



June 2026

A photograph of a green harvester working in a field under a cloudy sky.

The Western Sun

The Western Library System's Monthly Newsletter

News from Around the System

Summer Reading is in Full Swing!

Many libraries across the system have kicked off their Summer Reading Programs, and the excitement is absolutely **dino-mite!** From roaring good stories to prehistoric crafts, games, and activities, readers of all ages are stomping into summer fun.

Check out some of these **T. rex-cellent** highlights from around the system!

WNCC SUMMER READING



**WE ARE HIDING BRONTY, BRENT AND
BUDDY WITH A FOSSIL EVERY TWO WEEKS!**

WNCC Summer Reading started May 11th. While we focus on Adult reading programs, we also do some fun kid friendly crafts and a new take on our popular Buddy the Cougar on a Bookshelf Program. We are looking at doing a book folding class later in the summer.



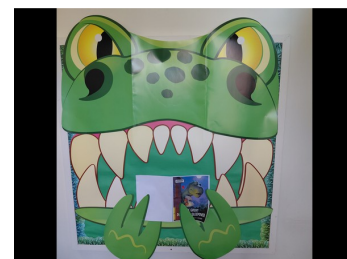
Bayard Public Library

Aaron Fowler performs at Bayard Public Library's Summer Reading Kickoff



Sidney Public Library

High school art students helped paint the library's windows this year



Grant County Library

A dinosaur-themed display greets you when you enter the Grant County Library



Kathleen Lute Public Library

A prehistoric adventure awaits at Kathleen Lute Public Library



Alliance Public Library

Welcome to Jurassic Park! Walking into Alliance Public



Lied Scottsbluff Public Library

The dinosaurs have moved in and taken over the children's

Library makes you feel like
Chris Pratt in an action movie

section at Lied Scottsbluff
Public Library



Lied Scottsbluff Public Library

The Friends of the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library sponsored a roar-some Storywalk in the library park



Gering Public Library

Gering Public Library held their Summer Reading Kickoff in the Gering Civic Center. The line for the cotton candy machine stretched outside!



Gering Public Library

The Gering Public Library Friends and Foundation held a live-action Try Your Luck game



Trenton Public Library

Dinosaurs have stampeded through Trenton Public Library!



Palisade Public Library

A few dinos have taken up residence at Palisade Public Library



Culbertson Public Library

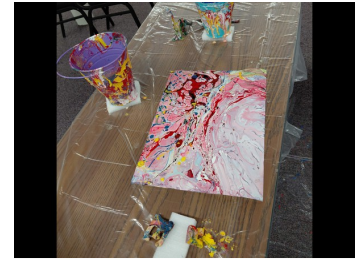
Check out this cool dino diorama craft summer reading participants made at Culbertson Public Library

Hydro dipping

Have you heard about hydro dipping? There are several methods to hydro dip, but here is one easy way to hold a hydro dipping program: fill a container with water, then add small amounts of thinned oil paint or enamel paint onto the surface. Because the paint is oil-based, it spreads and floats instead of dissolving. The colors can be gently moved with a stick, skewer, or comb to create marble-like swirls. Then the object is slowly dipped through the floating paint, letting the pattern cling to its surface. After the object is removed, it dries and may be sealed with a clear coat.

Western Library System staff have held several hydro dipping demonstrations for libraries. Interested in learning more about hydro dipping? Please let us know, we would be happy to show you!

(P.S. be sure to wear clothes you don't mind getting paint on, hydro dipping can get messy in the best possible way!)



Let Freedom Read: Western Library System Annual Meeting

Let Freedom Read: Western Library System Celebrating 50 Years

Kimball Public Library and Goodhand Theatre
★ Thursday, July 30th 2026 ★

Western Library System

Get ready to check out a star-spangled day in Kimball!

The **Western Library System Annual Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, July 30, 2026**, in **Kimball, Nebraska**, at the **Kimball Public Library and Goodhand Theatre**.

Please plan to arrive at the **Kimball Public Library at 9:30 a.m. MT** for registration, library tours, coffee, and networking. The meeting will begin promptly at **10:00 a.m. MT**.

This event is free to attend. Please register by the end of the day on **Wednesday, July 22**, so we can plan accurately for lunch and refreshments. **To personalize the event for everyone, we kindly ask that each person register individually.**

[Register](https://bit.ly/WLSAnnualMeeting2026) for the Annual Meeting here: bit.ly/WLSAnnualMeeting2026

32nd Annual Joint Youth Services Retreat

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!



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.

Every year, Nebraska's Regional Library Systems sponsor the Joint Youth Services Retreat at Camp Carol Joy Holling, near Ashland NE. Designed expressly for library staff serving children and teens, the Joint Youth Services Retreat on September 3rd and 4th is a time to connect with and learn from fellow colleagues in a beautiful setting.

