



## Western Library System Helping libraries serve our communities.

### Our Libraries Rock™ - The Importance of Stories and Song

As we enter the New Year most of us are beginning to focus on new programs for our patrons, with the Summer Reading Program at the top of the “To Do” list. During the holiday season, I had time to contemplate what the theme “Libraries Rock™” means to me while watching the movie *Australia* by Baz Luhrman, starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman. One character, Nullah, expressed just how important stories and songs are to everyone the world over when he states “Grandfather teach’em me most important lesson of all. Tell’em story [sic].” The Drover explains “without stories, Nullah will have no country. He’ll have no story, no dreaming.” This was reiterated when he explains his love for Australian adventures: “Most people like to own things. You know, land, luggage... and in the end the only thing you really own is... your story. Just tryin’ to live a good one.” When near disaster strikes as they drive their cattle across the desert they must rely on ancestral stories for survival: “The ancestors created songs for everything. For every rock and tree. They’re all linked, so when Galapa, the magic man..., sings them in order, he’ll sing us to water. Even across the Never-Never [sic].” As librarians, we realize how important stories and songs are to every patron, in every culture, and within each generation. Without stories we would be left without a history, without hope, and without a future. Our libraries use stories, music and songs to become community builders and to teach cultural identities.

I’m very excited about the Summer Reading Program concept that “Libraries Rock.” Books, music, craft making and storytelling are powerful tools for every community. They teach history, cultural traditions, and how to navigate the world. They are our common place between all generations, and the bond within our communities. We can use fairy tales and plays to teach valuable life lessons and survival skills. Fantasy and science fiction theories teach us to dream and create new worlds while escaping our current surroundings. Just as the Aboriginal communities have a tradition of “singing,” we too use stories, songs and dance to teach and combine emotions with our past, present and future. Music is therapy, and libraries are community builders. Whether we use movies, theatre, crafts, books, or music, each aspect of listening, telling stories, acting out, playing, and having a chance to dream of what may be is so important to everyone, and all ages. This is how we learn to dream about the future, learn about our identities and our history, along with learning what we can become.

There is a huge generation of musicians that originated in Nebraska including Randy Meisner, one of the founding member of the Eagles from Scottsbluff; Josh Rouse from Paxton; Jack & Jack (Jack Johnson and Jack Gilinsky); along with Mannheim Steamroller from Omaha; Zager and Evans from Lincoln; Amy Heide-mann (Karmin) from Seward; and Matty Lewis from Papillion, just to name a few. Nebraska is culturally rich with excellent librarians and musicians, which is all the more reason to embrace our libraries to “...sing you to me” as Nullah did, when our “Libraries Rock™” this summer!

- Jan Jolliffe -

*Australia*, by Baz Luhrman, script content accessed 1/7/2018, [https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie\\_script.php?movie=Australia](https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=Australia)

Libraries Rock™ is provided by Collaborative Summer Library Program.

“Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life. Libraries change lives for the better.” *Sidney Sheldon*

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# January/February Display and Programming Ideas

January is starting off really cold. We can hope that, by February, it will be a teeny bit warmer (above zero would be nice). For this month, you could put together a display of teddy bears and make a sign that says **Winter is Bear-able with Books**. Here are several more display ideas for January and February:

## **Brain Teaser Month**

Challenge patrons to solve riddles and brain teasers from this website <https://www.everythingmom.com/parenting/45-riddles-and-brain-teasers-for-kids>. Offer a prize for the most correct answers.

## **National Soup Month**

This is a terrific time to display all your soup cookbooks. You could even get preschoolers involved by sharing your favorite version of the folktale **Stone Soup**.

## **Amelia Earhart Day (January 11)**

To honor this pioneer, display biographies of female aviators and astronauts. This is the perfect opportunity to feature model airplanes. Ask your patrons to bring in any models they have constructed and place them on top of your shelves or suspend them from the ceiling.

## **Jack London's Birthday (January 12, 1876)**

John Griffith "Jack" London was an American novelist, journalist, and social activist. A pioneer in the world of commercial magazine fiction, he was one of the first writers to become a worldwide celebrity and earn a large fortune from writing. He was also an innovator in the genre that would later become known as science fiction. Display London's books along with a bookmark listing all his titles.

