

RAPPORT

HUMANITIES NEBRASKA

HELPING PEOPLE EXPLORE WHAT CONNECTS US AND MAKES US HUMAN



COURTESY PHOTO

**PRIME TIME
PRESCHOOL
LAUNCHES IN
MADISON**

PG 2



**GOVERNOR'S
LECTURE
RECAP &
PHOTOS**

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**NEW
SPEAKERS &
TOPICS
ANNOUNCED**

PG 12

UPCOMING EVENTS

- UNTIL
JAN 27
"VOICES AND VOTES"
Great Plains Black History
Museum, *Omaha*
- DUE
JAN 2
**MINI GRANT APPLICATIONS
DUE JANUARY 2**
(Details on our website)
- DUE
JAN 15
**MEDIA GRANT
APPLICATIONS DUE**
(Details on our website)
- JAN
20
**HN WINTER BOARD
MEETING**
Lincoln
- STARTS
FEB
**NEBRASKA WARRIOR
WRITERS WORKSHOPS**
Lincoln, Omaha, Online
(Dates to be announced)
- DUE
MAR 1
**MINI AND MAJOR GRANT
APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 1**
(Details on our website)
- MAR
25
CAPITOL FORUM DAY
State Capitol, Lincoln
(Details to be announced)

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MADISON, NEBRASKA BECOMES LATEST COMMUNITY TO HOST A PRIME TIME PROGRAM

Local public library brings families together for a meal, reading, discussion and play.

This year, Madison Public Library became the newest host site for Prime Time Family Reading.

Humanities Nebraska began offering Prime Time in 2002. Created in 1991 by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH), Prime Time helps underserved children and their families improve literacy by reading and discussing award-winning books with humanities themes like honesty, courage, perseverance and family.

The program has been offered in 40 states with the help of funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), local states, and private donors. HN is currently second only to Louisiana in the total number of Prime Time programs offered since it began.

Several years ago, LEH intro-

duced Prime Time Preschool, which is designed to help children ages 3-5 improve their readiness for school with books, discussion and activities that foster critical thinking skills and a love for reading. HN immediately began offering Prime Time Preschool in both bilingual and English-only series.

"On staff, we had wanted to offer a preschool program for some time," explained Erika Hamilton, director of literary programs. "It's important to introduce preschoolers to reading and discussing books before they enter school."

When in-person gatherings were not possible in 2020, HN and other states adjusted with Zoom programming and reading kits that put new books, activities, and discussion guides into the hands of thousands of families.

HN has continued to create kits to distribute during the summer months, helping children maintain their reading skills for a more successful return to school the following autumn.

The 2023 summer kits were what first caught the eye of Lori Porter, head librarian at Madison Public Library.

"We wanted to encourage families to spend time together, and this sounded like a great program," she said.



Photos courtesy of Madison Public Library

She – and many other libraries and existing Prime Time host sites – applied for HN's summer reading kits and received ten to distribute to local families.

"They loved the kits!" Lori reported with enthusiasm. "All the books and toys were great for families."

After that success, she was determined to bring Prime Time Preschool to her library.

"We try to do programs that include the whole family, and this fit the bill," she said.

Working with Erika Hamilton and Susan Hale, HN's Prime Time assistant, Porter was able to launch a bilingual English/Spanish series of Prime Time Preschool this autumn.

"We have many families in town that are bilingual, and we are trying to get them more involved in the library," Lori explained. "We try to come up with programs that include everyone, and to let them know that we are a safe place for their children to come to."

According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services, public libraries are vital to fami-

lies that are new to the United States because they "help ease the way" for people "to participate fully in American society." In addition to offering resources on immigration, libraries provide opportunities to connect with the local community and learn the English language. They even serve as a gateway to citizenship.

With HN providing books, resources and training, the Madison Public Library staff was ready to facilitate. Calvary Community Church, which is well-connected with Spanish-speaking people in the area, offered a larger space for the program. The pastor there often joins forces with the library, and he helped spread the news to families he sees regularly. Flyers posted at Madison schools and other places around town also encouraged families to attend.

For six weeks, families gathered at Calvary Community Church for a meal followed by age-appropriate storytelling and play centers based on the stories

read.

Lori said she was very pleased with Prime Time Preschool, and so were the participating parents.

"The survey responses were very positive and highly recommended that we do this again," she reported. "The parents were impressed with the quality of the program and the books."

