

The NCB News

Volume 21

Spring 2011

No. 1

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

2011 Nebraska Book Festival Set for May 21 in Lincoln

Join the Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB) in Lincoln for **Cultivating Creativity: Nebraska Writers**, the Nebraska Center for the Book's **2011 Nebraska Book Festival**, May 21, 2011 at nuVibe Juice and Java, 126 North 14th Street (10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.) and the Nebraska State Historical Society's Nebraska History Museum, 131 Centennial

Mall North, (1:00- 6:30 p.m.). The festival will again be dedicated to honoring Nebraska writers and will focus on the rich literary offerings of Nebraska.

A variety of Nebraska authors with books © 2010 have been invited to read from their work and three Writers' Workshops will be made available **free of charge**. The workshops will be led by **Timothy Schaffert** (*The Coffins of Little Hope*), **Jim Reese** (*ghost on 3rd*), and **Matt Mason** (*Things We Don't Know, We Don't Know*)/**Dwaine Spieker** (*Garden of*

Stars)/**Jeff Lacey**. Register in advance for workshops at www.nlc.state.ne.us/training/train.asp. A highlight of the festival is the keynote panel on the 2011 One Book One Nebraska, *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps*, led by **Ted Kooser**, Nebraska's own former Poet Laureate of the United States (2004-2006). The panel will feature Kooser, with **Virginia Smith** and **Paul Amandes** (the adaptors of *Local Wonders A Play with Music*, www.localwondersmusical.com). It will focus on how this rich non-fiction description of the place Kooser calls home in southeastern Nebraska has evolved into a musical theatre production.

Nebraska writers who will read from their 2010 work include:

- **Ted Kooser**, *Bag in the Wind*
- **Christopher Cartmill**, *The Nebraska Dispatches*
- **Marilyn June Coffey**, *Mail-Order Kid: An Orphan Train Rider's Story*
- **James Solheim**, *Born Yesterday: The Diary of a Young Journalist*
- **Sue Baumann**, (writing as Laura Landon) *Shattered Dreams* and *When Love is Enough*
- **Wendy Townley**, *Nerdy Thirty*
- **Barbara Schmitz**, *What Bob Says*
- **Jim Reese**, *ghost on 3rd*
- **Sarah McKinstry-Brown**, *Cradling Monsoons*
- **Roy Scheele**, *A Far Allegiance*
- **Desmond LaVelle**, *Thirteen Cats LaVelle*
- **Marjorie Saiser**, *Beside You at the Stoplight*
- **Mary Helen Stefaniak**, *The Cailiffs of Baghdad, Georgia*
- **Willa Cather Foundation**, *At Willa Cather's Tables: The Cather Foundation Cookbook*

This event promises to be another great 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 join us May 21, 2011. The Nebraska Book Festival is supported by Nebraska Arts Council and Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska Writers Collective, A Novel Idea Bookstore, nuVibe Juice and Java, University of Nebraska Press, and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Nebraska Repertory Theatre. The festival is offered for Nebraska readers and writers **free of charge**. Keep up with the Festival at <http://bookfestival.nebraska.gov> and on www.facebook.com/NebraskaBookFestival. ➡



Could this be your last print newsletter?

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

Taste the Variety of Poetry

Guest Editorial
by

Matt Mason,
Nebraska Writer's
Collective and
poetrymenu.com

When we think of poetry, we often think of just one thing, one aspect as most of us don't yet realize that poetry is the same as music, the same as movies, the same as sports: there is something for everyone. It's as if we lived in a world where the word "music" was synonymous with "Classical Music." What a wonder it would be, then, to discover something different than what we expect, to bump into The Beatles' White Album, Pink Floyd, Lyle Lovett, Tom Waits, heck, Johnny Cash, Arcade Fire, Jimmy Cliff, Erykah Badu, and on and on. That's what poetry tends to be, synonymous for many with one style, not realizing how broad it actually is.

And broad it is, with poets writing funny poems, sports poems, horror poems, love poems, fight poems, car chase poems, smart poems, dumb poems, dog poems, cat poems, everything, you just have to

look around and find it.

And you don't need to look far, especially today and especially in Nebraska. Just look at the work The Backwaters Press, *Plainsongs* poetry magazine, and Black Star Press' Nebraska Poets Calendar keep putting out, as well as the poets reading in UNK's Reynold's Series, the OM Center Poetry Slam, the Plains Writers Fiesta, the Encyclopedia Show, Wednesday Words, Tuesdays With Writers, and on and on and on. We've got it all. From Pulitzer Prize winners to the kid off the street wowing an open mic, we have a great diversity and a great amount of talent which we can enjoy.

So if you're out there thinking you'd rather flip on the TV tonight than enjoy some poetry, think again. Go to a bookstore, go online, go to a reading, and see what's really going on. ➡

Help Select 2012 One Book One Nebraska

The Nebraska Center for the Book invites recommendations for the **2012 One Book One Nebraska** book selection. The Nebraska Center for the Book will consider books written by a Nebraska author (living or dead/with current or former residence in the state), or that have a Nebraska theme or setting. Books should have a broad appeal to readers across Nebraska and lend well to group book discussion. Books may be fiction, non-fiction, biography, memoir, or poetry. They must be in print and readily available. The Center for the Book strongly suggests that anyone who nominates a text should have read it.

Book recommendations can be made via e-mail: nlc.ask@nebraska.gov or online (link at www.nlc.state.ne.us/news/content/2653.html) by **June 15, 2011**. Recommendations may also be sent via postal mail to The Nebraska Center for the Book, One Book One Nebraska, c/o Nebraska Library

Commission Reference Services, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023.

