

# Nebraska Press Women

nebraskapresswomen.org

Fall/winter 2014

## Potter sweeps national communications contest

Lori Potter and Delaware Press Association won top honors in the 2014 National Federation of Press Women's annual professional communications contest.

Awards were presented during the communications contest recognition ceremony, held Sept. 6 at the national convention at Greenville, S.C.

Potter captured the individual sweepstakes honor for the third time. She also won top honors in 2008 at the conference in Idaho and 2012 at the conference in Arizona.

Potter received a plaque and \$250 check for finishing in the top spot.

Finishing second was Mary Beth Breckenridge of Ohio who won \$150 for her efforts.

Third place and \$100 went to Christina Motley of North Carolina.

The awards were determined on the number of winning entries a mem-



(Mary Pat Finn-Hoag)

**WINNER – NFPW President Teri Ehresman presented Nebraska Press Women Lori Potter with a plaque recognizing her as the sweepstakes winner in the national communications contest.**

ber submitted and the number of entries in those categories.

Delaware Press Association received \$100 for having the most members

place in the national contest.

This year, 22 affiliates and an at-large group sub-

## Thone receives 2014 Communicator of Achievement award

by Martha Stoddard

Ruth Raymond Thone of Lincoln received the 2014 Nebraska Press Women Communicator of Achievement in absentia. She was not at the fall convention because her husband, Charlie, was in poor health. But, she got to hear the award presentation through the magic of cell phones.



**THONE**

Ruth is a freelance writer, an author, a community activist and former first lady of Nebraska. She is a Scottsbluff native who worked at the Scottsbluff Star-Herald while in high school.

She got her journalism degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and was editor of the Daily Nebraskan. After graduation, she worked at the Lincoln Star and was assistant editor of the Nebraska Education News, put out by the Nebraska State Education Association.

In later years, she has written magazine articles, provided commentary for Nebraska Public Radio and written columns for the Lincoln

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# President's Column

It is an honor to serve as your Nebraska Press Women president these next two years, and I look forward to working with all of you to move our organization forward.

My goal is to focus on how Nebraska Press Women can best meet the needs of our members, whether they are from newspaper, broadcast, advertising, public relations or other communication backgrounds.

It's our members' diverse experiences that make Nebraska Press Women unique, as well as a valuable asset for both professional development and networking. Both are increasingly important in today's world.

This will be a team effort, and your new board already is looking ahead to 2015. Membership directors Judy Nelson and Kerry Hoffschneider, with assistance from last year's director Cheryl Alberts Irwin, will soon be asking for members' opinions about what they value most about NPW and how it can best meet their needs. Watch for an email with a link to the survey in January – and then tell us your opinions. This information will guide the board as it plans for the future.

The professional communication contest and the high school contest are just around the corner, and Terri Hahn and Bette Pore already are promoting them. This will be our second year that both contests will be online. Look for details on the professional contest on page 3 and start thinking about what you want to enter.

Barb Batie will compile Ruth Thone's nomination to represent Nebraska as our 2015 Communicator of Achievement in the 2015 National Federation of Press Women competition, and she'll be looking for nominations for next year's award. Let her know if you have suggestions.

As the new scholarship chair, Jill Claflin is contacting colleges and high schools to let them know about our two scholarships – one for a collegiate student and another for a high school senior.

As vice president, Cheryl Alberts Irwin is seeking nominations for the Hall of Fame award. Start thinking



(File photo)

**SHERRY THOMPSON**



(Mary Pat Finn-Hoag)

**NEW BOARD – The 2015 Nebraska Press Women board includes (from left) Lori Potter, treasurer; Mary Jane Skala, secretary; Cheryl Alberts Irwin, vice president; and Sherry Thompson, president.**

## 2015 Nebraska Press Women board

President: Sherry Thompson

Vice President: Cheryl Alberts Irwin

Secretary: Mary Jane Skala

Treasurer: Lori Potter

Achievement Award: Barb Batie

Communication Contest: Terri Hahn

High School Contest: Bette Pore

Historian: Mary Pat Finn-Hoag

Member Services: Barb Micek

Membership: Judy Nelson and Kerry Hoffschneider

Newsletter: Mary Pierce

Publicity: Terri Hahn

Legislative/First Amendment: Stephanie Geery-Zink

Parliamentarian: Beverly Wieler

Scholarship: Jill Claflin

Past President: Bette Pore

**"When the public's right to know is threatened, and when the rights of free speech and free press are at risk, all of the other liberties we hold dear are endangered."**

– Christopher Dodd

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# Online contest enters second year

by *Terri Hahn*

After a successful (but trying at times!) first year, the National Federation of Press Women and the Nebraska Press Women will continue the process of hosting an online contest.

Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of information at this time, but we'll pass it on as soon as we get it. That information will include the contest website address, entry processes and deadlines and more. It is expected the entry deadline will be in late January.

What we can tell you is that the entry fees will remain the same (\$10 for the first entry and \$5 for each additional entry) and the contest categories will be the same as last year.

So while waiting for more information, check out the contest categories on the

NFPW website and get those entries in order. The contest website will accept pdf's, jpg's, Word documents, etc., just about any digital document will be accepted.

Members who work at weekly newspapers that don't have pagination may need to scan articles or pages in order to produce a digital file. In the case of full-page entries, if you can't scan a full page, take a photo and send it as a .jpg file.

All categories have the same deadline. The only exception to the online contest is that people entering books or publication editing may mail their book, newspaper or magazine to the affiliate contest director if they don't have a digital file. Entrants should just go to the website, fill out the entry form and print it in order to send a copy of the entry form with the book, newspaper or

magazine. The judges are being instructed not to give preference to entries that are uploaded over the mailed entries in these categories.

You can pay for your entries online with a credit card, or you can choose to mail a check to the contest director. When you click on Pay Now, it will show how much the entry fees are and there is a box you can check that says Pay Offline. That means you will mail your check.

To enter the contest, your dues must be paid by Dec. 31.

And one final request: if you are planning on entering the contest, please send an email to me at [terri.hahn@theindependent.com](mailto:terri.hahn@theindependent.com) as soon as possible. I want to make sure I have everyone's current email address in my system so I can get the contest info out as soon as I get it from the national office.

## Cash prize now offered in high school contest

In an effort to increase participation in the Nebraska Press Women High School Journalism Contest, in 2015, the contest will include a \$100 cash sweepstakes award to the high school with the most points for student awards, along with a trophy for that school's journalism department.

Funds for the first year will come from proceeds from the art raffle conducted at the 2014 spring NPW convention. In the future, with more participation, there should be enough income from the contest to support the award.

Next year will be the second year that the contest is conducted online, with students entering digital copies of their work to be judged online.

Bette Pore is the contest director, but an assistant director is needed. The position must be filled by a National Federation of Press Women member who would be willing to learn about the online system with the intention to become contest director in the future.

Anyone interested in filling the position can contact Pore at (308) 383-7299.

## NPW members asked to state their opinions

by *Judy Nelson*

Please make your opinions known!

What do you think?

When it comes to Nebraska Press Women, what do you value most about the organization? What is NPW doing well, and what could it do better? What topics would you like to see offered as workshop topics? How can NPW best meet the needs of its members?

You have the opportunity to make your opinions known

on these and other questions in an NPW electronic survey coming soon to a computer near you.

All NPW members will receive an electronic survey in January, after the holidays as we all look to the new year. Information you provide will help direct NPW's board in addressing ways to best meet members' needs now and in the future. Your input is important.

Mindful of everyone's busy schedule, the survey will be quick to complete,

with multiple choice and short-answer questions. You control the time you spend on any answer.

Please help. When you receive your survey in January, please take the few minutes needed to contribute your ideas and opinions.

Have an item for the newsletter?

Nebraska Press Women's quarterly newsletter seeks news about its members.

Email information to [mpierce@ogallalacnews.com](mailto:mpierce@ogallalacnews.com)



## Thone receives 2014 Communicator of Achievement Award..

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Journal Star, Omaha World-Herald, Washington Post Outlook magazine and The Christian Science Monitor. In her 80s, she still writes a regular column for the Journal Star's Neighborhood Extra section.

Through her writing, she has shared her personal journeys, from being first lady and mother of three daughters to overcoming an alcohol problem, quitting smoking and surviving an aneurysm and a stroke.

She has authored or co-authored three books: "Fat, a Fate Worse Than Death? Women, Weight and Aging;" "Women and Aging: Celebrating Ourselves," which was based on a course she taught at Southeast Community College; and "Being Home," a collection of her columns.



