

The NCB News

Volume 13

Fall 2003

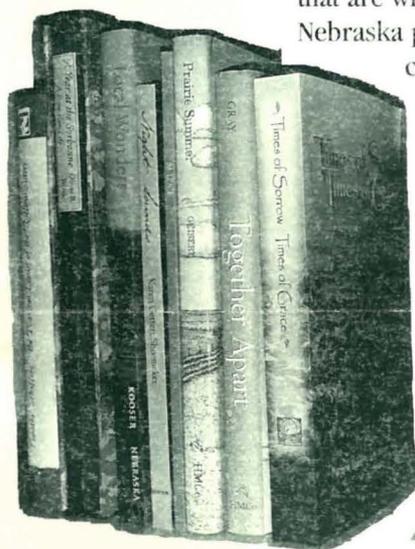
No. 3

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

Nebraska Books Honored

The 2003 Nebraska Book Awards program, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB), recognizes and honors books that are written by Nebraska authors, published by Nebraska publishers, set in Nebraska, or concerning Nebraska. This year's winners are:

- ▲ **Children/Young Adult:** *Together Apart*, Dianne E. Gray, Houghton Mifflin Company
- ▲ **Children/Young Adult Honor Book:** *Prairie Summer*, Bonnie Geisert, Houghton Mifflin Company
- ▲ **Cover Design/Illustration:** *Times of Sorrow, Times of Grace: Writing by Women of the Great Plains/High Plains*, Marjorie Saiser, Greg Kosmicki, and Lisa Sandlin (editors), The Backwaters Press
- ▲ **Cover Design/Illustration Book Arts Production Honor Book:** *A Year at the Sorbonne: A Proustian Life*, Oliver B. Pollak, The Yellow Barn Press



- ▲ **Fiction:** *The Phantom Limbs of the Rollow Sisters*, Timothy Schaffert, Blue Hen Books/Penguin Putnam
- ▲ **Fiction Short Story Collection Honor Book:** *Night Sounds and Other Stories*, Karen Gettert Shoemaker, Dufour Editions Inc.
- ▲ **Non-Fiction:** *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bobemian Alps*, Ted Kooser, University of Nebraska Press
- ▲ **Poetry:** *Muse*, Susan Aizenberg, Crab Orchard Review & Southern Illinois University Press
- ▲ **Poetry Honor Book:** *Times of Sorrow, Times of Grace: Writing by Women of the Great Plains/High Plains*, Marjorie Saiser, Greg Kosmicki, and Lisa Sandlin (editors), The Backwaters Press

Books published in 2003 will be eligible for the 2004 Awards program. To receive notification of the 2004 Book Awards program, contact Mary Geibel, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mgeibel@nlc.state.ne.us>.

Purchase Raffle Tickets Now

by Molly Fisher

Thanks to a generous contribution from The University of Nebraska Press, thirteen volumes of the *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* are being raffled by the Nebraska Center for the Book. Edited by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UN-L) distinguished Professor Gary Moulton, this highly acclaimed collection is considered by scholars to be the definitive edition of the Lewis and Clark journals. Funds earned from the raffle will help support the Nebraska Book Festival and the Nebraska Book Awards, sponsored annually by the Nebraska Center for the Book. If you don't think your personal library can hold the thirteen-volume set, consider buying a raffle ticket and donating the collection to your favorite library. The set, valued at more than

\$900, is much sought after by libraries.

Tickets are on sale now for \$5, available from any member of the Nebraska Center for the Book Board. For more information or to purchase a ticket, contact Molly Fisher (photo right), 402-488-1240. The drawing will be held at the Nebraska Center for the Book February board meeting.



Reflections on Six Years on the NCB Board

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

Just turning sixty, I have spent ten percent of my life (six years) on the board of the Nebraska Center for the Book. I have a record. My priors include several years at the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Jewish Historical Society. The relationship usually ends because the bylaws limit reelection.

Parole and release lead to assessment, reflection, and summation. I served under Presidents Clinton and Bush, one a voracious reader and the other a librarian's spouse.

The leadership of the Nebraska Center for the Book is guided by one-year term chairmen/women/persons with a benevolent big brother/sister/parent in the background, the Nebraska Library Commission.

