



Summer Reading Bulletin #1

Featuring Book of the Month: *Rhinos in Nebraska*

Welcome

Welcome to the first Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) Adult Summer Reading Program! This is the first of three issues that you will receive over the course of the summer.

We will keep track of what you read

TBBS will track your total checkouts of talking books and braille books over the course of the program.

Your reading counts whether you borrow books through the mail or download from BARD. Any hardcopy or digital braille you borrow from the Utah State Library also counts, as do any books you request through our Braille on Demand program. Audio and braille magazines also count towards your total.

How to earn raffle tickets

TBBS will tally up your tickets at the end of the program. You already earned your first raffle ticket just by registering, congrats!

You can earn an additional ticket for every braille book you read or every five talking books that you read.

You can also earn an additional ticket by completing our survey, recommending a book, and giving a brief review of a book you read.

You can participate as much or as little as you'd like. However, the more you participate, the more chances you'll have to win.

If you downloaded books on BARD after you registered but before May 25 that you would like to count towards your total, please contact your Reader Advisor to let them know the titles.

Book of the Month

Each bulletin will include a TBBS Summer Reading Book of the Month. These books will relate to the 2026 national theme: Unearth a story.

This month's book is...

DBC 02048 *Rhinos in Nebraska: The Amazing Discovery of the Ashfall Fossil Beds* by Alison Pearce Stevens.

“Twelve million years ago, rhinos, elephants, and giraffes roamed North America. They would gather at nearby watering holes-eating, drinking, and trying not to become someone else’s lunch. But one day, in what we now know as Nebraska, everything changed. The explosion of a supervolcano a thousand miles away sent a blanket of ash that buried these animals for millennia. Until 1953, when a seventeen-year-old farm worker made an unbelievable discovery. This is the first book to be published about the Ashfall Fossil Beds, where more than two hundred perfectly preserved fossils have been found. Step into the past with author Alison Pearce Stevens, who has worked with many of the Ashfall researchers at the University of Nebraska State Museum”-- Provided by publisher. For grades 4-7.

Why we picked this book

When we think of Nebraska history, we think of covered wagons, the Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains, sod houses, and the Dust Bowl.

We don't think about volcanoes and prehistoric rhinoceros!

Rhinos in Nebraska is a multi-award winning book that has earned praises from Kirkus Reviews, School Library Journal, and Publisher's Weekly. In easy-to-digest writing for all ages, it shares a fascinating account of Nebraska pre-history, and highlights the scientific exploration and discoveries made in our state.

According to Nebraska Game and Parks:

“Nearly 12 million years ago, volcanic ash engulfed this ancient watering hole, entombing innumerable animals. National Geographic has called Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park ‘the Pompeii of prehistoric animals’. Because of its scientific importance, the 360-acre historical park between Orchard and Royal was acquired in 1987 [It] is a joint project of the Game and Parks Commission and the University of Nebraska State Museum.”

The Ashfall Fossil Beds are located near Royal, Nebraska and Verdigre Creek. The park is open to the public now through mid-October. Visitors can watch paleontologists at work and dig in a replica ash bed. For more information, visit outdoorne.gov.

About the author

Alison Pearce Stevens has a background in zoology and ecology. She writes to connect young readers with the natural world around them. According to her website, she has stood in the eye of a hurricane, been climbed on by a baby bat, and had a gecko hide in her hair. Those special moments influenced her pursuits into science.

Staff member review

Reading this was so cool! Prehistoric Nebraska looked like the African Savanna. When I was a kid I saw the Ashfall Fossil Beds; reading this helped make sense of my kid memories. I was glad the story focused more on the discovery of the fossils rather than the plight of those animals. The craziest fact I learned was that volcanic ash isn't like wood ash—it is sharp like tiny shards of glass! It's amazing all the scientific ways there are to uncover natural history.

Jo, Reader Advisor

Want more like this?

TBBS recommends the following titles.

DB 124112 *Oceans of Kansas: A Natural History of the Western Interior Sea* by Michael Everhart.

“Revised, updated, and expanded with the latest interpretations and fossil discoveries, the second edition of *Oceans of Kansas* adds new twists to the fascinating story of the vast inland sea that engulfed central North America during the Age of Dinosaurs. Giant sharks, marine reptiles called mosasaurs, pteranodons, and birds with teeth all flourished in and around these shallow waters. Their abundant and well-preserved remains were sources of great excitement in the scientific community when first discovered in the 1860s and continue to yield exciting discoveries 150 years later. Michael J. Everhart vividly captures the history of these startling finds over the decades and re-creates in unforgettable detail these animals from our distant past and the world in which they lived-- above, within, and on the shores of America's ancient inland sea.”-- From publisher. Unrated. Commercial audiobook.

