



Southeast Signal

News, Events, and Information from Around the System

From the Director



Librarians are usually helpful people, that's why we choose this profession. Our first inclination is sometimes to jump in

to help someone we think needs help. But have you ever thought about asking first? It might seem like a small thing, but it can make a big difference.

When you ask someone if they need help, you show respect for their ability to handle things on their own. This simple question can prevent them from feeling overwhelmed or frustrated by unsolicited help. Plus, it opens up a conversation where they can tell you exactly what they need. This way, your help is more likely to be useful and appreciated.

Asking before helping also builds mutual respect and understanding. It shows that you value their opinion and are willing to listen. This can strengthen your relationships

and build trust. In a work setting, this approach can improve teamwork and make the environment more positive and productive.

Not everyone wants or needs help all the time. By asking first, you give them the chance to say no politely, without feeling pressured. This respect for their choice can boost their confidence and independence, making them feel more capable of handling things on their own.

Also, make sure your policies and procedures don't take away opportunities to have these discussions with your patrons. Sometimes in our rush to solve problems, we forget to talk with the person who would be impacted the most by the solution.

So, next time you see someone who might need help, take a moment to ask first. You might find that your help is more welcome and effective. It's a simple thing that can lead to better results and a better relationship with your patrons.

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Calendar

June 13, National Sewing Machine Day

June 14, National Pop Goes the Weasel Day

June 19, Juneteenth (SELS Office Closed)

June 20, National American Eagle Day

June 26, National Handshake Day

June 27, [CASTL, Via Zoom, "Open Meetings Act Refresher"](#)

July, National Ice Cream Month

National Culinary Arts Month

July 4, Independence Day (SELS Office Closed)

July 10, National Chronic Disease Day

July 11, National French Fry Day

August 28 & 29, [31st ANNUAL JOINT YOUTH SERVICES RETREAT!](#), p. 11



Photo of the Month



The children's librarian at Fairbury Public Library, Trish Vculek, added a few flowers to the library's garden and was able to get it certified as Pollinator Habitat by Nebraska Extension.

--Provided by Trish Vculek

CASTL Wrap-up

Upcoming CASTL Meetings

June 27

Online Only

“Open Meetings Act Refresher”

July 25

Clay Center Public Library

August 21

Pawnee City Public Library
“Summer Reading Successes”

September 25

Fairmont Public Library

Our May CASTL was held via Zoom due to the busy time of year. It covered the topic of “Policies for the Use of Library Space” and dealt mainly with the usage of meeting rooms.

We found that library spaces are very popular, and it is hard to know what exactly people may expect the library to be able to host. We even had one case where there was a desire to establish a mostly permanent office in a library!

It can also occur that someone reserves a room for an event and their advertising gives the location of the program as the library, but it doesn’t name the sponsor. Then it may appear that the event is library-sponsored. This can be partially solved by policies requiring those reserving meeting rooms to not advertise in a way that suggests events or meetings are sponsored by the library. It is even possible to have them explicitly agree to that condition (for example, by checking a box on a paper or online meeting room application). While this does not guarantee that people will follow the policy, it gives a basis on which to correct meeting room users.

Libraries differ on whom they allow to use meeting rooms. Some only allow use by the library and by non-profit organizations. Others also allow commercial and personal use, although they may require deposits and/or charge fees for those types of use. Sometimes a group will give a donation as a “thank you.” Some of our libraries also state in their policy that the library has the right to, if necessary, bump a group in order to hold a library program or event.

We also discussed the pros and cons of having a time buffer between groups using meeting rooms. If there is a buffer, then a group that goes a few minutes long or needs time to clean up can have it. However, time buffers also reduce the overall amount of meeting room time available and may somewhat limit the number of groups who can use the meeting room(s).

Finally, [SELS has a few meeting room policy examples on its website.](#)

Upcoming Basic Skills Courses

7/7 - 7/18

Reference

5/26 - 6/20

7/28 - 8/8

Library Policy

6/16 - 7/11

8/18 - 8/29

Collection Management

7/14 - 8/8

For the complete schedule, [click here.](#)

News Around the System

Clarks Public Library Kicks Off Summer Reading

Provided by Barbee Sweet

Clarks Public Library kicked off Summer Reading Wednesday on June 4th with Wildlife Encounters. We learned all about the different wildlife habitats and diets. We were lucky enough to be able to pet a few of the animals!



News Around the System

Community Mural in Valparaiso

Provided by Marie Fiala

Valparaiso Public Library kicked off the Summer Reading Program "Color Our World" with a community mural on the sidewalk downtown during the annual Val Days celebration. Over forty kids and parents participated in the masterpiece which helped "color our world" temporarily until the rain washed it away a couple of days later.



Tosca Lee Comes to Falls City

Provided by Jayme Coonce

Author Tosca Lee (and husband, Bryan) braved some treacherous April storms to visit the Falls City Library and Arts Center. Tosca spoke about her 2025 One Book One Nebraska book, *The Long March Home*, as well as her many other books and gave insight to audience members about her writing process, future plans, and life on their farm.

