



WALTER AND TURNER SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

On May 31, the Willa Cather Foundation had the pleasure of awarding three Norma Ross Walter Scholarships and the very first Antonette Willa Skupa Turner Scholarship. The recipients were Alexandra Baxter of Millard North High School, who received \$2,000 as the first place NRW recipient; Amanda Slater of Sandy Creek High School, who received \$1,000 as NRW first runner-up; Sapphire Andersen, of Aurora High School, who received \$500 as NRW second runner-up; and Jordie Theye, who had the honor of receiving \$500 as the first Antonette Willa Skupa Turner Scholarship recipient.

The scholarship award presentations took place as part of the 58th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference in Red Cloud. This year's four finalists, who graduated from their respective high schools in May, gave their original essays on Cather, which is a part of the Scholarship's extensive application process. This event is a time-honored tradition and always appreciated by the Conference attendees.

Since 1987, the Willa Cather Foundation has awarded 36 scholarships totaling more than \$147,500 through the Norma Ross Walter Scholarship program. This year marks the 27th anniversary of the Foundation's effort to provide scholarship support to female Nebraska high school graduates to continue their higher education as English majors at accredited colleges or universities.

The Antonette Willa Skupa Turner Scholarship honors Anna Sadilek Pavelka, the prototype and inspiration for Antonia Shimerda Cuzak, the major character in Cather's novel *My Antonia*. The scholarship, to be given annually, is open to a Nebraska high school male or female graduate



L to R: Virgil Albertini, Jordie Theye, Amanda Slater, Sapphire Andersen, and Whitney Bendorf, winner of the *O Pioneers!* Essay Contest.
Not pictured: Alexandra Baxter.

who will major in either English or history at an accredited college or university.

The Norma Ross Walter Scholarship fund was established through a generous bequest from Norma Ross Walter. A lifelong fan of Cather's work and frequent visitor to Red Cloud, Norma Ross Walter was a firm believer in education for young women. The Antonette Willa Turner Scholarship fund was established in 2012 through the generosity of Antonette Willa Skupa Turner.

The scholarship winners and the Willa Cather Foundation owe a debt of gratitude to Norma Ross Walter and Antonette (Toni) Turner. The Foundation's scholarship efforts, directed by long-time Board of Governors member Virgil Albertini, are a fundamental part of our educational mission.

GOODRICH SCHOLARS VISIT RED CLOUD



The University of Nebraska at Omaha's Goodrich Scholars recently conducted a service learning project at the Nebraska State Historical Society's Pavelka Farmstead near Red Cloud. They spent the morning prepping the house for a fresh coat of paint. This farm is the location where Antonia (Annie Pavelka) raised her children. South of the house is the fruit cave described in *My Antonia*, from which the children emerged in a "burst of light and life." The site was also recently re-roofed and re-painted by the Nebraska State Historical Society.

CATHER ENTHUSIASTS GATHER IN RED CLOUD

The 58th annual Spring Conference in Red Cloud, in spite of some tricky weather, was a great success by all accounts! Directed by Melissa Homestead of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, this year's conference focused on the 100th publication anniversary of *O Pioneers!*, and several special events were planned accordingly to explore the legacy of the Nebraska pioneers that Cather commemorated in prose.

To honor Alexandra Bergson's Swedish heritage, for example, our Saturday luncheon featured Scandinavian fare. Traditional dishes such as Mr. Janssen's Temptation (potatoes, onions, and anchovies), Kroppkakor (boiled dumplings), and Svenska Köttbullar (Swedish meatballs) were a great hit with our conference-goers, followed by numerous Scandinavian desserts and cookies.

This year's Passing Show concentrated on the publication history of *O Pioneers!* and Sarah Orne Jewett's encouragement of Cather as she embarked on her writing career. Director Melissa Homestead, Susanne George Bloomfield of University of Nebraska-Kearney, Ann Romines of George Washington, and Janis Stout, Professor Emerita at Texas A&M, served on the panel.

Stout and board member Andy Jewell also contributed much excitement to the conference through their newly published work, *The Selected Letters of Willa Cather*. Readings from the book were held at four Cather sites—the Cather Childhood Home, the Second Home, Grace Episcopal Church, and the Harling House—and a book signing was

held.

In the Opera House, we offered a screening of the Hallmark Hall of Fame movie *O Pioneers!*, starring Jessica Lange, as well as screening "Pioneers," a short film by Nebraska filmmaker Charles Fairbanks, followed by a question-and-answer session.

Dan O'Brien, buffalo rancher, biologist, and author of a number of novels and a memoir, came to Red Cloud to give our keynote address. O'Brien spoke of the changes in agriculture and in the land over the past 100 years, pondering what Willa Cather would think of our "progress." On the Cather Prairie, Education Director Tracy Tucker led the inaugural Willa Cather Wildflower Walk on a gorgeous spring day. More than twenty species were in bloom! Unfortunately, the good weather did not last, and on Saturday, our chuck wagon dinner with Food Network contestant Kent Rollins, had to be moved to the Red Cloud Opera House due to high wind. In spite of this, Kent and his wife Shannon delivered a great meal of chicken fried steak and brisket with all the fixin's, prepared on their vintage Studebaker wagon.

As always, complimentary tours were given of the Cather sites and the Opera House hosted a musical performance. This year, MAW, an all-woman string band from Lawrence, Kansas, played to an enthusiastic crowd. In all, more than 150 conference-goers attended the weekend's festivities. Next year's Spring Conference will be held June 5-7; make plans to attend!

