CAPITOL FORUM ON AMERICA’S FUTURE
Equipping today’s students to become tomorrow’s engaged and informed citizens
SEE PG 2

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Capitol Forum invites high school students from all over the state to examine global issues, weigh the facts, and deliberate with other students about the potential impact on our nation and our state. Offered at no cost by Humanities Nebraska in partnership with the Secretary of State’s Office, it gives students skills that will last them a lifetime.

Secretary of State John Gale estimates more than 20,000 Nebraska high school students have engaged with the Capitol Forum curriculum.

The impact is impressive. More than 20,000 students have deliberated on today’s most pressing issues and have come to appreciate Nebraska’s significance to the international community and vice versa. Some have even articulated their positions on those pressing issues within the chambers of the Nebraska State Capitol.

“Capitol Forum helps young people develop a sense of what values and issues are most important to them,” Secretary Gale said. “Global warming, nuclear non-proliferation, international trade, and immigration are all things students know about, but they often don’t have the structure or context to develop a well-considered opinion.”

Capitol Forum empowers high school students to formulate well-considered opinions through the Choices Program created and provided by Brown University. Humanities Nebraska distributes this curriculum to teachers throughout the state who are involved with the program. Students then have the chance to examine important issues facing the nation and sample how the American democratic process works.

“The Choices curriculum provides Capitol Forum with such a firm foundation,” said Kristi Hayek Carley, HN program manager for Capitol Forum. “It provides the students and teachers with balanced scholarly research rooted in primary sources whenever possible. It is also frequently updated to reflect new events and perspectives that are helpful for understanding these complex world issues.”

As Chief of Protocol—one of the Secretary of State’s official functions as designated by the unicameral—Secretary Gale feels a responsibility to reach the youth of Nebraska. He strives to foster educational, commercial, and cultural relations with foreign nations, and he understands the importance of including...
students in his goals.

“We have realized how important it is to have our students well-informed and educated in American foreign policy,” Secretary Gale said. “Foreign policy is a critical component of global security and global cooperation, and we want to furnish the students with knowledge and understanding as they reach voting age.”

The secretary noted he has seen one of the most important parts of democracy flourish through Capitol Forum: civil discourse.

“In our society today, it seems that the nature of civic discourse has somewhat broken down,” Secretary Gale said. “But with Capitol Forum, we give high school students the facts and confidence to engage in meaningful discourse.”

The teachers implementing the curriculum have seen the benefits, too.

Heidi Reinhart, an instructor at Omaha’s Duchesne Academy, appreciates the unbiased content and the emphasis placed on finding solutions via open discussion, rather than merely winning an argument or debate.

“Capitol Forum is more important than it has ever been, because this generation has so much information at their fingertips that can be confusing for them,” Reinhart reasoned. “It is more challenging for students to discern good information, and Capitol Forum shows them that seeing all sides of an issue is important.”

Robert Kerr, a teacher at Hastings High School, said that Capitol Forum returns high school students to the atmosphere their nation was born from. Kerr said confronting issues with thoughtful discussion of all views dates back to the founding fathers and unjust taxation. “The importance of deliberation is in our very bones as Americans!” Kerr said. “Today’s students carry on that legacy when they participate in Capitol Forum to arrive at what they collectively see as the best policies for America to pursue.”

Secretary Gale sees Capitol Forum as more than another class for high school students.

“There’s an excitement and enthusiasm that comes with this process,” he said. “When students realize that Nebraska is a part of the bigger world, and then they realize that they can engage in that role - this is a deep commitment to having our students’ voices in American foreign policy.”

Humanities Nebraska thanks NextGen Lincoln, a fund of the Lincoln Community Foundation, for their generous support of Capitol Forum in 2016.

Seward and Nebraska City will host Chautauqua on June 15-18 and June 21-24 respectively. “World War I: Legacies of a Forgotten War” is a free festival of entertainment, historic presentations, exhibits, youth camps and more.

“Next year is the 100th anniversary of the United States’ entrance into World War I, so it’s a good time for Nebraskans to come together and develop a fuller understanding of how the Great War still affects the world today,” said Kristi Hayek Carley, HN Chautauqua program manager. “Many people do not realize how much of an impact World War I had, both globally and domestically.”

