The Healing Wall
(excerpt) by Andy Gueck

The family who searches the Wall to find a name,
to put closure to the hole torn within their hearts
every parent hopes that the telegram was wrong,
That the name they seek is not there.
As they reach the year, the day, the line,
they find the name they so hoped was not there.
Tears stream down her cheeks, weathered with age and sorrow,
his eyes lose some of their luster in knowing the truth.
The child seeking someone who was never there,
touches a name, takes a shading, but receives no answers.
ON WRITING
NEBRASKA VETS FIND SUPPORT IN WRITING WORKSHOPS

On November 9, Nebraska Warrior Writers received the 2019 Jane Geske Award from the Nebraska Center for the Book. This program, a cooperative effort by Humanities Nebraska with the Nebraska Writing Project and the Veterans Administration, gives military veterans and active duty personnel access to free coaching from professional writing instructors. Sharing her thoughts on this important program is Sara Hollcroft, an English teacher and facilitator for the Lincoln program.

On a crisp Saturday autumn morning, several men and women entered the Veterans Administration office in Lincoln, Nebraska. Their counterparts in Omaha were also gathering at their meeting place. Since 2014, they have met six weeks in the fall and again in the spring. They are vets or family members of vets, and they are called the Warrior Writers because that is what they do.

Several are Vietnam vets who find a safe harbor for writing with other vets. Or as another veteran from a different deployment, John Petelle, states, “A knowledge that we are not alone.”

They want to write.

Andy Gueck says of the group, “We all wore the uniform of our country, and we accept each other unconditionally.”

Gueck, one of the original members of the Warrior Writers, states he was not a writer before attending the writing group, but now he is.

Mary Baker, one of the female vets present, likes the safe place to share her writing and her heart with veterans who understand what she has been through in her career. They have become her friends who push her to be a better person.

Another female writer writes about her sexual assault while in the military. Another is outlining a book on her own assault, ready to name names. Writing helps liberate them from their past shadows. Perhaps then, they can retake control. Perhaps then, sleep comes easier. Perhaps then, the powers-to-be will listen.

Nebraska Warrior Writers
is a partnership between the Nebraska Writing Project and Humanities Nebraska that gives these vets support and hope.

Warrior Writers do not usually write about their experiences of combat, but some write about their attempt to heal afterwards. The poem “The Healing Wall” by Gueck speaks of family and friends who visit the wall for hope when the name they seek is not there or for closure when it is.

However, it might be said that the wall is not for the soldier, but for the person who spits on the soldiers, who called them “worthless” and “baby killers.” It is those people who need to heal, to learn to forgive themselves.

The Warrior Writers program helps vets heal through the sharing and acceptance of their writing with others. They laugh together hearing a story about grilling meat on a car’s engine as a fellow vet’s family drives the long miles to their destination. Laughter heals.

And they understand the sorrow of death of another vet’s family member. There is a sense of knowing without actually knowing when a fellow vet needs comforting, who is struggling with life itself. They have been there themselves. Warrior Writers helps vets be heard, accepted, appreciated, and valued.

Veteran Joel Elwell, a novelist in the making, shared that the Saturday sessions help him to hone in on his writing skills without outside pressure. The Warrior Writers guest speakers and the books covering topics such as revising, publishing, and the overall craft of writing (paid for by HN), all help Elwell and the other participants improve and expand their writing.

Writers learn to recognize and trust their growth as writers. It often tells them something they didn’t know about themselves—that they are stronger than they thought.

Writing empowers them. Writing is a way to shine a beacon of light for others. It can be an act of defiance, but for most of the vets, it is a labor of love, faith, and hope.

As to the name of the writing group, in the words of Elwell and Gueck, “The title, ‘Warrior Writers,’ describes who we were, not who we are.”

And so, the warriors write on.

Humanities Nebraska thanks the Cooper Foundation and other donors who have made Nebraska Warrior Writers possible. If you’d like to help fund this program, please call Heather Thomas at 402.474.2131.

ASHLAND TO HOST “THE FIFTIES IN FOCUS”

Nebraska Chautauqua will return next summer. Ashland will host “The Fifties in Focus,” a comprehensive and objective look at a decade that is often viewed with a sense of nostalgia and romanticism - hot rods, rock-and-roll, fashion, and the like.

But the ’50s were marked by sweeping change as Americans dealt with Cold War tensions related to the Korean War, and watched the U.S. and Russia compete for dominance in space. Domestic resources were strained by the baby boom, while women and minorities sought to succeed in the labor market. The Civil Rights movement began to solidify, and McCarthyism compromised families, friendships and working relationships.

