

PLAIN SPEAKING

CENTRAL PLAINS LIBRARY SYSTEM NEWSLETTER

Educate | Connect | Inspire

Examine the Essentials

We'd love to have you present at the **2026 CPLS Regional Conference** at the Kearney Public Library on Thursday, April 30, 2026.

Our conference provides System librarians a unique opportunity to unite as a professional community and foster a sense of togetherness.

We are seeking proposals on topics relevant to all types of libraries within our System. Our theme is **Examine the Essentials**. Program topics could include library management, grant writing, customer service, collection maintenance, programming, reader's advisory, marketing, social media, or technology...all things that are essential for librarians in small and rural libraries to understand.

We are planning for one keynote address (60 minutes), 12 full sessions (45 minutes which includes Q and A), and 2 mini sessions (15 minutes each).

Please submit your proposal by February 16, 2026. We will be in touch about your proposal by March 16, 2026.

For additional information on submitting a proposal, read ["Tips for a Terrific Program Proposal"](#) located on the CPLS website. If you have any other questions, contact Denise at denise.cpls@gmail.com or 402-462-1975.



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BOARD MEMBERS:

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Call for Speakers

The Call for Speakers for ***Big Talk From Small Libraries 2026*** is open!

Submit your proposal by Friday, December 12, 2025.

This free one-day online conference is tailored for staff from small libraries; the smaller the better! Small libraries of all types – public, academic, school, museum, special, etc. – are encouraged to submit a proposal. We're looking for seven 50-minute presentations and four 10-minute "lightning round" presentations.

Do you offer a service or program at your small library that other librarians might like to hear about? Have you implemented a new (or old) technology, hosted an event, partnered with others in your community, or just done something really cool? The Big Talk From Small Libraries online conference gives you the opportunity to share what you've done, while learning what your colleagues in other small libraries are doing.

Here are some possible topics to get you thinking:

- Unique Libraries
- Special Collections
- New buildings
- Fundraising
- Improved Workflows
- Staff Development
- Advocacy Efforts
- Community Partnerships
- That great thing you're doing at your library!



Speakers must be from small libraries or directly partnered with a small library and submitting a proposal to co-present with the library. Speakers from libraries serving fewer than 10,000 people will be preferred, but presentations from libraries with larger service populations will be considered.

Big Talk From Small Libraries 2026 will be held on Friday, February 27, 2026 between 8:45 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (CT) via the GoTo Webinar online meeting service. Speakers will present their programs from their own desktops. The schedule will accommodate speakers' time-zones.

Are You Attending the NLA Conference?

This is a Keynote Spotlight!

Allen Eskens will deliver our morning keynote session on Wednesday (10/22) at 10:00am.

He will also join us for a discussion of his book ***The Life We Bury*** during the One Book, One Librarian session at 4:00pm.



BASIC SKILLS CLASSES

Class Dates	Class	Registration Dates
Open	Communication* (self-paced)	Available Any Time
10/20 - 10/31	Management/Supervision	9/8 - 10/10
11/3 - 11/14	Leadership	9/15 - 10/24
12/1 - 12/12	Library Services to Children & Teens	10/20 - 11/21

[Click here](#) for the Nebraska Library Commission's webpage for the 2025 Basic Skills Schedule and to register for any of the classes.

NCompass LIVE PRESENTATIONS

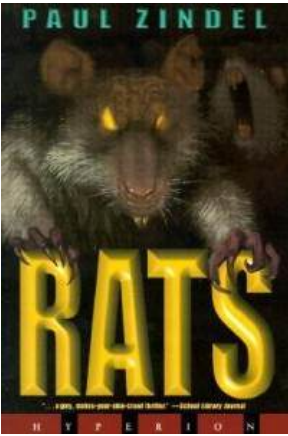
NCompass Live is the Nebraska Library Commission's weekly webinar series, covering a variety of library activities and topics. The show is free and open to anyone to watch. These one-hour sessions are hosted by Christa Porter, the NLC's Library Development Director, and include a mixture of presentations, interviews, book reviews, Web tours, mini training sessions, and Q & A sessions presented by NLC staff and guest speakers. Attendees ask questions and participate in the show via VoIP, using their own microphone, or in the live text chat.