(Lori Potter)

**CONGRATULATIONS –** During the fall conference, Martha Stoddard congratulated Ruth Thone by phone on her being selected for the Communicator of Achievement award.

Ruth also has been active in her community and the wider world. In 1982, she helped found The Gathering Place, where people from all walks of life could come together. Located in a home near downtown Lincoln, it offered classes, lectures and

events in its initial years. It also was a soup kitchen, serving meals for people in need of something to eat. It is now a program of Community Action, which serves 30,000 meals a year.

She has been a state and national board member of

Common Cause, a government watchdog group, and been active in several peace and justice causes.

A long-time NPW and NFPW member, Ruth has spoken at state conferences and has won several awards for her writing.

That's the tame version of her achievements. The other is that Ruth spent much of her life scandalizing others, whether by allowing herself to be photographed sliding down the banister in the governor's mansion or by refusing to back down on controversial issues.

For example: in 1952, the middle of the McCarthy era, when she was a college student and Daily Nebraskan editor, a committee of the Lincoln American Legion started investigating a well-respected professor. Ruth took them on with fiery words—"The Nebraskan will not stop or slow down its efforts to rid our citizenry of this current fear of thinking, of disputing, of speaking truthfully"—for which she was publicly criticized by the Legion committee chairman.

The incident didn't turn out too bad for her, though. The committee disbanded in the face of mounting criticism and her writing caught the attention of a deputy attorney general, Charlie Thone. He not only quit the committee but ended up asking her for a date.

You know the rest of the story.

## Potter sweeps national communications....

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mitted 1,502 entries electronically in the statewide contests. Some states also submitted hard-copy entries in categories for books and publications.

There were 502 first-place entries from 124 categories in the state competitions that were advanced to the national competition. Of those entries, there were 101 first-place awards, 94 second-place awards, 70 third-place awards, and 56 honorable mentions.

(Re-printed with permission NFPW Agenda)



(Courtesy photo)

**SMILES –** After being awarded the sweepstakes in the national communications contest, Lori Potter smiles for fellow NPW member Mary Pat Finn-Hoag.

# Nebraska Press Women visit Living History Farm during fall conference

by Mary Pat Finn-Hoag

YORK—Docent Susanne Keller, attired in a flour sack apron, greets visitors to the stately two-story house that dominates a picturesque farmstead south of York.

At Wessels Living History Farm, calendar pages have been turned to the 1920s when farm life was prosperous. The price of a bushel of corn and wheat hit \$2 for the first time ever. Numerous new inventions were emerging that simplified farm tasks.

The 145-acre historic farm, which opened to the public in 2006, fulfills the dream of the late David Wessels.

The progressive York farmer and philanthropist stipulated in his will that “a certain amount of land and capital should be set aside to establish the ‘Wessels Living History Farm’.”

The York Community Foundation was formed in 1995, the year Wessels died. Research followed, leading first to the launch of an educational ag-themed website in 2003 and the development of an actual farmstead.

In 2002, a house in York where Wessels and one of his brothers had lived after moving to town was relocated to land the family farmed along Highway 81. The abandoned house, which was a gift from York College to the Wessels’ project, was



(Mary Pat Finn-Hoag)

**Marilyn Elkins, a volunteer docent, points out features of the altar of the Thayer Lutheran Church to members of the Nebraska Press Women, including Sherry Thompson (middle) of Omaha and Cheryl Alberts-Irwin (right) of Lincoln.**

restored and completely furnished to represent 1925.

Docent Mary Faig, who led a recent tour of the main floor of the house for Nebraska Press Women members, pointed out the many donated furnishings. The only deviation from the 1920s’ furnishings is the 1940s cookstove, which is used for demonstrations and to make such goodies as cornmeal cookies for visitors.

A red, timber-frame barn was moved to the site in 2003.

Other older buildings include a corncrib, garage, well house, chicken coop and out-house. The blades of the 14-foot wheel of a special-edition Dempster windmill, purchased for the Wessels site in 2005, are gold plated.

A modern building houses 20 tractors and a pull-behind combine owned and restored by Wessels, as well as other pieces of antique equipment.

The Thayer Lutheran Church, which was closed due to declining membership,

was hauled 17 miles to the history farm last November. After the electrical system was rewired, a sprinkler system added and other updates completed, the church was opened to the public in August.