Mark your calendar for July 31-August 1, and plan to join your family and friends in exploring the social, economic, political, and international changes of the 1950s. There will be a variety of activities and events for Nebraskans of all ages to enjoy, led by experts and scholars.

“The Fifties in Focus” just might change the way you look at America’s most iconic decade, forever. More details will be shared on the HN website soon and in the spring edition of this newsletter. For information, contact Kristi Hayek Carley, program manager, at kristi@humanitiesnebraska.org or 402-474-2131.
GOVERNOR’S LECTURE RAISES MORE THAN $200,000

More than 1,200 humanities donors, friends, students and community members attended the 24th annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities on October 24 at the Holland Performing Arts Center in Omaha. David Eisenhower’s speech was titled, “D-Day + 75; In the Eyes of America’s Postwar Generations.”

Preceding the lecture, more than 550 humanities donors and friends gathered for a benefit dinner which raised more than $200,000 for HN’s statewide programs. Co-chaired by HN board members Brenda Christensen and Pete Zandbergen, the dinner set a new record for attendance and funds raised.

In the moments before the lecture, Joe Starita received the 2019 Sower Award in the Humanities. He was recognized for his “significant contribution to the public understanding of the humanities in Nebraska” via his work as an author, teacher, journalist, and speaker who focuses on Native American civil rights and history.

David Eisenhower then took the stage to talk about the U.S. invasion of Normandy. He explored how the events of June 1944 changed the tide of World War II as an historian, sharing little-known insights about his grandfather, the Supreme Allied Commander in charge of the invasion, General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Following the lecture, Scott Wilson, a history teacher from Omaha Central High School, moderated questions from the audience. Earlier in the day, UNO hosted a campus visit during which Mr. Eisenhower engaged in discussion with a number of students.

The evening closed with Humanities After Hours at the Holland’s rooftop bar, Skyview Terrace. Guests mixed and mingled and talked about the evening’s lecture.

The lecture was rebroadcast on NET Radio on November 8, and a full transcript is now available on the HN website. KIOS Radio in Omaha will also rebroadcast the lecture soon.

HN is grateful to the 2019 Governor’s Lecture committee and for the many sponsors and donors who supported and attended this year’s event. Thank you!
MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER II

During David Eisenhower’s visit to Omaha, he shared meaningful connections with several Nebraskans who came to the Governor’s Lecture.

Nancy Seaton of Hastings has an unusual relationship to President Dwight David Eisenhower: Her father-in-law, Fred Seaton, was the Secretary of the Interior in his cabinet.

Nancy shared several pieces of Eisenhower memorabilia that she wished to give to David Eisenhower during his visit to Nebraska. One of her wonderful donations was a portrait of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The portrait is called “Ike,” the late president’s renowned nickname.

A group of Omaha ROTC cadets also shared a special connection with the speaker. On June 6, 2019, some 70 students from various Omaha high schools took part in 75th anniversary ceremonies commemorating D-Day in France. The students had also laid American flags on the graves of fallen service members from Nebraska and Iowa. David Eisenhower took some time to visit with a contingency from Omaha Central after his lecture, posing for a photo with them.

Another person in the audience was Frank Dye. Dye was one of Eisenhower’s Navy shipmates. The speaker shook his hand as they reminisced about their time in service.

Michelle Swain arrived with a gift: newspapers from the Fremont Guide and Tribune dated June 7, 1944, which had been stored in her mother’s attic for decades. Michelle waited in line during David Eisenhower’s book signing to give him the newspapers as a memento of his grandfather’s courageous and exceptional leadership.

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Prime Time Family Reading Time participants and facilitators from Grand Island.
Join these generous contributors and help to cultivate an understanding of our history and culture. Thank you for becoming part of our mission!

www.HumanitiesNebraska.org
HN AWARDS 21 GRANTS TOTALING $102,035

Humanities Nebraska recently awarded the following grants:

