

# The NCB News

Volume 14

Summer 2004

No. 2

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

## Kearney Hosts 2004 Nebraska Book Festival

**O**n September 17 and 18, the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UN-K), along with the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Humanities Council, will present the Nebraska Book Festival.

Other sponsors include the University of Nebraska Press, the *Kearney Hub*, the Kearney Public Library and Information Center, and the Nebraska Library Commission. Two full days of activities are scheduled, including a day for high school students on Friday, a reception and movie Friday evening, and a diverse selection of activities, presentations, workshops, and readings throughout the day and evening on Saturday. All activities are free to the public (except meals).

Ron Block, Gothenburg native and author of short story collections *The Dirty Shame Hotel*, *Dismal River*, and *Prairie Volcano*, will be the featured speaker at the Friday festival for high school students.

Block will talk about the stories and the process of writing, as well as answer questions from the students. In addition, workshops lead by UN-K faculty will include *Interpreting Movies*, *Writing Poetry*, *Writing Family History*, and *Writing Fantasy/Science Fiction*. A special presentation by York Community High School Teacher Jay Garrison will close the day's activities. Pre-registration is required.

On Friday evening, the University of Nebraska Press will host a reception at the Museum of Nebraska Art from 6:00-7:00 p.m. The Kearney Area Arts Council will provide a display of art books and rare books. From 7:30-9:30 p.m., the Kearney Public Library and Information Center will sponsor a showing of the movie *Tully* at UN-K. The movie is based on a short story by Tom McNeal, who will comment on the

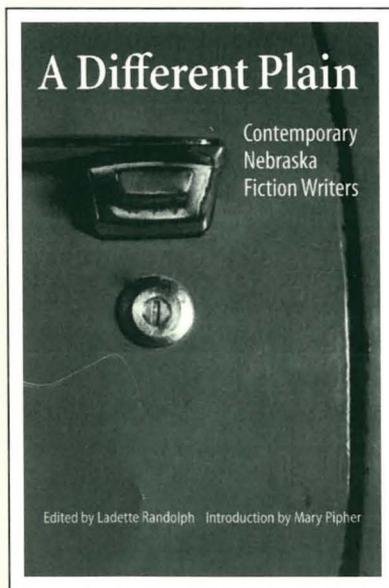
film with UN-K Professor of Film Studies Sam Umland. McNeal will be available for book and DVD signings.

On Saturday, the Festival will feature sessions on romance and fantasy writing, publishing and editing advice, book clubs, book reviewing, book collecting, Nebraska authors, children's books, a panel discussion of the movie *Tully*, a session on creating and binding your own books, as well as prose and poetry readings. In addition, throughout Saturday morning, participants may bring up to three heirloom books to be appraised by Carl Ashford of Omaha's Jackson Street Books and may browse the displays of Nebraska author societies, library and humanities organizations, book sellers, and individual authors.

The Saturday luncheon will feature a Keynote Address by author Ron Block, who won a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Nebraska Arts Council in 2000. Nebraska Center for the Book 2004 Book Award winners will be announced, along with the recipient of the Mildred Bennett Award. The cost of the luncheon is \$10 per person. Register in advance by contacting Taffnee Faimon, <faimonta@unk.edu>.

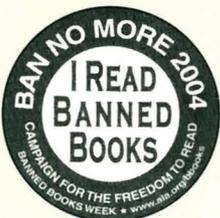
This year's festival features a One Book/One Community component. The featured book is *A Different Plain: Contemporary Nebraska Fiction Writers*, an impressive collection of twenty-four short stories by writers who have all published books of fiction and who have lived in Nebraska. The collection, edited by Ladette Randolph with an Introduction by Mary Pipher, is published by the University of Nebraska Press. Libraries and book clubs across Nebraska are being urged to join the celebration by reading and discussing this book in reading groups and then attending the Festival to meet many of the authors. Twelve of the authors from across the United States will attend the Festival.

