



Southeast Signal

News, Events, and Information from Around the System

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From the Executive Director



*There's a party goin' on right here
A celebration to last throughout the years
So bring your good times and your laughter too
We gonna celebrate your party with you*

Celebrate Good Times—Libraries Have Plenty to Celebrate!

"Celebrate good times, come on!" These iconic lyrics from Kool & the Gang's 1980 hit still ring true today—and in 2026, the library community has more reasons than ever to join the celebration.

In less than a month, the United States will mark an extraordinary milestone: our nation's 250th birthday. For two and a half centuries, Americans have built communities, shared ideas, and preserved history through institutions that strengthen democracy and lifelong learning. Libraries have proudly been part of that story.

The celebrations don't stop there. Later this month, the American Library Association (ALA) will commemorate 150 years of leadership, advocacy, and service to librarians and library users across the nation. Since its founding in 1876, ALA has helped shape the profession, champion intellectual freedom, and support libraries as essential community institutions.

Closer to home, the Nebraska library community has its own accomplishments to celebrate. Earlier this year, the Nebraska Library Commission marked its 125th anniversary of service to Nebraska libraries. For more than a century, the Commission has provided leadership, resources, and support that have helped libraries of every

size serve their communities more effectively.

And now, drum roll, please...

Thanks to research conducted by Christa Porter, we've uncovered another significant anniversary that deserves recognition. The six Nebraska library networks—the predecessors to today's regional library systems—were incorporated in 1976. That means this November marks the 50th anniversary of regional support to libraries and librarians in our state!

Yahoo! Fifty years ago, visionary library leaders recognized the power of collaboration and established regional networks to strengthen library services across the state. Those networks laid the groundwork for the regional library systems that continue to support libraries today through professional development, consulting services, resource sharing, and advocacy.

Of course, regional systems have another major milestone on the horizon. While the original networks were incorporated in 1976, regional library systems received legislative funding support in 1983. We'll save that celebration for 2033, but it's never too early to start planning!

If you'd like to learn more about the history of Nebraska's library networks and regional systems, I encourage you to explore [Centennial: Libraries for the Centuries](#) on the Nebraska Library Commission website. The information about library networks and regional systems can be found in the 20th-century section of the document. Originally developed for the Nebraska Library Commission's centennial celebration in 2001, it remains a fascinating look at the people, partnerships, and progress that have shaped library service throughout Nebraska.

Looking for additional ways to participate in the nation's upcoming semiquincentennial celebration? Be sure to visit [Celebrate America250 @ Your Library](#), a collection of resources curated by the Nebraska Library Commission's Documents Librarian. You'll find ideas, programming resources, and inspiration to help your library engage community members on this historic occasion.

And if you're in the mood for even more library history, take a look at the American Libraries article, [55 Moments That Redefined Librarianship](#). From 1876 to today, it highlights many of the milestones, innovations, and achievements that have transformed libraries and the profession we love.

So, whether you're celebrating 50 years, 125 years, 150 years, or 250 years, this is a wonderful time to reflect on our shared history and look ahead to an exciting future. Libraries have always been places where communities gather, learn, and grow—and that's certainly something worth celebrating.

Celebrate good times, come on!

Calendar of Events & Observances

- **June 15:** National Nature Photography Day
- **June 19:** Juneteenth (SELS Office Closed)
- **June 20:** National Bald Eagle Day
- **June 21:** Father's Day
- **June 23:** National Typewriter Day
- **June 26:** [CASTL, 10 am, virtual only, "Open Meetings Act Refresher and Update"](#)
- **June 27:** National Sunglasses Day
- **July 4:** Independence Day / 250th Birthday of the United States (SELS Office Closed)
- **July 7:** World Chocolate Day
- **July 10:** National Piña Colada Day
- **July 13:** National Oxymoron Day
- **September 3 & 4:** [Joint Youth Services Retreat](#)



CASTL Wrap-Up

Kelly Spellman, library director, and Veronica Ognoskie of Hebron Secrest Library hosted our May 22 CASTL. Amanda Sweet led the morning session focused on redefining the library's role in regard to technology. She introduced the concept of "digital navigators," emphasizing that technology should be utilized as a tool to solve specific community problems (such as meal planning or telehealth) rather than being treated as an end goal. The session highlighted the importance of partnering with outside experts to properly evaluate and integrate these tech tools into existing community support systems.

