

From the Director



This is a slight reworking of a previous article, published way back in 2014.

I'll admit a pet peeve I have to you right now. I get my hackles up when someone is discussing a new policy, procedure, or invention and the first, second and third questions they ask are

how efficient it is. While efficiency is a very important criterion when deciding to start any new effort, either in thought, word or deed, it should not be always be the main focus. A more important focus is "Is this method effective?" or "Does this have the effect we want it to?" I know in the tight times we all have gone through in the recent years with funding being cut or at best, flat, that the cost of everything is scrutinized and at the front of people's minds, but I've seen so many efforts backfire because the implementers were more focused on making an inexpensive solution instead of one that would solve the problem at hand. Sometimes it is worth putting the extra time, money, or resources toward something if that is what gets you the best results. Low-bid, short term net-gain thinking toward your efforts only let you mark it off the to-do list with a good chance it will come back again.

I've heard the difference explained this way: Effectiveness is doing the right thing; efficiency is doing the thing right. Both are important and they are not mutually exclusive concepts. You can have something that is very efficient and very effective at the same time. These are the best choices, but sometimes those aren't available, and you have pick.

Let me share an example from my past life in the UNL Libraries computer department. One year there was a big push to take the lowest bid computer equipment with no exceptions. The Libraries bought a bunch of computers as part of their rotation, as they do every year. What was new

in this particular year was that over half of those computers ended up having serious problems. I mean, "There's literally smoke coming out of the computer" problems. The time it took to replace and repair that low-bid equipment probably cost more than getting a more reputable vendor's product in the first place. After that potentially hazardous situation, cost was just one of the criteria in selecting a computer vendor.

Here's another example: I could do almost all my business via postal mail. It would be very efficient for me. I go to one place every day, spend all day doing one task (writing letters) and take them all to the post box at the end of the day to be picked up the next morning. That would be very efficient of my time and energy but would not be very effective or efficient for those waiting for answers.

On the other hand, I could drive to the libraries we serve for every question they have. I could drive to Palmyra to answer a simple question and then head down to Byron that afternoon to answer another question and just bounce around the SELS area answering questions in person. Would I be effective in gaining understanding of the situation and providing a good response? It certainly would be effective, but what a waste of gas that would be when the question is "When is the next CASTL meeting?"

When deciding what to do, please do keep in mind the cost in time, money, and other resources, but remember that if it doesn't work you may end up spending more of whatever it was you were trying to save in the long run. Another thing to remember is as you review your policies, procedures, and technology after implementation, new ways may become apparent where you can keep the same effectiveness yet become more efficient.

So, when making decisions, please keep in mind this question, "Do I want to get to someplace specific eventually, or get nowhere fast?"

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Calendar



January 18, National Winnie the Pooh Day

January 20, [CASTL, Aurora, Alice M. Farr Memorial Library, "Nebraska Extension and Libraries"](#)

January 26, National Peanut Brittle Day

February, National Library Lover's Month

Black History Month

Annual report to City Council or Village Board

February 1-7, African Heritage and Health Week

February 1, National Freedom Day

February 3, Geneva Public Library, "Sticker Obsession" Workshop, email todd.schlechte.sels@gmail.com to register

February 7, National Kite Flying Day

February 9, National Pizza Day

March 7, Tech Kits and Job Skills with Amanda Sweet, Beatrice Public Library, 10:00-3:15

Photos of the Month



The Humboldt Friends of the Library (Bruun Memorial Library) held a unique "chair"itable fundraiser. Photos by Jorene Herr. More on p. 4.

CASTL Wrap-up

Upcoming CASTL Meetings

January 20

Alice M. Farr Library
Aurora
“Nebraska Extension and Libraries”

February 23

Tecumseh Public Library
“The Golden Sower Award Process”

March 24

Superior Public Library

The December 16th CASTL was held at the Southeast Library Library System meeting room. Our theme was "All About Humanities Nebraska.." Mary Yager introduced herself as the Associate Director of Humanities Nebraska and gave the presentation.

