

# Sage Readers

Wyoming Center for the Book

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## Literary 'map' set to hit bookshelves

"Deep West: A Literary Tour of Wyoming" started as a request that changed into an idea.

The request that every state's Center for the Book produce a literary map of their state came from the national Center for the Book at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

The idea to put that map in the form of a book came from the volunteers on the Wyoming Center for the Book board in 1998.

"The Wyoming Center for the Book board decided to do an anthology featuring Wyoming writers as a fundraiser for the center," Mike Shay, board member and Wyoming Arts Council's literature program manager said.

According to Shay, also one of the anthology's editors, there has been two previous literary maps of the state, both of which are state maps with the cities and towns where authors live highlighted.

Not wanting to leave that kind of resource out, there will be a fold out map included in the anthology.

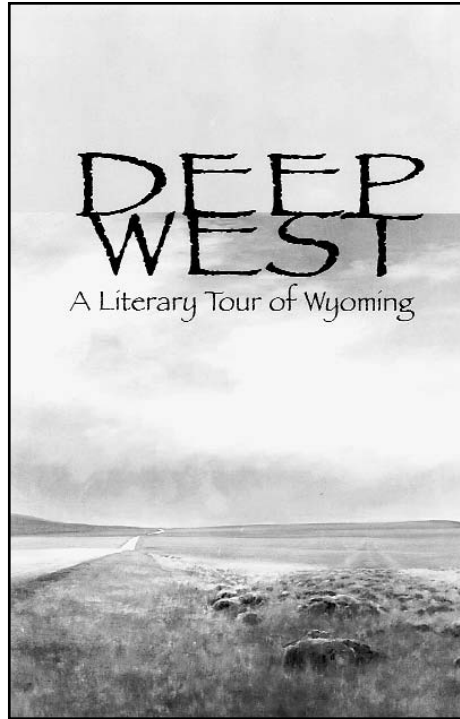
"We wanted to show what the writers in the state do and what life for a writer in Wyoming is like," David Romtvedt, co-editor and former center board member said. "As we talked, we decided it should reflect Wyoming as it is now, which ended discussion over whether to use contemporary or historical authors."

The anthology features the works of 19 published authors either living in Wyoming or, in one case, with deep roots in the state. But choosing the 19 turned out to be a big task.

"We debated on who we should select for the book," Shay said. "The board came to an agreement on living contemporary writers with works important to the state."

The center sent out letters inviting more than 40 authors to participate.

"We received a number of letters from authors saying they didn't want



to participate for one reason or another," Romtvedt said.

But 19 of them, including Tom Rea, Annie Proulx, Charles Levensosky, Page Lambert, Dainis Hazners, and B.J. Buckley, said they would. More than half of the authors featured in the anthology are Wyoming Arts Council award winners.

Once they knew who would be in the anthology, it was just a matter of putting it together.

Linn Rounds, Center for the Book coordinator and manager of publications and marketing at the Wyoming State Library, is the third editor. She reformatted, rekeyed or scanned the submissions from the authors to create a uniform document with a consistent style.

"What we said to the authors was send us what you think is your best work and we'll use it," Romtvedt said. "We did edit it like copy editors, for grammar, spelling and punctuation,

but not for content."

In addition to their work, the editors wanted an essay from each about what it means to be an author in Wyoming, their influences and some biographical information. In the final copy, the list of influences has been dropped.

The authors sent new stories or works in development, poems, short stories, or portions of novels that have already been printed.

Authors who submitted already-published works created an extra step for the editors. In addition needing the releases from the authors, the editors had to get releases signed by the publishing houses.

But once all of the paperwork was taken care of, the editors hit another challenge.

A publisher from Jackson, who was also a board member, was interested in printing the anthology. But once it came together and he read a manuscript, things hit another snag.

"He realized it wasn't quite ready to publish," Shay said. "So he recommended the manuscript be sent to a professional editor he knew in New York for some polishing."

"The editor managed to keep the vision of the book while making it more marketable."

But in the meantime, the editors had to find a new publisher. Enter Pronghorn Press.

"Annette Chaudet of Pronghorn Press in Greybull agreed to publish the book," Shay said. "In fact, they are already pre-selling the book on their website, [www.pronghornpress.org](http://www.pronghornpress.org)." Cost is expected to be about \$23 a copy.

