



The **NCB** News

Volume 10

Summer 2000

No. 2

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

Ninth Nebraska Literature Festival Set for September 15, 16, and 17

On September 15, 16, and 17, Beatrice Public Library and Lincoln City Libraries co-host the Nebraska Center for the Book's 2000 Nebraska Literature Festival. The theme of the Ninth Nebraska Literature Festival "Prairie Visions: Nebraska Authors and Their Art" reflects the artist in two realms—the written word and the visual image.

Friday, September 15: At the Homestead National Monument of America near Beatrice, State Poet William Kloefkorn conducts a writing workshop for Nebraska high school students. The prairie setting at the Homestead National Monument is a unique visual image because the prairie is surrounded by devel-

opment. The students' writings from this workshop will be assembled into a spiral-bound volume, and each student will receive a copy. High school students and their teachers are encouraged to register soon because enrollment is limited to ninety. Contact Lauren Riedesel, Beatrice Public Library, 402-223-3584, for student registration information. There is a fee of \$5 to cover the cost of lunch.

The opening festivities begin on Friday evening in Lincoln at the Lincoln Station Great Hall in the Historic Haymarket. Two short programs feature Ricardo Garcia on The Art and Practice of Hispano Storytelling and a Celebration of Language, featuring Lora Black. These programs focus on recognizing some of the languages through which

Nebraska literature and stories are communicated to the world. The **Mildred Bennett Award** and the **Nebraska Book Awards** will be announced that evening.

Saturday, September 16: Programs and panels are held at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln from

9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. CDT with registration beginning at 8:30 A.M. Some programs feature Nebraska authors and illustrators such as Willa Cather, Loren Eiseley, Wright Morris, Mari Sandoz, Bess Streeter Aldrich, and Ruth Rosekrans Hoffman. Other programs feature experiences of an author who recently moved to Nebraska; book design; Aaron Douglas as illustrator; and readings from *Plains Song Review*. Throughout the day eighteen different poets and prose authors perform short readings, concluding with State Poet Bill Kloefkorn. Lois Poppe will conduct a biographical writing workshop, "Your Life is a Story, Capture it in Writing" from 9:15 A.M. to 12:15 P.M. in the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at the Bennett Martin Public Library. Pre-registration is required for this workshop and participation is limited to twenty.

Saturday's activities also include a literary tour of Lincoln, "Classic Nebraska" from 1:00–3:00 P.M. The tour departs from The Cornhusker Hotel. Pre-registration and a fee of \$10 are required. Contact Carol Connor at 402-441-8510, e-mail: <cjc@rand.lcl.lib.ne.us> to pre-register.

Sunday, September 17: Guided tours conclude the festival.

Weldon Kees, a native of Beatrice, is best known as a poet but also wrote prose. He was an artist, art critic, filmmaker, and photographer. "The Weldon Kees Tour" in Beatrice visits sites related to Weldon Kees' life, and sites that are related to his works. The tour is conducted from 1:30 to 4:30 P.M., leaving from the Gage County Historical Society Museum, 2nd & Court Streets, Beatrice.

In Lincoln, the Archives and Special Collections at University of Nebraska—Lincoln (UN—L) Love Library is open to the public from 1:30 to 3:00 P.M., featuring exhibits and information related to Nebraska authors. Love Library is located on the UN—L campus at 13th & R Streets. Lincoln.

A tour of the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors is conducted from 2:30 to 3:30 P.M. at the Bennett Martin Public Library, 14th & N Streets



NEBRASKA LITERATURE FESTIVAL

**PRAIRIE VISIONS:
Nebraska Authors and Their Art**

SEPTEMBER 15, 2000
High School Day:
Homestead National Monument - Beatrice
Evening Opening Events:
Lincoln Station - Lincoln

SEPTEMBER 16, 2000
Programs:
Cornhusker Hotel - Lincoln
9:00 - 4:00 p.m.

For information call:
Lincoln City Libraries, (402) 441-8503
or Beatrice Public Library, (402) 223-3584.



Real People; Real Entertainment

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

Are you a people watcher from long ago? Or have you recently become a people watcher? Here are some things going on that involve people you can actually meet:

- ▲ Your family can attend the Bess Streeter Aldrich Remembrance Day on October 1, beginning with lunch and a program in the Elmwood Elementary School where Carol Miles Petersen, Aldrich's biographer, will appear as Bess Streeter Aldrich. This year the Streeter Family Association will hold a family reunion in conjunction with Remembrance Day.
- ▲ Willa Cather's *Song of the Lark* has been turned into a Mobil Masterpiece Theatre American Collection production, premiering October 1 at 2 P.M., at the Red Cloud High School Auditorium (to be broadcast later on PBS). Admission is free!
- ▲ Beatrice and Lincoln share the Nebraska Literature Festival in September. Students can attend the reading and writing exercises in Beatrice on Friday the 15th, with State Poet William Kloefkorn as the featured guest for High School Day at Homestead National Monument. The next day many authors will be reading and commenting on their work in Lincoln amid numerous activities related to books.
- ▲ Valentine's theme for the annual Cowboy Poetry Gathering is "Old West Days," October 5 to 8. It features Nebraskans Howard Parker, Georgeann Sheets, and Paddy Whack who will explore the Irish-Scotch influence in poetry and song.

