

THE WESTERN SUN

Trailblazing and Influential Librarians and Institutions

2024, the year of featuring trailblazing and influential librarians and institutions, culminates in honoring Rod Wagner. With Rod's leadership, the Commission is a dynamic resource for current information, resources, training and support.

Here is a reprint with picture of an interview with Rod from February, 2000.



Rod Wagner is the 11th, and current, director of the Nebraska Library Commission. He began work at the Commission in 1972. A newly minted master's degree in political science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in his hand and a desire to find gainful employment led him to apply for a newly created position at the Commission. Jobs were scarce at the time, so the prospect was an inviting one.

He did not get that job, but they were interested in his degree in political science. The Commission had received funding through the federal Public Employment Program (PEP) and Wagner was hired as a Research Coordinator. Even though he "had no idea what the Library Commission was or involved with" he was intrigued with the job. He began work in February of 1972 under Dr. Bob Kemper.

A number of people were hired at that time with PEP funding as network consultants. A period of training followed for the first six months. One of the first jobs they did was to go to the Library for the Blind and Physically handicapped to help shelve materials.

Wagner did research for Dr. Kemper on the Bellevue Library project. He was given the assignment of supervising the move from the Capitol building to 1420 P Street. There he designed the office space, purchased shelving and supervised the installation of it.

A leave of absence in the mid-70s permitted Wagner to attend library school in Missouri and receive his MLS. He returned to the Commission in the fall of 1976, about the time that John Kopischke became director.

Jane Geske appointed Rod Deputy Director about 1974-75. He was responsible for the development of the agency budget and activity planning. He had a number of different assignments in that capacity.

Wagner was named director of the Commission February 5th, 1987. Commission chair Sandra Riley said, "Wagner's excellent credentials merited his selection following a national search by the board." He had been acting director since John Kopischke's resignation in 1987.

Rod's long history with the Commission gives him a lot of background to events that are important to the history of the Commission. The Panhandle systems demonstration stands out as a memorable event. It was to be the prototype upon which the other systems would be built.

Since becoming director, Wagner has encouraged staff members to develop a great many programs. The colloquiums for library directors were up-scale programs to encourage librarians to read about library trends and to listen to experts in their fields talk about innovation and moving forward.

The Wilson Symposium for Rural Libraries was a national seminar that involved bringing in librarians from all parts of the United States to learn about the problems those libraries in rural areas face.

Legislative issues have become increasingly important to the life of the Commission in these later years of the Commission's history. Funding has become scarcer and the needs have grown. Rod has helped to spearhead the drive for innovative ways to fund crucial programs. Statewide contracting is one method to address those needs.

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Dates to Remember

November 12: Western Library System Board Meeting, Scottsbluff and Zoom, 10:00

2025

January 14: Western Library System Board Meeting, Scottsbluff and Zoom, 10:00

January 25-27: American Library Association [LibLearnX, The Library Learning Experience](#) Phoenix, Arizona

June 26-July 1: American Library Association Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

August 28-29 (tentative) Joint Youth Services Retreat sponsored by the Regional Library Systems

September 17-20: Association of Rural and Small Libraries Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico

October 1-3: Mountain Plains Library Association, (Combined conference with North and South Dakota Library Associations) Grand Forks, North Dakota

October 22-24: Nebraska Library Association Conference, [Holthus Convention Center](#), York

2026

October 14-16: Nebraska Library Association and Mountain Plains Library Associations Conference, La Vista

Policy Power

State legislatures, school and public boards across the county have been active in reviewing legislative bills. In Nebraska there have been bills introduced to criminalize library staff for their choice in materials and limit what is available to their residents. The Nebraska Library Association and Nebraska School Library Association monitor bills and communicates the progress of these bills before the State Senate to their members and involved parties.

EveryLibrary is a nonprofit organization that “helps public, school and college libraries win funding at the ballot box, ensure stable funding and access to libraries for generations to come.”

In addition to tracking state and local bills that may be unfavorable to libraries, EveryLibrary monitors the [positive bills](#).

Examples of Pro-library legislations include:

Delaware:

Delaware’s governor signed an amendment to Titles 6 and 9 of the State Code that. Adds “public libraries” to the definition of “place of public accommodation” for purposes of Delaware’s Equal Accommodations Law. It also directs the Delaware Library Consortium to develop and adopt common policies concerning collection, development, and other topics in order to ensure equitable access and the right to read for all Delawareans.

Colorado:

Colorado’s bill signed by the Governor establishes standards that public libraries in Colorado must include in their policies regarding the acquisition, retention, display, reconsideration, and use of library resources, as well as the use of public library facilities. Key provisions include: Defining “library resource” to include a wide range of materials, both print and non-print, available in public libraries. Requiring public libraries to establish written policies that comply with standards such as: serving as a center for voluntary inquiry and information dissemination, providing access to diverse perspectives, not excluding resources based on the identity or viewpoint of the creator, and prohibiting discrimination in the selection, retention, display, use, or reconsideration of library resources.. Establishing a process for reconsideration of library resources, including requirements that the reconsideration policy be publicly available, that only local residents can make such requests, and that there be limits on how often the same resource can be reconsidered.. Prohibiting retaliation against library employees who refuse to remove a resource before it has been properly reviewed or who make decisions in good faith based on the established standards. The bill also clarifies that written requests for reconsideration of library resources are not considered private library user records.

California:

California's Freedom to Read Act was signed, enacted and adopted on September 24, 2024. This act adds to Chapter 10 of Title 1 of the Education Code.

The bill aims to protect the right of Californians to access a wide range of information and ideas in public libraries. It requires all public libraries that receive state funding to establish a written collection development policy that guides the selection and deselection of materials, and allows community members to share concerns and request reconsideration of library materials. The bill prohibits libraries from banning or restricting access to materials based on their content or the personal characteristics of the authors or subjects. It also protects librarians and staff from retaliation for making collection decisions in accordance with the policy. The bill declares that ensuring public libraries are free from censorship is a matter of statewide concern, and provides for reimbursement of any state-mandated local costs.

Influential Librarians~ Rod Wagner (continued from page 1)

Continuing education is available for all librarians to upgrade their level of expertise, which in turn results in better service for the customer. Trustees, Friends and Foundations are becoming more proactive in the search of funds for the improvement of information dissemination due to the number of advocacy programs that have been developed for use across the state.

Coalition building by partnering with groups outside the library world is the new wave of the future. Rod's vision of the future in the 21st century includes the opportunities to create the Nebraska Library which will be electronic web based. He hopes this will pull together the disparate parts into a more cohesive whole.

His ultimate goal is to make electronic collections more accessible. He wants to be able to have more training available in a sustained way so that people in libraries are not over-whelmed by all the technology. Most of all, he wants to see the Nebraska Library Commission at the forefront of progress in library service that reaches all Nebraskans in an equitable manner.

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Interviews Rod, a Respected State Library Leader

The interview with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) demonstrates how Rod has been forward thinking through his years of service. Here are excerpts from the interview. IMLS was asking for information on how the five-year plans for LSTA Grants to States funds (2013-2017) differ from their past plans (2008-2012), and how they see the needs of library users in their states changing and evolving.

What were the three most important community needs you sought to address through library services between 2008 and 2012?

Rod's response included topics of the economic downturn, current technology needs and patron training; downloadable resources with patron and staff training and the funding to support it. He addressed a higher turnover in library leadership and staff with a successful effort by the Commission to provide training activities

Michele: How did the evaluation of the programs and initiatives developed over the 2008-2012 cycle affect the state's plan for 2013-2017?

Rod: The Commission surveyed library staff from across the State. The results confirmed that the Commission was providing effective resources. There were requests for more databases for elementary and middle schools and grant support for training.

