“CROSSROADS: CHANGE IN RURAL AMERICA” COMING TO NEBRASKA

THE MOORE FAMILY FROM SARGENT, NEBRASKA - PHOTO BY SOLOMON BUTCHER, 1886

“THE FIFTIES IN FOCUS” COMING TO ASHLAND AUG. 6 & 7

PRIME TIME FIRST AID KITS INSPIRE FAMILY DISCUSSION
changes led to massive growth of America’s urban areas. Yet, less than 10% of the U.S. landmass is considered urban.

Many Americans assume that rural communities are endangered and hanging on by a thread—suffering from ailing schools, over-used land, higher costs for groceries and durable goods, and dwindling populations as younger generations seek careers and amenities in urban areas.

But that perception is far from true in many areas. Many rural Americans work hard to sustain their communities. In Nebraska, communities have become destinations for dining, tourism, entertainment, and unique cultural offerings. Whether it is a boutique offering one-of-a-kind items, a small restaurant operated by a five-star chef, a state-of-the-art coworking facility, a thriving manufacturer, an historic site, or a festival that draws people from across the nation, Nebraska’s rural towns and villages have exhibited creative thinking and a work ethic that enables them to thrive.

Why should revitalizing the rural places left behind matter to those who remain, those who left, and those who will come in the future? All Americans benefit from rural America’s successes. There is much to be learned from listening to the story of rural America!

The Nebraska tour of the Smithsonian’s “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” exhibition is scheduled to begin in September 2021 and end in June 2022, with openings at sites in seven communities.
tion, both Johnson County Historical Society Museum in Tecumseh and McCook Economic Development Corporation have been selected to participate in the MOMS “Stories: YES” program. This engages community youth with collecting oral history stories centered on the content of the exhibition. The youth will learn about primary source research using local resources and develop 21st century skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, as well as important technology skills.

Each organization will receive the resources and the support of the Smithsonian, including training materials, storytelling guides, and educational webinars. The Smithsonian will bring its expertise in storytelling and technology, as well as collective knowledge from previous projects. They will also supply a getting started pack with some technology and how-to guides, including one to assist local fundraising efforts for “Stories: YES.” The youth projects will be highlighted and featured on the national MOMS website and social media platforms. HN funded mini grants to help with the cost of “Stories: YES”, in addition to the usual financial support in bringing Crossroads to all seven hosts.

Representatives of the seven host sites recently met via Zoom with HN staff and a representative from the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program to begin preparing for the Nebraska opening of the tour in September. The group will have three additional monthly Zoom meetings to discuss publicity, logistics, and programming ideas to increase interest.

HN thanks the Shoemaker Family Foundation for their support of “Crossroads.”

For details, visit HumanitiesNebraska.org/programs
To become a sponsor, email heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.

“THE FIFTIES IN FOCUS” PLANNED FOR AUGUST 6 & 7 IN ASHLAND

After moving to virtual-only in 2020, the 2021 Nebraska Chautauqua will return this summer on August 6 and 7. “The Fifties in Focus” will be presented in Ashland with in-person programming that allows for social distancing as well as online opportunities.

“The Fifties in Focus” takes an objective look at America’s most iconic decade, idealized in television and movies, but also a time of sweeping change. The 1950s mark the early years of the Cold War and rising tensions for Civil Rights and workplace equality.

Dr. Lenneal Henderson and Becky Stone will return to present history as Thurgood Marshall and Rosa Parks, respectively. The keynote speaker will be Jim Newton, former L.A. Times editor and author of “Eisenhower: The White House Years.”

Other scholars will conduct workshops on many topics, including agriculture, the impact of the new Interstate Highway System, fashion, television and music. The community of Ashland is also preparing other family-friendly activities.

Chautauqua is made possible through support from the Johnny Carson Fund at the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and other donors, sponsors, and volunteers.

For more information, visit NebraskaChautauqua.org.
To become a sponsor, email heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.
WELCOME, NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

Humanities Nebraska recently welcomed eight new board members and one returning member during its spring board meeting. Three have joined the board of the Nebraska Humanities Council, and six were added to the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities.

NEW TO THE COUNCIL

CECIL L. HICKS (Omaha) has 25+ years of experience in leadership roles in the financial industry, city government, non-profit and higher education. He is currently Associate Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO).

