

Expressions *of time*

Local calendar pairs poets, artists

By Jason Hardy

Senior staff writer

About a week and a half ago, the calendar turned. The world turned its eyes and imagination to the uncharted future. It was the year 2000.

The Black Star Press, the instrument that helps countless people plan their upcoming year, will also help them remember some of Nebraska's best poets and artists this year.

Nine artists and 12 poets from Nebraska are featured in the newly-released 2000 Nebraska Poets Calendar, a calendar that pairs poems by Nebraska poets with art by Nebraska artists. The calendar has been published since 1994.

The project is an effort to celebrate the character of Nebraska, said Sarah Fairchild, Black Star Press editor.

She said she wanted to showcase Nebraska art and poetry in a calendar format instead of an annual book because a calendar was something everyone needed.

"We decided that poetry books don't

because, by nature, a calendar was more visible than a book.

"If it's a calendar, people see it every day," she said. "Maybe they'll read the poems many times and look at the picture many times, so I guess people will probably look at it more."

Roy Scheele, a poet in residence at Doane College in Crete and a featured poet in the calendar, said the calendar format was definitely a good way to showcase the art and character of Nebraska.

"I think its value as being something different is part of its appeal," Scheele said. "A lot of times people will see my poem, and they'll mention it to me when they see me, so that's kind of fun."

"I also think poets and writers generally don't get that much feedback, and I probably get more feedback from the poems I publish in the calendar than I normally do otherwise."

Aside from the Nebraska Poets Calendar's appeal as something different, Scheele said the pairing of art and poetry that was decidedly Nebraskan tends to better promote each individual artistic endeavor.

"I think it's always interesting to see somebody's illustration because it uncovers something for the poet that they might not have been aware of," he said. "It's like having a reader's interpretation of your poem in visual form."

While at times the art and poetry were created independently of each other, some of the artwork was specifically inspired by a particular poem, as with Scheele's poem, "The Wanting Figure," and Janna Harsch's untitled artwork that accompanies it. For Scheele, the collaboration is a big asset to the calendar's overall effectiveness.

"I think what happens with an illustration is it gives the reader another layer to the poem," he said. "Usually an illustration picks out an image or two and combines them to give the reader another dimension to the poem."

"I think it's especially good for someone who may not read all that much poetry."

Fairchild said she couldn't be more pleased with the success of the calendar. It is available at a number of galleries and bookstores around Lincoln, including the Noyes Art Gallery, the University Place Art Gallery, the Heritage Room and Lee Booksellers.

"I thought I'd only do it for one year," Fairchild said. "But the enthusiasm of the poets was so great. They seemed so appreciative of the calendar that I just want to keep it up."

Fairchild said the calendar has become something many Nebraskans enjoy year after year.

"Often they buy it in twos and threes," Fairchild said.

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Roy Scheele
poet



Art Courtesy of Nebraska Poets Calendar

sell very well every year, but a calendar is something that's useful too," Fairchild said.

Julia Noyes, owner of the Noyes Art Gallery in Lincoln, is featured twice in the calendar - on its cover and in conjunction with a poem. Noyes said she was happy to participate in the project