What were the three most important community needs you plan to address through your library program in the next five years?

Rod: answered with digital literacy, employment information for patrons; early childhood education; encouraging reading skills and continued support for the active successful summertime program across the State.

“Lisa Kelly’s nomination to consider Rod Wagner for the Library Commission’s Excellence in Leadership Award expresses a staff member’s perspective on Rod’s governance.

“I would like to nominate Rod Wagner for the Library Commission’s Excellence in Leadership Award. Rod has been the director of the Library Commission since 1988 and has been a valued employee since 1972. His longevity has given him a measured sense of our agency with a patina that can only come with experience. Something as significant as managing troubled budget cycles is a task only long-termers can do with understanding and foresight which is an assurance beyond compare for his employees.



One of the qualities *** listed is valuing people. Nobody does this better or more respectfully than Rod. Once someone is hired at the Library Commission, they are appreciated and given chances to grow. Many staff members have achieved advanced degrees with tuition reimbursement while employed at the Library Commission. Learning and continuing education are part of the life blood of this agency and of librarianship.

Rod practices a benevolence in leading the agency that I believe is responsible for many other long term employees and low turnover. He leads the management team in a relaxed yet focused way to steer the agency in a uniform direction even though we may have different ideas about how to get from point a to point b.

A sense of humor and a firm resolve when needed are both qualities that have made me respect and appreciate Rod’s leadership. Another quality of a good leader is letting others do their job and providing a firm foundation for every employee to do what they can do best. I’ve never known a director to be such a leader by example than Rod is to me. As my direct supervisor, he responds to my need for guidance and answers any concerns I have in a timely way. He is concerned with both our professional and personal lives; another factor in our long term staff.

At a time when change is something that happens so quickly, steady and quality leadership is not to be taken for granted. Rod provides this to our staff, to our agency, and to the state of Nebraska and has been doing so for many years.”

***One of the required responses on the nomination application.



Rod with Governor Pillen Promotes Broadband Connections During National Library Week in 2023 in Clay Center. Governor Jim Pillen, together with the Nebraska Library Commission, the Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC), the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), and the Clay Center Library, highlighted the Nebraska E-rate Special Construction State Matching Grant Program as an opportunity to further connect Nebraskans by incentivizing new broadband fiber construction to state libraries.



Anthony Chow, Professor & Director, San Jose State University iSchool writes in his blog that he “visited the Nebraska Library Commission in August of this year. He met with Rod, Sally Snyder and Amanda Sweet and others and learned about the initiative to build Community Book Gardens and Book Ecosystems with Nebraska public libraries. The vision is to collaborate together to ensure book and reading rich environments are strategically provided for young children and their families by removing the significant barriers of cost, access, and cultural relevancy. This includes helping communities tell and publish their own stories so that children and families can read about themselves and their cultures. We all want to see ourselves in the adventures and pages we read! Together we can disrupt the vicious cycle of poverty and lack of access to literacy resources, books, and libraries. The goal is equal access to all and the SJSU School of Information is proud to be a partner and thought leader in doing the hard work to make this happen.”

A few of the many the accolades and achievements Rod received over the years.

Rod has been active with a variety of associations and partnerships which enhances his leadership qualities. Notable examples include:

- ◆ The Literary Heritage Award recognizing persons or groups that promote excellence in writing in Nebraska.in 2016
- ◆ Partnering with Emporia State University and its Master of Library Science program
- ◆ Rod has been active with United for Libraries and the predecessor division Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF). The benefits to the libraries in Nebraska is the collaboration allows the library staff, their Friends and Foundation to access free training. The training is used for Continuing Education Credits required for accreditation and certification



Nancy Bush, Marty Hale (Dean of the Emporia State University MLS) and Rod Wagner signing the agreement.

Celebrations and Milestones

Congratulations to these libraries reaccredited through 2029

Bayard Public Library - Silver

Broadwater Public - Silver

Kimball Public Library (Silver to Gold)

Lied Scottsbluff Public Library - Gold

Oshkosh Public Library (from Bronze to Silver)

Palisade Public Library—Silver

Grant Opportunities



The American Library Association and the Association of Rural and Small Libraries is opening their third round of Library Transforming Communities grants. This initiative offers grants to small and rural libraries to increase the accessibilities of facilities, services and programs to better serve people with disabilities.

Submission: Open Now

Deadline for Submission: Wednesday, December 11, 2024 by 11:59 pm (CT)

Award Notification Date: Monday, March 3, 2025

Check out if this grant will be beneficial to your library. The complete information and the application are available [here](#).

Nebraska Libraries that received this grant from previous rounds.

Kilgore Memorial Library (Kilgore, NE)

Lied Tekamah Public Library (Tekamah, NE)

Schuyler Public Library (Schuyler, NE)

Penguin Random House and United for Libraries Announce New Grants for Friends of Libraries

in celebration of National Library Week. Grants of \$500 and \$1,000 will be awarded to support libraries in need. The funds are awarded to assist Friends of Library groups or nonprofit groups that support and fundraise for libraries in their communities, with priority projects. In addition, an in-kind book donation grants of \$500.00 will be awarded to 20 libraries to purchase Penguin Random House titles.

Grants will be administered by United for Libraries: The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, whose mission is to support those who govern, promote, advocate, and fundraise for all types of libraries. Grant funding is provided by Penguin Random House. This [link](#) will take you to all details. *The training includes a session on how to establish a Friends group and how to originate a 501c 3 if your library does not have one.*



Nebraska
Library
Commission

Grants to Nebraska libraries and library organizations finance through the Nebraska Legislature and the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

This is a meaningful opportunity for libraries to enhance their facilities, programs and services

[Grant applications](#) for the following are **due November 15, 2024**. To learn more about the 2025 grants, watch the recording of the September 25, 2024 *NCompass Live* webinar

Continuing Education and Training Grants

This year, the Nebraska Library Commission is opening the CE grants to 1) online learning, 2) attending conferences or workshops, and 3) larger continuing education projects.

The purpose of these grants is 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 2025. (All reimbursement forms and receipts must be submitted by June 13, 2025.)

Library Internship Grant Program

The Nebraska Library Commission has made funding available to accredited Nebraska public libraries for internships through the 2025 Nebraska Library Internship Grant Program. This project is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the Nebraska Library Commission.

This internship program works 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 (\$500 or \$1,000 per library or branch) to provide stipends to the student interns. In the past student interns have helped the libraries expand programs, complete projects, improve websites, and expand social media use, while bringing fresh ideas into the library.

Library Improvement Grants

The purpose of the Library Improvement Grants is to facilitate growth and development of library programs and services in Nebraska public and institutional libraries, by supplementing local funding with federal funds designated for these purposes. In order to be funded projects must meet one or more of the following:

- Facilitate access to resources . . . for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry;
- Encourage resource sharing among . . . libraries for the purpose of achieving economical and efficient delivery of library services to the public;
- Promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning and to enhance and expand the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources relating to workforce development, 21st century skills, and digital literacy skills;
- Ensure the preservation of knowledge and library collections in all formats and to enable libraries to serve their communities during disasters;
- Promote library services that provide users with access to information through national, state, local, regional, and international collaborations and networks.

Youth Grants for Excellence

The program is designed to encourage creative thinking, risk-taking and new approaches to address problems and needs of children and young adults in your community. Grant awards enable youth librarians to begin needed programs and try projects which they have been unable to undertake. The grants also offer an opportunity to expand youth service capabilities in new and different directions. It is also expected that the funding will provide a foundation for ongoing rather than one-time services, which can be continued with community support or through a reallocation of library funds.