## **Black History Month**

Each year beginning on February 1, an entire month of events is planned nationwide honoring the history and contributions of African Americans. The theme for Black History Month in 2018 is "African Americans in Times of War" honoring those brave men and women who served their countries in the armed forces, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice while defending the American ideals of freedom and democracy. For poems, quotations, and lesson plans go to <http://www.chiff.com/education/black-history-month.htm>.

## **National Bird-Feeding Month**

Display nonfiction books about birds, including the **Audubon Guide to North American Birds** to help patrons identify birds at their bird feeders. Books about how to build bird houses and feeders would be a good addition to the display as well as a bag of bird seed.

## **World Read Aloud Day (February 1, 2018)**

Everyone in the world should get to read and write. Every year, on World Read Aloud Day, people all around the globe read aloud together and share stories to advocate for literacy as a human right that belongs to all people. Reading aloud to children every day puts them almost a year ahead of children who do not receive daily read alouds. Go to <http://www.litworld.org/wrad> to download the full *World Read Aloud Day Event and Activity Packet*.

## **Super Bowl Sunday (February 4, 2018)**

Super Bowl 52, also known as Super Bowl LII, is set to be played on February 4, 2018 under the dome at state-of-the-art U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. Display all of your books about football, NFL football teams, and biographies of famous football players.

## **2018 Winter Olympics (February 9 – 25, 2018)**

Pyeongchang, South Korea, hosts the 23<sup>rd</sup> Winter Olympic Games. When the Olympics are on, we all watch sports that we normally don't follow. It is exciting to watch Americans compete and to see which country has the most medals. A medal board would make a great display. Add books about winter sports and past Olympians to draw patrons' interest. You could include information about South Korea and a map to show where the games are taking place. Go to <http://www.nbcolympics.com/> for more on the Olympic Games.

## **Valentine's Day (February 14)**

Have you wanted to try the **Blind Date With a Book** program? Valentine's Day is the perfect time to start. Select a variety of fiction books and place blank book review slips in them. Wrap them in red and pink wrapping paper. Leave only the barcode uncovered. Make an eye-catching display near your circulation desk. As people check the books out, ask patrons to fill out the book review slip inside before returning them. This is a fun way to get people to read books by new or less popular authors.

## **Presidents' Day (February 19, 2018)**

Presidents' Day observes the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Present usage often regards Presidents' Day as a day to honor all former presidents of the United States. This year you could focus on Abraham Lincoln. Display books and other material about our sixteenth President. Look in all the library's collections...adult, children's, fiction, nonfiction, and media.

## Mark Your Calendar

### WLS Board Meeting

Railway Office Plaza, Conference Room 10:00 a.m.  
January 9, 2018

Proposals due if you are interested in presenting at the **Big Talk From Small Libraries 2018**.

Please [submit your proposal](#) by Friday, January 12, 2018.

### ALA 2018 Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits- Denver, CO

February 9-13

### 2018 Youth Media Award - announcements

February 12, 8 a.m. (Mountain Time) from the Colorado Convention Center. Fans can follow 2018 results in real-time via live webcast at <http://ala.unikron.com/2018>, or follow hashtag [#alayma](#).

### The IMLS Public Library Survey

deadline is February 16, 2018

### “Community Needs Response Plan” Workshop

Sidney Public Library 1-4 p.m., February 21, 2018.

### E-rate

The deadline to file your FCC Form 470 is February 22, 2018.

### Big Talk From Small Libraries 2018 - Online Conference

7:45am - 4pm (Mountain Time)  
February 23, 2018,

### SRP “Libraries Rock” Workshops

Watch for the upcoming registration form.

