



NEWS FROM CATHERLAND

VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 1 | MARCH 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

National Willa Cather Center Projected to Open in 2016	1
New Website Launches	2
New! The Beatrix "Trix" Mizer Florence and Sidney R. Florence Collection	2
Cather Legacy Society Established	3
Showing in Lincoln: <i>The Fine Things of Youth</i> with words and music from Willa Cather's <i>Lucy Gayheart</i>	3
60th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference	4
International Scholar Visits Red Cloud	4
Educator Scholarship Available	5
Photography by Jorn Olsen on Display in the Art Gallery	5
15th International Cather Seminar	6
New Program! <i>Lark/Song</i> by A.P. Andrews	6
<i>CATHERLAND</i> to Premiere at the Red Cloud Opera House	7
Board and Staff	8
Coming Up	8

Visit us online at www.WillaCather.org to browse our bookstore or sign up for our e-Newsletter.

National Willa Cather Center Projected to Open in 2016

A multi-year fundraising effort to create our first climate-controlled archive and study center as principal components of what will become the National Willa Cather Center has raised more than \$6.12 million in gifts and pledges to date. The project is estimated to cost \$6.7 million and a campaign to raise the balance of \$577,000 required to complete the effort is in the final stages.

With fundraising at 91% of goal and a preliminary phase of construction nearing conclusion, it is with great pleasure that we announce the impending completion of the National Willa Cather Center in 2016. Major renovation will commence in the coming months in an effort to fully restore the historic Moon Block adjacent to our headquarters into a state-of-the-art archive, museum, and arts center.

The overarching premise guiding the project is creation of a preservation environment that provides the best possible conditions for perpetuation and access to our extensive

and growing collection of rare books, archival papers, photographs, textiles, and artifacts that belonged to Cather and the Cather family. While the Center's focus will be a museum, archive, and collection space for public visitation, the restoration will also provide a classroom, expanded bookstore, art gallery, and backstage facilities for our Red Cloud Opera House.

Once complete in 2016, the National Willa Cather Center will become a unique destination and provide an important tribute to one of America's greatest authors. We invite you to get involved in this important effort by making a donation to the project. Pledges to the campaign are being made over a five-year period and a number of naming and recognition opportunities are available at various giving levels. For more information, please contact Ashley Olson, Executive Director at 402-746-2653 or aolson@willacather.org.

The National Willa Cather Center



New Website Launches



If you haven't visited us online recently, it's time to make a return trip. On February 20, we proudly announced the launch of our new website, located at www.WillaCather.org. The next chapter of our website was introduced in celebration of our 60th year and includes many rich features for visitors. In addition to desktop and mobile capabilities, users will find a streamlined process for product purchasing, event registration, online ticketing, and donations. Robust search functions, a full newsletter library, virtual tours, and rich educational content for readers and educators is also available. The website was designed and developed by UNANIMOUS, a Lincoln-based marketing agency that assists clients with branding, marketing, and web development.

New! The Beatrix "Trix" Mizer Florance and Sidney R. Florance Collection

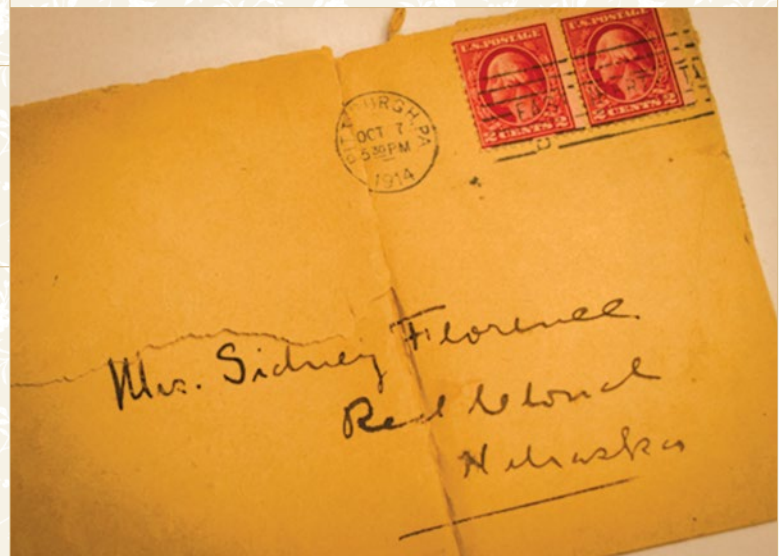
Our growing collection of Cather papers and objects was enhanced recently with the addition of the Beatrix "Trix" Mizer Florance and Sidney R. Florance Collection. Arriving late last year through the generosity of the Florance grandchildren, the collection of over twenty-five items contains nineteen letters written by Cather to Sidney and Beatrix Mizer Florance, three signed cards, photos, and two groups of newspaper clippings.