Every Wednesday 10am - 11am (CST)
To view past presentations, [CLICK HERE](#).

<u>NCompass Live: Letters About Literature 2025</u>	<u>Oct 1</u>	<u>Register</u>
<u>NCompass Live: The Do's & Don'ts of D&D</u>	<u>Oct 8</u>	<u>Register</u>
<u>NCompass Live: NO NCOMPASS LIVE THIS WEEK ENJOY NLA!</u>	<u>Oct 22</u>	
<u>NCompass Live: Summer Reading Program 2026: Unearth a Story</u>	<u>Nov 19</u>	<u>Register</u>
<u>NCompass Live: Pretty Sweet Tech</u>	<u>Nov 26</u>	<u>Register</u>

BOOK CLUB SPOTLIGHT AT NLC

CONTRIBUTED BY MACKENZIE MARROW



As a huge horror reader, Mackenzie always thought the Commission's collection was lacking in that genre, until she stumbled across ***Rats*** by Paul Zindel and was instantly sucked into his macabre world. Known for book titles with unique names such as 'The Pigman', 'Pardon Me, You're Stepping on My Eyeball!', and 'My Darling, My Hamburger', Zindel is best known for ushering in the realistic teen fiction revolution along with contemporaries like Judy Blume. The late author was never one to sanitize his work and spoke directly to an audience that was neglected by the publishing industry. Whether that was in his general YA fiction, or his action/horror adventure series, Zindel will give the truth to his readers in all their glorious and gory details.

On a hot summer day in the forgotten borough of New York, 30 years of rotting trash is being slowly buried under mountains of asphalt, trapping and poisoning the landfills' rat denizens with methane gas. The unsuspecting citizens of the quiet Staten Island suburb are in the fright of their lives as hordes of mutated rats burst from the seams, with a taste for blood. Self-proclaimed rat expert Sarah and her little brother Mike must race to stop the murderous infestation before it takes over New York City. But little do they know, they have a mole amongst the rats.

Rats is a part of Zindel's "The Zone Unknown Series" which are stand-alone horror/thriller books featuring young teens fighting to survive a mutated and perilous natural world. Teachers and librarians are always looking for the perfect book to get through to their reluctant readers, books that are engaging and exciting stories written with non-readers in mind. Since Halloween is only one month away, maybe you're looking for a gnarly and visceral horror novel to hook your reluctant readers. In ***Rats***, Zindel weaves his gross-out descriptions with prose that, at times, is startlingly evocative. It contains both emotional and environmental messages that can lead to good discussion. Students can learn about proper Landfill Capping, and the harmful effects of pollution. They will also read about personal and family strife. How to reach out for help and to not hide their problems from those who love them, letting it poison and fester until it's too big to control.

If you're a school librarian or are leading a preteen to teen book group, I do recommend giving ***Rats*** a look-over first to see if the graphic images and scenarios are right for your particular students. Some readers will be too squeamish while others will be thoroughly captivated. It takes all kinds!

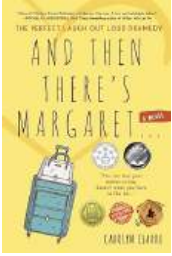
If you're interested in requesting ***Rats*** for your book club, you can find the Request Form [here](#). **There are 11 copies.** (A librarian must request items.)

[Click here](#) to see Mackenzie's complete review.

Zindel, Paul. *Rats*. Hyperion. (1999).



NEW BOOK CLUB KITS AT CPLS



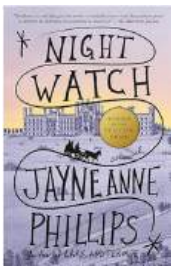
***And Then There's Margaret* by Carolyn Clarke (10 copies)**

Donated by Hastings Public Library

When Allison Montgomery's beloved father-in-law and long-time confidant passes away, her mother-in-law, Margaret, 'temporarily' moves in. From rearranging the furniture and taking over the kitchen, to undermining and embarrassing Allie at every turn, including funding her daughter's escape, throwing a hissy fit at the mall, and publicly equating Allie's glass of Chardonnay to full blown alcoholism, Margaret turns Allie's life upside down causing her to bounce between a sincere desire to support her grieving mother-in-law and an intense urge to simply push her out of the nearest window.