March 7- Prairie Winds Community Center, Bridgeport , NE  
& March 8 - Hastings Memorial Library, Grant., NE



# Upcoming NCompass Live

Upcoming NCompass Live events:

- 1/10 - Friday Reads 2017: A Year in Review
- 1/24 - NCompass Live: Nebraska Schools and Libraries: Breaking the Ice and Igniting Internet Relationships
- 1/31 - The Innovation in Libraries Awesome Foundation Chapter

**NCompass Live is broadcast live, every Wednesday, from 9am - 10am Mountain Time.**

For more information, to register for NCompass Live, or to listen to recordings of past events, go to: <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/>

## Basic Skills for Nebraska Librarians 2017-2018 Schedule

Class Dates	Class	Instructor	Registration Dates
1/22 - 2/2	Communication *	Mary Jo Ryan	12/11 - 1/12
2/12 - 2/23	Customer Service *	Christa Porter	1/8—2/2
3/5 - 3/16	Library Governance	Denise Harders	2/5 - 2/23
3/19 - 3/30	Library Technology	Holly Woldt	2/19 - 3/9
4/2 - 4/27	Organization of Materials *	Allison Badger	3/5 - 3/23
4/23 - 5/4	Readers Advisory	Sharon Osenga	3/26 - 4/13
5/21 - 6/1	Intellectual Freedom and the Core Values of Librarianship *	Sally Snyder	4/23 - 5/11

(\* Requisite class)

Register on the Nebraska Library Commission [Training and Events Calendar](#).  
[Description of Basic Skills courses](#)

[Basic Skills Planner](#)--for program participants to keep track of their progress  
For further information, contact [Holli Duggan](#), NLC Continuing Education

Visit the Nebraska Library Commission Website for News and Announcements.



# Big Talk From Small Libraries

## Small Libraries Doing Big Things

February 23, 2018

**Big Talk From Small Libraries 2018** will be held on Friday, February 23, 2018 from 7:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Mountain Time via the GoToWebinar online meeting service.

We've been listening! A comment we've heard pretty often is that so many presentations at conferences seem to be by and for librarians from larger libraries. Well, Big Talk From Small Libraries will change that! This free one-day online conference is aimed at librarians from small libraries; the smaller the better! Each of our speakers is from a small library or directly works with small libraries.

Topics will range from technology (new and old tech) to programming to new roles for the library. This event is a great opportunity to learn about the innovative things your colleagues are doing in their small libraries.

Everyone is welcome to register and attend, regardless of how big or small your library. But, if your library serves a few thousand people, or a few hundred, this is the day for you.

Big Talk From Small Libraries is broadcast online using the GoToWebinar online meeting service. GoToWebinar works on Windows, Mac, Google Chrome OS, Linux, iOS and Android devices. GoToWebinar login instructions will be e-mailed to registered attendees the day before the conference. Please see the [NLC Online Sessions webpage](#) for detailed information about GoToWebinar, including system requirements and firewall configuration.

We do plan on recording all of the sessions and making them available on this site as soon as possible after the event. You do not need to register for the conference to access the recordings.

This conference is organized and hosted by **Christa Porter** of the [Nebraska Library Commission](#) and is co-sponsored by the [Association for Rural & Small Libraries](#).

*Big Talk From Small Libraries* was inspired by the Iowa Small Libraries Online Conference, and our event wouldn't exist without their advice and encouragement.

More details can be found @ <http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/bigtalk/>

The most up-to-date news releases from the Nebraska Library Commission are always available on the Library Commission Website, <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/publications/newsreleases>.

**\*\*\*Have you submitted your proposal to Big Talk From Small Libraries 2018? Better hurry - the deadline is Jan. 12! Submit your proposal at <http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/bigtalk/call-for-speakers/>**  
(Information sent on behalf of [christa.porter@nebraska.gov](mailto:christa.porter@nebraska.gov))



Nebraska  
Library  
Commission

**Big Talk From Small Libraries**

**February 23, 2018**

**7:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Mountain Time**

Information provided by  
Nebraska Library Commission



# “Libraries Rock”

## Summer Reading Workshops

March 7, 2018

March 8, 2018

Prairie Winds  
Community Center  
Bridgeport, NE

Hastings Memorial  
Library  
Grant, NE

More details regarding programming and the registration form coming soon.

*This program is supported in part by the  
Institute of Museum and Library Services  
under the provisions of the Library Services  
and Technology Act as administered by the  
Nebraska Library Commission.*



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## E-rate Form 471 Application Filing Window Dates Announced



From the [USAC website](#):

### FY2018 Application Filing Window Dates Announced

The FCC Form 471 application filing window for Funding Year 2018 will open Thursday, January 11, 2018 at noon EST and close Thursday, March 22, 2018.