HELP US RESTORE THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



With funding assistance from the Yost/Leak Historic Preservation Fund and other private donors, the WCF recently resumed restoration work on the First Baptist Church in Red Cloud. Preservation of the Church will be furthered as a result of a re-roofing project that took place in June. The next critical step will be replacing deteriorated siding and re-painting the site's exterior.

The Baptist Church was built in 1884. It is the church Cather attended when she was a child. The Webster County Argus for May 14, 1885, reported: "The Sunday School concert at the Baptist Church Sunday evening was of the usual high standard. The house was filled to overflowing and all were pleased. Miss Willie Cather electrified the audience with her elocutionary powers. . . ." The First Baptist Church was also the prototype for the Baptist Church described in *The Song of the Lark*, *My Antonia*, and "The Joy of Nelly Deane."

Please consider aiding our continued restoration of the church by making a donation—of any size—to the Willa Cather Foundation. All contributions are tax-deductible.

14TH INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR HELD IN ARIZONA



Over 100 Cather scholars traveled to Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona, for our 14th International Willa Cather Seminar. Scholars representing twenty-six states and six foreign countries, including India, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, and Taiwan, presented papers at the event. Seminar directors Ann Moseley, John Murphy, and Robert Thacker organized three full days of scholarly presentations and musical performances, as well as two day-long excursions.

Left: Co-Director Ann Moseley shares historic photos she has compiled at Walnut Canyon's Ranger Cabin, a site Willa Cather stayed in during her 1912 visit. The Ranger Cabin tour was organized especially for our Cather scholars and fans.

MIRIAM MOUNTFORD VOLUNTEER AWARD

Another of the WCF's time honored traditions at Spring Conference is awarding the Miriam Mountford Volunteer Award. This year's award recipients were Virgil and Harriett Zade of Red Cloud. The Zades are the epitome of what every organization looks for in its volunteers. They often serve as greeters or ushers for Opera House events and are always ready and willing to help wherever they are needed.

The Volunteer Award honors Miriam Mountford's dedication to the WCF. Miriam was the Foundation's first volunteer, and the organization's first president after Mildred Bennett. Miriam worked with Mildred to devise

the first guided tours of Red Cloud and Catherland, and served as first editor of the *Willa Cather Newsletter & Review*. The Miriam Mountford Volunteer Award was established in her memory to recognize outstanding volunteer service and to pay tribute to our selfless volunteers, whose service is the heart of the WCF. Each year, one volunteer or one couple is recognized for outstanding service.

Are you interested in volunteering for the WCF? Opportunities exist in a variety of areas, and for individuals near Red Cloud and beyond. To inquire about volunteer opportunities, contact us at 402-746-2653.

OUR LIVES, OUR STORIES ON DISPLAY NOW

Our Lives, Our Stories: America's Greatest Generation, a new exhibit opening at the Red Cloud Opera House this month, explores the life arc of the World War II generation—as told in their own words. Born in the 1910s and 1920s, this generation was decisively shaped by the Depression and World War II. They went on to create the “Baby Boom” and economically-prosperous postwar era. But who are these Americans who have been deemed “the greatest?” *Our Lives, Our Stories* draws on memories and oral histories to help us understand their stories. The exhibition begins with babies in the early 20th century and explores the human impact of major historical events on their lives—the Great Depression, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, World War II, the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement, and the growth of our media-driven consumer culture during the post-war boom.

In conjunction with the *Our Lives, Our Stories* exhibit, the Red Cloud Opera House hosted a 1940s Movie Matinee and Omaha Big Band concert on July 13. The

feature film was *From Here to Eternity*, starring Burt Lancaster, Frank Sinatra, Deborah Kerr, and Donna Reed, preceded by cartoons and MovieTone News. Black cows and brown cows (chocolate or vanilla root beer floats) were also served, for a 1940s price of 25¢.

On Sunday, July 21, American music historian Michael Lasser presented “All the Old Familiar Places: Love Songs of the Depression,” following screenings of two New Deal documentaries by Pare Lorentz—“The Plow that Broke the Plains,” and “The River.”

Our Lives, Our Stories: America's Greatest Generation is made possible by NEH on the Road, a special initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Originally developed by the Minnesota Historical Society in Saint Paul, Minnesota, the exhibition was adapted and is toured by Mid-America Arts Alliance through NEH on the Road.

This exhibit and the supplementary humanities programs and arts events are made possible through the support of the Humanities Nebraska, the Nebraska Arts Council, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

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... all arts events are made possible with the support of the Nebraska Arts Council & Nebraska Cultural Endowment.



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CLUB WILLA TO LAUNCH IN 2014!

What is in a name? A lot! It is always a delight to sign a letter to, or receive a call from someone named Willa! We are interested in connecting with those friends, supporters and fur-children named Willa (or a derivative) that may not already be involved.

Please contact us at llevy@willacather.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Frog Prince

Presented by local youth and Missoula Children's Theatre

Audition: Monday, July 29 for grades 1st through 12th

Production: Friday, August 2, at 7:00 p.m. and

Saturday, August 3, at 4:00 p.m.—\$10, \$7, \$5

What the Wind Taught Me

Presented by Angels Theatre Company

Saturday, September 28, at 7:00 p.m.—\$15, \$10, \$5

Taxi Driver Band

Rock and country covers!

Saturday, October 19, at 7:00 p.m.—\$25

The Nelson Brothers

"Home for the Holidays Concert"

Saturday, December 7, at 7:00 p.m.—\$25