The traditional Missouri Synod Lutheran-style church was built and furnished in 1905 at a cost of \$4,052, said volunteer docent Marilyn (Galbraith) Elkins, a Beemer native. The church includes the original altar, pulpit, baptismal font, hand-carved pews and original windows with lead weights.

The pipe organ, which dates to 1915, didn’t even need tuning after the move, she said. Neither were there any cracks in the windows nor walls from the move.

The church, which seats 140, now is the site of weddings as is the lawn in front of the house, Elkins said.

The land continues to be farmed by family members with proceeds to the Wessels foundation, said Dale Clark, director of the Wessels Living History Farm.

When hired in 2005, he said the farmstead was “nothing but unfinished buildings.” Extensive work has been done since then.

“The community has shown great support,” said Clark, a former director of

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# NPW members get a glimpse into the past

By Nancy Hansen

YORK – Sixteen Nebraska Press Women and guests gathered around Miss Lizi at the entrance to Wessels Living History Farm on Oct. 4, for a tour stepping back to the 1920s.

The NPW Fall Conference had highlighted the State Poet Twyla Hansen focusing on writing and Calamity Kate (Leta Powell Drake) taking them back to the beginning of television, her part of children's telecast history and her new book discussing children's programming beginning in the 1950s.

Now, the conference attendees stepped back farther into history: a glimpse of rural history near the intersections of Highway 81, near highway 34, or closer yet – the interstate, which wasn't dreamed of back in the late 1800s when the Wessels immigrated.

Miss Lizi introduced the attendees to three volunteers who explained the details of the farmhouse and church, which have been added to the living farm grounds to complete a 1920's experience with the original museum concept of farm equipment, working windmill and animal outbuildings.

The newest addition is less than a year old: The Missouri Synod Lutheran Church of Thayer. It arrived by flatbed truck in 2013 without damage to foundation, altar, pipe organ, or steeple over a two day venture the seventeen miles from its original location. The miraculous arrival and re-setting on a basement foundation is part of the story the volunteers are proud to present. When the volunteers opened the documents from the church history, which were presented by the congregation along with building, they found David Wessels listed as being baptized at that church. David Wessels was one of three sons living on the land which the Wessels Living Farm and Museum



(Lori Potter)

Several NPW members pause in front of the Wessels Living History farm house south

of York for a final visit before heading home from the NPW fall convention Oct. 4.

now resides. At the time the church was moved no one knew Wessels had attended that church. Reviewing history had presented many surprises.

The farmhouse also belonged to the Wessels family, however, was not part of the original land gift for the Living Farm given by David Wessels. The house was a Sears and Roebuck home costing the original owners, the McConaughy family \$2,400 when fully built. It was located across the street from York Business College (now York College) in York. The Wessel's purchased it in 1946 and their three bachelor sons continued to live in the home and work on the farm until it was willed to the College. When the usefulness to the college expired the fire department used it for practice fire drills before it was purchased and moved to the Living Farm location

outside of York in 2003-04. Remnants of the fire department practices can still be seen on chard but newly refinished floors.

Now, refurbished with typical 1920s period items volunteers share the sounds of the music from the Victrola, explain the difference between the grandfather, grandmother and granddaughter clocks, wider than normal doors, from the outside to a inside room, called coffin doors, and metal dust catchers in the corners of the wooden stairs. Explanation of each item, in each room of the two story home, was readily available from the volunteer guides.

The glimpse into the past was enjoyable and as the conference attendees found the offer of cookies and lemonade makes a good snack in any decade.

# State poet encourages women to write

by Mary Pat Finn-Hoag

“Write like crazy. See what happens.”

Those were the instructions given Nebraska Press Women members by Nebraska State Poet Twyla Hansen as she led a creative writing exercise during her recent “For the Love of Words” workshop presentation at the fall convention in York.

The NPW members were asked to think of a favorite fall activity or a special place related to the fall months. “Use as many senses as you can – whatever works best for you,” Hansen said.

At the end of 10 minutes, she asked: “Did everybody get a story? Did you discover something about yourself? Were you surprised by what happened (during your writing)?”

Some of the NPW members expressed surprise at what they had written.

For Ruth Brown of Lincoln, her piece focused on a family tradition while growing up at West Point: trips to Dead Timber to collect colorful leaves to decorate their home. Brown said, “I’d totally forgotten about it.”