You can read the [USAC announcement](#) for full details.

To prepare for the window opening:

- If you haven't already done so, **file your FCC Form 470 now; you don't need to wait for the window to open.**
  - To file your FCC Form 470, log into the [E-Rate Productivity Center](#) (EPC). You must wait 28 days after your FCC Form 470 is posted to the USAC website before you can close your competitive bidding process, select a service provider, sign a contract (if applicable), and submit an FCC Form 471. If you issue an RFP after the FCC Form 470 is posted, you must wait 28 days from the release of the RFP to select a service provider.
  - **Thursday, February 22 the deadline to post your FCC Form 470** to the USAC website or issue an RFP and still complete all of these actions before the window closes.
- Log-in or create your account in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) and then review, update or assign user rights for anyone who will need access for FY2017. **Review your EPC profile and confirm all of your information is accurate** including your organization's name, address and entities. Your profile is now unlocked and available for you to insert any further updates but will be locked again on January 10, 2018 at 11:59 PM EST. Libraries should confirm their square footage, main branch, and public school district of the main branch information is correct and that any book-mobiles or kiosks are included.

You can find additional resources and instructions for using the EPC on the [USAC website](#) and on the NLC's [E-rate website](#).

## BROADWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY

### After School Club

The Broadwater After School Club meets every first Wednesday of the month at 4:15 p.m.



Broadwater has between seven and nine children in a town that statistically shows about 17 school aged children. Our afterschool patrons range in age from four to nine. Our success is due to the previous relationship with two of the active moms, with seven children themselves, that helped to round up the group.

We have also re-organized our Children's section under topics to make it more user friendly.

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Article and photos submitted by Cheryl L. Hamilton,  
Director, Broadwater Public Library  
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### DON'T FORGET!

The annual (2016-2017 fiscal year) IMLS public library survey (submitted via [Bibliostat](#)) is now available. The survey deadline is **February 16, 2018**. Completion of the survey is **required** for your library to receive state aid if you are accredited. If you aren't accredited, you still have an incentive to complete the survey (\$200), called [Dollar\\$ for Data](#).



Please feel free to contact [Sam Shaw](#) if you have any questions throughout the process. You can always start the survey, save your submissions, and then resume at a later date. It doesn't have to all be done at once. **Tip:** It's always a good idea to click on the red "save" button in Bibliostat before clicking "next" to the next screen. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Posted on [November 15, 2017](#) by [Sam Shaw](#)

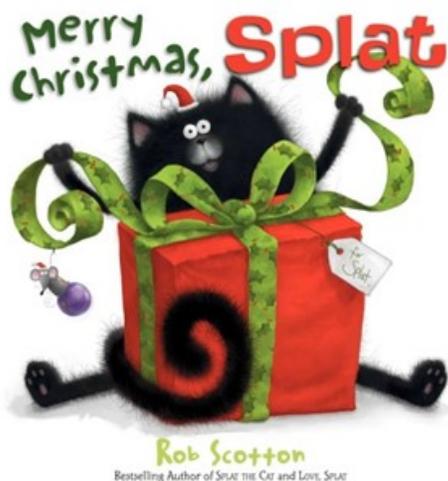
# News Around The System

## Library Christmas Party For Community's Children

The Lied Scottsbluff Public Library hosted a Christmas party for the community's children on the evening of December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Hampton Inn and Suites.

The party theme was "Merry Christmas, Splat the Cat... and More Than That!" The evening was filled with special Christmas activities for the entire family. The library began the tradition in 2013. Although previous Christmas parties were held at the library, it was decided to move the event to the Hampton Inn which offered more space to facilitate the large attendance.

The evening included a storytime featuring the book *Merry Christmas, Splat!* by Rob Scotton, a Christmas reindeer craft, homemade Christmas sugar cookies and milk, and a visit from Santa! After visiting Santa, every child received a copy of the Splat Christmas book to take home, courtesy of Scotts Bluff County Keno and the Scottsbluff Kiwanis Club.



**Ava visits with Santa**

The Christmas celebration was a tremendous success with nearly 350 people attending!

