



# Southeast Signal

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

## From the Director



Looking back at the article I wrote at the first of the year, I talked about how your goals & “mental picture” for the library may be tested by other people. I did not expect this whole year to be such a

different type of test.

After we have tried and tried for years to get people into the library, many of us had to spend a good chunk of this year telling people they couldn’t come in for now. “Library as place” has been an integral part of many library’s focuses since the widespread adoption of home internet.

On the flip side, many of our users can’t afford home internet, so we saw many people sitting outside our buildings trying to connect to the wifi they now needed to keep up with school or work tasks.

Another side effect of the pandemic was new or heightened conflict with our city, school, or organizational administrations. Questions about who has the power necessary to create new policies and procedures on closing or reopening the library and how to provide services outside of the usual method would continue to pop up. Many assumptions on library governance were challenged this year.

Probably greatest of the tests we saw this year were the amount of personal stress many of us had dealing

with the pandemic. From being physically isolated from some of the people we hold most dear to seeing loved ones pass because of COVID complications – it has been hard on many of us.

COVID wasn’t the only test we saw in this country. I could probably fill a whole newsletter trying to recap how many of us gained new awareness of the level of racial injustice that still exists in our country. The growing political division we have seen is another one that can’t be covered adequately in 400 words.

With all that said, there is hope for a better year. Vaccines for COVID are being shipped to states now. Greater awareness on racial injustice can lead to more people actively working on changing the culture that allows it. A light has been shown on just how far apart citizens have grown in their political beliefs, so now we can address it in practical ways instead of just in theory.

This year has been a crucible and while it wasn’t pleasant, these trying times have given us a clearer picture of the world around us. I’ve often said that we can’t fix what we don’t know is broken. Now we know so let’s adjust our “mental pictures” for the library, realign our goals, roll up our sleeves and get back to work. I’ve got your back – we are all in this together!

### In this Issue:

Page 1—From the Director

Page 2—Calendar

Page 3—CASTL Wrap-up

Pages 4-6—News Around the System

Page 7—Other News and Flyers

Page 8—System Spotlight

# Calendar

December 15, Bill of Rights Day

December 18, [CASTL via Zoom, "Lincoln Public Schools MOSAIC project"](#)

December 20, National Wreaths Across America Day

December 21, Crossword Puzzle Day

December 23, Roots Day (Family History)

December 24, Christmas Eve, SELS Office Closed

December 25, Christmas, SELS Office Closed

December 26, National Candy Cane Day

December 29, National Hero Day

December 31, New Year's Eve

January 1, New Year's Day, SELS Office Closed

January 2, National Science Fiction Day

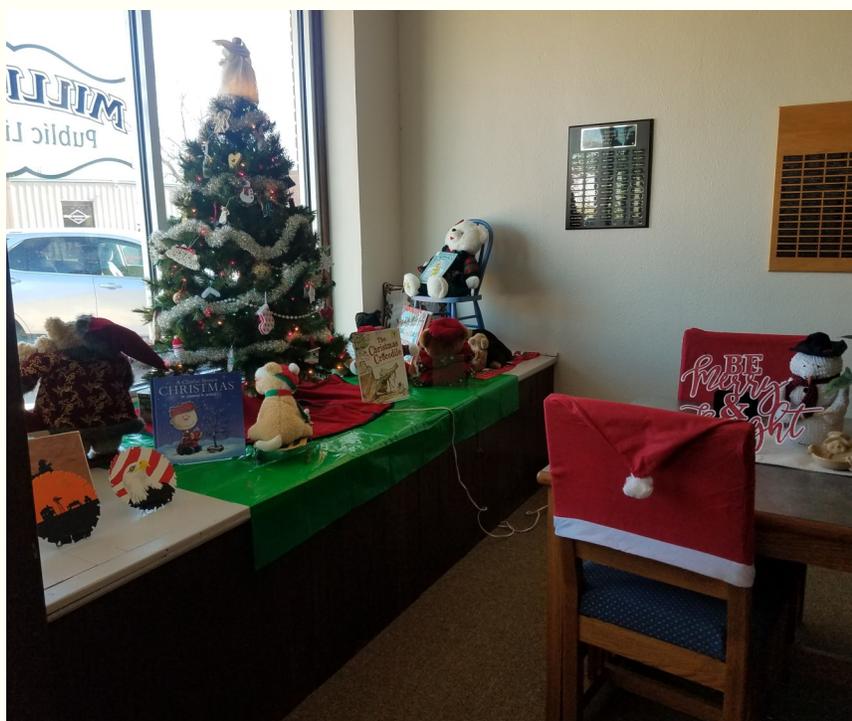
January 3, National Fruitcake Toss Day

January 4, National Trivia Day

February 4, 1-3, or February 5, 10-12, [Fully Engaged Customer Service](#) (see pp. 6 & 7)