This year Humanities Nebraska will have a big celebration because it becomes 50 years old. 50 years ago, the National Endowment for the Humanities was encouraging each state to establish humanities councils, and Nebraska did so. For the first 10 years it only received money from the National Endowment for the Humanities before other sources began to play a role.

Mary talked about two major Humanities programs, some of which may be unfamiliar to librarians:

1. A recently simplified the grants program, which can used to help pay stipends to authors or presenters, mileage, airline costs at economy rate, publicity costs. They require a 1 to1 match, which may be made with in-kind or donated items. There is a limit of \$1000 for a presenter stipend. Minigrants are \$1000 or less, Major grants may be as much as several thousand. There are six competitive 6 mini grant rounds per year and 2 major grant rounds per year.
2. Many librarians are familiar with the Speakers Bureau. This is entirely distinct from the grants program with a much simpler application form. You can choose from approximately 100 or more speakers, presenters, and performers who have been vetted. Generally, you can use the Speaker's Bureau twice a year, with the processing fee for the first speaker being \$50 (\$75 for highly popular speakers) and \$100 for the second speaker. Other organizations which you partner with, governmental or non-profit, may also avail themselves of this opportunity.

One thing that is new since the pandemic is that some speakers will do virtual presentations for \$25. You can check with presenters if that is an option you are interested in exploring. For more information, [click here](#).

Upcoming Basic Skills Classes

To see the list of basic skills classes, [click here](#). Here's what's coming up next:

<u>Dates of Class</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Registration</u>
Feb. 2—Feb. 18	Customer Service	January 3—January 28
March 7—March 18	Library Governance	January 31—February 28
March 21—April 1	Library Technology	February 14—March 11

News Around the System

In Humboldt: a "Chair"itable Fundraiser and a Holiday Tea

By Jorene Herr, photos of the month (p. 2) by Jorene Herr, Holiday Tea photos by Sandy Stalder

The Humboldt Friends of the Library's somewhat unique and really fun "chair"itable fundraiser, which was coordinated by Deb Costello of 3rd Street Studio. A total of 53 chairs were donated, painted or embellished by local members of the community. Artists ranged from age 7 through nursing home residents. It included children's chairs, rocking chairs, folding chairs, high chairs, step stools, and even several vintage children's tables. Bids ranged from \$10 to \$155, and all chairs were sold, including some that were bought by the artists or their family members. Pictures of all the chairs can be seen on 3rd Street Studio's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=3rdstreetstudios>)

Bruun Memorial Library had their annual Holiday Tea on Monday, December 12. Friends of the Library and the Library Board helped with refreshments, which included cookies and hot spiced cider, coffee, cocoa, tea and water. Four door prizes were given away--a tabletop Christmas tree, a wreath, an afghan and a children's bag. Everyone who attended got to pick a homemade ornament from the tree. It was a fun afternoon filled with food and fellowship.



Winterpalooza Does it Again

By Stephanie Schrodetzki, photo by Amanda Winkler

Another successful year of Winterpalooza at the Morton-James Public Library in Nebraska City! 433 patrons attended the one-day event to meet Santa, decorate cookies, make crafts, win prizes and more.

"Thank you for this memory with our kids!" ~ Danielle Wilson via Facebook



News Around the System

The Grinch Visits Clarks

Provided by Barbee Sweet

This December the Clarks Public Library added a new event for the public to participate in. The library had a very special guest make a visit. The Grinch came Tuesday, December 20th after school for a special reading of 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas'. After the story The Grinch took pictures with the kids.



Coffee, Cookies, and Christmas Crafts

By Debbie Aden

The Fairbury Public Library held a "Coffee, Cookies, and Christmas Crafts" program where participants were encouraged to bring Christmas goodies to share while they drank coffee and did simple Christmas crafts. Participants voted for their top treat, and the winner received the "Jingle" wall hanging.