The 2012 One Book One Nebraska choice will be announced at the Fall 2011 Nebraska Center for the Book Celebration, which will include a 2011 One Book One Nebraska Program, Jane Pope Geske Award Presentation, Nebraska Book Awards Ceremony, and NCB Annual Meeting. For information about One Book One Nebraska, including current and previous book selections, see <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/onebook.html> or join us on <http://www.facebook.com/OneBookOneNebraska>. The Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Association, Nebraska Library Commission, and other statewide organizations sponsor One Book One Nebraska to demonstrate how books and reading connect people across time and place. ➡

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Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

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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.centerforthebook.nebraska.gov

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One Book One Nebraska 2011 Underway



Proclamation signing February 16, 2011
 L to R: Chris Sommerich (Nebraska Humanities Council), Rebecca Faber (Nebraska Center for the Book), Tracy Bicknell-Holmes (Nebraska Library Association), Donna Shear (University of Nebraska Press), Gov. Dave Heineman, Erika Hamilton (Nebraska Humanities Council), Rod Wagner (Nebraska Library Commission).
Photo courtesy Nebraska Library Commission

The Nebraska Center for the Book invites all Nebraskans to participate in One Book One Nebraska 2011 by reading and discussing **Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps** (University of Nebraska Press, 2002) by Ted Kooser, of Garland, Nebraska. Kooser is one of America's most highly regarded poets and served as the United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004 - 2006. He is the author of numerous full-length collections of poetry, including the 2005 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Delights and Shadows* (Copper Canyon Press, 2004). Kooser's first book of prose, *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps*, won the Nebraska Book Award for Nonfiction in 2003 and Third Place in the Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Award in Nonfiction for 2002.

In **Local Wonders**, Kooser describes with exquisite detail and humor the place he calls home in the rolling hills of southeastern Nebraska—an

area known as the Bohemian Alps. Nothing is too big or too small for his attention. Memories of his grandmother's cooking are juxtaposed with reflections about the old-fashioned outhouse on his property.

After receiving nominations from across the state, the Nebraska Center for the Book board announced **Local Wonders** as Nebraska's statewide reading choice at the **2010 Celebration of Nebraska Books** in Lincoln. On February 16, 2011, 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. One Book One Nebraska 2011 is sponsored by a coalition of organizations including the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Association, Nebraska Library Commission, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Nebraska Repertory Theatre, and University of Nebraska Press.

Libraries across Nebraska will join other literary and cultural organizations in planning book discussions, activities, and events that will encourage Nebraskans to read and discuss this book. Support materials to assist with local reading/discussion activities are available at <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/onebook.html>. Updates and activities are listed on the One Book One Nebraska Facebook group at www.facebook.com/OneBookOneNebraska.

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

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 ___ Additional Contribution

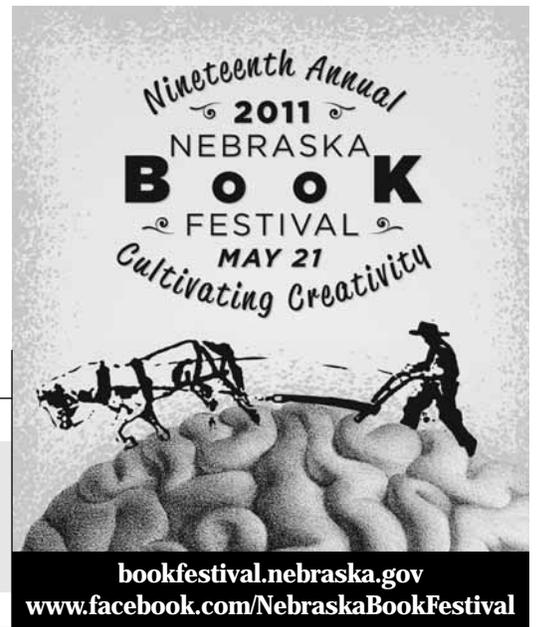
Contributions above \$15 are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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



2011 Nebraska Book Festival Schedule of Events

nuVibe Juice and Java, 126 North 14th Street



Time	Conference Room	2nd Floor Mezzanine
10:00 a.m.	Writers Workshop: "Geographies of Fiction" Timothy Schaffert (10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.)	Reader # 1 - Reader # 2 (10:15 - 11:15 a.m.)
10:30		
11:00		Reader # 3 - Reader # 4 (11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)
11:30		
Noon		
12:30 p.m.	Lunch on your own	

Nebraska State Historical Society's Nebraska History Museum, 15th and P Streets, Lincoln

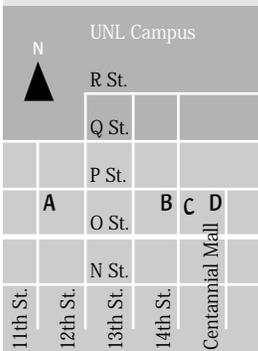
Time	Lobby	Auditorium	Reading Space	Gilmore	Investigation Station	Museum Shop
1:00	Registration (1:00 - 1:30)					Book Sales (1:00 - 4:30)
1:30	Signings (1:30 - 4:15)	Reader #5 (1:30 - 2:00)	Reader #6 (1:30 - 2:00)	Writers Workshop: "Get Published Now" Jim Reese (1:30 - 3:30)	Writers Workshop: "Lightning Writing Prompts" Matt Mason, Jeff Lacey & Dwayne Spieker (1:30 - 3:30)	
2:00		Reader #7 (2:15 - 2:45)	Reader #8 (2:15 - 2:45)			
2:30						
3:00		Reader #9 (3:00 - 3:30)	Reader #10 (3:00 - 3:30)			
3:30		Reader #11 (3:45 - 4:15)	Reader #12 (3:45 - 4:15)	Reader #13 (3:45 - 4:15)	Reader #14 (3:45 - 4:15)	
4:00						
4:30		Keynote: Ted Kooser <i>Local Wonders: From Book to Musical Theatre Production</i> (4:30 - 5:30)				
5:00						
5:30	Reception & Signings (5:35 - 6:30)	Presentation: Mildred Bennett Award (5:30 - 5:35)				
6:00						
6:30						

