

The NCB News

Volume 14

Spring 2004

No. 1

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

Jackson Fisher of Lincoln Named Letters about Literature National Winner

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, in partnership with Target Stores and in cooperation with Nebraska Center for the Book and Weekly Reader Corporation, is pleased to announce that a Nebraska student writer was selected as a national winner in the 2004 Letters about Literature contest.

Jackson Fisher, Lincoln, was honored for his letter to Carl Hiaasen, author of *Hoot*.



Winners honored by Governor Mike Johanns (far right).

Jackson, a fourth grader at Morley Elementary School, stated in his letter, "Your book has given me so many ideas. Ideas for today how to respect and act towards

people I don't yet know regardless of how different they appear. Ideas for tomorrow how to work together with other people and put my efforts towards a good cause. Ideas for my future how to use my imagination and spur new ideas so that I can someday create books for kids that are smart, funny,

and suspenseful. Who knows, maybe one day you'll read one of my books?" Readers in grades four through twelve wrote personal letters to authors, living or dead, from any genre (fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic) explaining how that work changed their way of thinking about the world or themselves

State-level winners from Nebraska are **Kelsey Springsguth**, St. Libory; **Molly Keran**, Lincoln; **Amber Hoffman**, Omaha; **Philip Thrailkill**, North Platte; and **Alexander J. Lin**, Lincoln. Honorable Mention was awarded to **Paige Yowell** and **Stephanie Borgia**, both of Lincoln.

Winners receive cash awards at the national and state levels. Nebraska winners were honored by the governor at a ceremony at the State Capitol. As a national winner, Jackson Fisher will receive a Target gift card and a trip to Washington D.C. to read his letter during the National Book Festival on October 9, 2004. The next contest is expected to begin this fall. For more information see www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/letters.html.

Book Award Nominations Sought

The **Nebraska Book Awards**, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book and supported by the Nebraska Library Commission, recognizes and honors books written by Nebraska authors, published by Nebraska publishers, set in Nebraska, or relating to Nebraska. Submit nominations for the 2004 Competition (books with a 2003 copyright) by **June 30**.

Books must be professionally published, have an International Standard Book Number (ISBN), and be bound. Books may be entered in one or more of the following categories: Anthology, Children/Young Adult, Cover Design/Illustrations, Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry. Certificates will be awarded to the winners in each category. Award winners will be



announced at the Nebraska Book Festival on September 17-18, 2004 at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. The winning books will be displayed at the Book Festival. Winners are entitled to display award stickers on their book covers.

For more information and entry forms see the Library Commission home page, www.nlc.state.ne.us, search on NCB Book Awards or contact Mary Geibel, 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665, e-mail: mgeibel@nlc.state.ne.us for print. Send the entry form, three copies of the book, and the \$40 entry fee to NCB Book Awards, Nebraska Library Commission, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023.

What IF Libraries Went Away?

Guest Editorial
by Rivkah Sass,
Omaha Public
Library

Libraries represent what is good and valuable and lasting in our society. They exist to serve a variety of functions that people in all walks of life can value and appreciate. Recently, the role and value of libraries of all types is being questioned, not overtly but in a much more insidious fashion.

With many colleges and universities increasing their student bodies through distance education programs that provide no physical access to libraries, the question of whether we need academic libraries has been raised. The number of special librarians whose libraries have been closed (large, previously well-funded corporate libraries) is on the rise. School libraries in many states are virtually nonexistent, or are chronically under-funded and understaffed. Public libraries, often the most visible and tangible libraries in their communities, are under siege in ways many of us who've been in the profession for decades, never thought to see again. We find ourselves paring hours, praying that long-time, experienced and valuable staff will retire so that we can save money on salaries, and reducing our materials budgets (again!).

Public libraries, when they must compete with police and fire departments, will always come up short because the argument is that they are not essential services. Neither are schools if one doesn't have children. Neither are emergency services if one never needs them. Essential should be measured by what the world would look like if the service ceased to exist. Viewed this way, libraries would fare better. I think of it like this: a corporation considering a move checks out schools, parks, and libraries to see if corporate families can thrive in a new setting. However, when forced to balance the budget, parks and libraries always suffer the first blows. It makes no

sense from an economic or from a quality of life perspective.

