



AUGUST

6 & 7

Ashland, Neb. 2021



HUMANITIES NEBRASKA



The 1950s are often looked at with a sense of nostalgia and romanticism. However, this decade was also a time of sweeping change that can now be revisited with a critical, more objective eye.

This weekend's Nebraska Chautauqua will explore various social, economic, international, and political changes during the '50s. Multiple scholars from around the state and across the nation are gathering in Ashland to share their insight and lead discussions for an enjoyable, unique experience that will be as fun as it is educational. Just as important are the personal memories attendees share with each other.

The Nebraska Chautauqua is also an opportunity for the community to come together to discuss these complex historical events and explore how the 1950s still connect with current events. As you enjoy the events, presentations, discussions, and interactive Q&A sessions, we hope you will draw connections from the 1950s to today.

Thank you for joining us. It is time to put "the Fifties in Focus".



## *Friday • August 6, 2021*

- 4 - 7 p.m.      **Food for purchase** near the Chautauqua Tent (*Southeast of 13th and Silver Streets*)
- 5:30 p.m.      **"A Century of Fashion: The 1950s"** with Sue McLain, Chautauqua Tent
- 6:30 p.m.      **Keynote: "The Middle Way: Eisenhower and the Struggle for National Consensus,"** by Jim Newton, Chautauqua Tent, with Q & A moderated by Dr. Danielle Battisti, UNO
- 8 - 10 p.m.      **Reception at Glacial Till Cider House & Tap Room**, 1419 Silver Street, '50s attire welcome!

## *Saturday • August 7, 2021*

- 8 a.m.      **Breakfast & coffee for purchase** outside of Ashland Public Library
- 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.      **Rock Around the Clock Breakout Sessions**, Ashland Public Library  
(*See following pages for specific times, descriptions and speaker information.*)  
*Local 1950s History Displays, courtesy of Ashland Historical Society*
- 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.      **Food for purchase**, outside of Ashland Public Library
- Noon - 4 p.m.      **Kids Activities**, north lawn of Ashland Public Library
- 3 - 6 p.m.      **1950s Show & Shine Car Show**, Silver Street at 15th Street, sponsored by Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce
- 4 - 7 p.m.      **Food for purchase** near the Chautauqua Tent
- 5:30 p.m.      **Rosa Parks, as portrayed by Becky Stone**, Chautauqua Tent
- 6:30 p.m.      **Thurgood Marshall, as portrayed by Dr. Lenneal Henderson**, Chautauqua Tent
- 7:30 p.m.      **Q&A with Chautauqua Scholars and closing remarks**, Chautauqua Tent, moderated by Dr. Catherine Biba, Hastings College
- 8 p.m.      **1950s Sock Hop**, Chautauqua Tent



# Rock Around the Clock Breakout Sessions

Two sessions are scheduled for each timeslot except at 11 a.m..

## 9 a.m. SAC, Deterrence, and Nebraska North Room in the Early Cold War

*Brian York, Curator, SAC Museum*

Nebraska was far away from many crisis points early in the Cold War, but with the establishment of Strategic Air Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska played a central role in world crises throughout the 1950s and beyond. Explore the role of the Strategic Air Command and Offutt Air Force Base in the efforts of containment and deterrence during this tumultuous time.

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## 9 a.m. History of Rock N' Roll South Room

*Dr. Randall Snyder, Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau*

What would the 50s have been without rock & roll? This presentation takes a look at rock music's interaction with social history, with topics ranging from the origins of rock to Elvis Presley.

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## 10 a.m. Red Channels: Anti-Communism in North Room 1950s Film and Television

*Dr. Sean Trundle, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

The Second Red Scare famously reached its zenith with the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954, broadcast directly into American living rooms. These hearings put McCarthy's overzealous and often paranoid efforts to root Communists out of the federal government on full display, effectively ending his moment in the political spotlight. But this was hardly the first — or the last — time that anticommunism would grace either the 'idiot box' or the silver screen over the course of the decade.

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# Rock Around the Clock Breakout Sessions

Two sessions are scheduled for each timeslot except at 11 a.m.

