



Willa Cather



THE NEWS FROM CATHERLAND

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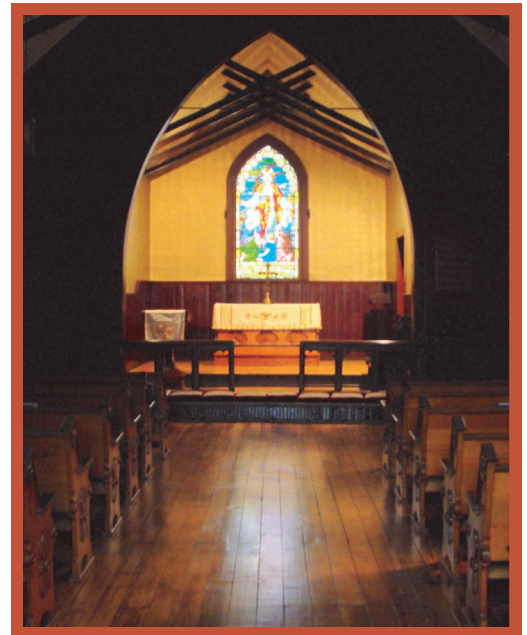
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GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH FLOORS ARE BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED

With generous funding support from the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska and the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Willa Cather Foundation recently completed a restoration of the original wood floors within the Grace Episcopal Church. In order to complete the project, carpet was removed exposing the original yellow pine floor, which was sanded, stained and sealed to create the beautiful finish shown in the photo to the right.

The Grace Episcopal Church was built in 1884 and moved to its present location in 1891. Willa Cather joined the church with her parents in 1922 at the age of 50. Two of the beautiful painted glass windows in the church were purchased by Cather in memory of her parents and she gave the communion rail in memory of her brother Douglass. Cather also helped purchase items for the Church's upkeep such as lights and the furnace, and even paid the taxes at one point. In *The World of Willa Cather*, Mildred Bennett notes that nearly every letter Cather sent to friends in Red Cloud included a check for the altar guild



of the church. The Grace Episcopal Church is owned by the Nebraska State Historical Society and managed by the Willa Cather Foundation. The site is open for tours daily. Visit www.WillaCather.org or call toll-free 866-731-7304 for tour times and pricing.

WILLA CATHER HISTORIC SITE CHOSEN AS NEBRASKA TOURISM PASSPORT ATTRACTION

The featured stops for the 2012 Nebraska Passport have been selected, and the Willa Cather State Historic Site is among the highlighted attractions. The program, created by the Department of Economic Development's Travel and Tourism Division, encourages travelers to explore Nebraska. The Willa Cather State Historic Site will be promoted as a stop along the culture

tour, which also includes Wessels Living History Farm, Homestead National Monument, Museum of the Fur Trade, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, Petrified Wood Gallery & Art Center, Woodland Trails Art & Learning Center, and the Nebraska State Capitol. To learn more or participate in the program, visit www.visitnebraska.gov.



“There is something frank and joyous and young in the open face of the country. It gives itself ungrudgingly to the moods of the season, holding nothing back.”

—My Antonia

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LESLIE C. LEVY

It seems strange to have spring fever after the mild winter we’ve experienced (my eight-year-old son complained that he only used his sled *once* this winter!). Today, as I watch a dreary late-February rain dampen the Plains, I cannot help but feel eager for the trees to bud, the tulips and daffodils to bloom, and for this year’s Spring Conference May 31-June 2. As the staff and board members are busy finalizing details of this year’s conference, I’m energized. The focus of the conference is on Cather the poet, her verse and today’s poets from the Great Plains region. What’s more, the conference will sur-

round attendees with visual and musical interpretations to further the poetic exploration.

Supplement these particulars with plans for the Prairie Writers’ Workshop, May 17-20, 2012, “A Poetry Writing Workshop: Exploring Your Gift of Song” and the Road Scholar program, June 4-8, 2012, with Cather scholar Steve Shively. It is fair to say that the Foundation is embracing the upcoming Spring with anticipation and aplomb.

So, check your calendar, and make plans to spend the spring in Catherland—we just know you’ll embrace it too.

YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE GROWTH OF THE WILLA CATHER FOUNDATION

In compiling your 2011 tax return information, did you discover that you neglected to make a contribution to the Willa Cather Foundation? Please consider supporting our organization in 2012 by becoming a member and financial con-

tributor. As a member, you join 675 other stewards whose gifts and generosity ensure the Cather legacy, historic properties and educational outreach prosper. All memberships, contributions and bequests are tax deductible. *Thank you!*

FOUNDATION WELCOMES SHARON JENSEN AS DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The Willa Cather Foundation is pleased to announce that Sharon Jensen has joined the Foundation as its Director of Development. Sharon brings to the Foundation extensive experience in non-profit leadership especially in the area of fundraising and development. Most recently she was an Area Vice President for the American Cancer Society with fundraising responsibilities in three states.



Sharon Jensen

In addition to her professional experi-

ence, Sharon is closely tied to Catherland as her mother was born and raised in Riverton, Nebraska, west of Red Cloud. She is thrilled to work in a position that allows her to combine her life-long fondness for Red Cloud with her professional fundraising experience.

Sharon is a graduate of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. Originally from Lincoln, she and her husband Steve live just outside Springfield, Nebraska.

