



# Southeast Signal

*News, Events, and Information from Around the System*

## From the Executive Director



I'll admit it: I'm a serious procrastinator. When I accepted the role of executive director of the Southeast Library System (SELS), I knew I would have

deadlines and goals to meet—and this article for the system newsletter is a prime example.

During my first week in the office, Todd explained the monthly production schedule for the *Southeast Signal*. I promised—perhaps too optimistically—to deliver my article a full week before publication. Todd graciously assured me that a day or two in advance would be fine. Then he left for a well-deserved two-week vacation.

Every day since, I've written "newsletter article" on my to-do list—and every day, I've failed to cross it off. Now, on the eve of Todd's return (and just before this edition goes out), I'm finally writing.

It's not that I haven't been working on it. Quite the opposite: I've been reflecting, researching, jotting notes, and gathering ideas—waiting for the right moment when everything would come together. Ever

since I officially joined SELS, I've had the American Library Association's strategic plan documents, *ALA Forward*, on my mind. I'm inspired by its mission, vision, values, and objectives, and I see it as a helpful guide as we begin setting our own strategic goals for the system and charting the road ahead together.

Here's how I justify my last-minute tendencies: until the due date arrives, nothing I write feels truly finished. Why rewrite something ten times before it's time to send it? Ironically, that approach paid off this time. Before I sat down to write tonight, I came across a thoughtful reflection by Kathleen de la Peña McCook on *ALA Connect*, published as we begin celebrating National Library Week (NLW), about the 60-year history of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Her words were a timely reminder that each of us can influence meaningful changes in our communities every day—and that our work deserves celebration all year long, not just during National Library Week. Two weeks ago, I might not have included this perspective. But

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# Calendar

April 23, [CASTL, Tecumseh Public Library, "Interlibrary Loan"](#)

April 24, Arbor Day

April 27, National Tell a Story Day

May, National Inventor's Month

National Mental Health Awareness Month

April 30, [Children's Day/Book Day - El día de los niños/El día de los libros \(Día\)](#)

May 1, May Day

May 5, National Astronaut Day

May 8, [SELS Training Extravaganza, Seward Memorial Library](#)

May 10, Mother's Day

May 12, National Limerick Day

May 22, CASTL, Hebron Secrest Library, Digital Navigation

May 27, [Golden Sower Reading Day, Seward Memorial Library](#) (Register by May 13)



# Photo of the Month



The Easter Bunny visits Valparaiso Public Library. (More on page 4.) -Photo by Marie Fiala.

# CASTL Wrap-up

## Upcoming CASTL Meetings

April 23

Tecumseh Public Library  
“Interlibrary Loan”

Our February 26 CASTL was hosted by Lucy Watson at the Hruska Memorial Library in David City.

Wendy Kettelsen of Lied Lincoln Township Library (Wausau) presented on creating mini-books, sharing her experience making them an artist and teacher. She discussed the supplies needed, including cardstock and staplers for easier assembly, and mentioned that teens and upper middle schoolers would likely enjoy this craft project.

Wendy demonstrated the process of making a book, starting with cutting paper into strips and folding the strips in groups. She explained how to staple the folded paper groups and then glue them to each other to create the inner book structure.

Next, she showed us how to cut leather covers to size and how to make holes and set grommets for binding the books. Two holes and grommets for tying the book, and the other with which to attach a keychain or other item. After that was done, the “book pages” could be glued to the inside of the leather, followed by tying the book and attaching a chain.

May 22

Hebron Secrest Library  
“Digital Navigation”

Lisa Macke from Creighton Public Library led a demonstration on creating a unique book fold project, explaining the step-by-step process of finding the center of a book, marking the halfway point, and cutting approximately 50 pages from both sides to create a "barn door" effect. The next step was folding in and taping 5 pages at a time. This formed a flower vase.

June 26

Via Zoom  
“Open Meetings Act Refresher”

Lisa then guided the group through making paper flowers, explaining the step-by-step folding process using 5x5 square papers. She demonstrated how to fold the paper into a triangle, then into a diamond shape, and finally into a petal. The group discussed using the same-colored paper for each flower and whether to use tape or hot glue to assemble the petals. The group made a total of five petals, which they glued together around a stem to form a flower. Buttons were then glued on to form the center of the flower, and the flower(s) were placed in the book vases.

For the recordings and the handouts, [click here](#).