Deb Carlson, Children's Librarian at the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library would be glad to provide assistance in planning to any librarians desiring to host a similar event in their city next year.



**LSPL Staff pose with Santa**



**Jim helps attendees write letters to Santa**

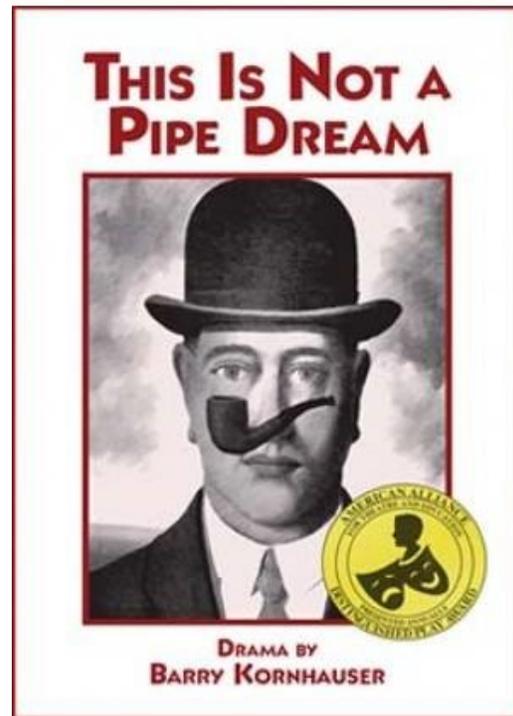
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Pictures and article by Deb Carlson, Children's Librarian & Noelle Thompson, Lied Scottsbluff Public Library Director

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## Lied Scottsbluff Public Library

On November 18, Lied Scottsbluff Public Library welcomed special guest performers, students from the Western Nebraska Community College Theatre Department, to present *This is Not a Pipe Dream*, an energetic family-friendly play about the life of painter Rene Magritte. The free production was one stop on the children's theatre tour. Theatre Instructor, Robert Thompson, Jr., directed the play and hopes to make the stop at LSPL an annual event.



Daniel Smith, James Buxbaum, and James Maag pose during a production of *This is Not a Pipe Dream*.



Daniel Smith plays painter Rene Magritte.

Article and pictures submitted by Noelle Thompson, Director

# News Around The System

## Western Library System's First Non-Profit Library Tree presented during Trees Along the Trail at Legacy of the Plains Museum



All 40 Western Library System public libraries were represented with individualized ornaments and bookmarks. Thank you to everyone that participated, along with those that voted for our tree.

# News Around The System

## Friends Cover Late Fees

The Friends of the Scottsbluff Library have generously donated \$300 to cover collection fees for children and teens. While LSPL offers two fine-free days each week and cooperates with patrons to reduce late fees, patrons with materials overdue more than sixty days are assessed a \$15 collection fee. Many of these patrons are minors and are not able to pay the fee. Because the Friends of the Library wish to see library services and resources available to all people and especially children, they've created a fund to cover those fees and reinstate library users. LSPL is grateful for the Friends for all they do, but especially for their advocacy for those in need.



Article and photo submitted by Noelle Thompson, Director, Lied Scottsbluff Public Library

## “Santa’s Workshops” and Local Author Visit at Mitchell Public Library

The Mitchell Public Library sponsored four “Santa’s Workshop” sessions for kids during December. Priscilla had crafts that kids could come in and make, like reindeer heads made from old ties, and plaster hands with the palm cut out with a heart for an ornament.



We also sponsored a book signing for Camille Takuski, a local author who has just published her first book, a children’s book called *Mabel Grace Says All Colors Matter*, along with Melissa Nelson the illustrator. We had a good turn-out, and Camille was thrilled to sell lots of books.

Article submitted by Maryruth Reed, Director, Mitchell Public Library



### “Mablegracesays

· December 16 at 2:57pm ·

We had an amazing turnout this weekend at our first book signing! Thank you all for supporting our dreams! We had so much fun! A big THANK YOU to the wonderful ladies at Mitchell NE Library 📖! ”



Photos courtesy of Melissa Nelson, Illustrator, and [Mablegracesays](#) Facebook post

· December 16 at 2:57pm ·

# News Around The System

## Sidney Innovation Studio Open House

The UNL Innovation Studio and UNL Extension Office received a grant from the National Science Foundation to study distant learning technologies and methods that can be used to provide educational outreach to rural communities. The Sidney Public Library was selected by them to house an extension of Lincoln's Innovation Studio. The Innovation Studio is "makerspace".