Imagine what our world would look like if there were no libraries. Imagine if no one cared enough to chronicle and organize the record of our culture, past and present. What if there was no place to visit, to read about learning disabilities, to learn to crochet, to prepare for a wedding, or just to sit and enjoy? What if, as I've heard so often since coming to Nebraska, people only bought their books? John Grisham and Nora Roberts might be happy, but what if no one thought it was important to read Jane Austen, Billy Collins, or Peter Drucker?

Seattle Public Library made the news when it shut the doors of all its libraries for a week in order to respond to a \$1 million budget cut. By calling for a week-long furlough Seattle avoided the syndrome of whittling away hours until there is not much left to cut. The Seattle solution was swift and visible. Close the buildings AND the web site for an entire week and everyone feels the effects immediately and profoundly. I understand that this would not work for every library, but it certainly sent a message! I've wondered what it might be like if all public libraries shut down, even for a day. I like to think that people would notice, that they would think about what life would be like if they couldn't walk into the library and share in the wonders that we have gathered, organized, and made available to them.

I think libraries have a bright future, but it is essential that we remember our unique role in the world, that we change with the changing needs of our users, and that we keep one foot firmly planted in our rich history and one arm extended to the future. ▲

The NCB News

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2004 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meetings

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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A Short History of the Nebraska Book Festival

By Twyla Hansen,
Poet and Horticulturist

Since 1991, the fall gathering formerly known as the Nebraska Literature Festival has been well documented. Today, The Nebraska Book Festival is our state's premier showcase of literary talent, paying tribute to past and present writers, books, and publishing, with a variety of new themes, venues and audiences each year.

Less is known about the Festival's early history. Exact dates, locations, and details are filed away in boxes and memories. What is known is that its humble beginnings took place at Northeast Community College (NECC) in the 1980s. The idea is credited to two English instructors, Paul Shuttleworth and Larry Holland. They first started the *Elkhorn Review* magazine, a visiting writer's series, a summer writing conference and workshop, and then, the Nebraska Poetry Festival in 1985 and 1986. Barbara Schmitz, retired NECC English instructor, also participated in organizing the festival.

Larry Holland is deceased. Paul "Red" Shuttleworth (now teaching at a community college in Washington State) said the magazine, workshop, and festival were all about writing. "It was a very exciting time," Shuttleworth said, "all poetry, all the time. Poetry, poetry, poetry. We made our readers happy and our writers happy. We encouraged a writer's growth and stuck with them as contributors. We gave out two prizes—the Elkhorn Prize—one for a Nebraska writer and one national. And the festival seemed like a great way to get people together."

After 1986, the Nebraska Poetry Festival became the Nebraska Literature Festival, hosted in a variety of Nebraska communities. In 2002, the name was changed to the Nebraska Book Festival to reflect the broader focus of the gathering. The Festival is co-sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Humanities Council, with support from the Nebraska Library Commission. Each year, an organization hosts the Festival, providing local arrangements and programming. Many local organizations and individuals have contributed to the Festivals over the years.

2004 Nebraska Book Festival

On September 17—18, the University of Nebraska at Kearney will be hosting the Thirteenth Annual Nebraska Book Festival, sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Humanities Council. Co-sponsors this year will include the Nebraska Library Commission, University of Nebraska Press, Kearney Public Library, and Kearney Hub.

The Festival will include a day for high school students on Friday, a reception and showing of the movie, *Tully*, on Friday evening, as well as activities, presentations, workshops, and readings throughout Saturday. All activities (except the meal at the noon luncheon) are **free of charge**. See www.unk.edu/acad/english/nebraskabookfestival/home.html.

Books Alive! 2003 Nebraska Book Festival

"Books Alive!"—the twelfth annual Nebraska Book Festival, co-sponsored by Creighton University, the Nebraska Humanities Council, and Nebraska Center for the Book—was held October 24–25, 2003 at Creighton University in Omaha. Additional sponsors were the Nebraska Library Commission, Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, Borders Books, Hot Shops Art Center, Jewish Community Center, Medusa Project, and Nebraska Book Arts Center. Festival coordinators were Timothy R. Austin and Brent Spencer of Creighton University.

