Humanities Nebraska has announced that 30 topics from its Speakers Bureau have been selected to represent a special initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. “A More Perfect Union” intends to advance civic education nationwide as we approach the United States of America’s 250th anniversary.

A goal of this initiative is to help Americans better understand the world’s oldest constitutional democracy and how our founding ideals are met in a pluralistic society. “We are pleased to have so many diverse topics to offer for Nebraska non-profit organizations,” said Mary Yager, HN associate director. “Our talented speakers have a variety of presentation styles, including first-person portrayals. They’re exceptionally good at making history come alive.”

Appropriate for most age groups, the topics cover historic events such as the Civil War and the women’s suffrage movement, biographical presentations about famous U.S. citizens, and our government. Other presentations are about voting rights, social justice issues, etc.

“This is a great opportunity to look at U.S. history with fresh eyes,” Mary noted. “Sometimes, history books don’t cover all the details, and it’s good to hear from a scholar who has done an extensive study about one of their personal favorite topics. It can really expose the nuances and hidden truths that can help us understand our nation better.”

Members of the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau are screened through an auditioning process to ensure that audiences will receive a high-quality educational experience.

To assist libraries, schools, clubs and other organizations in planning a speaker event or series, programs from this list are available at a special rate of $25 for the first application in a calendar year and $50 for a second application in the same calendar year. The usual two
The selected Speakers Bureau presentations include:

- A Century of Women’s Suffrage: Celebrating the 19th Amendment
- Aaron Douglas, UNL Class of '22: Visual Artist of the Harlem Renaissance
- Adam Clayton Powell: A Living History Presentation
- African-American Soldiers in the Civil War: Fighting on Two Fronts
- Ahead of Their Time – The Story of the Omaha DePorres Club
- America in the Eyes of an Islamic Fundamentalist
- Audacious, Nebraska Saga
- Beverly Deepe Keever: An Unconventional Woman for an Unconventional War
- The Burckharts: An African-American Epic
- Completing, Remembering, and Forgetting the Civil War
- Diaries and Letters of Early Nebraska Settlers
- Diversity: I Was a Stranger
- Dust Bowl Descent
- Fight Against Slavery on the Great Plains: Nebraska’s Underground Railroad
- Frederick Douglass – The Voice of Abolition
- I Am a Man: Chief Standing Bear’s Journey for Justice
- Kings of Broken Things: Bystanders, Historical

Writing a “Dear Stranger” about your personal weather story

As you bundle up for Nebraska’s chilly winter, consider participating in the HN “Dear Stranger” letter exchange. This season’s optional prompt is “Share a story about a time when weather impacted you. With a global focus on climate change, how are you feeling about what it might mean for Nebraskans?”

Just fill out a participation form, write a letter or postcard, and send it to HN by February 15. You will be anonymously matched with someone from another part of the state. For more information, go to the Programs section of our website and click on “Dear Stranger.” To help sponsor this program, send email to heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.
Humanities Nebraska recently received an unexpected – and deeply meaningful - gift of two works of art. Lincoln artist Merrill Peterson, along with his wife Nancy, gave HN two original large print photographs, one in memory of former Council chair Don Pederson and a second in honor of Don’s wife June. Both pieces, framed thanks to June Pederson, now hang in HN’s office reception area.

According to Merrill Peterson, “Don was the ideal combination of an insightful, thoughtful and eloquent man. He was authentic, kind and generous — he led by example and he deserves special recognition. I had great respect and admiration for him. He was the standard we should seek in our leaders.”

The photograph in honor of Don depicts a stand of windmills. Long-time resident of North Platte, and eventually residing in Lincoln, Senator Don Pederson served in the Nebraska Legislature from 1996 to 2006, including as chairman of the Appropriations Committee. Don served on HN’s Council board from 2003-2010, including two years as Chair. In one of his most lasting legacies, Don was instrumental in the creation of the Nebraska Cultural Endowment as well as the Nebraska Savings Plan. He passed away in 2019.

The second donation is a photograph in honor of June Pederson of the “American Gothic” house in Eldon, Iowa. Merrill commented, “Don and June were ideally suited for each other. The degree of love and respect they had for each other was clear but expressed in their typically understated way. They have enriched our community, especially the arts and deserve to be long remembered.”

You are invited to stop by HN to enjoy these special gifts.
At the 26th Annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities on October 12, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. captivated nearly 900 audience members with remarks about the importance of learning family history and his own childhood in West Virginia, including a story about his middle school teacher, Helen Iverson from Plattsmouth, Nebraska. Some supporters attended in person at the Holland Performing Arts Center in Omaha, and others watched online via livestream. Due to the pandemic, Gates delivered the lecture virtually.