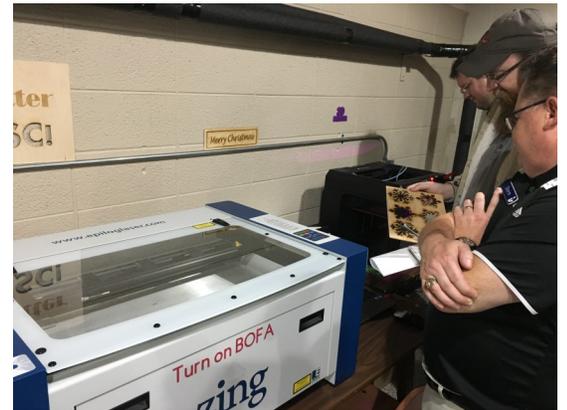
A makerspace is a DIY space where people can gather to create, invent, and learn. They often have 3D printers, software, electronics, craft and hardware supplies, tools, and more. The Sidney makerspace has a Laser Cutter/Engraver, two 3D Printers, a CNC/Router, a Vinyl Cutter and a Sewing Machine that are available for use by the public. The Library will be providing classes to teach people how to use this equipment beginning in Jan 2018.



Top and right, patrons and Andrew Sherman assessing the signs and ornaments made with the Laser Cutter/Engraver.



Pre-made ornaments, along with the Laser Cutter/Engraver in action.



Andrew Sherman, Sidney Public Library Director, discussing the new Laser Cutter/Engraver during the Innovation Studio Open House .



Mary Kay Brauer runs the robot "Beam", which is a "telepresence" robot that lets an expert at the Innovation Studio in Lincoln provide remote support to users in Sidney. <https://suitabletech.com/products/beam>.



3D Printer



Musical cutouts, above; Garage Band set up, below.



Article by Andrew Sherman, Director, Sidney Public Library. Photos by Jan Jolliffe.

# News Around The System

## The New Alliance Bookstore

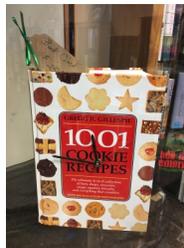
The Alliance Public Library Foundation has opened a bookstore within the library! The bookstore features new and used books, crafts, jewelry, and book related gifts! All Proceeds from the store go to support library projects and contests. The bookstore has been doing very well and is open anytime the library is open! Come see what we have!



Fantastic fiction and non-fiction books, Harry Potter scarves, and more...



Coffee cups, bookmarks, book baskets and clocks. What more could a book lover need?



Welcome to Carolyn Marlott, the new part-time clerk at Alliance Public Library!

Article provided by Stephanie O'Connor, Director of Alliance Public Library. Photos by Jan Jolliffe.

## “Community Needs Response Plan” (aka Strategic Plan) Workshop

February 21, Sidney Public Library, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

### Looking for help with your Strategic Plan?

Do you have a plan? The Nebraska Guidelines for Public Library Accreditation require that a library have an up-to-date Community Needs Response Plan (formerly known as the Strategic Plan) in place. The guidelines are community-based, so libraries need to know what their communities' needs are in order to provide appropriate library services that meet those unique needs.

That's where planning comes in. Christa Porter, NLC's Library Development Director, will guide you through Community Needs Response Planning for your library. Public Library Directors, Staff and Library Board Members are encouraged to attend.

Information provided by [Christa Porter](#).

Information provided by  
Nebraska Library Commission



Nebraska  
Library  
Commission

# Librarians Around The System

## Nebraska Library Commission Awards Grants for Youth Library Service

The Nebraska Library Commission recently awarded \$25,000 in grants for Excellence in Youth service. Of the grants awarded to nineteen Nebraska public libraries, several addressed the need for Science Technology Engineering Art Mathematics (STEAM) programming in libraries and some will design programs for specific age groups: babies, toddlers, preschoolers, teens, and tweens. The Nebraska Library Commission congratulates the public libraries listed below as they develop new and innovative programs to ensure excellence in library service for Nebraska young people.

