Spring Newsletter
Message from the Director

It was March, and apparently it was going to be an advanced one. The maples were feeling the push of the sap against the dark of their bodies. The hickory and oaks of the virgin timber-land not far away were vaguely responding to the stir of life. In the pulpiness of the bog the trailing arbutus would soon be showing its mauve-colored face,—on the hillside a thousand lavender crocuses spring forth to the call of the sun. —Spring Came on Forever (our featured book in 2020)

Published in 1935, Spring Came on Forever follows the story of two Nebraska pioneer families from settlement to the 1930’s. The heroine is Amalia Holmsdorfer, one of a band of German immigrants who settle on the prairie. From her late teens to her mid-eighties, she confronts and defeats the forces of nature. Her life might be a modest triumph but for one detail: she marries the wrong man.

The opening passage of this newsletter reminds us of Mrs. Aldrich’s ability to create beautiful imagery with her words. Yet, another fact that we can rely on is the accuracy of the content. Whether it’s the species of trees, the varieties of flowers, the development of a community or the destructiveness of a storm, we can be certain that Mrs. Aldrich thoroughly researched the content and is sure it is accurate as it relates to the location and the time period of the story.

In Spring Came on Forever, there are many references to the development of our state and the establishment of the state capitol. That is why the Aldrich Board thought it would be interesting to invite Jeff Barnes to speak at our Spring Banquet on Saturday, April 4, at 7:30 p.m. Jeff, a Humanities Nebraska presenter, will share his presentation entitled “Nebraska’s Landmark Buildings.” The program is free; but if you would like to join us for the social, meal, and the awarding of the short story winners, the cost is $15. We hope you can join us. —Kurk Shrader, Director

The Spring Banquet

What: Bess Streeter Aldrich Spring Banquet, Honoring Spring Came On Forever
When: Saturday, April 4
Where: 5 to 5:45 p.m., Social and Unusual Collections Exhibit, Aldrich House
       6:00 p.m., Dinner, Elmwood Christian Church, 311 N. 5th Street
Menu: Baked Steak*, Mashed Potatoes, Glazed Carrots, Dinner Roll, Tossed Salad, and Cherry Crisp/Ice Cream
       *Note: a Vegetarian Lasagna May Be Substituted by Notifying the Director
Announcement of Short Story Contest Winners/Design Competition (The Cutters)
Entertainment/Program: “Nebraska’s Landmark Buildings”
       7:30, Jeff Barnes, Humanities Nebraska
Cost: Program is FREE; Meal/Social, $15.00
RSVP by April 1 by Calling 867-4233 or emailing kurkshrader@gmail.com

This newsletter is funded in part by Cass County Tourism., www.visitcasscounty.com.
Last fall, the Aldrich Board decided to remove the shrubs on the south side of the Aldrich House. This resulted in a 13th garden to be planted and named. At that time, the board decided to name the garden after Mrs. Aldrich’s short story “Why I Live in a Small Town” and to honor Dwight and Marge Clements for their many contributions to the Aldrich Foundation including the donation of the Aldrich House in 1992. Fortunately, we were able to let them know of the board’s decision before Marge passed away in December. The new plants will be planted this spring. We thank Karyl Smith of Ashland for helping us plan the space which will have a variety of hydrangeas. Several donations and additional memorials will help us finish this garden and update other gardens with some new perennials.

Jeff Barnes’s presentation of “Nebraska’s Landmark Buildings” features many of the buildings that have survived the decades, the architects who designed them, and the communities and people who used them. His talk also highlights Thomas Rogers Kimball, the state’s greatest architect and the newest inductee of the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Jeff is a writer based in Omaha, Nebraska. He is the author of six books of Great Plains history, including “150@150: Nebraska’s Landmark Buildings at the State’s Sesquicentennial,” which received the Nebraska Book Award. He is currently at work on a book of Nebraska’s earliest historical monuments and markers with the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation.

With major funding support from Humanities Nebraska, the Nebraska State Legislature, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and private donations.