Presented by HN with co-sponsors Union Pacific and the University of Nebraska, the lecture followed a conversation format this year with William G. Thomas III, Angle Chair in the Humanities and professor of history at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Nebraska Public Media provided the livestream.

Co-chaired by HN board member Beth Whited and former board member Mary Lopez, the Governor’s Lecture committee successfully planned and implemented a hybrid-style event that raised more than $196,000 for HN’s statewide programs. Humanities Nebraska is grateful to the many sponsors, donors and friends of the humanities who responded with generous support of HN this year.

As part of the conversation program with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., he responded to questions submitted by the audience. Earlier in the day, he met with UNO students via Zoom.

The ongoing pandemic led HN to shift this year from the benefit dinner that usually precedes the lecture to a reception. Audience participant comments included: “I admire Dr. Gates and really enjoyed the conversation;” “Thank you for making this available online;” “Dr. Gates was awesome! Never miss Finding Your Roots!” “It was really great to hear his story. Love what he has done for African Americans in finding their roots.”

Prior to the lecture, historian and author John R. Wunder received the 2021 Sower Award in the Humanities. A long-time University of Nebraska-Lincoln history professor, Wunder has written about the Great Plains, Nebraska, Plains Indians, and American and Constitutional legal history. “John Wunder’s ability to capture the imagination of people of all ages, through his teaching, his community participation, and the extension of his work through his writing, speaks directly to the meaning of the Sower Award and the symbol of excellence it represents,” said nominator Ron Hull.

Thank you to all who sponsored, supported and attended this year’s Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities, and for making Humanities Nebraska’s statewide work possible!
Thank you to our donors:

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Join these generous contributors and help Nebraskans explore what connects us and makes us human.
To join the Patron’s Circle, please contact Heather Thomas at heather@HumanitiesNebraska.org.

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Patron’s Circle donors are invited to a special event on Friday, April 8, 2022 in Omaha in gratitude for their annual support. A memorable humanities experience will be included. Details will be mailed to the Patron’s Circle soon.

In April 2018, Patron’s Circle donors and their guests were invited to a special program with former Nebraska State Poet Twyla M. Hansen and current Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason.

WE THANK THESE GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE HELPING ENSURE A VIBRANT CULTURAL LIFE IN NEBRASKA WITH ANNUAL GIFTS OF $1,000 OR MORE MADE BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 AND OCTOBER 31, 2021. THANK YOU!
The Plainsman Museum in Aurora received a grant to collaborate with the Smithsonian for the exhibition, “Community Works,” which opened this year after being delayed due to the pandemic.

Tina Larson, Plainsman Museum Executive Director, is ecstatic to have been selected as one of the ten museums nationwide chosen to create a pilot “Starter Kit” project from the Smithsonian. “Community Works” showcases Hamilton County’s work history throughout its 150 years of existence and how it relates to American history.

“The long-term impact is that we have the opportunity to partner with the Smithsonian for the next five years,” Larson explained. “The staff, volunteers and board members now measure the effectiveness of the exhibits by the new standard that has been set through this collaboration.”

Filled with engaging photographs and artifacts, “Community Works” gives the public a great opportunity to look at, think about, and discuss the deeper meaning of work as a component of the community’s, the state’s and the nation’s story. Thanks to the grant and the expertise of the Smithsonian, “Community Works” has helped further develop the mission of the museum.

