Nebraska books and writers will be featured and celebrated at two events in Lincoln, so save the dates for the Nebraska Book Festival on August 25, 2018 and Celebration of Nebraska Books on October 27, 2018. These two events will highlight work by Nebraska writers and publishers, featuring stories and poetry set in Nebraska.

The August 25 Nebraska Book Festival will be held at the University of Nebraska (UNL) City Campus Union from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. It will feature author appearances, book signings, exhibitors, booksellers, poetry readings, and hands-on family activities. Authors include Janice Harrington, Stew Magnuson, Brandon Vogel, Melissa Fraterrigo, Jeff Kurrus and Michael Forsberg, along with Nebraska poets from the 2018 One Book One Nebraska selection Nebraska Presence: An Anthology of Poetry. An opening reception on Friday evening and a closing reception on Sunday afternoon will be held at the Center for Great Plains Studies to highlight new Nebraska books. The Festival is sponsored by University of Nebraska Press, Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska Center for the Book, Lincoln City Libraries, Humanities Nebraska, Union Bank and Trust, University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism & Mass Communications, Friends of University of Nebraska Press, Nebraska Writers Guild, and Concierge Marketing and Book Publishing Services. More information about the Festival is available at http://bookfestival.nebraska.gov/2018/index.aspx.

The October 27 Celebration of Nebraska Books will be held at the Nebraska History Museum, 131 Centennial Mall North. The winners of the 2018 Nebraska Book Awards—Nebraska's prestigious awards for literacy, writing, and publishing—will read from their winning books and sign copies of the books. The Celebration will also feature poetry readings in honor of the 2018 One Book One Nebraska book selection, Nebraska Presence: An Anthology of Poetry (The Backwaters Press, 2007) edited by Greg Kosmicki and Mary K. Stillwell.

Awards will be presented to supporters of Nebraska writing. The Mildred Bennett Award will recognize an individual who has made a significant contribution to fostering the literary tradition in Nebraska, reminding us of the literary and intellectual traditions that enrich our lives and mold our world. The Jane Geske Award will be presented to a Nebraska organization for exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, or literature in Nebraska, commemorating Geske's passion for books. The deadline for nominations is August 15 and forms are available at http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/nominationforms.html.

The Nebraska Center for the Book Annual Meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m.—just prior to the Celebration of Nebraska Books. An Awards Reception honoring the winners, book signings, and announcement of the 2019 One Book One Nebraska book choice will conclude the festivities. The 2018 Celebration of Nebraska Books is sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska History Museum, and History Nebraska—with Humanities Nebraska supporting the One Book One Nebraska presentation. For more information see http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/celebration.html and https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook.
In a book review later in these pages, Sherry Houston says, “Thanks for the memories,” and that really describes how I’m feeling right now. Since I’m planning to retire in early September, this will be the last edition of the NCB News that I will edit. I’ve enjoyed editing this newsletter for the past twenty years and I can’t begin to tell you how much I’ve learned. Thank you all for introducing me to poetry and stories I never would have heard, writers I never would have found, and activities and events I never would have experienced.

I’ve also really enjoyed getting to know all the friends I’ve made along the way. My favorite people are those that love stories, and some of the best people of all are those that love Nebraska stories. Nebraska stories may be an acquired taste for some. But, I was born to it. Growing up in western Nebraska and hearing the meadowlark in my back yard, I had already memorized the soundtrack before I ever read Cather. I had heard the slightly inappropriate tales of frontier justice (and injustice) before I read Agee. I had seen the false pageantry that was Buffalo Bill Cody in my hometown parade before I read Neihardt. I was ready for every story, and poem, and play, and film. And I thank you all for introducing me to them.

Thank you for the opportunity to do work that makes a difference. Some of it has been hard. Thank goodness for comfortable shoes. Some of it has been ridiculous. Thank you for sharing a laugh when that’s just the only thing left to do. But it has been my pleasure to contribute to all of it.