2011 Nebraska Book Festival

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR'S SPONSORS:

- Nebraska Arts Council
- Nebraska Cultural Endowment
- Nebraska Center for the Book
- Nebraska Humanities Council
- Nebraska Library Commission
- Nebraska State Historical Society
- Nebraska Writers Collective
- A Novel Idea Bookstore
- nuVibe Juice and Java
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Nebraska Repertory Theatre
- University of Nebraska Press

FESTIVAL MAP



- A - Parking Garage
- B - Parking Garage
- C - nuVibe
- D - Nebraska State Historical Society Nebraska History Museum

Our Presenters

Paul Amandes, Associate Professor of Theatre at Columbia College in Chicago, is an actor, director, playwright, singer, guitarist, and songwriter. He co-adapted and wrote original songs for *Local Wonders: A Play with Music*. He has performed the play around Chicago, including at Chicago Dramatists and two runs of the one-man show with Blue Moon Studio Theater in Chicago. He is part of the Keynote Panel with Ted Kooser and Friends: "Adaptation of *Local Wonders* to Musical Theatre."

Sue Baumann (aka Laura Landon) spent ten years as a high school music teacher and nine years making sundaes and malts in her very own ice cream shop, but once she penned her first novel, she closed up shop to spend her time writing. She has written more than a dozen Victorian historical novels. Baumann will read from her 2010 work, including *More than Willing* (The Wild Rose Press), *Shattered Dreams*, and *When Love Is Enough* (Prairie Muse).

Playwright, actor, and director, **Christopher Cartmill** teaches at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University. His plays have earned awards from the Kennedy Center, Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Committee, and the Los Angeles Drama-Logues. Nebraska's Lied Center for the Performing Arts commissioned Cartmill to write a play about Chief Standing Bear, and this journey became his memoir. He will read from his 2010 work, *The Nebraska Dispatches* (University of Nebraska Press).

Marilyn June Coffey is a best-selling, internationally published author of poetry and prose. She won a Pushcart Prize, and *Atlantic Monthly* featured her memoir on its cover. Coffey trained as a journalist (B.A., University of Nebraska, 1959) and creative writer (M.F.A., Brooklyn College, 1981). Her work has appeared in Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, India, and Japan. Her latest book, *Mail-Order Kid* ("out West" Press) — a biography of an orphan-train rider—is a best-seller on Amazon/Kindle.

Ted Kooser, a two-time U.S. Poet Laureate (2004–2006), received a bachelor's degree from Iowa State University and a master's degree in English from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. He is the author of twelve collections of poetry, including *Delights & Shadows* (Copper Canyon Press, 2004), which won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. Other honors include two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, a Pushcart Prize, and the Stanley Kunitz Prize from Columbia University. He is a Presidential Professor in the English department of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Kooser will read from his 2010 work, *Bag in the Wind* (Candlewick Press), and head up the keynote panel based on his *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps* (University of Nebraska Press)—One Book One Nebraska for 2011.

Jeff Lacey completed a bachelor's degree in philosophy and English at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and a master's degree in English at the University of

Nebraska-Lincoln. Recently, his poetry has appeared in publications such as *The Hiram Review*, *Nebraska Life Magazine*, *Christianity and Literature*, and *The 2011 Nebraska Poet's Calendar*. He was the editor for *The Loren Eiseley Reader Teacher's Guide*. A writing teacher who lives in Ralston, Lacey helps direct the Omaha Metro Area High School Poetry Festival. His first book of poetry, *Keep Going*, will be published this year. He is a Writers' Workshop facilitator.

Desmond LaVelle is a longtime advertising copywriter. He found that billboards and bus benches were rarely big enough to tell really great stories. While crafting Super Bowl commercials and Sunday circulars, LaVelle began writing his literary debut. He grew up in Omaha and studied Journalism at the University of Kansas. He moved to Chicago and, after a short decade spent riding the elevated train, traveled west to Sausalito. A Midwesterner at heart, living in beautiful California gave him an overwhelming feeling of guilt. He currently resides in Chicago—again. He will read from *Thirteen Cats LaVelle* (Lulu, 2010).

Matt Mason received his MA in English from the Creative Writing Workshop at the University of California at Davis. He returned to Omaha to promote public poetry readings and poetry readers as executive director of the Nebraska Writers Collective and through PoetryMenu.com, an online listing of poetry events. Mason's first book of poetry, *Things We Don't Know, We Don't Know* (The Backwaters Press, 2006), won the 2007 Nebraska Book Award for Poetry and was a Contemporary Poetry Best Seller. He runs the monthly poetry slam and open mic at the Omaha Healing Arts Center and was on five poetry slam teams at the National Poetry Slam. He has helped with poetry events for bookstores, high schools, junior highs, colleges, libraries in the U.S., as well as in Nepal and Belarus through the U.S. State Department. Mason is a Writers' Workshop facilitator and coordinator of the morning activities at the Nebraska Book Festival.

Winner of the Academy of American Poets Prize, **Sarah McKinstry-Brown** studied poetry at the University of New Mexico, University of Sheffield, England, and University of Nebraska. In 2004, she won the Blue Light Poetry Prize and has since been published everywhere from West Virginia's standardized tests to Omaha bus benches. McKinstry-Brown received her MFA in Poetry at the University of Nebraska. She lives in Omaha with her husband, Matt Mason, and their two beautiful, feisty daughters. She will read from her 2010 Blue Light Book Award-winning work, *Cradling Monsoons* (Blue Light Press, 2010).