A childhood friend of Cather who later studied music in Chicago, "Trix" Mizer Florance is one of several possible prototypes for Cather's Lucy Gayheart, making the addition of these letters especially meaningful to scholars and students. Collectively, the letters, cards, and notes reveal their long friendship and shared interest in music. Spanning more than 30 years, the collection includes newspaper clippings of contemporaneous music reviews, news of Cather's work and famed acquaintances, and business correspondence between Cather and Sidney Florance.

The letters between the two women show the warmth of their long-standing personal friendship, detailing illnesses and deaths, sharing small jokes, and expressing support. "I'm just terribly sorry"—Cather writes after learning of Mr. Florance's illness. "That's all we can do for each other in this queer world, be sorry or glad for our friends." Cather's beautiful prose shines through even the most perfunctory notes.

"After almost seventy years, our family is pleased to donate this meaningful collection of letters to the Willa Cather Foundation. It seems quite fitting they return to their original destination in Red Cloud for preservation and study in the National Willa Cather Center when it opens in 2016," said David Mousel on behalf of the family.

We are incredibly grateful to the Mousel family for making the care and study of these letters possible. Inquiries about the collection may be directed to Education Director, Tracy Tucker, at ttucker@willacather.org.



One of many envelopes addressed in Cather's hand to Mrs. Sidney Florance in Red Cloud. From the Beatrix "Trix" Mizer Florance and Sidney R. Florance Collection.

Cather Legacy Society Established

In our first 60 years, the Willa Cather Foundation has been exceptionally fortunate to be the recipient of a number of valuable planned gifts that have made a meaningful impact on our mission-driven programs and services.

A selection of transformational gifts include a bequest by Norma Ross Walter in 1982 that established a scholarship program for female graduates of Nebraska high schools who intend to enroll as English majors at the collegiate level. The scholarship program is now in its twenty-eighth year and is funded in perpetuity.

An estate gift by Josephine Frisbie in 1997 provided the leadership donation that was crucial to launching our campaign to restore Cather's beloved Red Cloud Opera House, which now serves as our headquarters and is once again a vibrant arts and cultural center.



Josephine Frisbie, a founding member of the Board of Governors, whose bequest was critical to launching the Red Cloud Opera House restoration efforts.

Most recently, a descendant of Frank H. Woods provided a significant and meaningful gift to our endowment in 2013. With the principal fully intact, this gift will endlessly pay dividends that provide direct support of our valuable programs and services.

In acknowledgment of prior and future planned gifts, we are eager to announce the formation of the Cather Legacy Society to recognize those individuals who have made a commitment to our future through a bequest or as a beneficiary of a trust, retirement plan, or life insurance policy. If you have made a planned gift to the Foundation or would like more information about doing so, please contact Ashley Olson, Executive Director, at 402-746-2653 or aolson@willacather.org.

Showing in Lincoln: *The Fine Things of Youth* with words and music from Willa Cather's *Lucy Gayheart*

We invite you to join us in Lincoln, Nebraska, on Thursday, June 11, for a stimulating evening to celebrate Cather's artistry. *The Fine Things of Youth* is a dramatic account of Cather's great late novel, based upon Cather's text and the classical song repertory featured in this haunting story of the doomed affair between an impressionable young music student and a charismatic older singer. Drawing on the Schubert lieder that fills the novel, the presentation will use the talents of a dedicated group of artists, including:

Jill Anderson, an Omaha-based actor, singer, director and producer whose 24-year career has taken her across the United States and includes such roles as Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*. Her Joslyn Castle Literary Festival productions have focused on the Brontes, Oscar Wilde, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Bram Stoker.