The richness of the landscape of Nebraska literature is beyond anything I ever imagined. I’m forever grateful for the opportunity to be a small conduit for sharing this bounty with others. Thanks for the memories…mjr
Young Nebraska Writers Honored

Young Nebraska writers received Letters about Literature award certificates from Gov. Pete Ricketts at a proclamation-signing ceremony celebrating National Library Week, April 8-14, 2018. Letters about Literature is a national reading and writing promotion program. Nearly 50,000 adolescent and young readers nationwide in grades four through twelve participated in this year’s program; 420 of them from Nebraska. The competition encourages young people to read, be inspired, and write back to the author (living or dead) who had an impact on their lives. The Nebraska winners were honored at a luncheon and received cash prizes and gift certificates. Their winning letters were placed in the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln.

The students 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.

WINNERS
Avery Yosten, Norfolk, for a letter to Rob Buyea
Caleb Hans, Omaha, for a letter to Trenton Lee Stewart
Harper Leigh Wells, Axtell, for a letter to Harper Lee

ALTERNATE WINNERS
Ryan Ostrander, Lincoln, for a letter to Katherine Applegate
Conleigh Hemmer, Lincoln, for a letter to Herman Melville
Daniel Con, Lexington, for a letter to Suzanne Collins


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

☐ $15 Individual Membership ☐ $25 Organizational Membership ☐ Additional Contribution

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The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120 • Lincoln, NE 68508-2023

Letters about Literature award winners at the April 2, 2018, proclamation-signing ceremony: (l-r) Ryan Ostrander, Lincoln; Conleigh Hemmer, Lincoln; Donna Kennedy Marvin, Nebraska Center for the Book board member; Harper Leigh Wells, Axtell; Daniel Con, Lexington; Caleb Hans, Omaha; Gov. Pete Ricketts; Richard Miller, Nebraska Center for the Book board member; Pat Leach, Lincoln City Libraries Director and Nebraska Center for the Book board member; and Francine Canfield, Baright Public Library (Ralston) Director and Nebraska Center for the Book board member.

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.
Choose Your Days to Represent Nebraska at Festival

A children's picture book that encourages us all to remember that we hold the key to our days will represent Nebraska at the 2018 National Book Festival. The Nebraska Center for the Book selected Choose Your Days by Paula Wallace (Cinco Puntos Press, 2016) as the state's selection for the National Book Festival's "Discover Great Places through Reading" brochure and map. Each state selects one book about the state, or by an author from the state, that is a good read for children or young adults. The brochure and map will be distributed at the September 1 Festival in Washington, DC and will be featured in the “Great Reads about Great Places” links on the websites of both the national and Nebraska centers for the book, http://www.loc.gov/bookfest/kids-teachers/educators/greatreads.html.

This book, written and illustrated by Omaha artist Paula Wallace, tells an engaging story of a child learning to live her dreams to the fullest. The bright and whimsical illustrations sweep the reader along through the story and help deliver a powerful message about love and loss. Nebraska's “Great Reads about Great Places” book is chosen from the previous year's Nebraska Book Award winners, and this book was awarded the 2017 Nebraska Book Award in the Children's Picture Book category. Entries for the 2018 Nebraska Book Awards will be accepted until June 30—see http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/awards/nebookawards.html.

The National Book Festival will feature presentations by award-winning authors, poets, and illustrators at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC. Festival attendees can meet their favorite authors, get books signed, have photos taken with mascots and storybook characters, and participate in a variety of learning activities. States will staff exhibit booths to promote reading, library programs, and literary events. Find out more about the 2018 National Book Festival (including a list of featured authors) at http://www.loc.gov/bookfest.