DBC 01858 *Bone Wars: The Excavation and Celebrity of Andrew Carnegie's Dinosaur* by Tom Rea.

When *Diplodocus carnegii* was unearthed from the Wyoming badlands in 1899, philanthropist Andrew Carnegie set out to display his prized dinosaur. This soon set off a public storm of interest for these incredible creatures around the world. Here is the intrigue, manipulation, rivalry, and skullduggery by which Andrew Carnegie obtained his dinosaur, and by which his opponents did their best to thwart him. For high school and adult readers.

DB 85679 *Very Short Introduction: Fossils* by Keith Stewart Thomson.

Past director of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History explains the study of fossils and the ways they help us understand the Earth's past. Considers the public's fascination with fossils--especially the remains of dinosaurs--and recounts famous hoaxes such as Piltdown man. 2005

DB 88084 *Curators: Behind the Scenes of Natural History Museums* by Lance Grande.

Curator at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago shares in depth his experiences in his career. Discusses what led him to becoming a curator in a natural history museum, the education necessary, and his day-to-day work. Addresses challenges faced by those in the field, now and in the future. 2017

DB 25292 *Dinosaurs in the Attic: An Excursion into the American Museum of Natural History* by Douglas Preston.

Somewhat whimsical history of Manhattan's American Museum of Natural History by a longtime museum staffer. No more than two percent of the museum's collection is on exhibit on its 700,000

square feet of floor space; the rest is squirreled away in twenty-three interconnected buildings. Preston takes us on a grand tour of its library of bones, labs, vaults, corridors, and storage rooms, reporting on the museum's mind-boggling treasures.

DB 35090 *Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections in Natural History* by Stephen Jay Gould.

Harvard professor and curator Gould has compiled another collection of essays from his eighteen years of monthly contributions to "Natural History" magazine. Included are essays on such divergent topics as male nipples, Joe DiMaggio's unmatched hitting streak, the kiwi birds' enormous eggs, and Australia's unusual mammalian echidna—an egg-laying anteater related to the duckbilled platypus.

Unearthing local stories

Seward, NE is known around the state for its Independence Day celebrations. Last year's festivities featured something extra special—the opening of Harold Davisson's time capsule.

Davisson started building his time capsule in 1974 and completed it the next year. At the time, it was the World's Largest Time Capsule, and set to remain unopened for 50 years. In Davisson's words, in an article he wrote for the Seward County Independent's Special 4th of July Edition of that year, "we picked the year 2025, which is really much shorter time than most time capsules are buried, because we wanted the youngsters of today who will be here to see this capsule covered, to be here when it is opened."

The World's Largest Time Capsule held memorabilia, letters from local elders to future youngsters, Coca Cola, Pepsi, and Husker Beverage. Seward merchants and organizations were invited to donate an item. There was also a car—a 1975 Chevrolet Vega. In the same article, he gave some information

on the capsule's planning:

It wasn't all that easy to construct this Time Capsule for there was no one with any experience building such that could tell us just how to go about building the World's Largest Time Capsule. Up to this time all time capsules were several feet square, large enough to hold a few documents, pictures and other such memorabilia, but none were large enough to hold even a bicycle. Thus we talked to Dick Odell, an ambitious young contractor in Seward, who in turn talked to dozens of people in the construction business, but few of them could lend much help. Our best information and suggestions came from morticians, who after all have had more experience placing things underground than anyone else.

The community of Seward not only donated significant items for the capsule, but helped throughout the whole process. On July 4th, 1975, members of the Woman's Club of Seward registered items and law enforcement handled traffic. Boy Scouts counted attendees, and Girl Scouts registered their names so that we'd remember all who took part in the auspicious occasion.

The community was there, too, when the capsule was opened just last year. Harold Davisson himself passed in 1999, but it was his daughter, Trish Johnson, who was the first to climb down into the time capsule. Lori Shriner, for the Seward County Independent quoted Trish that day: "Fifty years! We did it."

Unearthing NLS history

An excerpt from Claire Rojstaczer's 2024 article, "NLS Technology, from 1934 to Present..."