***One Golden Summer* by Carley Fortune (10 copies)**

Good things happen at the lake. That's what Alice's grandmother says, and it's true. Alice spent just one summer there at a cottage with Nan when she was seventeen—it's where she took that photo, the image that changed her life. Now Alice lives behind a lens. As a photographer, she's most comfortable on the sidelines. Lately though, she's been itching for something more, and when Nan falls and breaks her hip, Alice comes up with a plan for them both: another summer in that magical place. But as soon as they settle in, their peace is disrupted by the roar of a familiar yellow boat, and the man driving it.



***Night Watch* by Jayne Anne Phillips (10 copies)**

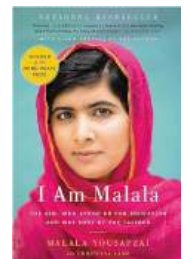
In 1874, in the wake of the War, erasure, trauma, and namelessness haunt civilians and veterans, renegades and wanderers, freedmen and runaways. Twelve-year-old ConaLee, the adult in her family for as long as she can remember, finds herself on a buckboard journey with her mother, Eliza, who hasn't spoken in more than a year. They arrive at the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum in West Virginia, delivered to the hospital's entrance by a war veteran who has forced himself into their world. There, far from family, a beloved neighbor, and the mountain home they knew, they try to reclaim their lives.

I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban

by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb (20 copies)

Donated by St. Paul Library

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York.



Register Now

The Nebraska Library Association's 2025 Annual Conference will be held in York at the Holthus Convention Center (Oct. 22nd – 23rd) with the theme of "Soaring to New Heights."

[Click here to register.](#)

Nebraska Library Association Annual Conference 2025

SOARING

to new heights



2026 NLC Grants are Open for Applications!



Nebraska Accredited Public Libraries and State-run Institutions! Do you have an idea for a program or project you would like to see funded? Apply for an NLC Grant!

Applications are now open for NLC Grants for 2026. Don't let your library miss out on these opportunities!

The Nebraska Library Commission has made funding available for four grants for 2026: Continuing Education & Training, Internship, Library Improvement, and Youth Grants for Excellence.

Grant applications for these 2026 NLC grants are due November 14, 2025.

For more information about these grants, watch the recording of the NCompass Live webinar, **NLC Grants for 2026**.

Continuing Education & Training to assist Nebraska libraries in improving the library services provided to their communities through continuing education and training for their library personnel and supporters. Successful applications will show how the continuing education and/or training proposed will support the library's mission. For this round of CE and training grants, applications should be for events happening before June 2026.

Internship grants work to introduce high school and college students to the varied and exciting work of Nebraska libraries. The internships are intended to function as a recruitment tool, helping the student to view the library as a viable career opportunity while providing the public library with the finances to provide stipends to the student interns.

Library Improvement grants facilitate growth and development of library programs and services in Nebraska public and institutional libraries, by supplementing local funding with state funds designated for these purposes.

Youth Grants for Excellence are available specifically for innovative projects for children and young adults in your community. The program encourages creative thinking, risk-taking, and new approaches to enable youth librarians to begin needed programs and try projects which they have been unable to undertake, and to offer an opportunity to expand youth service capabilities in new and different directions.



PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY **Opening Soon**

November 3, 2025 -
February 13, 2026



Don't Forget About...



Reader Zone

The Nebraska Regional Library Systems and the Nebraska Library Commission have teamed up to provide access to Reader Zone. This web-based software lets you create paperless reading logs. Your students and patrons can report their progress through the Reader Zone app or via the Reader Zone website. You will be able to see statistics and reports without having to compile them yourself. **This program is free for your library.** If you are not familiar with Reader Zone, [click on this link](#).

You will be able to create multiple "groups" to best serve your community's needs. For example - you might create a group for young readers that has the goal based on the number of books read per week, one for teens based on number of minutes spent reading per month, and then one for adults that has per-page milestones.