JEANNETTE EILEEN JONES (Lincoln) is Associate Professor of History and Ethnic Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). Her expertise includes American cultural and intellectual history and African American Studies. Her research includes Black European Studies and the Black American West.

DAVID D. VAIL (Kearney) is Associate Professor of History at the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK), specializing in Environmental and Agricultural History, science and medicine, the Great Plains, and public history.

NEW TO THE FOUNDATION

KEITH N. BYSTROM (Plattsmouth) is a retired attorney who has practiced law in Nebraska, Oklahoma and Minnesota during his career. He is also an active community volunteer who has developed significant expertise on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, genealogical research, and his deep family history in Nebraska.

JOEL FALK (Omaha) is regional president of UMB Bank’s Nebraska region. He has served on multiple boards of community organizations including United Way of the Midlands. Falk is also a graduate of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce Leadership Omaha program.

KAREN HIGGINS, M.D. (Grand Island) attended UNL and medical school at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She retired after practicing general pediatrics for 40 years at the Grand Island Clinic and serving on the Nebraska Medical Board for 10 years.

RENÉE MCCLYMONT (Norfolk) is an avid pursuer of history in all its forms. She has a bachelor’s in History, Anthropology, and Secondary Education from UNL. She works with her family raising beef cattle in Norfolk.

ANDY POLLOCK (Lincoln), a partner in the Rembolt Ludtke law firm, works in government relations and lobbying. He currently spends much of his time pushing for policies to accelerate rural broadband deployment. In 2020, Andy published an anthology of his creative writing.

THOMPSON H. ROGERS (Omaha) is Chairman of Affiliated Companies, Inc., as well as Chairman of VidaNyx Investment, LLC. He has worked in banking, venture capital, and investment management throughout his career. He is currently focused on serving non-profits and on investment management.

The Council also elected CONNIE DUNCAN of Lincoln as chair and BETH WHITED of Omaha as vice chair. MIKE LINDER of Omaha was re-elected treasurer. AMY SANDEEN of Hastings is immediate past chair. The Foundation elected TAMIE HELLMAN of Kearney as president, BRENDA CHRISTENSEN of Omaha as vice-president and MIKE HOMA of Omaha as treasurer.
THANK YOU TO OUR NEWLY RETIRED BOARD MEMBERS!

Humanities Nebraska is grateful to the board members who reached the end of their board service in January. HAL FRANCE of Omaha served on both the Council and Foundation boards from 2015-2021, and MARK ELLIS of Kearney and BARBARA HEWINS-MARONEY of Omaha served on the Council from 2015-2021.

Board members retiring from the Foundation included NICK BAXTER of Omaha, who began his service in 2014 and finished with a year as board president; JOHN CONLEY (2018-2021) and PETE ZANDBERGEN (2015-2021) of Omaha, SHANNON HARNER of Lincoln (2015-2021), and KENT WARNEKE of Norfolk (2015-2021). Each of these board members provided leadership in many ways, including chairing numerous committees.

We are grateful to them for their service and dedication to enriching the lives of all Nebraskans through the humanities.

DEAR STRANGER CONNECTS MORE THAN 100 NEBRASKANS

Earlier this year, Humanities Nebraska invited Nebraskans to participate in a second round of an anonymous letter exchange program called “Dear Stranger.” Based on a program of the same name created by Oregon Humanities, the idea is to send a letter, be matched with a Nebraskan from a different part of the state, and receive their letter in return.

After the first anonymous exchanges, if both members of an exchange agree to continue the correspondence, they are given each other’s names.

The theme this winter was “place.” A total of 110 Nebraskans wrote letters and included photos, sketches and memorabilia related to a place they love.

At the end of February, participants began receiving letters. Reactions began filtering in almost immediately.

“I enjoyed reading the letter a lot and plan on writing another,” wrote one participant. “This was a great way to get mail that was not a bill or junk mail. It brightened up my day.”

“This has been interesting to write to a complete stranger during this isolated time,” said another. “Thank you for facilitating connections.”

Several participants noted how Dear Stranger makes a difference during the social isolation we are all experiencing during the global pandemic.

“I just received my Dear Stranger letter, and it was a perfect pairing,” said one. “In this hectic year, it felt great to hear from another voice...Both politically and socially, this year reminded me how important it is to connect with neighbors, those across boundaries, break free of our typical social circles. Thank you.”

“Making connections is so important, particularly given this past year when all of us have been so isolated,” another offered. “Getting to know others is a skill that takes practice, and letter writing is one great way to get that practice.”

