



The NCB News

Volume 10

Spring 2000

No. 1

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

Fisher and Nebraska Center for the Book Both Winners

by Dee Yost,
Nebraska Center
for the Book Past
President

Molly Fisher of the Nebraska Humanities Council was the lucky winner of the Nebraska Regional Library Systems' dollhouse raffle. The Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB), is also a winner because Molly donated it to us to help fund the Nebraska Literature Festival.

Since a balanced reading collection is one of the selling points of the dollhouse, it is especially appropriate that the Center for the Book will be a beneficiary of future revenue generated by the dollhouse.

Earl Tooker, husband of Eastern Library System Administrator Kathy Tooker, constructed the dollhouse from a kit. This delightful American half-story Bayberry cottage has all the design, detail, and character of the real thing. The triple, front-facing gables are typical of 1930s architecture. A tripartite window with silkscreen "glass" adds to the authentic beauty of the dollhouse. The house is three stories with five rooms and a staircase. Each of the six Nebraska library systems furnished and decorated an area of the home. Additional selling points of the house are the expansive front porch with swing, charming Peter

Rabbit nursery, fresh-baked goods in the kitchen, brass coat rack, original photo of Nebraska's Chimney Rock, and the fact that there is no bathroom to clean.

Because of Fisher's generosity, there will be another lucky winner. A limited number of no more than 250 raffle tickets will be sold at \$20 each. The drawing will be held at the November 2000 annual meeting of the Nebraska Center for the Book. The winner need not be present to win. If you would like a chance to win the dollhouse and support the Nebraska Literature Festival at the same time, contact the Nebraska Center for the Book or one of its board members. The dollhouse may be viewed at the Nebraska Library Commission Web Page at <www.nlc.state.ne.us>, search on Dollhouse. ▲



Nebraskans Invited to Nominate Books for the 2000 Book Awards



The 2000 Nebraska Book Awards program, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, will recognize and honor books that are written by Nebraska authors, published by Nebraska publishers, set in Nebraska, or relate to Nebraska.

Books published in 1999, as indicated by the copyright date, are eligible for nomination. They must be professionally published and bound, and have an ISBN number.

Books may be entered in one or more of the following categories: Non-fiction, Fiction, Children/Young Adult, Cover design/Illustrations, and Poetry.

Certificates will be awarded to the winners in each category. Award winners will be announced at the Nebraska Center for the Book Annual Literature Festival in the fall of 2000. The winning books will be displayed at the Literature Festival and presented to the Governor to be included in the permanent

continued on page 2...

Try a Literary Vacation

by **Gerry Cox**,
Nebraska Center
for the Book
Editor

People are constantly amazed at the number of writers who can be called Nebraska authors. Local newspapers regularly report on new books by residents or remind readers of authors from the past who have a connection to their communities.

In order to encourage new writers, many community organizations provide opportunities for adults and children to learn about literature and writing from established writers and teachers.

The Calendar of Events (see page 12) lists out-of-the-ordinary places for you and your children to spend a vacation reading and writing. Adults can take part in the writing conference on the grounds of Fort Kearny. Adults can accompany children to the Young Writers' Camp at Fort Robinson and stay in the area for the Mari Sandoz Society Young Writers' Workshop in Chadron. The Storytelling/Poetry Olio and the Children's Literature Festival is available in Norfolk, while the ninth Nebraska Literature Festival will be held in Lincoln and Beatrice, September 15-17.

continued from page 1...

collection at the mansion. Winners will be entitled to display award stickers on their book covers.

The entry fee is \$35 per book. The deadline for entries is May 15. Entry forms are available from the Nebraska Library Commission home page, <www.nlc.state.ne.us>, search on Book Award; or

Arapahoe, Grand Island, and Seward are hosting the Chautauqua this summer with activities for all ages. Other places in Nebraska may offer similar opportunities. Contact libraries, schools, and parks to take part in the rich literary tradition in Nebraska.

Reading and writing groups also provide opportunities to learn and grow as readers and writers. In this issue of the *NCB News*, Norfolk's Joan Moody talks about the active reading and writing groups in that area. In the last issue of the *NCB News*, Linda Deeds introduced us to North Platte writers. We look forward to printing a story about the literary scene in your community. We continue to compile information about reading and writing groups. Send information to the Nebraska Center for the Book, Attn. Mel Krutz, The Nebraska Library Commission, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln NE 68508-2023.

CORRECTION —The Nameplate of the Fall 1999 Nebraska Center for the Book newsletter should have read *NCB News*. We regret any confusion for readers. GC ▲

contact Mary Geibel, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mgeibel@neon.nlc.state.ne.us> for print information. Enter by sending the entry form, two 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 **NCB**News

Spring 2000 • Vol. 1

Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

By-Laws

Molly Fisher—Vice President/President
Elect; Katherine Walter, Dee Yost

Funding/Membership

Connie Osborne—Committee Chair
John Butler, Molly Fisher, Mel Krutz

NE Literature Festival

Katherine Walter—Committee Chair,
NCB President
Jerry Kromberg—NCB Treasurer
Kathy Johnson,
Dee Yost—NCB Past President

Programs/Projects

Joan Birnie—Committee Chair, Lora
Black, Vicki Clarke, Laureen Riedesel,
Andrew Wertheimer

Publications/Publicity

Gerry Cox—Committee Chair
Richard Allen, Oliver Pollak,
Mary Jo Ryan—staff

Awards Art Coordinator

Denise Brady

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

2000 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meetings

May 13

9:30 A.M., Beatrice Public Library

August 5

9:30 A.M., Bennet Martin Public Library,
Lincoln, Nebraska

November 5, Annual Meeting

2-4 P.M., Annual Membership Meeting

4-5 P.M., Board Meeting
Location to be announced.