Evan Bravos, baritone, an Illinois native and graduate of Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music (M.M.).

His recent roles include Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) and Prison Guard (*Dead Man Walking*) at Central City Opera, where he was Apprentice Artist in the summer of 2014. His recent concert performances include the Fauré *Requiem* and Copland's *Old American Songs*.

Mark Kurtz, accompanist, a musician and composer and Director of Music Ministries at First United Methodist Church in Omaha.

David Porter, piano, a scholar, classicist and former president of Skidmore College. An accomplished musician and pianist, he has performed recitals throughout the U.S. and the U.K. He is editor of the scholarly edition of *Lucy Gayheart*, forthcoming from the University of Nebraska Press.

Co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Cather Project, this public event will be held at Temple Theatre Building on the final evening of the 15th International Cather Seminar. Ticket information is available at www.WillaCather.org or by calling 402-746-2653.

60th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference

We invite you to make plans to join us in Red Cloud as nationally recognized historian Richard Norton Smith headlines our annual Spring Conference June 5–7, 2015. The event will celebrate our 60th year, groundbreaking of the National Willa Cather Center, and the centenary of Willa Cather’s third novel, *The Song of the Lark*. Held in conjunction with the 15th International Cather Seminar, this is a unique and special year for the Spring Conference, which like the Seminar, will focus primarily on Cather and the arts.

Keynote speaker Richard Norton Smith, is an author, historian, and a familiar face to viewers of C-SPAN and the PBS *NewsHour*. He is a past director of the Herbert Hoover, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, and Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museums, as well as a founding director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. In 2001, he appeared in Red Cloud for C-SPAN’s live broadcast of *American Writers*.

The three-day event will also feature informative papers and panel discussions; guided town and country tours;

an evening wildflower walk on the Cather Prairie; the premiere of the NET Television documentary, *Yours, Willa Cather*; a formal dinner and toast to the groundbreaking of the National Willa Cather Center; the premiere of *Lark/Song*, a theatrical retelling of *The Song of the Lark*; and folk music by Daniel Martinez at the Nebraska State Historical Society’s Burlington Depot.

The Regionalist Works of Grant Reynard, organized by the Museum of Nebraska Art and featuring the work of one of Nebraska’s most well-known artists, will be on exhibit throughout the conference. Also on view will be *The Growth of an Artist: Commemorating 100 Years of The Song of the Lark*, a collaborative exhibit inspired by the novel and showcasing the work of local and regional artists.

Three-day, single-day, and single-event ticketing options are available. A select number of lectures and exhibitions will be open to the public free of charge through grant support from Humanities Nebraska. To learn more or register, please visit www.WillaCather.org or call toll-free 866-731-7304.



Richard Norton Smith

International Scholar Visits Red Cloud



Sapphire Andersen, Dr. Charles Johanningsmeier, and Dr. Yohei Yamamoto are pictured on the campus of the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Dr. Yohei Yamamoto, of Meiji University in Tokyo, came to Nebraska for the International Program Development seminar at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, arriving days ahead of schedule in order to visit Red Cloud’s historic sites and the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie. His research focuses on depictions of the natural environment in Cather’s writing, primarily in *My Antonia* and “Neighbour Rosicky.” While at UNO, he visited with Willa Cather Foundation Board of Governors member Dr. Charles Johanningsmeier and his classes. Dr. Yamamoto is pictured here on the UNO campus with Dr. Johanningsmeier and Sapphire Andersen of Aurora, Nebraska, one of our Norma Ross Walter scholarship recipients.