- ▲ Authors and illustrators Paul Zelinsky, Caroline Arnold, Patricia Calvert, and Denise Fleming will work with students and adults at the 2000 Plum Creek Children's Literacy Festival, October 6 and 7 at Concordia University in Seward. Children attend free of charge but must pre-register for Friday, Children's Day. Saturday is for secondary school students who will attend writing workshops free of charge and adults who may attend sectionals of their choice.
- ▲ On Monday, October 16, teachers are urged to use professional leave to meet Dr. Arthur Applebee at the annual conference of the Nebraska English Language Arts Council (NELAC) in Kearney. Applebee, a well-known author and researcher, explains the National Research Center for English Achievement work on use of English textbook series and other resources for Nebraska students.
- ▲ September 5–30 the Neihardt Center in Bancroft will exhibit Native American artwork from the collection of the Red Cloud Heritage Center. A reception will be held Sunday, September 10 at 2:00 P.M. with comments by Charles Trimble, Neihardt Foundation President.

This list shows the richness of experiences awaiting participants of these upcoming book-related programs. Make plans to attend those of interest to you and your family. The people you meet could give you new insights into the human condition and lead you to additional conferences, displays, and (most importantly) books to read. ▲

The **NCB** News

Vol. 10 • Summer 2000 • No. 2

Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

By-Laws

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

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John Butler, Molly Fisher, Mel Krutz

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Katherine Walter—Committee Chair,
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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

November 5, Annual Meeting

Gere Branch Library, Lincoln
2-4 P.M., Annual Membership
Meeting/Program

4-5 P.M., Board Meeting

Advertising

The NCB News can accept up to four 1/8
page ads for each issue. The advertising
rate is \$125 for 1/8 page. *NCB News* is
issued May 1, August 15, and November
1. The advertising and copy deadline is
six weeks prior to issue date. For details,
contact Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Center
for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street,
Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023;
phone 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665,
e-mail: <mjryan@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>.

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Editor: Gerry Cox. Design and
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Staff: Mary Jo Ryan, Cynthia Hobbs.

Karl Shapiro 1913-2000

by **Ted Kooser,**
Nebraska Poet

Karl Shapiro, one of the most highly celebrated poets of his generation, winner of the Pulitzer and Bollingen Prizes, and a member of The National Institute of Arts and Letters, died in New York City in May of this year.

He lived in Lincoln and taught at the University from 1956 to 1966, and our unabashed Husker boosterism would claim him as one of ours. But it was only in one of his collections of poems, *The Bourgeois Poet*, and only in a few lines, that he wrote specifically about Nebraska, "Where travelers from California bitch at the backwardness and New Yorkers step on the gas in a panic." He declared his affection in this way: "I love Nowhere where the human brag is a brag of neither time nor place, / But an elephant house of Smithsonian bones and the white cathedrals of grain, / The feeding-lots in the snow with the steers huddled in symmetrical misery, backs to the sleet, / To beef us up in the Beef State plains, something to look at."



Karl Shapiro, center, with students in Nebraska nearly a half century ago. Left is Poet Ted Kooser.

(Reprinted with permission from *Reports of My Death* by Karl Shapiro, published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, a division of Workman Publishing.)

Karl Shapiro was the most distinguished poet ever to take up residence in Nebraska, and we can be proud, in our Nowhere, "human brag," boosterish kind of way, that he honored us with his teaching and lecturing and writing, if only for a few years, nearly a half century ago. ▲

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 October 15.

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.**

2000 Nebraska Literature Festival

Prairie Visions: Nebraska Authors and Their Art

in Lincoln. The Heritage Room collection consists of 11,000 volumes representing 3,400 Nebraska authors.

Exhibitors: On Saturday at the Cornhusker Hotel, booksellers and Nebraska author organizations present displays and books for sale.

Booksellers may participate by contacting Carol Connor, Lincoln City Libraries, 402-441-8510, e-mail: <cjc@rand.lcl.lib.ne.us>.

Sponsorship: The Nebraska Literature Festival is sponsored and funded by the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Humanities Council. Lincoln City Libraries and Beatrice Public Library are co-hosting the festival.

Registration is free unless otherwise noted. ▲

Most events are open to the public and free of charge. Pre-registration is not required for most activities.



Palmer-Epard cabin at Homestead National Monument of America in Beatrice.