Saturday afternoon and evening will feature readings by Nebraska prose and poetry writers. For more information see the schedule on Page 4, visit the Web site at <nebraskabookfestival.org>, or contact Susanne George Bloomfield, 308-995-8547, 308-865-8867, <bloomfields@unk.edu>. ▲



# Celebrating the Freedom to Read

**Guest Editorial**  
by **Mary Jo Ryan**,  
Nebraska Library  
Commission



**Banned Books Week, September 25–October 2**, celebrates the Freedom to Read and reminds Americans not to take this precious democratic freedom for granted. Each year individuals, bookstores, libraries, and other organizations celebrate the Freedom to Read with displays, events, and programs during American Library Association's Banned Books Week. This year's campaign slogan, *Ban No More 2004*, encourages supporters to wear buttons proclaiming, "I Read Banned Books."

Recently the Nebraska Center for the Book Board participated in an exercise to help articulate what intellectual freedom means to the community of the book. The following excerpt from an article published in the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska's *Sentinel* helps to illuminate their thoughts on this subject as they responded to discussion questions.

## **Q. Why is Intellectual Freedom important to the Nebraska Center for the Book?**

Many of the responses focused on the connection between books/writing and freedom of expression:

- ▲ Books are vehicles for conveying ideas—not just the popular or the easy, but the difficult, the controversial, and the challenging. . . Since the Nebraska Center for the Book's purpose is to bring together the community of the book in Nebraska, you can't have a true community of the book if you exclude some ideas, some voices.
- ▲ Without intellectual freedom new thoughts, ideas, or voices would not be published, read, or promoted.
- ▲ Nebraska Center for the Book is all about books. In a free society, it is important to have freedom to publish without fear of reprisal. Academics (especially) should be free to publish without fear for their jobs.

Many responses asserted the importance of intellectual freedom to a healthy democracy:

- ▲ Intellectual freedom is vital to democracy.
- ▲ Anti-censorship and freedom of speech are cornerstones of our society.
- ▲ Free marketplace of ideas distinguishes the United States of America from repressive regimes elsewhere.

## **Q. Why partner with AFCON (Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska)? Why is this partnership meaningful?**

Most responses focused on the shared mission of the organizations:

- ▲ Nebraska Center for the Book is the premier book organization in Nebraska and a natural partner with organizations that seek to protect academic freedom.
- ▲ Both organizations (and their members) reinforce mutual interests and actions.
- ▲ The organizations have a common mission and together boost membership, good will, and public relations.

Some responses pointed out that there are times when the organizations really need each other:

- ▲ The organizations can provide assistance in getting the message out when needed.
- ▲ Today. . . organizations such as AFCON are more important than ever. . . the USA PATRIOT Act illustrates how easily and quickly our First Amendment rights can be threatened.
- ▲ Given today's political climate we cannot relax our intellectual freedom vigil.

For more information about celebrating intellectual freedom during Banned Books Week, see <[www.ala.org/bbooks](http://www.ala.org/bbooks)>. ▲

## The **NCB**News

**Vol. 14 • Summer 2004 • No. 2**

### **Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees**

#### **Executive Committee**

Chuck Peek, President; Kathy Johnson, Past President; Shelly Clark, Vice President/President Elect; Jerry Kromberg, Treasurer; Rod Wagner, ex-officio

#### **Funding/Membership**

Molly Fisher (ex-officio), Committee Chair; Joan Birnie; Shelly Clark, Vice President/President Elect; Jerry Kromberg, Treasurer; Jane Smith

#### **2004 Nebraska Book Festival**

Chuck Peek, President, Committee Chair; Peter Beeson (ex-officio); Twyla Hansen, Secretary; Nancy Johnson; Jerry Kromberg, Treasurer; Brent Spencer

#### **Programs/Projects**

Vicki Clarke; Mel Krutz; Ellen Scott; Rod Wagner (ex-officio)

#### **Publications/Publicity**

Linda Trout; Committee Chair; Jeanetta Druke; Twyla Hanson; Mary Jo Ryan, staff

#### **Awards Art Coordinator**

Denise Brady

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

#### **2004 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meetings**

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](mailto:mjryan@nlc.state.ne.us)>, <[www.unl.edu/NCB](http://www.unl.edu/NCB)>.