## Upcoming Basic Skills Courses:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Class Dates</u>	<u>Registration Dates</u>
<a href="#">Intellectual Freedom / Core Values</a>	5/4 - 5/15	3/23 - 4/24
<a href="#">Readers' Advisory</a>	6/1—6/12	4/20—5/22
<a href="#">Reference</a>	5/25—6/19	7/6—7/17

**[For a complete list of classes, click here.](#)**

## From the Director

*(continued from page 1)*

because I waited (and because I was inspired), I can see a clearer way to connect NLW with the future of our libraries and our system. Timing, it seems, has its benefits.

On a more practical note, I want to share an upcoming regulatory update. A notice scheduled for publication in the *Federal Register* on April 20, 2026, announces new deadlines for compliance with Title II requirements, something many of us have been discussing for a while:

- State and local government entities serving populations of 50,000 or more now have until April 26, 2027 (extended from April 24, 2026).
- Public entities and special districts serving fewer than 50,000 now have until April 26, 2028 (extended from April 26, 2027).

While this extension may come as welcome news, we can't wait that long to act. SELS needs to start offering how-to training sessions and updating our own web-accessibility information well before the final deadline—and I'll be calling on your support to make sure we're ready. (We will be offering a first session about this at the Training Extravaganza in Seward on May 8.)

So yes, this article was written at the last minute. But for me, waiting brings a little more confidence that I've included everything possible for this edition of the *Southeast Signal*.

## News Around the System

### The New Libraries on the Web Project

The old library WordPress websites provided by the Nebraska Library Commission will no longer be supported beginning in September. While some public libraries have already made the switch to other options, there are still 16 SELS libraries that need to do so or else risk losing their website.

Fortunately, there are a couple of options. One is totally free: a basic web site created by the Nebraska Library Commission. Here is an example: <https://libs.ne.gov/valparaiso>

Information about another option, WordPress from LibChalk, can be found here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/13JhnsPEGFAfmyd8wN2ck\\_lePxxwLOZlcO/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/13JhnsPEGFAfmyd8wN2ck_lePxxwLOZlcO/view). This is a better option for libraries that want to create their own unique look, have more creative control, and/or to have their current site migrated over with minimal changes.

In both cases, the Nebraska Library Commission will migrate your current site for you.

## News Around the System

### Seward Memorial Library finished March on a high note!

*Provided by Sherri Payne*

On March 23, we gathered for our "Bring Color to Your Garden" workshop. Horticulture expert Nichole Stoner from the Nebraska Extension led an engaging session that left everyone feeling inspired. The session proved to be perfect for everyone from total beginners to seasoned gardeners. Attendees walked away with newfound confidence and excitement for the upcoming growing season.



With April approaching, we geared up for National Library Week. We had an exciting week full of events planned with the theme "Find Your Joy" at the library! The week features the following lineup of programming:

Sunday, April 19 at 1:30 PM – Navigating the New Era of AI - The world of Artificial Intelligence is moving faster than ever. In 2026, AI is no longer just a chatbot—it is a proactive partner capable of reasoning, planning, and executing complex tasks. But with these incredible capabilities come new challenges.

Monday, April 20 at 6:30 PM – Puzzle Tournament - Whether you are a strategic sorter who tackles the edges first or a fast-fingered builder with an eye for detail, nothing beats the collective rush of adrenaline as teams race to click that final, glorious piece into place.

Tuesday, April 21 at 6:30 PM – Craft Night - "Painted Pots," a creative session where you transform a simple terracotta pot into a colorful masterpiece for your porch or garden.

Thursday, April 23 at 6:30 PM – Book Review Bingo - Are you looking for your next great read? Join us as we combine the thrill of the game with a curated guide to the best literature of the year! As we play, library staff will share reviews from the 2025 Notable Books list and 2025 The Reading List, giving you an insider's look at the must-read titles hitting our shelves.

Friday, April 24 at 6:30 PM – A Novel Night of Trivia - Think You Know Your Books? Prove It! Dust off those bookmarks and gather your sharpest friends! The library is hosting a Book Trivia Night, and it is time to see who remembers the plot twists and who just like the cover art.

Saturday, April 25 at 10:00 AM – York's Children's Theater – This year's presentation will be "The Fisherman and his Wife." Enjoy a classic German fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm that serves as a powerful cautionary tale about greed and contentment.

