

PLAIN SPEAKING

CENTRAL PLAINS LIBRARY SYSTEM NEWSLETTER

Educate | Connect | Inspire



Let All Get Together in Kearney

Our **CPLS Conference** is *fast-approaching!*

The Central Plains Library System is hosting its second full-day Conference on April 30, 2026, at the Kearney Public Library from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. We have a keynote address and 3 breakout sessions in each time slot. Lunch will be a great time to reconnect with other CPLS librarians. Participants will earn up to 6 CEs for the day. Library Directors, Staff Members, and Library Board Members will all find sessions that will interest them. There will be plenty of giveaways, too!

Registration Fee is \$25.00 which includes lunch. This fee may be paid on-site with cash or check, or by having your funding agency mail a check to the System office.

Central Plains Library System
2727 West 2nd Street, Suite #233
Hastings, NE 68901

[Here is the link to register for the CPLS Conference.](#)

New Feature in the Newsletter

Recently, I was talking to the Three Rivers Library System's Director, Tammi Thiem, and she mentioned that she wanted to highlight her libraries in her newsletter. After looking at Facebook, she decided to take screenshots of some of the postings. I think that is a **GREAT** idea. So now, our newsletter has a new feature called Social Media Snapshots and it will always be on page 6. The screenshots will come from both Facebook and Instagram. This month the featured libraries are: **Logan County Library; Jensen Memorial Library; Blue Hill Library; and Wilson Public Library.**

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BOARD MEMBERS:

Sharon Bohling
Stephanie Branham
Sierra Burrows
Jody Crocker
Jamie Dennis
Sherrie Dux-Ideus
Terri Eberly
Jane Hilton
Lisa Mount
Jennifer Norton
Kina Stefka
James Tidei

Call for Speakers

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.

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 click here to submit your proposal by February 16, 2026.](#) We will be in touch about your proposal by March 16, 2026.



Golden Sower Book Sets

CPLS will be purchasing Book Sets of the Golden Sower nominees for 2026-27 soon! **Please help us order the sets that you need.**

Call or email the System Office to reserve your choice of the sets!

[Click here for a list of the 2026-2027 nominees.](#)



BASIC SKILLS CLASSES

Class Dates	Class	Instructors	Registration Dates
Open	Communication* (self-paced)	Available Any Time	
3/23 - 4/3	Library Technology	Amanda Sweet	2/2 - 3/6
4/1 - 4/30	Introduction to Cataloging (Organization of Materials)*	Self-paced	2/16 - 3/20
4/13 - 4/24	Library Finance	Holli Duggan	3/2 - 4/3
5/4 - 5/15	Intellectual Freedom / Core Values*	Holli Duggan	3/23 - 4/24

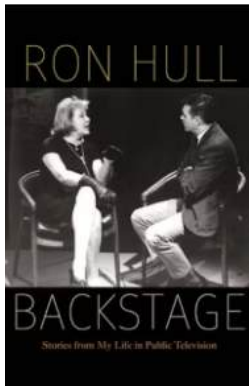
[Click here](#) for the Nebraska Library Commission's webpage for the 2026 Basic Skills Schedule and to register for any of the classes.

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](#).

NCompass Live: Homesteading at Your Library	Feb 4	Register
NCompass Live: Empowering Families Through Literacy: Tools and Strategies from Nebraska's Statewide Initiative	Feb 11	Register
NCompass Live: Communicating Your Library's Value and Getting your Board "On Board" to Help!	Feb 18	Register
NCompass Live: Pretty Sweet Tech	Feb 25	Register



BOOK CLUB SPOTLIGHT AT NLC

CONTRIBUTED BY MACKENZIE MARROW

Backstage by Ron Hull

Public Television pioneer Ron Hull may have been born in South Dakota, but he was a Nebraska man through and through. A state, in his words, that cultivates fiercely independent, creative people who value honesty and hard work.

Without the late Ron Hull, public television as we know it wouldn't exist. Before he had become a television legend, Ron was an army grunt stuck in Fort Sill, Oklahoma after being drafted near the end of the Korean War. But it was there that the wayward drama major got his big break- with no experience in film or television, he was assigned to produce a weekly show for the base. Ron, with a ragtag group and a small sound stage brought his first live TV program to life, having to learn the basics on the fly. After the success of 'Front and Center', Ron's passion for public and educational television was ignited. He joined the budding public television team in Lincoln, Nebraska, helped establish a unified television network in war-torn Korea using airplane transmitters, taught in Taiwan, became an influential member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and so much more.

