

## SPRING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS

“Mapping Literary Landscapes: Environments and Ecosystems” is the theme for the 59th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference, to be held June 5–7, in Red Cloud, Nebraska. The 3-day arts and humanities event focuses on the impact of the natural environment on Cather and her contemporaries, as well as the writers and artists of the following generations.



Clay Jenkinson, the popular cultural commentator and host of NPR’s *The Thomas Jefferson Hour*, will speak about Willa Cather’s sense of the primordial on the Plains—an idea expressed in Cather’s pioneer novels as civilization’s impermanence in the region—as well as the tensions between what is perceived as an improved or unimproved landscape.

Jenkinson’s expertise in environmental history will inform his discussion of Cather and other Great Plains writers. Jenkinson’s address is supported with a grant award from Humanities Nebraska. His lecture is free and open to the public.

Spring Conference also features a day of scholarly and creative panel presentations, foraging and wildflower viewing

on the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie, and demonstrations by local artisans, as well as an artists’ reception and book signing.

Two exhibits will be on display during the conference. Nebraska artist Catherine Meier’s landscapes will hang in the gallery, while regional photographer Peter Brown’s and author Kent Haruf’s *West of Last Chance* (organized by the Museum of Nebraska Art through the ARTreach program) can be seen in the auditorium. Both Brown and Meier will give a gallery tour of their work Friday, followed by a reception.

Saturday night, Illusion Theater of Minneapolis will present their critically acclaimed, award-winning adaptation of *My Ántonia* in the Red Cloud Opera House, following a locavore banquet featuring Nebraska prime beef.

Online registration and a full schedule of the weekend is available by visiting our website, [www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org). Student, daily, and single-day registrations are available. Every Cather reader, of any age, will enjoy the weekend’s events!

The Spring Conference is made possible through private sponsorships and the support of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Cather Project, Humanities Nebraska, Hastings College, the Nebraska Arts Council and Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

## RON HULL NAMED NEBRASKAN OF THE YEAR

Willa Cather Foundation Advisory Council member Ron Hull was named Rotary’s 2014 Nebraskan of the Year on February 4. This award, given annually to a Nebraskan who, in their daily life, shows honesty, integrity, and concern for others; serves in charitable and civic causes; and has made significant accomplishments in leadership in his or her professional and volunteer activities.

Hull became a member of the Willa Cather Foundation Board of Governors in 1975 and, as an early member of the organization, played a pivotal role in our continued success; Ron is a master storyteller, and his stories from those early days with founder Mildred Bennett are not only charming, but serve to inspire us in our mission. Without doubt, we are a stronger and more vibrant organization, thanks to the tireless work of Ron Hull.



Several representatives of the WCF attended the award luncheon in Lincoln. From left, former Executive Director Leslie Levy; Board members Steve Shively and Glenda Pierce; Advisory Council member Joel Geyer; Ron Hull; Executive Director Ashley Olson; Board member Chuck Peek; Karen Baker and Advisory Council member Bruce Baker; Nancy Peek.

## NEW TO OUR COLLECTION

In early May, 1909, Willa Cather traveled to Europe for *McClure’s* magazine. She spent several months in London and Paris, scouting for the magazine and meeting writers such as Ford Maddox Ford, H.G. Wells, and Lady Gregory, the Irish playwright. Cather saw the London premiere *Playboy of the Western World*, written by John Millington Synge and starring a young Irish actress named Marie O’Neill, who so impressed Cather that she became the inspiration for Hilda Burgoyne in Cather’s first novel, *Alexander’s Bridge*.

It was during this eventful trip that Cather learned of the death of her friend and mentor, Sarah Orne Jewett. Because of the importance of this voyage, we are pleased to have recently acquired this ship’s passenger booklet from the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Große*, which brought Willa Cather home to New York in early July. “Fraulein W. S. Cather” is listed in “First Cabins.” Also on board was Ambassador Lloyd Griscom.

The *Kaiser Wilhelm der Große* was the first “four-stacker” ocean liner, making her maiden Atlantic crossing in September 1897 and soon winning the Blue Riband for the fastest North Atlantic crossing for the Norddeutscher Lloyd shipping line. The passenger booklet was donated to the Willa Cather Foundation by Michael Olson of Abilene, Texas, and originated from the estate of Evelyn Fosbury.



## TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

We are now collecting membership dues for 2014. Right now, your support is as critical as ever! Your renewed financial support at this time helps ensure the Willa Cather Foundation remains the source for informative Cather-related programming; a vital educational resource for teachers, scholars and students; and a steward of the Cather collections, historic properties, and the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie.

In addition, it is never too early to think about planning your future gift to the Willa Cather Foundation. Many of the gifting options available can benefit you in your lifetime, as well as provide future gifts to the Foundation. Moreover, planned giving

has a meaningful impact on our mission, beyond your lifetime and far into the future. The Foundation has diverse avenues in furthering Cather’s legacy. We promote Cather and her work through her interests: writing and education (scholarships, educational conferences, programming, the bookstore), theatre and the performing arts (Opera House), family and place (historic preservation/prairie restoration). Respecting the donor’s intent is crucial to us. Rest assured, one hundred percent of the gift you give will be designated and used to further our work in the areas that most interest you and that you’ve chosen to support. For more information about planned giving, contact Ashley Olson at 402-746-2653 or [aolson@willacather.org](mailto:aolson@willacather.org).