Educator Scholarship Available

In a dedicated effort to serve our community of teachers, new this year is creation of the High School Educators Scholarship. Through this program, five high school educators will receive a complimentary registration for the 60th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference, slated for June 5–7, in Red Cloud. Successful applicants will have the opportunity to experience the programs, historic

sites, cultural opportunities, and the Cather research and pedagogy that our Spring Conference offers. It is our sincere hope that these partnerships will facilitate a dynamic exchange of ideas between Cather scholars and high school educators, upon whom we rely for our next generation of Cather readers. Applicants should apply by April 30th. An application may be found on our website or obtained by contacting Tracy Tucker, Education Director at 402-746-2653 or ttucker@willacather.org.

Photography by Jorn Olsen on Display in the Art Gallery

A new exhibition on display in the Art Gallery of our Red Cloud Opera House features stunning photographs of the Nebraska plains by Jorn Olsen. Prints include vibrant images of the sandhill cranes, stunning sunsets and sunrises over rolling green pastures, and popular attractions such as the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie and the Starke Round Barn.

Jorn Olsen is well known for his stunning photography featuring Nebraska landscapes. His work has been published in *The London Times*, *Focus Magazine*, *Readers Digest International*, and *Nebraska Life*. He is originally from Portland, Oregon, and now resides in Hastings, Nebraska, with his wife, Mary. Since a very young age Olsen has been an avid outdoorsman; his appreciation of wild untamed landscapes comes naturally.

We invite you to attend an artist reception for this exhibition on Saturday, May 2, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. prior to the production of *CATHERLAND* at the Red Cloud Opera House. Olsen will be present to sign copies of his award-winning book *Across A Wide Horizon: Discovering the Uncommon Beauty of the Nebraska Plains*. This hard-bound coffee table book takes readers on a journey exploring Nebraska's hidden treasures with 119 vibrant images on 168 pages and four 34-inch fold-out panoramic scenes.

The exhibition may be viewed during regular business hours through May 3. Books, prints, gallery wraps, and a variety of high-quality photo cards are available for purchase. Exhibitions in our art gallery are made possible with the support of the Nebraska Arts Council, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Copyright © Jorn C Olsen

Backup Plans by Jorn Olsen. A windmill spins in the evening breeze, pumping water into a stock tank, as the sun sets on a Sandhills pasture in western Nebraska.

15th International Cather Seminar

In the centenary year of Cather's third novel, *The Song of the Lark*, more than seventy scholars and students from over twenty-one states and five countries will participate in the 15th International Cather Seminar on "Cather and the Arts" being held June 5–12, 2015.

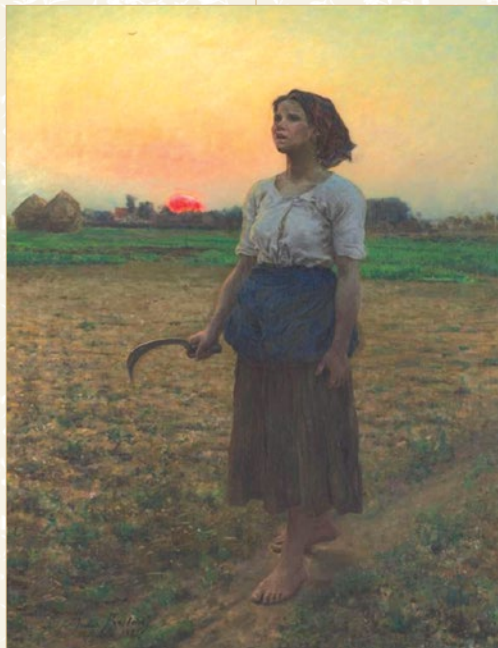
The seminar will be based in the two prominent places of Cather's Nebraska experience—Red Cloud and Lincoln. Cather spent her early life in Red Cloud and six of her twelve novels are at least partially set here. Her years in Lincoln were spent attending school, working as a critic for the local and university newspapers, and taking her first steps as a writer.

Organized by the Willa Cather Foundation and our friends at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Cather Project, the seminar will focus on Cather in her interdisciplinary contexts, including theater, music, and the visual arts. In addition to paper

sessions and panel discussions, the seminar will offer unique opportunities for the public to engage in the event. Jules Breton's painting, *The Song of the Lark*, an inspiration for the novel of that name, will be on display at the University's renowned Sheldon Museum of Art as part of an exhibition titled "Cather and the Visual." Author Terese Svoboda and historian Richard Norton Smith will each give a keynote address, and a program entitled "The Fine Things of Youth: Words and Music from Willa Cather's *Lucy Gayheart*," will be held on the seminar's final evening.