## Crises and Opportunities of the 1950s Cold War

*Dr. Thomas Berg, Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau*

The tension in the post-World War II era between the United States and the Soviet Union was a new normal that had impacts all over the world. What were some of the flashpoints in the Cold War in the 1950s, and how did the superpowers and their allies maintain and resolve the tension without events progressing into a “hot war”?

10 a.m.  
South Room

## The Fight for Civil Rights

*Dr. Lenneal Henderson and Becky Stone*

Join our Chautauqua scholars in exploring significant developments in the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and how the different events are tied to issues of politics, faith, and mass media. They will focus on how some of the major players in the Civil Rights movement at that time (including Rosa Parks and Thurgood Marshall) found their way into turning points in history. Extra time allotted for this segment to allow for questions and answers following the presentation.

11 a.m.  
North Room  
(75 minutes)

## Lunch

*Food available for purchase east of the Ashland Public Library or from nearby restaurants.*

12:15 p.m.

# Rock Around the Clock Breakout Sessions

Two sessions are scheduled for each timeslot.

1 p.m.

North Room

## Conformity and Its Discontents: Suburbanization & Consumer Culture

*Dr. Sean Trundle, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Though suburban development undeniably raised the living standards for millions of Americans, the bland uniformity of tract housing and visible status symbols of mass consumption also led to a hyperawareness of even small social or economic differences. This reality bred fears that cookie cutter neighborhoods would lead to an eradication of individualism, replacing the free 'American spirit' with 'The Organization Man.'

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1 p.m.

South Room

## A Lost Consensus? Politics and Culture in the 1950s

*Dr. Danielle Battisti, University of Nebraska-Omaha*

After WWII, Americans exhibited a remarkable degree of agreement on a number of political and cultural issues. At least, that seemed to be so. This talk will discuss the shared values of the postwar era and explore the tensions simmering just beneath the surface that contributed to diverging political and social views as the 1960s got underway.

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2 p.m.

North Room

## Fire in the Hole: The Contrasting Visions of Dwight Eisenhower and Earl Warren

*Jim Newton, Eisenhower and Warren Scholar*

Dwight Eisenhower and Earl Warren were among the most prominent Republicans of their day. They shared many views on matters foreign and domestic. Eisenhower appointed Warren to the Supreme Court, yet they came to regard each other warily, even with suspicion. What happened, and what were the implications for the country? Join in on a discussion about this tenuous relationship.

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# Rock Around the Clock Breakout Sessions

Two sessions are scheduled for each timeslot.

## What's Up with Ward & June? The '50s American Family in Myth, Memory, & Reality

*Dr. Catherine Biba, Hastings College*

One of the enduring images of 1950s in the United States is that of the nuclear family. Indeed, there is much truth to the idea that the 1950s were an intensely family-focused time period. Explore the reasons for this family-centered cultural moment and the limitations and realities of family life in 1950s America.

2 p.m.  
South Room

## Whom We Shall Welcome: Immigration and the Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Postwar America

*Dr. Danielle Battisti, University of Nebraska-Omaha*

Immigration was a vital social and political issue after World War II. Even though immigration rates were at historic lows in the 50s, there was a dynamic movement to overhaul immigration policies. Along with exploring the roots, tactics, and outcomes of this movement, Dr. Battisti will place the discussion in the context of other major events of the period: the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement.

3 p.m.  
North Room

## The Korean War: Uncharted Waters in the Cold War

*Dr. Thomas Berg, HN Speakers Bureau*

After resplendent victories in WWI and WWII, the U.S. expected a similar victory in Korea. With no comprehensive defense plan, inadequate forces, few allies, changing objectives, and a fight between the president and one of the nation's most celebrated generals, we were woefully disappointed. However, less than five years after the world had experienced the most terrific war in history, the Cold War was now boiling and could become even worse.

3 p.m.  
South Room

## Rock Around the Clock Breakout Sessions

Two sessions are scheduled for each timeslot.

4 p.m.