# News Around the System

## Fun Activities at Valparaiso Public Library

*Story and photo by Marie Fiala*

March was an exciting month at Valparaiso Public Library. We hosted the Saunders County Extension's Embryology Program. They taught two after school classes about what happens inside the egg while chicks are developing. The library is taking care of an incubator full of eggs until they are scheduled to hatch right after Easter. Speaking of Easter, we had a special visitor this year during our Annual Library Easter Party - the Easter Bunny (see photo of the month). The Bunny read the book, "The Night Before Easter" to a group of little kids, before handing out candy and inviting them to the community's annual Easter egg hunt across the Street.



## NLC Book Club Spotlight – *Song of the Trees*

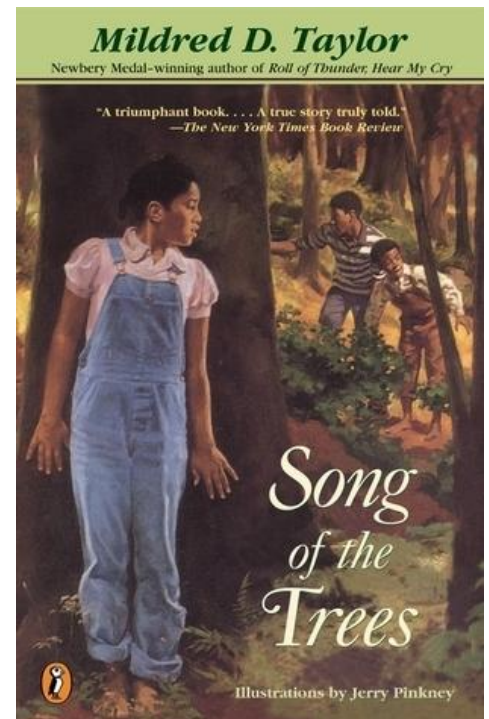
*Provided by Mackenzie Marrow, see full blogpost here*

Here is a book that fits wonderfully with the celebration of [Arbor Day](#), a Nebraska born holiday, this week!

Cassie Logan and her brothers race through forest. Their laughter and jokes fill the air, high up into the lush canopies above as their house fades into the distance of the early morning light. Cassie pauses, the cool earth beneath her feet... something is wrong. The trees, always stoic but welcoming, are quiet, as if they are frightened. That's when she hears them. There are lumbermen in the forest- *their forest!* With her father away for work, only her mother, her grandmother, and siblings are left to stand against Mr. Anderson and his lumbermen forcing their way onto Big Ma's land. The Logans must stand up for themselves and what is theirs, even if it frightens them.

Based on her family stories about growing up African American in the deep south, Taylor's writing is accessible for ages 9 and up. The novellas short pages are filled with beautiful prose and insight that will brighten your heart and leave you wanting more.

If you're interested in requesting *Song of the Trees* for your book club, you can find the Request Form [here](#). **There are 15 copies.** (A librarian must request items)



# 2026 TRAINING EXTRAVAGANZA

*This activity is supported 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.*



*Dr. Lynne Herr presents on AI!*

We will begin our day with a hands-on, two-part session entitled:

**AI in Action: Practical, No-Stress Tools for Librarians!**

Seward  
Memorial  
Library

**May 8**

9:30-3:00

For more information and to register, [click here!](#)

**Only \$25**

Includes catered lunch



# GOLDEN SOWER READING DAY

Wednesday, May 27  
9:00 am-12:30 pm

Take this chance to read the 2027-2028 potential Bluestem (K-2) nominees. The books will be set out to read while you enjoy refreshments!



**Seward Memorial Library**

**REGISTER HERE!**

*Please register by May 13 so that the Golden Sower Committee has time to onboard new readers.*

# APOLLO™

NEBRASKA USERS GROUP MEETING

Friday,  
May 1, 2026

**WHO:** Your fellow Nebraska library staff in person, and Biblionix staff via zoom. The meeting will not be recorded or streamed live.

**WHAT:** Join us for a day of discussion and learning! This will be an open forum with an opportunity for libraries interested in the [Biblionix Apollo ILS](#) to learn more, as well as current users to ask questions, get feedback from your peers, learn how others utilize various features, and more.

**WHERE:** Seward Memorial Library, 233 S. 5th Street, Seward, NE 68434.

**WHEN:** Friday, May 1, 2026

9:00 a.m.	Refreshments, introductions, open forum begins.
12:00 p.m.	Break for lunch.
1:00 p.m.	Open forum continues.
1:15 p.m.	Q&A Session with Biblionix, open forum continues.
3:00 p.m.	Tentative wrap up.