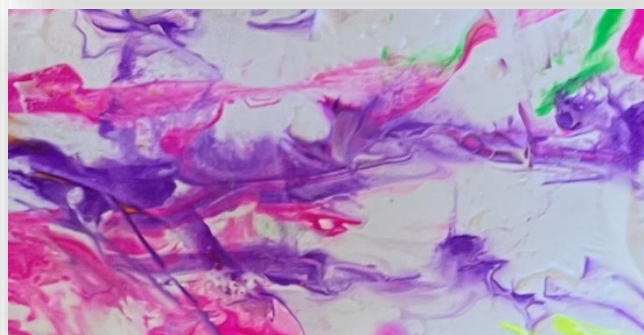


News Around the System

Fairbury Public Library Holds First Summer Activity

Provided by Trish Vculek

We had our first activity for the 2025 summer reading program, and we made marbled paper with shaving cream and marbling paint.



Records Broken in Auburn!

Provided by Heather Konecke

On June 3rd, we had our first program of the summer. Wildlife Encounters came and brought several animal ambassadors. While this program is always a hit with our community, we had a record attendance of 260 people! This led to a record number of people for the day as well as a record number of checkouts. Hopefully we can keep this momentum going all summer!



News Around the System

Seward Memorial Library Begins Summer Reading

Provided by Sherri Payne

For our theme this summer, “Color Our World,” we are exploring the wonderful world of art with programs featuring a different medium each week throughout the summer, whether it is weaving, cartooning, or creating beautiful mosaics! We started with a summer kick-off party, and everyone had a wonderful time outside in the beautiful weather! Kids were entertained with a bouncy house, slides, an obstacle course as well as other all-time favorites such as face painting and creating bubbles.



The first weeks of June were busy with an entertaining magic show with Bruce Jacoby, straw loom weaving for the kids, a family dance party with Art in Motion and a cartooning class.

June fun continues with *The Little Mermaid* by Crane River Theater Workshop, a Family Craft Night (Create your own I-Spy game), The LEGO Guy, Kids Craft Time (Create a summer mosaic), and Science Art with Laura Goracke.

News Around the System

Summer Lego Club at Clarks Public Library

Provided by Barbee Sweet

Lego Club has started at the Clarks Public Library this week! Our first challenge was to build something we are thankful for. It was great to see the creativity of all the kids! Lego Club will be every Thursday afternoon throughout the summer.



News Around the System

A Scholarship for Trustees!

Provided by Holli Duggan

Apply for an individual Trustee scholarship to attend either the [NLA 2025 Conference](#) in York on October 22nd-24th or to attend the [ARSL 2025 Conference](#) on September 17th-20th (either in Albuquerque, NM or virtually)!

The Fern V. Heim Scholarship for Trustees was established by her friend, Mary Louise Dutcher, to honor Fern's dedication to small public libraries and their trustees. Recognizing that few small library budgets could provide support for librarians, let alone their volunteer trustees, to attend professional meetings, she encouraged them to go whenever possible (at their own expense) if only for a portion of the meeting. As her legacy, it is fitting to assist those trustees through this scholarship program.

This award provides assistance to **current Nebraska public library trustees** with preference to members of the Nebraska Library Association Public Library and Trustee Section (PLTS) for attendance at the [Nebraska Library Association Conference](#) or the [Association for Rural and Small Libraries Conference](#).

The purpose of these grants is to assist Nebraska libraries in improving the library services provided to their communities through continuing education and training for their library trustees. Successful applications will show how attending this conference will support the library's mission.

Eligible costs include:

- Conference Registration
- Travel
- Meals
- Lodging
- Preconference fees

Applications must be **submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. CST on August 1, 2025. Faxes and U.S. mail will not be accepted.** For complete information, [click here!](#)



News Around the System

NLC Book Club Spotlight – *Room*

Provided by Mackenzie Marrow, [see full blogpost here](#)

As a college freshman, Ma was abducted and locked in a shed for 7 years. Despondent in her confinement, it's not until her son is born that Ma is renewed and dedicates her life not only to their escape but to providing the naïve Jack with a full and healthy life, unaware that he is in captivity. Inspired by the real-life determination of mothers and women in the face of impossible circumstances, *Room* is the winner of the [Alex Award](#), a [New York Times Best Book of the Year](#), and 2010's [Irish Novel of the Year](#).