The recipients are:

Atkinson Public Library, Music and LEGO®

Bennington Public Library, Summer of STEAM

Blue Hill Public Library, LEGO® Club

**Broadwater Public Library, Summer Reading Program**

Central City Public Library, STEM in Music and Reading

Hruska Memorial Public Library, David City, Afterschool Makers Clubs

Keene Memorial Library, Fremont, Teen Advisory Board

Genoa Public Library, Adventure Club

Grand Island Public Library, Teen Program

La Vista Public Library, Preschool Musical Movers and Shakers

Lincoln City Libraries, Makerspace Kits and Programming

**Morrill Public Library, Afterschool Programs**

Norfolk Public Library, Book-to-Film Club

Plattsmouth Public Library, STEAM IDEA Boxes

Baright Public Library, Ralston, Monthly Mini Makers

Ravenna Public Library, Baby and Me

South Sioux City Public Library, 1,000 Books before Kindergarten

Dvoracek Memorial Library, Wilber, Celebrate Books and Reading

Kilgore Memorial Library, York, Starlings for York Encouraging Parents of Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Youth Grants for Excellence are made available by the Nebraska Library Commission with funding from the State of Nebraska. As the state library agency, the Nebraska Library Commission is an advocate for the library and information needs of all Nebraskans. The mission of the Library Commission is statewide promotion, development, and coordination of library and information services, “bringing together people and information.”

The most up-to-date news releases from the Nebraska Library Commission are always available on the Library Commission Website, <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/publications/newsreleases>.

Posted on December 20, 2017 by Jennifer Wrampe

# Librarians Around The System

## Librarian Spotlight

### **Eleven Nebraska libraries were named Star Libraries for 2017 by *Library Journal*.**

#### 5-Star

Atkinson Public Library (Director -- Judy Hagan)

Hartington Public Library (Director -- Tami Anderson)

Neligh Public Library (Director -- Jennifer Norton)

#### 4-Star

Central City Public Library (Director -- Sara Lee)

**Hastings Memorial Library (Director -- Robin Quinn)**

Saint Paul Public Library (Director -- Angela Blankenship)

#### 3-Star

Creighton Public Library (Director -- Lisa Macke)

Louisville Public Library (Director -- Darla McDonald)

Gardner Public Library (Director -- Elizabeth Carlson)

Weeping Water Public Library (Director -- Aimee Morlan)

John A. Stahl Library (Director -- Mary Jo Mack)

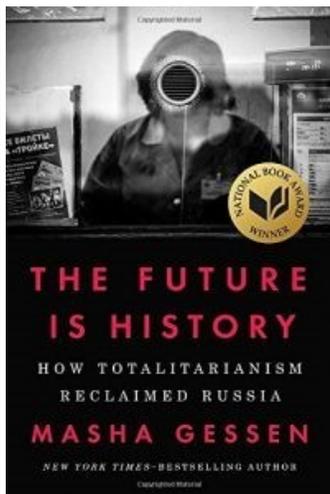
Congratulations to all of these libraries, along with their dedicated directors and staff. We are especially proud to be represented by one of our own Western Library System Librarian: Robin Quinn, from Hasting Memorial Library in Grant, NE.

According to Robin, “this accolade really came at the right time for us as a morale booster and as validation that what we are doing is working and working well!” Kudos to Robin, along with Sarah Pick and Valerie Foster, Assistant Librarians.

Information provided by emails from Robin Quinn, Director of Hastings Memorial Library and Andrew Cano, NLA President, along with article in *Library Journal*, December 2017.

## Book Review by Susan Knisely, Online Services Librarian, Nebraska Library Commission

### The Future is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia, by Masha Gessen



Just over a month ago, on November 15, Masha Gessen's *The Future is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia* won the 2017 National Book Award for Nonfiction. Since my knowledge about Russia, which has been omnipresent in the news lately, is lacking, and since I've had positive experiences with nonfiction National Book Award winners in the past, I tracked down a copy. I've been working my way through it ever since.