- **African Culture Connection**, Omaha, $9,850 to help expand its in-school & after-school residency programs for the 2019-2020 school year.
- **El Museo Latino**, Omaha, $6,675 to fund a series of gallery talks and a film discussion. Three occurred this fall, with the remaining scheduled for Spring 2020.
- **Friends of the Homestead**, Beatrice, $1,700 to help fund a fiddle festival on May 23, 2020, at the Education Center of Homestead National Monument.
- **Heartland United for Puerto Rico**, Omaha, $2,000 for creation of a multi-media exhibition to open in September 2020.
- **History Nebraska**, Lincoln, $2,800 to help support a screening and discussion of a few short films from the "UNLADYLIKE 2020" series, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment.
- **John G. Neihardt Foundation**, Bancroft, $2,405 to help fund their 2020 spring conference at the Neihardt State Historic Site in Bancroft.
- **Kearney Area Community Foundation**, Kearney, $7,515 to help fund their annual storytelling festival at multiple locations in Kearney.
- **Lincoln Orchestra Association**, Lincoln, $1,750 to help fund seven pre-concert chats held prior to Lincoln Symphony Orchestra concerts.
- **Lux Center for the Arts**, Lincoln, $1,800 to help fund the Lincoln Day of the Dead Celebration, held at the Nebraska History Museum and Bennett Martin Public Library on November 3.
- **Lydia Foundation for Social Engagement**, Lincoln, $2,000 to fund a moderated discussion program at the UNL Nebraska Union auditorium. The first in this “Good Talks for the Good Life” series was held in October.
- **Nebraska Writers Collective**, Omaha, $8,960 to support a visiting artists series, bringing four nationally acclaimed performance poets to mentor students involved in the ninth annual Louder Than a Bomb: Great Plains Youth Poetry Festival.
- **NET Foundation for Television**, Lincoln, $10,000 to fund a series of civics interstitials to play between regular programming.
- **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute**, Lincoln, $5,800 to help support a symposium commemorating the 19th Amendment’s centennial; $1,875 to help support three film discussions in October and November 2019 and April 2020. The spring event will be held in conjunction with the Vision Maker Film Festival.
- **Plainsman Museum**, Aurora, $10,000 to help develop and create their own localized exhibit, called “Community Works”, which focuses on the where, how, who and why of work in Hamilton County.
- **University of Nebraska-Lincoln Board of Regents**, Lincoln, $9,698 to help fund production of a short film on the repatriation of native lands called “Return of the Pawnees;” $7,750 to help support a conference in April 2020, which is to be titled “Climate Change and Culture in the Great Plains.”
- **University of Nebraska at Omaha Board of Regents**, Omaha, $2,900 to fund various events commemorating the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha received a grant to fund events for the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

**Rudy Vrtiska** became HN’s new communications intern, helping with social media and other projects. Rudy is double majoring in business administration and communication studies at Nebraska Wesleyan University. A Falls City, Nebraska, native, Rudy spends his free time competing in the decathlon for NWU’s track and field team. Rudy also enjoys going hunting in his hometown.

**WELCOME, NEW HUMANITIES NEBRASKA INTERNS**

**Annelise Christen** recently joined Humanities Nebraska as a special projects intern. She is majoring in advertising and public relations and minoring in communications at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. During her free time, she enjoys traveling and working out. She also enjoys spending time with her friends and family and attending local sporting events.

**Jacqui Ortega** recently joined Humanities Nebraska as the program intern. Jacqui is currently double majoring in elementary education and special education at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Jacqui grew up in Grand Island, where she attended Prime Time as a child. During her free time, she enjoys spending quality time with her friends, family, and her dog, Brownie.

**Rudy Vrtiska** became HN’s new communications intern, helping with social media and other projects. Rudy is double majoring in business administration and communication studies at Nebraska Wesleyan University. A Falls City, Nebraska, native, Rudy spends his free time competing in the decathlon for NWU’s track and field team. Rudy also enjoys going hunting in his hometown.
GRANT SPOTLIGHT: FORGIVENESS LINCOLN, FAITH COALITION OF LANCASTER COUNTY

One local organization is working to encourage forgiveness and reconciliation towards racial discrimination and race motivated aggression. Forgiveness Lincoln is a project of Faith Coalition of Lancaster County that promotes reflection and dialogue within the community. The program is centered around breaking the cycle of violence and retribution through healthy cycles of emotions such as processing, understanding, acceptance, and forgiveness.

From April 26th to May 16th, 2019, “Stories of Forgiveness” was staged at Gateway Mall, with the help of a grant from Humanities Nebraska. This exhibition consisted of a three-week public display of 18 six-foot art banners that featured true stories of forgiveness and reconciliation from citizens around the world.