"Print-on-demand technology has been a real godsend," Shay said. "The way I understand it is the book is essentially printed using high-end photocopying technology."

See *DEEP WEST* on **PAGE 4**

# High Plains Bookfest set for July in Billings

Imagine if you will.

Hundreds – perhaps thousands – of people milling around on a bright, sunny July day, looking at and buying books, listening to and participating in discussions and workshops and viewing the works of cowboy artist Will James.

This picture is exactly what organizers of the first High Plains Bookfest are hoping to see July 11-13 in downtown Billings, Mont.

“Eastern Montana and the High Plains region has its own vernacular which is often reflected in its literary works,” Corby Skinner, Billings YMCA Writer’s Voice director said. “There are a significant number of writers in this region who feel the landscape

makes for this distinction and places them in a unique position especially relative to the examination of the West.”

The YMCA along with a consortium of 18 organizations including the Yellowstone Art Museum, Western Heritage Center, Montana State University-Billings, joined together to host the event.

“There are 18 organizations in Billings putting on the bookfest, and because of the visibility of some of the authors who have said they will be there, there is sure to be some people there,” Mike Shay, Wyoming Arts Council’s literature program manager.

A total of 75 writers have agreed to attend the three-day event. Some of

those include Sam Western, Tom McGuane, Mark Spragg, Tom Rea, David Romtvedt, Diane Glancy, C.J. Box, Michael Punke and Page Lambert, many of whom are featured in the upcoming anthology “Deep West: A Literary Tour of Wyoming.”

Workshops and panels are scheduled on writing, historical research, editing and publishing.

Also slated are open mic sessions and readings with a major art exhibition on the letters and works of Will James.

For more information, contact the Billings Cultural Partners at 406/294-5059 or [sharing@downtownbillings.com](mailto:sharing@downtownbillings.com).

## *State LAL winner places in top 5 at nationals*

As part of an English assignment, 14-year-old Jennifer Shafer entered the 2003 Letters About Literature contest.

Her letter to Louisa May Alcott, won first place in the Wyoming semifinals and was sent on to the national contest.

There, Shafer’s letter about “An Old-Fashioned Girl” placed in the top five in the nation.

“When I found out I had placed in the top five, I was shocked because I had never done anything this big before,” she said. “When I heard I won in Wyoming, I was shocked. I was even surprised I was a semifinalist.”

The contest, co-sponsored by the Wyoming Center for the Book, the Center for the Book and the Library of Congress, invites students in the fourth grade through high school seniors to write a letter to an author, living or dead, to tell them how the book made a difference in their lives.

Shafer isn’t a stranger to Alcott’s works, having read both “Little Women” and “Little Men” before finding a copy of “An Old-Fashioned Girl” in the Big Piney Branch library.

“Alcott is my favorite author and I wanted to do her for the letter,” she said. “This book is my favorite.”

Once she entered the contest, the judges at contest co-sponsor Weekly Reader Corp., chose it as one of 22 Level III semifinalists out of 206 entries.

From there, the semifinalist’s letters were sent to the Wyoming Level III judge, UW English professor Eric Nye.

“I was most impressed by the combination of innocence and maturity in Ms. Shafer’s letter to Louisa May Alcott,” Nye said. “As a modern reader,

Ms. Shafer had engaged the author’s world so completely that her questions came from the heart and went to the heart.”

The first place letters from all three levels were forwarded on to the national contest where several judges, including John Cole, director of the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, reviewed the letters.

“Shafer’s essay is a thoughtful, well-written and personal reaction from a knowledgeable Louisa May Alcott reader and fan.”

The journey began for the home-schooled freshman when she received the assignment to write the letter from her mother.

“I had seen a flyer for the contest at our library in Big Piney. Then I went on the Internet to find the details and discovered that would be good to use as a writing assignment. This was back in November, and I saw the deadline was about a month away, and I knew they could accomplish it,” Donna Shafer said. “It was a different kind of writing assignment than the ones I normally give the kids.”

And what about the rest of the family?

“My family is pretty excited. I have five brothers and sisters,” Shafer said. “I don’t know if the young ones really understand, but my older brother and my 12-year-old sister think it’s pretty neat.”

The following is a list of the rest of the Wyoming semifinalists.