This round of Dear Stranger was sponsored by Postscript in Ashland and Diane Kaye Walkowiak. HN staff is planning another round of Dear Stranger next winter.

To be added to the Dear Stranger notification list, email info@humanitiesnebraska.org
For sponsorship information, please contact heather@humanitiesnebraska.org
Join these generous contributors and help to cultivate an understanding of our history and culture.

**ORGANIZATIONS**

$10,000 OR MORE
Anonymous
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

$5,000-$9,999
Ardie Charitable Foundation
Shoemaker Family Foundation

$2,500-$4,999
Union Pacific

$500-$999
Bluestem Prairie Foundation
C.W. Yount Foundation, Inc.

$100-$249
C.W. Yount Foundation, Inc.

**INDIVIDUALS**

$5,000-$9,999
Anonymous (7)

$5,000-$9,999
Anonymous

$2,500-$4,999
Anonymous (5)

$1,000-$2,499
Anonymous (3)

$500-$999
Anonymous

$100-$249
Anonymous

**GIFTS RECEIVED BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1, 2020 & FEBRUARY 28, 2021**

Many donors make multiple gifts throughout the year. Cumulative giving for the year is listed in our annual report.

*Deceased*
Mark your calendars: May 25 is Give to Lincoln Day! Sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation, the 10th annual Give to Lincoln Day is an online event where you can show your love for nonprofit organizations, including Humanities Nebraska. Give to Lincoln Day gifts to HN will go toward “First Aid Kits” for Prime Time families. The kits, valued at $150, help families read and discuss books together. See page 12 to learn more about them. HN distributed nearly 300 kits last December. Every gift will receive a proportional share of a $500,000 challenge match fund. Thank you!

Make your donation between May 1-25 at givetolincoln.com/nonprofits/humanities-nebraska

We thank these generous individuals who helped ensure a vibrant cultural life in Nebraska.

Patron’s Circle

ANNUAL GIFTS OF $1,000 OR MORE MADE BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2020 AND FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Anonymous
Virginia & John Alta
Marian B. Andersen
Anne & Nicholas Baxter
Cindy & Mogens Bay
Amy Bones
Laura & David Bun tin
Brenda Christensen & Michael Morris
Kristen & Geoffrey Cline
Jay Conrad & David Clark
Linda Clark
Gloria & Roy Dinsdale
Kim & Tom Dinsdale
Kate & Sandy Dodge
Connie & Todd Duncan
Judy & Jack Ekeler
Katherine & Dick Endacott
Kay Fowles
Lynne Friedewald & Chuck Shoemaker
Julie & Lance Fritz

Carol Gendler
Jan Gradwohl
Linda & Mark Graff
Judy & Jeff Greenwald
Amy Haddad & Steve Martin
Carey & Brian Hamilton
Chris & Ron Harris
Tami & Jerry Hellman
Candy & Tom Henning
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Ellen & Charles Lierk
Denise & Mike Linder
Christine & Robert Makowski
Angenette & Bob Meany
Cynthia & Robert Milligan
Mary & Bob Nefskey
Natalie & Sam Olson
June Pederson
Kim Robak & Bill Mueller
Brenda Robinson
Thompson H. Rogers
Lynn & Dana Roper
Constance Ryan
Barb & Ron Schaefcr
Barb & George
Schlothauer
Heather & Bryan
Schneider
Rhonda Seacrest
Susanne Shore & Gov. Pete Ricketts
Betiana & Todd Simon
Vicki & Chris Sommerich
Gene Spence
Paulette & Robert Stekda
Erie Swanson Russell & Joel Russell
Sue & Ed Tricker
Laura & Bill Troshynski
Harriet Turner
Katherine L. Walter
Jen Rae & Major Alan Wang
Dori Wanitschke
Carol & Tom Waring
Nancy & John Webster
Sheila & R. Ted Weschler
Beth & Kelvin White1
Judy & Ross Wilcox
Iris & Roger Winkelhake
Kristaie & Peter
Zandbergen
Chris & Art Zygielbaum

Contact Heather Thomas at heather@HumanitiesNebraska.org to learn more.
HN ENHANCES ONLINE SPEAKERS BUREAU SEARCH FUNCTION

As part of an extensive website upgrade, Humanities Nebraska enhanced the online Speakers Bureau catalog to make it easier for host sites to search for programs.