Hull's autobiography is full of incredible tidbits of his amazing life and his excellent, personable storytelling shines. Book Club Groups interested famous Nebraskans, exploring the early days of television in America, or those who enjoy memoirs full of memorable characters and stories will have much to discuss and share when reading ***Backstage***. With the future of public broadcasting in the balance, ***Backstage*** exists as an important historical document of its beginnings and cultural value. To aid in your group's discussion, I have compiled a list of helpful [Discussion Questions](#).

If you're interested in requesting ***Backstage*** for your book club, you can find the Request Form [here](#). There are 6 copies. (A librarian must request items)

Hull, Ron. ***Backstage: Stories from My Life in Public Television***. Bison Books. 2012.

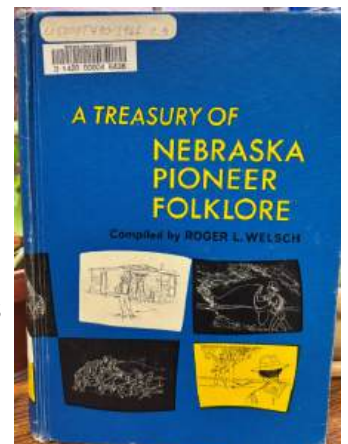
To read Mackenzie's complete review, [click here](#).

Read About Pioneer Folklore on BARD!

CONTRIBUTED BY MIRANDA SHREVES

["A Treasury of Nebraska Pioneer Folklore"](#) compiled by Roger Welsch is now available on cartridge and for download on BARD, the Braille and Audio Reading Download service.

This collection of Nebraska pioneer folklore is taken largely from the Nebraska Folklore Pamphlets issued by the Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s. Contents include songs of trail and prairie and of the Farmers' Alliance, white man's yarns and Indian tales, pioneer Nebraska folk customs, sayings, proverbs, beliefs, children's games, cooking, and cures.



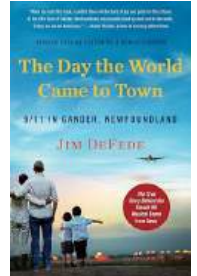
TBBS borrowers can request "A Treasury of Nebraska Pioneer Folklore" [DBC02031](#) or download it from the National Library Service BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) website. You may also contact your reader's advisor to have the book mailed to you on cartridge.

NEW BOOK CLUB KITS AT CPLS



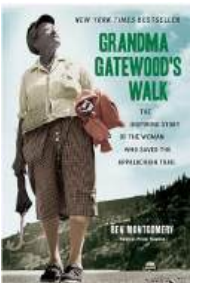
The Lion Women of Tehran by Marjan Kamali (10 copies)

In 1950s Tehran, seven-year-old Ellie lives in grand comfort until the untimely death of her father, forcing Ellie and her mother to move to a tiny home downtown. Lonely and bearing the brunt of her mother's endless grievances, Ellie dreams for a friend to alleviate her isolation. Luckily, on the first day of school, she meets Homa, a kind girl with a brave and irrepressible spirit. Together, the two girls play games, learn to cook in the stone kitchen of Homa's warm home, wander through the colorful stalls of the Grand Bazaar, and share their ambitions of becoming "lion women."



The Day the World Came to Town by Jim DeFede (10 copies)

When 38 jetliners bound for the United States were forced to land at Gander International Airport in Canada by the closing of U.S. airspace on September 11, the population of this small town on Newfoundland Island swelled from 10,300 to nearly 17,000. The citizens of Gander met the stranded passengers with an overwhelming display of friendship and goodwill.



Grandma Gatewood's Walk by Ben Montgomery (10 copies)

Emma Gatewood told her family she was going on a walk and left her small Ohio hometown with a change of clothes and less than two hundred dollars. The next anybody heard from her, this genteel, farm-reared, sixty-seven-year-old great-grandmother had walked 800 miles along the 2,050-mile Appalachian Trail. By September 1955 she stood atop Maine's Mount Katahdin, sang "America, the Beautiful," and proclaimed, "I said I'll do it, and I've done it."



The Women on Platform Two by Laura Anthony (10 copies)

Dublin, 1969: Maura has just married Dr. Christy Davenport and they look forward to growing their family. But as her husband's vicious temper emerges, Maura worries that her home might never be safe for a child. Meanwhile, her close friend Bernie, a mother of three, learns the devastating news that another pregnancy could prove fatal.

Dublin, 2023: A close call makes Saoirse realize that she may never want to be a mother. Little does she know that only a few decades ago, a group of women made this option possible for her. And she's about to meet one of them...