This system is available to public, school, and academic libraries year-round for reading programs for all ages. [Click here to sign up now!](#)

Contact denise.cpls@gmail.com if you have any questions.

This activity is supported in part with funding from the State of Nebraska and from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the Nebraska Library Commission.

Banned Books Week 2025

October 5 - 11, 2025

The American Library Association and Banned Books Week Coalition are pleased to announce the theme for Banned Books Week 2025: "Censorship Is So 1984. Read for Your Rights." Banned Books Week will take place October 5 – 11.

Current efforts to ban books and information held in schools, libraries, archives, and bookstores are a truth close to fiction – namely, the depiction of extreme censorship by an oppressive regime in George Orwell's cautionary and prescient tale 1984. The Banned Books Week 2025 theme reminds us that the right to read belongs to all of us, that censorship has no place in contemporary society, and that we must defend our rights.



CPLS Will Provide A Speaker for Your Library

Would you like to have a live performance at your library?

Humanities Nebraska has many fine speakers. Browse the Speakers Bureau Catalog: <https://humanitiesnebraska.org/catalog/>.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Buffalo Bill's Nebraska by Jeff Barnes
- Excess Baggage: Riding the Orphan Train by Charlotte Endorf
- Grit 'n' Gumption by Cherrie Beam-Callaway
- Ho for America! Northern European Immigrants to the Midwest by Jeff Kappeler
- Meet Buffalo Bill by Terry Lane
- Music of the Plains by David Marsh
- Nebraska Territory Stories by David Seay
- Overland Trails: The Children on the Trail by Renae Hunt

The Central Plains Library System will provide the administrative fee for each library in our System that books a Humanities Nebraska program this year. That means you can have a terrific live performance any time, without cost for your library.

1. First, contact the performer.
2. After your program details are finalized, fill out the form on the Humanities Nebraska website: <https://humanitiesnebraska.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Catagory-I-new.pdf>, print it out and mail it to the address on the bottom of page 2.
3. When completing the form, include the following on the bottom of the first page: "Please bill to CPLS."



AUDIOBOOK COLLECTION

CPLS owns over 1,000 circulating audiobook titles. System member libraries may borrow audiobooks (CD and MP3 formats) for a loan period of 90 days.

Here are some new additions:

Strangers in Time by David Baldacci

The Note by Alafair Burke

Don't Forget Me, Little Bessie by James Lee Burke

Sunrise on the Reaping by Suzanne Collins

King of Ashes by S. A. Cosby

Welcome to Murder Week by Karen Dukess

Black Woods Blue Sky by Eowyn Ivey

Don't Let Him In by Lisa Jewell

The Boxcar Librarian by Brianna Labuskes

Murder Takes a Vacation by Laura Lippman

We All Live Here by Jojo Moyes

Badlands by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child

I LOVE MY LIBRARIAN AWARD 2026

The American Library Association (ALA) invites library users nationwide to nominate their favorite librarians for the prestigious I Love My Librarian Award. The national award recognizes the outstanding public service contributions of librarians working in public, school, college, community college or university libraries. [Nominations are accepted online](#) now through Monday, Dec. 15, 2025.

Ten librarians will each receive \$5,000 in recognition of their outstanding achievements. Awardees will be honored at the I Love My Librarian Award ceremony at the 2026 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago; honorees will also receive free full conference registration and a travel stipend to cover expenses as part of their award packages.

Young Readers Invited to Write to Favorite Authors

Young readers in grades 4-12 are invited to write a personal letter to an author for the Nebraska Letters about Literature (LAL) contest, a state reading and writing promotion program. The letter can be to any author (living or dead) from any genre: fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic - explaining how that author's work changed the student's view of the world. Submissions must be completed online October 1 - December 31, 2025. Nebraska Letters About Literature is coordinated and sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Library Commission, with support from Lincoln City Libraries, Francie & Finch Bookshop, and Humanities Nebraska.

The Nebraska Center for the Book's panel of judges will select a winner and an honorable mention per competition level (Level I for grades 4-6, Level II for grades 7-8, and Level III for grades 9-12) to be honored in a proclamation-signing ceremony at the state capitol during National Library Week in April 2026. Their winning letters will be placed in the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln. Nebraska winners and honorable mentions will receive state prizes.