Festival Schedule

Prairie Visions: Nebraska Authors and Their Art

Friday, September 15

9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. **High School Day with State Poet William Kloefkorn**
Homestead National Monument of America, Beatrice
Open to high school students. Participation limited to 90. Pre-registration required. Fee: \$5 per person

6:30 to 9:00 P.M. **Opening Festivities**
Great Hall, Lincoln Station, 7th & P Streets, Lincoln

7:00 to 7:45 P.M. **Programs**
Ricardo Garcia, *The Art & Practice of Hispano Storytelling*
Lora Black, *Celebration of Language*

7:45 to 8:30 P.M. **Awards**
Mildred Bennett Award
Nebraska Book Awards

Saturday, September 16

Cornhusker Hotel, 333 So. 13th Street, Lincoln

9:00–9:50 A.M. **Author Program**
"From Where I Stand: Interdisciplinary Teaching of Place Using Literary Text: *My Antonia*"
Willia Cather Pioneer Memorial
Mellanee Kvasnicka, Antoinette Turnquist, Marjorie Waterman, Granville Welch

Program
"Designing Books"
Dika Eckersely

Readings
Twyla Hansen
Pat Pike
Greg Kosmicki

9:15 A.M.–12:15 P.M. **Workshop**
"Your Life is a Story—Capture it in Writing," Biographical Writing Workshop
Lois Poppe
Location: Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors
3rd floor, Bennett Martin Public Library, 14th & N Sts., Lincoln
Pre-registration required.

10:00–10:50 A.M. **Author Program**
"Through the Eyes of Dorothy Thomas: A Different View of Loren and Mabel Eiseley"
Friends of Loren Eiseley
Christine Pappas

Program
"The Accidental Nebraskan"
Meghan Daum

Readings
Charles Fort
Nancy McCleery
Marilyn Dorf

11:00–11:50 A.M. Author Program
“Wright Morris ‘Photo Text’ a Rare Art”
Lone Tree Literary Society
Martha McGahan, Nancy Johnson, Doris Gacke

Program
“Willa Cather and Quilts”
Evelyn Haller

Readings
Barbara Schmitz
Steve Schneider
Mary Stillwell

Noon–1:00 P.M. Lunch On Your Own

1:00–1:50 P.M. Author Program
“*The Christmas of the Phonograph Records*”
Mari Sandoz Heritage Society
Virginia Opocensky

Panel
“The Plains Can Sing: *Plains Song Review*
Writers Read Their Works”

Readings
Constance Merritt
Karen Schoemaker
Ladette Randolph

1:00 - 3:00 P.M. Activity
“Literary Lincoln Tour: Classic Nebraska”
School Bus departs from
Cornhusker Hotel
Pre-registration required.
Fee \$10

2:00–2:50 P.M. Author Program
“Teaching Bess Streecher Aldrich”
Bess Streecher Aldrich Foundation
Frances Reinehr
Carol Miles Petersen

Program
“Aaron Douglas and Nebraska’s
Connections to the Harlem
Renaissance”
Steve Shively

Readings
Roy Scheele
Charlene Neely
Marge Saiser

3:00–3:50 P.M. Author Program
Readings
“Readings of John G. Neihardt Accompanied by
Guitar”
John G. Neihardt Foundation
Hilda Neihardt, Reading
Robin Neihardt, Guitar

Program
“Pencils, Ink, and Stardust: The Illustrations of
Nebraska’s Own Rosekrans Hoffman”
Pat Leach

Readings
J.V. Brummels
Kelly Erlandson
Bill Kloefkorn

Sunday, September 17

1:30–3:00 P.M. Guided Tours
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Archives and
Special Collections
Exhibits and Information related to Nebraska
Authors
Meet at Love Library, 13th & R Sts., Room 209,
Lincoln

1:30–4:30 P.M. Weldon Kees Tour
Meet at Gage County Historical Society
Museum, 2nd & Court Sts., Beatrice

**2:30–3:30 P.M. Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of
Nebraska Authors**
Meet at Bennett Martin Public Library,
14th & N Sts., 3rd Floor, Lincoln



**Big bluestem and goldenrod on the
restored tall grass prairie at
Homestead National Monument of
America in Beatrice.**

The Reader and The Listener

by **Oliver B. Pollak**

Department of
History, University
of Nebraska at
Omaha

We were in Jackson, Wyoming for a conference and to visit high school and college friends from the sixties. As we near our sixties, they are still friends despite multiple remarriages. It was the longest car ride we had taken in years.

Between a very comfortable car and Advil or Tylenol every four to six hours, we emerged not too stiff. CDs replaced the sparse radio stations through Wyoming and western Nebraska. Country music has pushed off evangelical and gospel, and AM radio appears to have ceased to exist. Our friends, a lawyer and psychologist, suggested listening to a tape, *The Reader* by Bernard Schlink.

A friend who has commuted daily from Omaha to Lincoln for thirty years swears by books on tape. I "pooh-poohed" the idea. Listening rather than reading, "Oh really." What about literary nuance and abridgment? What a cheap way to read. My anti-technology Luddite gene flared up. Well, we listened for four and one-half hours, about 360 miles, with a break at a Torrington motel. The novelty of the experience and the novel provoked reactions.

In *The Reader*, Hanna is a nineteen-year-old diligent worker in 1939 at Siemens. She is offered a promotion, but instead enters the SS as a concentration camp prison guard. At the camp she selects the weakest Jewish women and they read to her at night in the last month of their lives. After the war she

works for a bus company as a conductor. In her early thirties she has an affair with a fifteen-year-old boy who reads to her before lovemaking. She is a good bus employee, but disappears when offered a promotion to driver. Hanna is later placed on trial for war crimes, admits to writing the report that sent Jewish women to their deaths, and receives a life sentence. Hanna learns how to read and write while in prison and is paroled after serving eighteen years.