The complete schedule of all speakers and events as well a reading list and more, will be available at www.NebraskaChautauqua.org after the first of the year.
Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Sonia Nazario spoke about America’s immigration dilemma to more than 1,500 people at the Lied Center for Performing Arts on Tuesday, September 27, 2016. This 21st annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities was presented free to the public by Humanities Nebraska in partnership with the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues and the University of Nebraska. Major funding was also provided by the Pulitzer Prize Centennial Campfires Initiative, which recognizes the 100th anniversary of the Pulitzer.

Chaired by Catherine Lang and Carol Rempp, the lecture was preceded by a benefit dinner that raised more than $165,000 thanks to many generous sponsors and donors who are supporting humanities programs throughout Nebraska with their gifts.

Also at the dinner, the 2016 Sower Award in the Humanities was presented to Marian Andersen of Omaha. She is a champion of culture, arts and humanities and spoke warmly of others who share her passion for culture.

At the Lied Center, Governor Pete Ricketts introduced Nazario to the audience. She talked about her “fly on the wall” journalistic style, which led to her Pulitzer Prize-winning work about immigration and the book she wrote, “Enrique’s Journey.” Nazario recounted her own harrowing journey, flinging herself onto moving freight trains through Central America with the migrating children. She also discovered a network of people who would help the travelers, despite their own poverty.

The journalist challenged the audience to look at immigration in new ways. While admitting that she is “not an open borders gal,” she maintained, “If a child is in danger and knocking at our door, we should open that door.”
Humanities Nebraska recently awarded the following grants:

**African Culture Connection**, Omaha, $6,500 for its 2016-2017 school residencies program.

**El Museo Latino**, Omaha, $1,700 for the 2016 Day of the Dead “Ofrenda de Carapan” celebration and $4,425 for “Nebraska, A Land of Immigrants— A Lecture Series.”

**Elkhorn Valley Museum**, Norfolk, $675 for “Tales from the Park,” a temporary exhibit showcasing the history of Verges Park.

**Friends of the Homestead**, Beatrice, $3,000 for a bilingual storytelling event and a fiddling competition.

**Friends of the Midwest Theater**, Scottsbluff, $1,800 for the Indielens Pop Up 2016-2017 season of film screenings and discussion and $5,430 for “Ranky Tanky” educational workshops and student matinee.

**Friends of the Nebraska Sesquicentennial**, Lincoln, $4,500 for artist talks about “Painting the Legacy of Nebraska,” a component of the sesquicentennial celebration featuring paintings inspired from all 93 counties in Nebraska.

**Great Plains Welsh Heritage Centre**, Wymore, $3,500 for a video and exhibit project highlighting the history and culture of Welsh settlers in Nebraska and the Great Plains.

**Hastings Museum of Natural and Cultural History**, Hastings, $2,000 to bring the Red Road photography project to their November 2016 Native American Festival.

**Inclusive Communities**, Omaha, $4,500 for “Inclucity,” a human relations and leadership program for a diverse group of high school students.

**Joslyn Art Museum**, Omaha, $10,000 to add interpretive technology to its European galleries.

**Joslyn Castle**, Omaha, $810 for “A Joslyn Castle Festival in Celebration of Nebraska Art and Literature.”

**KANEKO**, Omaha, $7,500 for feedback 2016-2017, featuring readings and writing workshops led by published authors.

**The Language Conservancy**, Bloomington, IN, $5,500 to provide 1,000 copies of the Omaha Level 1 language textbook for distribution to the Omaha Nation Public School in Macy and Walthill Public Schools.

**Lincoln Public Schools**, Lincoln, $675 for the Excellence Project at Lincoln High School, and $1,000 to help start and sustain a writing center at Lincoln North Star High School.

**Malone Community Center**, Lincoln, $2,700 for the Malone Center’s symposium, “Art, Culture, and History-African American Film.”

**Mari Sandoz Heritage Society**, Lincoln, $1,000 for the 2016 Mari Sandoz annual conference, titled “Sandoz & Custer.”

**Metropolitan Community College Foundation**, Omaha, $5,000 to fund a keynote speaker and five breakout session leaders for a creative writing forum.

**Mitchell Public Library**, Mitchell, $5,500 for “A World of Music with Todd Green” in seven communities across the state.

**Museum of Nebraska Art**, Kearney, $855 for “Mujeres at MONA,” the first exhibition in Nebraska to focus on five contemporary female Latino artists with Nebraska connections.