[Register here!](#)

[Find more information about the retreat here](#)

United for Libraries Virtual: Trustees – Friends – Foundations



[Registration is free](#) for Nebraska library staff, board members, friends, and foundation members to attend United for Libraries Virtual 2026, because the Nebraska Library Commission pays for

a statewide membership for United for Libraries.

Programming runs from 11:00 am Eastern to approximately 4:00 pm Eastern daily with scheduled breaks. Registrants may participate in some or all program sessions live, and/or watch recordings on-demand.

Themed days offer focused programming. You can register for a single day, multiple days, or the full conference.

- Trustee/Board Member Day - Tuesday, July 28, 2026
- Foundations & Fundraising Day - Wednesday, July 29, 2026

2026 NLA/MPLA Joint Conference



Registration information is now available for the 2026 Nebraska Library Association and Mountain Plains Library Association Joint Conference.

The conference dates are Wednesday, October 14 – Friday, October 16, 2026

Pre-conference sessions take place Wednesday, with the full conference continuing Thursday and Friday at the La Vista Conference Center in La Vista, Nebraska.

[More details about the conference here](#)

Second Lady's Summer Reading Challenge

Second annual Second Lady's 2026 Summer Reading Challenge for children in K-8. Participants who read and track 12 books of their choice between June 1 and September 4 will receive a personalized certificate and an America 250th anniversary-themed bookmark. They will also be entered for a chance to visit Washington, D.C., and the White House with a chaperone. Learn more at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/read/>



SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

1

Choose your *books*

2

Track your *progress*

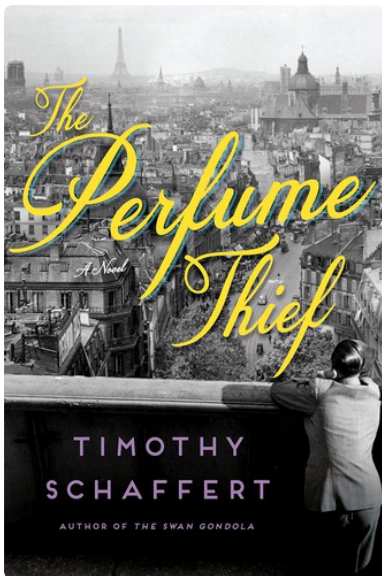
3

Submit your *Reading Log*

4

Claim your *PRIZES!*

NLC Book Club Spotlight



The Perfume Thief

June is a month of celebration and reflection for ourselves, and our community. For today's Book Club Spotlight, we'll be revisiting an author who is not only a friend to Nebraska Libraries, but an active member in our state's literary tradition. Winner of the [Nebraska Book Awards for Fiction in 2022](#) and previously featured author of the [Swan Gondola](#), Timothy Schaffert's novel *The Perfume Thief* takes his readers to the cold, destitute Paris of World War II. But underneath lies a beautiful community of artists who choose to love fiercely, and celebrate each other even in the darkest of times.

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.

Like all countries ravaged by the war, France is still coming to terms with the devastation caused and the effects it still has on its people and culture today. In 2025, Paris unveiled a [memorial to the LGBTQ+ victims of the holocaust](#) of a giant metallic star with one side a matte black of the dark and painful history it remembers, and a bright mirror on the other, reflecting back hope and light of a bright future onto the viewer.

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.**

Mackenzie Marrow is the librarian in charge of book clubs at the Nebraska Library Commission and wants to share with everyone the hidden gems in the [NLC's Book Club Kits Collection](#).

Grant and Scholarship Opportunities



[Creative Aging Arts Program \(CAAP\)](#)

Apply for CAAP grants at least six weeks ahead.

Grants cover most or all expenses. Funds are limited, and grants are processed first-come, first-served.



[Rob-See-Co Library Grant 2026](#)

[Applications due June 30, 2026](#). Preference is given to rural libraries operating in and serving local communities within the Rob-See-Co sales territory. Each grant will be a minimum of \$500. The focus areas for grant distributions will assist local libraries with expanding book collections, core educational programs for adults or children, and computer or software upgrades.



[USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants](#)

[Applications due June 30, 2026](#). \$50,000 to \$750,000 grants to assist rural communities, with populations of 20,000 or fewer, in acquiring equipment and technology that support distance learning and telemedicine services. 15% match required.



Twenty scholarships are being awarded to library staff from small and rural libraries to attend this fall's [ARSL conference](#). The deadline for the [NNLM Professional Development Award](#) is June 15 – selected recipients receive up to \$1,500 to cover registration and travel for ARSL 2026.