Nearly fifty presenters (writers, literature specialists, teachers, performers, bookmakers, and cooks) led discussions, workshops, panels, readings, and book discussions. School Day on Friday included activities on Lewis & Clark's Omaha Journal, storytelling, and a bookmaking. National Book Award Finalist Ron Hansen highlighted an evening reception. A screening of *Stone Reader*, an award-winning documentary film about the love of books, preceded the dinner and discussion with filmmaker/director Mark Moskowitz. Attendance on Saturday was estimated at five hundred. ▲

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. ▲

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Please send this form and a check to: Nebraska Center for the Book
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Review: *The Dante Club*

by **Matthew Pearl**, Random House, 2003
ISBN: 0812971043

Reviewed by **Barbara Rixstine**, University of Nebraska—Lincoln

The place is Boston. The time is 1865, just after the Civil War, when its many and varied losses have cast an ever-tightening loop of poverty around the survivors, if survivors they indeed were. Tempers are short. Life is cheap. The war hangs on in memories and relationships and, most of all, in the sense of injustice felt by many Americans on both sides.

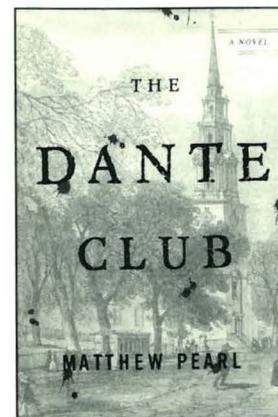
But the name bandied about among four American literati of the time isn't Sherman or Lee. It's Dante. Dante Alighieri, the writer of Dante's *Inferno*, and *The Divine Comedy*. In America, Dante's work is only available in the original Italian, a language snubbed at Harvard as vastly inferior to Greek and Latin. Therefore, these literati (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell and their publisher, J. T. Fields) seek to translate Dante's work into English, so that all of America can enjoy it as they do. They form The Dante Club with George Washington Greene and meet each week to translate and talk over their work. Then Judge Artemus Prescott Healey dies and dies horribly, in a tortured elongation of a hell gradually realized to be taken straight from *The Inferno* and Longfellow, Russell, and Holmes must find the killer, who can

only be a scholar as learned as they.

Taut, suspenseful, and full of bon mots from and about the principals involved, *The Dante Club* is a *New York Times* best-seller and likely to be one of the top book club choices throughout the country. The weave of fact and fiction produces a texture of wealth, intellect, and genuine scholarship (instead of the simplistic qualities found in many popular mysteries).

Warning: there are grisly parts better suited to students of forensic entomology than students of literature. Sensitive readers can skip some of that to speed ahead to the denouement. It's well worth the trip.

Ed. Note: Barbara Rixstine will discuss *The Dante Club* with Kit and John Keller and Mary Jo Ryan on KZUM Radio's *Booktalk* on June 2 at 6:30 P.M. CDT, 89.3 in Lincoln, <www.KZUM.org> on the Web. ▲



Review: *Sergeant Patrick Gass, Chief Carpenter*

by **William Kloefkorn**
Ellis Press, 2002
ISBN: 0944024432

Reviewed by **Richard Miller**, Nebraska Library Commission

This book contains free verse written from the perspective of, and in the presumed voice of, Patrick Gass, chief carpenter on the Lewis & Clark expedition (1803—1806). Nebraska State Poet William Kloefkorn delved into Gass's journals from the trip, as well as those of Lewis and Clark and several other members of the expeditionary force to call attention to "a man who deserves more credit than thus far he has been given."

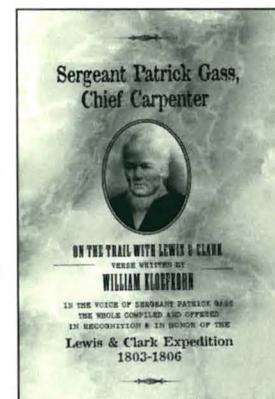
The author is drawn to the "poetry in him," despite Gass's rather stolid visage and reserved nature. (One look at the portrait on the book's cover conveys the latter quite well.) Gass's almost mystical love of working with wood, his loyalty to the expedition, his spirit of adventure "that wants to discover what lies beyond the next bend in the river," and the occasional appearance of his wry sense of humor make Gass a wonderful vehicle for Kloefkorn.