Jim Reese is Associate Professor of English; Director of the Great Plains Writers' Tour at Mount Marty College in Yankton, South Dakota; and Editor-in-Chief of *Paddlefish*. Reese's poetry and prose have been widely published, most recently in *New York Quarterly*, *Poetry East*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Louisiana*

(continued on page 6)



2011 Nebraska Book Festival *(continued)*

Literature Review, *Connecticut Review*, and elsewhere. Reese has been the National Endowment for the Art's Writer-in-Residence at the Yankton Federal Prison Camp since 2008. He will facilitate a Writers' Workshop and will read from his Pulitzer Prize-nominated book, *ghost on 3rd* (New York Quarterly Books).

Marjorie Saiser was named Distinguished Artist in Poetry in 2009 by the Nebraska Arts Council. Her awards include the Little Blue Stem Award, the Nebraska Book Award, the Literary Heritage Award, and the Vreelands Award. Her poems have been published in *Prairie Schooner*, *Field*, *Georgia Review*, *Cimarron Review*, *Crazy-Horse*, *Cream City Review*, and have been featured on "The Writer's Almanac" and Ted Kooser's "American Life in Poetry." Saiser will read and discuss her 2010 works, including *Beside You at the Stoplight* (The Backwaters Press, 2010) and *Rooms* (Pudding House Publications, 2010).

Timothy Schaffert is the author of four novels, most recently *The Coffins of Little Hope* (Unbridled Books, 2011). His work has been a Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers selection, a New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice, and an Indie Next pick from the American Booksellers Association. He teaches creative writing and literature at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, directs the Nebraska Summer Writers Conference and the (downtown) omaha lit fest, and serves as digital development editor for *Prairie Schooner*.

Roy Scheele is a poet who has been published in *The Sewanee Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Commonweal*, and many other places. His profiles of poets have appeared in *Poets & Writers*, *Verse*, and other publications. He is Professor of English, poet-in-residence, and director of creative writing at Doane College in Crete. Scheele will read and discuss his newest poetry collection, *A Far Allegiance* (The Backwaters Press).

Barbara Schmitz is the author of several poetry collections. Her poem "Uniforms" appeared in *South Dakota Review* and will be featured in Ted Kooser's newspaper column "American Life in Poetry." She was a writer-in-residence at the Mabel Dodge Luhan House in Taos, NM, and won a Nebraska Arts Council Award. She received Emeritus Status from Northeast Community College, where she taught creative writing and coordinated the Visiting Writers Series for thirty years. Schmitz will read and discuss *What Bob Says* (Pudding House Press, 2010).

Virginia Smith, Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, teaches acting and directing and has been the Artistic Director of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre since 2005. She also heads the M.F.A. program in Directing for Stage and Screen and the B.A. undergraduate emphasis in Directing and Management. She became part of the theatre faculty at UNL in the fall of 2000 after sixteen years working as a professional in Chicago. In December 2010, *Local Wonders: A Play with Music* played

in Chicago at Chicago Dramatists under Virginia's direction. She co-adapted this piece with Paul Amantes (who also wrote the music and some of the lyrics) from poet Ted Kooser's book *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps*. Smith is part of the Keynote Panel with Ted Kooser and Friends: "Adaptation of *Local Wonders* to Musical Theatre."

A poet and children's book author, **James Solheim** won the Academy of American Poets Prize as a student at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. His new book for children, *Born Yesterday: The Diary of a Young Journalist* (Philomel/Penguin Young Readers, 2010) received starred reviews from *Publisher's Weekly* and *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, which chose it as one of the year's ten best picture books. His work has appeared in many literary magazines and won a Pushcart Prize. Solheim will read from his 2010 work.

Dwayne Spieker teaches British Literature, Composition, and Creative Writing at Wayne High School. After growing up on a farm outside Elgin—at the eastern edge of the Sandhills—he graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and received a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Spieker was the recipient of the 2010 Nebraska Book Award for Poetry for *Garden of Stars* (Lulu, 2010). He is a Writers' Workshop facilitator.

Mary Helen Stefaniak's first novel, *The Turk and My Mother* (WW Norton, 2005), was translated into several languages and received the 2005 John Gardner Fiction Award. Her work has appeared in many publications. A graduate of the Iowa Writer's Workshop, Stefaniak teaches English and Creative Writing at Creighton University in Omaha. She will read from *The Cailiffs of Baghdad, Georgia* (WW Norton, 2010)—an Indie-Next Great Reads pick for 2010.

Wendy Townley (@wtownley on Twitter) is an author, blogger, and award-winning writer—see www.wendytownley.com and www.nerdythirty.com. She fancies social media, handwritten correspondence, NPR, and the Macintosh. Townley earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2002, and will graduate this year with a master's degree in communication, also from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Townley will read from her first book, *Nerdy Thirty* (WriteLife, 2010).

The **Willa Cather Foundation** was founded in 1955, through the efforts of a small group of volunteers in Red Cloud, led by Mildred R. Bennett. The Foundation is directed by a thirty-member Board of Governors—scholars, teachers, and business and professional people from throughout the United States—and is dedicated to preserving and promoting understanding and appreciation of the life, time, settings, and work of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Willa Cather. Foundation board members will read from *At Willa Cather's Tables: The Cather Foundation Cookbook*; Ann Romines, Ed. (Allen Press, 2010). ♦



What Are You Reading?

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

I've just finished *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* (Picador, 2003) by Michael Dorris. For years, friends have recommended this book to me. For some reason, I hadn't followed their suggestion. I'm sorry that I didn't read it sooner! It is a beautifully crafted narrative of three women and their experiences, primarily on a reservation. Their stories are told separately, but they weave together as masterfully as any rug.