Hansen said, “You never know what’s going to come out of these (writing) exercises.” She added: “It’s fun to write about seasons because you’re in it.”

In 1927, Nebraska was the first state to pass legislation establishing a state poet laureate when John G. Neihardt



(Mary Pat Finn-Hoag)

## NEBRASKA STATE POET TWYLA HANSEN

was named. The title is now known as Nebraska State Poet.

Hansen was named to the position in December 2013 and will serve a five-year term. The role of the state poet is to promote and encourage appreciation of poetry and literary life in Nebraska while inspiring an emerging generation of new writers.

As she read several of her poems as a way to introduce herself, the group sat silent, processing the words, visualizing what each poem meant to them.

The Lincoln resident said she writes about ordinary things.

“Things happen,” she said. “Almost anything can be a poem or a personal essay. Everything is food for poetry.”

Creative writing, unlike journalism, is a process,” Hansen said. “One thing leads to another in creative writing.”

Creative writers and journalists pay attention to their surroundings, like during her morning walks near Salt

## “This Fragile, Healing Land”

How fragile this land  
is and how healing.  
That we might gather  
its bounty, be  
humbled  
by its opulent and  
sufficient nourish-  
ment.

If we could only  
learn to inhale its  
pale breath,  
abandon ourselves to  
its fragmented song.

See, there – water,  
leaf and feather –  
ribbons  
in the wind, the sun a  
copper disk at sunset.

Let the wheel of your  
singular mind un-  
wind,  
imprint your body  
with each phase of  
the moon.

Be open to the unex-  
pected, expect to be  
amazed.

— From Twyla Hansen’s  
chapbook “Prairie Suite:  
A Celebration.”

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# Nebraska Press Women visit Living History Farm...

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educational programs at the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island. Of his current role, Wessels said, "It's a passion, not a job."

Wessels Living History Farm had a "phenomenal summer" in terms of visitors, and he is hopeful the number will exceed the 7,000 mark by year's end. The farm's website, which features the history of agriculture from the 1920s to today, had 140,000 hits in September. Included are videotaped interviews and classroom lesson plans.

Wessels Living History Farm is located one mile south of Interstate 80 south of York along Highway 81.

The farm is open from May 1 through Oct. 31 seven days a week (afternoons only on Sundays) and by appointment January through April.

In December, the farmhouse features the sights,



(Mary Pat Finn-Hoag)

**Lori Potter of Kearney shoots photos in the corncrib at the Wessels Living History Farm.**

sounds, smells and tastes of Christmas in the 1920s and is open from 1 to 4 p.m. Dec. 6-23 and 26-28. The church also will be decorated and open in December.



(Mary Pat Finn-Hoag)

**Terri Hahn (left) of Osceola and Laurie Cicatello of Hawaii catch up on the front steps of the farmhouse.**



(Lori Potter)

**Judy Nelson of Lincoln and Joan von Kampen of Omaha walk the grounds at the Wessels Living History Farm south of York. A tour of the farm was the final event of the NPW fall convention.**

## State poet encourages ...

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Creek. After almost every outing, Hansen said she could return home and write a poem about what she had just seen.

"I like to fill up cheap notebooks," scribbling away, she said. "That's how I write. Every writer is different."

As another exercise to do on one's own, Hansen challenged the audience to read a poem and then write their own version.

"Make it your own," she said.

She offered the following advice: "Read, read, read. Write, write, write. That's how you become a writer."

She quoted famed golfer Arnold Palmer: "The more I practice, the luckier I get." Hansen said that's also good advice for writers.

She garnered applause

when she said she still reads a newspaper.

Hansen, whose background is in horticulture and sustainable agriculture, had worked as a horticulturalist at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Hansen's workshop was made possible by Humanities Nebraska.

Hansen also challenged the NPW members to try another writing exercise "just for the heck of it when you have time someday." She added that it "could lead to a novel or a poem."

"Sometimes words will trigger writing," Hansen said. "Pick out about 15 words."

She tossed out these word suggestions: Dance, thumb, wallpaper, flower, break, stain, shoulder, invisible, diligent, basement, shadow, shiver and storm.