Gass also displays a sensitive side without becoming maudlin. Examples include his description

of the touching scene when Sacagawea meets her brother following years apart from her tribe; Gass's commentary on possessions (Sacagawea by her husband Charbonneau, York by his master Clark);

and his description of a beautiful meadow filled with wild flowers, "where the first bird sang. . . where the first flower bloomed." His optimism shines through. This is supported by what we know of the man's life. He turned fifty during the expedition, returned to St. Louis with his original flask and hatchet, married at age sixty, raised seven children, and outlived all other members of the Corps of Discovery, according to Kloefkorn. The reader can believe that.

Ed. Note: William Kloefkorn, Nebraska State Poet, will read from his book at Wayne State College on August 23, 2004. ▲



Writers' Conference Set for June 19-25

by **Brent
Spencer,**
Creighton
University

Plans are underway for the second annual Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference, to be held on the campus of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln, June 19-25. The conference brings together writers from all across the country at every stage of development, from seasoned professionals to talented beginners.

The program includes seven weekend workshops and eleven week-long workshops in poetry, novel, short story, writing to change the world, memoir, publishing, writing for television, documentary film, and screenwriting. Consultations with New York

literary agents and the Editor-in-Chief of Penguin Books are also available for week-long participants.

Faculty for 2004 include Rita Mae Brown, Carl Phillips, Robert Olen Butler, Pam Houston, Mary Pipher, Jesse Lee Kercheval, Jane Barnes, Hilda Raz, Elizabeth Dewberry, Sharon Oard Warner, Grace Bauer, Denise Brady, Marcos Villatoro, agents Emma Sweeney and Wendy Weil, and Penguin Editor-in-Chief Jane Von Mehren.

In addition to the workshops, several events are free and open to the public, including readings, receptions, and panel discussions. For more information and to register, visit the conference Web site at <www.nswc.org>. ▲



NCB Web Site Adds Links

by **Jeanetta
Drueke,**
University of
Nebraska—Lincoln
Libraries

Want a recommendation for a good book? Visit Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB) on the Web at <www.unl.edu/NCB>. Click on Links for online book reviews and booklists. Want to find a copy of the book? Link to your local library, local bookseller, or online bookseller. Want to talk about the book? Link to Usenet book groups, book discussion listservs, and online book groups.

In addition to links to Web sites about books, the site has current and past issues of *NCB News*, a calendar of events, information on NCB awards and programs, and membership forms.

Send comments and suggestions to the Web site developers (Judellen Thornton-Jaringe, Jeanetta Drueke, and Kathy Johnson) at <mdrueke1@unl.edu>. ▲

Review: *Deep West: A Literary Tour of Wyoming*

edited by **Michael
Shay, David
Romtvedt and
Linn Rounds**
Wyoming Center for
the Book, 2003
ISBN: 0-8032-8853-0

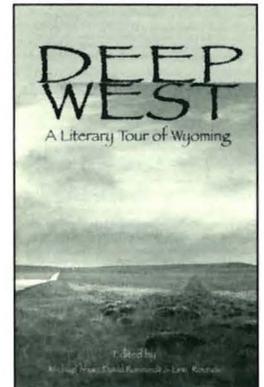
Reviewed by
Jeanetta Drueke

In *Deep West: A Literary Tour of Wyoming*, a publication of the Wyoming Center for the Book, is a description of an eight year old girl in Guinea filling a basin with water from the Niger. Mark Jenkins writes, "Her sarong is floating in folds against her, the gourd resting on the water. She unties the gourd from the twine and begins to scoop up cups of brown river. It is a smooth motion. She dips the gourd, gently raises it above her head out over the lip of the basin, and empties it. She cannot see where she is pouring the water. It is somewhere above her head, only her hand knows where. Nothing moves on her body but one arm. She repeats the motion again and again. It is a very large basin and the gourd is small."

When we read the author's accompanying essay on writing and place, we learn why this is a Wyoming story as well an African one, "I sense the landscape of my homeland has influenced my language. Wyoming geography is spare, elegant, and durable—three characteristics I strive for in my writing."