Lorinda Rice, an art curriculum specialist for Lincoln Public Schools who helped develop Forgiveness Lincoln, said, “The project was an opportunity for the community to see multiple perspectives of the theme of Forgiveness in the banners. Reading these experiences and then talking with others allows us to unravel our thinking and grow.”

The project also included hosting a speaker at the Lincoln Mayor’s prayer breakfast and a forum at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Through these events, community members could experience the incredible story of Pardeep Kaleka. On August 5th, 2012, a white supremacist killed Pardeep’s father in a mass shooting at a Milwaukee Sikh temple.

Pardeep later became co-creator of Serve 2 Unite, inspiring others with his commitment to foster forgiveness and peace in our communities.

Forgiveness Lincoln provided the community with an opportunity to grow psychologically together to cultivate a more compassionate, inclusive, and accepting society.

After seeing the exhibit, one person said, “Forgiveness is a natural human need for survival of the soul.”

“ALL THE GALLANT MEN” CHOSEN FOR 2020 ONE BOOK ONE NEBRASKA

During 2020, Nebraskans are encouraged to read and discuss, “All the Gallant Men: An American Sailor’s Firsthand Account of Pearl Harbor” by Donald Stratton with Ken Gire. Stratton, who hails from Red Cloud, was one of the survivors from the U.S.S. Arizona and the only one to write a memoir honoring the 1,177 shipmates who were killed in the attack.

One Book One Nebraska is sponsored by Nebraska Center for the Book, Humanities Nebraska, and the Nebraska Library Commission. Resources for book clubs, libraries, etc., will soon be available. For details, visit OneBook.Nebraska.gov/2020 or search “One Book One Nebraska” on Facebook.

IN MEMORY

SHIRLEY FLACK, 1934-2019

Shirley J. Flack of Scottsbluff passed away August 7.

Always a lover of literature, Shirley worked for the Scottsbluff Public Library for more than 40 years; serving 30 of those years as library director. She was a member of numerous professional and civic organizations including Friends of the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library, Soroptimist International, Panhandle BPW, and American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

From 1980-1983, Shirley served on the board of the Nebraska Humanities Council, where she offered wisdom and unbounded enthusiasm for our literacy programming.
JACK CAMPBELL HONORED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Humanities Nebraska has benefitted from the service of many great leaders over 46 years of existence. It is difficult to imagine where we would be now without them.

Jack Campbell is a prime example. Thanks to leaders like Jack, Humanities Nebraska is a financially stable organization that Nebraskans can count on now and in the future.

We are grateful to Jack and his wife, Sally, for all of their years of support of HN, and thrilled that after being co-nominated by HN and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment (NCE), Jack was recognized by the Nebraska Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals with a Lifetime Achievement honor on National Philanthropy Day, November 13.

Jack served on our Council board from 1987-1993 and our Foundation from 1991-1997 (and as its president), a pivotal time in our existence. After the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities was created in the 1980s, it took a few years to find its true purpose. That purpose—raising private funds and advocating for public funding for HN—came squarely into focus when there were significant threats to federal funding and the very existence of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

In 1995-96, federal funding for the NEH—much of which is distributed out to state councils—was slashed from $172 million down to $110 million.

At that time 65% of HN’s funding was federal, while 16% was private donations. Jack Campbell provided the vision and leadership to invigorate our Foundation board as a critical partner for raising private funds for HN programming. As a businessman and community leader, Jack saw the potential and the urgent need to increase private fundraising for long-term stability.

Today, that private support has quadrupled from those early years, and is now roughly 27% of our budget. Meanwhile, federal support of our revenue is down to less than 40%, while the total HN budget has more than doubled from $750,000 to $1.8 million.

Another critical source of funding for both HN and the Nebraska Arts Council since the 1990s is the NCE. Again Jack played a key role through his service on the NCE board. This public-private partnership, with private dollars being matched one to one in a public fund managed by the state, has now grown to the point where 20% of HN’s budget is covered through earnings from the NCE. In these times of political and economic uncertainty, this diversity in revenue sources is critical and exactly what was envisioned by Jack Campbell and others. Thanks, Jack!

LEGACY DONORS PROVIDE GENEROUS SUPPORT

The Nebraska Cultural Endowment (NCE) and Humanities Nebraska (HN) are proud to thank and recognize these Legacy Donors for their lasting support of the arts and humanities:

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To learn how you may join these donors, contact Kyle Cartwright, NCE executive director (402.285.2226) or Heather Thomas at HN (402.474.2131).