1934: Library of Congress purchases its first talking books. Produced on 12-inch phonograph discs by the American Foundation for the

Blind, the talking books were recorded at 33 1/3 rpm—less than half the speed of 78 rpm commercial records of the day. That allowed for about 15 minutes of recorded content on each side and began a trend of NLS using slower speeds to more efficiently serve patrons. It was another two decades before the 33 1/3 rpm LP became the standard format in the commercial market.

1957: Model D player goes into production. The Model D talking-book player had dual motors to accommodate both 33 1/3 rpm discs and the 16 2/3 rpm discs NLS was developing. A subsequent model, the AE-1, had a three-speed motor that also accommodated 8 1/3 rpm discs.

1969: Circulation of books on cassette begins. The earliest NLS cassette tapes played at 1 7/8 ips (inches per second) and were recorded on two tracks. By 1973, NLS had begun experimenting with four-track cassettes played at the slower speed of 15/16 ips. They had six hours of playing time—enough to contain a 200-page book.

1976: C-76 cassette player introduced. Like previous NLS cassette players, the C-76 could switch between 15/16 ips playback and the 1 7/8 ips playback used by commercial cassettes. It also had a variable speed control slider that allowed patrons to read at any speed with no change in pitch. Upgraded players continued to be developed, culminating with the C-1 in 1981. A workhorse of the NLS program, more than 1.2 million C-1s were produced through early 2007. The C-1 was formally retired in 2017.

2005: Design of Digital Talking-Book Machine begins. After years of planning, a contract was awarded to develop a digital talking-book system that included both solid-state digital talking-book players and flash memory-based cartridges that delivered encrypted books compatible only with authorized players. Production began in 2007,

and the Digital Talking-Book Machine (DTBM) was formally released in 2009.

2006: BARD pilot begins. NLS launched the Braille and Audio Reading Download Service as a pilot program for 100 users, allowing them to download digital talking books. Formally dubbed BARD in 2007, the service became available to all patrons with access to a computer and the Internet in 2009.

2013: BARD app for iOS launches. With the BARD Mobile iOS app, patrons could instantly download material to their iPhones and iPads. For the first time, they could listen to NLS digital talking books on mainstream devices instead of specialized equipment—or download braille books for use with a Bluetooth-linked refreshable display. An Android app followed two years later.

2016: NLS begins pilot of refreshable braille displays. Thanks to an amendment to its authorizing legislation, the 1931 Pratt-Smoot Act, NLS was allowed to develop and distribute refreshable braille displays. The first players—called the NLS Braille eReader—were released to patron testers in 2017, and now are available to all interested NLS braille readers.

From NLS

NLS is hosting some Summer Reading events for their adult program. Some details have not yet been announced; you can visit the link at loc.gov/nls/services-and-resources/summer-reading, or call your Reader Advisor with questions.

- June 15: NLS Kick-Off Event.
- June 16: Author Event. Best-selling author Peter Heller discusses his novel, [The Dog Stars \(DB75493\)](#), with public radio journalist Maeve Conran.

- June 30: National Parks as Living Archives. Multidisciplinary conversation with National Park Service employees about the stories of science, history and culture living inside New Mexico's National Park Designated sites.
- July 6: Narrated Soundscape "walk-through" of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Matthew Brown, Managing Librarian at Hawaii State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled.

Survey

After you've read *Rhinos in Nebraska*, consider the following questions. For another raffle ticket entry, call your reader advisor to complete this 2-minute survey over the phone.

How many stars would you give this book?

Would you recommend this book to a friend?

Is this different from what you normally read? How so?

Have you heard of the Ashfall Fossil Beds before?

Have you ever seen a fossil in nature?

Call your Reader Advisor to do the survey over the phone.

What to expect for the next issue

We're dialing up the excitement with our next book of the month: **DB 32018** *Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton.

Something is terribly wrong at Jurassic Park on a remote island off the coast of Costa Rica. Visitors and residents are being attacked by strange looking animals that maul them and leave behind a sticky saliva. In reality, dinosaurs cloned and raised by a genetic engineering firm have escaped. Consultants are brought in to solve the problem, but soon everyone is running for dear life. Some strong language. Bestseller. 1990.

You might have seen the movie version, but have you read the book? It's a thrilling fan favorite that will have you on the edge of your seat. Stay tuned for your next Summer Reading Bulletin!

Have any questions about the Summer Reading Program? Want to request a book mentioned in this bulletin? Contact your Reader Advisor for more great reading ideas!

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