(Lori Potter)

NPW member Jill Claflin of Cozad won this framed art during a drawing at the NPW fall convention at York. The artistically enhanced photo of flying cranes on a blue background is one of four donated to NPW by Gary Stone of Scottsbluff. The fall drawing raised \$130, with two earlier drawings raising \$235. In part, funds are to help promote NPW's high school communications contest. The drawing for the fourth piece of art, a workhorse team, is to be held at spring convention.



(Lori Potter)

## Nebraska Press Women celebrate at fall conference

(Photo above) Nebraska Press Women gathered for a group shot at the Wessels Living History Farm south of York, which was the site of an activity of the fall conference.

(Photo left) NPW members met at the York Country Club Oct. 4 for the fall convention meeting, workshops and lunch. From left are Bette Pore of Grand Island, Mary Jane Skala of Kearney, Mary Pat Finn-Hoag of Norfolk and Judy Nelson of Lincoln.



(Lori Potter)

## Nominations invited for Marian Andersen Nebraska Women Journalists Hall of Fame

Nominations are being accepted through Jan. 24, 2015, for the Marian Andersen Nebraska Women Journalists Hall of Fame.

Since its inception in 2011, 14 women have been inducted into the hall.

The general public, as well as NPW members, are encouraged to submit nominations for the award. The women nominated may be living or deceased and may come from any facet of the journalism profession, including broadcast, print or online, news, advertising or public relations. Nominees must have a Nebraska background by birth or work experience, having spent a significant amount of their professional careers in the state.

Nominations submitted in 2014 will be considered again in 2015, and it is not necessary to resubmit the nomination.

Nominations will be judged on:

- Contributions to the profession.
- Achievements within the profession.
- Service to her communities (local as well as state and/or regional/national).

Nominations must give compelling reasons why the woman should be selected and must be accompanied by two letters of support, each of which addresses at least one of these criteria. They are to be submitted by email to: Cheryl Alberts Irwin at [rcirwin@windstream.net](mailto:rcirwin@windstream.net). A nomination form and guidelines are available on the NPW website [http://nebraskapresswomen.org/?page\\_id=303](http://nebraskapresswomen.org/?page_id=303).

Final selection will be made by the NPW Board of Directors.

The inductees will be recognized at the 2015 Nebraska Press Women spring convention, set for April 25, 2015, in Lexington.

Past Hall of Fame Honorees

2011 – Bess Furman Armstrong, Wilma Crumley, Lynne Grasz, Marj Marlette, Beverly Pollock and Deanna Sands

2012 – Mildred Brown, Harriet Dakin MacMurphy and Mary McGrath

2013 – Clara Bewick Colby and Maxine Moul

2014 – Gwen Lindberg, Leta Powell Drake and Elia Wilkinson Peattie

## President's Column....

*continued from page 2*

about outstanding female journalists, either living or deceased, who deserve this honor. The nomination form is on our website. The deadline for nominations is Jan. 24, 2015.

Other officers and board members will work throughout the year to keep moving NPW forward.

As secretary, Mary Jane Skala records and maintains our group's official minutes.

Treasurer Lori Potter keeps our books, and she also leads the finance committee that oversees investments. In the coming months, the committee will consider how to best invest the donation from Harold and Marian Andersen for the Marian Andersen Nebraska Women Journalists Hall of Fame. Finance committee members also include Ruth Brown and Stephanie Geery-Zink.

Member services director Barb Micek will be looking for ideas for new items that will showcase Nebraska Press Women and promote pride in our organization.

Historian Mary Pat Finn-Hoag is continuing to document NPW's history. Please provide her with any items that should be included in the

albums.

As the Legislative/First Amendment director, Stephanie Geery-Zink will keep us informed of any issues that merit our attention.

Parliamentarian Beverly Wieler is responsible for making sure that meetings run efficiently and that proper policies and procedures are followed.

As publicity director, Terri Hahn promotes NPW to the media, and she also manages our Facebook page.

Mary Pierce will continue as newsletter editor, producing the quarterly publication that keeps members informed and connected. Watch for emails with newsletter deadline information and then send her updates on NPW projects, as well as member news.

We are fortunate to have talented and dedicated board members to lead Nebraska Press Women these next two years. Thanks so much to everyone who stepped up to take on leadership roles.

If you are not on the board and are interested in getting more involved with Nebraska Press Women, please let me know, as opportunities are available.