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 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mjryan@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>.

The *NCB News* is published three times a year by the Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023. Subscription is free with membership. Editor: Gerry Cox. Design and production: Valerie Dayton. Staff: Mary Jo Ryan.

Welcome to Nebraska's Community of the Book

by **Katherine L. Walter**, Nebraska Center for the Book President and University of Nebraska Love Library

Welcome to the tenth year of the Nebraska Center for the Book. We have been an affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book since 1990 when some very forward-looking Nebraskans envisioned a community of readers, writers, librarians, publishers, printers, and booksellers.

Thanks to people like Jane Geske, Ron Hull, and many others, the Nebraska Center for the Book is proud to have inspired a community of the book on the great plains of Nebraska.

The people who make up the community of the book in Nebraska are all of you who love reading and the written word. From Harrison to Falls City, from Benkelman to Ponca, there are many promoting liter-

ature. This year, the **Nebraska Literature Festival 2000** will be held in Beatrice and Lincoln. Initiatives like **Letters About Literature**, the **River of Words** poetry contest, and the **Nebraska Book Awards Competition** offer opportunities for everyone to celebrate the book and to honor Nebraskans' contributions to literature.

We invite you to participate in one of the upcoming events and welcome your membership in the Nebraska Center for the Book. It promises to be a wonderful tenth anniversary year, and we'd love to have your continued involvement and support. In celebration of our first ten years, here's to the Nebraska Center for the Book! ▲

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, 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 Library of Congress National Center for the Book since 1990.

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

By way of dipping our toes in the water, the *NCB News* has begun taking ads in a small way. We can publish only three or four ads per issue. The cost is \$125 per 1/8 page. To place an ad in the next issue, contact Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023; 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665; e-mail: <mjryan@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. The deadline for the next issue is July 5.

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.

Nebraska Young People Write to Influential Authors

by Gerry Cox

Four young writers were honored by Governor Mike Johanns for their letters to authors, living or dead, describing how the authors' books or stories somehow changed their way of viewing the world.

Emily Benes of Raymond Central Elementary School in Valparaiso wrote to Mildred Taylor and won \$100, first place in Level I for Grades 4 to 7. Matt Pieper of St. Patrick Sr. High in North Platte wrote to John Grisham and won \$100, first place in Level II for Grades 8 to 12. The two second-place winners were Tyler Baker of Arlington Jr. High in Level I for his letter to Jerry Spinelli and, in Level II, Tom Stehno of St. Patrick Jr. High, North Platte, for his letter to Lois Lowry. All received a bound blank book with their names embossed on the cover. Following the meeting with the Governor, they were invited to lunch at the Cornhusker with a guest. Then they toured the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at the Lincoln City Libraries' Bennett Martin Public Library.



Governor Mike Johanns honors winners of Letters about Literature contest.

The Nebraska Center for the Book, as an affiliate of the National Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, and the Weekly Reader Corporation sponsored the statewide contest last fall. Entries came from 287 students. The finalists represented ten communities across the state: Alliance, Arlington, Dodge, Geneva, Lincoln, North Platte, Omaha, Seward, Thurston, and Valparaiso. The judges were Mel Krutz and Evelyn Haller (Level II) and Fran Reinehr and Mary Ann Satterfield (Level I). The winners received cash prizes of \$100 from the Weekly Reader Corporation, while the alternates received \$50 contributed by Nebraska's Houchen Bindery. ▲

Geske Award Presented at Annual Meeting

by Dee Yost

The *Jane Pope Geske Award* was presented to the *John G. Neibardt Foundation and Neibardt Center* at the November 7, 1999 annual meeting of the Nebraska Center for the Book at the Webster County Museum in Red Cloud.

The Jane Pope Geske Award is presented for exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, book selling, or writing in Nebraska. Nominations must be made by a member of the Nebraska Center for the Book. The Foundation and Center was nominated for its Institute of Vision and Learning, which features a literary competition at the Red Cloud Indian School, a weeklong writer's workshop for intertribal students at Wayne State College, and an art exhibit from the Red Cloud Heritage Center.

The award, established in recognition of Geske's contributions to the well-being of the libraries of Nebraska, commemorates

her passion for books. Geske was a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors, as well as a long time leader in many other Nebraska library and literary activities. Author/Photographer Terry Evans was the featured speaker at the meeting. Evans, a Kansas native, exhibited a one-person show, "In Place of Prairie," at the Smithsonian Institution and Chicago Art Institute. She has published three books: *The Inhabited Prairie*, *Disarming The Prairie*, and *Prairie: Image Of Ground And Sky*. Her slide/lecture presentation featured *The Inhabited Prairie*. Evans also presented her program November 8 at the Homestead National Monument of America and at a **LIVE! At the Library** program at Beatrice Public Library.