With intentions to host another Prime Time Preschool series next autumn, Lori said she would encourage other Nebraska librarians to consider adding it to their own offerings.

"It would be an awesome addition to any library program," she affirmed. "It was so much fun, and we all learned so much!"



To learn more about this program, select "Prime Time" from the programs list at HumanitiesNebraska.org

LAST CHANCE TO SEE SMITHSONIAN "VOICES AND VOTES" IN NEBRASKA

NOW
THRU
JAN 27

The Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street exhibition "Voices and Votes: Democracy in America" opened at Omaha's Great Plains Black History Museum on December 1, the final site for its Nebraska tour. "Voices and Votes" is a

springboard for discussions about how everyone in every community is part of this ever-evolving story – the story of democracy in America.

The traveling exhibit includes interactive

features that engage visitors about what it means to have the right to vote. Viewers have said they gained a greater appreciation for the price paid to have voting rights.

The Great Plains Black History Museum will host the exhibition through Saturday, January 27. Located at 2221 N 24th Street, the museum is open Wednesday-Saturday, 1-5 p.m. or on Tuesday by appointment. HN thanks the Nebraska Trucking Association for transporting "Voices and Votes" around Nebraska.

For more information, please visit HumanitiesNebraska.org/voices.



HELP STATE POET MATT MASON VISIT ALL COUNTIES!

Before his tenure is over at the end of 2024, Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason intends to meet his goal of reaching every county in Nebraska. Of Nebraska's 93 counties, Matt has been to 73 at least once. Seven more are currently scheduled, leaving 13 counties on his list. These are: Franklin, Gosper, Grant, Greeley, Hamilton, Hayes, Hitchcock, McPherson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Stanton, Thurston, and Wheeler counties.

"I'd also love to come back to ones I've been to," Matt said.

He has spoken at schools, coffee houses, writing clubs, theatres, libraries, and other venues. Through the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau, HN covers most of the costs of Matt Mason's visit to not-for-profit organizations.



To book State Poet Matt Mason through the HN Speakers Bureau, please visit: humanitiesnebraska.org/speakers

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BEST-SELLING AUTHOR AMOR TOWLES CHARMS AUDIENCE AT ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S LECTURE

On Tuesday, October 10, the 28th annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities and benefit dinner were the culminating events of HN's 50th Anniversary Humanities Week. "From Moscow to the Lincoln Highway: An Evening with Amor Towles" featured the best-selling author in conversation with William Padmore and was chaired by HN board members Mike Homa and Ana Lopez Shalla.

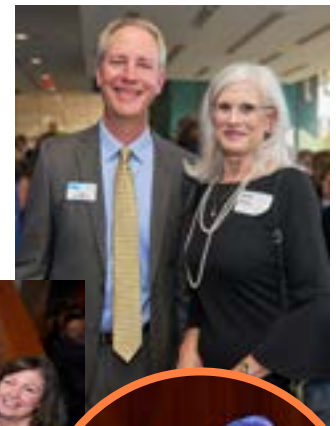
Many new faces were among the 515 dinner guests at the Holland Center. More than 700 attended the lecture in person, and hundreds more tuned into the livestream broadcast provided by Nebraska Public Media. More than \$220,000 was raised to support HN programming in 2024.

Holocaust educator Beth S. Dotan, Ph.D., accepted the 2023 Sower Award in the Humanities with a heartfelt speech before Governor Jim Pillen introduced Amor Towles.

Towles set the tone for the evening by regaling the audience with hilarious criticisms of his three novels that he has received from fans. Padmore skillfully asked questions, including submissions from both the online and in-person audiences who wanted to know more about Towles' writing process. His answers were simultaneously enlightening and entertaining.

Afterwards, many attendees stayed behind to meet the author and have their copies of Towles' novels personally signed.

HN is grateful to co-sponsors UMB Bank and Union Pacific, an anonymous 50th anniversary donor, and the many other benefactors and sponsors listed on the previous page.



Photos by Ron Coleman



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To learn more, contact Heather Thomas at heather@HumanitiesNebraska.org

**SAVE
THE
DATE!
4.12.24**

Patron's Circle donors are invited to the celebratory event in gratitude for their support on Friday, April 12, 2024, in Omaha. Save the date notices with details will be mailed to Patron's Circle donors in early 2024. For questions, please contact Heather Thomas, heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.



MANY PARTICIPATE IN HN 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Humanities Nebraska celebrated its 50th anniversary year in a variety of ways, including some very special events designed to "Spark Your Curiosity."