Review:

Million Dollar Party: A Restaurant Memoir

by Robert Mark Ihrig and Susan Jean Butherus Ihrig
Dog Ear Publishing, 2018
ISBN: 1457557053

Perhaps this book should have merely been called, A Life. Although the author wanted to tell the story of his failed restaurant adventure, he really told the story of his life, growing up in mostly Nebraska in the 1950s and 1960s. Ihrig’s dad developed heart disease and died in his thirties. One forgets that until recently, heart disease was a death sentence. Ihrig tells of his mom’s alcoholism, his love of rock bands of the 60s, and of course, the Nebraska Cornhuskers. His collection of Nebraska Husker memorabilia had to have been one of a kind.

Ihrig's life was one of adventure, of doing things his own way with success as well as failure. A Life. Written in vignettes from a few paragraphs to a few pages, Million Dollar Party starts with the closing party for Bob’s Gridiron Grille and flashes back to Bob’s early years in Clatonia and school days in McCook, interspersed with Cornhusker game highlights and memorabilia collecting. Bob’s Gridiron Grille was the culmination of the Ihrig’s dreams; but it failed. Perhaps it was the economy, perhaps it was timing, or just an unlucky break. By the end, Bob and Susan have only $500 and a run-down vehicle in which they escape to Colorado—a pair of modern day refugees. Easily readable, Million Dollar Party travels through the years reminding one of what was. Easy and hard, good and bad—A Life! Thanks for the memories!
What Are You Reading?

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

My favorite book of 2018 is Kristin Hannah's *The Great Alone* (Holtzbrinck Publishers, 2018), set in the 1970s in Alaska. My husband and I volunteered in Alaska in 2001, and we were both struck by the unforgiving yet beautiful landscape. Every day there is a challenge. To survive, the people, especially the women, need a toughness and Hannah really captures that mental and physical struggle.

Molly Fisher

Our Souls at Night (Vintage, 2016) by Kent Haruf feels like a last love letter to his wife. Haruf makes me feel a part of his story with his sparse prose and his evocative description of small town America. I love the story and I miss his writing.

Sherry Houston

I'm reading *Grant* (Penguin, 2017) by Ron Chernow, a dense, long, supremely well-written biography of Ulysses S. Grant, Civil War hero and president. This is the kind of book I usually read in the winter, but it's so good I'm making an exception and reading it in the height of gardening season.

Pat Leach

I am reading *Our Souls at Night* (Vintage, 2016) by Kent Haruf feels like a last love letter to his wife. Haruf makes me feel a part of his story with his sparse prose and his evocative description of small town America. I love the story and I miss his writing.

Lois Todd Meyer

I am reading *Pursuit of Endurance* (Viking, 2018) by Jennifer Pharr Davis. She is an author, speaker, and Appalachian Trail record setter. She shares what she's discovered about endurance from her own experience and those of her mentors who have tested their limits, on the trail and off. Her wonderful storytelling draws you in and helps you see how we can each harness endurance to achieve our dreams while hiking or in everyday life.

Christine Walsh

Of Book Festivals, Writers, and the West

What are you doing on the first day of September? If you haven’t made plans yet, I’d like to suggest my new annual destination: the Library of Congress National Book Festival in Washington, DC. I attended for the first time in 2017 because the folks at the Nebraska Center for the Book, in conjunction with the Nebraska Library Commission, had kindly chosen my young-adult biography, *This Strange Wilderness: The Life and Art of John James Audubon* (University of Nebraska Press, 2015) to represent Nebraska at the festival’s Pavilion of the States. The Pavilion’s purpose was to promote children’s literature, and this was brilliantly realized through its theme, “Discover Great Places Through Reading.” All fifty state affiliates of the Library of Congress Center for the Book, as well as those of the U.S. territories, were represented at booths displaying their books. Young and not-so-young readers, armed with brochures and maps, made it a point to visit every one. I was honored to be included and delighted to spend the day with my Nebraska friends.