Many years ago I saw the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café* and loved it. Now I am reading the novel (Random House, 2005) by Fannie Flagg on which the film was based. I like the novel even more than I liked the film. It's funny, tragic, insightful—and very difficult to put down. The narration changes, the time frame changes, the location changes, yet it makes delightful sense. It's the most fun read I've had in quite a while!

Becky Faber

I am currently reading *In Search of Midnight: The Mike McGee Handbook of Awesome* by Mike McGee (Write Bloody Publishing, 2009). I've enjoyed McGee's comic approach to poetry for years and it's nice here to have his greatest hits gathered from the various chapbooks he has out.

Matt Mason

Do you know how you sometimes think everyone knows about something except you? That is how I feel about the magazine *Nebraska Life*, (see www.nebraskalife.com). I was waiting for my book group to start (Women and Finance at Omaha Public Library), browsing the magazines at the library, and picked up *Nebraska Life*. What a great magazine. I came home and ordered it for our house. After driving across the Platte River near Grand Island every day for more than a year, I especially loved the article on the cranes and the pictures were fantastic. I copied the recipe for the Rueben sandwich for my daughter and read the whole article. Then, there was the recipe for the kolaches—I am definitely trying them. Every issue has many articles about interesting Nebraska places or happenings. My husband and I think we should road-trip a place from each issue. I don't know any of the writers or the editor, but they are doing a fantastic job. How did I miss this gem? It makes me really proud to love Nebraska.

Sherry Houston

I'm reading *Murder Your Darlings: An Algonquin Roundtable Mystery* (Signet, 2011) by J. J. Murphy—the first in a series featuring Dorothy Parker and her friends. Although the setting is the Algonquin Hotel in New York, the content is light—for anyone familiar

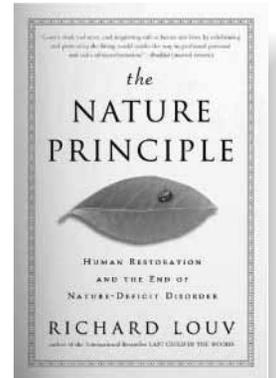
with that literary period, the book may come up short. But as a light mystery, it is enjoyable.

I'm also reading *Let the Tiger Die* (Rue Morgue, 2011) by Manning Coles—originally published in 1947. Tommy Hambeldon is a modern language teacher turned British secret agent. This book takes place shortly after WWII and finds Hambeldon chasing a Nazi bombing plot. There are about twenty-five titles in this British mystery series and I hope to read all of them.

Carol Connor

I recently finished reading Richard Louv's *The Nature Principle* (Algonquin, 2011). I had the opportunity to introduce him for an author event and had the chance to read his book beforehand. Louv is a fine writer, researcher, and story teller. His motivational book inspires readers to enjoy the benefits of nature, or, as he calls it – Vitamin N.

Rod Wagner

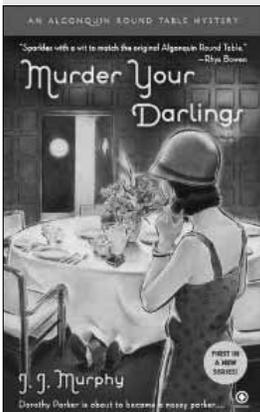
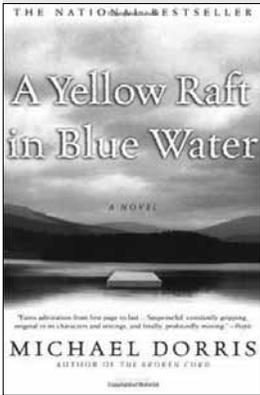


My six year-old daughter discovered Barbara Park's *Junie B. Jones* series over Christmas. We read them together, partly so I can help her with words she doesn't know, partly to ask her questions as we go along, but mostly because it's more fun to laugh together than to laugh alone. We recently finished *Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky Peeky Spying* (Scholastic Book Clubs, 2009) in which Junie B. must decide whether she should keep a secret or tell somebody that she saw her teacher eating grapes ("It's called stealing!") at the grocery store. The copy editor in me cringed at the deliberately bad grammar, but I did enjoy Barbara Park's portrayal of the way a kindergarten processes her world, from taking things too literally to mixing common idioms.

Erika Hamilton

Elizabeth Gilbert wrote *Eat, Pray, Love* (Penguin, 2011) as her true story, a search for self, a search for balance in her life. After a divorce, she takes a year to rediscover herself. She is able to do so because she has received an advance on a book, and appears to have plenty of money otherwise. I admire her honesty throughout the book. However I kept thinking, "How many people would be financially able to do what she does?" I do believe that this book and maybe the movie—which I have not seen—encourages women of any age to do the same thing, even though the escape may not be to the exotic places Gilbert visits. My daughter gave me this book and she is on a journey of discovery—a return to graduate school.

Molly Fisher 🐾



A “Bibliogastro” Tour, Part Deux *(continued from V. 20, No.2)*

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

My paper, “English Language Burmese Cookbooks, 1903-2009,” presented at the 9th International Conference on Burmese Studies in Marseille in July, occasioned a bibliogastro tour...

Paris appeared to have bookstores at every turn, of course our hotel was a few blocks from the Sorbonne. Despite the rain the book stalls along the Seine persisted. “Every book has its next owner or the shredder.” Recent *New York Times* stories on Paris restaurants guided our dining, and we met delightful like-minded American and French “gustators.”