Applications Now Open for NEA Big Read Grants

Information posted by Christa Porter on the NLC website.

“Applications are now open for the 2025-26 cycle of the National Endowment [NEA Big Read](#), a national program that offers matching grants of up to \$20,000 to support community-wide reading programs around the theme of “Our Nature: How Our Physical Environment Can Lead Us to Seek Hope, Courage, and Connection.”

The Intent to Apply deadline is January 23, 2025. Final Application due: January 30, 2025. Visit Arts Midwest’s website for complete grant guidelines and to apply.

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The 22 NEA Big Read books available for programming this cycle explore our relationship with the physical environment, from our cities and farms to our mountains and coastlines. Applicants will host book discussions, writing workshops, and other creative activities that examine how we shape our physical environment and how it shapes us.

The NEA Big Read welcomes applications from a variety of eligible organizations, including first-time applicants; organizations serving communities of all sizes, including rural and urban areas; and organizations with small, medium or large operating budgets. Eligible applicants include nonprofit arts organizations, universities/colleges, school districts, public libraries, tribal organizations, museums, and community service organization.

Potential applicants may sign up for a live informational webinar, being held on November 14, 2024 at 1’pm CT, to learn more about the program. All registrants will be sent ta link to the recording, even if you cannot attend the live event.”

Big Read grants are available to 501c3 non-profit organizations and other federally tax-exempt entities including, universities/colleges, school districts, public libraries, tribal organizations, museums, and community service organizations.

Past Nebraska library participants in the Big Read Initiative

2008-2009: Omaha Reads—*The Call of the Wild* and Plattsmouth Public Library-*The Maltese Falcon*

2010-2011: Plattsmouth Public Library—*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

2014-2015: Seward Public Library— *The Call of the Wild*

2022-2023: Norfolk Public Library through Northeast Community College—*Sitting Pretty*

Other Nebraska organizations who have received Big Read grants include the Henry Doorly Zoo and the Willa Cather Foundation. Outside of Nebraska other 501c(3) participants often partner with their local libraries. Examples include:

- ◇ Arts Centers and Councils
- ◇ Colleges and Universities (often used as a common book for first-year students to read , discuss and attend programs)
- ◇ Humanities Nonprofits
- ◇ Theater groups such as El Centro Su Teatro in Denver and Shakespeare Festivals throughout the country

Around the Sun

Tales from two Summer Reading Awardees of funding from the Western Library System

Kimball Public Library ~ Amelia Shada

“Adventure Begins at Your Library” was such a fun theme to work around programming for Summer Reading. Every year the Kimball Public Library hosts a sort of scavenger hunt as one of our teen programs, and this year we morphed it into a cooperative team geocache event for our teens. Geocaching functions by using real-life map coordinates and a hint to lead you towards a hidden “cache”. They can vary in size and difficulty to find, and usually contains trinkets for the geocacher to collect. It’s basically an ongoing scavenger hunt and it’s free to participate. We based our program around this concept to give our teens a taste of geocaching. And to take advantage of the warm weather, we hosted this activity outside at a local park.



They were to work together as a team to follow a series of clues and map pins to lead them to their next cache. They had about 10 to find before their hour was up. Teens were encouraged to bring their smartphones. We created QR codes that when scanned brought up a map of the park, with a pin on their next location, and a brief clue to help them find the specific hiding spot of the cache. We designed the maps in Canva and CorelDraw, and we found a free online QR code generator to upload the maps to. Every cache was uniquely different and contained trinkets for each teen to collect and take home with them.

This did take a decent amount of prep. It took time to design the maps, come up with clues, and make sure we had enough trinkets in every cache for each teen. We usually average 10-15 kids for this particular program. We obtained permission from the parks department to hide these caches on the day of the program, and thankfully caught sunshine in a brief window of storms that day.

We tried to make some of the prizes in-house to promote our Makerspace; adventure themed buttons (button maker), pokeballs with wooden Pokémon inside (laser cutter), adventure themed stickers (vinyl cutter) and laminated bookmarks with silhouette campfire and hot air balloon cutouts (Cricut maker) to name a few. The rest of our prizes were purchased to add some variety. The last clue took them to the end of the slide. They had to yell a funny word- Fubsy or Pronk, up the slide to receive an ice cream treat! There were some learning curves through this process. Firstly, just because a QR code generator website says free, it does not mean it’s free! Thankfully, we started this process early and learned some websites require a subscription or the codes simply expire after a certain amount of time and send you to a dead link.

Eventually, we were able to find one that works. Using QR codes was a fun way to integrate tech and ensure that every teen had access to the map without needing to print multiple copies, or have them all struggling to look at just one. We are finding that it’s harder and harder to get teens excited about activities and this was no exception. Many kids come back because they really enjoy the scavenger hunt. We try to make the trinkets cool, and the clues to require thought without being too difficult. If they seemed like they were stuck on a particular clue, we tried to nudge them in the right direction. The excitement they expressed at even little moments of success made the work worth it.

The way we run our scavenger changes slightly every year as we try to fine-tune the process and make it more fun. At the end of the program, we usually have an opportunity to get some feedback from the teens about what they liked and didn’t like to help us make further adjustments in the coming years. The scavenger hunt will be back next year, and we’re excited to see how that goes!





Gordon City Library ~ Rachael Price

Kids, Kindergarten through 5th grade explored four of the continents this summer using their imaginations at the Gordon City Library. We kicked off our program with a visit from a local traveler and retired teacher, Mrs. Russell, who shared pictures and souvenirs from each of her overseas trips. The kids loved exploring the sites through her eyes and hearing special recollections of her travels. As the program continued through the two weeks, each day offered a “visit” to a different location with a story and craft based on traditions from that area.

Creations included painting boomerangs with Aboriginal dot-art while visiting Australia, designing and creating clay pots with traditional African designs, constructing a Koi wind-catcher, and stringing beaded necklaces featuring Imitation bear claws or coyote teeth. Twenty-five readers registered and attended in two sessions.

The smaller kids (K-2nd grade) enjoyed a variety of books by individual authors, and Miss Amy’s Australian accent while reading a story about kangaroos was a favorite. For the older kids (3rd-5th grade), the highlight of the two weeks was reading through “Around the World in 80 Days” adapted for young readers. Funds received from the Western Library System made many of the crafts and prizes possible.



We appreciate the resources and hard work that Cindy and her team put together to support our 2024 Summer Reading Program!



Alliance Public Library ~ Cynthia Horn

“Apollo to the Moon” was the theme of a recent Breakout Box event with Alliance Middle School students and staff.

The event coincided with the launch of NASA’s Europa Clipper Mission in October. The craft began a yearslong journey of 1.8 billion miles to explore Jupiter’s smallest, icy moon Europa. NASA created a “Message in a Bottle” campaign to support this mission.

Engraved on the spacecraft was U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón’s “In Praise of Mystery” poem. The poem (next page) was introduced to the students. Prior to the launch the public was invited to participate by sending their names that were microchipped into the craft.

Check out a Breakout Box from the Western Library System.



In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa
Ada Limón



Arching under the night sky inky
with black expansiveness, we point
to the planets we know, we

pin quick wishes on stars. From earth,
we read the sky as if it is an unerring book
of the universe, expert and evident.

Still, there are mysteries below our sky:
the whale song, the songbird singing
its call in the bough of a wind-shaken tree.

We are creatures of constant awe,
curious at beauty, at leaf and blossom,
at grief and pleasure, sun and shadow.

And it is not darkness that unites us,
not the cold distance of space, but
the offering of water, each drop of rain,

each rivulet, each pulse, each vein.
O second moon, we, too, are made
each rivulet, each pulse, each vein.
O second moon, we, too, are made
of water, of vast and beckoning seas.