The National Book Festival is an inspiration to all who love books; since its 2001 founding, about 100,000 people every year have attended to buy, to learn, and to hear acclaimed authors speak. One of my favorite YA writers, M.T. Anderson, regaled his audience with tales from the creation of his latest work, *Landscape with Invisible Hand* (Candlewick, 2017) and the inimitable David McCullough talked about his new book, *The American Spirit: Who We Are and What We Stand For* (Simon & Schuster, 2017), a collection of his most notable speeches. Anderson urged us to look for the “strange stories all around us,” to recognize the bizarre not only in exotic places but sometimes as nearby as our neighbors’ front porches. McCullough spoke movingly about his love for this country and observed that “This wonderful gathering here is all about the American story.”

This September, I’ll be at the convention center not as an author but in my capacity as president of Western Writers of America (WWA). WWA, founded in 1953, is the nation’s preeminent...
American Life in Poetry: Column 673

How do I know what I think until I see what I say?” has been attributed to a half dozen different writers. It can be helpful in encouraging people to write, but also in describing poetry that arises out of meditation. Greg Kosmicki is a Nebraska poet whose work is deeply thoughtful but also cordial and conversational. Here’s an example from his new book It’s as Good Here as it Gets Anywhere, from Logan House Press.

You Never Get One Thing

This notebook is so old the paper is yellow. I wonder where the tree grew.

Seems like you never get one thing without losing another. There’s some sort of law about that to do with finite resources.

Somewhere some guys have figured out to the exact ounce how much my life has cost the earth, how many people have died that I might live.

ED. NOTE: …AND for a special poetry treat Ted Kooser agreed to share this as yet unpublished poem with our readers.

AMONG BOOKS

by Ted Kooser, U.S. Poet Laureate

Between the tall shelves, as if in an alley, I bent down out of the light and tried to make out the titles, like a dog sniffing around a long row of dumpsters. I wasn’t searching for one book in particular but, rather, was enjoying the look of the spines, a few of them gold-stamped, some on leather, but most with library re-binding alphabets, black letters on tacky cloth, brown, green and black. I was browsing the shelves as if I were passing along a reception line, nodding hello to those I hadn’t seen or even thought of for decades and whose names I could barely remember, though now and then I drew out a volume I’d known, as if to shake its hand, and then slipped it back. And when at last I stood again on shaky legs, I was so faint I had to hang onto a shelf till the blood climbed back up, shelf over shelf, to my head and the books, both stranger and friend, stopped swirling about me, expressing concern.

Start with my parents, and theirs, and all who died because of them. It’s like we drip in blood. Who can wake up then tomorrow morning, do the tasks set out before them as if it was their work and their work only? Who has the courage to look out to the east again at someone else’s sun?


I was browsing the shelves as if I were passing along a reception line, nodding hello to those I hadn’t seen or even thought of for decades and whose names I could barely remember, though now and then I drew out a volume I’d known, as if to shake its hand, and then slipped it back. And when at last I stood again on shaky legs, I was so faint I had to hang onto a shelf till the blood climbed back up, shelf over shelf, to my head and the books, both stranger and friend, stopped swirling about me, expressing concern.
Letter Writing Clinics Underway

What could motivate Nebraska young people to write letters? A great story and the opportunity to tell an author about how a book made a difference in their own life can provide just the right encouragement. Teachers and librarians across Nebraska were recently awarded grants to host Letter Writing Clinics for students in their area. The clinics introduce students to the Letters About Literature (LAL) contest and letter writing techniques. The clinics help students get ideas for selecting books and learn how to craft letters that can be submitted to the Letters About Literature contest, a national reading and writing promotion program that engages nearly 50,000 adolescent and young readers nationwide in grades four through twelve. The competition encourages young people to read, be inspired, and write back to the author (living or dead) who had an impact on their lives.