We trudged to Maurel’s International Bookstore in Marseille, the equivalent of Paris’s Shakespeare and Company. Pierre Maurel had no English language literature on the Marseille Jewish

Community, at 80,000 the third largest in Europe. *Made in Marseille, Food and Flavors from France’s Mediterranean Seaport* (2002) by Daniel Young prepared us for three bouillabaisse dinners, if not quite for Pierre Maurel’s recommended restaurant that turned out to be the most expensive meal of our lives, an eleven course, 3 1/2-hour eating extravaganza. The Jewish bookstore in the Judaï Cité, Librairie Pardess, had a nice selection of French and Hebrew Judaica, but nothing in English on Marseille Jewry. Marseille no longer prints the *Yellow Pages*, however, the *Jaune Pages* are online.

We returned to London via the 150-mile-per-hour Eurostar Chunnel train. We visited the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine, a fabulous medical arts museum with a great medical library. On the main floor is the Blackwell Bookstore. Among its alluring titles were *Diabetes: The Biography*, by

Robert Tattersall; *Obesity: The Biography*, by Sander L. Gilman (both Oxford University Press); and *A Brief History of Nakedness*, by Philip Carr-Gomm (Reaktion Press, printed in Singapore). The coffee shop was run by the same people as the British Library café.

With two hours to go before our departure for Heathrow airport, we crammed in a Sunday book sale at the neighboring Royal National Hotel. The cavernous hall contained scores of booksellers—some with active brick and masonry establishments, some semi-retired working out of their homes—from as far away as Cardiff. The G.R. Henty, Doris Lessing, James MacDonald Frazier, Flashman series, were in my estimation overpriced. I left behind a reasonably priced 1799 map of London. We accumulated business cards and catalogs, and most important, were made aware of the longstanding bimonthly *Book Source Magazine* published in Cazenovia, New York.

I gained about eight pounds but quickly shed four. Unpacking our luggage in Omaha we discovered seven books missing: the signed copy of Dervla Murphy’s *Wheels within Wheels*; Ma Thanegi’s *The Native Tourist: A Holiday Pilgrimage in Myanmar* (thoroughly marked up and annotated); a Paris map; and most distressingly, *Picklehead*, borrowed from my Burmese language teacher Anna Allott; *The Last Chinese Chef* borrowed from an Omaha friend and colleague, Joan Latchaw; a University of Nebraska Press book on the Holocaust in France; and a UNO library book on the Holocaust in Marseille. There is almost nothing worse than losing someone else’s book. Replacement cost, including shipping and re-cataloging, came to over \$200.

In August, Barnes & Noble offered itself for sale. Print publishers, post offices, reading, and book collecting could go the way of stamp collecting and sending letters. A pity!



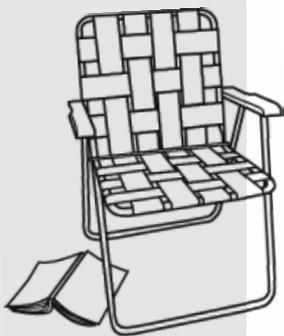
Oliver and Karen Pollak visit bookstores and restaurants in France.

Summer Writers Conference Set for June

Registration is open to the public for the 2011 Nebraska Summer Writers Conference, scheduled for June 12 – 17 on the University of Nebraska campus in Lincoln. The program includes creative writing workshops and panel discussions in poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Tuition is \$250 for a weekend course, \$525 for a weeklong course, or \$700 for both. Faculty for weekend workshops (June 11-12) include Sean Doolittle (fiction), Zachary Schomburg (poetry), Anna deVries (editorial/publishing), and Richard Dooling (business/publishing). Faculty for week-long workshops (June 12-17) are Kim Addonizio (poetry), Glenna Luschei (poetry), Aimee Nezhukumatathil (poetry), Hilda Raz (poetry), Robin Hemley (creative

nonfiction), Kate Bernheimer (fiction), Maud Casey (fiction), Daniel Handler (fiction), and Carolyn Parkhurst (fiction). Master classes in poetry and fiction for writers with complete manuscripts and manuscript consultation with a literary agent are also offered.

The Nebraska Summer Writers Conference joins the *Prairie Schooner* literary journal and the *American Life in Poetry* series as part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln creative writing program. Contact Timothy Schaffert, Director, Nebraska Summer Writers’ Conference, University of Nebraska, English Department, 202 Andrews Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0333, 402-472-3067, nswc@unl.edu, or nebraskawriters.unl.edu.



Review:

Lamb Bright Savors and Another Burning Kingdom

by **Robert Vivian,**

University of
Nebraska Press,
2010

ISBN

978-0-8032-1380-7

and

University of
Nebraska Press,
2011

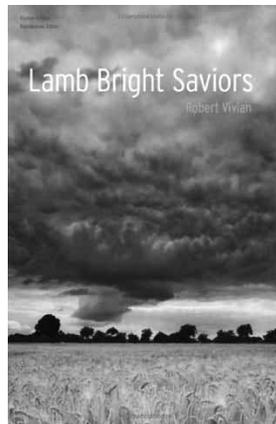
ISBN

978-0-8032-1107-0

Review by

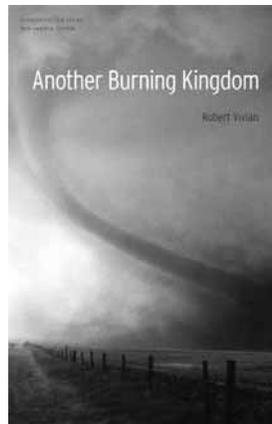
Joseph J. Wydeven

With the publication of these fine, intense short novels, Robert Vivian has completed his Tall Grass Trilogy, including *The Mover of Bones* (2006), *Lamb Bright Savors*, and *Another Burning Kingdom*. Employing Nebraska settings, each novel is narrated through an array of first person voices—with echoes from sources as diverse as William Faulkner and Cormac McCarthy, as well as the *Bible* and medieval mysticism. With each novel, Vivian has gained greater control over his materials: reducing the size of his cast of characters from book to book, for example, has allowed him a firmer grasp of character identity and his essential themes of witnessing and redemption.



