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### ***Charlotte's Web* being discussed at next history book club meeting**

PIERRE, S.D. -- The story of Charlotte, Wilbur and Fern still resonates after 61 years.

Writer and writing teacher Candy Hamilton of Rapid City will share insights into E.B. White's style of writing and how he felt about *Charlotte's Web* as he wrote it during a program that begins at 5:15 p.m. Central Time on Tuesday, May 7, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

"I see it as a chat with other book lovers about excellent writing in a popular book," Hamilton said.

The story is of the bond between a pig named Wilbur, a clever spider named Charlotte and a little girl named Fern. It addresses death, loneliness and loss as it celebrates life, love and friendship.

Hamilton's program is part of the History and Heritage Book Club sponsored by the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation (the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society) and the South Dakota State Historical Society Press.

"*Charlotte's Web* was published in 1952 and is still one of the best-loved children's books of all time," said Foundation President Michael Lewis. "The book shows how we can bear the heartbreaks and tragedies as well as all the wonders of life. We want to introduce youngsters to *Charlotte's Web* and have adults revisit a childhood favorite."

The foundation arranged for Hamilton to make presentations about *Charlotte's Web* to pupils at St. Joseph Catholic School and Pierre Indian Learning Center during the morning of May 7 before making a presentation to the History and Heritage Book Club. The evening program is free and all ages are welcome to attend. The program is made possible by the South Dakota Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

White, 1899-1985, was an influential essayist and the writer of the children's classics *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte's Web* and *The Trumpet of the Swan*. Hamilton became interested in White's writings through her fascination with *The New Yorker* magazine. White was a contributing editor to the *New Yorker* from 1927 until his death.

Hamilton uses excerpts from *Charlotte's Web* as examples of successful sensory writing when she conducts writing residencies for the South Dakota Arts Council.

“I think Charlotte is still popular because White writes with such precision, details and honesty about his very own farm and the life and death there – the life cycle he observed year in and year out with characters (animal and human) he knew well,” she said. “Although he was writing for children, he shows no condescension in the story or in the vocabulary. I find the book interesting – even enchanting – for those same reasons.”

*Charlotte’s Web* is available at the Heritage Store at the Cultural Heritage Center and the Capitol. Book club members receive a 10 percent discount, and SDSHS members receive an additional 5 percent discount, when they purchase the book at either Heritage Store.

For more information, call Dorinda Daniel at (605) 773-6006.

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*The South Dakota Historical Society Foundation is a private charitable nonprofit that seeks funding to assist the South Dakota State Historical Society in programming and projects to preserve South Dakota’s history and heritage for future generations.*

*The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society’s world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit [www.history.sd.gov](http://www.history.sd.gov) for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.*