Thank You! Carol Miles Petersen
Some time ago, I was invited to the home of Carol Miles Petersen, Aldrich biographer and author of Mrs. Aldrich’s short story collections. She graciously gave the Aldrich Foundation two large boxes of her research. At the time, I didn’t realize the true significance of that donation. However, several board members and I have been recently organizing artifacts related to Mrs. Aldrich for a future preservation project. As we approached Mrs. Petersen’s donation, we soon realized that we were the benefactors of an amazing, extensive collection. Truly, she has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy collecting a wide range of materials. At our February board meeting, the decision was made to keep the contents together, purchase a filing cabinet and label it as the “Carol Miles Petersen Research Collection.” By appointment, you are invited to review the collection. The Aldrich Foundation extends its true appreciation to Mrs. Petersen; and for her many years of service to the Aldrich Foundation, the board voted to label the tulip tree by Mrs. Aldrich’s lily pond in honor of Carol.

Updates to the Aldrich House/Tours
If you haven’t been at the Aldrich House lately, now is a good time to visit. We have added some new furnishings, installed period appropriate pan lights in the living room, and painted many areas. Perhaps, you belong to a civic group that would like to include an Aldrich House Tour as a program. Tour groups of five or more can choose alternative times other than regular hours. Groups have the luxury of adding a visit from Mrs. Aldrich (one of our wonderful guides in character) during a garden tea, luncheon and/or dessert event. Ask the director about the options. Character tours are also held at 2 p.m. the 1st Sunday of every month ($8). It is recommended that guests pre-register to confirm the guides’ availability.

Honoring Marge & Dwight Clements
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Book Club Discussion Questions/Review

Resources are being developed for book clubs. The most recent addition came from the Taylor Meadows Book Club, who developed materials for *Spring Came On Forever*. If your club is contemplating reading an Aldrich book, you will want to check out "Book Club Materials" on bessstreeter-aldrich.org. Here, we will be adding discussion questions and facilitator links as they are developed. If your book club needs multiple copies of a book, contact us for purchasing/renting options.

A book review of *Spring Came On Forever* will be conducted by Laurie Zum Hofe, English professor at Concordia College, on Thursday, May 28, at 7 p.m. This event is free! The Foundation has ordered extra copies of the book and is offering it for $15 this year, regularly $20.

He had brought her a gift—a little work box covered with shells, angel wings and moon shells, Roman snails, and other fan-like shells of a sea they have never seen. Almost were the strange shells symbolic to her of things to come, unknown journeys with Matthias to far-off seas, hearing the sound of wind whipping sails and the call of the gulls on the sand. —*Spring Came on Forever*

Seeking Additional Guides and Aldrich Characters

Making the Aldrich House available for garden events, weddings, and other group events has stretched our guides. If you or someone you know is interested in helping us supervise events and/or give tours, please contact the director. Also, as you are aware, the Aldrich House now offers character tours. Donna Durette of Eagle and Billie Lefholtz of Lincoln are pleased to share their talents on the first Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. or by appointment. We will continue to seek additional individuals who might be interested in assisting the Aldrich Foundation with tours and presentations to groups. Our next training will take place on Wednesday, April 15, at 1 p.m.

Kids’ Writing Camp/Traveling Trunks

With a grant from the Mary Katharine Goddard Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, the Aldrich Foundation has been able to create curriculum for writing camps and to develop Traveling Trunks for nearby schools. The writing curriculum will be used this summer at a camp that will be held at the Aldrich House from June 15 to 18, (12:30 to 3:30). Children, grades 3 to 6, are invited to participate ($30 charge). We thank Cindy Backemeyer, Elmwood-Murdock Elementary, for field testing the materials with her after-school writing club and for teaching the class this summer.

The Traveling Trunks, which were created by Cindy Backemeyer, Elmwood, and Judy Kettle, Lincoln, highlight Mrs. Aldrich while providing writing, history, and literature curriculum for nearby schools. It is being field tested this semester by Dorchester High School, Humboldt Middle School, home school participants, and Elmwood-Murdock elementary.

Foundation Board

At the end of the year, three of our Aldrich Foundation board decided to retire. Collectively, they have contributed over 75 years of service to the Aldrich Foundation. We thank Junior Oehlerking, Roger Bornemeier, and Nancy Savery for their devotion and service over the years. New board members are Barb Oehlerking, Nina Landwehr, and Gary Hall.