[National Endowment for the Arts Grants for Arts Projects](#)

For projects taking place in 2027. Organizations eligible to apply include: Nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organizations; Units of state or local government; or Federally recognized tribal communities or tribes. Cost share/matching grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$150,000. **Two funding cycles each year: applications due February 12 and July 9, 2026.**

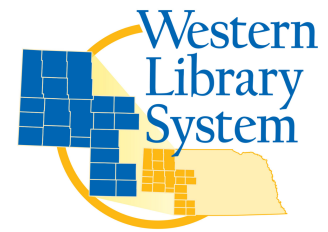
[Lois Lenski Covey Foundation Bookmobile Grants](#)

2026 Applications must be postmarked by August 15, 2026. Grants to organizations that operate a lending bookmobile that travels neighborhoods populated by underserved youth. \$500 to \$3,000 grants to purchase books published for young people preschool through grade 8. Bookmobiles operated by charitable [501(c)(3)] and other non taxable agencies, including public libraries or schools, are eligible. Only hardcopy (paper) applications will be accepted by mail.

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Western Library System Scholarships

The Western Library System (WLS) created a scholarship fund to support and encourage the professional development of library staff in the system. Member library staff may use the money for professional membership association dues and meetings, classes, workshops, or other professional development activities. Funding may also be used for presenters at your library. Upon approval, funds will be dispersed.



[Apply for a WLS Scholarship](#)

Education and Training

Education & Training | Nebraska Library Commission Blog



[Here](#) is a list of free training opportunities coming up this week and some recently recorded webinars!

Maine State Library Continuing Education Calendar



CE CALENDAR
Continuing Education

[Here](#) is a list of free training resources which is compiled each month by the Maine State Library and WebJunction.

Upcoming NCompass Live Shows



[NCompass Live](#) is broadcast live, every Wednesday, from 10am - 11am Central Time.

[Unlocking Nebraska's Stories: Introducing the Nebraska Literary & History Escape Room Kits](#)

- **Date:** 6/17/2026
- **[Register](#) by:** 6/15/2026

[Pretty Sweet Tech](#)

- **Date:** 6/24/2026
- **[Register](#) by:** 6/22/2026

[Library Compliance with the ADA Title II Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) Rule](#)

- **Date:** 7/8/2026
- **[Register](#) by:** 7/6/2026

[Community Literacy Treasure Hunt: The Fun Way to Increase Literacy!](#)

- **Date:** 7/15/2026
- **[Register](#) by:** 7/13/2026

The [shows are recorded](#) for anyone who may want to watch again or who cannot attend at the scheduled time. Registration for a live show is not required to view the archived recording.

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Basic Skills Courses



Class: [Communication](#)

- **Class Dates:** Self-paced
- **Registration Dates:** Available any time

Class: [Reference](#)

- **Class Dates:** 7/6 - 7/17
- **Registration Dates:** 5/25 - 6/19

Class: [Library Policy](#)

- **Class Dates:** 7/27 - 8/7
- **Registration Dates:** 6/15 - 7/10

Class: [Collection Management](#)

- **Class Dates:** 8/17 - 8/28
- **Registration Dates:** 7/13 - 8/7

Class: [Programming and Outreach](#)

- **Class Dates:** 9/14 - 9/25
- **Registration Dates:** 8/3 - 9/4

[More information about the Basic Skills for Nebraska Librarians Courses](#)

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Upcoming Events

July 1 - Opening Day for [Public Library Accreditation Process](#)

July 14 - Western Library System Board Meeting, Scottsbluff and Virtual

July 30 - Western Library System Annual Meeting, Kimball

August 19-21 - Quarterly Meeting with the Commission, Scottsbluff, WLS Office

September 3, 4 - Joint Youth Services Retreat, Ashland

September 20 - Craig Johnson Author Tour, 1:00 p.m., Chase County Schools Auditorium, Imperial

September 20 - Craig Johnson Author Tour, 6:00 p.m., Sidney High School Auditorium, Sidney

September 21 - Craig Johnson Author Tour, 6:00 p.m., Midwest Theater, Scottsbluff

September 22 - Craig Johnson Author Tour, 6:00 p.m., Memorial Hall Auditorium, Chadron

October 14, 15, 16 - [NLA/MPLA Joint Conference](#), La Vista

October 17 - Nebraska School Librarians Day, Kearney and Omaha



Save the Date



We've Moved to a **New Website & Email!**

Please update your records with our new contact info:

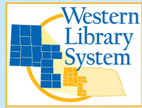
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This activity is supported in part with funding from the State of Nebraska and from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the Nebraska Library Commission.



Western Library System

www.westernlibrarysystem.org



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