News Around the System

Stuffed Animal Sleepover

By Sarah Johnson, photos by library staff

The Geneva Public Library hosted their annual Stuffed Animal Sleepover on Friday, November 18, with 36 youth and 18 adults in attendance. This is the sixth time for this program in seven years, and the staff get better at it each time.

The main event (as viewed by the public) was from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. We read aloud a couple picture books, then the children enjoyed a bedtime snack of juice boxes, animal crackers, and teddy grahams.



We usually follow that up with a couple more stories, but this year, we had two special guests from the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Ashley Wulf, an Advocacy Specialist, and Sharon Sinkler, the Interpreter Program Coordinator. Ashley taught everyone the American Sign Language for a dozen words in “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”, and then proceeded to sign the entire story with her interpreter speaking. This was extremely well received by attendees and so many of the kids tried following along and signing with Ashley through the entire book. Following Ashley’s story, the families tucked in their stuffed animals, checked out their own bedtime stories, and went home. Families were encouraged to return to the library on Saturday to pick up their stuffed animals and to see the remnants of all the overnight shenanigans.

By 8:00 p.m. on Friday night, the patrons had all left, and the real work began! Library staff and three high school volunteers grouped the animals into teams of three or four based on size, animal type, and real life siblings. Staff then rotated the animal teams through a minimum of eighteen photo scenes set up throughout the library, averaging 100 photos per team. *(continued on p. 7)*

News Around the System

(continued from p. 6)

This year's "overnight" special guests were two men in full bunker gear from the Geneva Volunteer Fire Department who were supposedly checking the batteries in the library smoke alarms. In reality, they were incredibly patient and good humored as we rotated through stuffed animals to take photos! After shooting pictures, library staff dropped the photos into a memory booklet template, printed, and gave these to the children as soon as they were completed. Some memory booklets were ready to pick up Saturday with the stuffed animals, but all were finished within the next few days.

This program often has people who rarely visit the library in attendance. It is a great opportunity to welcome them into the library and encourages

them to check out more books! A pleasant surprise was the library's Facebook post about the Stuffed Animal Sleepover being shared by the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and by Nebraska State Jobs onto their respective Facebook pages.



Creative Aging Arts Program (CAAP) grants pay for programs with teaching artists trained in best practices of creative programming with older adult participants. Select teaching artists from NAC's CAAP Artist Cohort, which is listed with CAAP grant information on the NAC website. During CAAP residencies, artists share their expertise through skill-based, sequential arts lessons in a variety of disciplines. Sessions also foster social engagement among participants, ending with a culminating event to showcase participants' work. Sponsor organizations, including non-profits, senior centers, local agencies on aging, and libraries may apply. Grant applications have a rolling deadline - apply at least six weeks ahead.

This grant requires no matching funds, and pays for the artist and the majority (if not all) of the supplies. There are artists available for painting, storytelling, acting, dance, quilting, ceramics, photography, music and many more forms of art.

Please refer to the full grant guidelines on the web page to get a complete idea of what the program entails.

<https://www.artscouncil.nebraska.gov/apply/creative-aging/>



Sticker Obsession

Friday, February 3

9:45—3:15

Geneva Public Library

Lunch on Your Own



2 Spots left!

**For more information, see the
description on our website.**

**To see if one of the remaining spots is
available, please email
todd.schlechte.sels@gmail.com**



This activity is supported in part with funding from the State of Nebraska and from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the Nebraska Library Commission.