She shared updates on a resource hub that organizes tools by both technology type and specific community needs (such as housing affordability and utility navigation). With roughly 75% of the resources compiled,

Upcoming CASTL Meetings



June 26: Via Zoom – Open Meetings Act Refresher & Update



July 24: Via Zoom – Virtual Round Robin

Amanda explored how libraries can leverage makerspaces, 3D printing, and partnerships with platforms like CraftCloud to grant patrons free access to otherwise cost-prohibitive design software and fabrication tools. Because of filament and maintenance costs associated with 3D printing, it is more economical to outsource the printing to services like Craftcloud or Etsy.

Amanda clarified the legal boundaries for library staff, noting they can offer technical troubleshooting and point patrons toward curated resources, but cannot provide direct guidance on sensitive tasks like tax forms or job applications. She also introduced new AI literacy tools, including lesson plans, Google’s Teachable Machine, and deepfake identification sites. [You can view the recording here.](#)

Upcoming Basic Skills Courses

Dates	Class	Instructor	Registration
7/6 - 7/17	Reference	Christa Porter	5/25 - 6/19
7/27 - 8/7	Library Policy	Holli Duggan	6/15 - 7/10
8/17 - 8/28	Collection Management	Denise Harders	7/13-8/7

News Around the System

Yutan Library Happenings

Provided by Elizabeth Casey

We officially kicked off the start to our summer reading program with great participation so far!

Yutan Public Library hosted Fontenelle Forest for Critters-on-the-Go on May 29th. Attendees were able to come face-to-face with a tree frog, land turtle, and bull snake.

We look forward to our next event with Fontenelle Forest about raptors on June 17th.

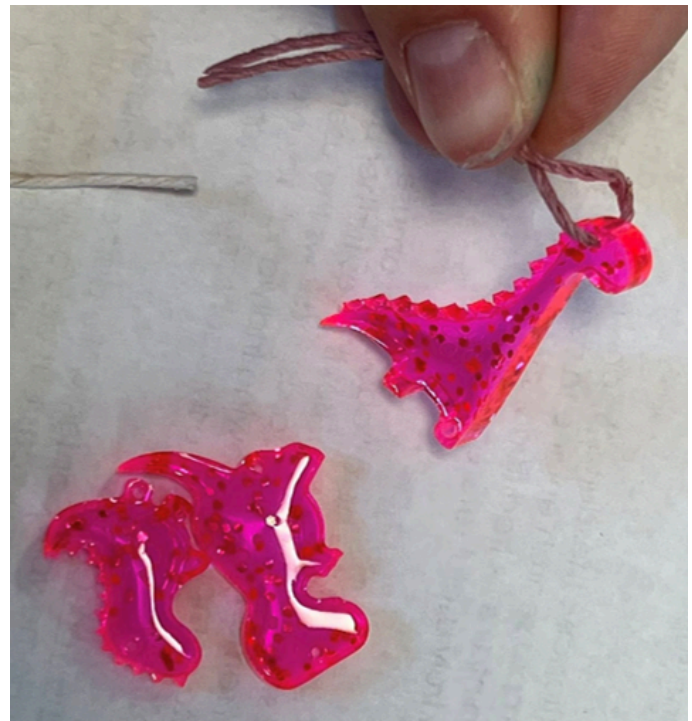


Summer Reading at Fairbury Public Library

Provided by Trish Vculek



So far at the Fairbury Library, for summer reading we have done resin art. The adults did flowers, while the kids did dinosaurs. Ranger Anthony (Stomp Chomp Roar) also came and talked about dinosaurs.



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TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS!



We have designed a brief survey regarding the professional development opportunities offered by the Southeast Library System. While we consistently gather feedback through event evaluations and informal conversations, we value the chance to hear from you more directly. Because we serve every participating library across our 20-county area, we invite all school, academic, and public library staff to share their thoughts. Whether you are a director, a youth services librarian, a solo practitioner, or serve in another vital role, your perspective is incredibly welcome and appreciated.



TAKE THE SURVEY!