**Nebraska Conservation Education Fund**, Lincoln, $7,000 to enlist, train and support ten facilitators to host “Common Ground,” humanities-based climate change conversations to be held in ten communities, April–November 2017.

**Nebraska Cowboy Poetry Gathering** (aka Old West Days), Valentine, $2,000 to help fund performances by poets and storytellers at the Old West Days and Nebraska Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

**Nebraska Writers Collective**, Omaha, $10,000 to help fund the Louder Than a Bomb: Great Plains youth poetry festival.

**Nebraska Writers Guild**, Grand Island, $831 for their 2016 fall conference.

**NET Foundation for Television**, Lincoln, $10,000 to fund “Nebraska 150 History Moments” to be broadcast during Nebraska’s sesquicentennial year.

**Sioux County Schools**, Harrison, $830 for “Celebrate Geography Day” at Sioux County Schools.

**St. David’s Welsh Society of Nebraska**, Lincoln, $1,000 for the 2017 Welsh Song Fest Tour.

**UNL Board of Regents**, Lincoln, $2,500 for “Artists in Residence (AIR): A Celebration of Culture in Four Part Harmony.”

**UNL Center for Great Plains Studies**, Lincoln, $1,500 for their “Mapping Nebraska” symposium.

**UNO Board of Regents**, Omaha, $5,775 for the program “The Vietnam War: Lessons and Legacies.”

Cowboy poets, storytellers, and balladeers gathered in Valentine recently for an exciting week of historical entertainment.
HUMANITIES NEBRASKA DONORS: THANK YOU!
Many donors make multiple gifts throughout the year. Donors are listed at the level of their cumulative giving for the year in our annual report.

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Join these generous contributors and help to cultivate an understanding of our history and culture. Thank you for becoming part of our mission!

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We thank these generous individuals who helped ensure a vibrant cultural life in Nebraska with annual gifts of $1,000 or more made between September 1, 2015 and November 30, 2016. To learn more about the Patron’s Circle, please contact Heather Thomas at 402.474.2131 or heather@HumanitiesNebraska.org. Thank you!
GRANT SPOTLIGHT: “VIETNAM WAR: LESSONS AND LEGACIES”

Humanities Nebraska supported the University of Nebraska Omaha’s two-day symposium, “Vietnam War: Lessons and Legacies.”

HN sponsored discussion of the lessons and legacies of a war that changed America and continues to affect our policies today. Experts, veterans, and local leaders considered the war from a variety of perspectives: from the view of the once-young soldiers, of the defiant society, of the military, of the Vietnamese.

Hundreds of guests listened to local veterans as they discussed the meaning, leadership, and responsibility they had found in the war.

“We’re not here to glorify what happened,” moderator Don Clarke said. “We’re here to understand what it was like and how it changed our lives.”

IN MEMORY

MICHAEL J. HOLLAND, 1940-2016

The first director the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities (NCH, predecessor of HN) Mike Holland died on May 24. He started his adult life as a Jesuit, later finding his calling as a teacher in Scottsbluff in the 1960s. In addition to leading NCH for ten years, Mike served as job training director for the Nebraska Department of Labor. He was known as a man of quiet humility, tireless in his work for others.

RICHARD “DICK” HOLLAND, 1921-2016

Philanthropist Dick Holland died on August 9. Often called Omaha’s renaissance man, Holland and his late wife, Mary Holland, gave Omaha a performing arts center, and numerous other gifts. For his efforts regarding cultural enrichment in Nebraska, he received the Sower Award in the Humanities in 2009. In addition to supporting the humanities, Mr. Holland put his passion and power behind scores of other causes.

PETER SUZUKI, 1928-2016

Peter Suzuki died on August 22. Having spent some years in a U.S. “relocation camp,” during World War II, Peter was a champion for educating the public “to build a better world.” He taught philosophy and anthropology at universities in Turkey, Crete, and West Germany before joining the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1973. He served on the HN board 2001-2004.

JEANENE WEHRBEIN, 1940-2016

HN Board member Jeanene Wehrbein passed away on November 6. Jeanene was deeply involved in her community and state. She was managing editor of for the Plattsmouth Journal from 1991-2003, Plattsmouth Chamber executive director from 2003-2008, member and past president of Plattsmouth Rotary, charter member of the Nebraska Community Foundation, and a board member of numerous organizations.