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# Mary Pipher to Address Library Conference



In Mary Pipher's book, *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town*, she tells the story of how Lincoln, Nebraska becomes a gathering place for refugees from all corners of the globe. Nebraska, sometimes described as the "middle of nowhere," is increasingly becoming a "cultural crossroad." Dr. Pipher says, "We're becoming a richer curry of peoples." She immersed herself in the lives of the refugee families that comprise this "rich curry" and emerged with a collection of warm, touching, anecdotal stories of how new arrivals to the United States strive to make sense of this new place, while holding fast to their cultural heritage. "Arrival stories are survival stories," she says, expressing admiration for the resiliency they exhibit.

The Nebraska Library Commission is proud to sponsor Dr. Mary Pipher as the Leadership Keynote speaker for the Nebraska Library Association/Nebraska Educational Media Association Conference on Friday, October 8 in Grand Island. She will lead us through an exploration of how "cultural brokers" (schoolteachers, caseworkers, public health nurses, library staff and volunteers, and American friends) can help new arrivals to make intentional

decisions about what to accept and what to reject in America, easing us into each other's cultures. The session will include a book signing.

Dr. Pipher travels all over the world sharing her ideas with community groups, schools, and health care professionals. Her articulate and passionate delivery creates enthusiasm in all types of audiences. Her down-to-earth stories of hope and resilience inspire people to work together to build a better community. She lives in Lincoln. Her books include:

- ▲ *Hunger Pains*,
- ▲ *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*,
- ▲ *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding Our Families*,
- ▲ *Another Country: Navigating the Emotional Terrain of Our Elders*,
- ▲ *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town*
- ▲ *Letters to a Young Therapist*

For more information about the conference, see <[www.papillion.ne.us/~NLA2004](http://www.papillion.ne.us/~NLA2004)>. For more information about Mary Pipher see <[www.marypipher.net](http://www.marypipher.net)>. ▲

## 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. ▲

## Baby Reads @ your library®

by Pam Scott, Omaha Public Library

This spring, the Omaha Public Library launched a new program to promote literacy by encouraging parents to read to their children from birth. **Baby Reads** was funded by a grant from the Target Foundation. Brochures are given to new parents at area hospitals informing them of the program and inviting them into the library to get a card for their baby and a free board book, *Good Night Moon*. They can check out a kit (English or Spanish) containing three board books for infants; a book for parents, *The Joy of Reading* that discusses how and why to read to young children; a video, *Your Baby can Read*; and a music cassette of lullabies, *Baby Blues*. The kits also include a flyer with tips on reading to

infants and young children. As an added incentive, parents applying for a card for their child under age one are eligible for a one-time amnesty for all past fines and charges. Everyone gets to start reading with a clean slate.

Recent research has shown that children who are read to from an early age develop early-literacy skills needed for reading readiness. This fall the library will offer **Every Child Ready to Read @ your library®**, developed by the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Services to Children. Sessions will include "Early Talkers: Birth to Two-Year-Olds," "Talkers: Two- and Three-Year-Olds," and "Pre-Readers: Four- and Five-Year-Olds." Librarians will conduct classes for parents and caregivers. ▲

## 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



# 2004 Nebraska Book Festival Schedule

Voices of a Different Plain

September 17-18

Kearney

## Friday, September 17

9:00 A.M.—3:15 P.M.

### Student Day Featuring Ron Block

- ▲ Interpreting Movies (Honeyman/S.Umland)
- ▲ Writing Poetry (Fort)
- ▲ Writing Family Stories (Lorentzen)
- ▲ Writing Fantasy/Science Fiction (Emrys/R. Umland)
- ▲ Closing Session (Garrison)

6:00-7:00 P.M.

- ▲ Museum of Nebraska Art: Reception hosted by the University of Nebraska Press
- ▲ Art Book Display provided by the Kearney Area Arts Council

7:30-9:30 P.M.

- ▲ Movie: *Tully*, Introduction by Sam Umland and Tom McNeal
- ▲ Book and DVD Signing, Author Tom McNeal

## Saturday, September 18

8:30 A.M.—4:30 P.M.

- ▲ Registration
- ▲ Booksignings
- ▲ Vendor Displays

10:00—11:30 A.M. AND 1:00—3:00 P.M.