My committee assignment, publicity, meant writing for the *NCB News* under the watchful eyes of Linda Hillegas, Gerry Cox, and Mary Jo Ryan. Each issue entailed an hour-long teleconference to establish content and deadlines. Selecting topics, books for review, and likely writers, we kept in mind Nebraska's human and spatial diversity. There's an abundance of Nebraska book scene stories. The joy of voluntary participation is you choose the dirty jobs you like.

Members are librarians, writers, and academics. Different talents, skills, and interests fill different needs. The businessman becomes the treasurer.

Several people taught me, including Denise Brady, Kay Walters, Jerry Kromberg, Mel Krutz, Gerry Cox, Linda Hillegas, Rod Wagner, Mary Jo Ryan, and Molly Fisher. All of whom I will miss. But do I have to miss them? The Nebraska Center for the Book, established in 1990, is now thirteen years old. That means there are several former board members, enough to create an alumni or support group, a way of staying in touch and preserving funny stories.

The Nebraska Center for the Book supports publication. Mel Krutz's *Book Discussion and Writing Groups* is about to appear. Nebraska nonprofit societies preserve the memory of authors Bess Streeter Aldrich, Willa Cather, Loren Eiseley, Wright Morris, John Neihardt, and Mari Sandoz. Has the time arrived for Tillie Olsen to be treated with similar reverence?

If you are not a member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, become a member. And if you want to serve on the board, make your desires known. Non-profit voluntary groups thrive on people stepping forward.

Ed. Note: The *NCB News* thanks Oliver Pollak for his fine contributions to this publication. We look forward to his continuing communication via regular articles and reviews. ▲

The **NCB** News

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Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

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Denise Brady

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

2004 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meetings

February 7 Lincoln
May 15 Kearney
August 7 Omaha
November 7 Lincoln, Annual Meeting,

Advertising

The *NCB News* can accept up to four 1/8 page ads for each issue. The advertising rate is \$125 for 1/8 page. *NCB News* is issued May 1, August 15, and November 1. The advertising and copy deadline is six weeks prior to issue date. For details, contact Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023; phone 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <mjryan@nlc.state.ne.us>, <www.unl.edu/NCB>.

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Grand Island Public Library and Foundation Honored at Annual Meeting

Nebraska book lovers (readers, writers, booksellers, librarians, publishers, printers, educators, and scholars) gathered at the Nebraska Center for the Book Annual Meeting to enjoy a presentation featuring Dr. David Wishart, editor of the *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains* and Chair of the Department of Anthropology and Geography at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. The annual meeting was held in the main gallery of the Great Plains Art Collection in Lincoln in November.

The Jane Pope Geske Award for exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, bookselling, or writing in Nebraska was presented to the Grand Island Public Library and the Grand Island Public Library Foundation, Inc. The library and foun-

ation were honored for their rich tradition of service (120 years in 2004), their outreach services provided throughout Hall County, and the variety of reading and literacy services offered.

The award, established by the Nebraska Center for the Book, is presented annually to an organization, business, library, school, association, or other group that has made an exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, or Nebraska literature. The Jane Geske Award commemorates Geske's passion for books, and was established in recognition of her contributions to the well-being of the libraries of Nebraska. Jane Geske was a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book and a long-time leader in Nebraska library and literary activities. ▲

Table of Contents: An Omaha Online Bookseller

by **Oliver B. Pollak**

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. ▲

I searched <www.abebooks.com> and <www.BookFinder.com> for Nebraska charity cookbooks (those limited local editions bound in plastic clips). Several intriguing titles appeared associated with the term "Table of Contents," not the conventional book term but the actual name of the book dealer. The telephone number, with 402 area code, puzzled me. I called the number on the Web site. Stan Lassegard called back and we arranged a meeting.

Stan built his 30,000-volume stock by haunting thrift stores, Goodwill, Salvation Army, auctions, estate and garage sales. He rented a 3,000 square foot basement space in a Midtown Omaha commercial building. It has some shelves, but essentially contains boxes of books, floor to ceiling. At the age of forty-five, Stan left his twelve-year career as an adolescent substance abuse counselor and turned his avocation to his second occupation. He entered five hundred titles on the Web and waited for the phone to ring.

My wife and I purchased about twenty great plains ethnic cookbooks—a genre usually unavailable on interlibrary loan, since they frequently elude being

accessioned by libraries and entered into the *OCLC WorldCat* worldwide catalog.