## Prairie Writers' Workshop <sup>7th annual</sup> poetry instruction with GLENNA LUSCHEI



Glenna Luschei has published the poetry magazines *Cafe Solo, Solo*, and *Solo Cafe* for fifty years. She has received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a D.H. Lawrence Fellowship in Taos, an honorary Doctorate of Literature from St. Andrew’s Presbyterian College, and a Master of Life Award from her alma mater, the University of Nebraska. She was named Poet Laureate of San Luis Obispo City and County for the year 2000.

Glenna has published numerous books of poetry; her poetry has appeared in journals including *Blue Mesa Review*, *New Mexico Quarterly*, *New Mexico Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Parnassus*.

The encaustic paintings of Margaret Berry will be exhibited alongside the ekphrastic poems of Glenna Luschei in the Red Cloud Opera House gallery. Berry is the former Executive Director of the Lincoln Arts Council and Education Director of the University Place Art Center in Lincoln, Nebraska. She is an artist-in-residence for the Nebraska Arts Council.



# MAY 15 - 18, 2014 RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA

To register, contact the Willa Cather Foundation  
[www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org) | 402.746.2653

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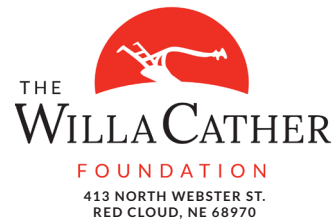
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## Coming Up:

Hometown Favorites:  
Lukas Rupperecht and Lester Junction  
Saturday, May 3 – 7:30 p.m.

7th annual Prairie Writers' Workshop  
Wednesday, May 14, through Sunday, May 18

59th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference  
Thursday, June 5, through Saturday, June 7

Illusion Theater presents *My Ántonia*  
Saturday June 7 – Dinner at 6 p.m. – Show at 7 p.m.

Willa Cather Symposium in Rome, Italy  
Thursday, June 12, through Saturday, June 14

Taxi Driver Band  
Saturday, July 12 – 7:30 p.m.



Arts programming presented with  
the support of the Nebraska Arts Council  
and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.



## NATIONAL WILLA CATHER CENTER ANNOUNCED

On March 25, we were pleased to officially announce our plans to build the National Willa Cather Center, a public museum, archive, and arts and cultural center. The facility, located at our headquarters in Cather's childhood home of Red Cloud, Nebraska, will provide almost 20,000 square feet of space that includes a public museum, state-of-the-art archival space, research center, classroom, expanded bookstore and art gallery, dressing rooms and backstage facilities for our Red Cloud Opera House, street-level retail space, and three residences for visitors. The Center will occupy Red Cloud's historic "Moon Block" building following a restoration of the 1886 structure.



Documentary filmmaker and lifelong Willa Cather enthusiast Ken Burns is the Honorary National Chair for the Center's public fundraising effort. In a video announcing the project, Burns said, "The Center will have something for everyone. As an archive and museum, it will become the permanent home to some of Willa Cather's most personal treasures, items made famous in her stories, and artwork inspired by her vision of the prairie. For scholars, it will be a chance to explore, firsthand, some of her most insightful original works and papers."

In addition to Burns, former First Lady Laura Bush has endorsed the Center, saying "Willa Cather's literature gives voice to the values that define America's frontier heritage. By reading her words and promoting her contributions to western culture, we commemorate the pioneering spirit that distinguishes us as a nation."

Tom Gallagher, Willa Cather Foundation President states that the Center—envisioned more than a decade ago—will "allow us to preserve and share our nearly 5,000 Cather

treasures that are now safely in storage." The facility will serve the nearly 10,000 Cather fans who visit Red Cloud each year, Gallagher added.

We have raised a majority of the funds we need from state and federal grants, private funders, and foundations. Now we are asking the public to help us raise the remaining funds to complete this truly unique Center.

In order to continue the fundraising campaign and meet a \$400,000 challenge grant offered by the Peter Kiewit Foundation of Omaha, Nebraska, the Willa Cather Foundation must raise \$132,000 by June 30th. Donors can send contributions to the Willa Cather Foundation, 413 North Webster Street, Red Cloud, NE 68970 or give online at [www.WillaCather.org](http://www.WillaCather.org). To learn more, contact Ashley Olson at 402-746-2653 or [aolson@willacather.org](mailto:aolson@willacather.org).



## OLSON NAMED AS DIRECTOR

Our Board of Governors has recently announced that Associate Executive Director Ashley Olson was named Executive Director, beginning April 21. This announcement comes as Leslie Levy, former Executive Director of the Willa Cather Foundation, has been named Executive Director of the International Quilt Study Center and Museum in Lincoln.

"We thank Leslie for her hard work at the Willa Cather Foundation and wish her well in her new role," said Tom Gallagher, President of the Willa Cather Foundation Board of Governors. "Ashley is well known to the Foundation's community and extended family, and the Board is thrilled to have her move into the role of Executive Director."

Olson joined the Foundation staff in 2008 and has served as Associate Executive Director since 2010. She is a native of Red Cloud and a graduate of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln with a degree in Business Administration.