- ▲ Book Appraiser Carl Ashford, Jackson Street Books, Omaha

9:00-10:00 A.M.

- ▲ *A Different Plain* Readings/Discussion, Lisa Sandlin, Terese Svoboda, Dan Chaon
- ▲ Bess Streeter Aldrich and Wright Morris: Visual Images, Martha McGahan, Teresa Lorensen, Teliza Rodriguez
- ▲ An Informal Gathering of Book and Writing Groups, Mel Krutz
- ▲ *Tully*, From Book to Movie to Classroom, Tom McNeal, Sam Umland, Brent Spencer, Martha Kruse
- ▲ Fort Kearny Alumni Reading

10:30-11:30 A.M.

- ▲ *A Different Plain* Readings/Discussion, John McNally, Mary Helen Stefaniak, Timothy Schaffert
- ▲ My Two Friends: John Neihardt and Mari Sandoz, Ron Hull
- ▲ Steven Lawhead and Fantasy/Science Fiction, Rebecca Umland, Julie Flood, Justin Sevenker
- ▲ Book Collecting: Medieval to Modern, Joan and Rodger Bassett
- ▲ Writing for Kids and Young Adults, Jean and Ronald Lukesh, Laura McNeal

12:00-1:30 P.M.

### Awards Luncheon, Keynote Ron Block

1:45-2:45 P.M.

- ▲ Editing Regional Anthologies, Ladette Randolph, Margie Rine, Suzanne Wise, Marge Saiser
- ▲ Willa Cather, Loren Eiseley, and the Environment, Steven Trout, Darrel Lloyd, James M. Cook, Deborah B. Derrick
- ▲ Nebraska Writers' Guild: How to Get Published, Hugh Reilly, Jean Lukesh
- ▲ Creating and Reviving Book Clubs, Carol Connor, Myrna Tewes, Lauren Riedesel
- ▲ Children's Stories as Art, Susan Reiber

3:00-4:00 P.M.

- ▲ *A Different Plain* Readings/Discussion, Trudy Lewis, Jonis Agee, Karen Gettert Shoemaker
- ▲ Self-Publish or Perish, Steve Buttress
- ▲ Romance: The Billion Dollar Love Story, Cynthia Rutledge, Julie Miller
- ▲ Create Your Own Book, Art Pierce, Shaun Padgett
- ▲ Readings/Open Mic

4:30-6:00 P.M.

**Dinner** and libations on your own or join a table at the Thunderhead Brewery

6:00-9:30 P.M.

- ▲ Poetry/Prose readings at the Black Sheep Coffee House

6:00-8:00 P.M.     **Invited Readings**

8:00-9:30 P.M.     **Open Mic**

All events are at located at UN-K unless otherwise noted.



# Review: *The Turk and My Mother*

by **Mary Helen Stefaniak**,

W.W. Norton, 2004  
ISBN: 0-393-059243

Reviewed by **Brent Spencer**,

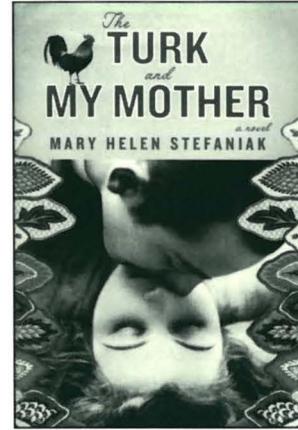
Creighton University

Mary Helen Stefaniak has written a magical, funny, and touching novel about four generations of a Hungarian family whose lives span the globe and the twentieth century, from the wilds of Siberia to the streets of Milwaukee. Stefaniak is a graceful and compelling storyteller who draws the reader into this family in a tale that is both comic and tragic.

Family history is never clear, never plain, never single. It's always a labyrinth of facts, dreams, and outright lies—the story of what actually happened balanced or opposed against the story of what could have happened. Stefaniak captures this well, inventing a narrator who's attempting to piece together the fragments of family history, while also trying to understand her own place in the family. At its heart, the book is about family stories and family mysteries. Why did Grandma Agnes run crying from the theater at the sight of Omar Sharif in a movie? Did the narrator's mother have a romance with a Turkish prisoner-of-war during World War I? And what of Uncle Marko family legend who may or may not be dead, who may or may not be traipsing through the

hinterlands of Siberia? And that blind gypsy fiddler the grandmother adored—could he have been Uncle Marko's father? For this family, the truth has more hairpin turns than a mountain road.

