

# Story<sup>the</sup>Catcher

A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society

## Registration Deadline for Story Catcher Writing Workshop May 7

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is hosting a two-day workshop for writers of poetry, fiction and non-fiction from May 30-June 1, 2012 on the Chadron State College campus.

This is an exceptional opportunity for writers of all levels to work with professionals and other writers to learn and sharpen their skills in a small class setting.

See information on instructors on Page 4. Register, by May 7, at the website [www.storycatcherworkshop.com](http://www.storycatcherworkshop.com).

Participants will register for one of the workshops that takes place in four sessions over two days. Additional writing excursions may be arranged, as well as nature hikes or writing retreats.

Each workshop is led by published authors or writing professionals and sessions are open to aspiring writers of all ages (16 and up) and abilities. (Students must be rising juniors or older and will need to show proof of student status.)

The goal of the Story Catcher Writing Workshop is to provide a learning experience where people can gather, share their creative work, receive helpful feedback from peers and professional faculty. ✨



## Caroline Sandoz Pifer Dies

By Dan McGlynn

Caroline Sandoz Pifer, the last surviving child of Old Jules, passed away March 12, just two months shy of her 102nd birthday. After the death of her sister Mari in 1966, Caroline played an essential role in continuing the Sandoz legacy.

Thanks to her, many people were able to learn first-hand of the beauty and the rich history of the High Plains region about which Mari so famously wrote. I was one of those lucky enough to know Caroline.

The first time I met her was on an Old Jules Sandoz land tour in June of 1984. Caroline led the caravan of cars, pausing at places like Walgren Lake, Sacred Heart Catholic Church and the well site. At each stop, she read appropriate passages from "Old Jules."

Midway through the tour, I asked Caroline if she would like to ride the rest of the way with my nine year old daughter and me. Caroline accepted and sat in the back seat for the rest of the tour while a reporter from Scottsbluff interviewed her. The stories Caroline told about her sister, her father, the Indians and the area were priceless. The more I listened, the more I realized what a treasure Caroline was.

Later that summer, my family and I made the first of many visits to her ranch southeast of Gordon, Nebraska.

*Continued Page 3*

## The StoryCatcher

The "StoryCatcher" is the title of a book by Mari Sandoz and it is the title of Helen Winter Stauffer's biography of Mari, *Mari Sandoz: The Story Catcher of the Plains*.

The StoryCatcher is published four times a year by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The vision of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is to perpetuate and foster an understanding of the literary and historical works of Mari Sandoz; and to honor the land and the people about which she wrote: Native Americans, ranchers, farmers and the people who settled the High Plains country.

The Society hosts a conference and presents the Pilster Great Plains Lecture Series.

Additionally, the society provides collections on loan to the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center at Chadron State College.

Address changes should be mailed to 2301 NW 50th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524.

Contributions to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society are tax-deductible. To join the Society, fill out and mail the form on the back of this newsletter. For more information, e-mail [marisandoz\\_society@windstream.net](mailto:marisandoz_society@windstream.net), or visit [www.marisandoz.com](http://www.marisandoz.com).

## Mari Sandoz

The feats, the passions, and the distinctive speech of the West come alive in the writings of Mari Sandoz (1896-1966).

As the author of 23 books, including *Old Jules*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *Crazy Horse*, the *Strange Man of the Oglalas*, she was a tireless researcher, a true storyteller and an artist passionately dedicated to the land.

With her vivid stories of the last days of the American frontier, Mari Sandoz has achieved a secure place as one of the finest authors in American literature and one of Nebraska's most important writers.

As a historian and as a novelist, Sandoz was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame in 1976 and posthumously received the coveted Wrangler Award from the Hall of Great Westerners.

## Authors McNeals to Speak at Writing Workshop and Festival

Fiction writer Tom McNeal has strong ties to Northwestern Nebraska. He will be the keynote speaker at the Story Catcher Writing Festival at the Mari Sandoz Heritage Center in Chadron, Neb. on Saturday, June 2. He and his wife, Laura, both authors will also present workshop sessions at the Story Catcher Writing Workshop held on Chadron State College that precedes the festival on May 30 to June 1.

McNeal was born and raised in Santa Ana, California, but spent part of every summer at the Nebraska farm where his mother grew up near Hay Springs, Neb.

He has always been fascinated by his mother's stories of her girlhood in the remote town and knew that he eventually wanted to write about this region. (The population of Hay Springs is actually even smaller than the fictional Goodnight.)

After earning a BA and a teaching credential from UC Berkeley, he moved to Hay Springs, Nebraska, taught high school English, drove a school bus, substituted briefly in a one-room schoolhouse and began work on what would become his first published novel "Goodnight, Nebraska." (Random House, 1998).

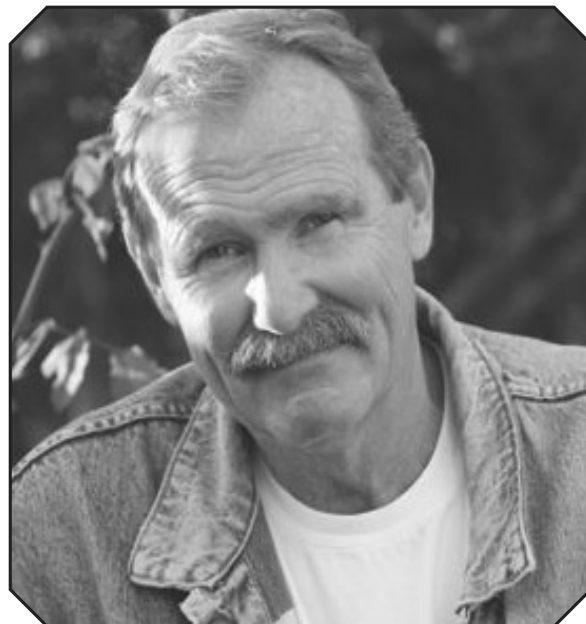
He began placing short stories in literary journals and, eventually, in 1998, published his first novel, "Goodnight, Nebraska," which won the James A. Michener Memorial Prize, given to a first-time author 40 or older (he was 51 at the time).