Stan is a one person operation, though he has runners looking out to enhance his stock. As high tech as he is on the Web, he does not take credit cards or have a fax machine. As many small businesses do, he limits his overhead. To increase business and get to the next level, it would require more staff and storage space, thus increasing operating costs. Table of Contents is an example of a second career business that could not have leveraged itself into any prominence or profitability prior to the Web. Printed catalogues, mailing lists, and postage (laborious and financially costly limited distribution techniques) have been replaced by computer keyboard and virtually limitless market exposure. The information age enabled Stan to follow his dreams. Local booksellers have a greater propensity to acquire local publications and ephemera. While this may make Willa Cather's books more expensive in Nebraska than Oregon, Stan's cookbook prices were very reasonable. For more information, see <www.abebooks.com/home/LASSEGARD>. ▲

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

A New York Book Binge

by Oliver B. Pollak

I stopped at W. H. Smith bookstore at Omaha's Eppley Airport for some airplane reading. Nothing attracted me. An energetic Waterstones salesman persuaded me to purchase *Pasquale's Nose*, by former Omahan Michael Rips. I also purchased *How to be Alone*, by Jonathan Franzen. I read Rips first. His enchanting quirky Tuscan romp prompted me to call him at the Chelsea Hotel and arrange a Sunday breakfast meeting. . . more of that later.

Karen took Al Franken's paperback, *Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot and other Observations* rather than his more recent hardback, *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them, a Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*.

A trip to the New York Public Library Bookstore netted *The Word Museum: The Most Remarkable English Words Ever Forgotten*, by Jeffrey Kacirk; *Drek!: The Real Yiddish Your Bubbe Never Taught You*, by Yetta Emmes; *Quirky Qwerty: A Biography of the Typewriter and its Many Characters*, by Torbjörn Lundmark; and a reproduction of a 1924 publication, *The Typewriter: An Illustrated History*. Across the street at the recently reopened independent Coliseum bookstore I purchased *Book Lust: Recommended Reading for Every Mood, Moment*

and *Reason*, by Nancy Pearl of the Seattle Public Library.

My wife and I like the Jewish Charitable Cookbooks. Typically produced as fund raisers by sisterhoods, National Council of Jewish Women and Hadassah, they are distinguished by plastic and wire spiral bindings. Kitchen Arts & Letters on Lexington Avenue contains about 12,000 cookbooks and an additional 3,500 older out of print and antiquarian stock. We purchased *The Hawaii Passover Cookbook*, by Honolulu's Congregation Sof Ma'arav, *Dining with the Ancients*, by Pittsburgh's Rodef Shalom Biblical Botanical Garden, and *California Kosher*, by The Women's League of Congregation Adat Ari El Synagogue of North Hollywood.

Our last event in New York pleurably tied up our wonderful stay, breakfast at The Antique Café in Chelsea with Michael Rips. Michael gave us a tour of Chelsea and the Sunday Flea market scene. We met his wife, Artist Sheila Berger, and their five year old daughter, Nicolaia. They will be in Omaha when Sheila shows at the Bemis Gallery. We parted with words of friendship and plan to keep in contact by e-mail. Give yourself a treat, read *Pasquale's Nose*. ▲

The Book Guys in Omaha

by Linda Trout,
Omaha Public
Library

The spring fundraiser of the Omaha Public Library Foundation was a phenomenal success, drawing hundreds of bibliophiles to the W. Dale Clark Library, giving national recognition to Nebraska and to Omaha Public Library, and raising funds that exceeded anticipated goals. Under the guidance of Marcy Cotton, Executive Director of the Foundation, the Foundation, KIOS 91.5 FM Radio, and The Bookworm bookstore brought to Omaha appraiser Allan Stypeck, host Mike Cuthbert, and author Nick Basbanes of National Public Radio's (NPR) The Book Guys.

