

Librarian's Shelf by Melodee Pedersen

Friends' Annual Meeting and Program

Sunday, January 29th at 2:00 p.m. Dr. Dan Holtz will be presenting "From Bleeding Kansas to Old Virginny: Songs and Stories of the Civil War", sponsored by the Friends of the Columbus Public Library and the Nebraska Humanities Council. This is the annual meeting of the Friends, so there will be a very brief business meeting, followed by the program. All 2012 Friends' members who attend will have their name put in a drawing to win a free Kindle e-book reader!

Dr. Holtz is a native Nebraskan and a long-time professor of English at Peru State College. He has performed and presented programs for civic organizations and elementary and secondary schools across Nebraska as well as at the Nebraska State Capitol, the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, Scottsbluff National Monument and the John Neihardt Center. He also appeared at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in July 1999.

When asked about his program, Dr. Holtz said, "I do a number of the well-known songs of the Civil War, such as the "Battle Cry of Freedom" and "Lorena." But I also do many lesser-known songs, particularly ones which deal with the western theater and the western border of the war. These were often folksongs and typically did not appear in sheet music until long after their original composition.

Just as importantly, I talk about the background to these songs and tell stories about people who fought in or were affected by the war, people in important positions such as Abraham Lincoln, as well as common soldiers in the ranks and wives on the home front."

Dr. Holtz shared that he hopes his audience gains a greater appreciation and understanding of the sentiments and ideologies about the War which are conveyed through songs and which they might not find in history books.

He explained that he enjoys performing because, "I really like being able to meet people around Nebraska and to learn about their communities. I also like to see the expressions on people's faces when I play a song which touches them or tell a story that amuses or touches them. At times, there's a connection created between the audience and me, and I like that feeling."

One of the highlights of his performing career so far was performing at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. He related that, "At that time the Kennedy Center was putting on a series of concerts in the summer of 1999 featuring all of the states. The people at the Kennedy Center contacted Sen. Hagel's office, and his staff contacted the Nebraska Humanities Council asking for a person who could do a musical program representing Nebraska. The Humanities Council recommended me, and I performed on what was called the "Millennium Stage" in one of the big hallway/entryways at the Kennedy Center. I also performed in front of the U.S. Capitol Bldg. on the same day. It was quite an exhilarating experience."

Another exhilarating experience can be finding a great book to read at bargain prices. You can find that thrill at the Friends of the Columbus Public Library Book Sale, Feb 2nd-5th. Thursday night is the \$5 preview night from 6:00-9:00 p.m., Friday the sale will be open 9:30-5:00, Saturday 10:00-5:00 and Sunday 1:30-5:00. Hardback books are \$1 and most paperbacks are 25 cents. We appreciate all those

who have donated books to the sale more than we can say! This particular sale we will have several art prints as well as our usual assortment of books, movies, audio books and more. Hope to see you there!