The "What Connects Us" Chautauqua in July at Grand Island's Stuhr Museum brought back some favorite historical figures. Each scholar led a workshop that helped connect participants with topics ranging from storytelling to Native American culture.

To highlight HN's Speakers Bureau, online "Curiosity

Connections" presentations were held monthly. "Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History" (sponsored by HBE), "The Amazing Library of Thomas Jefferson Kirkpatrick" (sponsored by Dillon Foundation), and "Willa Cather's Life in Letters" (sponsored by Laura & Bill Troshynski) were presented in the spring. "Poetry is for Rock Stars," "Living Legacy of Chicanos," and "Black Homesteaders of the Great Plains" (sponsored by Beth & Kelvin Whited) were all held this autumn.



Angela Bates, Nicodemus Historical Society.

Also, special \$1,000 grants were given to 43 K-12 educators for humanities projects.

Commemorative "Spark Your Curiosity" tees are still available. Please see page 11 for details.

IN MEMORY



SHIRLEY GREENBERGER | 1921-2023 Shirley (Spar) Greenberger, a longtime Grand Island resident and former HN board member, passed away September 18. Growing up in the Depression, Shirley earned money as a teen by designing and making prom dresses, beginning her journey as a resourceful, independent woman. She and her husband Bernie operated two women's clothing stores in Grand Island. An avid reader, and accomplished artist, Shirley was also a tireless volunteer for many organizations.

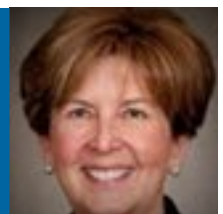


GWEN MEISTER | 1947-2023 Folklorist and director of Nebraska Folklife Network Gwen Meister died October 16. She had a masters degree in cultural anthropology and MBA from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Always passionate about preserving the traditions of Nebraska's many different cultural groups, Gwen founded the Nebraska Folklife Network in 2003 with her husband Bill Behmer. Together, they performed folk music as members of the HN Speakers Bureau.



ROBERT NEFSKY | 1951-2023 Bob Nefsky passed away November 22. A respected attorney with Rembolt Ludtke, Bob first became involved with Humanities Nebraska in 1990. He served on both HN's Council board (1992-97, chair 1995-96) and Foundation board (1992-2001, president 1997-2000). He was honored with the Sower Award in the Humanities in 2014, and for many years has been an integral part of the board leadership of the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

**The Spring 2024 issue of this newsletter will contain a more comprehensive tribute to Bob's multi-faceted contributions.*



BARBARA SCHAEFER | 1953-2023 Barbara Wittmann Schaefer died October 21. She was born near Hooper, Neb., and raised in Lincoln. After three years of private practice, Barb joined Union Pacific Railroad as an attorney in May 1981, and was later elected senior vice president of Human Resources and eventually corporate secretary. Barb was a strong and effective leader who served as a board member of many non-profit and professional organizations, including Humanities Nebraska.

GRANT SPOTLIGHT: PEERS SHARE ANNE FRANK

Humanities Nebraska recently awarded a grant to the Institute for Holocaust Education (IHE) for “Anne Frank – a History for Today,” a traveling exhibit. IHE presented the exhibit in Nebraska schools in partnership with the Anne Frank House and the University of South Carolina’s College of Education.

The 30-panel exhibit, which tells the story of Anne Frank’s family and the impact of Nazi persecution and war, traveled to three middle and high schools in Lexington and Omaha during the 2022-23 school year.

At each school, a group of students was trained to be peer educators to help their fellow students think critically about the exhibit and relate lessons of the past to present-day circumstances. The exhibit stayed at each school for two weeks and was opened to the community for one evening at each school.

Some 2,500 students and community members viewed the exhibit, which had a measurable impact. In a survey, 80.4% of participating students said they would be more likely to speak up

in a situation where they saw prejudice or discrimination.

A participant at Omaha’s Westside Community Schools said, “I think [the exhibit] brought a lot of awareness not just to anti-Semitism, but to the ways prejudice and discrimination can present themselves in everyday communities.”



A Westside Middle School peer educator shares Anne Frank’s story with classmates.