Of the two novels reviewed here, *Lamb Bright Savors* is the more complex. A preacher called Mr. Gene walks Nebraska's rural roads, seeking witnesses as he prepares for his death; he is accompanied by a teen-aged girl pulling a wagon full of *Bibles*. The witnesses Mr. Gene gathers include an old blind woman (Marian) and four violent men, including an ex-convict and a soldier recently returned from Iraq, who had assaulted her and trashed her house many years before. These

seven characters come together—as if in some cosmic plan—in Marian's house, where the men come under the influence of Marian's ethic of forgiveness and undergo a variety of redemption experiences.



Another Burning Kingdom, the concluding novel, is perhaps even more intense and dire. The cast includes only three main characters: the brothers Jackson and Lem Purchase and Lem's estranged wife, Lissa. The lives of all three have not been easy. The brothers have survived a brutal father, who tried to drown Jackson (thinking he was Lem) before he

disappeared from their lives; Jackson has become a "home-grown terrorist"; Lem and Lissa have struggled with a difficult marriage. Jackson intends to blow up the state capitol in Lincoln (he has the bomb ready), and Lem is driving from California to stop him. All three characters reflect on the meaning of this central event in their lives and on their relationships with one another. The conclusion is powerful and apocalyptic, complete with hints of potential reconciliation. It is a fitting ending to this extraordinary trio of books—like nothing seen in "Nebraska literature" before.

Review:

Sky Sailors True Stories of the Balloon Era

by **David L. Bristow,**

Farrar Straus
Giroux, 2010

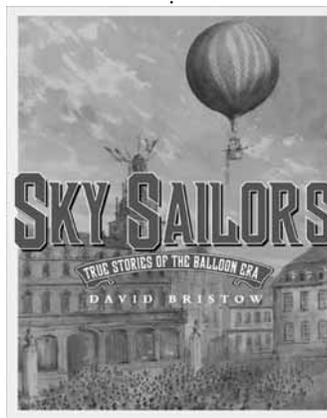
ISBN

978-0374370145

Review by
Mary Ellen Ducey,

University of
Nebraska-Lincoln

Bristow's *Sky Sailors* is an intriguing work with stories that prove entertaining and informative. He tells the history of balloon flight from its very beginning in France to the exploratory adventure of Salomon Andree's North Pole experience. Through detailing adventures and inventions, Bristow brings forth the hope, the fear, the resourcefulness, and the determination of each person whose balloon flight led to greater discoveries. The chapter titled "The Children Are Gone!" relates the story of an unexpected balloon ride for two young children, an eight year old and a three year old, who were unexpectedly sent adrift in a balloon due to an ineffectual grip on a rope. With dialog and historical accounts woven into the story, Bristow brings forth the children's



severely cold ride, the fear experienced by the children, their parents, and the witnesses to the flight, and the amazement of the man who discovered them after they landed.

Added to the historical stories are significant numbers of illustrations. These include portraits of those who invented balloons and flew them, advertisements, and illustrations from historic newspaper accounts of balloonists and their feats.

One young reader noted that the illustrations were "interesting, weird, and awesome," which seems a winning combination for a middle

school audience. The *Sky Sailors* brings history and invention together in such a way as to appeal to a young reader – and to keep any age reader interested.



Young Nebraskans Win Writing Competition

Young Nebraska writers will receive Letters about Literature award certificates from **Gov. Dave Heineman** on April 13 at a proclamation-signing ceremony celebrating National Library Week, April 10-16, 2011. Letters about Literature is a national reading and writing promotion program, which encourages young people to read, be inspired, and write back to the author who has somehow changed their view of the world or themselves. This annual contest is sponsored nationally by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, in partnership with Target Stores. The Nebraska competition is coordinated and sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Commission, and Houchen Bindery Ltd. Young Nebraska writers to be honored are:

Winners:

- **Grace Doll**, Lincoln, to Willa Cather about *My Ántonia*
- **Megan Brookhouser**, Omaha, to Jeannette Walls about *The Glass Castle*
- **Arash Hamidi**, Omaha, to Gene Luen Yang about *American-Born Chinese*

Alternate Winners:

- **Frank Wickizer**, Lincoln, to Ernest Hemingway about *The Old Man and the Sea*
- **Grace Cai**, Omaha, to Philip Pullman about *Northern Lights (The Golden Compass)*, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*.
- **Timarree Speer**, Mason City, to Beatrice Sparks about *Anne's Baby*.

More than 450 Nebraska students participated in the annual contest. 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 will be honored at a luncheon, receive cash prizes and gift certificates to Target Stores, and their winning letters will be 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 centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/LAL.html. ➡

American Life in Poetry: Column 296

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



Those of us who live in the country equate the word "development" with displacement, and it has often been said that subdivisions are named for what they replace, like Woodland Glade. Here's a writer from my state, Nebraska, Stephen Behrendt, with a poem about what some call progress.