From the NLC

Book Club Spotlight – *The Fishermen*

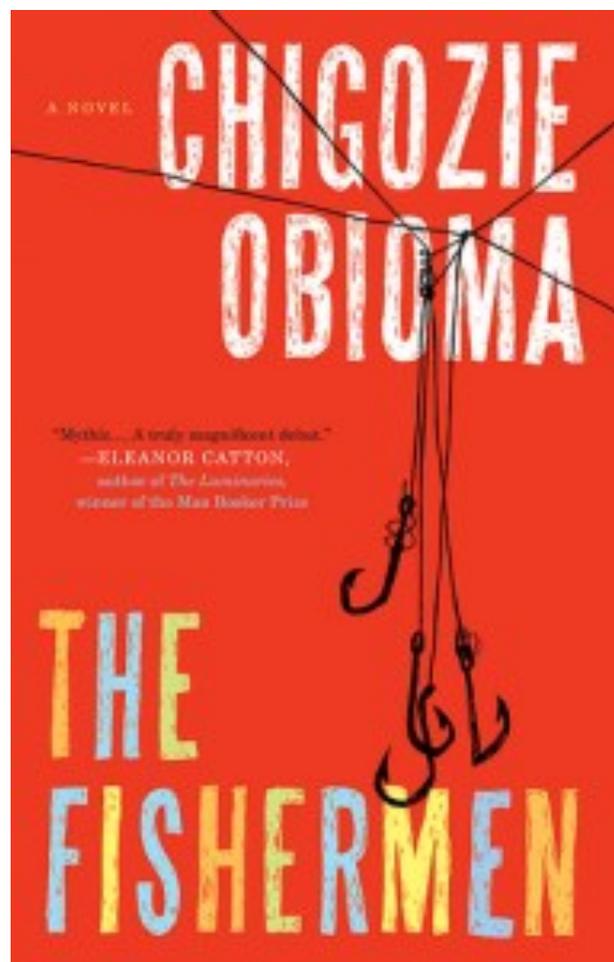
By MacKenzie Marrow (edited)

The Fishermen by Chigozie Obioma is, first and foremost, a book about family. Written as a love letter to his brothers, Obioma explores the intrinsic connection between siblings and how easily chaos can sow a rift between them. Born in Nigeria, Chigozie Obioma is currently the James E. Ryan Associate Professor of Creative writing at UNL. *The Fishermen*, his debut novel, also won the Inaugural FT/Oppenheimer Award for Fiction, the NAACP Image Awards for Debut Literary Work, and was shortlisted for the 2015 Booker Prize.

In 1990s Nigeria, under the dictatorship of Gen. Sani Abacha, there is a family of brothers. Ikenna, the oldest; Boja and Obembe in the middle; and the youngest, Ben as our narrator. When their father moves away for work, the delicate family structure begins to crumble without its leader. In a fit of rebellion, the four boys go behind their mother's back to fish in a forbidden and polluted river, leaving her clueless, tending to their two youngest siblings. At the river, the boys encounter the town's prophetic madman, who convinces Ikenna that he will be murdered brutally by one of his siblings. Driven mad by this prophecy, the family suffers the loss of another authority figure, as their eldest brother becomes suspicious, anxious, and even violent toward them. So, the four brothers, like Cain and Abel before them, are plunged into turmoil, testing their bond and loyalty to the bitter end.

Even though the novel is an allegory for and takes place during a dangerous time in Nigeria's history, this is not a historical war novel. While affected and aware of the situation, the children are more invested in their interpersonal lives rather than politics. And in this book is about strife and torn bonds, Obioma delivers hope for the future resting on the next generation's unmarred shoulders.

If you're interested in requesting this book for your book club, you can find the Book Club Kit Request Form [here](#). There are 20 copies available with large print and audio CD (Items must be requested by a librarian)



System Spotlight

Scholarships

Did you know that the Southeast Library System provides scholarships to pay for registration and/or travel costs for continuing education events, course work in library science, and webinars?



Applicants must be residents of the area served by the Southeast Library System or work in a library within the System. Preference is given to those who have never received a scholarship from SELS in the past, and to first-time attendees at the event requested. [Click here for more information.](#)

Southeast Library System

<http://libraries.ne.gov/SELS/>

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Otoe • Pawnee • Polk • Richardson • Saline • Saunders • Seward • Thayer • York

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