Funding support from the Cooper Foundation and Woods Charitable Fund, both of Lincoln, Nebraska, allowed the Foundation to establish this fundamental staff position in order to help build long-term organizational capacity for an effective and continuing fundraising program.

OPERA HOUSE ANNOUNCES ITS 10TH SEASON OF EVENTS

Many of the most popular performers since the reopening of the Red Cloud Opera House in 2003, as well as some new additions, will be highlighted in programs of various genres including music, exhibits, humanities presentations, and theatre throughout 2012.

An exhibit on loan from Exhibits USA, a division of the Mid-America Arts Alliance, entitled *The Wartime Escape: Margret and H. A. Rey's Journey from France*, is currently on display in the Art Gallery through March 10. The exhibit is about the true story of the journey that saved the beloved storybook character Curious George. In addition to the exhibit, programming on March 3 will include a showing of the movie *Curious George* at 10:00 a.m., a humanities program by David Nienkamp, "Teachers in Nazi Germany" at 1:00 p.m., and the comedy "Jerry Finnegan's Sister" presented by Hastings Community Theater at 3:00 p.m.

Ezinma Piano Trio will perform a free concert on Sunday, March 18, featuring selections from several of the world's most famous classical composers. One of the main highlights of the year will be the return of Matthew and Gunnar Nelson to perform their personal tribute to their father, "Remembering Ricky Nelson," on Tuesday, April 24.

A series of workshops and conferences will populate the spring schedule including the 5th annual Prairie Writers' Workshop. This year's workshop will be "A Po-

etry Writing Workshop: Exploring Your Gift of Song," with Mary Stillwell, artist-in-residence, May 17-20. The 57th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference and Symposium, "Willa Cather: Making Herself Born," will be held May 31-June 2. *April Twilights* is the featured work for the conference and participants will enjoy panel discussions, special tours, original artwork, and musical productions inspired by Cather's poems.

Missoula Children's Theatre will return with *Hansel & Gretel* in the summer with



Matthew & Gunnar Nelson

auditions for 1st through 12th grades on Monday, July 30, and performances on August 3 and 4. The newly founded Hastings Boxcar Youth Theatre will perform *Anne of Green Gables* in August as well.

Musical performances for the fall and holiday schedule include Red Cloud native and world class operatic singer Sarah Arneson, with pianist George Kern on September 2; the nostalgic Rat Pack Jazz featuring Adams & Cooley on September 22; the hot cover band Taxi Driver on October 13; and a Christmas show by one of our favorite groups, the Thalken, Tesdall, & Thalken jazz band on December 8. For a complete schedule of events, visit www.WillaCather.org.



"When I go about among the little Nebraska towns, the thing I miss the most is the Opera House."

—Willa Cather, personal interview

ROAD SCHOLAR PROGRAM TO BE HELD JUNE 4-8, 2012

The Willa Cather Foundation and Road Scholar are proud to invite you to Red Cloud, Nebraska, this summer. As a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting appreciation and understanding of the life and works of Willa Cather, we would like to offer you, as committed learners, the opportunity to enhance your travels using our educational resources and historic facilities. The Foundation offers a wide variety of educational activi-

ties and explorations designed to facilitate a better, more comprehensive understanding of Cather and her importance in America's rich cultural history. Visitors will undoubtedly leave our site with a better sense of one of our country's most celebrated writers. For more information and to register, call Road Scholar toll free at 877-426-8056, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, or register online at www.roadscholar.org.

WILLA CATHER FOUNDATION

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Showing now through March 10: *The Wartime Escape* by Exhibits USA—Free



This exhibit tells the story of Margaret and H. A. Rey's journey to escape the Nazi invasion of Paris at the start of WWII. It features 27 framed art prints by artist Allan Drummond and supplemental archival images from the DeGrummond Collection of Children's Literature at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Saturday, March 3 at 10:00 a.m.: *Curious George* movie—Free

The Man in the Yellow Hat travels to Africa where he accidentally adopts an adorable chimpanzee named George. While George is surely cute, his curiosity has a tendency to get him into a series of predicaments in this endearing big-screen adaptation of the beloved books by Margaret E. Rey.



... at 1:00 p.m.: "Teachers in Nazi Germany" by David Nienkamp—Free

Nienkamp is a Regional Educational Representative with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and helps organize teacher workshops on the Holocaust across the Midwest.

... at 3:00 p.m.: "Jerry Finnegan's Sister" by Hastings Community Theatre—\$10



This highly acclaimed comedy has charmed audiences of all ages and has been produced with great success in a number of theatres nationwide. It has been hailed by critics as "having enough chuckles, guffaws and belly laughs to please any patron."

Sunday, March 18 at 2:00 p.m.: Ezinma Piano Trio—Free

Featuring pieces by the world's most famous classical composers, Ezinma Piano Trio celebrates the universal language of music. Sponsored by Peoples-Webster County Bank.

Tuesday, April 24 at 7:30 p.m.: Remembering Ricky Nelson—\$20

Matthew and Gunnar Nelson perform their dad's greatest hits including "Hello Mary Lou," "Travelin' Man," "I'm Walking," "Garden Party," alongside their self-penned chart toppers "Love & Affection" and "After the Rain." This show is truly a slice of Americana, appealing to multi-generational audiences. Sponsored by the John & Dorothy Sherwood Fund and Peoples-Webster County Bank.