The first International Cather Seminar was held in 1973, and the event has taken place biennially since 1993 in locations across the United States and internationally. The 16th International Cather Seminar will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2017. To

register or learn more, please visit www.WillaCather.org, www.cather.unl.edu, or call toll-free 866-731-7304.



Jules Breton's painting, *The Song of the Lark*, an inspiration for the novel of that name, will be on display at the University's renowned Sheldon Museum of Art during the seminar. This important work is part of an exhibition titled "Cather and the Visual."

New Program! *Lark/Song* by A.P. Andrews

One of the most anticipated events at the annual Willa Cather Spring Conference has been the long-established evening banquet and Opera House performance. This year, we are pleased to partner with New York City-based playwright A.P. Andrews to present *Lark/Song*, a theatrical retelling of Cather's *The Song of the Lark*. The novel of self-discovery and reaching one's potential will be at the heart of an intensive artists' residency and culminating performance by Andrews and performers Kerri Lowe, Adin Lenahan Kaela Mei-Shing Garvin, and Alton Albuero.



A.P. Andrews, a New York City-based playwright who was born and raised in the small town of Superior, Nebraska.

Original words and music by the performers combine with dance, performance, and Cather's own beautiful prose for a unique theater-in-the-round experience performed in Cather's beloved Red Cloud Opera House. The banquet and performance will take place on Saturday, June 6, 2015. Tickets for the evening meal and show are \$50 and available at www.WillaCather.org or by calling 402-746-2653. This program is made possible with support from the Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, the Cather Project at UNL, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

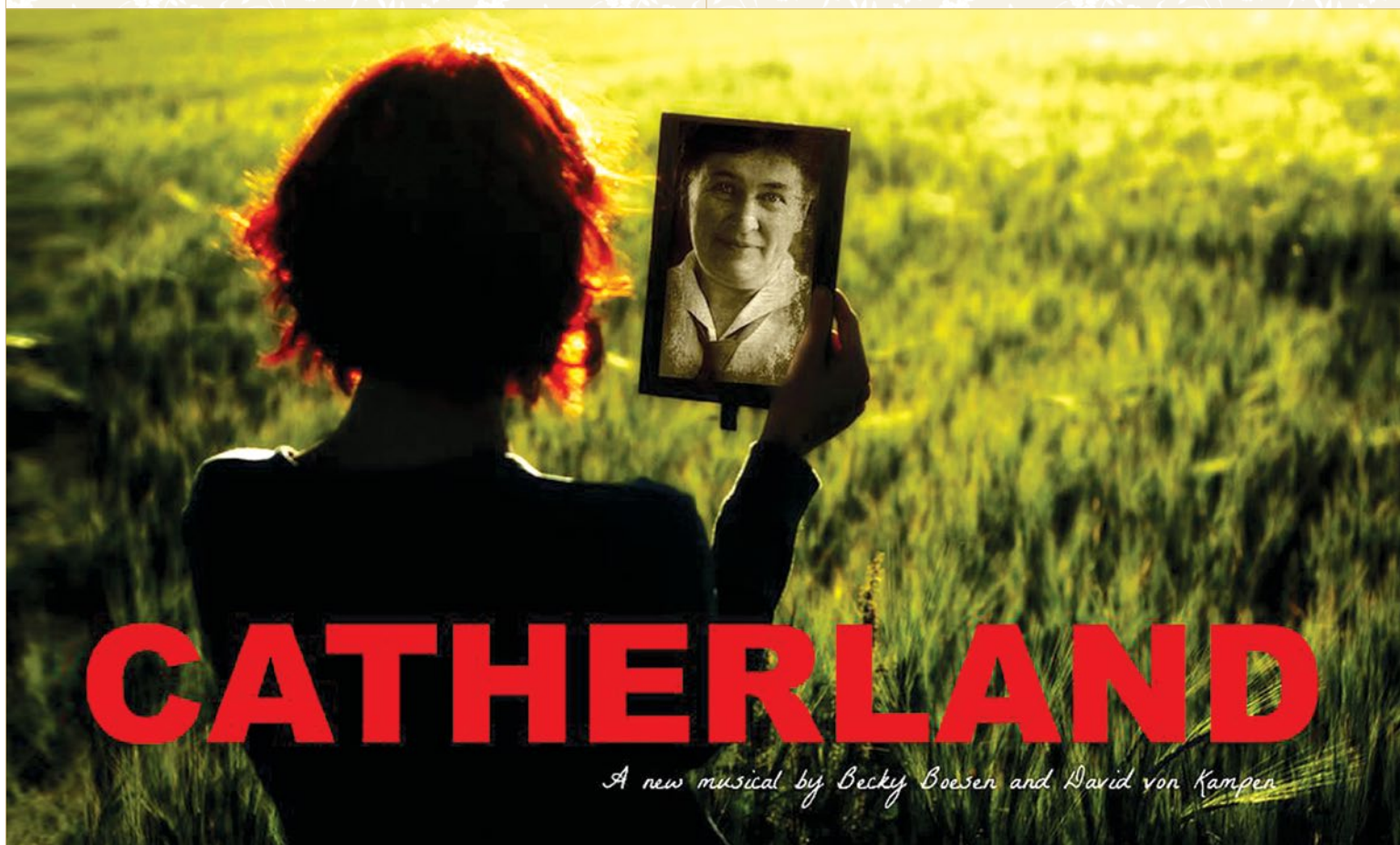
CATHERLAND to Premiere at the Red Cloud Opera House