**COST:** FREE to attend, although lunch is on your own.

**OTHER NOTES:**

5 CEU's for Nebraska Certification will be submitted to NLC on your behalf.  
Bring a laptop and your EXTERNAL Apollo username/password if possible.

**QUESTIONS** can be directed to:

Becky Baker at (402) 643-3318 or [becky.baker@sewardlibrary.org](mailto:becky.baker@sewardlibrary.org),  
Sarah Johnson at (402) 759-3416 or [sjohnson@cityofgeneva.org](mailto:sjohnson@cityofgeneva.org)

## REGISTRATION:

Complete this [ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM](#) for each person attending.  
Registration deadline is April 29, 2026.

Future Ready Nebraska Conference on June 1-2, 2026

# DIGITAL LITERACY IN THE AGE OF AI: EMPOWERING FUTURE READY LEARNERS

*This is not reacting to AI – we are learning how to shape what comes next.*



**Kristen Mattson**  
Keynote: Digital Citizenship



**Amanda Bickerstaff**  
Keynote: AI for Education



**Jennifer LaGarde**  
Featured Librarian Speaker



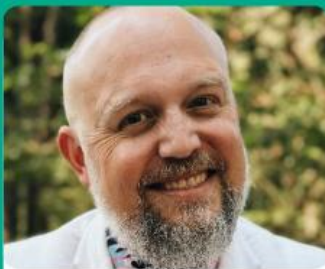
**Matt Winters**  
Topic: AI in Education



**The NCADEMI Team**  
Topic: WCAG Accessibility



**John Meehan**  
Topic: Playful UDL Pedagogy



**Brian Buffington**  
Topic: AI in Education



**Katie Novak**  
Topic: Elevating UDL with AI



**Tony Frontier**  
Topic: AI with Intention



**FREE Statewide Event**  
Designed for educators, school leaders, instructional coaches, librarians, and technology directors.

**Register at [nefutureready.com](https://nefutureready.com)**



## Library and Information Services

Fall 2026 Online Course Offerings

Aug. 17, 2026 – Dec. 11, 2026

Registration is open as of April 13, 2026



### **LIBR 1010 Foundations of Library and Information Services**

Lisa Mount, Instructor

This course, the recommended first in the Library and Information Services curriculum, provides introductory information in multiple areas.

- Library history and organizations
- Foundational Principles/Code of Ethics
- Information databases and Internet usage

### **LIBR 2250 Leadership and Management in Library and Information Agencies**

Michael Straatmann, Instructor

This course includes the theories, concepts and activities integral to leading and managing 21st Century libraries and information agencies.

- Leadership principles
- Management strategies
- Policies and procedures

### **LIBR 2940 Library and Information Services Capstone Practicum**

Stefanie Green, Instructor

This capstone course is the last course in the Library and Information Services program. Students will complete 40 hours of service learning in a host library. The course also includes a review of the principal pieces of learning from the LIS program.

- Fall 2026 will be the last semester for Capstone to be offered in the Fall. Beginning Spring 2027, the Capstone will be offered in the Spring only.

Fall 2026	Spring 2027
<b>Libr 1010</b> Foundations of Library and Information Services	<b>Libr 2100</b> Reference Resources and Services
<b>Libr 2250</b> Leadership and Management in Library and Information Agencies	<b>Libr 2150</b> Develop and Organize Collections
<b>Libr 2940</b> Library Science Capstone Practicum	<b>Libr 2940</b> Library Science Capstone Practicum

The Library & Information Services Certificate is a 15-credit hour program. All credits can be applied to a Central Community College associate degree.

For more information on the Library and Information Services program, see:

<https://www.cccneb.edu/lis>

For information concerning Admissions or Registration, contact: Michelle Setlik, [msetlik@cccneb.edu](mailto:msetlik@cccneb.edu), 308-398-7341

Central Community College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.



# System Spotlight

## CASTL: Learn and Renew!

CASTL is an enormously beneficial monthly meeting where public librarians can get together and learn from one another. Officially known as “Conversations Among Small Town Librarians,” each meeting has a themed discussion or presentation. These days, you have a choice of how you attend the morning portion of CASTL (virtually or in-person). For in-person attendees, there is also a round-robin discussion in the afternoon where everyone gets a chance to share what’s going on at their library, ask questions, and talk about solutions to issues in a confidential setting. We also lunch together. CASTL offers you a monthly break from your library and wonderful support from fellow librarians! For more information contact Todd at [todd.schlechte.sels@gmail.com](mailto:todd.schlechte.sels@gmail.com).



## 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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