Nominations for the 2000 Geske Award should be postmarked by July 15 and sent to Katherine L. Walter, Chair, Special Collections and Preservation Dept., University of Nebraska, N209 Love Library, Lincoln NE 68588-0410, 402-472-3939, fax: 402-472-5131, e-mail: <kayw@unllib.unl.edu> ▲

Nebraska Center for the Book Annual Meeting



Featuring Terry Evans'

THE INHABITED PRAIRIE

A Nebraska Librarian Speaks Out about the Rocket eBook™

by **Kit Keller**,
Nebraska Library
Commission

reprinted from
NCompass
Newsletter, V. 7, No.
1, Nebraska Library
Commission

Several months ago, the Library Commission purchased a Rocket eBook™ to use in training across the state. The Rocket eBook™ is a compact, handheld electronic reader, weighing just 22 ounces. Just as e-mail has, for much of our correspondence, replaced the paper mail we used to receive from friends and family, e-books have the potential to replace some of the printed books, magazines, newspapers, and catalogs we currently read.

Commission staff loaned the Rocket eBook™ to staff at various libraries, asking them to learn to use this new tool and give their feedback on potential library uses. **Sara Aden, Assistant Director of the North Platte Public Library**, shares the following:

"Thanks to Commission staff, I was fortunate to be able to play with this new device called a Rocket eBook™. I have a Palm Pilot III, a hand-held device that is an organizer, expense tracker, calculator, note pad, and gaming unit. I thought a Rocket eBook™ was about the same thing. I was wrong. It is a completely different concept altogether. The eBook houses several books and provides an interface to navigate through the books."

How did you get started using the Rocket eBook?

"I downloaded Rocket Librarian from the Web site at <<http://www.rocketebook.com/enter.html>>. This software runs on a PC and allows you to communicate or download information to the eBook. It has an Internet browser built into the software. You can use the browser to access a Web site, then download a book or other Web content to the eBook. The site also has an eNewstand that provides subscriptions to newspapers and magazines that can also be downloaded to the eBook."

I know, Sara, that your technology skills are exceptional. Does someone have to have to be a "techie" in order to use this?

"Over the holidays, I brought this new toy with me, loaded with a few of the classic books such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *Treasure Island*, to my parents' house. My Mom is entering her sixties and has rheumatoid arthritis. She finds that her hands do not do detail work well, including turning pages, and that things are difficult for her to grasp or lift. I put the eBook in her hands and showed her how to load *Alice in Wonderland*. She was amazed. I explained that this device contained the entire book, including illustrations. She had a hard time believing that this actually held several entire books. I had her read the first page and then she said, *Now what? How do I*

see what's next? I explained the up and down buttons on the device and she pressed the down button and the screen changed to the next page. She exclaimed, *Well, for heaven's sakes! That's neat.* When I asked if she could ever get used to reading a book like this she thought for a moment and said, *Oh yeah, I probably could. It's not hard. And the words are so big and bright.*"

So you think this type of device has some appeal, other than just convenience?

"Yes, as librarians we face people everyday who don't read books because of physical challenges, so we give them a tape cassette or a large print book. Librarians need to continually challenge ourselves to find better ways to meet the needs of those we serve."

What might be the "library" future for devices like the eBook?

"I see libraries offering eBooks (the books, not the devices) for people to download into their own personal eBooks (the devices). I also see libraries using the eBook as a tool for outreach by loaning eBook devices with several books to homebound or institutionalized individuals. Entire populations currently served by expensive bookmobiles could be served by a more economical mini-van or car. I can foresee libraries sending an eBook home with a kid, loaded with a variety of content, including the magazine articles, books, and pertinent web sites for an entire research subject."

What are some of the issues involved in making these changes happen?

"The device needs to come down in price and weight, but not in size or screen quality. Copyright laws need to recognize the differences between a paper world that is costly and requires resources to duplicate and an electronic world where duplication is seamless and immediate. And finally, the people we serve need to be aware of the technology and what it can do for them."

Libraries are part of an evolving and adapting culture, thanks in part to the onset of the information age and the digital revolution. Librarians should embrace these new challenges as opportunities. How well we adapt to the new technologies and the increasing demand for information will determine whether libraries grow or die. I can't wait until that customer walks in and says, *I'm not from around here, but can I download the latest edition of the Wall Street Journal and the newest Stephen King book to read?* And in return I can say, *Sure*, without the worry of whether or how the book will return to us or, worse yet, denying service." ▲

Cather Prairie Designated First Nebraska Literary Landmark

by Dee Yost

A portion of the Nebraska prairie near Red Cloud was designated as the first Literary Landmark in Nebraska on November 7, 1999. The designation was made at the Nebraska Center for the Book annual meeting at the Webster County Historical Museum, Red Cloud. Literary Landmarks is a program of the Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (FOLUSA).



Friends groups associated with libraries would normally make the request for the designation, but FOLUSA graciously made an exception to the rule by granting the Nebraska Center for the Book's request.