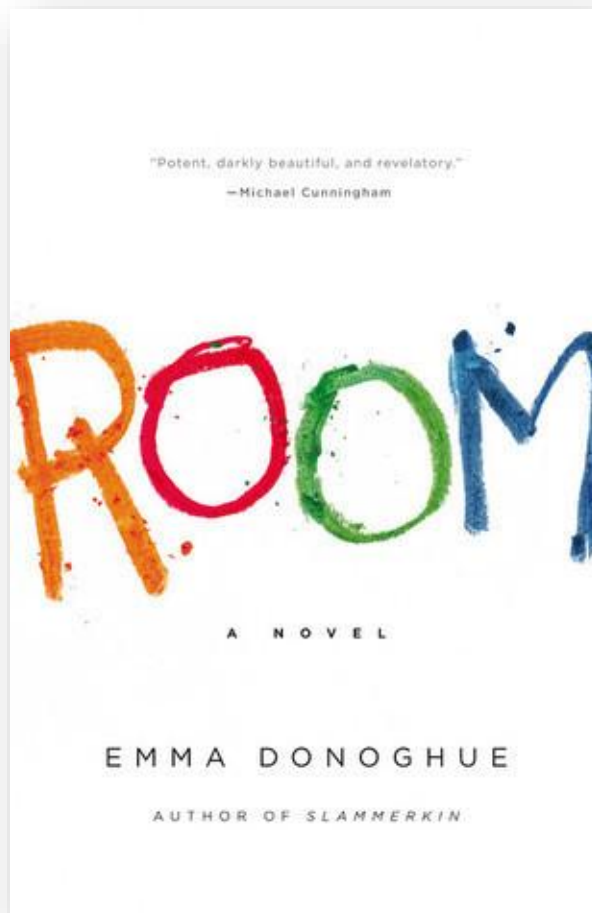
In the Room, Jack and Ma play, learn, brush their teeth, exercise, and look out Skylight. Every night, he goes to sleep in Wardrobe while a mysterious man comes to visit. Ma doesn't seem to like Old Nick, but Jack likes it when he brings them new things like clothes, food, and sometimes candy! To Jack, Room is all there is, and he wants everything to stay the same forever. But now that Jack is 5 years old, his curiosity is harder to contain, he gets in fights with Ma, and Old Nick gets so upset that their power is off for days! Maybe he should have just stayed 4. Ma is changing too.

She decides it's time to tell Jack a story, a real story this time, about a place called Outside. And about a plan where Jack must be brave, get to Outside, and save Ma.

From discussing faith, the sensationalism of tragedy, and the spirit of motherhood, love is at the forefront of this novel. Narrated by Jack's unusual and childish voice, *Room's* language will take a second to get used to and is not for everyone. We follow his malleable young mind as it opens up and tries to process this place that was previously far beyond his understanding. But once the reader is enveloped in his unique world, it's hard to leave and return to Outside.

Room was adapted by Emma Donoghue into [an academy award winning movie of the same name](#) starring Brie Larson and Jacob Tremblay.

If you're interested in requesting ***Room*** for your book club, you can find the Request Form [here](#). **There are 11 copies and an Audio CD.** (A librarian must request items)



Swanson Center

Camp Carol Joy Holling

31ST ANNUAL JOINT YOUTH SERVICES RETREAT



AUGUST 28 & 29

- Hosted by the Regional Library Systems
- A chance to network with your colleagues
- Learn from experienced presenters and from each other
- Have fun! New this year: Boating



Register Here!

For more information, click here!

Columbus Public Library

2500 14th St. Columbus, NE 68601

Advanced Book Repair

With the Book Doctor,
Kimberly Young

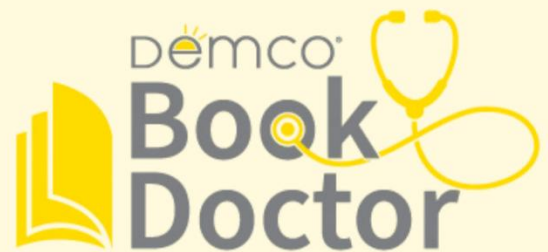
- **Hands-on** training
- Tailored **repair** and **processing** instruction
- **Free** book care resources

When:
August 6th, 1-4pm

Where:
3rd Floor
Community Room

Register with Melodee at
melodee.pedersen@columbusne.us
by Aug. 1st.

**This is for librarians and
volunteers only.**



Read Aloud Nebraska Workshop

FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 7
2025

SAVE THE DATE

REGISTRATION IN
EARLY FALL 2025



November 07, 2025

Seward Memorial Library
233 S 5th St, Seward, NE

Featured Speakers

Rebecca Bellingham: Essential Practices of Reading Aloud

Steven Layne Ed.D: Building Lifetime Readers

Chloe Burgett: <https://www.chloebartistry.com/>

<https://libraries.ne.gov/readaloud/>

System Spotlight

Policy Examples on SELS Website

Are you looking for ideas to help you as you revise or create a policy? SELS has a page on its website with [examples of policies](#). Feel free to use anything you find here. There is no plagiarism when creating policy with the help of ideas and language from other libraries! Also, we would love to add more examples to the page, so please let us know if you feel you might have a policy we could link to.

Section 51-212 of the Nebraska State Statutes states that library use is "subject always to such reasonable regulations as the library board may adopt to render such library of the greatest use to the inhabitants of the city, village, county, or township. The board may exclude from the use of the library and reading rooms any person who willfully violates or refuses to comply with rules and regulations established for the government thereof."

Southeast Library System

Butler • Clay • Fillmore • Gage • Hamilton • Jefferson • Johnson • Lancaster • Merrick • Nemaha • Nuckolls •
Otoe • Pawnee • Polk • Richardson • Saline • Saunders • Seward • Thayer • York

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