Dogtown by Katherine Applegate and Gennifer Choldenko (10 copies) (Grades 4-6)

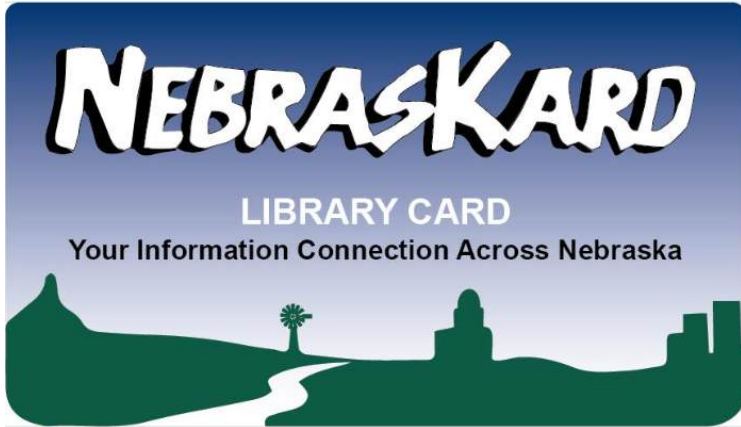
Dogtown is a shelter for stray dogs, misbehaving dogs, and discarded robot dogs, whose owners have outgrown them. Chance, a real dog, has been in Dogtown since her owners unwittingly left her with irresponsible dog-sitters who skipped town. Metal Head is a robot dog who dreams of being back in a real home. And Mouse is a mouse who has the run of Dogtown, pilfering kibble, and performing clever feats to protect the dogs he loves. When Chance and Metal Head embark on an adventure to find their forever homes, there is danger, cheese sandwiches, a charging station, and some unexpected kindnesses along the way.



Nothing Else But Miracles by Kate Albus (10 copies) (Grades 4-7)

When 12-year-old Dory Byrne's pop left New York City's Lower East Side to fight Hitler, he promised her and her brothers that they'd be safe. Like he always said, "the neighborhood will give you what you need." There's the lady from the bakery, who saves them leftover crullers. The kind landlord who checks in on them. And every Thursday night, the Byrnes enjoy a free bowl of seafood stew at Mr. Caputo's restaurant. . . which is where Dory learns about the abandoned hand-pulled elevator that is the only way to get to Caputo's upper floors.

Logan County Library is excited to announce that we are now offering the Nebraskard card! This card will allow you to borrow from other participating libraries in Nebraska, for free! If you are interested in getting a Nebraskard, then come see me here at the library on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8am-5pm (closed 12pm-1pm for lunch)!



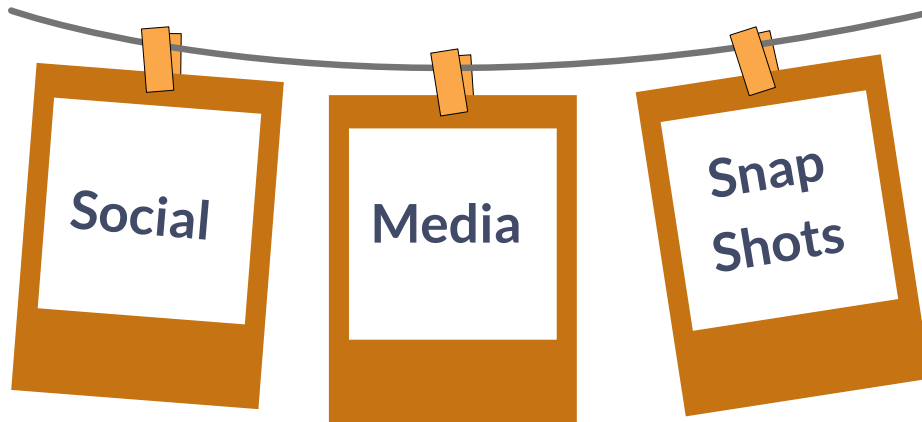
14 likes · 6 comments · 2 shares
Like Comment Share

Logan County Library, Stapleton

Top Ten Tuesdays are back! We start with the top checkouts at JML from 2025. These titles and several other best-sellers and award-winners from 2025 are on display in the Adult area.

ADULTS	CHILDREN/YA
1. The Long March Home by Marcus Brotherton & Tosca Lee	1. Dog Man (series) by Dav Pilkey
2. A Mind of Her Own by Danielle Steel	2. The Baby-Sitters Club (GN series) by Ann. M. Martin
3. Winter Garden by Kristin Hannah	3. Elephant & Piggie Biggies (series) by Mo Willems
4. Counting Miracles by Nicholas Sparks	4. Wings of Fire (GN series) by Tui Sutherland
5. Broken Country by Clare Leslie Hall	5. Cat: Kid Comic Club by Dav Pilkey
6. The Woman in Suite 11 by Ruth Ware	6. Meet Bluey's Family
7. The Teacher by Frieda McFadden	7. Frozen 5-Minute Stories
8. Say You'll Remember Me by Abby Jimenez	8. Big Cats by National Geographic Society
9. The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah	9. Elephant Goes Potty by James Patterson
10. Regretting You by Coleen Hoover	10. Cocomelon: 5-minute Stories

Jensen Memorial Library, Minden



Wilson Public Library, Cozad

We had a productive day at the library. These are all projects done on the Glowforge. Did you know we can engrave on leather? They all turned out so good!