## North Room

# Let's Play Ball! Sports in American Life

*Dr. Catherine Biba, Hastings College*

Playing and watching athletic competitions have been popular in the United States for a long time, but the 1950s marked an important decade for the growing importance of sports in Americans' recreational life. Professional leagues expanded, colleges began concerted efforts to grow football programs into well-attended spectacles, and TV provided a new opportunity to enlarge fanbases. Sports now consume many American leisure hours.

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4 p.m.

## South Room

## Post-War Pop: Memorabilia of the '50s

*Donald-Brian Johnson, Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau*

America has been flooded with pop culture collectibles for the better part of a century, but perhaps none are as iconic as those that recall the 1950s. Johnson's entertaining, informative program examines how the trends of this fabulous decade came to be. A colorful PowerPoint presentation and artifact samples bring the mid-twentieth century vibrancy to life. Enjoy an invigorating exploration of the tastes that shaped an era.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



## About the Keynote Speaker

### Jim Newton



Jim Newton a veteran journalist who began his career as clerk to James Reston at *The New York Times*. Since then, he has worked as a reporter, bureau chief, and editor of *The Los Angeles Times*, where he presently is the editor at large. He is the author of "Eisenhower: The White House Years," a critically acclaimed biography that examines the 34th President's legacy of principled moderation and commitment to progress.

Jim Newton now teaches at UCLA and edits *Blueprint* magazine, in addition to writing other biographies about Chief Justice Earl Warren, Leon Panetta, and Jerry Brown.



## *Meet the Chautauquans*

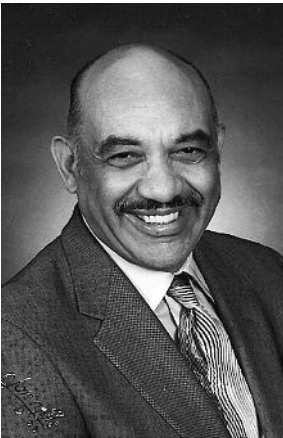
### **Becky Stone**



Becky Stone was born and raised in Philadelphia. She earned her undergraduate degree at Vassar College in Drama with a minor in French. Her M.A. is in Elementary Educational Counseling from Villanova University. She worked for seven years for the Philadelphia School System and taught theater for 10 years at a classical Christian school in Fletcher, NC.

Becky has been a Chautauqua scholar since 2003 when she first researched and presented Pauli Murray. Her other characters are Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, and Maya Angelou. Becky continues to act in theater. More often she is on stage as a storyteller at festivals, libraries, and schools.

### **Dr. Lenneal Henderson**



Dr. Lenneal Henderson was born in New Orleans and raised in the housing projects of San Francisco, California. He received his A.B., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of California, Berkeley.

Currently a professor at the Fielding Graduate University and visiting instructor at the College of William and Mary among other key roles in academia, Dr. Henderson has produced four books and more than 60 articles and editorials for various publications. He is an international lecturer/presenter, a Fulbright Senior Specialist, an actor, and the playwright of *Thurgood is Coming*, a one-man play commemorating the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, in which he performed the role of Thurgood Marshall.

## *Meet the Speakers*

**Dr. Danielle Battisti** is an assistant professor of History at the University of Nebraska at Omaha where she specializes in immigration and ethnic history. Her new book, “Whom We Shall Welcome: Italian Americans and Immigration Reform” examines both liberal and conservative elements of Italian American efforts to influence American immigration policies in the 1950s and 1960s.

**Dr. Catherine Biba** is a Nebraska native, born and raised in Geneva, Nebraska. She earned B.A. degrees in English and History from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in History from Cornell University. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of History at Hastings College where she teaches a wide array of courses in U.S. History.

**Dr. Thomas Berg** received his M.A. and Ph.D. in US military history from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has taught courses in American history, European military history, US military history, and the Second World War. Dr. Berg has received a high number of teaching awards at UNL and is one of the most popular instructors for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

**Donald-Brian Johnson** is the co-author of several books on Art Deco through Mid-Century decorative arts. Prior to his career as an author, he worked in the Midwest as an award-winning theatre director, television/radio reporter, and advertising writer. Johnson has earned a national reputation as a seminar speaker and contributing writer for numerous design publications.