The author has taken an interesting risk in merging actual family history with fiction. The result is a compelling narrative about the extraordinary and everyday magic of family life. At bottom, it's love and magic that hold this family (and this book) together. And it's magic of a very particular kind—the magic of forgiveness. *The Turk and My Mother* shows an author who is deeply wise about the ways that family mysteries hold us together and sometimes threaten to drive us apart. Mary Helen Stefaniak's *The Turk and My Mother* is a rich, rewarding novel by a writer who goes to the heart of who we are. ▲



# Review: *With the Lightnings*

by **David Drake**,  
2000

Baen Books  
ISBN: 0-6718-7881-6

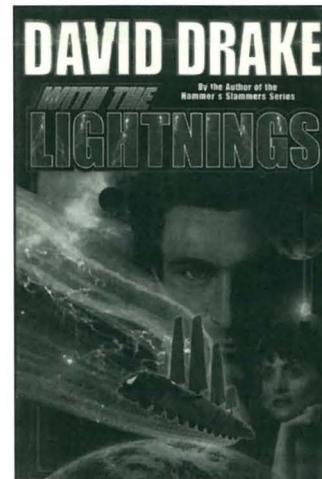
Reviewed by **Dr. Stan Gardner**,  
Wayne State College

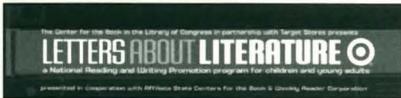
A more descriptive title might be "The Lieutenant and the Librarian," because that is what the story is about. It has a lot of political stuff, a lot of military adventure, almost no romance, but enough action to keep you turning the pages to see what happens next. The hero, Lieutenant Daniel Leary, experiences flashbacks to an argument with his father (one of the major political figures in this book), and contemplates the history and politics of the galaxy for the last five decades. The librarian, Adele Mundy, builds bookshelves, sorts old books, and has flashbacks to when her entire family was legally executed (including her five-year-old sister) for treason to the state.

Daniel, an amateur naturalist, has some interesting hobbies that bring him to the library, where he meets Adele. Adele has just been hired as the librarian, but has been given no budget, just rooms full of boxes of books. In return for his help in setting up the library, he gets the use of the library and they become friends. The two of them, along with Daniel's

butler and a squad of marines, become an effective team.

In many ways this seems to imitate the Hornblower motif. But in reality, it is a Science Fiction version of the series by Patrick O'Brien, featuring fictional characters Stephen Maturin and Jack Aubrey (a parody of *Hornblower*, see *Letter of Marque*). Drake is a writer who is starting to get some of the attention that he so richly deserves. He has written more than fifty-six novels. The sequel, *Lt. Leary, Commanding*, was published in 2000. I strongly recommend this book to those who like space opera, have an interest in seeing a different kind of librarian, and just want a good read. ▲





## Students Urged to Enter Letters About Literature Contest

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, in partnership with Target Stores, invites readers in grades four through twelve to enter Letters about Literature, a national reading-writing contest. To enter, readers write a personal letter to an author, explaining how his or her work changed their view of the world or themselves. Young readers can select authors from any genre—fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. The contest is hosted in Nebraska by the Nebraska Center for the Book, with support from the Nebraska Library Commission.

Nebraska contest winners are announced in April during National Library Week. Judges representing the Nebraska Center for the Book select state finalists. Nebraska finalists will be honored by the governor at a ceremony at the State Capitol and receive cash awards and other prizes. State winners advance to

national competition and receive cash prizes and Target gift cards. Six national winners will receive a Target gift card and a trip to the nation's capitol to read their letters during the National Book Festival in the fall. Last year, a Nebraska contestant, Jackson Fisher of Lincoln, won the national top prize for Level 1 (Grades 4–5) for his letter to Carl Hiaasen, author of *Hoot*.