Asian Community and Cultural Center, Lincoln, $4,000 to help fund Untold Migrant Stories, a digital storytelling project created by middle and high school students. • Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, $9,000 in support of four lectures in early 2022 exploring the intersections between the body and hospitality. • Central Community College, Grand Island, $12,500 to help fund a new curriculum on Native American societies and ecologies. • El Museo Latino, Omaha, $6,925 to help fund its Latino Culture and Traditions lecture series and other public programs. • Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, $5,140 for public and education programming related to an exhibition on landscape artist Karl Bodmer. • Lincoln Commission on Human Rights/City of Lincoln, $700 to help support participation by a dozen Omaha and Lincoln students during the October 21 Civil Rights Conference at Nebraska Innovation Campus. • Lincoln Orchestra Association, $2,950 in support of the 2021-22 series pre-concert chats. • Movement in Omaha for Racial Equity, $1,800 in support of a series of five events encouraging community members to explore social factors that often divide communities, planned for October and November 2021, and three dates in February-April 2022. • Nebraska Public Media, Lincoln, $10,000 to help fund a series of short video segments to be used between programs focused on the 50th anniversary of Title IX legislation. • Nebraska Shakespeare Festival, Inc., Omaha, $6,000 in support of “Shakespeare on Tour” for the 2021-2022 school year. • Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, $5,658 to help fund “Spooky Evenings 2021,” an annual series on horror in literature, film and other media, available via virtual streaming in September and October. • Nebraska Writers Collective, Omaha, $6,400 in support of its annual touring artist series for area high schools. • Opera Omaha, $1,800 to help fund their 2021-2022 Poetry & Music Project. • Papillon Community Foundation, $1,500 in support of a Chautauqua-style event featuring Ulysses S. Grant (Dr. Curt Fields) and Mark Twain (Warren Brown) for the city’s 150th Anniversary Celebration. • Together We Achieve Miracles, Inc, Omaha, $9,000 to help fund digital media programming from multi-cultural perspectives. • University of Nebraska at Omaha Board of Regents, $7,300 in support of traveling exhibits and speaker panels for “Charting our Path,” a celebration of 50 years of Black studies. • University of Nebraska-Lincoln Board of Regents, $2,000 in support of the 2021 Virtual Summit on Human Trafficking and Migration, $5,000 to help fund various elements of a documentary film by Dr. James LeSueur about Nebraska’s unique place in the COVID-19 pandemic, $6,000 in support of the OLLI Fall Symposium, “The Fragile Future of Democracy,” $9,500 to complete stage one and launch of an educational web portal called “The Nebraska Stories of Humanity: Holocaust Survivors & WWII Veterans,” and $10,000 to help fund a summit titled, “Reckoning and Reconciliation on the Great Plains.”
**STINNERS NAMED OUTSTANDING PHILANTHROPISTS OF THE YEAR**

This fall Senator John Stinner and Rita Stinner were honored at the annual National Philanthropy Day event, sponsored by the Nebraska Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

Nominated jointly by HN, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment (NCE) and the Nebraska Arts Council, the Stinners’ impact truly reaches every corner of Nebraska. In addition to Rita’s board service on NCE, she and Senator Stinner are Legacy Donors to the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, having made a designation in their estate plans to support Nebraska’s arts and humanities programs in perpetuity.

Senator Stinner, a former community banker and current Nebraska state senator, and Rita, a retired collegiate music instructor and current performer, conductor and arts and humanities advocate, have dedicated much of their lives to service and share with others the importance of the arts and humanities for strong communities, personal development and for future generations.”

A virtual statewide celebration to honor all of the 2021 National Philanthropy Day award honorees was hosted on November 16.

Humanities Nebraska warmly congratulates Senator John and Rita Stinner!

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**IN MEMORY**

**DIANE BROWNELL | 1943-2021** Diane Brownell died September 8. Originally from Pennsylvania, she graduated from Catawba College in North Carolina, and received her master’s from Doane University. As a newlywed, she taught at Starr Elementary School in Grand Island until retiring, and later relocated to Lincoln. She was on the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities board 2007-2013 and participated in the RAK Optimist Club. She also volunteered in the Morley Elementary Library.

**ANTONETTE “TONI” TURNER | 1920-2021** Toni Turner died on August 13. As a granddaughter of the real Antonia, Toni joined the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau to give talks about Willa Cather’s “My Ántonia.” She helped create scholarships for students pursuing English or History degrees. Active in community organizations such as the Extension Club, the Heart Association, and the Nebraska Czech Organization, Toni received the Vladimir Kucera Award for spreading the Czech language.

**CAROL ANN LINK WARING | 1935-2021** Carol Waring died August 25. A Nebraska native, she and her husband Tom moved to Fremont after he completed his medical training. Carol was active in many organizations including Fremont Family YMCA Board, Fremont Area Community Foundation, Fremont Health Foundation Board, Fremont First United Methodist Church Board of Trustees, among others. She served on the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities board 2008-2014.
Recently, HN welcomed **Alexis Cruz** as the new grants specialist. Formerly a graduate and research assistant at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and her alma mater, Drake University, Alexis divides her time between HN and the National Museum of Roller Skating, where she is archivist and docent. Her primary role is helping to promote HN’S American Recovery Program (ARP) grant opportunities, processing APR grant applications, and working with applicants.

What’s your favorite thing about Nebraska?
I don’t really have one favorite thing. It’s my home.

Why are you passionate about the humanities?
Accomplishing my Master’s in History equipped me with an understanding of what human institutions bring into the world.  