**Dr. Randall Snyder** is a composer and jazz musician who lives in Lincoln and teaches at Peru State College. Born in Chicago, he studied saxophone with his father, a professional jazz musician. He earned his Ph.D. degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1973. While simultaneously publishing original compositions, Snyder teaches courses in jazz, ethnomusicology and rock and roll.

**Dr. Sean Trundle** is an Associate Professor of Practice in the Department of History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His primary research interests center on postwar popular culture, science and technology, and digital pedagogy. He received his PhD from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 2013.

**Brian York** started his career at the Strategic Air and Space Command Museum in 1998 as an intern. In January of 2000, the museum named him Curator of Exhibits and Collections. In this role, Brian oversees all exhibits, archives, artifacts, library, and oral history projects as well as provides support for restoration, education, events, social media, and public relations.

## *About Humanities Nebraska*

Humanities Nebraska is a statewide non-profit organization supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, the State of Nebraska, and many generous donors throughout the state.

For nearly 50 years, HN has helped Nebraskans explore what connects us and makes us human. HN programming offers engaging experiences for residents of all ages to explore other worlds of expression and human existence, celebrate shared histories and diverse cultures, and engage in meaningful conversations that respects difference and finds points of common experience. These opportunities include:

- Grants to non-profit organizations for public programs
- Speakers Bureau available to communities throughout the state
- Reading and discussion programs
- History events and traveling exhibits

HN programs enrich Nebraskans and cultivate a more informed, thoughtful, and just society through reading, learning, thinking, questioning, and discussing.

For more information, please visit [HumanitiesNebraska.org](http://HumanitiesNebraska.org).

### *Humanities Nebraska*

funds programs in communities across the state each year, thanks to generous contributions from citizens like you. Please consider joining them in supporting HN's many programs that help Nebraskans explore what connects us and makes us human. To make a gift that will support HN programming, please visit our website, [www.HumanitiesNebraska.org](http://www.HumanitiesNebraska.org), or pick up an envelope at our Chautauqua information table.



HUMANITIES NEBRASKA

### *The Nebraska Cultural Endowment*

is pleased to be a partner with Humanities Nebraska and the Nebraska Arts Council in ensuring a lasting legacy of arts and humanities programs for all Nebraskans. Congratulations to HN for its 2021 Chautauqua season and best wishes to volunteers in Ashland for making it possible. To become a partner in Nebraska's cultural future, contact Kyle Cartwright, executive director of NCE at 402-595-2722 or by sending email to [info@nebraskaculturalendowment.org](mailto:info@nebraskaculturalendowment.org).



NEBRASKA CULTURAL ENDOWMENT  
*Endless* ARTS & HUMANITIES

# *Humanities Nebraska Programming*

## **Capitol Forum on America's Future**

Using a curriculum from Brown University, Capitol Forum encourages high school students to develop better understanding of U.S. democratic principles as they discuss global issues with their peers and elected officials.

## **Chautauqua**

Chautauqua immerses audiences in exploring our history through educational entertainment for children and adults in workshops, evening presentations, and performances.

## **Community Conversations**

Humanities Nebraska supports community conversation programs that bring Nebraskans together to explore important topics from different perspectives.

## **Dear Stranger**

HN matches pairs of anonymous strangers to exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences via personal letters.

## **Governor's Lecture in the Humanities**

The annual Governor's Lecture brings an outstanding national speaker to Nebraska for a free public lecture on the humanities. A benefit reception preceding the lecture raises critical funding for statewide programs.

## **Grants**

Humanities Nebraska grants are available to non-profit organizations, government entities, and schools in support of humanities-related programs that are accessible to the public.

## **Museum on Main Street**

Collaborating with the Smithsonian, Humanities Nebraska brings traveling exhibits to small Nebraska museums, building interest in exploring American history and culture. "Crossroads" will tour Nebraska in 2021-2022.

## **Prime Time Family Reading**

Underserved families gather to read and discuss award-winning children's books with discussion leaders. Prime Time fosters academic skills for children and encourages family literacy to help break the poverty cycle.