We, too, are made of wonders, of great
and ordinary loves, of small invisible worlds,
of a need to call out through the dark.

“In Praise of Mystery” by Ada Limón was released at the Library of Congress on June 1, 2023.

Conferences and Events

Youth Services Retreat ~ August 29-30 ~ Camp Carol Joy Holling

Enthusiastic librarians who work with youth gathered at Camp Carol Joy Holling for two days of thought-provoking, motivating and fun sessions replete with camaraderie. Program sessions included one from the Western Library System's own Elaine Bleisch, Youth Services Librarian from the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library. Elaine presented the informative, well-received presentation on her Board Games IRL (In real life) programming. Elaine, Emily Meysenburg from the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library and Cindy Osborne represented Western Nebraska.

Topics included: (handouts from the session titles followed with an asterisk can be requested by e-mailing cindy.osborne@nebraska.gov by December 20th.)

- ◇ Collaborate2Create with Lisa Smith
- ◇ Fantastic New Reads for Children with Aura Sewell*
- ◇ Programs & How I Plan 'Em with Liz Hittle*
- ◇ "Booktalk" Your Favorites (But Not Books)
- ◇ Board Games IRL with Elaine Bleisch*
- ◇ Lending Non-Traditional Material—Is It worth the aggravation? With Denise Harders*
- ◇ Great New Books for Teens with Kris Cram*
- ◇ Dream Chasing with Brody Kelly, A Nebraska teacher/author of a Delightful Children's Book *The Best*. This book has been ordered for the Western Library System to checkout to libraries.*
- ◇ Tapping into Collective Wisdom
- ◇ Grant Applications—Are Too Much! Some Tips for Success with Sally Snyder*
- ◇ Family and Community Programming—Major Successes & Epic Fails with Jennifer Norton & Rossy Casanova

Pictures from the event: Clockwise from upper left hand corner: Camp Carol Joy Hollings's bucolic setting; one of the walking paths; enjoying a meal together; Brody Kelly, describing the writing process for his book *Dream Big*; an interactive session filled with personal stories and laughter.



Author Tour—2024 “The Writer’s Journey” with William “Kent” Krueger

The Western Library System’s Author Tour Committee, Allison Reisig, Becky Henkel, Ethan Nelson, Sarah Johannsen and Sherry Preston chose an outstanding author for the 2024 Tour. Kent Krueger’s personable, relatable, down-to earth personality contributed to the event attendees positive reception for this choice.

Each event brought in participants locally and from the surrounding area. He charmed people when he signed books. He was entertaining and educational at his presentations. His love for the protagonist characters in his stories is clear.

At the book signing in Scottsbluff and events at the Kathleen Lute Library in Ogallala, the System appreciated the enthusiastic support from the respective Friends groups. Scottsbluff provided their autumn themed refreshments with cookies, lemonade and iced tea. Ogallala featured charcuterie cups and William Kent Krueger cookies with his book titles on a setting that matched the books.

Pictures from the events: (the high-quality pictures were taken by Ethan Nelson) clockwise from upper left hand corner: Becky Henkel and Cheryl Hamilton, WLS Board Member; Book selecting at the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library. Cookies and charcuterie cups in Ogallala, Kent signing books in Ogallala, Ethan and Sherry selling books. The front and back of the promotional bookmarks in the right hand corner and below.



Western Library System
AUTHOR TOUR 2024
OCTOBER 7
SCOTTSBLUFF
 4 P.M.
 BOOK SIGNING
 LIED SCOTTSBLUFF PUBLIC LIBRARY
 1809 3RD STREET
 7 P.M.
 AUTHOR TALK
 MIDWEST THEATER
 1707 BROADWAY
OCTOBER 8
OGALLALA
 KATHLEEN LUTE PUBLIC LIBRARY
 610 WEST A STREET
 6 P.M.
 BOOK SIGNING
 7 P.M.
 AUTHOR TALK

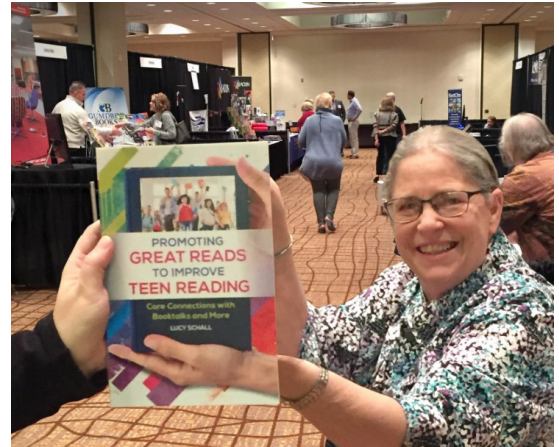


Nebraska Library Association Conference—Kearney, October 10-11

An action-packed conference filled with a wide assortment of sessions and exhibitors selling their library wares.



The opening keynote with the captivating, enlightening Dr. Artika Tyner.



The intrepid Sally Snyder.



The busy exhibit hall with representatives for the Mountain Plains Library Association, Michael Straamann and Robin Hastings on the left



Western Library System Attendees Share their Conference Experience

Three Western Library System awardees used their fund to attend the Nebraska Library Association Conference. One of the requirements for the scholarship is an article for the Western Sun. The first three articles are from the awardees.

Ethan Nelson ~ Lied Scottsbluff Public Library

The 2024 Nebraska Library Association Annual Conference, “Thrive Together,” was an amazing experience and allowed me to make connections with colleagues across the state, learn about new advances and state-of-the-art technologies in the profession, and develop my customer service skills.

The conference featured several informative and exciting presentations on accessibility and creating inclusive programs and services. In the first session, “Creating Adaptive and Inclusive Programs for Individuals with Impairments and Disabilities,” Elizabeth Claymon described how to design, facilitate, and market programs for patrons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I learned about several activities that can be easily modified for different skill and ability levels and how to make programs inclusive for patrons who are sensitive to certain sensory stimuli.

The next session I attended, “Bridging the Gap: A Discussion on Accessible Materials in Nebraska,” featured representatives from the Talking Book and Braille Service and Radio Talking Book who discussed their programs and the unique services they offer. I was amazed to learn about the incredible free resources available for Nebraskans. Alexa streaming devices, and even live audio description. I was especially excited to learn about the services from Radio Talking Book, which include live readings of Nebraska newspapers, live readings of books and textbooks, and radios and Alexa devices which are free for Nebraskans to borrow and use to listen to the readings.

Both programs offer services for blind and visually impaired citizens, including Braille e-readers, book cartridge players, radios, Alexa streaming devices, and even live audio description. I was especially excited to learn about the services from Radio Talking Book, which include live readings of Nebraska newspapers, live readings of books and textbooks, and radios and Alexa devices which are free for Nebraskans to borrow and use to listen to the readings.

The conference also included several inspiring keynote speakers: Dr. Artika Tyner, who spoke about inclusive leadership, and Dr. Lydia Kang, who spoke about her journey of becoming a writer. I want to thank the Western Library System for providing the scholarship which allowed me to attend this amazing conference.

Roberta Boyd ~ Lied Scottsbluff Public Library

2024 NLA trip or Ethan, Jill and Roberta' Excellent Adventure!

I will allow myself that one exclamation point. And I will try not to embarrass my co-workers any more than I may have at the 2024 Nebraska Library Association's annual conference: Thrive Together.

By the time this is published I will have just completed my 15th year of service at the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library. And this year was the very first year I ever had an opportunity to attend this conference. I want to thank WLS and the scholarship committee for providing me with the financial assistance to help with expenses.

As I read through the conference schedule I sort of felt like a kid in a candy store - decisions, decisions...it was hard to pick just one program in each time slot.