Teachers, librarians, and parents can download the contest guidelines, free teaching materials, information on the online entry system, and past winning letters on the [Nebraska Center for the Book website](#). An informational [NCompass Live](#) webinar aired on October 1st, discussing this year's contest, the submission process, and judging criteria, with [a recorded session available here](#). For more information contact [Nebraska Center for the Book](#).



Golden Sower Book Sets
CPLS has Book Sets of the **Golden Sower nominees for 2025-26** available now! Call or email the System Office to reserve your choice of the sets!



System Services Spotlight

Deb's Preschool Projects

These craft projects feature shapes made by the System's die cutting equipment. Our intent is to save our CPLS librarians valuable time each month. Place your order for the craft materials before the posted deadline by emailing Deb at cplsasst@gmail.com. There is no charge for this service.

The Preschool Projects are provided for the months of September through May. Please place your order individually for each month prior to the deadline. This project is 10.5" x 8".

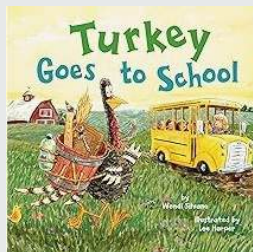
October



This big turkey has brightly colored ribbons woven across his feathers. Use school glue or tape to hold the ribbons in place. Cut the hearts you receive in half to form the turkey's red wattle. Glue it on with a glue stick or school glue. The eye is self-adhesive and is ready to put in place.

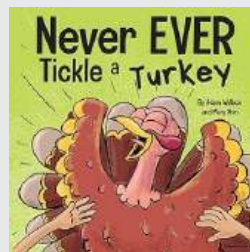
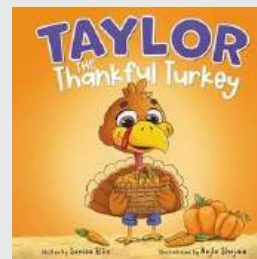
Please email your request by
October 17, 2025.

Suggested Books



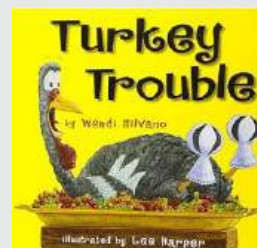
Turkey Goes to School
by Wendi Silvano
Preschool - 2nd Grade

Taylor the Thankful Turkey
by Sonica Ellis
2-7 years old



Never Ever Tickle a Turkey
by Adam Wallace
2-7 years old

Turkey Trouble
by Wendi Silvano
Preschool - 2nd Grade





CPLS HAS SCHOLARSHIP MONEY AVAILABLE!

You may be looking forward to attending a training opportunity that will come up in 2025 or 2026. The System can help! We have money available for you!

CPLS can award up to \$200 per event in Nebraska and \$300 for out-of-state events. These funds are available to help cover expenses such as registration, mileage, meals, etc. Only one scholarship per person per fiscal year (July - June). Each Library Agency shall be limited to two scholarships per year.

Name _____

Library _____

Event _____

Date of event _____

Scholarship requested for _____ (meal, room, etc.)

Amount requested _____

Who should the check be made out to _____

Other information _____

Send your request to: Central Plains Library System
2727 W. 2nd Street #233
Hastings, NE 68901

Disc Cleaning and Repair

The CPLS Office has the ECO AUTO-SMART Fully Automatic Disc Repair System.

It is not just a buffer, but a full-service machine, to both clean and repair your valuable discs. Save those discs that won't play! As long as they are not cracked, we can fix them.

From July 1, 2025, thru June 30, 2026, each CPLS member library has unlimited free disc cleanings available to them.



APPLY NOW!

Special funding is available for CAAP Workshops
in Nebraska libraries

Funds are limited, and grants are processed
first-come, first-served. Apply for CAAP grants
at least six weeks ahead. Grants cover most or
all expenses.