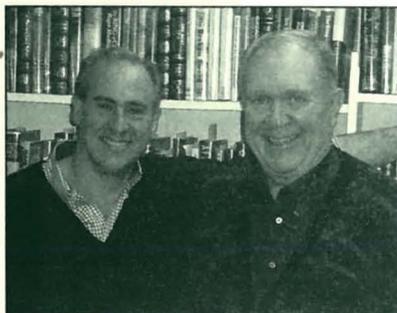
On May 6, KIOS 91.5 FM Radio's chief engineer and programming director Bob Coat taped Stypeck, Cuthbert, and Basbanes before a live audience at the W. Dale Clark Library. Those tapings were subsequently broadcast nationally during the two weeks following the taping. After the tapings, The Book Guys appraised hundreds of books, including a rare first

edition of *The Federalist Papers*, in "mint condition," which they valued at \$50,000.

That evening, one hundred and forty-five book enthusiasts and library supporters attended "Fact & Fiction on the Fortieth Floor" a \$100-per-person cocktail/buffet atop the new First National Bank Tower.

Joining The Book Guys crew was a new member, "Book Gal" Tara Kennedy from the Nebraska State Historical Society's Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha. Tara's specialty is paper preservation, which made her a natural to invite as part of this event. Radio audiences across the country can learn how to best care for older or damaged books and how to prevent damage when they hear Nebraska's own paper "conservationista" on NPR.

With the donations collected from book appraisals and the money raised from the cocktail buffet, the Foundation's Books for Kids project netted nearly \$18,000. ▲



Allan Stypeck (left) with
Book Guy Mike Cuthbert.

Nebraska Citizens Access UN-L Libraries

By **Jeanetta Druke**,
University of
Nebraska–Lincoln
Libraries

Would you like to locate an unusual quilt pattern? Learn more about the Lakota language? Find out what your town looked like in 1900? The University Libraries at University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UN–L) may be able to help. Use of collections and services are offered to Nebraska citizens as part of the university's land grant mission to the state. Some of the special collections and services are:

Library Cards: All Nebraska citizens, who are at least eighteen years old, are eligible to check out books and other materials.

Ask a Question: Anyone may pose questions by e-mail, chat, letter, phone, or in person. The reference librarians answer questions, recommend sources of information, help interpret library records, and make referrals. See <www.unl.edu/libr/rpg/help.html>.

Online Off-campus Access: Anyone may access the Libraries Web page (IRIS) at <iris.unl.edu> to search the library catalog; to link to other library catalogs around the world; to link to local, state, and federal government Web sites; and to access the *Internet Resources Collection*, a collection of public Web sites recommended by UN–L librarians.

Electronic On-campus Sources: Anyone may visit the University Libraries in person to search hundreds of licensed databases, although off-campus access to most electronic databases is limited for non-affiliates. These include full text and citation sources for medical journal articles, agriculture information, business resources, and *OCCLC WorldCat* (the worldwide catalog of forty million titles).

Print: The ten branches of the University Libraries have more than 2.6 million print volumes including a *First Folio of Shakespeare*, a page from a *Gutenberg Bible*, scholarly works of non-fiction, an extensive periodical collection, a children's collection, and fiction. Some of the unique collections include:

- Special collections of papers and other materials on Willa Cather and Mari Sandoz
- American Quilt Study Group collection of research on quilters, quilts, and quilt making with 6,000 monographs, journal volumes, exhibition catalogs, and ephemeral items

Architectural Slide Collection and Sanborn

Maps: The slide collection in the Architectural Library contains more than 100,000 images of buildings, city plans, interiors, and furnishings. Many are from Nebraska. The *Digital Sanborn Maps* database contains maps "created to assist fire insurance companies assess the risk associated with insuring a particular property" that "chart the growth and development" of 138 Nebraska towns and cities from

1876–1970. These two resources are invaluable for local historians and genealogists.

Rokahr Family Archive: The Music Library's Rokahr Family Archive was donated to UN–L by Jack Rokahr. The archive of more than 4,500 scores includes major collections of scores of French, Italian, German and Austrian operas, operettas, musicals dating from 1764, and posters, caricatures, recordings and videos. For more information see <www.unl.edu/libr/lib/music/rokahr.html>.

U.S. Patent and Trademark Depository Library: The staff of the Engineering Library on city campus assist with preliminary searching of patents and trademarks in public databases and perform complete patent searches. The library holds the *Official Gazette of the Patent and Trademark Office* and patents on CD-ROM and DVD, copies patents and trademarks for a fee, and provides information on the patent and trademark filing process. For more information see <www.unl.edu/libr/lib/engr/uspdl.html>.