I learned about subjects as varied as "What is Intellectual Freedom and Why Do Libraries Fight for It?" to "Tuning In: How to Create a Library Podcast." I discovered a new personality assessment tool called DiSC in "Fostering Healthy Communication in Your Library" *plus* I learned that the presenter, a library director, had received a continuing education grant from the Nebraska Library Commission that enabled the library's entire staff to take the tests which resulted in healthier workplace interactions.

It's impossible to talk about every single session I attended but in three short days (including travel- thanks for driving Jill.) I attended six smaller sessions plus two keynote addresses at the convention center. That's a lot of information to try to absorb!

Thursday evening, we attended the reveal of artist Leslie Iwai's newest permanent public art display at the University of Nebraska Kearney Calvin T. Ryan Library. It's a striking blending of art, poetry and architecture. The artist discussed the creations and several Nebraska poets shared readings.

<https://leslieiwani.com>

It was gratifying, in visiting with one of the librarians at the event, to learn that the college had committed to a two-year-long total renovation of the library, from bottom to top. That speaks volumes to me about the importance of actual physical libraries in our society.

If I had to pick one "Favorite" session it would be the opening keynote address by Dr. Artika Tyner, the founder and president of the nonprofit Planting People Growing Justice Institute.

She lives in St. Paul, Minnesota and is a passionate author, publisher, lawyer, educator and advocate for social justice and reform. And teaching reading and creating readers is key to that.



Part of the installation in the east entryway

Both keynote speakers were inspirational in their own way. Their presentations bookended (yes-pun intended) the conference. Dr. Lydia Kang, a practicing physician, professor, and writer brought things to a close by sharing her evolution as a writer; from her first writing attempt at 10 years old to her success as the author of “Star Wars: Cataclysm.”

In between those two events and other informational sessions I enjoyed myself immensely browsing the exhibitor’s hall booths and chatting with the vendors, the authors, and organizational representatives of several civic and non-profit entities. I entered drawings and picked up all kinds of handouts.

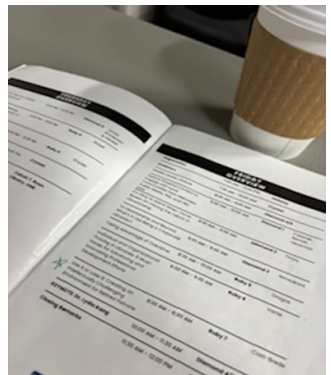
I also had the chance to meet and see people in-the-flesh who I had emailed, or called or seen on a video down through the years. It’s only my opinion and may be my generational bias, but I believe there is an energy that develops when you have the opportunity to come together with a group of people who share common interests and goals but with diversity too.

The last day I walked out of a session room and there were three librarians with their cameras out taping the hotel crew stripping the wallpaper. I remember thinking...” only librarians with that insatiable curiosity most of us seem to have would probably do that... yep, these are my people.”

Jill Winchell ~ Lied Scottsbluff Public Library

Finding My Gem at the 2024 Nebraska Library Association Annual Conference

When I registered for the 2024 Nebraska Library Association Annual Conference, I was looking for my gem. Something to really excite me, help me grow professionally and personally. As I received information on the presenters and presentations, I made my plan I found I was naturally drawn to attend sessions with topics that related to programs I plan and provide at our library. While each session I attended had a different topic and feel, and each presenter had their own style, two sessions really stood out for me.



The Thursday 2:15 session was a toss-up in my plan, I just picked one and went. I found my gem in Mitchell Roush’s presentation “SAY SOMETHING! Empowering Your Community to Help Share Your Library Story”. This session was especially uplifting for me. He talked about reframing how we respond. “Instead of this...make it about that.” This session really resonated with me. He gave us ideas for strategies we can use to navigate issues in our library as well as our community. Find common ground. Humanize everything you share! Be consistent! If you are going to do it-do it!

The last regular session I attended Friday morning, “Use It or Lose It: Creating an Intellectually Challenging Environment for Retired Patrons” was also a favorite. Melissa Cast-Brede asked us, “What is your retirement dream?” This session was built around 4 factors to consider when providing programming for retired patrons. Task complexity, goals, navigating interaction and adaptability are all crucial for continued mental engagement and brain health. Attendees shared positive, engaging program ideas libraries can provide retired patrons to aid in intellectual stimulation, social connections and improved cognitive functions.

I also attended the Pre-Conference session: What is Intellectual Freedom and Why do Librarians Fight for it?, Conference Keynote Speakers: Dr. Artika Tyner and Dr. Lydia Kang and sessions: Engaging Communities through the Arts, Bridging the Gap: A Discussion on Accessible Materials in Nebraska, Succession Planning, Say Yes: How Library and Recreation Partnerships Help Communities Thrive and the UNK Art Installation Event- The reveal of “Cumulate” in the Calvin T. Ryan Library.

Thank you, Western Library System, for awarding me a scholarship to attend and help cover expenses for the 2024 Nebraska Library Association Annual Conference. Roberta Boyd, Ethan Nelson and I were able to attend together. I enjoyed this conference and the growth it provided professionally and personally.



Roberta, Ethan and I attending the closing Keynote Speaker address by Dr. Lydia Kang.

The UNK Art Installation Event and Reception: The reveal of “Cumulate” in the Calvin T. Ryan Library.

Cindy Osborne

The conference started on a high note featuring Dr. Artika Tyner, a professor at the University of St. Thomas School of law, is described as being a “passionate educator, author, sought after speaker, and advocate for justice.” Her topic was “Key Leadership, Strategies to Foster Growth Through Hope and Justice: Planting People Growing Justice. Her talk was inspiring and included hopeful insight. Attendees left the session with her passionate words to commit to activating hope and serving our community.

“Creating Adaptive and Inclusive Programs for Individuals with Impairments and Disabilities”

Vicky Clark and Liz Claymon enthusiastically presented their program and services at the Lincoln Cities Libraries to this special community.

“A Meeting Held in Public, Not a Public Meeting”

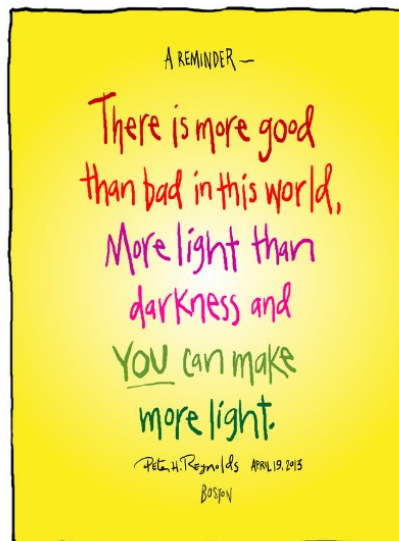
Presented by the Nebraska School Board Association Leadership Director, Marcia Herring, communicated effective agendas, use of best practices and policies, Open Meeting Laws and the importance of building a collaborative culture and cohesive leadership. The school board perspective is of value to library boards as well.

“Say Something! Empowering your Community to Share your Library Story”

This powerful, energetic session from Mitch Roush, Communications Director for the Grand Island Public School District, was informative and interactive.

In 2018, the York Public Library was in dire straights financially. He, along with other community members founded a grassroots effort to support the library.

One of their strategies: Peter Reynolds quote from a poster he created after the Boston Marathon bombing:



“Succession Planning”

Participant in the Regional Library System Director’s panel on **Succession Planning**.

The four Regional Library System Director’s explained components of a plan, what to do and what not to do and fielded questions from the audience.

“Color Your World”

Sally Snyder shared her curated list of summer reading program books to motivate and energize participants for the 2025 Color My World theme.