RECENTLY AWARDED GRANTS

African Culture Connection, Omaha, \$10,000 for an after-school program • **Angels Theatre Company**, Lincoln, \$1,800 supporting the 2023-24 Salon Reading Series • **Asian Community and Cultural Center**, Lincoln, \$1,690 for Stories of Us • **The Durham Museum**, Omaha, \$10,000 to support “Museum Live!” online • **El Museo Latino**, Omaha, \$6,000 to help fund a lecture series • **Foundation for Montana History**, Scottsbluff, \$7,200 for the Nebraska’s National Legacy Authors’ Tour • **Hall County Historical Society**, Grand Island, \$9,000 to help produce a documentary about David Kaufmann • **Intertribal Medicine Collective**, Lincoln, \$1,994 for “Indigenous Medicine Traditions on the Plains” • **Joslyn Castle Trust**, Omaha, \$4,000 to help fund its 2023 art and literary festival • **Legacy of the Plains Museum**, Gering, \$1,308 for the Circle the Bluffs PowWow • **Lincoln Orchestra Association**, \$4,550 supporting 2023-24 pre-concert chats • **McCook Community Kitchen**, \$1,900 for a *Dia de los Muertos* event • **Metropolitan Community College**, Omaha, \$900 to support “Standing Up by Javier Avila” and \$2,000 for an Hispanic Flamenco Ballet performance • **Movement in Omaha for Racial Equity**, \$9,000 for Selalelo, a series addressing racism • **Nebraska National Guard Museum Society**, Seward, \$1,800 to help fund its Fort Donelson exhibit • **Nebraska Public Media Foundation**, Lincoln, \$10,000 for “Nebraska Icons” • **Nebraska Storytelling Festival**, Lincoln, \$1,800 for its annual event • **Nebraska Writers Collective**, Omaha, \$7,250 to help fund its visiting writers series • **Omaha Performing Arts**, \$5,625 for the 2023-24 season of Voices Amplified • **Opera Omaha**, \$1,800 in support of “Poetry & Music” 2023 • **Together We Achieve Miracles, Inc.**, Omaha, \$8,000 to help fund pre production & multimedia training for digital programs • **University of Nebraska-Lincoln Board of Regents**, \$1,000 to help fund the OLLI fall symposium: “Misinformation & Conspiracy Theories”; \$1,800 for a lecture related to the exhibit “A New Deal for Quilts”; \$2,000 to help connect educators with the Nebraska Stories of Humanity web resource; and \$7,000 for “The Land Returns” documentary • **University of Nebraska at Omaha Board of Regents**, \$1,128 in support of “Ilse Koch on Trial,” the keynote lecture of its 48th annual European Studies Conference; \$1,700 to help fund “The Stories We Share” writing workshops at the Samuel Bak Museum: The Learning Center; and \$5,380 for “The Keeper: Visits with Kelcey Ervick.”

29
GRANTS

\$127,625
TOTAL

MEET ELODIE AND EMMA

Humanities Nebraska hired **Elodie Galeazzi-Kelly** as the new Prime Time Program intern. The intern from Villalaurie, France is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

What interested you about working at HN? I wanted to work in an organization with an inspiring mission and wanted to get more experience in non-profit organizations.



What's your go-to humanities hobby? I love taking advantage of the Arts for All program at the Lied Center and getting to experience different types of

shows including musicals, plays, orchestra and ballets.

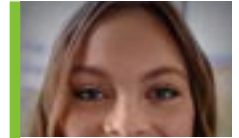
What are your future career plans or goals? My long term career goals are to work in international education or a nonprofit organization with a positive and inspiring mission.

Emma Parr recently signed on as social media/communications intern. The Hastings native is a junior at UNL studying advertising and public relations with minors in communications, art, and psychology.

What interested you about working at HN? I found that I resonated with HN's mission and knew it would be a great opportunity to meet and work

for some amazing people.

What's your go-to humanities hobby? I enjoy going to both art and history museums. I love seeing culture through the ages and having the opportunity to experience it up close!



What are your future career plans or goals? I plan to graduate with my Bachelors in Journalism and hope to seek out a job in the advertising agency space in Kansas City. Before graduating, I would love to work at another internship in a different state for the opportunity to travel and learn more about the advertising industry.

HN THANKS LEGACY DONORS

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Help us invest in the future of the arts and humanities across Nebraska. Learn more about the Nebraska Cultural Endowment at NebraskaCulture.org



SUPPORTING ANOTHER 50 YEARS

HN is winding up its 50th anniversary of helping people explore what connects us and makes us human.

In celebration of our milestone anniversary, we commissioned Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason and Omaha artist Sarah Rowe to create a 50th anniversary poem and corresponding artwork. "Studying the Game" is a tribute to the arts and humanities, the trails that came before us, and a nod to one of Nebraska's favorite pastimes...baseball.