# Photo of the Month



The Milligan Public Library doesn't have the storytime activities at this time but Christmas is in the air. The picture shows the view that is in the window looking out on Main Street. Thanks to the librarians the entire library is decked out for the holiday season. Patrons are coming in to check out books and masks and social distancing are followed.

—Shirley Brunkow

# CASTL Wrap-up

## Upcoming CASTL Meetings

December 18  
 Online—Zoom, 10-12  
 "Lincoln Public Schools  
 MOSAIC Project"

January 22  
 Online—Zoom, 10-12  
 "Social Media for  
 Small Libraries"

February 18  
 Online—Zoom, 10-12  
 "Leadership: Small Acts,  
 Big Results"

Our November 19th CASTL was held via Zoom with Sam Shaw presenting on the Bibliostat software used for collecting data from public libraries. He went through the entire survey with us, answered questions along the way, and promised to follow up on some items.

The survey this year has some new questions due to COVID. For example, it asks how many weeks during the year that a library was physically closed due to COVID. The question arose as to what "closed" meant exactly, because most libraries were still offering services even if they did not allow the public into the main part of the building. The answer was that a library was closed if it did not let patrons into the library beyond the lobby (e.g. to use the public computers or to browse). It could offer WIFI, curbside services, and virtual programs and still for the purposes of this question be physically closed.

Another question asked how many weeks a library limited public occupancy, such as reduced hours open, closed meeting rooms, visit by appointment, and visitor time limits.

Some of the data for Bibliostat is conveniently already in the form (such as population or Overdrive statistics). That information can be modified, if necessary, by calling Sam Shaw.

In the past, database use has been sometimes hard to ascertain, and that number must no longer be entered.

Finally, it should be noted that there are a number of new state level questions regarding COVID services. However, these require a simple "Yes" or "No" answer and should not take much time to fill.

# Upcoming Basic Skills Courses

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

<u>Dates of Class</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Registration</u>
December 14—January 4	Intellectual Freedom and Core Values	November 16—December 7
January 1—January 31	Communication	December 4—December 30

# News Around the System

## Christmas on the Square

*Story by Cheryl Green, photos by Denise Smith*

It was Christmas on the Square the night of December 2nd in Clay Center.

The library had books available for children to choose a free one and a reindeer game they could win prizes for. Approximately 85 books were given away. It was a cold but wonderful evening.



## New Sign

*Story and photos by Monica Tidyman*

The Stromsburg Public Library Foundation provided the Stromsburg Public Library with a new sign face back in October - it looks so much better than the old sign! *(Both are pictured)*



# News Around the System

## Maintaining a Festive Spirit

*Story and photo by Wanda Marget*

Fairmont Public Library maintains Holiday Cheer, even as most patrons switch to curbside pickup while the area is in the red zone.



## Sandy's Snow Scene

*Courtesy of Sandy Wallick*

Sandy presented at our Summer Reading Program Workshop for one last time. She will be missed when she retires at the end of January! For this newsletter, she provided a picture of a winter craft that she hasn't been able to find on Pinterest. She says that for this snow scene "she used a magnetic round box from Dollar Tree that's about 3 1/2 inches. They have slightly smaller ones (2 for a dollar) that I think would also make a great outdoor scene with small animals in them (scrapbook paper can be glued in the back for the scenery)."



# News Around the System

## SELS to Hold a Zoom Class on Fully Engaged Customer Service

Whether you spend most of your time on the front lines or primarily serve internal customers, your ability to handle your workload will be enhanced when you learn how to complete customer interactions successfully at the first point of contact, while cultivating a positive attitude and keeping stress levels to a minimum.