The Center for the Book chose the prairie because of Cather's close

association with the land and her ability to capture the effect of the prairie on the people who settled it. In partnership with the Willa Cather Educational Foundation, the Literary Landmarks plaque will be placed on unbroken prairie land that is part of the Nature Conservancy, approximately five miles south of Red Cloud and near the site where Willa Cather saw the plow silhouetted against the setting sun. In *My Antonia*, the plow became a symbol of the struggle of the early Nebraska settlers. The plaque carries the Cather quotation from *The Song of the Lark*, "It was over flat lands like this, stretching out to drink the sun, that the larks sang—and one's heart sang there, too."

Friends groups interested in information about the Literary Landmarks program can contact Dee Yost, coordinator for NCB literary designation, at 800-569-4961, <dyost@inebraska.com>, or contact FOLUSA, 800-9FOLUSA, <FOLUSA@libertynet.org>. ▲

Betty Kort, Hastings, Willa Cather Foundation Board President displays the Landmark plaque.

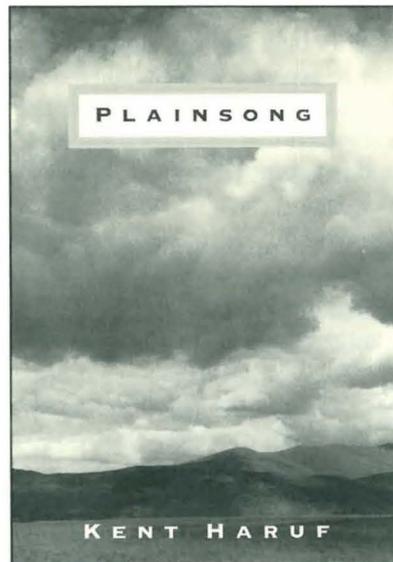
Review: Plainsong

by Kent Haruf,
New York: Alfred
A. Knopf, 1999,
hardcover, \$24,
ISBN 0-375-
40618-2

Reviewed by
**Oliver B.
Pollak,**

Department of
History, University
of Nebraska at
Omaha

Plainsong by Kent Haruf is an amusing, pithy, sometimes edgy story about four dysfunctional families in the small, "Lake Wobegonesque" town of Holt. It's about high school, cars and trucks, not quite "Norwegian" bachelor farmer brothers feeding and birthing cattle, preteens Ike and Bobby dealing with their mother leaving, mental illness, divorce, alcoholism, some matter of fact sex, unwed teenage pregnancy, fist fights, and some just plain old meanness. From this shambles emerges a picture of the life cycle of birth, growing up, and death.



Haruf's *Plainsong* is like early unisonous Christian vocal music. It might be usefully compared with Wright Morris' 1980 novel *Plains Song, for Female Voices*. These works by Haruf and Morris depict testy exaggerations of human relations, and raise questions. Are families dysfunctional solely because the novelist preys on their problems and crises? How do conflicts in rural settings differ from those in the big city? Is there a rural stereotype? Enjoyable books that raise questions are worth reading. ▲

The Writing and Reading Life in Norfolk

by **Joan Moody**,
Norfolk Library
Supporter



Joan Moody (left) and Mary Wakeley prepare for the discussion of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* for the A.A.U.W. Book Discussion Group.

Norfolk Book Discussion Groups

The book group scene in Norfolk is alive and well, thriving in several book groups composed of those who love reading and enjoy sharing books with others. The Norfolk Area Book Discussion Group was started by Center for the Book board member Dick Allen in 1979. Originating as a modern great book discussion group at the Norfolk Public Library, the participants now take turns giving a brief biography of the author and leading a discussion of the chosen book. The group meets on the last Wednesday morning of the month at the Norfolk Public Library. Norfolk Public Library Director Ted Smith facilitates the group. Recently, the emphasis has shifted somewhat to focusing on contemporary writers.

Occasionally a classic writer (such as Dickens, Hardy, Poe, or Hawthorne) is discussed. The selections have diverse appeal. Sometimes audiovisual material or correspondence from a contemporary author is incorporated into the discussion. The average attendance is twelve. Some of this year's selections are: *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, *Mrs. Ike* by Susan Eisenhower, *Out of Isak Dinesen* by Linda Donelson, *The Greatest Generation* by Tom Brokaw, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling, and *The Pilot's Wife* by Anita Shreve.

The Tuesday Night Book Discussion Group holds evening meetings monthly at the Norfolk Public Library. The ten members take turns serving as discussion leaders. This year's book list includes: *City of Light* by Lauren Belfer, *Cold Sassy Tree* by Olive Ann Burns, *Paradise* by Toni Morrison, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, and *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau.

The Norfolk Branch of the American Association of University Women formed a monthly evening book group in the 1960s. During the winter, meetings are held in homes of the members. During the summer, meetings are held at Skyview Lake with discussion over a brown bag supper. This year's book list included: *Nebraska Moments* by Don Hickey, *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen, *The Professor and the Madman* by Simon Winchester, *Divine Secrets of the YaYa Sisterhood* by Rebecca Wells, and *In the Shelter of Each Other* by Mary Pipher.