Gessen, a journalist and LGBT rights activist, was born in Russia in 1967 and immigrated to the United States with her parents and siblings in 1981. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, she returned to Moscow, eager to report on new freedoms and opportunities in what appeared to be an emerging democracy. She returned to the United States in 2013, when anti-gay legislation and rhetoric posed a serious threat to her, personally, and to her rights as a gay parent.

The task Gessen sets for herself in this book is to document not only what has happened in Russia over the last 30 years, but also to explore the how and the why. As she states in her prologue, she wanted to tell the story of “[t]he crackdown, the wars, and even Russia’s reversion to type on the world stage,” but also “to tell about what did not happen: the story of freedom that was not embraced and democracy that was not desired.”

She does this in part by tracking the lives of seven real people (her “main characters” or “dramatis personae”). Four were born in the early- to mid-1980s, just before Mikhail Gorbachev declared glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring). Their stories allow Gessen “to tell what it was to grow up in a country that was opening up and to come of age in a society shutting down.” The other three were older intellectuals—a psychoanalyst, a sociologist, and a philosopher—“who had attempted to wield [the intellectual tools of sense-making], in both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.”

I’m usually all about the personal stories used to bring historical and political nonfiction to life. In *The Future is History*, however, I’m actually more taken with the expository writing that appears between check-ins with Gessen’s protagonists. That’s because Gessen, with her reporter’s background, is just so good at explaining complicated social, political, and historical dynamics.

There’s no way to provide an adequate synopsis of this book’s content in a six-paragraph blog post. But, if you’re like me and have only superficial knowledge of the subject matter, I can almost guarantee that time spent with *The Future is History* will pay huge dividends in terms of your Russian literacy. And given the current news cycle, you will start reaping the rewards immediately. My investment has paid off several times already – and that’s just in the last week!

Posted on December 29, 2017 by [Susan Knisely](#).

Information provided by  
Nebraska Library Commission

# News You Can Use

## Cover One Book Repair Service!



The Western Library System has a binding repair machine that fixes a variety of types and sizes of books. Take advantage of this useful service to save your valuable books and avoid the cost of replacements. Go to <http://www.coverone.net/>

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## Disc Cleaning and Repair!



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## Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities



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For more details contact JoAnn McManus at [joann.mcmanus@nebraska.gov](mailto:joann.mcmanus@nebraska.gov).

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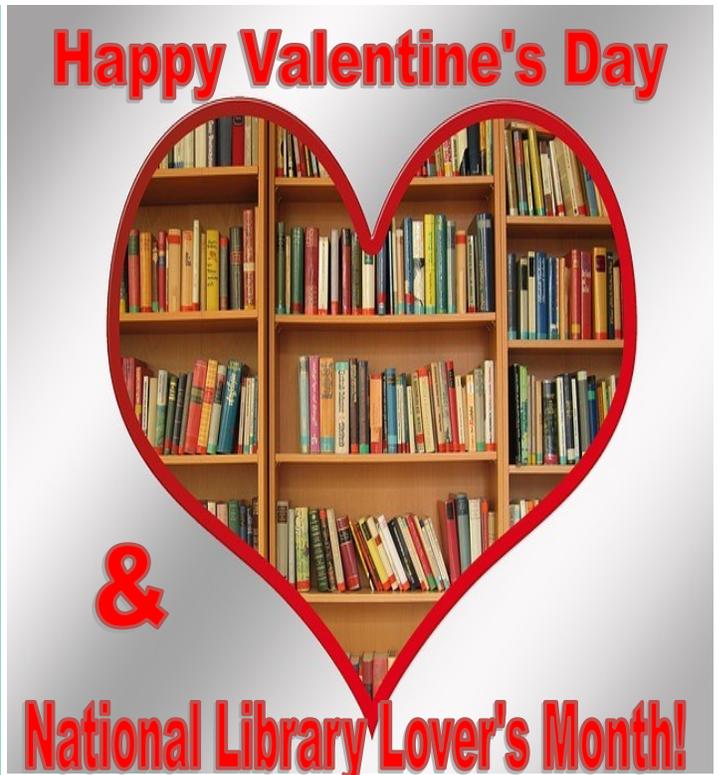
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