## **Speakers Bureau**

Urban and rural communities have easy access to more than 300 humanities programs by 150 speakers. This includes a wide variety of topics, presented statewide each year at schools, libraries, and other venues.

## **Partnerships**

Humanities Nebraska collaborates with other organizations on a variety of programs across the state, including National History Day: Nebraska, Nebraska Literary Tour, Nebraska State Poet, Nebraska Warrior Writers, One Book One Nebraska and others that enrich our appreciation for history, culture, and literature.

## *History of Chautauqua*

Traveling Chautauquas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought the world to rural communities in Nebraska. Chautauqua combined programs of political oratory and lectures about health, science, and the humanities with entertainment, such as opera singers and stage performances of Shakespeare. Audiences heard about national issues and discussed their views with their neighbors. For many rural Nebraskans, Chautauqua was the most important week of the year.

On June 26, 1883, the first Chautauqua program in Nebraska opened in Crete. In 1884 the Crete Chautauqua Association acquired 109 acres along the Blue River for two lecture halls, a dining hall, and 700 trees on site. Trains brought culture-hungry participants from Wymore, Lincoln, and Hastings. One delegation traveled all the way from Chadron to live in the tent city and hear the 10-day series of inspirational lectures, lantern-slide illustrated travelogues, and musical concerts. One day in 1888, 16,000 people attended the Crete Chautauqua, giving it the reputation of the greatest in the Missouri Valley.

The success of the Crete Chautauquas encouraged businessmen in Beatrice to start a similar enterprise in 1889. Other Chautauqua programs sprang up across the state. Tent cities blossomed for week-long periods at Chautauqua. Some people camped while hundreds drove in, returning home to farm chores by night.

At the turn of the 20th century, Chautauqua circuits were created. National Chautauqua promoters would roll into town, put up a big canvas tent, and overnight, towns would be transformed into bustling cultural centers. Tent cities still appeared, but the Chautauqua circuits emphasized entertainment more than serious lectures or political debates.

In 1907, Kearney had its first Chautauqua circuit. According to Edna Luce's "Chautauqua," the 1907 circuit brought campers to Kearney who would "enjoy the week living the simple life mid the cool breezes and delightful shade of the park." Locals gathered at Third Ward City Park to hear orators and such musical performances as the Williams' Original Dixie Jubilee Singers.

Chautauquas were so popular that it was not uncommon for Lexington's Charles F. Horner, co-founder of the Redpath-Horner Chautauqua Circuit, to book more than 60 shows in one season. Chautauqua speakers included Teddy Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Mark Twain, Clarence Darrow, Carrie Nation, George Norris, and perhaps the most famous Chautauquan, William Jennings Bryan, who presented his speech "Prince of Peace" more than 3,000 times.

Several factors led to the decline of traveling Chautauquas: greater mobility, radio and film entertainment, economic decline, and a change in national attitude. Perhaps most significant was the radio, where news was quickly and directly broadcasted to the general public, making it possible to hear FDR's "fireside chats," opera, and radio shows like "Amos and Andy" from the comfort of living rooms.

Humanities Nebraska (HN) rekindled the tradition in 1984 with modern Chautauquas that use public forum and discussion to focus on a particular historical era or theme. For more than 35 years, HN has brought humanities-based Chautauqua programs to communities all across this great state. Humanities Nebraska is honored to continue its Chautauqua tradition by partnering with the community of Ashland to present "The Fifties in Focus" in 2021.



## *2021 Chautauqua Local Organizers*

**Laura Capp, Chair**

**Jody Lamp**

**Pam Snow**

**Mary Beth Budz**

**Tanya McVay**

**Jean Whitaker**

**Rebecca Duncan**

**Janece Mollhoff**

**Marilyn Wright**

**Caleb Fjone**

**Brad Pfeiffer**

**Pat Yardley**

**Judy Hull**

**Lindsey Raikes**



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Chuck & Shirley Niemeyer

The Roost  
Strategic Air and Space Museum

Ashland Area Economic Development Corporation

Karen Stille

*Thanks also to the many generous donors and volunteers whose names were not available at press time. Without your help, this wonderful event could not have happened.*

PRESENTED BY:



HumanitiesNebraska.org