In addition to the book discussion groups in Norfolk, book review clubs are also active. The Ida Nicola Book Review Club began in 1930. When Nicola's eyesight failed, two friends met at her home to read books aloud to her. Since it took too long to read an entire book, Nicola invited other friends to

take turns giving book reviews. The group currently has twenty-five members who meet monthly from October through May, with members taking turns as reviewer or as host. They meet in homes of the members or at the Norfolk Public Library. Recent books reviewed have included: *Legacy of Lies and Loves* by Jean Tiedtke, *The Road Home* by Jim Harrison, *Sarah's Patchwork* by Stephanie Grace Whitson, and *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver.

The other book review club in Norfolk is the Ex Libris Book Club, organized by six women in 1946. Fran Pflug is the only member of the original group continuing as an active participant. The thirteen members and two honorary members meet monthly from April to November, with members taking turns as reviewer and as host. In a recently concluded two-year study of contemporary literature and the life of faith, members studied *Listening for God* by Paula Carlson and Peter Hawkins. They also addressed work by Flannery O'Connor, Annie Dillard, Alice Walker, Garrison Keillor, John Updike, and Kathleen Norris.

Additional participants who enjoy sharing a love of books are welcome in these groups. In the words of Henry Ward Beecher, "Books are the windows through which the soul looks out."

Norfolk Writing Groups

In addition to Northeast Community College (where well-known authors present readings from their works), two writing groups in Norfolk encourage the writing life in Norfolk. The Sprindrift Poets group is open to all aspiring and published poets and meets monthly at members' homes. Mrs. Don Hyde is the contact person.

The Northeast Nebraska Writers Club, in existence in Norfolk for 25 years, considers and critiques all types of original writings, a number of which have appeared in print. Meetings are held monthly in members' homes. Leatta Stortvedt of Norfolk is the contact person.

Norfolk Book Sales

Book lovers can find occasional book sales at the Faith Regional Health Services, the Senior Center, and the Norfolk Public Library. Bookstores include On Cue for books and videos; Cover to Cover for books and instructional material; Hastings Books for books, music, and videos; The Book Exchange for used books; and the Northeast Community College Bookstore. ▲

Review: Nebraska: Good Cooks! Good Books!

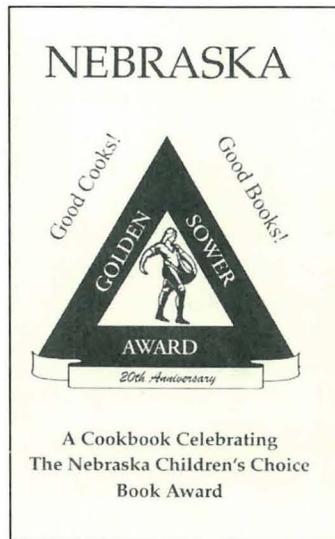
compiled by
Jan Kruse,
under the
auspices of the
Golden Sower
20th Anniversary
Committee, NE
Library
Association, 1999,
paper, \$16

Reviewed by
Lisa Kelly,
Nebraska Library
Commission

Having never reviewed a cookbook before, I feel a little inexperienced to make remarks—but I do know what I like, and a review is simply one's opinion. Any cookbook that has a spiral binder is serious cooking, in my opinion. The first cookbook my mother ever gave me was from the United Methodist Church in Beatrice. With this book, I learned the value of knowing the people who submitted recipes. As a Nebraska librarian, I appreciate my connection with the contributors in this book. As a reference librarian, I appreciate the indexes: Books with

Recipes,
Author/Illustrator,
and Recipe.

For a history of this cookbook, I talked with Jan Kruse (Fremont Public Schools Library Media Specialist) who explained that the impetus for the project was raising funds for the 20th Anniversary of the Golden Sower celebration. A group of women on the



Golden Sower Committee found themselves needing (kneading) a way to make some cash and created a cookbook for their preferred way to raise the dough! Solicitations for recipes went to every author and illustrator who was ever nominated and/or presented with a Golden Sower award. More than one hundred

recipes and anecdotes were submitted. Librarians and media specialists throughout Nebraska added more than one hundred of their favorite recipes. The result is better than anything Martha Stewart could print. For example, check out *Dad's Root Soup* from Mary Elizabeth Lomax at Omaha Public Schools. She says, "This soup is great to start the night before when you have heard a large snow storm is on the way. . . try to restrain yourself from eating the soup for breakfast. Let it simmer all day while you are at work. Restraint will be hard because the soup will smell so good, but it is worth the wait. OK, eat some for breakfast." I'm planning on making the *Sour Cream Enchiladas* (submitted by author Alice McLerran) for some librarian friends this week for dinner. I was charmed by the annotation which reads, "Here's a recipe that is, I assure you, an amazing one. I don't know why it isn't already ubiquitous. In spite of its name and its use of flour tortillas, it bears only the most tenuous relationship to Mexican food—but everyone adores it, vegetarians and carnivores alike. It's sinfully easy to put together, yet tastes wonderful. A green salad is a natural complement to this dish; offer a bowl of cherry tomatoes to complete the color scheme."