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Community Services Fund (CSF) is a coalition of 70 diverse nonprofits working to build a vibrant, creative and healthy community.

HN greatly appreciates donors who designated gifts to us through their CSF workplace giving campaigns. Thank you!

Please go online and visit communitieservicesfund.org to learn more.
INVEST IN THE HUMANITIES IN OUR STATE

Humanities Nebraska’s work is possible thanks to the support of individual donors like you! As the end of the year approaches, please invest in Nebraska communities through the humanities with a gift to HN. Your gift elevates our work and our state. HN welcomes gifts of all sizes.

- Outright gifts are always welcome. Please use the enclosed envelope or go to HN’s website, www.HumanitiesNebraska.org, to make a gift online.

- Gifts of stock may help fund a specific HN program or create dialogue in communities around the state. Donating shares of stock to Humanities Nebraska can have tax advantages too. Please consult a professional about your individual situation.

- If you are 70.5 or older, you may wish to make a tax-free gift to Humanities Nebraska directly from your individual retirement accounts (IRAs). For many donors, using funds from their IRA is a convenient and tax-effective way to make charitable donations.

Whether you give a one-time cash donation, a stock gift, or a monthly online gift, every donation to Humanities Nebraska helps us partner with local organizations and connect Nebraskans in meaningful ways. Thank you!

If you have any questions, please contact Heather Thomas, Director of Development, at 402.474.2131 or heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.

$15 provides a gift book to a Prime Time family
$50 provides a speaker to a school
$100 sends a student to Capitol Forum Day to deliberate on global policies
$250 brings the State Poet to a literature festival
$500 turns on the sound and lights at an evening Chautauqua performance
$875 covers a Prime Time storyteller at a family reading program
$1,000 provides a leadership gift and recognition in the Patron’s Circle

To learn more about how the Nebraska Cultural Endowment promotes the livelihood of arts and humanities in our state, visit NebraskaCulturalEndowment.org
Or, contact Kyle Cartwright at kyle@nebraskaculture.org or 402-595-2722.
NEW SPEAKERS, TOPICS ADDED TO THE HN SPEAKERS BUREAU: BOOK NOW!

HUMANITIES NEBRASKA IS PLEASED TO INTRODUCE THE FOLLOWING NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR SPEAKERS BUREAU. TO BOOK ONE OF THESE SPEAKERS, PLEASE VISIT HUMANITIESNEBRASKA.ORG, CLICK ON “SPEAKERS,” AND SELECT EITHER A SPEAKER OR TITLE TO GET STARTED.

NEW SPEAKERS:

Dr. Diane Bystrom, the Director Emerita for Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University, presents “Winning the Vote: The Campaign for Woman’s Suffrage in the United States,” which examines the history of the 72-year campaign for women’s voting rights.


Miss V, also known as Rubie Belle, presents “The Modern-Day Homesteader,” which utilizes song and story to explore elements of Western pioneer life. She draws on personal experiences to inform the presentation with themes such as cattle drives, the Pony Express, tie hacks, mail order brides, and other interesting topics.

Miss V also presents “Dawn in the Night,” a living-history portrayal of Amelia Earhart, and “Trails West,” a celebration of the era that followed the Civil War with momentous events such as the Oregon Trail, the Gold Rush, and the Pony Express.

NEW TOPICS:

Thomas Berg, history lecturer for the University of Nebraska Lincoln, presents “World War I and the Treaty of Versailles: How the Treaty that ended the ‘War to End All Wars’ Helped Trigger World War II.” Berg provides historic perspective on how the Second World War was affected by the Treaty of Versailles.

David Wells, an independent historian, presents “Vietnam: A Tribute, A Plea, A Reflection.” He will examine how the U.S. involvement developed within the war. Remembrance will be paid to the 399 Nebraskans who lost their lives during the war and the 16 from Nebraska still currently listed as POW/MIA.

Chris Sayre introduces “The British Isles and Irish Sampler.” Sayre performs the songs with button accordion, English concertina, fretted dulcimer, guitar, mandolin, and musical saw.

Thomas King, who teaches a Civil War course for Doane College, presents, “Andrew Carnegie.” He will portray Andrew Carnegie’s true rags to riches story in a first-person, Chautauqua-style event.

Jody Lamp, the co-founder, and author of American Doorstop Project/Nebraska’s Agricultural History discusses “Born to Rein.” Lamp will share how three native Nebraskans and communities throughout the state of Nebraska received national notoriety in America’s oldest sport, horse racing.