The national Level III winner was Jazlyn Langford of Molt, Mont. for her letter to Ronald Dahl, for his book “Matilda.”

### **Level I**

Meghan Kolf, first, Douglas, Douglas Intermediate School, fifth grade, “My Louisiana Sky” by Kimberly Wells Holt; Kayla Walker, second, Cody, Glenn Livingston Elementary School, fifth grade, “Downriver” by Will Hobbs; and Matthew Brady, third, Big Piney, Big Piney Middle School, sixth grade, “Star Wars: Boba Fett” by Terry Bisson

### **Level II**

Sagel Weichman, first, Jackson, Home School, seventh grade, “Lord of the Rings” Trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien; Quincey Smith, second, Powell, Powell Middle School, eighth grade, “The Giver” by Lois Lowery; and David Wilson, third, Powell, Powell Middle School, eighth grade, “Soldier’s Heart” by Gary Paulson

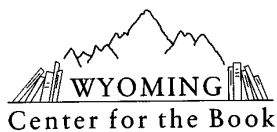
### **Level III**

Angela Foulger, second, Worland, Worland High School, senior, “Night” by Elie Wesel; and Katie Ferguson, third, Worland, Worland High School, senior, “Mountain Valley War” by Louis L’Amour

The Wyoming Center for the Book will produce a booklet with the winning entries of the 2003 Letters About Literature and River of Words contests. If you would like a copy of this booklet, please contact Scott Axtell, WCB, 307/777-6338, [saxtel@state.wy.us](mailto:saxtel@state.wy.us) or Linn Rounds, WCB coordinator, 307/777-5915, [lround@state.wy.us](mailto:lround@state.wy.us).

## New Wyoming author's bookmarks available

The following is a sampling of books written by Wyoming authors.



"Yellowstone County: The Photographs of Jack Richard" by Mark Bagne

"Winter Kill" by C.J. Box

"The Reflection" by Joe Bright

"Coyotes and Canaries" by Larry Brown

"Strip City: A Stripper's Farewell Journey Across America" by Lily Burana

"Subversion of Trust" by William Close

"Hot Biscuits: 18 Stories by Women and Men of the Ranching West" by Max Evans and Candy Moulton

"Secret of the Black Widow" by Eugene Gagliano

"The Badge" by Jim Geeting

"Clear Use of Power" by Matilda Hansen

"Rhymes of a Rexall Ranger" by Dick Hart

"Sunrise over the Rim" by Butch E. Hudson

"Partners in the Wilderness: Travis's Choice" by Ed Kienzle

"The Peeping Tom Poems" by Charles Levendosky

"Edge of Justice" by Clinton McKenzie

"Talon and the Dragons of Crinnelia" by Diana Metz

"Black Hat Butte" and "For the Norden Boys" by John D. Nesbitt

"What You See in Clear Water" by Geoff O'Gara

"That Old Ace in the Hole" by Annie Proulx

"The Revenant" by Michael Punke

"The Women of Eden" by Kayne Pyatt

"Hanna Stands Tall" by Shirley Rees

"High Altitudes and Low Multitudes" by Bill Sniffin

"Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief" Eric Sorg

"Pushed Off the Mountain and Sold Down the River: Wyoming's Search for Its Soul" by Sam Western

### **Also of Interest:**

"What Was It Like Grandma?" and "Grandma Maxine Remembers" by Ann Morris  
Featuring Maxine and Shawnee from the Wind River Indian Reservation

# LAL contest winner gets wider exposure

Sarah Hayden was the Level I winner in the 2002 Letters About Literature contest. She read "Chinese Cinderella" by Adeline Yen Mah.

"I found the book at the school's book fair and picked it up by chance," Sarah Hayden said.

While she hoped that she would win at the national contest, the young woman, who is now enrolled in an international baccalaureate program, probably never thought the experience would go further than that.

Until one day when she received a call from the Orange County, Calif. Reads One Book program.

"I was really surprised when I was contacted by Orange County Reads," Hayden said. "I received the notice that I was a semifinalist and then I didn't hear anything for a really long time. Then this check came (the prize money from the Letters About Literature contest). I guess it was about six months later that Orange County called."

Staff at the Orange County Reads program found Hayden's letter on the Library of Congress Website and called her to ask if they could use her letter.