Who could resist? For information on purchasing your own copy of this book (while supplies last), see www.nol.org/home/NLA/golden/info/GSstore/Form4.htm.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Golden Sower Awards are selected by Nebraska school children. They vote every April on their favorite fiction from books nominated as worthy from a literary and artistic standpoint. Schools work with public libraries to have children read current books and elect their favorites. ▲

2000 Chautauqua Locations Set

"Behold Our New Century, an Exploration of Early 20th Century Visions of America" is the theme of the 2000 Great Plains Chautauqua, coming to three Nebraska communities this summer. This is the first time that the traveling tent show will make more than two appearances in the state. As part of the week-long Chautauqua, scholars will offer a variety of programs for children and adults in Seward June 16-20, Grand Island July 7-11, and Arapahoe July 14-18.

Scholars will appear as President Theodore Roosevelt, African-American leader Booker T. Washington, reformer and peace advocate Jane Addams, philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, and American Indian leader Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman). They will shed light on why these influential Americans thought, wrote, or acted as they did; what they might have done differently; and what they think U.S. citizens of today might learn from their experiences. ▲

Nebraska Born Historians

by **Oliver Pollak**

Nebraska has a rich literary history and much attention is given to Aldrich, Cather, Morris, Neihardt, Olson, and Sandoz. We are also rich in historians, though the flavor of midwestern locale may not so indelibly mark their work.

Professor Joyce Appleby of UCLA recently spoke in Omaha. Her family moved to Nebraska in the 1880s and she lived in Omaha's Dundee neighborhood until the mid 1930s. She wrote the acclaimed *Telling the Truth About History* (1994) with Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob. Her talk in Omaha, *Completing the Revolution, The First Generation of Americans*, is the title of her next book.

Howard P. Chudacoff is a very active historian at Brown University whose work reaches into popular culture. His first book, based on his University of Chicago dissertation, is *Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha, 1880-1920* (1972). He has published books on alluring subjects such as *How Old Are You: Age Consciousness in American Culture* (1989) and

The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture (1999).

The work of **Christopher Lasch** (1932-94) in the area of intellectual history overflowed into social criticism. His 1979 best seller, *The Culture of Narcissism* received the attention of President Jimmy Carter. Lasch advised the President on the nation's "crisis of confidence" that became part of the President's "national malaise" speech. Other books by Lasch include *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (1962) and *Haven in a Heartless World* (1977).

Merle Curti, born in Papillion in 1897, died in 1996 at the age of 98 with a book of poetry by Emily Dickinson at his bedside. He taught at the University of Wisconsin for twenty-six years and produced the magisterial two-volume history of the Madison campus. He wrote more than twenty books and received the Pulitzer Prize in 1944 for *The Growth of American Thought*.

All these Nebraska-born historians explored new vistas of intellectual consciousness and frequently influenced public policy. ▲

Review: The Elements of Style

by **William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White**, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2000, paper \$6.95, ISBN 0-205-30902-X

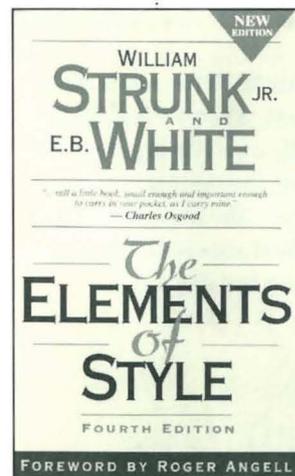
Reviewed by **Oliver B. Pollak**

The Elements of Style by Strunk and White first appeared in 1957. Its publishing history dates back to William Strunk, Jr. teaching English at Cornell University. His undergraduates were presented with "the little book," tricks of the writing trade. E. B. White took his English class in 1919 and in 1957, he published Strunk's gems with Macmillan at a retail price of one dollar.

Strunk, terse but humorous, outlined the elementary rules of usage, principles of composition, and commonly misused words and expressions. White, author of *Charlotte's Web* (1952) and regular contributor to *The New Yorker*, added a chapter on writing. The third edition added an Index. In the intervening years I contributed to the book's popularity by regularly assigning it to my under-

graduate historical research and graduate seminar students, and watched the price rise from \$2.25 to \$5.95. Ten million copies and forty years later, the fourth edition has appeared at \$6.95, with a foreword by White's stepson, Roger Angell. Little has changed. Two rules continue to echo, "use the active voice" and "avoid unnecessary words," strictures of immeasurable importance. Gender awareness has resulted in Sylvia Plath replacing Keats.

I recently saw a used copy in the campus bookstore. The prior owner had written in ink, "This is a text book, but also a book of fascinating subtleties." I cannot figure out why the student sold a book with such warm comments, unless they were quoting the instructor and the book went down like castor oil. ▲



Acorn Press Offers Great Heartlanders

by Christine Pappas, Plains Song Review Editor,

Acorn Press is doing a great service for eight- to twelve-year-olds by publishing their attractive "Great Heartlanders Series," featuring prominent Nebraskans. Their credo is that there is no better way to learn the history of a state than through biographies of its most notable citizens.

The durable soft cover books are typically 100-125 pages and cost \$9.95. A review from the Omaha World Herald states, "Although the books are clearly designed with an eye toward the classroom...they are well-written and interesting enough to capture children's imaginations on their own." (October 12, 1998).