Indians of the Plains Collections: Love Library is building a comprehensive collection on Indians of the Great Plains. Works include ethnographies, difficult-to-locate museum and archeological reports, early studies published by the Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnology, studies of contemporary issues, and reference works on U.S. federal Indian law and treaties.

Rainbow Division: The records of the U.S. Army 42nd Rainbow Division and of the Rainbow Division Veterans Association include correspondence, newspaper clippings, books, unit histories, rosters, photographs, and scrapbooks. They are heavily used by military historians and family researchers. For more information, see <www.unl.edu/libr/lib/spec/rainbow.html>.

Cooperating Collection of the Foundation

Center: Individuals and non-profit organizations use these resources to identify foundations for grant proposals. The centerpiece of the collection is *FC Search*, a database that allows people to enter terms describing their grant topic, the type of funding needed, and the geographic focus and to retrieve a list of foundations likely to fund their proposal. For more information see <www.unl.edu/libr/service/grants.html>.

These are only a few of the special collections available in the Libraries. To learn more contact the librarians via the **Ask a Question** service described above. Save time and travel expense by contacting the librarians before visiting the library to confirm that information will be readily available and that someone will be available to help you. ▲



Fragments Celebrating the Centenary of the Louisiana Purchase

by Oliver B. Pollak

"Jefferson's America and Napoleon's France," an exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art, is a thoughtful presentation of Native American, Federal, and French artifacts and documents. Documentary fragments are like shards of a clay pot. They provide an incomplete sense of shape and story. I found the following Nebraska library records as a byproduct of my work on the history of Nebraska's Carnegie libraries.

The Nebraska Library Commission records at the Nebraska State Historical Society contain a letter dated August 26, 1903 from H.G. Shedd in Omaha to Miss N. Edna Bullock in Lincoln. It refers to the return of two books on Shakespeare checked out to the Ashland Woman's Club. The letterhead catches the eye. H. G. Shedd was Assistant Secretary of The Nebraska State Commission to The Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

On November 15, 1904, Bullock issued a memo to "Library Associations in Rural Neighborhoods" in which she wrote, "When the corn is husked and hauled to the cribs and elevators, people have more time to read." She recommended "such topics as the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Panama Canal, the great Siberian railroad, Japan and Russia" as "well worth special programs."

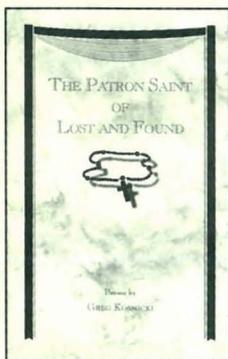
Bullock prepared a photograph and postcard exhibition featuring Nebraska libraries for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. She reported on May 8, 1905 that "Our exhibit of library photographs at St. Louis was awarded a gold medal. We are anxious to add to our collection. We are particularly interested in having pictures of as many of our traveling library stations as possible. We may send the pictures to Portland soon. Please help to make the collection complete." She was keen on acquiring exterior and interior pictures to display at the 1905 American Library Association convention in Portland.

To celebrate Library Day, October 20, 1905, Bullock recommended that "no more picturesque or thrilling incident of exploration adorns the pages of our history" than the "exceptionally perilous undertaking" of Lewis and Clark. She recommended five books, listed at \$8.85, which could be obtained at St. Paul Book & Stationary Co. for \$7.08 plus \$.75 postage. Thus did the Nebraska Public Library Commission celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. ▲

Review: *The Patron Saint of Lost and Found*

by Greg Kosmicki
A Lone Willow
Press Chapbook,
2003

Review by
Gerry Cox



The Patron Saint of Lost and Found is Greg Kosmicki's latest chapbook, exploring lost and found relationships, entities, and items. The title poem tells of an ordinary event with an extraordinary flair after the poet recalls the loss of his Catechism in the fifth grade and his prayer to "the Patron Saint of Lost and Found/ or Lost Causes or something like that," whose name he now has forgotten. As a boy, he found the lost item after he had to buy a new one with his own money. Now, after "rummaging around/...through the clutter in my head/ where the Saint whose name I have long since lost/ stayed, and searched, and found this poem for me."