"Chinese Cinderella" was chosen for the "Orange County Reads One Book" program because Mah is an Orange County resident, it teaches about multiculturalism and because it is on California's recommend reading list, according to Susan Redfield, project director Orange County Reads One Book.

"I knew about the Letters About Literature contest from the California Center for the



Book and I was tracking down some information on 'Chinese Cinderella' when someone told me there was a winning letter about the book from the Wyoming Center for the Book," Redfield said. "I went to the Library of Congress website, looked up the letter, then contacted

the Wyoming Center for the Book to get a number and get permission to speak with the writer.

"I called Sarah's parents and communicated with her through email back in September," Redfield added. "Sarah and her parents were incredibly accommodating. You can really tell that Sarah definitely loves writing and that her parents reinforce her interest. In an era where kids are not reading enough in the first place, for us to find one who was inspired to do this kind of quality work is wonderful."

Among the events so far for Hayden has been a photo of her and her letter on the Orange County Reads One Book website and even a guest on a local radio broadcast.

The first-ever Orange County Reads One Book program was inaugurated in February, and Redfield said they ran into a rather unusual problem early on.

"Area bookstores have already run out of copies of the book," she said. "We are having to work with the publisher to get some more books out here. Almost everyone is out, Borders, Barnes and Noble, even the California State University bookstore is out."

# Deep West/The anthology is five years in the making

Continued from PAGE 1

Under the old way of publishing a book, the committee would have had to order and pay for a certain number of books, find a place to store them and try to sell them.

For example the committee would have had to order 5,000 paperback books with 450 pages costing between \$10 to \$12,000, plus the additional cost of storing them for an unknown length of

time.

With the print-on-demand system, it will probably cost under \$10,000. The authors will get one more chance to proof their work in something called a galley proof. Finished copies are expected in about two months.

"Because we can order just what we need to sell, the funds can go back to the Center for the Book," Shay said.

The downside of print-on-demand publishing is the

customer usually has to be the distributor and marketer as well.

Once the book is published, the Center for the Book at the State Library and the Wyoming Arts Council have planned readings and other events to promote the book, and with the writers supporting the Center for the Book by allowing their royalties to go to the center, "we could have a chance to put some money into the Center for

the Book's coffers," Shay said.

As for the book itself, one editor hopes people don't just buy it because it is Wyoming writers.

"I hope people will want to see it and want to see what we have done," Romtvedt said. "I hope people will want to read it because it reflects writers in Wyoming, not just writing about Wyoming and I hope they are interested in the literature and the stories."

# Hayden/The book was chosen for its multicultural lessons

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"Orange County Reads One Book" invites everyone in Orange County to read the same book during early 2003 and to celebrate that fact with special discussions, programs, and festivities during "Book Week" March 23 to April 12.

Redfield said there was another reason the program chose "Chinese Cinderella."

"When children read this book, it leaves a mark, she said. "Like for my generation, that kind of mark came from reading 'The Diary of Anne Frank.' 'Chinese Cinderella' changes their lives in profound ways.

The publisher, Laureleaf, sent Redfield hundreds of letters written to Mah.

"They were all so meaningful, but when we saw a letter that had won a state contest, we were thrilled," Redfield



added.

Orange County has 3 million people with 505,000 public school children and countless others in private and religious schools and a huge Hispanic population.

"Kids from the Hispanic population can read this book and relate to the character's struggle," Redfield said. "That was another reason the book was chosen, because of its multicultural themes and intergenerational reinforcing material."

Redfield said there have been people who have questioned the choice of this book.

"People have asked why this one and not one more famous like 'To Kill a Mockingbird' or some other classic novel," she said. "We used Sarah's letter as part of the marketing kit we distributed and I show them her letter. After they have read it, I tell them it is representative of hundreds of letters.

"It shifts their thinking a little bit and lends new credibility."

For all the multicultural themes, the questions of the choice and other lessons waiting to be learned by readers of the book, Redfield finds one more lesson.

"It is teaching about multiculturalism and about not doing injustice to our own population," she said. "We need to embrace the beauty of all of the cultures in the U.S., especially now."

Wyoming State Library. Linn Rounds managing editor; Scott Axtell, editor. Sage Readers is produced by the Wyoming Center for the Book at the

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