With over 300 topics available from more than 100 speakers, staff spent extensive time seeking a developer to help create a customized online catalog that would serve the public far better than previous online versions.

In addition to a new open-ended search function that can be used for a keyword search, the online catalog now has category check-boxes that enable users to narrow down their options. A second open-ended search box enables users to search by speaker name — first, last or even a fragment.

For users who prefer to scroll through options, the online catalog was designed with engaging photos to help communicate the content of each presentation. Users who prefer larger titles and smaller photos can toggle to a list view.

The HN Speakers Bureau provides engaging speakers who spark learning and discussion in schools, libraries, senior centers and other venues all throughout the state. Many provide virtual programs online as well. Any not-for-profit organization may apply to host a program for a very low cost, with HN covering most of the speaker’s expenses.

IN MEMORY

CAROLYN RAE (JOHNSEN) FOWLER | 1944-2021 Carolyn Fowler died January 20. She was a pianist, painter, writer, teacher, award-winning investigative journalist for Nebraska Public Radio, and world traveler. She was a two-time recipient of the Fulbright Award and retired from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where she taught science journalism. As an accompanist on piano to her husband, violinist David Fowler, she traveled the state through the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau.

DANIEL J. SEMRAD | 1940-2021 Dan Semrad, a longtime financial advisor for Kirkpatrick Pettis, AG Edwards, and SMITH HAYES / D.A. Davidson, died April 8. Dan was a lifelong learner and a philanthropist who often supported local artists, small businesses, and many nonprofits. Dan was particularly passionate about his alma mater, Creighton University, and the value of the liberal arts. He served on the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities board 2002-2003.

DEBORAH L. THOMAS | 1956-2020 Deb Thomas, a former state administrator and vice chancellor for business and finance at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, died December 10. Her career included more than 20 years in state government, serving as director of several health and human services agencies and working for both Republican Governor Kay Orr and Democratic Governor Ben Nelson. She served on the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities board 2009-2010.
GRANT SPOTLIGHT: UNK@THE WORLD MAKES INTERNATIONAL FILMS AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

For six years, Humanities Nebraska has provided a grant to UNK@TheWORLD, a program that brings international films to Kearney. With each screening, University of Nebraska at Kearney students and the Kearney community at large have the opportunity to view a thought-provoking international film and engage in productive conversation. In 2020, the series focused on Women in Politics and Activism Around the World. The films included: *Camille* (France, 2019), based on the real-life story of a war photographer, *Divine Order* (Switzerland, 2017), about a Swiss housewife who campaigns for women’s right to vote, and *El silencio de otros* (“The Silence of Others”; Spain, 2018), the story of current-day Spaniards fighting against injustices committed during the 40-year Francisco Franco dictatorship, presented online.

UNK@TheWorld organizers report that audiences have averaged above 500, and the program has helped connect UNK students with the World Theatre, different UNK departments with each other, and with the general public.

The Strategic Air and Space Museum in Ashland received a grant for an exhibition about the Cold War in film.

32 GRANTS

$143,917 TOTAL

FILMS AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

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All high school social studies teachers are invited to apply to become part of Capitol Forum on America’s Future for the 2021-2022 school year.

Each year, up to 25 teachers from across the state are selected to receive free curriculum from the Choices Program at Brown University, training, and other support so they can enhance their students’ knowledge on global issues such as international trade, nuclear proliferation, terrorism, immigration, and climate change. Students develop skills that will enable them to become more informed voters and engaged citizens in the future.

HN provides Capitol Forum with the Office of Nebraska Secretary of State Robert Evnen.

Though students have been unable to meet in person for Capitol Forum Day for the last two school years due to the pandemic, HN is planning to welcome next year’s students to Lincoln to deliberate these important issues with delegations from other schools. When possible, student delegations are able to have lunch with their state senators. Capitol Forum Day culminates with a question-and-answer session with Nebraska’s U.S senators and representatives. This gives students a better understanding of government policy.

Benefits include curriculum from Choices, professional development opportunities, and reimbursement of travel costs and substitute pay to participating schools, alleviating any financial concerns.

Registration and brochure are available at HumanitiesNebraska.org.

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. To learn more visit communityservicesfund.org.