McGuffey's Reader, *the Weekly Reader*, and even the *Utne Reader* have not raised as much discussion as *The Reader*. My wife and I divided on emotional and intellectual issues. Was Hanna a brutal manipulator and child abuser or a hapless victim of illiteracy? Was a life sentence appropriate under the circumstances? Does illiteracy in a literate society suggest an inadequate personality?

The author, Bernard Schlink, born in 1944, is a professor of law at the University of Berlin. His two hundred-page book has been faithfully reproduced on tape. What are the risks of listening to tapes? The distraction and mesmerization are less insidious than a cell phone. An economist friend of mine says he has been listening to tapes for years. His son falls asleep on the back seat. His wife accedes to his choices, but she drew the line at *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen W. Hawking. This is a turning point in our lives. We are hooked on tapes and have another reason to go to the library. Friends don't let friends drive without a tape. ▲

Literary Scene in Scottsbluff

by **Karon Harvey**

Scottsbluff is indeed fortunate to have a flourishing literary community. There are several active reading and book discussion clubs in Scottsbluff, and these groups are diverse enough to appeal to all literary tastes.

In addition, there are more than thirty individuals who either belong to local writers groups or publish individually. Although there are several reading and book discussion groups in the Scottsbluff area, the **Literary Reading Group**, which meets once a month at the Scottsbluff Public Library, is rather unique. Founded by Mary Lou Kline as part of her master's thesis project in 1997 and as part of her employment as FRONTIER 55 coordinator at First

National Bank, this group has now grown to thirty members. Led by Nancy Escamilla, Scottsbluff Public Library, and Diane Downer, Gering Public Library, the members read one book a month and take turns leading book discussions. The discussions focus on relating each book to life issues as experienced by the members and on enhancing discussions through guest speakers and visual displays. Other popular book discussion groups concentrate only on the classics, on Oprah's book club favorites, best sellers, or old favorites. More than six discussion groups meet regularly.

Scottsbluff's Centennial 2000 is in full swing, and as residents celebrate, it is certainly appropriate to celebrate Scottsbluff's rich literary heritage. Susan Selvey, a published author and the Director of the



Literary Scene in Scottsbluff *continued...*

West Nebraska Arts Center, wrote the official Centennial 2000 play with the assistance of Peter Massey. The play, *Through Her Eyes*, is a musical paying tribute to families and ethnic groups that contributed so much to the valley. Jane Barbour Ramsey, author of *North Platte Valley Tales*, recently published *Scottsbluff, 1900-2000, Evolution of a*



**Scottsbluff
Literary Reading
Group Facilitators
(l. to r.) Mary Lou
Kline, Diane
Downer, and
Nancy Escamilla.**

City, a 126-page history of Scottsbluff written in honor of the Centennial.

Several authors have written historical fiction and nonfiction histories tied to the story of the Germans from Russia who settled in this valley. Before his death, Calvin Nuss, a

Scottsbluff geologist and restaurateur, wrote *Country Bumpkins*, *Her Golden Door; a Novel of the Volga Germans Who Followed Their Dreams to America*, and *Memories—Humor of a Second Generation Volga American; A Tribute To Two Second Generation Volga Americans: Johnny Hopp And George Sauer*. Mary Gerhard Dickinson, a retired Scottsbluff teacher, wrote the story of the Gerhard family immigrating to the United States and to the North Platte Valley in her book, *Immigrants' Dream*.

The Literary Arts Committee of the West Nebraska Arts Center published *Reflections and Perceptions: Stories and Poems* (1989), *Whispers from the Heartland: Stories and Poems* (1990), and *Dances With Words* (1992). The group moved to Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) and adopted a new name, the **Writers' Round Table**. Students, faculty members, and community writers are welcome to join the Round Table, which meets at the college twice a month during the school year. This group worked closely with the Scottsbluff Public Library staff to present "An Evening of Poetry" for the community last spring. Local poets read their original works in a coffeehouse atmosphere. They included Janet Craven, Laura Hill, Mary Jackson Krauter, Megan Bertelsen, Tom J. Glasco, and Coyd Walker. *Emerging Voices*, Western Nebraska Community College's literary and art journal, is published annually. It features fiction,

nonfiction, essays, and poetry. The 1999 edition won two literary awards for poetry and nonfiction entries from the Rocky Mountain Collegiate Media Association.

