Cather Day '88: windblown but worthy
excerpted from article in Lincoln Journal-Star
by Herb Hyde
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The day began with coffee and kolaches at Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial headquarters and a warm greeting from Mildred Bennett (who makes things go), followed by Mass at Grace Episcopal Church with the Rev. Theron R. Hughes, Jr. officiating, followed by Mass at St. Juliana Catholic with Father Frank Leiblinger officiating, followed by the traditional Leiblinger story, without which no St. Juliana Mass on Cather Day is officially over (even though he tells the story after he intones, in his own inimitable way, "The Mass has ended, depart in peace").

The Cather work and source of this year's conference theme was My Antonia, and our midmorning bus tour had been arranged to show us some of the story's significant places.

The day had warmed by the time we left the Red Cloud cemetery, nearby St. Juliana Church and the old Burlington and Missouri depot behind, crossed the tracks and headed west on a dirt road, "the winding line of the [Republican] river bluffs" on our left and the Harling (Miner) ranch yet to come. We crossed U.S. 136 and headed north on yet another dirt road, passing Jim Burden's "broken grassy clay cliffs which indicated the windings of the stream [Squaw Creek], and the glittering tops of the cottonwoods and ash trees that grew down in the ravine" on our way to the Dane Church. In My Antonia, Willa Cather calls it the Norwegian Church, which "had held a meeting and decided that the Norwegian graveyard could not extend its hospitality to Mr. Shimerda [who had killed himself]."

We passed the suicide grave, Catherton Cemetery and the prairie dog town (plenty of dogs on May 7, just as there were in Cather's day) and at last arrived at Antonia's (Annie Pavelka's), where a man on my bus said he enjoyed many a good time, having gone to school with eight of Annie Pavelka's children. The cellar, now home to a non-poisonous snake or two (or three), is the one where Antonia and Jim Burden "were standing outside talking, when they [Antonia's children] all came running up the steps together, big and little, tow heads and gold heads and brown, and flashing little naked legs: a veritable explosion of life out of the dark cave into the sunlight." I am sure that no matter how many times I may visit that cellar, I'll always expect to see children burst out of it; the vision comes with the territory.

The last country stop was Cloerton Cemetery, where Annie Pavelka is buried, she having died April 24, 1955, precisely eight years to the day after Willa Cather's death.

After lunch we broke into seven or eight groups to discuss My Antonia . . . About 3:30 University of South Dakota pianist, Karen Gullickson [played] difficult compositions by Blind Tom and Blind Boone, both of whom Cather heard in Red Cloud performances and
who together make up the character of Blind d'Arnault in My Antonia.

This year the depot was given over to the Nebraska State Quilt Guild Exhibition, a collection of some of the finest handwork I have ever seen.

Each item on the 7 o'clock banquet menu was accompanied by a passage from My Antonia, and what a delicious meal we had, from Early Garden Salad to Chadie Harling's Hickory Nut Cake, with iced tea, coffee and stimulating conversation between. The appetizer was musical: "Le Donna è mobile" from Giuseppe Verdi's Rigoletto, sung by tenor Daniel McKinney; "The Last Rose of Summer" from Martha by Friedrich von Flotow, sung by baritone Marshall Christensen; and "O Promise Me" from Robin Hood by Reginald de Koven, also sung by Christensen.

Our after dinner entertainment consisted of selections from Verdi's La Traviata sung by coloratura soprano June Schock (Violetta), McKinney (Alfredo) and Christensen (Pere Germont). Dr. James Johnson directed the string ensemble from the Hastings Symphony Orchestra. Harrold Shiffter narrated the program, which, of course, was drawn from Cather's description of the opera's performance in My Antonia. The musician's performance was superb and engendered a standing ovation at its conclusion. What better way than this, I thought, to end such a deeply satisfying day? Willa Cather would have loved it. So did I.

Kristin Guild (Continued)

the Biology Career Workshop at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The first runner-up in competition was Darcie L. Schanou of Aurora. The second alternate was Rebecca R. Berens of Seward. Our congratulations and best wishes to all who participated.

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On Reading Willa Cather's O Pioneers!

Thoughts and feelings
Rise out of these pages
Like grains of wheat from the prairie:

Friendship —
people with people
people with the land

Trust broken —
young with old
old with young

Trust fulfilled —
through suffering
through love

Love shared —
without freedom
without response

Love shared —
patiently
silently

Death —
letting go for the old
a new life for the young

Life —
new grains for the land
new roads for the people

Land —
taking
giving
stretching
calling back its people
from new roads
with a promise of

Friendship
Trust
Love
Death

Life — Sr. Adele Edwards, ’86

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Answers to Cather Puzzle, #1

by Robert H. Kurth

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1988 Prairie Workshop

Prairie Workshop, 6-10 June, convened in Red Cloud with Dr. James Work of the University of Colorado, Fort Collins on literature and writing and Dr. Ty Harrison of Westminster College, Salt Lake City on botany and ecology. Twenty teachers, writers and other interested persons participated.

Literary discussion encompassed Loren Eisley's The Immense Journey, Willa Cather's My Antonia and Mari Sandoz's Slogum House, with excerpts from John Neihardt's Cycle of the West. Stan Smith, student and friend of John Neihardt, discussed teaching Neihardt in the schools of Nebraska.