There are many ways *you* can help make Humanities Nebraska's statewide work "sing."

Sign up for the weekly eblast so you can follow our programs (simply email your request to info@humanitiesnebraska.org).

Attend a Speakers Bureau program or Chautauqua.

Share info about Nebraska Warrior Writers with a veteran.

Encourage a family to attend Prime Time Family Reading.

Make an end-of-year gift. It's

Studying the Game
for Humanities Nebraska on its 50th Anniversary
Matt Mason, Nebraska State Poet
October 2023

Seventh inning, ninety degrees, thoughts more on peanuts and Cracker Jack than balls and strikes, and

the organist splashes the seats with a tune that makes every one of us stand;

it sparks your curiosity, and you see

how the outfield grass has brush strokes that show prairie turned hunting ground turned settlement turned stadium;

you see the dance in the first baseman's cleats as he tries to choreograph that runner into an out; it's poetry,

as they say, describing the pitcher, how each throw traces a trail--Mormon, Oregon, Lewis and Clark--builds like a cycle of the West,

where each hitter studies to find the scansion, the rhyme; all the spectacle in these rituals,

these triples and arias, right field sestinas, baseline sagas, this song we all find ourselves being out as one.



easy! Use the included envelope or go to our secure website to make an online donation. Consider a recurring/monthly donation, a gift of stock or an IRA/Qualified Charitable donation.

Get your own 50th anniversary shirt for \$20, which includes a \$10 gift to HN.

Here's to another 50 years and programs that spark your curiosity. **Thank you!**

To become an HN donor or to see more ways to give, please visit:
HumanitiesNebraska.org/ways-to-give/donate

MAKE AN IMPACT



GIVE NEBRASKA is a coalition of 76 diverse nonprofits working to build a vibrant, creative, healthy community. HN greatly appreciates donors who designated gifts to us through their Give Nebraska workplace giving campaigns. To learn more, please visit givenebraska.org.



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TO UPDATE ADDRESS OR CANCEL SUBSCRIPTIONS,
402.474.2131 or INFO@HUMANITIESNEBRASKA.ORG

NEW SPEAKERS AND TOPICS NOW AVAILABLE FOR BOOKING

Humanities Nebraska recently added six new speakers who will be offering unique topics in the HN Speakers Bureau. Any non-profit organization (libraries, schools, etc.) may apply to host a Speakers Bureau program for a very low cost.

Sally Bisson-Best, a published author who speaks about women's legal rights, presents "**Doris Stevens: Nebraska's Forgotten Suffrage Leader.**" She shares the story of this national leader who helped gain passage of the 19th Amendment.

Beth Dotan presents "**Nebraska Stories of Humanity: Holocaust Survivors and WWII Veterans,**" a collection of tales by Holocaust survivors who settled in Nebraska. As part of this program, Dotan also demonstrates how digital tools have changed storytelling.

Peg Gilbert presents "**The Life and Drive of Mari Sandoz.**" Learn about Mari's life from birth and the experiences that shaped her into a nationally-known author. Gilbert is a cousin of the author and will share personal stories handed down by several Sandoz family generations.

Craig Larson, a career broadcaster, presents "**Sergeant Eddy: Nebraska's Last Doughboy,**" a story of Nebraska's last World War I veteran. This program describes Jess Edminsten's firsthand accounts of his military service along with the



Clockwise from above: A keepsake photo from a Holocaust survivor who moved to Nebraska, Nebraska suffragist Doris Stevens, historian/author Mari Sandoz, author Beth Streeter Aldrich

contributions and sacrifices of other Nebraskans during the Great War.

Jim McGee presents "**Historical Stories of Omaha's Parks, Boulevards, Brick Streets and Streetcars.**"

McGee has worked in areas of transportation research, freeway operations, and homeland security planning. He uses historic photographs to explore the history of Omaha's pre-World War II neighborhoods from 1868 to 1955.

Jolene McLaughin presents "**Bess Streeter Aldrich: In Her Own Words.**" McLaughin portrays Elmwood, Nebraska, author Bess Streeter Aldrich in period attire. She retells the story of the Aldrich's life journeys, joys, successes, and heartaches mostly through Aldrich's own words.

To schedule these or any other Humanities Nebraska speakers for a local event, please visit www.HumanitiesNebraska.org/catalog