Several Scottsbluff natives and "transplants" have contributed to the valley's (and to the state's) rich literary heritage. Larry Alkire, an instructor at WNCC, has published both prose and poetry. Two works are forthcoming. "In the Way of the Father" will appear in *The Sewanee Review* and "Ducks Upon a Pond" in *Northern Lights*. Merrill J. Mattes, superintendent of Scotts Bluff National Monument for eleven years, wrote *The Great Platte River Road*. Nancy Mayborn Peterson published three well-received books that focus on the early life along the Platte River and the Missouri River, *People of the Moonshell*, *People of Troubled Waters*, and *People of the Old Missury*. Robert G. Simmons, Jr. wrote *Reversed: the Arnold Affair*, an account of Scotts Bluff County's first murder trial and *One of Our Drivers Is Missing: the Banner County Murder*, recounting the story of a 1957 murder. Treva Adams Strait, who celebrated her ninety-first birthday this June, wrote *Miss Adams, Country Teacher: Memories from a One-Room School* and *The Price of Free Land*. Ruth Raymond Thone, a Scottsbluff native and former First Lady of Nebraska, published *Fat, a Fate Worse Than Death*, *Women and Aging*, and *Being Home*, a collection of descriptive essays. Coyd Walker published *The Realm Where Opposites Meet* and *162*, an autobiographical account of driving a cab in Denver and providing bus service on the Denver Coach between Scottsbluff and Colorado. John Warning published *War On The Plains*, an excerpt of which appeared in *NEBRASKAland* magazine. Linell Wohlers, an occupational therapist, has sold twenty-nine short stories and plays to children's magazines and anthologies since 1985.

Many of the publications mentioned in this article may be purchased from Copperfield's Bookstore in Scottsbluff, from the Nebraska Package, or the University of Nebraska Press. They may also be obtained through Interlibrary Loan from libraries across Nebraska. ▲

Karon Harvey served on the Nebraska Library Commission (1986-1989) and on the Scottsbluff Public Library Board (1974-1986 and 1990 to the present). She has been an English teacher, a library media specialist, and an adjunct faculty member at Chadron State College and Western Nebraska Community College.

Review: The Library of Congress: An Architectural Alphabet

**Prepared by
the Library of
Congress
Publishing
Office,**

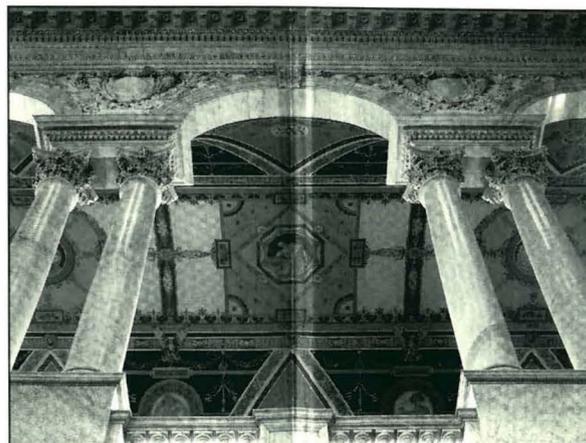
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Wagner, with
Blaine
Marshall,
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San Francisco:
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ISBN 0-7649-
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**Reviewed by
Gerry Cox**

Alphabet books are considered suitable for children, a way for parents to teach the alphabet to toddlers. But wait until you see this book that is designed for people of all ages!

You will marvel at the wondrous details in the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress—details such as the cover photograph of the sculpted, gilded rosettes in the sunken panels of the ceiling in the Pavilion of the Discoverers. In this book of beautiful photographs, each letter of the alphabet has two pages. Text is shown with its illuminated letter on one and a full-page photograph of an architectural detail illustrating the letter is shown on the facing page. The text and photo for the letter V is captivating for book lovers. The photo illustrates the vault: the ceiling vaults in the South Corridor. Names of twenty lyric poets appear in mosaic tile, and paintings illustrate scenes from poems by Milton, Shakespeare, Keats, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Emerson. The illuminated letter on each text page comes from a different source, from fourteenth century parchment to a 1994 reprint of a 1974 Broadside portfolio. You may wonder if this is suitable for toddlers. It may be if it is read to them. Reading a book like this to children will appeal to their enjoyment of word sounds and of designs and colors in the photos.

Other architectural alphabet books can contrast with the opulence of the Jefferson Building and help adults and children become aware of the need for historic preservation. *Architects Make Zigzags* (Preservation Press, 1986) by Diane Maddex and Roxie Munro depicts architectural terms in black and white drawings, some with whimsical appeal. Another, designed without text, is Stephen Johnson's *Alphabet City* (Viking, 1995). He painted the letters he saw



(From The Library of Congress: An Architectural Alphabet. Published by Pomegranate Communications. Copyright ©2000 by the Library of Congress. Used by permission.)

while walking along a city street. A fourth book for readers fascinated by architecture is *Archabet: an Architectural Alphabet* by Balthazar Korab (The Preservation Press, 1985), which uses black and white photographs with appropriate quotations. The most unusual example of architectural alphabet books comes from the eighteenth century, *Architectural Alphabet 1773* (Merrion Press, 1972), a facsimile of the original work by Johann David Steingruber. It is definitely not produced for children, but may be intriguing to many. He designed elaborate three-story buildings (which were never built) in the shapes of the letters of the alphabet.