Ecology studies included two trips to the Cather Memorial Prairie and one tour of Antonia country. Kay Young of Fontenelle Forest and Ty Harrison with help from Ann Billesbach, Curator of the Cather Historical Center, and Pat Phillips of the Cather Foundation, gathered prairie plants and cooked a prairie breakfast which delighted and informed the group.

We are now forming plans for the 1989 Workshop.

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Excerpts from comments by participants

"I felt a sense of renewal when I spent one week in June, 1988 at the Prairie Workshop in Red Cloud, Nebraska. This ambience provided the perfect setting for Dr. Harrison's plea that we preserve additional sanctuaries of virgin prairie."

"I sat beneath the shade of a mulberry tree transplanted from China and transcended this realm for Cather's space. I heard the Prairie Symphony broadcast on the wave length of the meadowlark's lilt."

Donna Kortje
Norfolk, Nebraska

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"An exciting, fast-paced experience that shows one — through direct contact — the relationship

(Continued on Next Page)
Cather Puzzle, #2
By Robert H. Kurth

After the Cather Seminar of 1987, Dr. Robert H. Kurth of Prairie Village, Kansas, sent two crossword puzzles, the following is the second one. Answers will be printed in a following issue.

ACROSS
2 Confidant and biographer (8)
8 Willa's grandmother: model for "Old Mrs. Harris" (4)
9 "Autobiography" of S. S. McClure written by _______________ (5)
10 Nebraska folklorist-friend of Cather (5)
13 The Love of Lucy (9)
15 Willa's sister (7)
17 Willa's world broken in _______________ in nineteen twenty-_____________ (3)
18 "Red" but not "Big Red" (5)
19 Cather's publisher (5)
21 Prototype of Antonia (7)
25 Pertains to 6 Down (4)
27 Biographer of Cather and restorer of Catherland (7)
28 Cather wrote treatise on this English author (7)

DOWN
1 Cather county (7)
3 Scholarly author on Cather's Romanticism (8)
4 Climate of Panther Canyon (4)
5 Credited author of book on Mary Baker Eddy (7)
6 Bird in the title of Cather's "autobiographical novel" (4)
7 Childhood name (6)
11 _______________ pastoral (8)
12 Destinies (7)
14 What the cruciform tree was for Latour (6)
16 _______________ Over Forty (3)
20 Dr. Mc Keeby, _______________ for Dr. Archie (5)
22 Sung by Thea (4)
23 Heroine of one of the Nebraska novels (4)
24 Great _______________ all Cather devotees owe to 27 Across (4)
26 _______________ of Ours (3)

1988 Prairie Workshop
(Continued)

between science and literature. Diversification offered in the workshop is probably its strong point. Even meal times often turn into discussion sessions on various authors, with professionals from several different backgrounds sharing their perspectives. One also becomes aware of the immense dedication of many persons toward preservation of the Cather heritage and an appreciation and love for two of Nebraska's greatest resources: its land and its people."

Rose Mary Datus
McCook, Nebraska

"I have always wanted to come to Red Cloud and this visit far exceeded my expectations."

Lisa Kae Anderson
Norfolk, Nebraska

Poetry and Fiction Writing Festival

The University of Nebraska-Omaha's Creative Writing Program in cooperation with four other state college campuses will host the Third Annual Poetry and Fiction Writing Festival October 6, 7 and 8 on the UNO campus.

The conference, supported by a grant from the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities, will focus on the theme "Regionalism: Putting Literature in Its Place and Time." A series of panels and readings are scheduled, with featured guest novelist Ellen Gilchrist.

For a complete schedule of events contact:

Richard Duggin
UNO Writers' Workshop
ASH 212
University of Nebraska-Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska 68182
(402) 554-4801
YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE LIFE AND GROWTH OF THE ORGANIZATION

- By being a Cather Memorial Member and financial contributor:
  - BENEFACCTOR .................. $1,000.00 and over

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS
- Patron .................................... $100.00
- Sustaining ................................ 25.00
- Family ................................... 15.00
- Individual ................................ 10.00

WCPM members receive:
- Newsletter subscription
- Free guided tour to restored buildings

- By contributing your Willa Cather artifacts, letters, papers, and publications to the Museum.
- By contributing your ideas and suggestions to the Board of Governors.

ALL MEMBERSHIPS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND BEQUESTS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE
Under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1965

Special group memberships (such as clubs or businesses) are available. Write to the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial for details.

AIMS OF THE WCPM
- To promote and assist in the development and preservation of the art, literary, and historical collection relating to the life, time, and work of Willa Cather, in association with the Nebraska State Historical Society.
- To cooperate with the Nebraska State Historical Society in continuing to identify, restore to their original condition, and preserve places made famous by the writing of Willa Cather.
- To provide for Willa Cather a living memorial, through the Foundation, by encouraging and assisting scholarship in the field of the humanities.
- To perpetuate an interest throughout the world in the work of Willa Cather.

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The Board of Governors of the Cather Foundation dedicated this conference, May 7, 1988, to the memory of Jennie Miner Reiher, August 26, 1897-March 17, 1988, charter member of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial, second cousin to Willa Cather, and faithful participant in all Foundation endeavors.