Blue Hill Public Library

Humanities Nebraska & Central Plains Library System Presents Bill Clemente: Feathers & Verses Writing Workshop for 4th Through 8th Grades
Friday, February 20, 1:30pm
Registration Required & Limited

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.

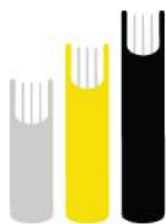
Dollar General Literacy Foundation 2026 Grants Application Cycle is Open

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is currently accepting grant applications for programs aimed at enhancing Adult, Family, and Summer Reading Literacy programs. The Foundation will also accept applications for its Youth Literacy grant program starting on **March 5, 2026**.

The application deadline for Adult, Family, and Summer Reading Literacy Grant applications is **February 5, 2026**. Interested applicants may find eligibility information and apply by visiting the Dollar General Literacy Foundation [Grant Programs website](#).

To be eligible for a grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, your organization must be a nonprofit organization as determined by the IRS, a public library, school or college providing direct literacy services within a state that Dollar General Corporation operates in and is within 15 miles of a Dollar General store. Other eligibility requirements are specific to each grant type and can be found within the grants themselves.

For the Adult and Family literacy grant programs, the maximum grant amount is up to \$10,000. The Summer Reading maximum is \$3,000 and the Youth Literacy grant is \$4,000. Applying for a grant does not guarantee that amount due to the large volume of requests we receive.



DOLLAR GENERAL
LITERACY
FOUNDATION

GIVE.
DREAM.
HOPE.

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
- 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:

The Women on Platform Two by Laura Anthony

The Girls with No Names by Serena Burdick

An Amateur Sleuth's Guide to Murder by Lynn Cahoon

The Day the World Came to Town: 9/11 in Gander Newfoundland by Jim DeFede

The Wilderness by Angela Flournoy

The Widow by John Grisham

The Killer Question by Janice Hallett

The Stolen Life of Colette Marceau by Kristin Harmel

The Night Before by Lisa Jackson

The River is Waiting by Wally Lamb

How to Break My Heart by Kat T. Masen

The Best Worst Thing by Lauren Okie

The Place of Tides by James Rebanks

The Seven Rings by Nora Roberts

The Magician of Tiger Castle by Louis Sachar

The Oysterville Sewing Circle by Susan Wiggs

Wayward Girls by Susan Wiggs

Book by Central Nebraska Librarian



How an Ordinary Boy Became a Hero shares the heartfelt story of Kyle Codner, a young boy raised on a farm in central Nebraska. Told through the eyes of his mother, this touching narrative recounts his ordinary yet cherished childhood moments before he joined the United States Marines. At just 19 years old, Kyle's life was tragically cut short in Iraq on May 26, 2004, when he was killed by a roadside bomb. This tribute captures the essence of love, loss, and the extraordinary heroism found in an ordinary life, honoring the memory of a son, friend, and hero who will never be forgotten.

Dixie Codner served as Librarian at both the Shelton Public Library and the Grand Island Campus of Central Community College. After retirement she wrote *How an Ordinary Boy Became a Hero*. Dixie has done writers' workshops for children and enjoyed speaking to a group of Veterans about her book. To make arrangements for Dixie to speak in your library, you can reach her at 308-380-8868 or dcod1954@yahoo.com.



CPLS HAS SCHOLARSHIP MONEY AVAILABLE!

You may be looking forward to attending a training opportunity that will come up in 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.



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 happy Spring scene is a “supply your own background” project. We suggest sheets of cardstock or paper plates. For each kit you request, you will receive die cut grass, a bunny, 2 butterflies, and a smiling sun. Then you could supply cotton balls for clouds, pom poms for the bunny's tail, and markers to draw butterfly details.

The **deadline** for this project is Friday, **February 20th**. Be sure to include your complete mailing address.

Suggested Books:

Spring is Here: A Bear and Mole Story,
by Will Hillenbrand
2-5 years



Little Blue Truck's Springtime,
by Alice Schertle
1-3 years

The Very Hungry Caterpillar's First Spring,
by Eric Carle
0-3 years



All About Spring,
by Wander Will
2-6 years

THE GREAT

AMERICAN WILD

Build-A-Best Friend

Hand Stuff a Furry Friend • Place a Wish Star Inside • Name It • Love It FUR-ever

Kits Include: 15 inch Unstuffed Furry Friend, Stuffing, Wish-Star, Birth Certificate

★ 1776 ★ Celebrating 250 Years ★ 2026 ★



Baxter Bison



Ember Eagle

Central Plains Library System is placing a group order for **Baxter Bison** and **Ember Eagle** to commemorate America's 250th Birthday. Originally priced at \$19.99 per kit, CPLS members will receive a discount. The System will pay for all transportation costs, from the warehouse to the System office and then out to the individual libraries. The discounted price is \$14 per kit. As a special bonus, CPLS will pay \$2 of the cost for each item (up to the first 50) ordered by every library.