The nineteen writers contributing to *Deep West* live in Wyoming. Some of the stories, poems, essays, and memoirs are about Wyoming. Some are not. This is a sampler of works produced by contemporary writers, shaped (as we all are) by a multitude of factors. Place among them.

Among the selections are Barbara Smith's poem on tough passages on Interstate 80; Annie Proulx's excerpt from her story of the Coffeepot Ranch where Car Scrope could hear "its grass mocking him;" Linda Hasselstrom's essay on what she learned from her horse; and Tom Rea's poem, "Listening to Miles Davis Play Bye Bye Blackbird while my Teenage Daughter Weeps into the Telephone." This is a fine collection that showcases the robust literary life of the contemporary American West. ▲



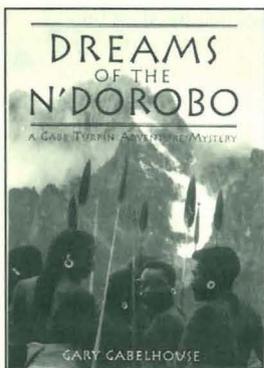
Review:

Dreams of the N'dorobo: Mystery, Murder, and Mysticism in the Shadows of Africa

by Gary
Gabelhouse

The Lyons Press,
2003
ISBN: 1592280668

Reviewed by
Brent Spencer,
Creighton University



In *Dreams of the N'dorobo: Mystery, Murder, and Mysticism in the Shadows of Africa*, Lincoln resident Gary Gabelhouse has written a two-listed adventure novel that's part Indiana Jones-style adventure and part sensitive anthropological appreciation of another culture. The author has based his tale of mystery and adventure on fascinating material. At the heart of the novel is a mysterious African tribe known as the Ndorobo, who live on Mt. Kenya.

Gabe Turpin, the hero of the novel, is a middle-aged anthropologist who rescues an African shaman from torturers, only to become his student, learning the ways of "dream walking," meditation that takes the form of teleportation. As he masters the mystical way of knowing, he comes to terms with his own troubled personal history. But there is a dark side to "dream walking," as Turpin's hard-won knowledge leads him to learn of a dark plot that he must stop at the risk of his life. The novel teems with magic and murder, with CIA agents, petty thugs, and the majesty

and squalor of life. If there's a problem with the novel, it's that the dialogue can sometimes sound a little wooden, but the fast-paced adventure and the sensitive attention to African people and places more than make up for this shortcoming.

The author, no stranger to adventure, comes by his material honestly. He has led many climbing expeditions in Africa, South America, Europe, Asia, and elsewhere, and lived for a long time in Kenya, where he led five expeditions to Mt. Kenya. His exploits led to a nomination to The Explorers Club in 1986.

The action is fast and furious as the novel's hero deals handily with everything from murder to insurrection to political and cultural conflict. And all of it is set against the rich tapestry of Africa and the mysterious ways of a reclusive tribe. In addition to being a good adventure story, *Dreams of the N'dorobo* is also a book with a message, about the toleration of difference and respect for the other, no matter how different that "other" may seem. ▲

Review:

Burn

by Sean Doolittle,
Uglytown
Productions, 2003
ISBN: 0-9724412-4-7

Reviewed by
Barbara Rixstine,
University of
Nebraska—Lincoln

Wildfires are rapidly spreading through California but they're not the problem for Andrew Kindler. He's got his own out-of-control burn. Hiding out in Los Angeles from some Mob trouble back East, Kindler finds that guys like him always end up where it's hot ... and getting hotter.

It starts with the murder of Gregor Tavlin. Tavlin was an exercise guru: well-known, good-looking, and in the best of shape. But Tavlin's not doing ab flexes these days. He's in the morgue, with a broken neck, a shattered pelvis, a collapsed ribcage, and dead tree branches in his eyes. He also managed to leak blood and cerebrospinal fluid all over his own car trunk. Now that makes police detective Adrian Timms suspicious. Timm finds Kindler. So do a couple of Mob guys. And Kindler, in turn, finds a lot of hot, hot trouble that has nothing to do with Los Angeles' continually soaring temperature.