“Use It or Lose It: Creating an Intellectually Challenging Environment for Retired Patrons”

University of Nebraska at Omaha professor Melissa Cast-Brede applied qualitative brain research on what happens when people retire to library programming and services. Participants shared the programs and services to their active, older adults.

Semper Disco - Always Learning

Upcoming *NCompass Live*

Upcoming NCompass Live events: Sessions count for Continuing Education credits.

***NCompass Live* is broadcast live, every Wednesday, from 9am - 10am, Mountain Time.** For

more information, to register for NCompass Live, or to listen to recordings of past events,

go to: <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/NCompassLive/>

Title	2024 Dates
Summer Reading Program 2025: Color Our World	November 6
Nebraska Open Meetings Act of 2024 Overview and Update	November 13
Building Cultures of Reading with Reader Zone	November 20
Pretty Sweet Tech	November 27
Best New Children’s Books of 2024	December 11
Best New Teen Reads of 2024	January 8, 2025

Basic Skills for Nebraska Librarians

One of the requirements for Public Librarian Certification is training in the basic skills of librarianship. This requirement may be fulfilled by completion of formal education in an institution of higher learning or completion of approved continuing education or certification courses, including the Nebraska Library Basic Skills Training Courses. Basic Skills training is presented as a series of online asynchronous courses through *NCampus*. Basic Skills participants are required to complete at least thirteen modules - six requisite modules and seven electives. These must be completed during the provisional (first) three-year certification period.

For each course successfully completed, participants will earn 2 CE credits. These count toward the 45 CE credits that all participants must earn during each three-year recertification period.

Basic Skills 2024 Schedule

Class Dates: 12/2 - 12/13

Library Services to Children & Teens

Register: 10/21— 11/15

Six required classes are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Collection Management | Customer Service |
| Community and the Library | Intellectual Freedom and the Core Values of Librarianship |
| Communication | Introduction to Cataloging (Organization of materials) |

Seven electives choosing from the 10 topics:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Leadership | Library Technology |
| Library Finance | Management & Supervision |
| Library Governance | Programming and Outreach |
| Library Policy | Readers Advisory |
| Library Services to Children and Youth | Reference |

Library and Information Services

Spring 2025 Online Course Offerings

January 13, 2025 – May 8, 2025

Enrollment for Spring Semester 2025 opens

Monday, Nov. 18, 2024



LIBR 2100 Reference Resources and Services

Marty Magee, Instructor

- Professional competencies including legal and ethical responsibilities
- Reference interview process
- The Reference collection
- Evaluation and use of digital resources, including databases, and websites

LIBR 2150 Develop and Organize Collections

Patty Birch, Instructor

- Basics of collection management including terminology and models
- Community and collection analysis
- Selection, Acquisition, Deselection/Weeding
- Intellectual Freedom and Copyright
- Cataloging instruction including classification systems, subject headings, MARC records, and RDA

<i>Spring 2025</i>	<i>Fall 2025</i>
Libr 2100 Reference Resources and Services	Libr 1010 Foundations of Library and Information Services
Libr 2150 Develop and Organize Collections	Libr 2250 Leadership and Management in Library and Information Agencies
	Libr 2940 Library Science Capstone Practicum

For more information on the Library and Information Services program, see: <https://www.cccneb.edu/lis/>

For information concerning Admissions or Registration, contact: Michelle Setlik msetlik@cccneb.edu, 402-461-2538 or Toll Free at 308-398-7341

Central Community College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

The Rural Health Webinar Series is being held throughout November in recognition of National Rural Health Day on Nov. 21. This series is an exploration of the efforts that communities, organizations, and other stakeholders take to address the unique health needs of rural populations in the United States. It aims to provide practical evidence-based solutions that support librarians, health educators, community leaders, and direct care providers to improve rural health outcomes. All webinars are **free**. Visit the [series website](#) for descriptions of the sessions and to register.



The purpose of the series is to engage participants with information regarding rural health issues, research findings, and innovative approaches to health information access and policy informing the delivery of health care in rural communities. Join us for these webinars (all events are 12-1 p.m. MST / 11-12 PST):

Building Healthy, Resilient Communities in Florida’s Rural Panhandle	Nov. 6
Facilitating Rural Access to Quality Health Information through Little Free Libraries	Nov. 7
Graphic Medicine Discussion: The Most Costly Journey	Nov. 12
When Your Community Is Your Hospital	Nov. 13
Promoting Walking for Health in Rural Communities	Nov. 14
Palmetto Connect: Fostering Digital Inclusion in Rural South Carolina	Nov. 19
Social Connectedness and Improving the Health of Rural Communities	Nov. 20
Rural Health Resources	Nov. 21

Resources for You!

Help your library patrons avoid scams with resources from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
Aimee Owen from the Commission posted this valuable information on the NLC Website

The Federal Trade Commission’s latest Consumer Alert is all about how librarians can help their communities recognize, avoid, and report scams. Their newly-updated website for librarians: <https://ftc.gov/libraries> provides free reference materials, outreach and programming ideas for all ages, social media “shareables” such images and videos, and handouts including bookmarks and brochures that you can print yourself or order in bulk for free. Shipping is free also. All resources are in the public domain and can be used without restriction. They also offer free webinars, and “office hours” for you to drop in and get your questions answered. Upcoming library-related webinars, co-sponsored by the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services include:
Thursday, December 5th, 1:00PM CST: How To Bring National Consumer Protection Week to Your Library

The gift card bookmarks to the right are an example of their free printables.



Read Around the World



[Read Around The World](#) is an initiative sponsored by Random House Children's Books

Travel around the world through the pages of fiction and nonfiction books set in countries across the globe! These books offer glimpses into different countries and cultures whose exploration will encourage discussions and reflection on readers' own identities, communities, and cultural practices.

The website offers an extensive booklist, supplemental reading, downloadable materials, and title-specific activities to aid your journey through the countries and regions brought to colorful life through this collection of world literature.

Crayola Creativity Week ~ January 27 through February 2, 2025

[Crayola Creativity Week](#) began in 2022 to celebrate the joy creativity brings to teaching and learning. With a variety of author, illustrator and celebrity partners joining the celebration there are resources, giveaways, and virtual content all week long. There are resources for children, parents, libraries and teachers.

Kids are naturally curious. They ask why and how? They imagine. They create. When kids create, they solve problems and think up new solutions. Young creatives need to be nurtured, so that their originality shines. So their ideas can take shape and become real. When we celebrate their innate creative mindsets, children view the world with wonder. They embrace innovative thinking. They create possibilities. Join Crayola Creativity Week, and help children create the fun.



Join the free celebration,
Jan 27-Feb 02, 2025

Can you determine the titles of these Young Adult books? Courtesy of the Oil Region Library Association, Pennsylvania

1. 🧙 + 🧙	11. 🟡 👑 🧙
2. 🍔 🍕 🍗 🎲 🎮	12. 🧙 ⚡ 🕶 + 🧙 💎
3. 🧙 ❤️ 🍏	13. 🏔 🧙 ❄️
4. 🪓	14. 💎 🥚 🌱 🧙
5. ⭐ 🧙	15. 🏰 🦴 🦴
6. 1 3 📺 ?	16. 📺 ❤️ 😍 🧙
7. 📄 🏰 ❤️	17. 5 🌊 👽 🍷
8. 🧙 📁 🖋	18. 🧙 ⚡ 🍴 🏛
9. 🗺 🚶 🤝	19. 👗 vs 👗 👑
10. 👠 🤖 ❤️	20. 🍳 🍳 🥄

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Answers on page 26

Honoring Native American Heritage Month

“Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our Ancestors, we borrow in from our Children”

Native American Proverb

[The Native American Heritage Month website](#) is a collaborative project of the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. The site offers teacher and program resources. The site provides this history.