Place your order by emailing how many of each animal you want to Denise at denise.cpls@gmail.com by May 15, 2026.



Noah's Ark Animal Workshop ● 1-866-484-6624 ● noahsarkworkshop.com

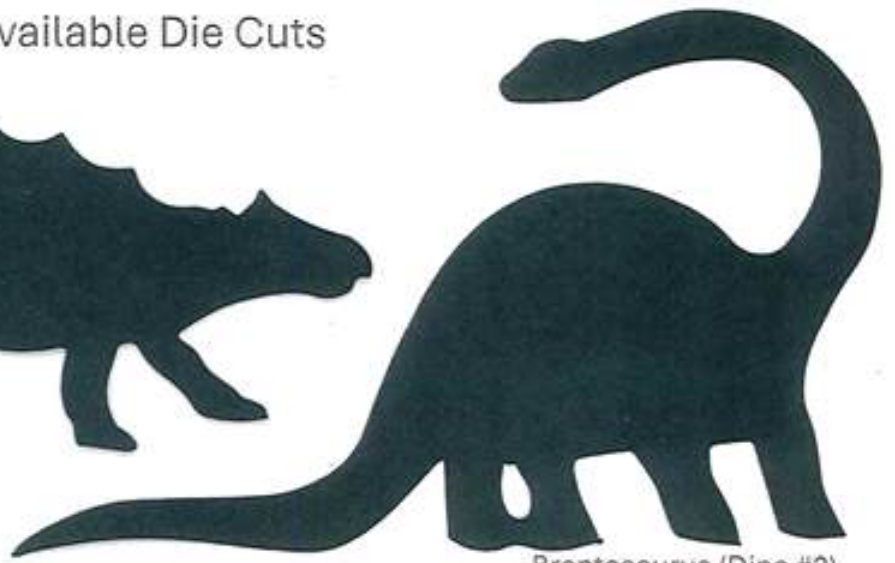
SUMMER READING 2026



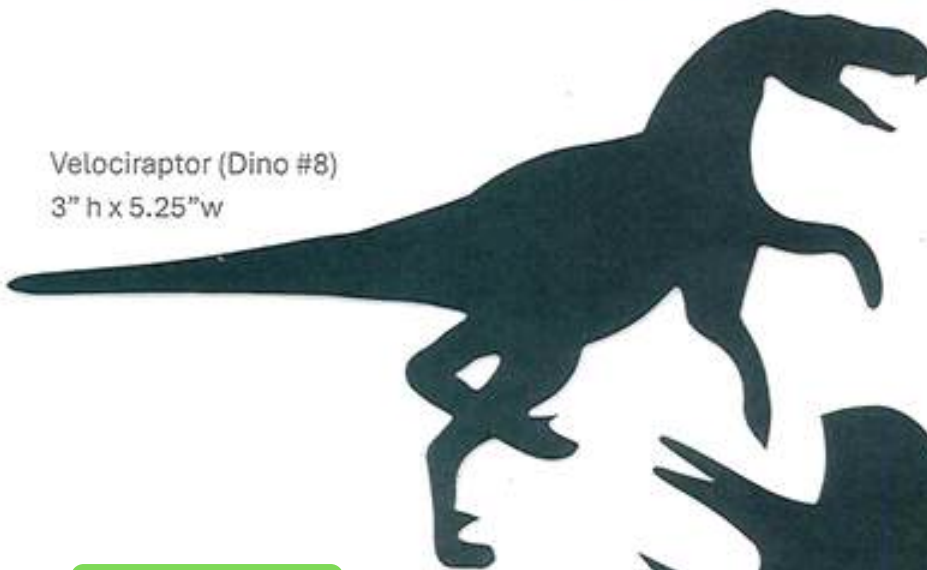
Available Die Cuts