Burn offers plenty of suspects trying to muddy the proverbial investigative waters. There's the rich heiress with bulimia, her missing twin brother, the

lovesick public relations tout who's in love with the heiress, the exercise guru you'll love to hate, and plenty more. Timms' suspicions and Kindler's own problems take the reader on a wild and funny ride through Southern California's people and pleasures. Doolittle's got his pacing down and thankfully adds a very good ear for dialogue.

"You know what they say," Andrew turned to the next article, which he'd just found in the August 6 edition at the bottom of the woodbin: Foul Play Suspected in Tavlin Death. 'Guns don't kill people. It's the bullets.'" Doolittle, who lives in Omaha, will be part of the "Mayhem in the Midlands" conference, sponsored by Omaha Public Library and Lincoln City Libraries, May 27-30. His first novel, *Dirt*, was named one of the 100 Best Books of 2001 by the editors of Amazon.com. *Burn* is a great follow-up. ▲



Bibliofile: Meet *A Great Plains Reader*

by **Jeanetta Druke**

A Great Plains Reader, University of Nebraska Press, 2003, is a welcome collection for anyone interested in the Great Plains and in the relationships among land, culture, and people.

Like the Great Plains, the book is notable for its variety, offering poems, short stories, essays, and excerpts from novels and works of non-fiction. Two university faculty with strong credentials in Great Plains literature edited the collection. Diane Quantic teaches English at Wichita State University and P. Jane Haden teaches English at the University Of Nevada—Las Vegas. Diane Quantic answered a few questions about her work on *A Great Plains Reader* in an e-mail interview.

Q. How did this project come about?

A. I think it first occurred to me when I was teaching a series of seminars (on Literature and Ecology on the Great Plains) sponsored by the Kansas Humanities Council for high school teachers. For three years, I put together huge books of readings. It occurred to me that I had enough material for a book. Make that several books.

Q. How did you decide how to define the Great Plains?

A. The definition has arisen in large part from the reading I have done over the last thirty years or so. Years ago I started out focusing on the Middle West, the region from Ohio to Kansas and north but I soon realized that a work set on the high plains of Kansas or Nebraska was very different from one about Winesburg, Ohio.

Then, as I read works in ecology, history, and other fields that considered regional differences I discovered that other scholars saw the Great Plains as a distinct region too. Most scholars agree that the core of the region includes Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, and the southern reaches of the contiguous Canadian provinces. Parts of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Colorado, Oklahoma and sometimes western Texas are often included as well. Familiarity with the Indian tribes of the region also reveals distinct cultures based on the great distances the people traveled in search of buffalo and good grass. Their legends and rituals reflect a distinct feel for the Great Plains as a place to live.

Q. What is distinctive about Great Plains literature?

A. There are certain common features of a Great Plains work. I jokingly say that a work has to mention the "sea of grass" in the first ten pages to qualify—but the truth is, I'm not often wrong. Great Plains literature about the white settlement and the subsequent establishment of social and cultural institutions focuses on the transformation of the land, the vagaries of the weather, the marginal lives of people who live at the mercy of weather and markets, and the physical and social isolation of

farms and small towns across the region. In other words, the literature is defined by the geographical, physical, social, and cultural features of the region. This is true of much of the Indian literature of the region as well. In these works, there is a much closer relationship between the people and the place(s) they occupy.

Q. How does landscape or place affect an author and therefore a work?

A. Many Great Plains writers have been profoundly affected by the Great Plains. Linda Hasselstrom, Willa Cather, Mari Sandoz, Kent Haruf, Kathleen Norris, Sharon Butala, Larry Woiwode, and Dan O'Brien have all written about the need to be connected to their particular places on the Great Plains—even if they are not living in the region. Kent Haruf, for example, surrounded himself with all kinds of icons and symbols of eastern Colorado in his basement writing room in Illinois. Mari Sandoz called her apartment in New York City her outpost among the Philistines.

Q. How has Great Plains literature evolved in the last century?

A. There is a kind of chronology: the children of the settlers and the first Indian children to be educated in mission schools told the stories of their parents and their own upended lives. Many of these works reflected the American myths of the garden or the desert, the democratic utopia, or the safety valve that the Great Plains represented at one point or another in the first century of settlement. But since World War II, the stories have changed. Someone like Wright Morris uses the familiar myths in unfamiliar ways. . . . Other writers introduce new threats to the land.