For a copy of the official contest guidelines, plus the required entry coupon, see the Nebraska Library Commission home page, <[www.nlc.state.ne.us](http://www.nlc.state.ne.us)>, search on Letters about Literature 2004 or contact Maria Medrano-Nehls, Library Commission Administrative Secretary, 402-471-4008, 800-307-2665, fax: 402-471-2083, e-mail: <[mnehls@nlc.state.ne.us](mailto:mnehls@nlc.state.ne.us)>, for a print copy. Deadline for entries is December 4, 2004. ▲

## Readers/Writers Conferences Held

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

Romance and murder don't always go hand-in-hand, but two recent public library conferences have managed to offer area readers and writers a little of each.

*Turning the Pages of Romance*, coordinated by Lincoln City Libraries' Rebecca Lee, was held in Lincoln in mid-April. *Mayhem in the Midlands* mystery conference was held in Omaha at the end of May and coordinated by Omaha Public Library's Jennifer Kirchmann.

Despite the difference in focus, the conferences were alike in many ways. Attendees came to sessions on topics such as research, character development and themes. They talked with authors about their works, came in droves to the author autograph tables, checked out vendor offerings, and picked up promotional giveaway items.

In Lincoln, Keynote Speaker and Omahan Victoria Alexander gave the event some humorous moments. Other authors included Pam Crooks, Kristin Gabriel,

Kim Louise, and Leigh Michaels. Eleven authors offered comment, humor, and romance writer wisdom to sixty-nine participants. First conferences always have their jittery moments, but Lee said that, based on comments from participants and authors, it was definitely a success.

In Omaha, about one hundred and fifty mystery fans came to the fifth annual *Mayhem* conference; many to hear from Guest of Honor William Kent Krueger and from Susan McBride, the official Toastmistress, who joined Julia Spencer-Fleming, Donna Andrews and thirty-one other mystery authors at sessions and at the autograph table. Kirchmann, who said goodbye to *Mayhem* responsibilities after this conference, said "This was our biggest *Mayhem* yet." In all, more than \$3,000 was raised in an auction to benefit children's services at both Lincoln and Omaha public libraries, she said, adding, "What a great way to end my *Mayhem* career!" ▲



**Mayhem panelists  
Barbara Rixstine  
and John Keenan,  
Omaha World  
Herald.**

## 2004 National Book Festival Set for October 9

The **2004 National Book Festival**, sponsored by the **Library of Congress** and hosted by **Laura Bush**, will be held on October 9, on the National Mall in Washington DC to celebrate books and the joy of reading. The 2004 National Book Festival will feature more than seventy award-winning and nationally-known authors, illustrators, poets, and storytellers. If you can't attend the festival, booklovers across Nebraska are invited to attend (in spirit) by visiting

your local library and by accessing the more than eight million items from the Library of Congress's unsurpassed American history collections at <[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)>. Nebraska Center for the Book, with the support of the Nebraska Library Commission, will sponsor an exhibit in the Pavilion of the States. For more information about the Festival see <[www.loc.gov/bookfest](http://www.loc.gov/bookfest)>. ▲



**Review:**

**The Most Beautiful Libraries in the World**

by **Guillaume de Laubier, Jacques Bosser, James H. Billington, and Laurel Hirsch**  
(translator)

Harry N. Abrams.  
2003  
ISBN: 0-8109-4634-3

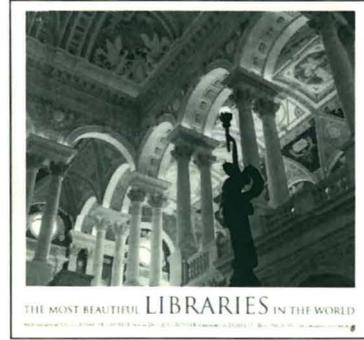
**Reviewed by Rod Wagner,**  
Nebraska Library Commission

People who love books, who love libraries, and who enjoy the beauty of great architecture will treasure architectural photographer Guillaume de Laubier's book, *The Most Beautiful Libraries in the World*. The book is a photographic celebration of the world's grandest and most historic libraries. Included are striking color photographs of twenty-three libraries covering national, religious and scholarly libraries from twelve European countries and the United States.