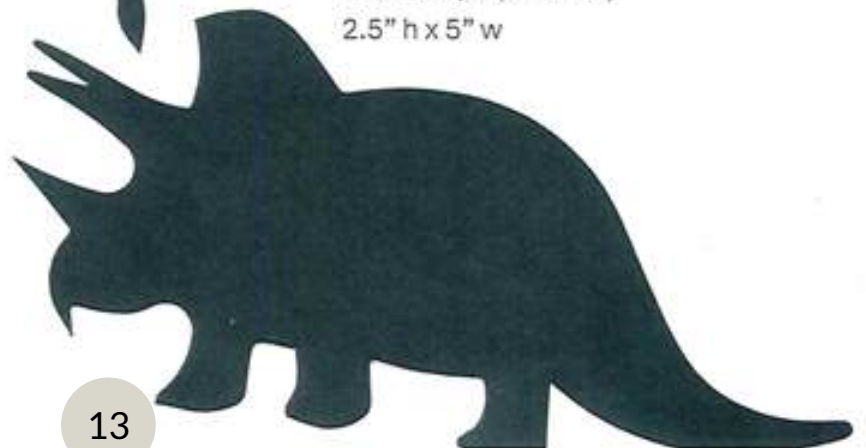
Ankylosaurus (Dino #7)
1.75" h x 5.25" w



Brontosaurus (Dino #2)
3" h x 5" w



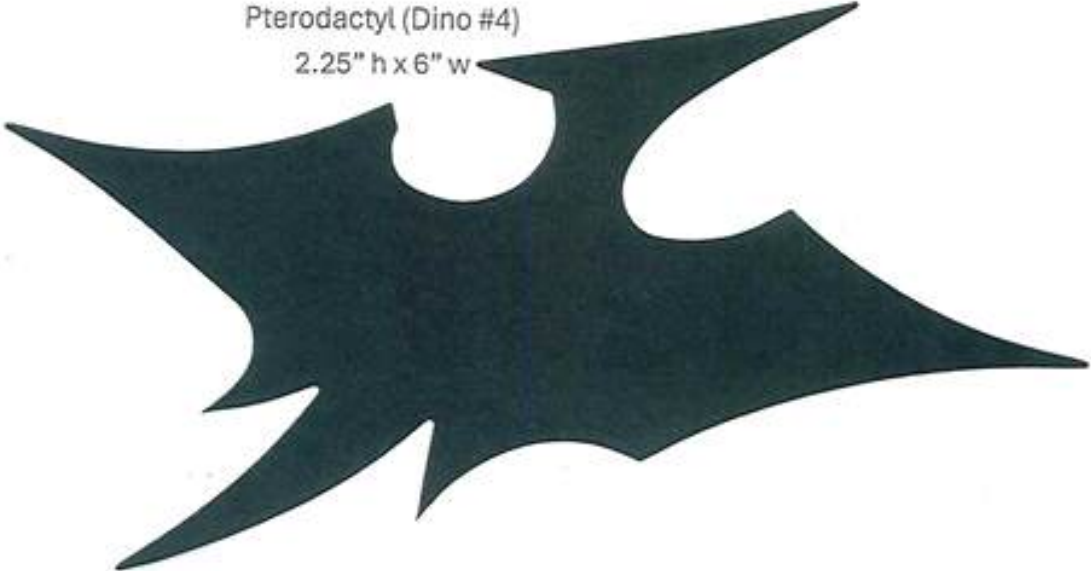
Velociraptor (Dino #8)
3" h x 5.25" w



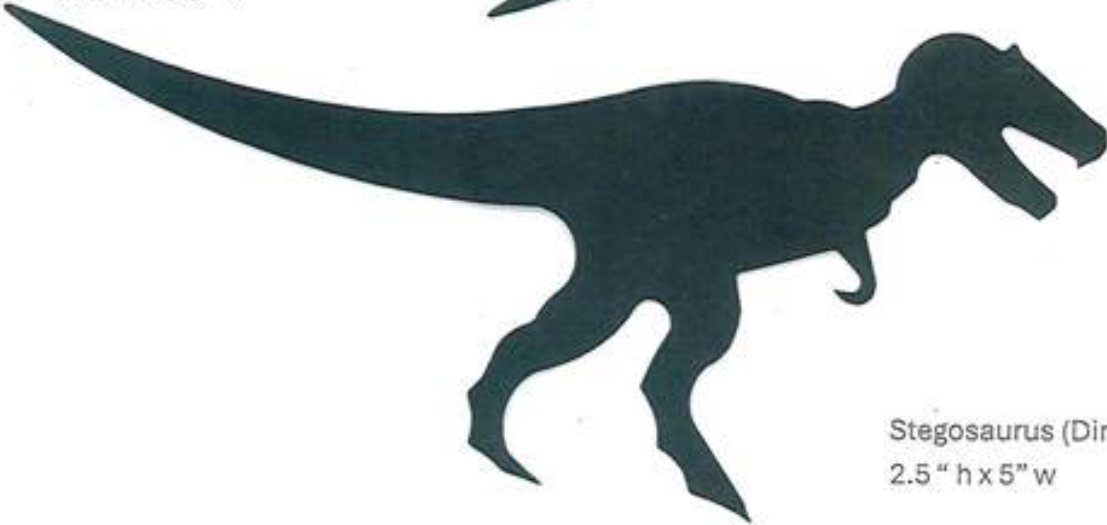
Triceratops (Dino #5)
2.5" h x 5" w

[Click here for the
2026 Die Cut
Order Form](#)

