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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANNOUNCING - Authors' Sundays at the LeDuc Historic Estate

February 1, 2011 - Hastings, MN - The LeDuc Historic Estate and Dakota County Historical Society are pleased to announce a series of three Authors' Sundays at the LeDuc Historic Estate, 1629 Vermillion Street, Hastings, MN - March 6, April 10 and May 15. These events begin at 1 p.m. and authors will read passages from their books, explain their writing craft, and sell and sign books after their readings. These events are FREE and open to the public; refreshments will be served.

March 6

Tim Spitzak, editor & publisher of the "St. Paul Voice" has written a book called *The Messenger*. Spitzak, who holds a B.A. in journalism from UW - River Falls, and has been in the journalism business for over 20 years, says of his book, "It tells the story of a young journalist, John Jenkins, as a dull obituary assignment opens his eyes to just how remarkable a small town life can be... It's about a guy whose life is transformed by the life of another... I wanted to write something about a real human experience... Community journalism has always been a passion for me... Everyone has a story to tell."

Bill Wittenbreer, Public Service Librarian at Augsburg College and scholar of 19th Century Art in Minnesota has written a chapter in *The State We're in: Reflections on Minnesota History*. Wittenbreer's chapter is about how people in early Minnesota made predictions about the future. The predictions are interesting and sometimes humorous. Bill Wittenbreer is a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a B.A. in history and holds a M.A. in history from St. Cloud State University and a M.A. in library science from Dominican University. He is a member of the board of trustees of the Minnesota Museum of American Art and is the author of several articles on Minnesota painting and painters.

April 10

Gunda Davis, a resident of Bettendorf, Iowa, tells her story in *Pumpkin Soup and Shrapnel - Growing up Under the Third Reich*. She studied at the Universities of Berlin and Heidelberg and West Virginia Institute of Technology. She is an avid gardener and volunteers in community service, especially for the Quad City Symphony Orchestra. The Quad City Times says of Gunda's book, "In clear, concise prose rich with detail, Gunda Davis writes of the conditions that spawned the rise of Hitler, the hold that he had on people and the pain and suffering that his dictatorship ultimately brought. The riveting narrative takes readers into Davis' comfortable, cultured world as it turns into hell marked by gas mask drills, bombings, starvation and frequent moves to escape the chaos."

Eric Dregni, Assistant Professor of English at Concordia University, St. Paul, and a Fulbright Scholar to Norway has told of his adventures in his book, *In Cod We Trust*. In this cross-cultural memoir, Dregni tells the hair-raising, hilarious, and sometimes poignant stories of his family's yearlong Norwegian experiment. Among the exploits he details are staying warm in a remote grass-roofed hytte (hut), surviving a dinner of fermented fish thanks to 80-proof aquavit, and identifying his great grandfather's house in the Lusterfjord only to find out it had been crushed by a boulder and then swept away by a river.

May 15

Cindy Thury Smith and Shirley Dalaska have spent countless hours doing research on their just-published book, *Civil War Veterans: Hastings, MN: A Documented List with Selected Biographies*. Hastings at the Mississippi River was the point of embarkation for thousands of Minnesota men who enlisted in the Union Army. These men were sometimes mere children who insisted on becoming drummer boys while others were professional people who left wives and children back home so that they could fight for a cause that was a passion for them. There are fascinating, warm, and sometimes heart-wrenching biographies composed by other historians from Hastings. All these stories put the Civil War into perspective and add such human interest to one of the nastiest wars of all time.

David P. Page is Chair of the Journalism Department at Inver Hills Community College and possesses an impressive and extensive knowledge on the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald. He will speak and do a power point presentation on Fitzgerald and the Civil War. He has co-authored The St. Paul Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald and F. Scott Fitzgerald in Minnesota. Mr. Page comes to us with a rich background in teaching at all grade levels and with Masters' Degrees of Arts in the Professional Writing Program from the University of Minnesota and in public Affairs from the University of Iowa. His presentation at the LeDuc Historic Estate is co-sponsored by the Hastings/Prescott Area Arts Council.

The LeDuc Historic Estate is owned by the City of Hastings and managed by Dakota County Historical Society.

For further information go to website: www.dakotahistory.org or call 651-437-7055.

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