Improving customer service outcomes requires moving beyond old habits to create a lasting change in behavior. In this safe and friendly environment you will practice simple, powerful techniques for improving

- Eye contact
- Facial expression and body language
- Tone of voice
- Availability to customers
- Your ability to listen when distracted
- Customers' ability to self-serve in the future

In this session with library consultant Cheryl Gould on your choice of either February 4 or February 5, you will practice and experience how to enhance service through being fully engaged to create a win-win experience that saves time for both you and the customer.

Participants are required to turn on video (have a camera) and possess a microphone for this Zoom class in order to participate actively. The two class opportunities are limited to 15 participants each, so register early at <https://bit.ly/engaged36>. (More on the next page.)



## NLA Gives Away Free Memberships

To celebrate the Nebraska Library Association's 125th anniversary, there is an offer for 125 free memberships. Join the 60+ people who have received their free membership! The deadline to sign up is December 31, 2020.

This offer for a year of free membership applies if you have never been a member or your membership has lapsed for five years or more. What a great chance to see what the NLA is all about! Click here to sign up: [125 New Members for 125th Anniversary Submission](#).



# Fully Engaged Customer Service

A Zoom Class by  
consultant Cheryl Gould

---

Participants must have a microphone and camera. Both skills based classes are the same and are limited to 15 persons each. Register at <https://bit.ly/engaged36>

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



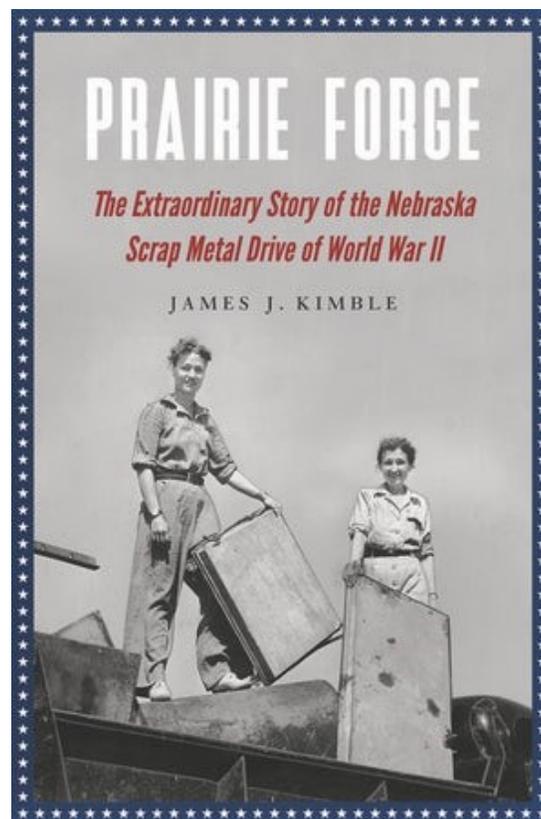
**FEB 4 • 1:00 PM TO 3:00 PM**  
**FEB 5 • 10:00 AM TO 12:00 AM**

# System Spotlight

## New Book Kit

SELS has a new book kit. It is the 2021 One Book One Nebraska choice: *Prairie Forge*. The book is the account of how at the beginning of World War II, the nation had a shortage of steel. Henry Doorly, publisher of the *Omaha World-Herald*, had the idea of holding a metal gathering competition, and Nebraskans gathered 67,000 tons of scrap metal in only three weeks. This then became a model for the rest of the nation.

The One Book One Nebraska reading program is entering its seventeenth year and encourages Nebraskans across the state to read and discuss one book, chosen from books written by Nebraska authors or that have a Nebraska theme or setting.



## Southeast Library System

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

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

### Staff:

Executive Director—Scott Childers  
scott.childers.sels@gmail.com  
Direct phone: 531-530-3011

Assistant Director—Todd Schlechte  
todd.schlechte.sels@gmail.com  
Direct phone: 531-530-3010

Administrative Assistant—Vacant

### Contact Us:

Local Phone: 402-467-6188  
Toll Free Phone: 800-288-6063  
Fax: 844-270-7004

selsne@gmail.com

5730 R St. Suite C-1  
Lincoln, NE 68505