Pterodactyl (Dino #4)
2.25" h x 6" w



T-Rex (Dino #3)
3.5" h x 5.5" w



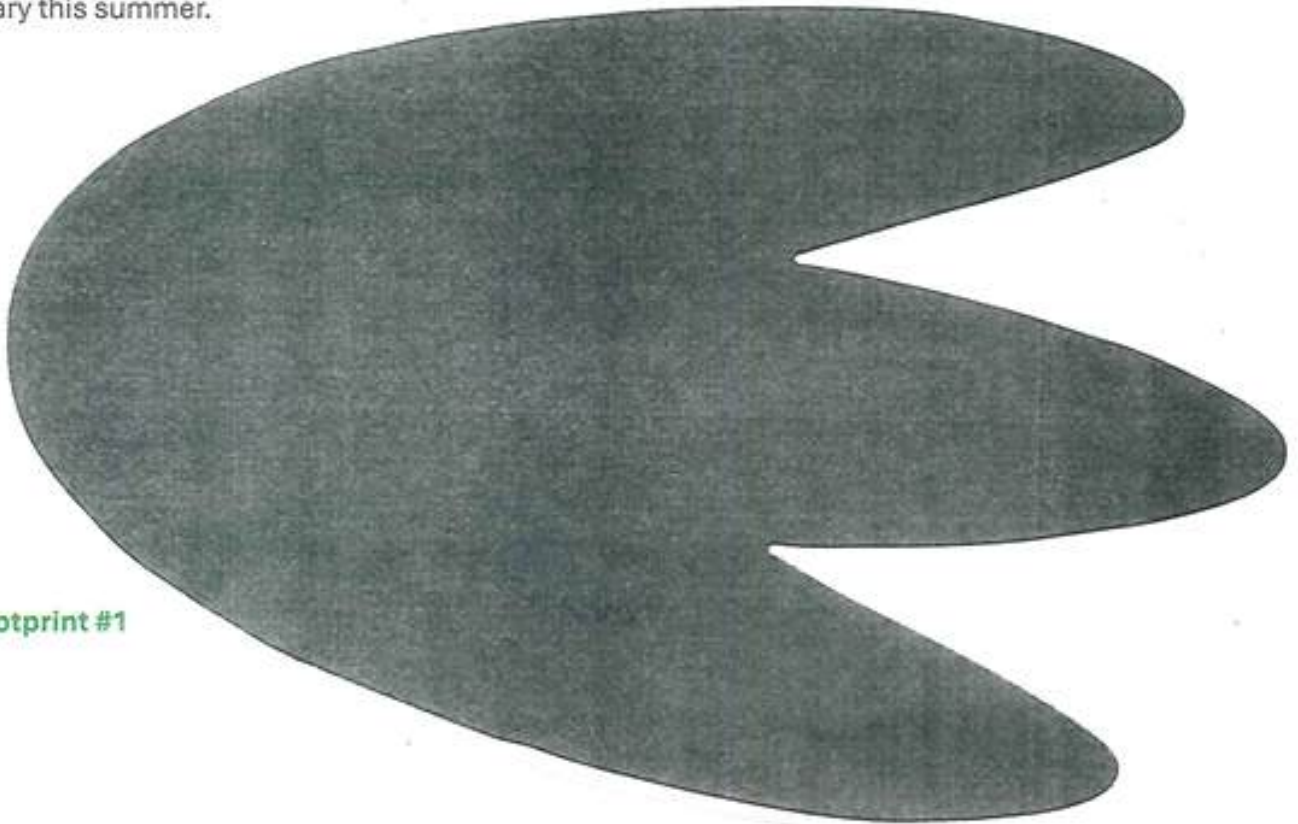
Stegosaurus (Dino #1)
2.5" h x 5" w



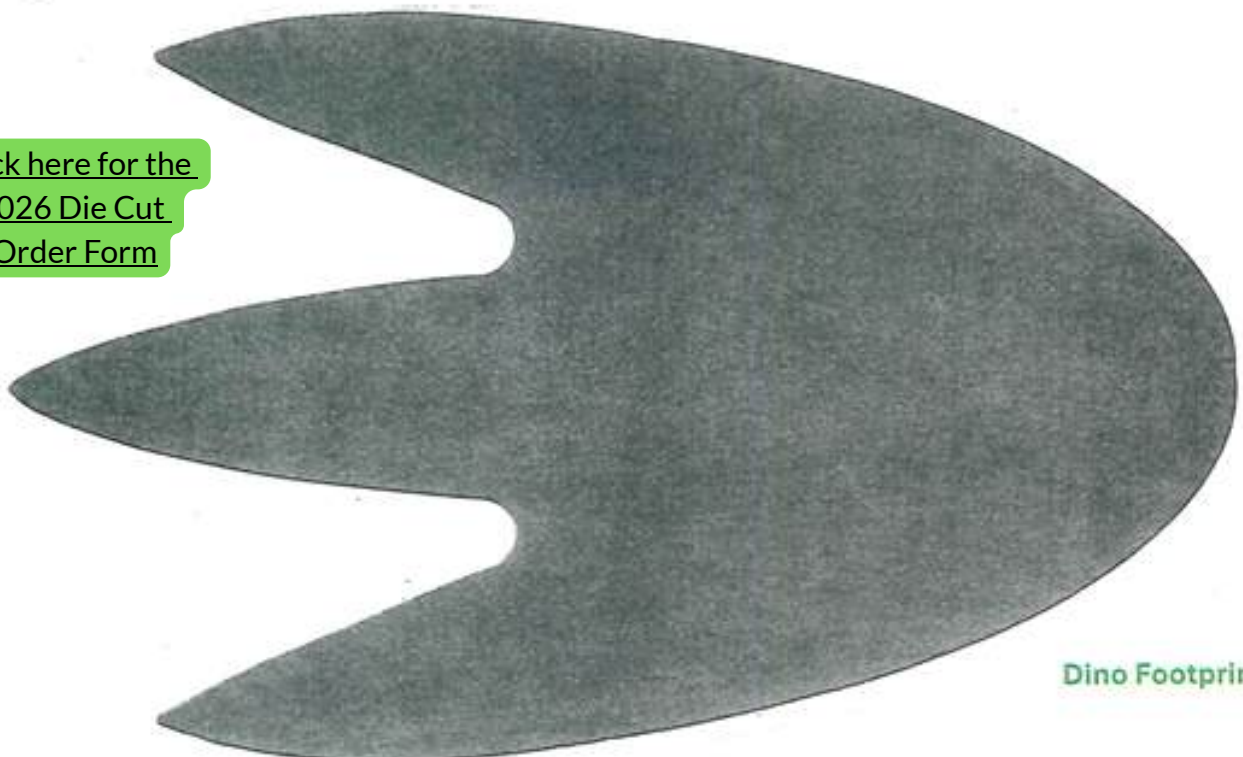
[Click here for the
2026 Die Cut
Order Form](#)

Dinosaur Footprints

These over-sized footprints will make terrific decorations or pieces for a game. Each one takes a full-sized sheet of cardstock and measures 10.5" x 6.5". Let us know how many you need to *Unearth a Story* at your library this summer.



Dino Footprint #1



Dino Footprint #2

[Click here for the
2026 Die Cut
Order Form](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

February 4	Summer Reading Program Workshop, Grand Island Public Library, 10 - 3:30
February 16	Presidents' Day Holiday, CPLS Office Closed
February 20	Deadline to request Deb's March Preschool Project
February 27	<u>Big Talk from Small Libraries</u> , Online Conference
March 14	<u>National Genealogy Day Conference</u> , CCC-Columbus, 9:30 - 4
March 16	Nebraska Library Association Advocacy Day, Lincoln
March 20	Deadline to request Deb's April Preschool Project
April 16	CPLS Board Meeting, Location TBD
April 30	CPLS One-Day Conference, <i>Examine the Essentials</i> , Kearney Public Library, 10 - 5
	Deadline for ordering Folkmanis Puppets
May 1	Deadline for ordering Summer Reading Program Die Cuts
May 15	Deadline for ordering Noah's Ark Bison and/or Eagle

Puppets!!!

We are doing a group purchase of Folkmanis puppets <https://www.folkmanis.com/> again this year. If you are interested in getting any of these amazing puppets to include in your story time or programming related to this summer's theme, *Unearth a Story*, now is the time to order them so you get the best discount.

CPLS Office:

Office:

2727 W. 2nd St, Suite 233

Hastings, NE 68901

(800) 569-4961

Denise Harders

Cell: (402) 705-1409

Email: denise.cpls@gmail.com

Deb Fairbanks

Phone: (402) 462-1975

Email: cplsasst@gmail.com

Nicole Ruzicka

Email: cpls.nicole@gmail.com

Puppets will be ½ of the price listed on the website. The company does require 15% of the final cost as a handling fee on all orders. Central Plains Library System will cover the cost of getting the puppets to you and will send an invoice with the puppets.



Puppet Orders are due APRIL 30, 2026

Please email your orders to: cpls.nicole@gmail.com

“Having fun isn't hard
When you've got a
library card.
~Marc Brown”