Much of Kosmicki's poetry concerns his brother, as in the poem, "Orbison." He is reminded of his brother's love for Roy Orbison's songs, which he hears thirty-four years after his brother's death. Kosmicki was only sixteen when his brother died at age twenty-one. In "The Visit," an emotional poem of understanding, he talks to his brother's spirit. "The Body's Desire" tells of his ambivalence about his lost memories, "I want to/ remember

and I want to forget and don't know/ which one of those impulses is stronger./ Maybe the body's desire/ is just to have a memory and leave it at that."

Greg Kosmicki, whose poems appear frequently in literary magazines and anthologies, has published seven books and chapbooks in the past sixteen years and has established a publishing company, the Backwaters Press in Omaha. *The Guide to Nebraska Authors* (1998) quotes Kosmicki, "I write mainly about relationships between the people I live and work with—nearly always in the context of 'personal' poems...writing out of the events of daily life attaches significance to them, and that it somehow works in the poems (if I'm lucky) that the seemingly trivial stuff of day-to-day living becomes a metaphor for the larger meanings of life."

Readers connect with his poetry as it is relaxed, based in Nebraska ways. We recognize the familiar ways in Kosmicki's poetry and are led to a new understanding of their significance. ▲

Bibliofile: Meet Kathy Johnson

by Gerry Cox

Kathy Johnson grew up in the Midwest, with her nose in a book. She took it out long enough to play violin, race around in the nearby woods with her friends, climb trees, and make her mother sigh for a child who didn't rip dresses and lose buttons. Her two sisters fit that bill nicely. Once she more or less stopped climbing trees, she went to college and discovered Pogo sticks and an English major. She also developed a taste for travel, which she hasn't outgrown. After library school, she moved to Lincoln, started work at the UN-L Libraries, earned a Master of Arts in English, married, and raised a child, several guinea pigs, a hamster, fish, and cats. The child and the cats are flourishing. She still has her nose in a book whenever possible and has learned to sew on her own buttons. She reports that she greatly enjoyed working with all sorts of people through the Nebraska Center for the Book. Gerry Cox interviewed her in Kathy's last days of service as Nebraska Center for the Book President.



Q. How long have you been at Love Library?

A. I've worked at the UN-L Libraries for thirty years. For half a dozen years in the 1980s, I ran the Architecture Library, but otherwise I've worked in Love Library.

Q. What encouraged you to enter your work?

A. The "what" is that I love books and reading, but there are a number of careers that can involve those things. For me, it was not so much a "what" as a "who." An English professor suggested that I might enjoy being a librarian. She was right.

Q. What changes have you seen during your years as a librarian?

A. The most sweeping change has been the shift from paper and print-based research tools and resources to electronic. I learned to catalog when we still used manual typewriters and to do reference when all the resources were paper-based. By 1976, I was doing "computer searches" and have increasingly used electronic resources ever since. However, I still prefer to read a printed book.

Q. What has been your most satisfying experience as a librarian?

A. I especially enjoy figuring out how to help people find answers to difficult or challenging questions. Selecting books for the collection is right up there, too.

Q. What book are you reading now?

A. *The Number 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* by Alexander McCall Smith.

Q. Who is your favorite novelist? Who is your favorite character?

A. Favorite novelist? I don't have one favorite, but I especially enjoy the works of Ellis Peters (Cadfael mysteries), Dorothy L. Sayers, J.R.R.

Tolkien, and J.K. Rowling. Favorite character? Jane Eyre.

Q. When and where is your favorite time to read?

A. My favorite place to read is on the comfortable old couch in my living room, in the evening. I'm often joined by a companionable cat who purrs beside my head.

Q. What three books would you take with you to a desert island?

A. By books, do you mean "titles" or physical volumes? If titles, then I would haul along the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (useful for building a small shelter when not in use as reading material), a good edition of Shakespeare's works, and the print version of *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*. Alternatively, how about a solar operated laptop computer that I could use to call up books on the Internet? I suppose that if I were to be really practical, I'd toss in a good first aid manual or medical book and drop the *OED*, but I'd rather have the dictionary.

Q. What is the first book you remember reading?

A. The first book that I remember reading by myself was *Heidi*. I missed a month of first grade, so the book kept me busy for quite a spell. My copy of *Heidi* was nearly all text, with a few sparse black and white pictures. I remember being a bit scornful of the school readers, because they had pictures on every page (until about fourth or fifth grade).