The Library of Congress book is the most spectacular of alphabet books based on architecture, and in addition to the architecture, provides classical, geographic, literary, and visual art references—a classic education sampler in one short book. ▲

Stamp Cancellation Celebrates Libraries

In honor of the Bicentennial of the Library of Congress, Hastings College Perkins Library, in cooperation with the Republican Valley Library System and the United States Postal Service, recently held a Special Second Day Issue Envelope and Cancellation ceremony. Nebraska Library Commission Director Rod Wagner (right) displays the framed Library of Congress Bicentennial Second Day Issue Envelope, which featured pictures of Hastings College Perkins Library and Hastings Public Library, and a sheet of

special Library of Congress Bicentennial stamps. Thanks to the Nebraska Library Commission for funding assistance. ▲



Review: **America's Library, The Story of the Library of Congress, 1800-2000**

by **James Conaway**, *New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Library of Congress, 2000, hardcover, ISBN 0-300-08308-4.*

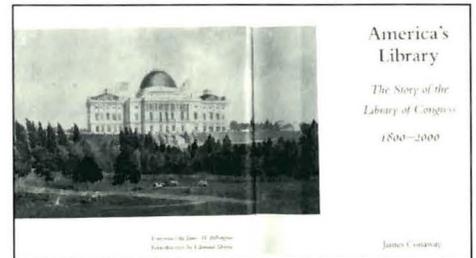
Reviewed by Oliver B. Pollak

This well-illustrated history traces the growth of the library over the last 200 years. The Library of Congress, originally founded in 1800, was destroyed by the British in 1814. Another fire in 1851 destroyed thirty-five thousand volumes, including two-thirds of the books acquired from Thomas Jefferson in 1815. All thirteen Librarians of Congress have been men and only one was a professional librarian. They have frequently been at the center of political, professional, and cultural controversy.

Access and technology have been library touchstones. Jefferson felt that no subject lay outside the potential interest of the people's elected representatives. This service has been extended to all Americans. In the late 1960s the first volumes of *The National Union Catalog: Pre-1956 Imprints* appeared, making the Library more accessible. The

Internet World Wide Web has further democratized the world's largest library, as its holdings can now be identified in local libraries, homes, and offices. This volume is a starting place to learn about the holdings and magnificent architecture of the Library of Congress.

(From *America's Library: The Story of the Library of Congress, 1800-2000* by James Conaway, published by Yale University Press. Copyright © 2000 by the Library of Congress. Used by permission.)



Review: **The Man Who Ate the 747**

by **Ben Sherwood**
The Bantam Dell Publishing Group, August 2000, hardcover, ISBN 0-553-80182-1.
Reviewed by Linda Hillegass, Owner, Lee Booksellers, Lincoln

J.J. Smith is just a regular guy, but he's got himself one extraordinary job. He's Keeper of the Records for *The Book of Records*. His life is spent mostly on the road chasing down the biggest, longest, tallest, smallest phenomena to add to *The Book* (a thinly disguised *Guinness Book of Records*). From Sri Lanka to the Soviet Republic of Georgia, from New York to Paris to the Taj Mahal, he's been everywhere, seen everything. It's the only job he's ever had, only one he ever wanted; but now his boss says he hasn't contributed anything really big in too long. He'll have to come up with something spectacular, or dust off his resume.

Things are looking bleak. Then there it is: An anonymous letter suggesting something huge. Out on the prairie, in Superior, Nebraska, there's a man who's eating a jumbo jet. J.J. is skeptical until he finds a news item about a big plane, on its final flight to the junkyard, forced down by weather on a farm outside Superior. Pilot and crew walked away, but there's no mention of what happened to the plane. J.J. feels the excitement. His intuition kicks in. This is it. He packs his bag and heads for Superior. Meanwhile, in Superior, farmer Wally Chubb is attempting to get the attention of Willa Wyatt and prove his lifelong love by using a specially built super grinder to reduce portions of the plane to powder that can be stirred into his food and eaten. Willa

thinks she can deter him by refusing to react and the good folks of Superior are going on about their business without comment. Onto this scene walks J.J. Smith, and a very personal matter suddenly becomes very big news.

Author Ben Sherwood does in-depth television reporting and special series as a Senior Producer of *The NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw*. Sherwood says his mother was born and raised in Omaha. "Her first real memory is of Memorial Stadium, Cornhusker football, and hot dogs." Though she moved to California at age eleven, Sherwood reports that he "grew up watching the Cornhuskers on New Year's Day." Over the years, Sherwood has worked on several stories in Nebraska. Apparently, he managed to pick up the flavor of the state, because he portrays small town Nebraska without condescending or lapsing into stereotype or caricature. Superior shines through. Sherwood's light hand with a pen gives the story an understated charm. When J.J. falls hard for Willa, when Willa reluctantly returns the sentiment, when Wally yearns for one he cannot have, when the town pitches in, you will cheer for them all.

Author Ben Sherwood will be at Lee Booksellers' Edgewood Center store, 56th & Highway 2, in Lincoln for a reading and signing at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 16. Call 402-420-1919 or toll-free: 888-665-0999 for details.



(Reprinted with permission from *The Man Who Ate the 747* by Ben Sherwood, published by the Bantam Dell Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc.)