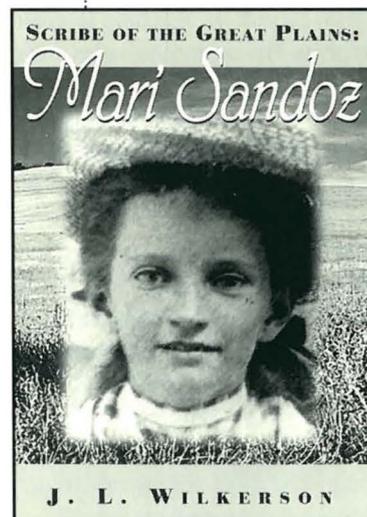
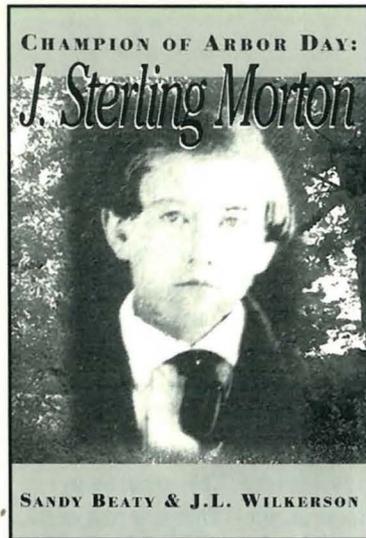
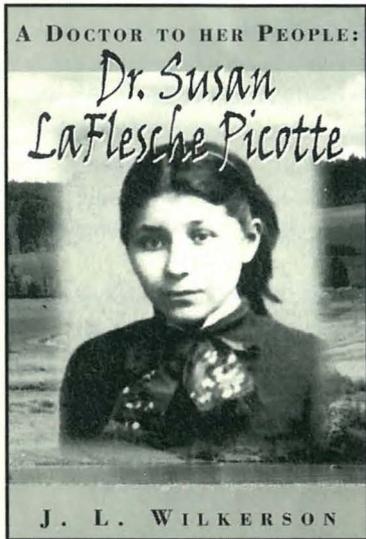
A Doctor to her People: Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte (ISBN# 0-9664470-2-6) by J. L. Wilkerson, was Acorn's first book about a Nebraskan. Dr. Picotte was a good choice, being the first woman Native American doctor. There are few families in Nebraska history more accomplished than the LaFlesches. In 1853, Joseph LaFlesche (also named "Iron Eye") became the last Omaha Chief. His daughter Susette LaFlesche Tibbles, (also named "Bright Eyes") traveled the United States acting as interpreter for Standing Bear.

The series expanded to include *Scribe of the Great Plains: Mari Sandoz* (ISBN# 0-9664470-0-X) and *Champion of Arbor Day: J. Sterling Morton* (ISBN# 0-9664470-1-8). Other books will follow, including biographies of Senator George W. Norris of McCook and Robert Henri, the artist from Cozad whose work is associated with New York's ashcan school.

Acorn Books is run by Jami Parkinson, a former teacher who obviously uses her experience to anticipate the demands of the classroom. She has meticulously researched state social studies standards and has pitched the

Heartlanders Series to the appropriate elementary school audience. The care that Acorn Books takes with its books is evident. They are filled with informational maps or diagrams and include black and white photographs of many of the books' subjects. Parkinson believes that children are like adult beginning learners and there is no need to simplify material if it is presented clearly. Author J. L. Wilkerson's use of dialogue makes the biographies particularly engaging. While many biographers shy away from inserting potentially unreliable fictionalized dialogue, Wilkerson researches the characters and situations, then adds conversations to bring the documented emotion to life. The covers of the books are notable, as Parkinson features a childhood picture of the subject of the book.

More than just providing books, Acorn Books seeks to provide fun and educational activities that tie into the themes in their books. Bookmarks, posters, and maps are available. Great Heartlanders Celebration Kits include party supplies and activity ideas that relate to themes like "Justice for All," "Fit for Life," and "This Earth, My Home." These biographies are intelligent and engaging. They present an interesting and diverse portrait of Nebraska's past. For more information, contact Acorn Books, Acorn Books, 7337 Terrace, Kansas City, MO 64114-1256, 888-422-0320+READ, 816-523-8321, <www.acornbks.com>. ▲



Bibliofile: Featuring Katherine L. Walter,

Nebraska Center for the Book President and University of Nebraska Love Library Special Collections and Preservation Department Chair

by Gerry Cox

Katherine L. Walter is the Chair of the Special Collections and Preservation Department at the University of Nebraska Love Library in Lincoln. She is incoming president of the Nebraska Center for the Book. This spring, NCB News Editor Gerry Cox interviewed her about what books and reading mean to her.



Q. What book are you reading now?

A. I'm reading several books right now: *The King Must Die* by Mary Renault; *The Home Place* by Wright Morris; and *Prairie University* by Robert Knoll. Many evenings, I read aloud to my family and we choose books that appeal to all of us. We recently read *I Capture the Castle* by Dodie Smith, a delightful book about a 17-year-old girl growing up in England after WWII. We've just begun Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.

Q. Who is your favorite character?

A. I don't think I can identify just one. Some favorite characters are Elizabeth Bennett, Amelia Peabody Emerson, and Lord Peter Whimsey. One of the reasons I married Tim (my husband) was because he could talk "piffle" like Peter.