Q. What is your favorite children's book?

A. *The Silver Chair*, by C. S. Lewis, although Rowling's *The Prisoner of Azkaban* is a close second.

Q. What poem or lines do you wish you had learned "by heart?"

A. I'd love to be able to recite the Robert Fagles translation of *The Odyssey* by heart, but at +/- 500 pages, it's beyond my capacity. (It's a great read-aloud book, though.)

Q. What poem or lines do you like to recite?

A. The last section of Yeat's "Among School Children." (Labor is blossoming or dancing where/ the body is not bruised to pleasure soul/ nor beauty born out of its own despair/ nor blear eyed wisdom out of midnight oil./ O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer/ are you the leaf, the blossom, or the bole?/ O body swayed to music, O brightening glance/ How can you tell the dancer from the dance?)

Q. Who would be your ideal literary dining companion?

A. I would enjoy dining with the essayist Lewis Thomas (author of *Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony* and other works), if he were still alive.

The NCB News



Calendar of Events:



**THE NEBRASKA
CENTER FOR
THE BOOK**

an affiliate of the Library of Congress

c/o Nebraska Library Commission
The Atrium
1200 N Street, Suite 120
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-2023
34-00-00

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**Win the Journals of the
Lewis & Clark Expedition**
Call 402-488-1240

- "Journey Into Christmas,"** Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation, Contact: Teresa Lorensen, Dec. 6, 7, 13, 14,
402-994-3855, <bsafmus@yahoo.com>, <www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/bsaf> 20, 21, 27, 28 Elmwood
- John Neihardt Center Holiday Concert:** Siouxland Master Chorale, Shrine Chanters,
Contact: 888-777-4667, <neihardt@gpcom.net> Dec. 14 Bancroft
- Holiday Concert:** Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial & Educational Foundation
Red Cloud Opera House, Contact: Betty Kort, 402-746-2653, <wcpm@gpcom.net>
<www.willacather.org> Dec. 14 Red Cloud
- "William Jennings Bryan: Nebraska's Mythic Great Commoner," Steve Larrick**
John Neihardt Center, Contact: 888-777-4667, <neihardt@gpcom.net> Jan. 11 Bancroft
- John H. Ames Reading Series: Essayist Lisa Knopp,** Author of *The Nature of Home*,
Jane Pope Geske Nebraska Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors, Contact: Joanna Lloyd,
402-441-8516, <heritage@rand.lcl.lib.ne.us>, <www.lcl.lib.ne.us/depts/hr/front.htm> Jan. 15 Lincoln
- Paul Olson Seminar: Lewis & Clark Expedition, "A Corps of Volunteers for
Northwestern Discovery,"** Stephen Witte, UN-L Department of History, Contact: Great Plains Studies,
402-472-3082, <kweide1@unl.edu>, <www.unl.edu/plains/events/seminars.html> Jan. 21 Lincoln
- Used Book Sale,** Lincoln Area Retired Teachers, Westfield Shoppingtown Gateway,
Contact: 402-466-9022, 402-489-6438 Jan. 29-Feb. 1 Lincoln
- Singer, Songwriter Joe Watson:** John Neihardt Center
Contact: 888-777-4667, <neihardt@gpcom.net> Feb. 9 Bancroft
- Bess Streeter Aldrich Birthday Celebration,** Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation,
Contact: Teresa Lorensen, 402-994-3855, <bsafmus@yahoo.com>,
<www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/bsaf> Feb. 15 Elmwood
- Paul Olson Seminar: Lewis and Clark Voyage of Discovery,**
Dr. Richard Fruehling on Medical Care, Contact: Great Plains Studies, 402-472-3082,
<kweide1@unl.edu>, <www.unl.edu/plains/events/seminars.html> Feb. 18 Lincoln
- John H. Ames Reading Series: Writer Brent Spencer,** Jane Pope Geske Nebraska Heritage
Room of Nebraska Authors, Contact: Joanna Lloyd, 441-8516, <heritage@rand.lcl.lib.ne.us>,
<www.lcl.lib.ne.us/depts/hr/front.htm> Feb. 19 Lincoln
- 30th Annual Nebraska State Reading Council Conference**
Contact: Tom Hansen, 308-865-8537, <hansent@unk.edu> Feb. 26-28 Kearney