The Telephone Book and Names

by **Oliver B. Pollak**

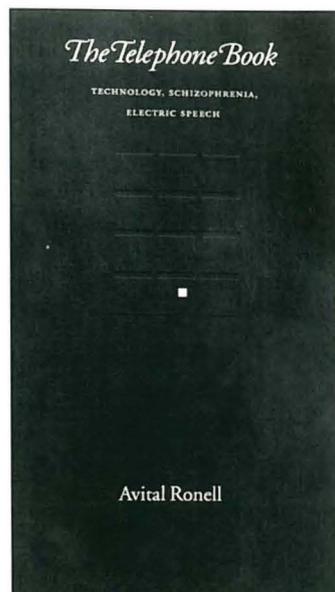
The telephone book boldly answers as the other book of books, a site which registers all the names of history, if only to attend the refusal of the proper name. **

"A good name," according to Ecclesiastes (VII:1), "is better than precious ointment." Felix Frankfurter, on graduation from Harvard Law School, declined to Americanize his name lest it be a detriment to his career. My father was born Vilhelm in Vienna. He and mother had the middle names Israel and Sarah imposed by Hitler during the thirties. Dad became Vilem to the Czechs, Hillel in Palestine, William and Willie in England. My refugee parents named me Oliver, perhaps because regicide Oliver Cromwell is also credited for allowing Jews to return to England in 1657, after being expelled in 1290 by King Edward I. Arriving in America in 1953, declining to change our name to Pollard, Dad became just plain Bill Pollak.

The various spelling permutations involving a, c, o and one l hardly compares to the Zulu leader Mzilikazi for which the Guinness Book of Records reports more than one hundred and twenty different spellings. Students see my name in the class schedule, syllabus, and exams, as well as on the blackboard and door. They continue to misspell it forty percent of the time, as do wedding invitations and charitable solicitations. Mother gave me a T-shirt with multiple spellings of Pollak. My name has been misspelled in

reviews of my first book in 1979; a 1981 award from the University of Nebraska Regents; page proofs with correct spelling followed by publications with misspelling; the June 21, 1999, front page of USA Today; and most recently, one of my monthly columns spelled my name three different ways. However, I will gladly negotiate checks with any variation of my last name. ▲

*Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989. (Richard Eckersley, also of the University of Nebraska Press, designed this imaginative and provocative book. The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce recently granted him the title Royal Designer for Industry.) ▲



(Reprinted with permission from the *Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech*, by Avital Ronell, published by the University of Nebraska Press, 1989, paperback, ISBN 0-8032-3938-3.)

Center for the Book Director John Cole Honored

John Y. Cole, director of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, received the 2000 Lippincott Award, which recognizes distinguished service to the profession of librarianship. The award recognizes him as "...a librarian and historian...for

his distinguished service as the founding director and driving force behind the Center for the Book...[which] has grown into an office of national and international importance." ▲

Heritage Room Named for Jane Geske

The Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at Lincoln's Bennett Martin Public Library has been renamed to honor Jane Pope Geske, Library Commission Director from 1969-1971 and 1973-1976. Geske was a founding member and early president of the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, as well as a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book and of Friends of the University of Nebraska

Libraries. She also served as president of the Nebraska Library Association and the Nebraska Arts Council. ▲



Bibliofile: Featuring Robert S. Runyon,

Dean Emeritus, University Library, University of Nebraska at Omaha

by Dick Allen

Q. What first got you interested in librarianship?

A. As a student at Wesleyan University (CT) I worked part-time in the Olin Library to earn spending money. Despite the routine nature of my work, I experienced a sense of adventure in being there. On reflection, I believe I had an awe or special attachment to books and the printed word. Books

seemed the most accessible personal pathway to learning, escape, and accomplishment. My feelings about books and reading were well described in a marvelous little book by Sven Birkerts, entitled *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*.

Q. Now that you are retiring, Bob, what do you consider the most satisfying experience of your library career?

A. I have served in libraries on three different campuses during the past thirty-four years. My interests gradually evolved from working directly with books to hiring people and shaping organizations that provide books for others. My most rewarding experiences have been those in which

it was possible to contribute to greater effectiveness and efficiency in those library organizations. The greatest satisfaction came from getting things done through others, often people with talents and skills greater than my own, but who shared the same belief in the importance of what we were doing. The greatest joy is to observe people you have hired and worked with go on to jobs and accomplishments that exceed your own.

Q. How and to what degree has technology changed the role of libraries today?

A. Through the influence of my stepfather, I developed a youthful interest in engineering and technology. When I was starting my library career in the mid '60s, it seemed apparent that data processing, first with punch cards and later with mainframe computers, offered important new techniques for performing library tasks. I felt confident that one could build a solid career foundation on the application of systems analysis and the use of these tools in libraries. I have since watched computers evolve and become, along with networking and communications technology, fully integrated into academic and other library operations and services. The successive growth of such powerful tools and techniques offers future challenges and opportunities that I believe are beyond all future reckoning.

I think that libraries, because they are about people as well as books (and all other forms of information), will always be around. Libraries are more than warehouses for books. They are open

doorways to the past, as well as to the present and to the future. They are places of meeting, sharing, discussing, finding, learning, and growing. While books and other information content containers will change, the essential functions of the library must continue in order to sustain society and scholarship, as we know it.

Q. Looking at "the book" as a statement or symbol, what does it conjure up?

A. The book used to be a static, stable, and constant thing. Now it is something very dynamic and in process. Textual delivery mechanisms are evolving in many directions from hypertext to the electronic book. Methods of displaying and delivering text, graphics, and other information have already evolved far beyond the cellulose and ink artifacts that dominated librarians' attention during most of my adult life. The book will not disappear, but increasingly digital and electronic surrogates that offer other advantages of convenience, quality, and cost will displace its format and role.