On occasion a new program emerges that must undeniably be presented from the Red Cloud Opera House stage. Whether it's a retelling of Cather's literary work, a production inspired by her life and writing, or a story using a place that was meaningful to Cather as a central character, we take great pride in hosting these new creations. When we learned of a new musical entitled *CATHERLAND* by Becky Boesen and David von Kampen, we were eager to host the first viewing in Red Cloud.

The musical is about a woman named Susan, played by Melissa Lewis, an emerging writer living the life of her dreams, complete with an adoring husband and an almost-finished first novel. When tragedy strikes and the trajectory of her life changes, she must decide how to move forward. Searching for answers, she flees to Red Cloud, Nebraska, the childhood home of novelist Willa Cather. Guided by her curiosity and the presence of a mysterious guest, Susan discovers that life is more about beginnings than endings. A lesson in embracing the unexpected, *CATHERLAND* reminds us that, "where there is great love, there are always miracles."

Additional cast members include Eric Moyer, Sasha Dobson, Natalie McClue, Tyler Hale, Robin McKercher, and Melissa Epp. Writers Boesen and von Kampen are two incredible artistic talents. Boesen is a working playwright, actor, director and producer. As a two-time winner of the Mayor's Arts Award, she serves both administrative and artistic roles at the Lied Center and is an adjunct faculty member at Doane College. David von Kampen is a composer whose creative work spans a wide variety of genres and styles. He has over forty choral and instrumental compositions and arrangements published and is currently an adjunct professor of composition at Concordia University.

CATHERLAND will premiere at the Red Cloud Opera House on Saturday, May 2, 2015, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15.00 in advance or \$20.00 the day of show and may be purchased online at www.WillaCather.org or by calling 402-746-2641. Funding for the Willa Cather Foundation's arts programs is provided by the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.



