.org/programs/programdetail.asp?RowId=1%2D44NWSS](http://www.exploritas.org/programs/programdetail.asp?RowId=1%2D44NWSS), 800-454-5768
- Nebraska Summer Writers Conference** . . . . . June 12-18 . . . . . Lincoln  
Contact: 402-472-3067, [nswc@unl.edu](mailto:nswc@unl.edu), <http://nebraskawriters.unl.edu>
- 2010 Fine Lines Summer Camp for Creative Writers** . . . . . June 14-18 . . . . . Omaha  
Contact: [fine-lines@cox.net](mailto:fine-lines@cox.net), 402-871-3682, <http://www.finelines.org/topics/events/camp>
- Superior Summer Screenwriting Colony** . . . . . June 19 - July 2 . . . . . Superior  
Contact: Lew Hunter, 402-879-3617, [lew1@windstream.net](mailto:lew1@windstream.net),  
[www.lewhunter.com/SuperiorColony.html](http://www.lewhunter.com/SuperiorColony.html)