While most notable for its photographs, the book is a special treasure due to the accompanying text contributed by Jacques Bosser, journalist and translator, and James Billington, Librarian of Congress. In his foreword, Billington notes the influence of the great libraries of Europe and the Italian Renaissance design of the Library of Congress. Billington observes, "*The Most Beautiful Libraries in the World* takes the reader into the grand spaces of libraries founded by monarchs, monks, and academics, as well as modern governments attempting to define as well as house a national culture."

The libraries celebrated here are notable for their grandness and for their prominence as historic and cultural structures. They express the place of libraries from their beginnings and throughout history as noted by Jacques Bosser's accompanying text.

Among the European libraries included are: the National Library of Austria, the Benedictine Abbey Library of Metten (Germany), the Vatican Library, the Mazarine Library in Paris, the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Trinity College Library in Dublin, the National Library in Prague, the National Palace Library in Mafra Portugal, the Library of Congress in Washington DC, and the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg. Libraries in the United States include the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and the Boston Athenaeum. ▲



**Review:**

**Not Just Any Land: A Personal and Literary Journey into the American Grasslands**

by **John Price**  
University of Nebraska Press,  
2004  
ISBN: 0-8032-3707-3

**Reviewed by Twyla Hansen,**  
Poet and Horticulturist

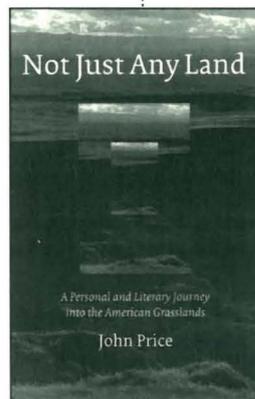
In the first sentence of the acknowledgements page, John Price states: "This is a memoir." But what follows in *Not Just Any Land* is not simple autobiography. It is a combination of scholarly research, self-searching, and the time-honored method of using others' words to clarify his own thoughts about the region formerly known as prairie, what we call the Great Plains. This "memoir" is grassland exploration and ecology literature search at its best, with Price citing more than sixty-five authors in his bibliography.

Price traveled to South Dakota, Kansas, and Iowa to discover what remained of the prairie, and in the process interviewed four writers whose books had spoken to him of the region. These writers, their varied views, stories, and struggles are the subjects of the four main chapters of the book: "Reaching Yarak: The Peregrinations of Dan O'Brien," "Not Just Any Land: Linda Hasselstrom at Home," "Native Dreams: William Least-Heat Moon and Chase County, Kansas," and "A Healing Home: Mary Swander's Recovery

Among the Iowa Amish." Price's insightful questions and sense of humor make the book's subject highly accessible and memorable.

Great Plains enthusiasts, as well as those wanting to understand this often-overlooked region "...where surprises can live and grow", will delight in his extensive use of quotations from well-known writers such as Wendell Berry, Gretel Ehrlich, Wes Jackson, William Kittredge, Wallace Stegner, and Terry Tempest Williams, to name just a few. Woven through the narrative in often lyrical passages is Price's own exploration of place, community, family history, and an understanding of "...what it is that the land demands of us in our daily lives: the nature of responsibility."

Price, who grew up in north central Iowa, has written an important book about region that will be studied, discussed, and enjoyed for years to come. He is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. ▲



# The NCBNews



## 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  
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NONPROFIT  
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Permit No. 988  
Lincoln, NE