“What started at the turn of the century as an effort to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the U.S., has resulted in a whole month being designated for that purpose. The first day in November is the designated day that continues during the entire month of November

One of the very proponents of an American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, who was the director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, N.Y. He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the “First Americans” and for three years they adopted such a day. In 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting in Lawrence, Kans., formally approved a plan concerning American Indian Day. It directed its president, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapahoe, to call upon the country to observe such a day. Coolidge issued a proclamation on Sept. 28, 1915, which declared the second Saturday of each May as an American Indian Day and contained the first formal appeal for recognition of Indians as citizens.

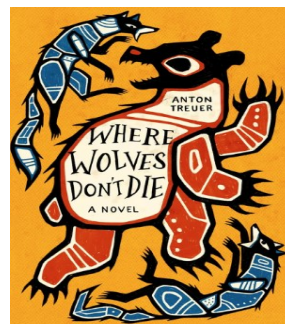
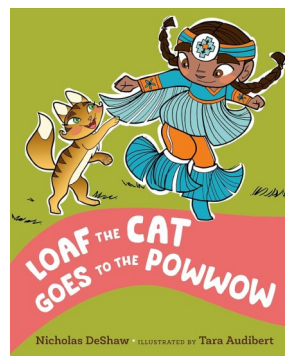
The year before this proclamation was issued, Red Fox James, a Blackfoot Indian, rode horseback from state to state seeking approval for a day to honor Indians. On December 14, 1915, he presented the endorsements of 24 state governments at the White House. There is no record, however, of such a national day being proclaimed.

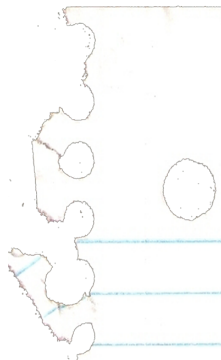
In 1990 President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 “National American Indian Heritage Month. The proclamation is signed annually.”

The American Library Association highlighted these books



An article from the Star Herald, August 15, 2024, featured books written by indigenous authors for young readers. The article recommends these books:





NEBRASKA

Letters About Literature

An annual writing contest from the Nebraska Center for the Book.

Letters About Literature (LAL) is a state reading and writing promotion program coordinated and sponsored in Nebraska by the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Library Commission, with support from the Houchen Bindery, Ltd, Humanities Nebraska, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Lincoln City Libraries, Francie & Finch Bookshop and Chapters Bookstore in Seward.

To enter, readers write a personal letter to an author, living or dead, from any genre-fiction, nonfiction, or poetry, contemporary or classic—explaining how that author’s work changed the student’s way of thinking about the world or themselves. Each letter must be submitted using the

[Letters About Literature online platform for Nebraska.](#)

Contest participants compete on three levels:

- Level I for readers in grades 4-6
- Level II for readers in grades 7-8
- Level II for readers in grades 9-12

One winner and one honorable mention in each competition level will receive a cash prize.

The prizes are presented during a recognition day in Lincoln which includes a luncheon and a photography with the Governor at the Capitol. The winners also sign copies of their letters at the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at Bennett Martin Public Library, where they are placed in the Nebraska author archives.

READ

Select a fiction or nonfiction book, a poem or play you have read and about which you have strong feelings. (Sorry, no song lyrics!) It might be a book that helped you through a difficult time or it might be a book that simply touched your heart or inspired you.

REFLECT

Think before you write. How did this author’s work change you or your view of the world? How do you know it did? How and why are you different now than you were before you read this work?

Persuade

Write a personal letter to the author, stating how reading his or her work changed you. Be personal but also persuasive! Support your ideas with specific details, including details from the work itself. This is not a fan letter but rather a reflection on how an author influenced you.

WRITE

Type your entry in letter format – do not send handwritten letters. Your name and complete return address (either school or home) must appear in the upper right corner of the first page of the letter.

Submit your letter by the deadline date at www.centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/LALform.asp



Dear John David Anderson,

The book *Minion* made me think more about good and evil and which one I am. It made me think about what it would be like to have a super power. Would it make you Happy, or would it really get in the way of your life? How much would it change your life? Reading *Minion* made me wonder a lot of things, like how I wonder a lot in my life.

I wonder about a lot of things, like if there's different levels of evil. Michael did a lot of bad things, but a lot of people still say that he's the good guy. How does Michael do bad things, but look like a saint compared to the dictator? Does that mean that you can do bad things and still be a good person? No matter how old you, are or how much you know, I don't think there's really an answer because everyone has their own definition of evil.

Michael killed a spider and his dad was upset and asked why he would do that. Michael didn't understand – it was a spider. This taught me to never kill without a reason.

Next it taught me the power is realizing that you have a choice, and the choices you make determine the person you will be. Everyone is one choice away from being good or evil. It's your choice, Thank you for writing *Minion* and sharing your thoughts with us.

Sincerely,

Caleb Hamilton, 6th Grade

Nebraska Golden Sower Nominees 2025-2026

The [Golden Sower website](#) provides more information. Vote anytime between November 1, 2024– April 15, 2025



Little Bluestem ~ Grades K-2



Big by Vashti Harrison, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2023

The Book that Almost Rhymed, by Omar Abed, illustrated by Hatem Aly. Dial Books, 2024

Dog vs. Strawberry, by Nelly Buchet, illustrated by Andrea Zuill, Random House Studio, 2024

I am Stuck by Julia Mills, Clarion Books, 2023

I Want 100 dogs by Stacy McAnulty, illustrated by Claire Keene, Chronicle Books, 2023

Mr. S by Monica Arnoldo Katherine Tegan Books, 2023

Seals Are Jerks by Jared Chapman, Orchard Books, 2023

The World's Best Class Plant by Audrey Bernick & Liz Garton Scanlon, illustrated by Lynnor Bontigao, G. P. Putnam's sons Books for Young Readers, 2023

Women and Caterpillar Are Friends by Kaz Windness, Simon Spotlight, 2023

Honeybee ~ Grades 3-5



Dogtown by Kathleen Applegate & Gennifer Choldenko, illustrated by Wallace West, Square Fish, 2024

Ferris by Kate DiCamillo, Candlewick, 2024

The Firefly Summer by Morgan Matson, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2024

Greenwild: The World Behind the Door by Pari Thomson, Farrar, Strous and Giroux, 2023

Home Away from Home by Cynthia Lord, Scholastic Press, 2023

The Lost Library by Rebecca Stead & Wendy Mass, Feiwel & Friends, 2023

Medusa by Katherine Marsh, Clarion Books, 2022

The Mystery of the Radcliffe Riddle by Taryn Souders, Sourcebooks Young Readers, 2023

Nothing Else But Miracles by Kate Albus. Margaret Ferguson Books, 2023

Tree, Table. Book by Lois Lowry, Clarion Books, 2024

Meadowlark Grades 6-8



Dust by Dusti Bowling, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2023

The Labors of Hercules Beal by Gary D. Schmidt, Clarion Books, 2023

The Lost Year by Katherine Marsh, Roaring Book Press, 2023

Mascot by Charles Waters & Traci Sorrell, Charlesbridge, 2023

The Mona Lisa Vanishes by Nicholas Day, illustrate by Brett Helquist, Random House Studio, 2023