The Letter Writing Clinic grants are sponsored by Humanities Nebraska, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and Nebraska Library Commission. The winning applicants are:
• Sarah Alfred, Morrill Public Library Director, Friends of Morrill Public Library
• Keri Anderson, Hoesch Memorial Library Director, Alma
• Becky Henkel, Bayard Public Library Director
• Alicia Lassen, Overton Public School Librarian and Teacher

This annual writing competition is sponsored nationally by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, with funding from Dollar General Literacy Foundation. The Center for the Book was established in 1977 as a public-private partnership to use the resources of the Library of Congress to stimulate public interest in books and reading. The Nebraska competition is coordinated and sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Commission, Houchen Bindery Ltd., and Chapters Bookstore in Seward.

For more information about Letters About Literature, see http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/LAL.html. Nebraska librarians are invited to host Letter Writing Clinics across Nebraska this summer and fall. To learn more about Letter Writing Clinics, see http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/LAL_Grant/2018/index.aspx, click on the Resources tab for materials to help with implementing a clinic.

Students at last year's Letters About Literature Letter Writing Clinic at Norfolk Catholic School craft letters to authors that made a difference in their lives.

“I thought this was a great experience for the students and myself. From the feedback I received, it seems like this was the first time our community had participated in this contest. I thought the letters written were well thought out, and it is always gratifying as a librarian to see young people enjoy books.”

– Oshkosh Public Library Director
Denise Ketchens, 2017 Letter Writing Clinic Grantee

Nominations Accepted Until August 15 for Literary/Literacy Awards

The Nebraska Center for the Book is accepting nominations to honor Nebraska's champions of literature and literacy. Awards will be presented at the Celebration of Nebraska Books on October 27. The Mildred Bennett Award honors an individual who has made a significant contribution to fostering the literary tradition in Nebraska. This award reminds us of the literary and intellectual traditions that enrich our lives and mold our world. The award recognizes inspired leadership and service on behalf of Nebraska literature, highlighting how the recipient follows the example of Mildred Bennett, the charismatic founder and long-time president of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation.

The Jane Geske Award is presented annually to a Nebraska organization for exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, or literature in Nebraska. It commemorates Geske's passion for books, and was established in recognition of her contributions to the well-being of Nebraska libraries. Jane Pope Geske was a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, former director of the Nebraska Library Commission, and a long-time leader in Nebraska library and literary activities.

“You Gotta BE the Book”: Teaching Engaged and Reflective Reading with Adolescents

by Jeffrey Wilhelm
Teachers College Press, 2016
ISBN: 978-0807757987

Why do some students struggle with reading? Why can’t they “see” the story in their mind or connect with text? What are highly engaged readers doing or thinking when they read? How is this different from struggling readers and how can they be helped?

While this book isn’t exactly an exciting summer beach read, I think it’s always interesting to read about reading. First published in 1996, with a third edition published in 2016, You Gotta BE the Book examines Jeffrey Wilhelm’s research in his middle school classrooms through his own teaching experiences and student stories from both engaged and struggling readers.

Wilhelm describes his difficulties trying to teach students who continually insist that they hate reading. They don’t enjoy reading and it’s difficult for them. Working with individual readers at all levels allowed Wilhelm to develop different interventions/strategies which helped his students practice visualizing the text, creating the opportunities necessary for struggling readers to finally connect with literature in meaningful ways. The book is an interesting mix between Wilhelm’s early reflections as a teacher, the feedback of his students, and reading theory. The visualization strategies and activity ideas, including drama and art, that Wilhelm describes could also be adapted outside of the classroom.

Also, if you want to read more about literacy theories, see: Lenses on Reading: An Introduction to Theories and Models by Diane Tracey and Lesley Morrow (Guilford Press, 2012) and Reading Don’t Fix No Chevys: Literacy in the Lives of Young Men by Michael Smith and Jeffrey Wilhelm (Heinemann, 2012).


Plum Creek Conference in October

The 23rd annual Plum Creek Adult Conference will be held on October 6, on the Concordia University campus in Seward. Teachers, administrators, media specialists, librarians, and book lovers are invited to hear visiting authors and illustrators, as well as other literacy experts.