### Nebraska Book Festival Set for September 17-18



## Calendar of Events:

- Library Card Sign-Up Month: The Smartest Card @ your library®**, <www.ala.org> ..... September ..... Nationwide
- Paul A. Olson Seminar: Art & Artists of the Sandhills Panel Discussion** ..... Sept. 15 ..... Lincoln  
Contact: Center for Great Plains Studies, Kim Weide, 402-472-3964, <kweide@unlnotes.unl.edu>, <www.unl.edu/plains>
- Plum Creek Children's Literacy Festival** ..... Sept. 16-18 ..... Seward  
Contact: Janell Uffelman, 402-643-7318, <juffelman@cune.edu>, <www.cune.edu>
- Nebraska Book Festival: Voices of a Different Plain**, Contact: Susanne George Bloomfield, 308-995-8547, ... Sept. 17-18 ..... Kearney  
308-865-8867, <bloomfields@unk.edu>, <www.nebraskabookfestival.org>
- The Moonshell Storytelling Festival**, ..... Sept. 18 ..... Mahoney  
Contact: Elizabeth Kumru, Nebraska StoryArts, 402-551-4532 <nebraskastoryarts.org> ..... State Park
- Medical Care on the Lewis and Clark Trail** ..... Sept. 20 ..... Wayne  
Contact: Lauran Lofgren, Wayne Public Library, 402-375-3135, <wpublib@cityofwayne.org>, <www.wsc.edu>
- Carole Nelson Douglas Author Tour**, Contact: Cherie Longmuir, Panhandle Library System, ..... Sept. 20-24 ..... Nebraska  
308-632-3168, 888-879-5303, <clongmuir@nlc.state.ne.us>, <teacherweb.panesu.org/pls/> ..... Panhandle
- Banned Books Week: Ban No More 2004** ..... Sept. 25-Oct. 2 ..... Nationwide  
<www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bannedbooksweek.htm>
- Lincoln City Libraries Book Sale** ..... Sept. 30-Oct. 3 ..... Lincoln  
Contact: Barbara Hansen, 402-441-8512, <b.hansen@mail.lcl.lib.ne.us>, <www.lcl.lib.ne.us>
- Bess Streeter Aldrich Remembrance Day**, ..... Oct. 2 ..... Elmwood  
Contact: 402-994-3855, <bsafmus@yahoo.com>, www.lincolne.com/nonprofit/bsaf
- NLA/NEMA Conference: Virtual Places, Physical Spaces, Nebraska Libraries Now** ..... Oct. 6-8 ..... Grand Island  
<www.papillion.ne.us/~NLA2004>
- 2004 National Book Festival**, <www.loc.gov/bookfest> ..... Oct. 9 ..... Washington, DC
- Foods and Cooking from the Lewis and Clark Expedition** ..... Oct. 11 ..... Wayne  
Contact: Lauran Lofgren, Wayne Public Library, 402-375-3135, <wpublib@cityofwayne.org>, <www.wsc.edu>
- Nebraska Cowboy Poetry Gathering: Old West Days**, ..... October 14-17 ..... Valentine  
Contact: 800-658-4024, <www.nebraskacowboypoetrygathering.com>
- Teen Read Week: IT'S ALIVE! @ your library®** ..... October 17-23 ..... Nationwide  
<www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teentopten/teentopten.htm>
- Getting to Know Terry Trueman Inside Out** ..... October 20 ..... Omaha  
Contact: Nancy Chmiel, Omaha Public Library Benson Branch, 402-444-4846, <nschiel@omaha.lib.ne.us>
- Paul A. Olson Seminar: Crazy Woman Creek: Women Reurite the American West**  
Readings by Contributors, Contact: Center for Great Plains Studies, Kim Weide, 402-472-3964, ..... October 20 ..... Lincoln  
<kweide@unlnotes.unl.edu>, <www.unl.edu/plains>
- Read Aloud Nebraska Presents Mem Fox**, Contact: Mark Claussen, 402-644-2507, <mclauss@npsne.org> ..... Nov. 4 ..... Omaha
- Lee Booksellers, Crazy Woman Creek: Women Rewrite the American West** ..... Nov. 5 ..... Lincoln  
Readings by Contributors, Contact: Linda Hillegass, Lee Booksellers Edgewood, 402-420-1919,  
<info@leebooksellers.com>
- Technology, the Corps to the Northwest and the Indians** ..... Nov. 8 ..... Wayne  
Contact: Lauran Lofgren, Wayne Public Library, 402-375-3135, <wpublib@cityofwayne.org>, <www.wsc.edu>
- Paul A. Olson Seminar: Peoples of the Plains: Communities, Common Property Management, and Economic Change in the Heartland**, Robert K. Hitchcock, UN-L Dept of Anthropology and Geography  
Contact: Center for Great Plains Studies, Kim Weide, 402-472-3964, <kweide@unlnotes.unl.edu>, <www.unl.edu/plains>