**What interested you about working at HN?**
I wanted to help others understand the great work HN does for others and is doing.

**What would you like to say to HN readers?**
I hope to get to know you better and look forward to working with you.

**“MY MASTER’S IN HISTORY EQUIPPED ME WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS BRING TO THE WORLD.”**  

— **ALEXIS CRUZ**

Jeanene Splitt joined the staff as communications intern. The Chicago area native is a senior at UNL, majoring in broadcast journalism.

**What’s your favorite thing about Nebraska?**
UNL is very welcoming and has the best of the best professors and staff. I also love the friendly people of Nebraska. “Welcome to the good life” is right!

**What interested you about working at HN?**
I was intrigued by the many amazing programs HN puts on and how I could be a part of promoting them by creating unique social media posts. Working in humanities has always been a dream, as these efforts preserve the great successes of the past.

**Which HN programs are you most eager to see?**
I am thrilled to see “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” now until December 27, in Falls City. It will be really neat to see the many artifacts, photographs, and art displays come alive in the interactive displays.

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**MEET ALEXIS CRUZ AND JEANENE SPLITT**

**ONE BOOK ONE NEBRASKA 2022**

During 2022, Nebraskans will read and discuss “The Bones of Paradise: A Novel” by Jonis Agee. A multigenerational family saga set in the unforgiving Nebraska Sand Hills in the years following the massacre at Wounded Knee, this novel is an ambitious tale of history, vengeance, race, guilt, betrayal, family, and belonging. Agee created vivid characters shaped by violence, love, and desperate loyalty to the land.

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 more information, visit http://onebook.nebraska.gov or search “One Book One Nebraska” on Facebook.

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**The Nebraska Cultural Endowment Proudly Supports Humanities Nebraska**

Learn more about the Nebraska Cultural Endowment ensures an endless tradition of arts and humanities in our state, visit NebraskaCulture.org
Many humanities fans will remember Paxton Williams. He portrayed George Washington Carver in the “Free Land” Chautauqua in 2012-2015. An assistant attorney general for the state of Iowa by day, Paxton was recently elected as Chair of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Congratulations Paxton from your friends in Nebraska!

In his statement, Paxton described the many adjectives that can explain these times: “trying; necessary; long-overdue; empowering; minefield-laden; unprecedented; fast-moving; scary; hopeful. Fortunately, the humanities are like a magic map that can help show us how to get from ‘here’ to ‘there.’ The humanities help us learn the questions we should be asking ourselves—even if the answers to those questions may be unclear or so thoroughly nuanced that the same words have different meanings in any given circumstance.”

Your year-end gift, of any size or shape, will help Humanities Nebraska cultivate our “magic map” while asking questions, listening and connecting with one another. Thank you!

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

HN THANKS THESE LEGACY DONORS

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To learn more visit communityservicesfund.org.
Voices and Votes is a springboard for discussions about those very questions and how they are reflected in local stories. Our democracy demands action, reaction, vision, and revision. From revolution and suffrage, to civil rights and casting ballots, everyone in every community is part of this ever-evolving story of democracy in America.

“We believe ‘Voices and Votes’ will inspire very timely conversations between Nebraskans in the months leading up to the next presidential election,” said Mary Yager, Associate Director. “We’re eager to see many Nebraskans engage in this topic.”

Selected sites will host the exhibit for about six weeks each between April 2023 and January 2024, with support and materials from Humanities Nebraska and the Smithsonian. Hosts will be asked to help promote the national exhibition, develop a companion local exhibit, and offer educational programming related to the theme.

Host sites are also welcomed to book various presentations from the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau that relate to American democracy and elections.

Museums, libraries and other community centers may apply by February 15, 2022 to host the next Museum on Main Street exhibition, “Voices and Votes: Democracy in America.”

Our nation’s founders took a leap of faith that sent ripple effects across generations. They embraced a radical idea of establishing a government that entrusted the power of the nation not in a monarchy, but in its citizens.

That great leap sparked questions that continue to impact Americans:

• Who has the right to vote?
• What are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens?
• Whose voices will be heard?
• How do you participate as a citizen?
• How do we encourage more people to participate in our democracy?

“Voices and Votes” is a springboard for discussions about those very questions and how they are reflected in local stories. Our democracy demands action, reaction, vision, and revision. From revolution and suffrage, to civil rights and casting ballots, everyone in every community is part of this ever-evolving story of democracy in America.

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An application and more information about hosting and sponsoring “Voices and Votes” is available at HumanitiesNebraska.org or by emailing mary@humanitiesnebraska.org.