Featured authors and illustrators this year are: Brian Biggs, Harry Bliss, Mark and Caralyn Buehner, Bruce Degen, Kelly DiPucchio, Chris Grabenstein, Laurie Halse Anderson, Ryan Higgins, Megan McDonald, Scott Magoon, Zachariah Ohora, James Ransome & Lesa Cline-Ransome, Adam Rex, Jon Scieszka, Steve Sheinkin, and Judith Viorst. Scieszka will offer the author luncheon speach, “Funny is Good.” Featured literacy expert Donalyn Miller, “The Book Whisperer,” will speak again, along with Janet Allen, Ellin Keene, and Kelly Westmoreland.

Registration, book sales, and author autographing begin at 7:30 a.m. The first session begins at 9:00 a.m. The last session begins at 3:00 p.m. Authors will autograph after the last session and book sales will remain open. A special exhibit featuring the original artwork of Jan Brett will be displayed in the Marxhausen Gallery on Concordia University’s campus.

Payment and registration forms for the conference are available at www.cune.edu/plumcreek or contact Dylan Teut, 402-643-7483, dylan.teut@cune.edu. 
2017: The Big Cookbook Year

You are what you eat; you are what you read. Celia Sacks opened Omnivore bookstore in San Francisco in 2008. Besides a wondrous new and gently used inventory, book signings may be accompanied by tasty bites and sips. Typically, thirty people fill the bookstore. Celia’s monthly online Books on Food Newsletter announces as many as eleven events a month. We are drawn to Jewish and Southeast Asian food, and alcohol. Our purchases mirror our passions.

Tattoos prevalent in the food service industry are not my favorite thing. What was I missing? Knives & Ink, Chefs and the Stories Behind their Tattoos (with Recipes) (Bloomsbury, 2016) by Isaac Fitzgerald and Wendy MacNaughton, improved my understanding of culinary passages and rituals.

We are nuts for Burmese food. The Bay Area has about twenty-five Burmese restaurants, the largest number in any city outside Burma. Omnivore hosted The Modern Salad, (Ulysses Press, 2016) by Elizabeth Howes, which included Burmese Tea Leaf Salad. Probably the most popular restaurant, Burma Superstar, produced Burma Superstar, Addictive Recipes from the Crossroads of Southeast Asia (Ten Speed Press, 2017) by Desmond Tan and Kate Leahy. Tea Leaf Salad followed both talks. Israeli–British chef Yotam Ottolenghi and co-author Malaysia-Singapore-Melbourne-London pastry chef Helen Goh visited San Francisco promoting Sweet: Desserts from London's Ottolenghi (Ten Speed Press, 2017). We ate our share of sweets at the pre and post talk receptions and had our copies inscribed.


The Gefilte Fish Manifesto: New Recipes for Old World Jewish Food (Flatiron Books, 2016) by Jeffrey Yoskowitz and Liz Alpern, caught us while we were in no more art, no more books, and no more wine moratorium mentality. Of the six books we purchased, four were published in China, one in Korea, and one in America.


New Prairie Kitchen

by Summer Miller.
Photographs by Dana Damewood.
Agate Midway, 2015
ISBN: 978-1572841673

It seems like the best cookbooks are the ones that tell a story—in addition to sharing great recipes and scrumptious photos. Recently I’ve been reading the stories, trying the recipes, and gazing at the photos in New Prairie Kitchen by Summer Miller. The author, a young mom and freelance writer from the Omaha area, explored restaurants and farms within a 200-mile radius of Omaha to bring us stories of real people who grow, prepare, and serve real food for their families and friends. The author says that the book “…pays homage to the outstanding and innovative chefs, farmers, and artisans of Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota. They have shared some of their favorite recipes here, organized by season and focused on regionally sourced meat, poultry, game, and produce. Profiles of these exceptional people are nestled throughout the book.” I love the stories and photos, and I’m loving the food, as well.