Perhaps, you are unaware of who the current board members are? The rare opportunity occurred when they were all together so we snapped a photograph. We are thankful for their vision and leadership: (l to r), Sue Connour, Barb Oehlerking, Nina Landwehr, Brenda Vogt, Angie Buckner; (back row), Linda Homan, Bonnie Drake, Cindy Backemeyer, Gary Hall, Robert Clements, Suzanne Yelkin, and Mary Johnson.
Calendar of Upcoming Exhibits and Educational Workshops

Unusual Collections. In March and April guests at the Aldrich House will be able to see an exhibit entitled “Unusual Collections.” Contributors were asked to share 6 to 12 items from their collections, which will be incorporated with the décor at the Aldrich House. There are over 60 collections represented. Besides regular hours, this exhibit will be open from 5 to 5:45 p.m. on Saturday, April 4, for a social hour prior to the Spring Banquet.

Everything Elmwood. In May the exhibit will be called “Everything Elmwood.” Perhaps you have Elmwood photographs, artifacts, school memorabilia, Miss Elmwood dresses, and/or newspaper clippings etc. that could be shared for that exhibit? Contact Kurk Shrader if you are willing to loan them. Besides our regular May hours (Wed., Thurs., Sat. & Sun. from 1 to 4), the Aldrich House will be open on Memorial Day, too (11 to 2)

Book Reviews. Join us at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 28, as Laurie Zum Hofe reviews Mrs. Aldrich’s book, SPRING CAME ON FOREVER. Dr. Zum Hofe is a English professor at Concordia College in Seward, Dr. Zum Hofe’s book review of Spring Came On Forever will focus on what Mrs. Aldrich wrote and will reflect on how Bess Streeter Aldrich’s craft and style influence our reading of her books.

A second review will be Thursday, June 18, at 7 p.m. when Joel Green of Lincoln will review his book entitled ROBBER’S CAVE: TRUTHS, LEGENDS, RECOLLECTIONS. The book weaves the fascinating history of the Lincoln, Nebraska, landmark cave from its possible origins, through a potential American Indian council location and the area’s first brewery. It is being sponsored by the Novel Approach Book Club, Elmwood.

Floral Quilt Show. The UNL Piecemakers and other contributors will have a floral quilt and needlework show at the Aldrich House during June and July.

Vintage Toy Exhibit. Our exhibitors in August and September will decorate using vintage toys, games, and books. This should be a fun exhibit for kids and grandparents alike.

What’s Cooking? Exhibit. This exhibit will include salt & pepper shakers and vintage kitchenware. Visitors in October and part of November will find quotes from Mrs. Aldrich related to cooking, and they will receive a couple of her favorite recipes.

Journey Into Christmas. The tradition continues; every room in the Aldrich House will be decorated for Christmas with a theme depicting some unique characteristic of Nebraska. The dates for tours include November 28-29, December 5-6, 12-13, 19-20, and 26-27 or by appointment.

Educational Workshops

You might remember that last fall, the Aldrich Foundation started offering educational workshops. For more specific details about the upcoming classes, go to bessstreeteraldrich.org and click on “Educational Workshops.”

Mar. 14, 1 to 4:30
Springtime Applique, 3-D
Sue McKee Neill

March 29, 1 to 2
Facebook Focus, A Beginner’s Guide
Nicole Hoffman

March 31, 10 to 4
Wool Applique
Barbara Bond

April 18, 10 to 4
Sit n Sew Day
Sue McKee Neill

April 24, 1 to 4
Bouncing Bets & Other Flower Watercolor
Suzanne Yelkin

April 25, 1 to 4
Watercolor Class Repeated
Suzanne Yelkin

May 5, 10 to 4
Wool Applique, Wall Heart Pocket
Barbara Bond

June 15-18, 12:30 to 3:30
Summer Writing Camp for Children
Cindy Backemeyer

June 19, 12:30 to 3:30
Watercolor Painting Class for Children
Suzanne Yelkin

June 24, 1 to 2 p.m.
Basic Woodturning for Junior High Kids
Elmer Miller

June 28, 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
Fairy Garden Workshop (2)
Cindy Backemeyer