Q. When is your favorite time to read?

A. Anytime! I have a hard time putting down a book, and find myself getting up at 2 or 3 in the morning to continue reading.

Q. Where is your favorite place to read?

A. We have a chocolate-colored room with three walls of bookcases. It has a warm, pleasing atmosphere for reading. And of course, it's wonderful to read in bed on cold winter nights, especially with a cat at the foot of the bed. Except they never stay there.

Q. What book did you want never to end?

A. *Mara Daughter of the Nile* by Eloise Jarvis McGraw. Mara was so daring, and I envied her tongue.

Q. What is the most difficult book you have read?

A. The C.K. Scott-Moncrieff translation of *Remembrance of Things Past* by Proust. The prose is beautiful but tortuous.

Q. What is the worst screen adaptation of a book?

A. *Sleepy Hollow* (1999). Johnny Depp plays Ichabod Crane as a policeman from New York City. The plot involves a wicked stepmother who turns out to be a witch. The movie was entertaining, but it had little to do with the original plot.

Q. Who would be your ideal literary dining companion?

A. For conversation, I'd choose Barbara Mertz, an archaeologist, as well as a mystery and suspense writer. I read a couple of her popular books on Egyptology in the early 1970s and liked them very much. About eight years ago, I accidentally picked up the Amelia Peabody series by Elizabeth Peters. Later, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that Elizabeth Peters is one of Mertz's pen names. To talk about food, I'd choose M.E.K. Fisher. Her book, *The Art of Eating*, is beautifully written.

Q. Do you have a comfort book that you reread?

A. Actually, I reread many books...anything by Dorothy L. Sayers, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, and P.G. Wodehouse's books about Jeeves and Bertie Wooster.

Q. What book has marketed spin-offs that you think are appropriate to buy for gifts?

A. There are many spin-offs from the *Wizard of Oz* series by L. Frank Baum that make very nice gifts. Some years ago, Effanbee created some very charming dolls based on the characters in the Oz books. The 50th anniversary restoration of the movie is out on video and many authors have been fascinated by the Oz stories and have written books that continue, or are based loosely on, the Oz books. Two I can think of are *Wicked* and *Was*.

Q. Which contemporary author(s) will have staying power?

A. I think Alice Hoffman's books will age well; also Jane Smiley's. I loved *Moo*.

Q. Other comments?

A. When I find an author whose books appeal to me, I like to read all her/his books in order of publication. I remember reading all of Cather's novels one year and getting so much out of the experience. I'm reading all of Wright Morris's books this year. These are so well written, but much darker than Cather's. His photography really appeals to me, especially since I've traveled so much of Nebraska for the Nebraska Newspaper Project. He had a great eye for the land.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Nebraska Newspaper Project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, seeks missing newspaper titles and issues for cataloging into an international database and for microfilming, making the newspapers available through a CD-ROM "Guide to Nebraska Newspapers: 1854-Present." ▲



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**Literature Festival
September 15-17**

**Jane Pope Geske Award
Nominations Due July 15**



**Calendar
of Events:**

2000 Young Writers' Camp , Ft. Robinson State Park Contact: Dr. Mary Ann Rudy, 308-432-6301, <m Rudy@csc.edu>	May 31-June 3	Crawford
Young Writers' Workshop , Mari Sandoz Society Contact: Andrew Elkins, 308-432-6307, <a elkins@csc.edu>	June 4-10	Chadron
Mayor's Arts Awards , Literary Heritage Award Contact: Margaret Berry, 402-434-2787, <a rtscene@alltel.net>	June 8	Lincoln
International Cather Seminar 2000 : Willa Cather's Environmental Imagination Contact: Margaret Rine, 402-472-8777, <m rine@unlserv.unl.edu>	June 17-24	Nebraska City
Great Plains Chautauqua: Behold Our New Century Contact: Clark Kolterman, 402-643-6138	June 16-20	Seward
Great Plains Chautauqua: Behold Our New Century Contact: Liana Steele, 308-381-1946	July 7-11	Grand Island
Great Plains Chautauqua: Behold Our New Century Contact: Grace Faw, 308-962-7892	July 14-18	Arapahoe
Fort Kearny Summer Writers Conference Contact: Steven Schneider, 308-865-8211, 800-865-6388, <s chneider@unk.edu>	July 10-14	Kearney
Storytelling/Poetry Olio , Norfolk Public Library Contact: Karen Drevo, 402-644-8710, <k drevo@ci.norfolk.ne.us>	July 28	Norfolk
Youth Literature Festival , Norfolk Public Library Contact: Karen Drevo, 402-644-8710, <k drevo@ci.norfolk.ne.us>	July 29	Norfolk
Bess Streeter Aldrich Rim of the Prairie Day Contact: Lorri Kentner, 402-994-3855, <l kentner@alltel.net>	August 5	Elmwood
Neibardt Day : Dr. Brigadier General Hal Sterns on the Lewis and Clark Expedition Contact: John Neihardt Center, 888-777-4667, <n eihardt@gpcom.net>	August 6	Bancroft
Nebraska Literature Festival : Prairie Visions: Nebraska Authors and Their Art Contact: Carol J. Connor, 402-441-8510 or Laureen Riedesel, 402-223-3584	September 15-17	Beatrice & Lincoln