NLC Book Club Spotlight – *The Perfume Thief*

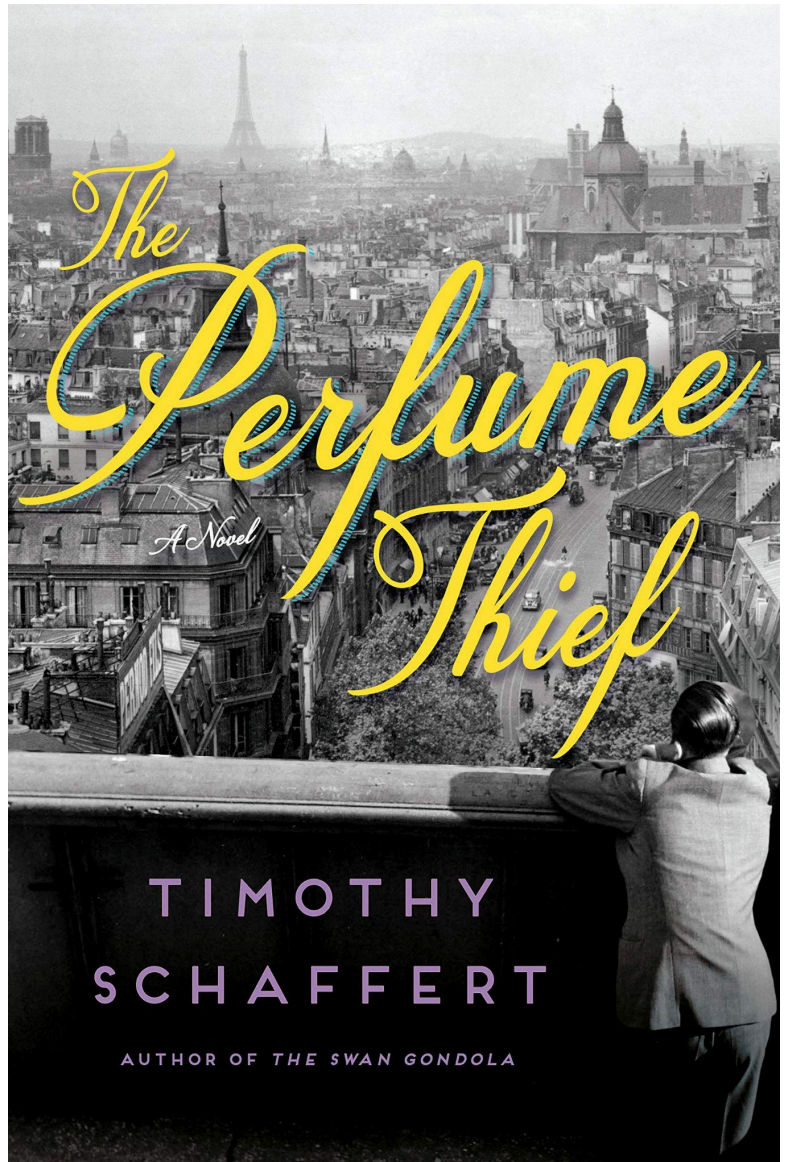
Provided by Mackenzie Marrow, [see full blogpost here](#)

Paris, 1941. Notorious thief of perfumes both valuable and rare, Clementine, has hung up her hat and lives life in semi-retirement creating perfumes for the ladies of Paris. With Nazi forces controlling daily life, the once vibrant and lush city is haunted by shuttered restaurants, empty stores, and struggling nightclubs. Residents do what they must to get from one day to the next alive, including Clem, who has enough on her mind keeping loved ones safe before being pulled out of retirement for one last heist. A Francophile Nazi bureaucrat has come to the city in search of a famous perfumer's notebook, and Clem must infiltrate his confidence to steal the diary before the deadly secret of a cabaret star is exposed.

Pantomiming a performance of the once great city to appease the Nazi soldiers who were promised [The City of Lights](#), artists and those on the margins who were once embraced had to tread carefully to survive. Featuring a protagonist in their 70s, the novel's acts of bravery and rebellion are not as loud and explosive as other stories of heroes facing Nazis may be, but the subtlety and cunning employed by those not on the front lines is no less important or deadly. There is much to learn from the beautiful and colorful characters who grace the page of *The Perfume Thief*, and Adult Book Groups who are fans of Historical Fiction will enjoy this look into a world of espionage and perfume resulting from Schaffert's dedicated research.

If your readers are fans of Schaffert, you're in luck! He will be speaking at Norfolk Public Library on [June 20th](#), followed by a reception at the Norfolk Arts Center featuring his work.

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



Swanson Center Camp Carol Joy Holling

32ND ANNUAL JOINT YOUTH SERVICES RETREAT



September 3 & 4

- A chance to network with your colleagues
- Learn from experienced presenters and from each other
- Relax and have fun!
- Games, Boating, Smores!



Register Here!

For more information, click here!

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.

SECOND LADY



USHA VANCE

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

1

Choose your *books*



2

Track your *progress*



3

Submit your *Reading Log*



4

Claim your *PRIZES!*



System Spotlight

Did you know that the Southeast Library System provides **scholarships** to pay for continuing education events? Currently, we are especially encouraging people to apply who have never attended the Joint Youth Services Retreat, or who have not done so for several years! Contact Deb Robertson at deb.robertson@selsne.org with any questions!



Southeast Library System

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