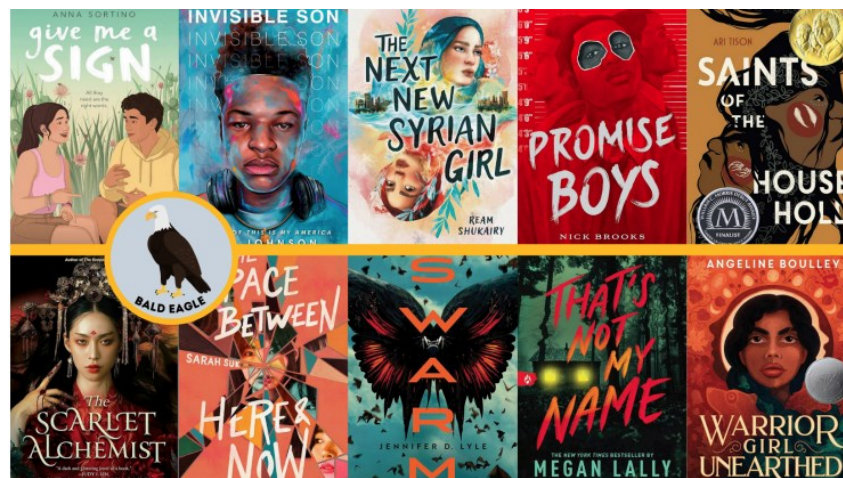
Parachute Kids by Betty C. Tang, Graphix. 2023

The Probability of Everything by Sarah Everett, Clarion Books, 2023

Something Like Home by Andrea Beatriz Arango, Yearling, 2024

Wild Poppies by Haya Saleh, translated by Marcia Lynx Qualey, Levine Querido, 2023

Bald Eagle Grades 9-12 (New Category)



Give Me a Sign by Anna Sortino. G.P. Putman's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2024

Invisible Son by Kim Johnson, Ember 2024

The Next New Syrian Girl by Ream Shukairy. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2023

Promise Boys by Nick Brooks. Henry Holt and Co. 2023

Saints of the Household by Ari Tison, Farrar, Status and Giroux, 2023

The Scarlet Alchemist by Kylie Lee Baker. Inkyard Press, 2023

The Space Between Here and Now by Sarah Suk, Quill Tree Books, 2023

Swarm by Jennifer D. Lyle. Sourcebooks Fire, 2023

That's Not My Name by Megan Ally. Sourcebooks Fire, 2023

Warrior Girl Unearthed by Angeline Boulley. Henry Holt and Co., 2023



The American Library Association announced forty-six books (23 fiction, 23 nonfiction) have been selected the longlist for the [2025 Andrew Carnegie Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction](#).

The six-title-shortlist, three each for the fiction and nonfiction medals will be chosen from the longlist titles and announced on November 12, 2024. The two medal winners will be announced by 2025 selection committee during the ALA LibLearnX on January 26th, 2025. Celebrations and presentations will take place in June 2025 at the American Library Association's Annual Conference in Philadelphia.

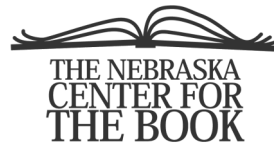
Answers to the Young Adult Emoji Titles on page 21

1. Witch & Wizard <i>by James Patterson</i>	11. Red Queen <i>by Victoria Aveyard</i>
2. The Hunger Games <i>by Suzanne Collins</i>	12. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone <i>by J.K. Rowling</i>
3. Twilight <i>by Stephanie Meyer</i>	13. Peak <i>by Roland Smith</i>
4. Hatchet <i>by Gary Paulsen</i>	14. Eragon <i>by Christopher Paolini</i>
5. Stargirl <i>by Jerry Spinelli</i>	15. City of Bones <i>by Cassandra Clare</i>
6. Thirteen Reasons Why <i>by Jay Asher</i>	16. Fangirl <i>by Rainbow Rowell</i>
7. Paper Towns <i>by John Green</i>	17. The 5th Wave <i>by Rick Yancey</i>
8. The Princess Diaries <i>by Meg Cabot</i>	18. The Lightning Thief <i>by Rick Riordan</i>
9. The Maze Runner <i>by John Dashner</i>	19. The Selection <i>by Kiera Cass</i>
10. Cinder <i>by Marissa Meyer</i>	20. Holes <i>by Louis Sachar</i>

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and the



One Book ~ One Nebraska 2025

On October 12th at the Nebraska Celebration of Books announced Tosca Lee and Marcus Brotherton’s book, *The Long March Home*, as the 2025 One Book~One Nebraska. In 2022, the Western Library System sponsored the delightful, enchanting Tosca Lee as the chosen novelist for the System’s Author Tour.

The inside book cover describes *The Long March Home*:

Jimmy Propfield joined the army for two reasons: to get out of Mobile, Alabama, with his best friends Hank and Billy and to forget his high school sweetheart, Claire.

Life in the Philippines seems like paradise—until the morning of December 8, 1941, when news comes from Manila: Imperial Japan has bombed Pearl Harbor. Within hours, the teenage friends are plunged into war as enemy warplanes attack Luzon, beginning a battle for control of the Pacific theater that will culminate with a last stand on the Bataan Peninsula and end with the largest surrender of American troops in history.

What follows will become known as one of the worst atrocities in modern warfare: the Bataan Death March. With no hope of rescue, the three friends vow to make it back home together. But the ordeal is only the beginning of their nearly four-year fight to survive.

Marcus Brotherton is a New York Times bestselling author and coauthor, with five New York Times bestsellers, seven national bestsellers, and four books have been optioned for movies. He was born in British Columbia and earned degrees at Multnomah University in Portland and Biola University in Los Angeles. He currently lives in the Pacific Northwest with his wife and children.

Tosca Lee is the award-winning and New York Times bestselling author of twelve books. Those awards include three International Book Awards, and a Nebraska Book Award for her thriller *The Line Between* and it’s sequel *A Single Light*. She received her B.A. from Smith College and currently lives in Nebraska with her husband, three of four children still at home, and her 160-lb. German Shepherd, Timber.

Look for updated information on the 2025 selection at [One Book ~ One Nebraska’s](#) website and Facebook page in January, 2025



The bookkit for the Long March Home along with former ~ One Nebraska and One Book kits are available for check out from the Western Library System.



The Western Library System purchased this DVD from a request by a School Librarian to find a copy to show their students. One of the teachers thought the DVD would be an inspiration for one of the students to help them overcome a difficult situation.

The back cover describes this film as “the incredible true story of Olympic legend Jesse Owens is vividly brought to life in *Race*. In his epic quest to become the greatest athlete in history, Owens chosen to compete in the 1936 Olympics, where he must overcome not only elite competition, but also the brutal racial climate of Adolph Hitler’s Germany. *Race* is a film about courage, determination, tolerance, friendship and trust

One viewer commented on their 5-star review: “Wow! What a great opportunity to show my kids true grit and perseverance despite being bullied.”

This DVD is available for check-out from the Western Library System.

Considering joining MPLA, NLA or going to a conference?

Apply for a Scholarship.

All member libraries and staff are eligible.

- Eligible requests include: Dues for library association membership; registrations and travel expenses for conferences, workshops and presenters.
- Up to \$300.00 per person every two years. (More than one person in a library can apply if applying for their own professional development.)
- Up to \$300.00 per library or library worker every two years.
- Scholarship recipients will provide a brief article for the Western Library System's Western Sun within a month of completion of the activities.

[Complete this form](#) and send or mail to the Western Library System. The Systems Scholarship/Awards committee will review the application and contact you.

Send all requests to: Western Library System
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Scottsbluff, NE 69361 Email: wls@westernlibrarysystem.com



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Cindy Osborne, Director
cindy.osborne@nebraska.gov
Cell Phone: 308-637-2060

WLS E-mail
wls@westernlibrarysystem.com
615 S. Beltline Highway West
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
Phone: 308-632-1350
Toll Free: 888-879-5303
<http://libraries.ne.gov/wls/>

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