Developing the Land

*For six nights now the cries have sounded in the pasture:
coyote voices fluting across the greening rise to the east
where the deer have almost ceased to pass
now that the developers have carved up yet another section,
filled another space with spars and studs, concrete, runoff.*

*Five years ago you saw two spotted fawns rise for the first time from brome where brick mailboxes will stand;
only three years past came great horned owls who raised two squeaking, downy owlets that perished in the traffic, skimming too low across the road
behind some swift, more fortunate cottontail.*

It was on an August afternoon that you drove in, curling down our long gravel drive past pasture and creek,

*that you saw, flickering at the edge of your sight,
three mounted Indians, motionless in the paused breeze,
who vanished when you turned your head.*

*We have felt the presence on this land of others,
of some who paused here, some who passed, who have left
in the thick clay shards and splinters of themselves that we dig up,
turn up with spade and tine when we garden or bury our animals;
their voices whisper on moonless nights in the back pasture hollow
where the horses snort and nicker, wary with alarm.*

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2005 by Stephen C. Behrendt from his most recent book of poetry, *History*, Mid-List Press, 2005. Reprinted by permission of Stephen C. Behrendt and the publisher. Introduction copyright ©2010 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 2011 Nebraska Book Awards program, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book 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 2010, as indicated by the copyright date, are eligible for the competition. 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 Fall 2011 Nebraska Center for the Book's Celebration of Nebraska Books and Annual Meeting, in downtown Lincoln.

The entry fee is \$40 per book and per category entered. Deadline for entries is June 30, 2011. Entry forms are available at <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/awards/nebookawards.html> or contact Jennifer Wrampe, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, jennifer.wrampe@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 2010 Nebraska Book Awards (books published in 2009) were presented at the 2010 Nebraska Center for the Book's Celebration of Nebraska Books and Annual Meeting. 2010 award winners honored were:

Anthology

African Americans on the Great Plains:

An Anthology

Publisher: University of Nebraska Press

Editors: Bruce A. Glasrud and

Charles A. Braithwaite

Anthology Honor

The Loren Eiseley Reader,

Loren C. Eiseley

Publisher: Abbatia Press/
Infusionmedia Publishing

Forward: Ray Bradbury

Cover art and illustrations:

Aaron Franco

Editor: The Loren Eiseley

Society

Cover/Design/Illustration

"I Do Not Apologize for the Length of This Letter":

The Mari Sandoz Letters on Native American Rights, 1940-1965, Mari Sandoz and Kimberli A. Lee

Publisher: Texas Tech University Press

Designer: Lindsay Starr

Cover photos: Courtesy Caroline Sandoz Pifer
Collection, Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center,
Chadron State College

Cover/Design/Illustration Honor

Great Plains: America's Lingerin Wild, Michael Forsberg

Publisher: The University of Chicago Press

Fiction

A Sandhills Ballad, Ladette Randolph

Publisher: University of New Mexico Press

Nonfiction

"I Am a Man": Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice, Joe Starita

Publisher: St. Martin's Press

Nonfiction Honor

Louise Pound: Scholar, Athlete, Feminist Pioneer, Robert Cochran

Publisher: University of Nebraska Press

Poetry

Garden of Stars, Dwaine Spieker

Publisher: All Along Press

Young Adult

Some Girls Bite, Chloe Neill

Publisher: New American Library



The NCB News



THE NEBRASKA CENTER FOR THE BOOK

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The Atrium
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Nebraska Book Festival, bookfestival.nebraska.gov

CURRENT RESIDENT OR:

- National Poetry Month** April Nationwide
Contact: www.poets.org
- Nebraska Writers Guild Spring Conference** April 8-10 . Mahoney State Park
Contact: Nebraska Writers Guild, Connie Crow, 3823 Coffey Ave., Bellevue, NE, 68123,
www.nebraskawriters.org
- Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation Spring Banquet** April 9 Elmwood
Contact: Teresa Lorensen, 402-994-3855, tlorensen@windstream.net,
www.bessstreeteraldrich.org/events.html
- 27th Annual Adult Spelling Bee** April 12 Lincoln
Contact: Lincoln City Libraries, 402- 441-8516, m.mcgowan@lincolnlibraries.org,
www.foundationforlcl.org/BeeSpellingBeeEntry2011-2.pdf
- Visiting Writers Series:** with poet M.L. Liebler April 13 Norfolk
Contact Neil Harrison, 402-844-7348, neil@northeast.edu
- Paul A. Olson Seminars in Great Plains Studies** with William G. Thoms, III. April 13 Lincoln
"Railroads, the Making of Modern America, and the Shaping of the Great Plains"
Contact: Kim Weide, 402-472-3964, kweide@unl.edu www.unl.edu/plains
- Poem in Your Pocket Day** April 14 Nationwide
Contact: www.poets.org/page.php/prmID/406
- Wine, Writers & Song Festival** April 15-16 ... Brownville
Contact: www.brownville-ne.com/main.taf?p=1,3
- ConStellation SciFi/Anime/Gaming Convention** April 15-17 ... Lincoln, NE
Contact: <http://constellationne.net/Joomla>
- Willa Cather Spring Conference** "Willa Cather and Her Popular Culture" April 29-3 Red Cloud
Contact: Willa Cather Foundation, 866-731-7304,
www.WillaCather.org/conferences/spring-conference
- 29th Annual Neihardt Spring Conference "Biography: Written Lives"** April 30. Bancroft
Contact: 402-648-3388, 888-777-4667, neihardt@gpcom.net, www.neihardtcenter.org/index.html
- Children's Book Week** May 2-8 Nationwide
Contact: www.bookweekonline.com
- The Clean Part Reading Series** with John Gallagher and G.C. Waldrep. May 3 Lincoln
Contact Trey Moody, treyemoody@yahoo.com, <http://cleanpartreading.blogspot.com>
- Garrison Keillor** May 10 Lincoln
Contact: www.liedcenter.org/events
- Nebraska Book Festival** May 21 Lincoln
Contact: <http://bookfestival.nebraska.gov>, www.facebook.com/NebraskaBookFestival



Calendar of Events:

View the complete
Nebraska Literary
Calendar at
[centerforthebook.
nebraska.gov/get_Involved/calendar.html](http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/get_involved/calendar.html)