After perusing the New Prairie Kitchen recipes, I went to the Farmer’s Market and bought a 4 pound pork shoulder roast from a local producer that was perfect for trying the Spice-Rubbed Slow-Cooker Pork (Kevin Shinn of Bread and Cup in Lincoln, NE). What could be simpler than a spice rub and a slow cooker? I did have to add some liquid to mine since my slow-cooker must be a little on the hot side, but after six hours the roast was juicy and fragrant—and I shredded it apart with two forks just like the experts on the cooking channel on TV. I should have made a YouTube video. Next, my backyard bumper crop of heirloom tomatoes inspired me to make Tomato Chutney (Sean Wilson of Proof in Des Moines, IA) and Tomato Marmalade (Clayton Chapman of The Grey Plume in Omaha, NE). Both are delicious on bread and cheese—and as a bonus, I got to use some of the garlic and jalapeño chilies from my garden too. And I’m not done yet. I’ll be making the Black Walnut and Clove Muffins (Maggie Pleskac of Maggie’s Vegetarian Café in Lincoln, NE) for the next Nebraska Library Commission potluck—and more.

The book might also provide a little tourism boost. The food sounds so good, it makes me want to hop in the car and go out in search of the places where other people will make this yummy food for me. Maybe a trip to the Back Alley Bakery in Hastings is in my future?

To find out more about this Nebraska Book Award-winning cookbook and the “foodways” of the Great Plains, see Summer Miller’s blog at http://www.scaldedmilk.com/.

ED. NOTE: This review originally appeared in the Nebraska Library Commission NCompass Blog, http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/. Some of the restaurants referenced above are now closed, sadly.

Norfolk Literature Festival Set for July

The Norfolk Public Library invites all Nebraskans to celebrate your love of books and writing at the newly remodeled Norfolk Public Library on Saturday, July 28, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Four authors nominated for the 2019 Golden Sower Award will be featured, including Michael Hall, Leslie Connor, Sharon Cameron, and Paul Griffin. Complete event details are available at https://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/library/pdftdocs/LiteratureFestival2018.pdf. For more information and details about group rates, contact Karen Drevo at 402-844-2108 or kdrevo@ci.norfolk.ne.us.
The NCB News

Of Book Festivals, Writers, and the West (continued)

western writers' organization. We are poets, historians, novelists, songwriters, screenwriters, and more. We are diverse geographically, with members nationwide and overseas. WWA sponsors educational symposia, publishes a superb magazine called Roundup, and annually grants the prestigious Spur Award for the best in Western writing. What unites our members is our love for the American West and its infinite fund of stories. Our motto is “Literature of the West for the World,” and our wide-ranging works focus on all things Western, past or present.

But how does one define “Western” writing, and how has the decades-old concept of “the Western” evolved? According to Past-President Kirk Ellis, “We as writers of Westerns must strive to liberate ourselves from traditionalist models and understand that the genre continues to evolve. Many of the best Western stories today, be they novels, histories or dramas, have a contemporary frame of reference, such as Hell or High Water and Wind River (screenplays) by Taylor Sheridan, to name two of WWA’s recent prize winners. The ‘West’ has never been about a specific era as much as it has been and will remain about a spirit of place—a geographical region that has always occupied an outsized place in the American psyche.”

So after I catch up at the Nebraska booth, I’ll be exploring the Pavilion to introduce other states’ Centers for the Book to WWA. I think that we are all traveling the same road, as we celebrate American literature and the joy of reading.

Treasures of the Heritage Room

An early patron of Lincoln City Libraries, Mari Sandoz holds a special place in the Heritage Room collection. In the 1920s and early 30s, before she was a published author, Lincoln’s Old Main Library was where Sandoz did most of her research and writing.

The Heritage Room collection reflects the years that Sandoz spent in Lincoln. She showed her appreciation for Lincoln City Library by donating a copy of the first printing of each of her books, most include a signed dedication to Lincoln City Libraries. Often, her dedications were illustrated with a pen-sketch of a boat or a bend on the Niobrara. The first book she donated to the library was her debut title, Old Jules. Her dedication reads: “Greetings to the most useful library – the Lincoln City Library”: Mari Sandoz.

