

Librarian's Shelf by Kelli Keyes

How WWII Affected Women's Lives

Sheryl Schmeckpeper, a Norfolk Nebraska native, journalist, and historian, is coming to the Columbus Public Library on March 19 at 2 pm to talk about World War II and how it affected the lives of the people of Nebraska, especially the women. She has written a book titled *These Three Things*, which is a fascinating historical fiction book that contains a lot of factual information that she will cover in her program. The book begins by introducing us to the main character, a 47-year-old widow named Clair. Clair, along with her mother, manage their family farm near Hastings, Nebraska. Clair's father died in the pandemic of 1918 and her husband was killed in WWI. She was expecting their son when her husband went overseas and died in battle. She raised their son alone during the Great Depression and then her son joined the war in WWII. Now she and her mother are home alone trying to deal with the food and supply shortages, political tensions, and lack of workers as their corn crop comes due for harvesting. She receives a telegram from the army that her only child is missing in action. German POW camps are being built around Hastings and the townspeople are scared. We learn that the locals' fear of the German prisoners of war melted away as these captives began to fill the need for laborers. Despite all the troubles Clair faces, she perseveres and gets through the tough times. Not perfectly, but in ways that make her more relatable. All of these trials ultimately made Clair stronger and she became an example and source of comfort to those around her.

In this compelling book, Sheryl Schmeckpeper brings to life in a historically accurate and interesting way what our ancestors in generations past lived through. By reading this book, we learn from the characters the history of the mistakes made and solutions created to survive the trials of their day. We can learn from them and be encouraged in our day. Your library owns a copy of this book and you are welcome to check it out and read it before Sheryl Schmeckpeper comes to visit. She will be selling copies of her books at the program for those wanting signed copies.

Sheryl Schmeckpeper served as the Living Page editor of the Norfolk Daily News for 25 years before retiring. She has written numerous articles for Nebraska Life Magazine and is currently a member of the State Historical Preservation Board. She is very knowledgeable in her facts of history and as you read her book, you can relate to her story as a Nebraskan and the familiarity of the places and events she writes about.

While Sheryl's visit is a month away, remember there is also a program at the library on Saturday, February 19 at 2 pm! We have the troubadours Kerry and Aspen coming with their folk guitar music to give us stories in songs of life in the pioneer days. No reservations are needed, just bring your family and friends to a fun afternoon of free entertainment. Be careful though, you might learn something too! All ages are welcome to attend and we hope to see you there.