CATHERLAND

A new musical by Becky Boesen and David von Kampen

Board Officers

President: Thomas Reese Gallagher, New York, NY
Vice President: Lynette Krieger, Hastings, NE
Secretary: Glenda J. Pierce, Lincoln, NE
Treasurer: David Porter, Saratoga Springs, NY
Past President: Susan Maher, Duluth, MN

Board of Governors

Virgil Albertini, Fairway, KS
Marion A. Arneson, Wayne, NE
Mark W. Bostock, Windsor, CO
Max Despain, Monument, CO
Richard C. Harris, Sea Cliff, NY
Jill Hornady, Grand Island, NE
Andrew Jewell, Lincoln, NE
Charles Johanningsmeier, Omaha, NE
Ruth H. Keene, Omaha, NE
Fritz Mountford, Hastings, NE
John J. Murphy, Boston, MA
Julie Olin-Ammentorp, Manlius, NY
Charles A. Peek, Kearney, NE
Guy Reynolds, Lincoln, NE
Ann Romines, Alexandria, VA
Nancy Sherwood, Omaha, NE
Steve Shively, Logan, UT
Kate Sommer, Omaha, NE
James P. Southwick, Heber City, UT
C. Kay Stahly, Kearney, NE
Robert Thacker, Canton, NY
Lu Williams, Red Cloud, NE
John A (Jay) Yost, New York, NY

Advisory Board

Bruce P. Baker II, Omaha, NE
Laurie Smith Camp, Omaha, NE
James L. Fitzgibbon, Red Cloud, NE
David B. Garwood, Red Cloud, NE
Joel Geyer, Lincoln, NE
Jane Renner Hood, Lincoln, NE
Ron Hull, Lincoln, NE
Betty Kort, Hastings, NE
Mellanee Kvasnicka, LaVista, NE
Lucia Woods Lindley, New York, NY
Dale McDole, Overland Park, KS
Gary L. Meyer, Red Cloud, NE
Nancy S. Picchi, New York, NY
Rhonda Seacrest, Lincoln, NE
John N. Swift, Whittier, CA
Gary W. Thompson, Lincoln, NE
Joseph R. Urgo, Asheville, NC

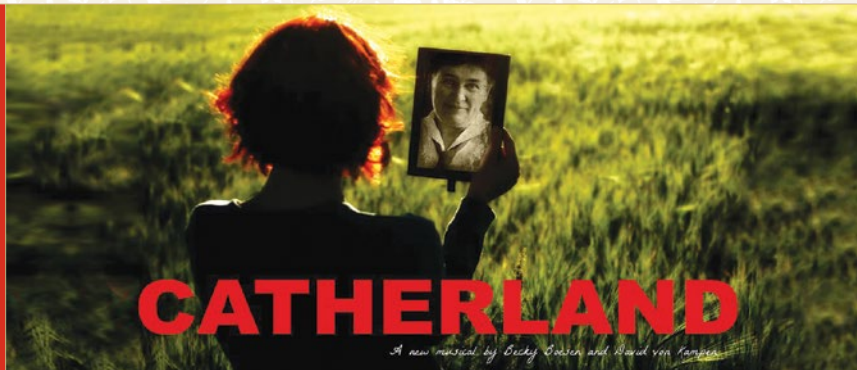
Staff

Ashley Olson, *Executive Director*
Tracy Tucker, *Education Director*
Ana Armstrong, *Administrative Assistant*
Jackie Lemmer, *Marketing Assistant*
Cheryl Wilson, *Buildings & Sites Curator*
Karin Prellwitz, *Maintenance*
Kevin Daehling, *Prairie Curator*
Sylvia Andersen, *Tour Guide*
Kay Blackstone, *Tour Guide*
Angela Duca, *Tour Guide*
Carol Duncan, *Tour Guide*
Priscilla Hollingshead, *Tour Guide*
Barb Kudrna, *Tour Guide*
Lisa Mahin, *Tour Guide*
Patsy Ord, *Tour Guide*



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Red Cloud, NE
Permit No. 10

COMING UP!



CATHERLAND: The Musical
Saturday, May 2, 7:30 PM
Advance Tickets \$15 / Day of Show \$20

The Growth of An Artist:
Commemorating 100 Years of The Song of the Lark
On Display May 5 to August 31

15th International Cather Seminar
Friday, June 5 to Thursday, June 11
Registration \$300 / Students or Emeriti \$200 / Performance Only \$25

60th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference
Friday, June 5 to Sunday, June 7
3-Day Registration \$150 / Banquet & Performance Only \$50



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