Q. How have books influenced you as a person?

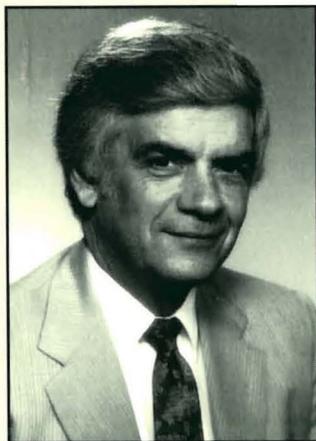
A. As indicated above, books have always occupied a special place in my personal scheme of things. That place has also been an ambiguous one, however, for while books can offer great fun and entertainment, they can also be quite intimidating. "Of making many books there is no end."

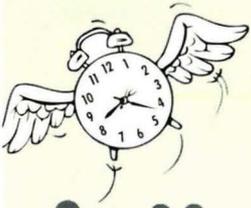
In one sense, they are like time capsules or compressed units of future time that remain always beyond one's reach. One can never read all the books, or as many books, as one would like. Thus, there is a continuous issue of selection and priority setting, in order to spend one's available time on the books that will reap the greatest personal benefits. Often this reaching, expressed as the buying or storing of many books and other printed matter, I find exceeds my grasp.

Q. What role will books play in your retirement future?

A. Books have always been my constant companions. With more time on my hands, this will increase in the future. I will also attempt to map out a more systematic reading plan, and to spend more time working down the reading list, all the while trying to better relate what I read to everything else I do, whether it be grandparenting, travel, volunteer work in literacy instruction, gardening, Rotary committee work, Toastmasters, etc.

Send comments or reactions via e-mail to <runyon@unomaha.edu>.





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Scottsbluff Literary Scene Highlighted Literature Festival September 15, 16, & 17

Native American Art Exhibit , John G. Neihardt Foundation Contact: John Neihardt Center, 888-777-4667, <neihardt@gpcom.net>	September 5-30	Bancroft
Nebraska Literature Festival Day for Students Contact: Laureen Riedesel, 402-223-3584, <lriedesel@beatrice.lib.ne.us>	September 15	Beatrice
Nebraska Literature Festival Contact: Carol J. Connor, 402-441-8510, <lifest2000@alltel.net>	September 16-17	Lincoln
Book Signing and Reading , Ben Sherwood, author of <i>The Man Who Ate the 747</i> Contact: Lee Booksellers Edgewood, 402-420-1919, 888-665-0999	September 16	Lincoln
Paul A. Olson Seminar , <i>John Wunder, Joe Starita, and Peter Maslowski on Six-Man Football: a Great Plains Legacy</i> Contact: Great Plains Studies, 402-472-3082	September 20	Lincoln
Bess Streeter Aldrich Remembrance Day , Bess Streeter Aldrich House and Museum <i>Carol Miles Petersen and the Streeter Family Reunion</i> Contact: Lorri Kentner, 402-994-3855, <lkentner@alltel.net>	October 1	Elmwood
ETV Premiere: Song of the Lark , <i>Willa Cather Foundation</i> Contact: Steve Ryan, 402-746-2653, <srryan@gpcom.net>	October 1	Red Cloud
Nebraska Cowboy Poetry Gathering: Old West Days Contact: Mary Mulligan, 402-376-3834, 800-658-4024	October 5-8	Valentine
Lincoln City Libraries Annual Book Sale , Nebraska State Fairgrounds Contact: Barbara Hansen, 402-441-8512, <bhansen@rand.lcl.lib.ne.us>	October 5-8	Lincoln
Plum Creek Children's Literacy Festival Contact: Janell Uffelmann, 402-643-7318, <juffelman@seward.cune.edu>	October 6-7	Seward
Nebraska Writers Guild 75th Year: Fall Conference Contact: Hugh Reilly, 402-498-1994, <HReilly333@aol.com>	October 14	Seward
Nebraska English Language Arts Council (NELAC) , Annual Conference with Arthur Applebee Contact: Rosalie Shimerda, 402-488-0014, <rs125406@alltel.net>	October 16	Kearney
Paul A. Olson Seminar Peter Longo, Mike Nelson, and Dick Herman on <i>Revising the Nebraska Constitution: A Score Card</i> • Contact: Great Plains Studies, 402-472-3082	October 18	Lincoln
MPLA/NLA/NEMA Library/Media 2000 Tri-Conference Contact: Sarah Watson, 402-444-4808, <sarahw@omaha.lib.ne.us>	October 25-28	Omaha
Pen Pointers Writers' Workshop , Elkhorn Valley Arts Unlimited Contact: LaRayne Meyer, PO Box 385, Pilger, Nebraska 68768-0385	October 28	Beemer
Nebraska Center for the Book Annual Meeting , Gere Branch Library Contact: Katherine Walter, 402-463-4244, <kayw@unllib.unl.edu>	November 5	Lincoln