DONOVAN L. “DON” WELCH, 1932-2016

Nebraska poet and retired University of Nebraska at Kearney English professor Don Welch died August 6. Welch was the first Reynolds Chair in Poetry, 1987-1997, at UNK and held the Martin Chair of English. He was an English professor 1959-1997, receiving several teaching awards, and wrote a poem daily, which led him to publish 18 collections. He received the Sower Award in the Humanities in 2004.
Gema Ramirez joined HN staff as the Omaha Prime Time Assistant. Gema graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha with a degree in education and minors in Spanish, psychology and library science. Gema has worked at schools and libraries throughout Omaha and Lincoln and worked as a student intern for the Prime Time Family Reading Time program with HN. Gema said she has a lot of favorite books, and would read anything by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Laura Esquivel.

Tim Anderson’s Walking with the Dream: John Neihardt’s Preparation for “Black Elk Speaks” is ideal for any 2017 One Book One Nebraska group.

Local historian/author Jeff Barnes now offers A Bad Man in a Better Place: Jesse James in Nebraska. Did you know this famous outlaw once wanted to buy a farm in Nebraska?


Nebraska State Poet Twyla M. Hansen has added Poetry of the Plains to her topics, featuring selections of her own poetry and how the Great Plains inspires her writing every day.

Historian Don Hickey has three new American History subjects that are perfect for all ages. His talks, Paul Revere’s Ride, Uncle Sam: The Origins and Evolution of an American Icon, or When Did the White House Become “The White House”? can be booked now.

Musician Dan Holtz has also added an all-new program. All Original, All Nebraska features his own songs celebrating the people, places, and events of Nebraska history.

Welcome to HN's New Staff, Interns

This fall, Elizabeth Rembert joined the HN office as a communications intern. Elizabeth studies journalism and Arabic at UNL as a sophomore. She has studied abroad in Oman, and she reports for the Daily Nebraskan, UNL’s student newspaper. In the office, Elizabeth updates the HN social media and website, and she helps write e-communications and newsletters.

Her favorite book is “One Hundred Years of Solitude,” by Gabriel Garcia-Marquez.
From June 2018 through April 2019, Nebraskans can dive into the world’s most important resource: water. “WATER/WAYS,” the next Museum on Main Street exhibition to tour Nebraska, will explore the relationships between people and water: water as both a critical resource and scared symbol; as a subject of politicians, authors, economists, and artists; and as a source of food, recreation, work, and celebration.

“We anticipate that this exhibition will draw a lot of people, with the recent increased awareness of the need to protect our water supply,” said Mary Yager, HN associate director.

Invite your community to immerse itself in the environmental, cultural, and historical components of water by applying to host “WATER/WAYS”. The exhibit is especially designed for small museums, and offers a unique opportunity for communities to learn about the element together.

Sites will be selected from the pool of applicants to host the exhibit for five or six weeks. Selected sites will receive support and materials from Humanities Nebraska and the Museum on Main Street program of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. Sites will be asked to help promote the exhibit, develop a companion exhibit about their community’s own history, and offer educational programming. Apply for your chance to host “WATER/WAYS” today!

More information about sponsoring “WATER/WAYS” between June 2018 and April 2019 is available at www.HumanitiesNebraska.org or by contacting Mary Yager at mary@humanitiesnebraska.org or 402.474.2131. The application deadline is February 28, 2017.

Corporate sponsorships are also still available. If you own or manage a business that has a particular interest in water and would like to support this exhibit’s Nebraska tour, please contact Heather Thomas, director of development, at heather@humanitiesnebraska.org or 402.474.2131.
COMBATTING VIOLENCE WITH SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

This message by HN Foundation Board Member and Nebraska Cultural Endowment (NCE) Legacy donor Ellen Lierk of Alliance originally appeared on the NCE blog Sept. 17.

My support for the arts and humanities has been long-standing. Importantly, the world is a better place when cultural understanding and celebration of the best in humans is paramount. I liken the work of humanities groups to spreading seeds of knowledge, understanding, celebration, community, and peace.