PAST HONOREES INCLUDE:

- Talented humanities faculty who reach beyond their classrooms
- Committed volunteers and philanthropists who enhance cultural life of the state
- Journalists and filmmakers who shed light on important public issues

PREVIOUS INDIVIDUAL RECIPIENTS

Marian Andersen • Robert Audi • Keith Blackledge • Marion Marsh Brown • Gene Bunge • Jack Campbell • State Sen. LaVon Crosby • Nancy Duncan • Walter Friedlander • Judi gaizakibos • John Gottschalk • Natalie Hahn • Richard Holland • Jane Renner Hood • Ron Hull • Ted Kooser • Frederick Luebkke • Robert Manley • Jack McBride • Gary Moulton • Ron Naugle • Robert Nefsky • Paul Olson • Don Pederson • Rhonda Seacrest • Todd Simon • Joe Seger • Bernice Slote • Annette and Paul Smith • Pamela Hilton Snow • Joe Stanila • E.N. “Jack” Thompson • Charles “Chuck” Trimble • Morrie Tuttle • Don Welch • Larry Wewel

DUE JUN 18

SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS INVITED TO APPLY FOR CAPITOL FORUM

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SOWER AWARD NOMINATIONS

Nomination forms can be found on the HN web site: HumanitiesNebraska.org/programs

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DUE JUN 01

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MEETING THE MOMENT
WITH YOUR SUPPORT

With thanks for your involvement over the past year, Humanities Nebraska rose to the challenges of the pandemic and created opportunities for Nebraskans to engage with one another.

Your gift now will allow HN to expand this crucial work and bring humanities programs to your community in 2021. Your donation, of any size, will help:

• Bring the new traveling Smithsonian Museum on Main Street exhibition “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” to seven Nebraska communities in 2021-22 (see page 2).

• Help HN create “First Aid Kits” for families participating in Prime Time (and check out Give to Lincoln in May - details on page 7).

• Bring the 1950s Chautauqua to Ashland in August with opportunities for in person and online participation (more information on page 3).

• Create connections for Nebraskans to participate in Dear Stranger, a letter exchange.

• Present Speakers Bureau programs in schools, libraries and senior centers.

Your gift will help HN meet the moment and connect Nebraskans in your community, sharing new stories and ideas in 2021. Check out the website for easy, secure online giving.

Make your gift at HumanitiesNebraska.org/donate
Thank you!

Ed Ayers, renowned historian and founder of the hugely popular radio show and podcast “Backstory,” was the featured speaker at the annual program in honor of Patron’s Circle donors in April.

Ensure an Endless Tradition of Arts & Humanities in Nebraska

Preserve the values and assets that are important to you and your family while helping to preserve arts and humanities for the future.

Download our FREE legacy planning guide, Donor Strategies to Preserve Arts & Humanities in Nebraska, at NebraskaCulture.org/mylegacy.
Prime Time Family Reading continues to be one of HN’s most active programs. This spring, nine series for families with elementary school children and two Prime Time Preschool programs are in progress. Families from Bellevue, Fremont, Grand Island, Lexington, Lincoln, Norfolk, and Omaha are reading and discussing award-winning children’s books with humanities themes like perseverance, courage and honesty.

To assist with social distancing, the Lexington Public Library is presenting Prime Time in a public park for the first time since Humanities Nebraska began offering this program in 2002. Families will be seated at their own picnic tables arranged to promote open discussion.

Meanwhile, HN staff is preparing two more sets of Prime Time First Aid Kits to distribute to families who do not have online access to the six-week series. The first set of these kits were distributed in December and received a great deal of positive feedback.

“I loved that it provided discussion questions and activities for each story,” said one parent. “They made it fun and kept my girls engaged.”

Another parent said, “The stories were thought provoking. They offered other points of view and an opportunity to discuss further. Also, I think the books were enjoyed by adults and kids.”

A similar kit will be distributed in May to encourage families to keep reading this summer break. The bilingual kit, designed for children ages 4-8, will include seven different books, a new discussion guide, writing supplies, tote bag, picnic blanket, toys, and a Dairy Queen gift card. For autumn, staff is creating a History and Culture kit for students in grades 2-5.

HN thanks the Sherwood Foundation, Acklie Charitable Foundation, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, the Johnny Carson Fund at the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Carol Gendler, donors through Give to Lincoln, an appropriation from the Nebraska State Legislature, and an anonymous donor for providing generous funding toward the kits.

For sponsorship information, please contact heather@humanitiesnebraska.org. For more information about this program, visit humanitiesnebraska.org/programs