Find complete information here:

[Creative Aging Arts Program - Nebraska Arts Council](#)



Above: Lexington Public Library CAAP participant and exhibit
Right: Lincoln Lied Township Library CAAP participant

NAC's Creative Aging Arts Program (CAAP) provides older adults with creative and educational activities along with opportunities for socialization. CAAP's core programming involves interactive artist residencies that are comprised of sequential workshops for participants who are 55 or older. Residencies are led by CAAP artists (painters, printmakers, writers, musicians, etc.) who have completed training in creative aging program development.

One of CAAP's primary goals is to address the problem of isolation and loneliness that many older adults experience. There is a growing appreciation for how creative endeavors can invigorate communities and bring people together. CAAP serves to enhance the lives of our older adults and can help libraries achieve community outreach goals.



CONTACT NAC STAFF FOR ASSISTANCE

General questions:

Anne Alston, anne.alston@nebraska.gov

Grant application questions:

Joshua Brown, joshua.brown@nebraska.gov

SPECIAL THANKS

Nebraska Library Commission
Medica Insurance Company

Read Aloud Nebraska Workshop

FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 7,
2025
8:00-4:00

Registration QR Code

Early Bird Registration includes
lunch and FREE books
by November 2, 2025



November 07, 2025
Seward Memorial Library
233 S 5th St, Seward, NE

Featured Speakers

Rebecca Bellingham Essential Practices of Reading Aloud
Chloe Burgett Illustrations as Part of the Read Aloud Experience
Steven Layne Ed.D Building Lifetime Readers

<https://libraries.ne.gov/readaloud/>

2025 NEBRASKA Makerspace CONFERENCE

Save the Date

November 4-5, 2025

Nebraska Innovation Campus Conference Center
Lincoln, Nebraska

Use this QR Code to access the Makerspace Conference webpage hosted by the Nebraska Library Commission to get and stay informed. There you will find information about the conference to include: a "Call for Session Proposal Form," Sponsor, Vendor, Makerspace, and Makers applications for those that would like a display table at the conference. Once the sessions have been selected, a registration flyer will be posted. We expect that with the help of vendors and sponsors, we can keep the two-day conference registration to under \$100. Questions? Click the contact link at the bottom of that webpage and ask any questions you might have. You can also find the webpage at: <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/libraries/maker/index.2025.Conference.aspx>



Nebraska
Library Commission



NEBRASKA
INNOVATION
STUDIO

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

October 5-11	Banned Books Week, "Censorship is so 1984. Read for Your Rights."
October 13	Columbus Day Holiday, CPLS Office Closed
October 16	CPLS Board Meeting, Lexington Public Library, 10am
October 17	Deadline to request the November Preschool Project
Oct. 22-23	Nebraska Library Association Conference, Holthus Conference Center, York
October 25	CPLS Regional Jigsaw Puzzle Competition, Ord Township Library, 9:30am
Nov. 4-5	Makerspace Conference, Nebraska Innovation Campus Conference Center
November 7	Read Aloud Nebraska Workshop, Seward Memorial Library, 8am - 4pm
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday, CPLS Office Closed
November 14	Deadline to request the December Preschool Project
November 20	Quarterly Meeting with the NLC, Lincoln, 10am
Nov. 27-28	Thanksgiving Holiday, CPLS Office Closed
December 5	Deadline to return completed Fall Crawl Brochures
December 10	Drawing for the Fall Crawl Prize Baskets
December 16	Deadline to request the January Preschool Project
Dec. 25-26	Christmas Holiday, CPLS Office Closed
January 1	New Year's Day Holiday, CPLS Office Closed

CPLS Office:

Office:

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Hastings, NE 68901

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Denise Harders

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Deb Fairbanks

Phone: (402) 462-1975

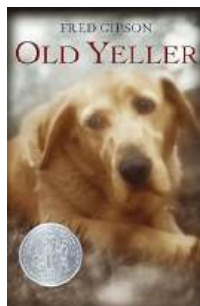
Email: cplsasst@gmail.com

Nicole Ruzicka

Email: cpls.nicole@gmail.com



We Added a New Book Set of a Classic Title



Old Yeller by Fred Gipson (18 copies)

One of the most beloved children's books ever written, **Old Yeller** is a Newbery Honor Book that explores the poignant and unforgettable bond between a boy and the stray dog who becomes his loyal friend.

