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For Immediate Release

Local teens provide creative viewpoint in library contest

Rapid City, SD – April 21, 2008 - In coordination with the 2008 Big Read, a national program to get communities reading and talking about a classic book, the Rapid City Public Library offered a contest for teens to express, via art or essay, their reaction to Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451. The novel, about a dystopian society where books are burned and independent thought discouraged, was the novel chosen by South Dakota for this year's Big Read.

Essay contest participants were asked to state, in 800 words or less, which book they would save and why. First place winner, Sarah Holz, a senior from Stevens High School in Rapid City, chose Madeleine L'Engle's "A Wrinkle in Time." Holz praised the book for its ability to offer an exciting story on a superficial level while touching on a variety of universal themes on a deeper level. She described the hours of pleasure the book had provided her when she was younger and the excitement of discovering new things in it as her perspective about life matured. Second place winner was Daniel Lang, a seventh grade student at St. Joseph Home School in Rapid City, who chose The Bible as the book he found most inspirational and described its historic importance. Third place went to sixth grade student Kassia Symstad, a student at Hot Springs Middle School, who wrote about "Weirdos from Another Planet," a Calvin & Hobbes tale by Bill Watterson.

For the art contest, students were asked to express their reaction to the book in a work of art using any medium. Alexander Marrs, a junior at Stevens High School, was first place winner in the art contest, submitting a unique mixed media piece with an assemblage of drawings on paper on a painted canvas. Sophomore Tina Nelson, also from Stevens High School, earned second place with a photography entry. Third was Grant Mason, a junior at Jefferson Academy in Rapid City, who submitted a drawing in pencil and pastel.

The winning students will receive their prizes at an awards event to take place at the downtown library at 1:00 pm on Saturday, May 3rd. Essay contest winners receive Borders book store gift certificates in varying amounts. Art contest winners will receive art supplies.

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May 3rd is World Press Freedom Day, a perfect date to celebrate Fahrenheit 451 with its predominant themes of censorship and government control of media. The public is invited to attend this event. The contest judges will be present to talk about the selection of the winning entries. The essay was judged by members of the Black Hills Writers Group. Craig Schaefer will represent the group at the May 3rd event and talk about writing and writers. Victoria Ledford, curator of visual art education at the Dahl, judged the art entries and will talk briefly about the Dahl and its current and upcoming programs.

The Rapid City Public Library is hosting Big Read events over the month of April. Events are listed at www.rapidcitylibrary.org/BigRead and at that webpage visitors can nominate the book that has had the biggest impact on their life. The **BIG READ** is an initiative of the National Endowment of the Arts (see www.neabigread.org) in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest. The South Dakota Big Read is sponsored by the South Dakota Humanities Council's Center for the Book.

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