Sandoz had been living in Lincoln for nearly a decade when she received word, in 1928, that her father was dying. She returned home to the Sand Hills where Jules Sandoz made the deathbed request that Mari tell his story. Despite her many efforts to publish the biography of her pioneer father, Mari would not find a publisher for Old Jules until 1935.

Sandoz won the Atlantic Monthly $5,000 prize for non-fiction for her biography of Jules after years of rejection and discouragement, but her incorrigible passion and persistence were worth the effort. Old Jules found immediate critical praise and commercial success, and eventually became one of the books that would define Sandoz’s reputation as one of Nebraska’s great authors.

Early reviews of Old Jules show that Mari was a groundbreaking author of her time. From the Nebraska State Sunday Journal on November 10, 1935, “Mari Sandoz crashed the headlines and the critics labored over her Old Jules. It is so strange, so strong and virile, that some keen critics have wondered if the nonfiction label lied. Nebraskans know it did not.”

Mari Sandoz is being celebrated this summer with the dedication of an historical marker on Lincoln Mall. The Heritage Room is participating in this commemoration by featuring our collection of Mari Sandoz books and artifacts. Come visit the collection and the Sandoz display to see why Mari Sandoz remains one of the most distinctive and respected voices in the Nebraska literary canon.
Calendar of Events:

**Nebraska Presence Workshop: “Nebraska, Our Song”** ................................................................. July 22 ........................................... Bancroft
One Book One Nebraska Workshop

**Norfolk Public Library Literature Festival** .............................................................................. July 28 ........................................... Norfolk
Contact: Karen Drevo 402-844-2108, kdrevo@ci.norfolk.ne.us, https://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/library/pdfdocs/LiteratureFestival2018.pdf

**Nebraska Book Festival** .............................................................................................................. August 25 ........................................... Lincoln
Contact: Rosemary Sekora, rsekora@unl.edu, 402-472-7710, http://bookfestival.nebraska.gov

**Library Card Sign-up Month** .................................................................................................. September ........................................ nationwide
Contact: http://www.ala.org/conferences/events/celebrationweeks/card

**2018 National Book Festival** .................................................................................................. September 1 ............................. Washington, D.C.
Contact: http://www.loc.gov/bookfest/

**Mari Sandoz Symposium: “Indian Activism”** ......................................................................... September 20-22 ............... Chadron

**Write on the River, with Karen Gettert Shoemaker and Teri Youmans Grimm** .................... September 20-23 ...... Brownville
Contact: 402-489-0859, larksongwritersplace@gmail.com, http://karenschoemaker.com/workshops/writeontheriver.html

**Banned Books Week** ............................................................................................................. September 23-29 ......... nationwide
Contact: http://www.ala.org/bbooks

**Nebraska Library Association/Nebraska School Librarians Association Conference** .......... October 4-6 ................................ Lincoln
Contact: https://www.nebraskalibraries.org/general/custom.asp?page=Neblib2018,
NLAexecutivedirector@gmail.com

**Plum Creek Children's Literacy Festival Adult Conference** ......................................................... October 6 ............................... Seward
Contact: 402-643-7483, Dylan.Teut@cune.edu, http://www.cune.edu/plumcreek

**Annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities** ......... Jon Meacham
“Tumult, Tragedy and Hope: America in 1968 From a Half Century's Perspective” ................... October 9 .............................. Lincoln
Contact: 402-474-2131, Erika@humanitiesnebraska.org, https://humanitiesnebraska.org/presencehost.net/programs/governors-lecture.html

**NE Center for the Book's Celebration of Nebraska Books** ....................................................... October 27 ............................. Lincoln
Annual Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

**Celebrate Nebraska Books October 27, 2018**
http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/celebration.html

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(See review on page 4)