But much remains the same: the marginal nature of the place, both physically and psychologically. The farms and towns continue to lose young people. In many parts of the Great Plains, time has not brought a sense of a permanent community.

Q. Has the importance of place changed?

A. Not really. The land is still a central character in the stories. The threats are often new. Some of the people are meaner, more like villains.

Q. What did you learn about Great Plains literature—or about any aspects of the project—and how you will apply it to future research and thinking?

A. Well, the organization of the book worked out well. Rather than a strict chronology, we have sections on nature writing, exploration, settlement, and community. The Indian selections, edited by Jane Haden, are included in all parts of the book. We see the Indian experience as an integral part of the region, not a separate time or place in Great Plains history and literature





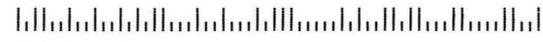
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**Nebraska Student Selected
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Literature Contest Winner**



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THE ATRIUM SUITE 120
1200 N STREET
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**Calendar
of Events:**

- Get Caught Reading Month** May Nationwide
- Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery Through the Eyes of a Crew Member**
Contact: Lauran Lofgren, Wayne Public Library, 402-375-3135, <wpublib@cityofwayne.org>, <www.wsc.edu> .. May 26 Wayne
- Lady Vestey Festival**, Contact: Superior Area Chamber of Commerce, 402-879-3419,
<www.victorianfestival.info/> May 28-30 Superior
- Mayhem in the Midlands Mystery Conference**, Contact: Jennifer Kirchmann, 402-444-4828,
<jkirchmann@omaha.lib.ne.us>, <www.omaha.lib.ne.us/mayhem/index.htm> May 27-30 Omaha
- Buffalo Commons Storytelling Festival**, Contact: Carol, Schneider, 308-345-8122
<Schneiderc@mpcc.edu>, <www.buffalocommons.org> May 28-29 McCook
- Meridian Library System Annual Meeting: **Bess Streeter Aldrich: A Living History**
Contact: Sharon Osenga, 308-234-2087, 800-657-2192, <sosenga@frontiernet.net> June 3 Cozad
- The Nature of Lewis & Clark on the Great Plains**
Contact: 402-472-3082, <cgps@unl.edu>, <www.unl.edu/plains/events/2004/index.html> June 3-5 Nebraska City
- 26th Annual Mayor's Arts Awards: Literary Heritage Award**, Contact: Executive Director Deb Weber,
402-434-2787, <lacdiretor@artscene.org>, <www.artscene.org/maa.asp> June 4 Lincoln
- Bess Streeter Aldrich House, **Cookout and Concert on the Lawn with the County-Line Brass Band**,
Contact: Teresa Lorensen, 402-994-3855, <tlorensen@alltel.net>
<www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/bsaf/upcoming.html> June 19 Elmwood
- Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference**, Contact: Jonis Agee, 402-472-1834,
<nswc@unl.edu>, <www.nswc.org> June 19-25 Lincoln
- George Drouillard: Hunter, Interpreter and Sign-Talker for Lewis and Clark**
Contact: Lauran Lofgren, Wayne Public Library, 402-375-3135, <wpublib@cityofwayne.org>, <www.wsc.edu> .. June 30 Wayne
- Deadline: Nebraska Center for the Book: Book Awards entries**
Contact: <www.nlc.state.ne.us/publications/ncbawards.html> June 30
- Great Plains Chautauqua, "From Sea to Shining Sea"**
Contact: Peter Beeson, 402-474-2131, <nhc@nebraskahumanities.org>, July 2-6 Neligh
<www.nebraskahumanities.org> July 9-13 Beatrice
- Story Telling OLIO**, Norfolk Public Library, Contact: Karen Drevo, 402-844-2100, <kdrevo@ci.norfolk.ne.us> .. July 30 Norfolk
- Tenth Annual Literature Festival**, Norfolk Public Library
Contact: Karen Drevo, 402-844-2100, <kdrevo@ci.norfolk.ne.us> July 31 Norfolk
- Omaha Reads: O! What a Book**, Omaha Public Library announces Book Selection
Contact <www.omahareads.org> or <www.omahapubliclibrary.org> August 1 Omaha