Contact me at [sherrythompson@cox.net](mailto:sherrythompson@cox.net) or cell phone (402) 917-5789.

### Upcoming conference dates

April 24-25, 2015 – Nebraska Press Women Spring Convention, Lexington

Oct. 2-3, 2015 - Nebraska Press Women Fall Convention at the U.S. Indian Industrial School, Genoa.



# About our members

## Review of Leta Drake's "The Calamities of Kalamity Kate"

by Scott Clark  
*Lincoln Journal Star*

"And what do you want to be when you grow up?"

That's how conversations with Kalamity Kate usually culminated, when you were sitting on the benches of Cartoon Corral, in the studios of channels 10/11. At least they did if you were a pre-teen in the late 1960s through the early 1980s in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Leta Powell Drake, the woman behind the Dolly Parton hair and fringed leather skirt, has served up a tasty helping of regional nostalgia – almost as tasty as the McDonalds hamburgers we youthful guests got to enjoy when we were lucky enough to appear on her iconic children's TV show.

Drake, as Kate, was one of the pioneering forces in live children's television programming in Nebraska. Her stint as host of Cartoon Corral, from 1967 to 1982, is illustrated with colorful and heartfelt stories, both from Drake's own recollections and from the letters of many of the kids (now adults) who appeared on the show. But she doesn't stop there. In addition to reminiscing about her own days as Kalamity Kate, Drake shares insights about many of the other original children's shows aired by KOLN/

KGIN, including For Children Only with Dale Holt, Juvenile Theatre, and Romper Room.

Particularly appealing in this volume are Drake's tales of interacting with other significant television personalities, such as Bob "Captain Kangaroo" Keeshan, Jerry Lewis, Art Linkletter, or John "Dr. San Guinary" Jones, of Omaha's KMTV station.

As a curious fan of Lincoln's television history, I appreciated the 60+ black & white and 12 color photos scattered liberally throughout this book. I'm glad to know that Drake kept so many photos (or knows the folks who did)! The one thing that stood out as rather quirky in my first look through this book was Drake's choice to tell Kalamity Kate's adventures in 3rd person narration, while sharing her own personal opinions and observations in 1st person narration. However, as a reader, you quickly get used to looking at Kalamity Kate's experiences from an outside perspective.

For anyone who grew up (or who had children who grew up) in the era spanned by her show, Drake's trip down memory lane will be a pleasant one. But even if you didn't grow up on Cartoon



(Courtesy photo)

**AUTHOR – NPW member Leta Powell Drake has had published her book, "The Calamities of Kalamity Kate."**

Corral, The Calamities of Kalamity Kate is a valuable look back at the formative days of local television.

The only calamity her is that Drake didn't have more room to share even more insider stories!

Oh, and my answer to that question? I think I probably said "Astronaut"!

Scott Clark works for the Lincoln City Libraries at the downtown headquarters, where his free time is constantly threatened by an abundance of excellent books,

both old and new. He can be reached at [cannelfan.livejournal.com](http://cannelfan.livejournal.com).

Disclaimer: Scott's father, David M. Clark, also worked at channels 10/11 in the late 1960s, just like Leta Powell Drake – hosting a weekend series of Charlie Chan movies as a "wise old Chinese philosopher."

(The book is available at Barnes & Noble stores in Lincoln, The State Capitol Gift Shop and on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com))



## NPW members share snapshots from nationals

(Photo right)

Five past National Federation of Press Women presidents in attendance at the 2014 NFPW Conference in Greenville, S.C., are pictured with current President Teri Ehresman of Idaho. From left are Donna Penticuff of Indiana, Gwen White of North Carolina, Ehresman, Marsha Shuler of Louisiana, Lori Potter of Nebraska and Cynthia Price of Virginia.



(Courtesy photo)



(Lori Potter)

Longtime Nebraska Press Women member Sue Fitzgerald of Americus, Ga., formerly of Lexington and several other Nebraska towns, drove to the NFPW Conference in Greenville, S.C., in time for the COA Banquet. She was presented with a gift bag of "Nebraska" goodies from her NPW friends.



(Lori Potter)

NPW members Mary Pat Finn-Hoag of Norfolk and Barbara Micek of Fullerton enjoy layer cakes that were the dessert for the annual Communicator of Achievement Banquet Sept. 5 at the 2014 National Federation of Press Women Conference in Greenville, S.C.