My need to personally spread those seeds by support for the Nebraska Cultural Endowment (NCE) was solidified through events that our family could never have imagined. A young man in our western Nebraska community entered our family pharmacy and demanded drugs at gunpoint. The young man chose to hold my husband hostage. Although Chas escaped, the young man sadly died.

We forgave him. We lived with renewed appreciation of the gift, but with a wound and sadness that will always be a part of our story.

After some time passed, I felt the need to act. My first inclination to solve the scourge of violence was to fight for intelligent gun control. My intention was not to ban hunting or shooting sports, but to keep high-powered, military-style guns out of the hands of those who would do harm. My opinions were not well-received and rather than help the healing I sought, it caused division.

About that same time, Chris Sommerich, executive director of Humanities Nebraska, called and asked if I would join the Foundation Board. Through this invitation, I had found a way to add to the positive, life-giving energy of our community and state. While serving, I learned about the NCE. The work of these two organizations focuses upon what is best in humanity.

The fear, sadness, and anger of that horrific day at our store coupled with my valuing of humanities education motivate my support and involvement in highlighting the best in our people. The work of these organizations effectively promotes understanding and community building. Violence and division do not get the last word.

Chas and I have included a donation to the Cultural Endowment in our will. In doing so, we hope that the tide can be turned from hurting toward caring for our fellow persons.

We hope that young people will see their inherent value and find expression that does not include drug abuse and violence. We hope that the legacy of this horrible incident in the life of our family will result in good derived from a celebration of the arts, humanities, and cultural pursuits.
GET READY TO CELEBRATE NEBRASKA’S 150TH YEAR OF STATEHOOD

Nebraska’s Sesquicentennial celebration gives citizens a year-long opportunity to celebrate Nebraska’s past and imagine its future, First Lady Susanne Shore said.

The ceremonies open on March 1, 2017, at the State Capitol with music, actors in period attire, and a recitation of the original Proclamation. A formal commemoration will be held at 2 p.m. in the Legislative Chamber, and will be broadcast live on NET. Nebraska State Poet Twyla Hansen will read an original poem written for the occasion, and there will be special music, an honor guard, speeches, and proclamations.

On the evening of March 1, the public is invited to the grand opening of “Painting the Legacy.” This exhibit of Todd Williams’ original paintings of all 93 Nebraska counties will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Nebraska History Museum.

Even before March 1, Nebraskans can celebrate online. Web projects launch in January of 2017, giving Nebraskans the opportunity to learn something new about their state. Through “Nebraska Impact Initiatives,” the “Nebraska 150 Challenge,” “I am Nebraska,” and “Now You Know Nebraska,” citizens of all ages can participate in projects that help them build community, discover their state, and make a difference.

“Now You Know Nebraska” will be short videos detailing fun and interesting Nebraska facts and stories. “I am Nebraska” is a challenge to submit “living history” videos of community service. While both projects target elementary and high school students, all can enjoy these projects. Also, the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau can help people of all ages learn about their state from the most passionate presenters: fellow Nebraskans.

Following the opening commemorations, other projects include the Tree Planting Initiative. Schoolchildren will plant trees to help restore damaged forest spaces and celebrate Nebraska’s tree-planting heritage.

Festivities will culminate in “A Salute to the Good Life” celebration, September 22-23 on Centennial Mall in Lincoln.

Nebraska 150 Celebration Executive Director Regan Anson, First Lady Shore, a two-person staff, members of the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission, and Friends of Nebraska 150 Foundation have been working hard to ensure incredible memories for Nebraskans. They are excited for the entire state to join in the fun.

“This moment is a moment in time where we can pause for just a heartbeat,” Anson said in a press release. “Reflect on how far we have come as a state, take pride in who we are as Nebraskans and chart the course for our future.”

“BLACK ELK SPEAKS” PICKED FOR ONE BOOK ONE NEBRASKA

Black Elk Speaks, the story of the Oglala Lakota visionary and healer Nicholas Black Elk and his people, has been selected as the 2017 One Book One Nebraska title.

Black Elk’s searing visions of the unity of humanity and Earth, conveyed by Nebraska State Poet Laureate John G. Neihardt, have made this book a classic. It crosses multiple genres and generations, an ideal selection for Nebraska’s 150th year.

Resources for book clubs, libraries, etc., will soon be available from One Book One Nebraska. For details, visit OneBook.Nebraska.gov/2017 or search “One Book One Nebraska” on Facebook.