



NEBRASKA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Kearney celebrates Centennial Chautauqua

Nebraskans from across the state will gather June 21-24 under a Chautauqua tent at the Great Platte River Archway to participate in what Theodore Roosevelt called “the most American thing in America,” marking the 100th anniversary of the first Kearney Chautauqua.

A review of that first Chautauqua in the July 22, 1907, edition of the Kearney Daily Hub declared, “Three cheers for the Kearney Chautauqua! The best thing that ever happened.”

The 2007 Centennial Chautauqua, entitled “Visions for America: Notable Nebraska Reformers,” will feature four scholars portraying historical figures from Nebraska who played major roles in important American political and social reform movements of the late 19th century and 20th century. Charles Everett Pace will portray spokesman for the cause of universal human rights Malcolm X, Donald Fiedler will portray three-time presidential candidate and orator William Jennings Bryan, David Landis will portray proponent of rural electrification and the Unicameral legislature George Norris, and Helen Lewis will portray crusader for immigrant women and children Grace Abbott.

The event will open at 6 p.m. June 21. Similar to the 1907 Chautauqua that brought speakers and musical and theatrical performances, the Centennial Chautauqua will open each evening with a 45-minute performance from local theater and music groups, including the Theatre of the American West and jazz vocalist Preston Love Jr.

In addition to evening events, daytime workshops at various venues in Kearney will be held to enhance the historical implications of the evening discussions. Chautauqua events are free and open to the public. Check the NHC website at www.nebraskahumanities.org or the Kearney Visitors Bureau’s website at www.visitkearney.org for a complete schedule of events.

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