July 11, 1 to 2 p.m.
Woodturning 101, Adults/Sr. High
Kris Shrader/Bonnie Brewer

July 18, TBD
Barn Quilt Workshop

Aug. 11, 10 to 4:30
Wool Applique, Holiday Stocking
Barbara Bond

Aug. 15, 1 to 3 or 4
Beginning Genealogy
Kami Voboril

Sept. 20, 1 to 2:30
Signs of Fall Nature Study for Parent/Child
Suzanne Yelkin

Sept. 22, 10 to 4:30
Wool Applique, Christmas Ornaments
Barbara Bond

Sept. 27, 1 to 3
Fabric Pumpkins
Kris Shrader
Are You an Aldrich Foundation Member?

If you are unsure if your membership is up to date, check the “Membership List” link (then “current members” on the left column) of the Bess Streeter Aldrich website. It was last updated on February 26. Your membership dues enable us to plan programs, maintain the Aldrich Home, stay connected in our community, and coordinate learning activities for Aldrich enthusiasts. Personally, you may be entitled to discounts on books, free admission to the Aldrich House, and even free books! Contact Kurk Shrader if you have questions.

**Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation**

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**Contact Information:**

Name____________________________________________________________________
Address____________________________________________________________________
City_______________________________________________State_____ZIP_____________
Phone_____________________________________________________________________
Email______________________________________________________________________

**Membership Levels (Mark One):** Your membership in the Aldrich Foundation demonstrates your commitment to encourage the reading of exceptional great plains literature and to illustrate a sense of community pride by specifically promoting Elmwood and the works of Bess Streeter Aldrich. All members will be recognized in one of our two newsletters.

_____ **Spring Came on Forever Level**, $25; receive two newsletters and $5.00 off any book purchase;

_____ **The Rim of the Prairie Level**, $50; receive two newsletters and two complimentary tickets for house tours;

_____ **Lantern in Her Hand Level**, $100; recognition in Aldrich Foundation publications, two newsletters, two complimentary tickets for house tours; and one Aldrich paperback book (one that remains in print). Indicate choice of book (circle one): Lantern in Her Hand, White Bird Flying, Rim of the Prairie, Spring Came on Forever, Mother Mason, or Journey into Christmas.

_____ **Journey into Christmas Level**, $250; receive two newsletters and two passes for free monthly admission.

_____ **Student Member**, $10; any student, up to 18 years of age, can join. They receive recognition in the newsletter and $5 off any book purchase.

**Other:**

_____ Cash Donation: Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of $ _______________.

_____ Volunteer. Please contact me about volunteer opportunities at the Bess Streeter Aldrich House and/or Museum (provide guided tours, decorate house, assist with house and garden maintenance, help with fundraiser, and/or become a board member.)

**Comments:**

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**House & Museum Hours:**

Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday: 1 to 4 p.m.; May through Sept.
Saturday and Sunday: 1 to 4 p.m.; October through April
Or by Appointment
Loan Retirement/Notes of Appreciation!

Last fall, we asked for assistance to retire the porch loan, and you responded! Due to the generosity of our members and other donors, the Foundation was able to make the final payment this winter. You might remember that we had to borrow $20,000 in the Summer of 2016 when the front wall of the Aldrich House porch collapsed and matching brick had to imported from Pennsylvania.

We are very appreciative of friends and family members who have chosen to honor their loved ones by giving memorials to the Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation. Most recently, we received memorials in honor of Marge Clements, Marietta Vogt, and Eula Swarts. A donation related to Bushberry school and Aldrich History was made to the museum by the family of Thelma Howe. Thank you all!

Finally, we also thank Foundation members who renewed their membership. Together, we will continue to develop strategies so that the next generation learns about Mrs. Aldrich’s outstanding writing and contributions to our community! Thank you for your generosity!

Stay Up-to-Date with the Latest Events at the Aldrich House by Liking Us on Facebook:

Bess Streeter Aldrich House and Museum

This newsletter is funded in part by Cass County Tourism., www.visitcasscounty.com.