His latest novel, the highly lauded, "To Be Sung Underwater" (Little, Brown, 2011), looks at a midlife that took a wrong turn many years earlier.

McNeal holds an MA in creative writing from UC Irvine and was a Stegner Fellow and Jones Lecturer at Stanford University. His short stories have been widely anthologized and "What Happened to Tully" was made into a film.

The McNeals were married in 1993 and now live in southern California with their two sons, Sam and Hank. Laura Rhoton McNeal was born in Arizona and raised near Air Force bases in Iceland, New Mexico, South Carolina, and Utah. She holds an MA in fiction writing from Syracuse University and taught middle and high school English in Salt Lake City.

Together, the McNeals are the authors of four young adult novels published by Knopf and a picture book called "The Dog Who Lost his Bob." Their second, "Zipped," won the 2004 PEN Center USA Literary Award for Children's Literature. ✂



*Author Tom McNeal is the featured speaker at a writer's festival and presenter at the Story Catcher Writing Workshop in Chadron.*

## Caroline Sandoz Pifer—The Grand Lady of The Sandhills—Dies

These visits led to a great friendship that lasted nearly 30 years.

In the fall of 1990, my son and I went with Caroline on a harrowing ride in her pickup truck to Lost Chokecherry Lake located near her ranch. (Many visitors have reported being bounced around like a pinball in a machine on a ride across her land.)

Chokecherry is where Little Wolf and Dull Knife and a band of 150 Northern Cheyennes spent the winter of 1878-1879 after they had escaped from Ft. Reno in Oklahoma. But their quest to reach the Yellowstone River ended tragically and became the basis of Sandoz's classic, "Cheyenne Autumn."

As further evidence of Caroline's influence, was the time my wife Linda's sixth grade class was reading "Winter Thunder." She told her students about her relationship with Caroline. With that, the kids decided they wanted to write letters to her, asking about the book, her famous sister and the history of the region. And a week or so later, every student received a type written letter signed by Caroline. That's the kind of person she was.

And after she moved to a care center in Gordon, I always made a point see her any time I was near. Before each visit, I would write down a list of questions to ask her. But I always left my notebook in the car so that Caroline wouldn't think she was being interviewed. And each time I got back to my car, I'd scribble down everything I could remember about what she had said.

I last saw Caroline a couple of years ago when I was on my way to a Sandoz Conference in Chadron. When I arrived, she was alone in her room sitting in her wheelchair. She didn't seem to recognize me, so I held her hand and talked to her. Before I left, I told her that I loved her and that she would always be special to me.

I remember a conversation we had years ago when Caroline was still living on her ranch. The subject of death came up. So I asked her then if she were afraid of dying. "Oh no," she said, emphatically. "Death is as much a part of living as the sun, wind and the rain."

*Caroline preserved Mari Sandoz's legacy and became a legend herself among Sandhills visitors. She is survived by daughters, Eleanor Hamilton of Minneapolis, Minn. and Mary Ann Anderson of Boulder, Colo. ❀*



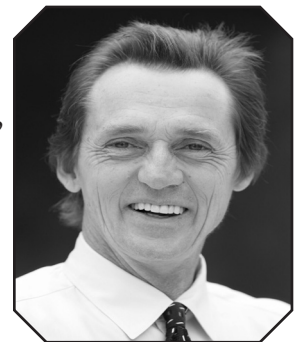
*Caroline Sandoz Pifer, youngest daughter of Jules and Mary Sandoz, was born May 21, 1910. Photo courtesy of Mari Sandoz Heritage Society - Beverly Cooper*

## Joe Starita is 2012 Pilster Lecturer

Joe Starita of Lincoln, Neb. has been chosen to speak at the Pilster Great Plains Lecture on Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012 at Chadron State College.

He is the author of "I Am Man:" Chief Standing Bear's Journey for Justice.

The book, which tells the story of Ponca Chief Standing Bear's



court battle to establish he was, in the eyes of the law, a person, is the 2012 One Book, One Nebraska title.

Starita also had an important role in the NET television documentary "Standing Bear's Footsteps."

A professor at the University of Nebraska's College of Journalism, Starita is also the author of The Dull Knives of Pine Ridge, that garnered him a second Pulitzer Prize nomination.

The Pilster Lecture will be held at Memorial Hall, on the Chadron State College Campus, and is free and open to the public.

The Mari Sandoz Society annual conference follows the Pilster Lecture on Friday, Sept. 28 ❀

# Workshop Writing Instructors Have Varied Talents

Each workshop category is limited to 12 participants each, so early registration is advised. To learn more about each instructor, the workshop goals and to register, by May 7, at the website [www.storycatcherworkshop.com](http://www.storycatcherworkshop.com).

## **Jovan Mays: *Poetry I (Performance & Spoken Word)***

Jovan Mays is a slam poet. In fact, he is a member of the 2011 Denver Slam Nuba Poetry Slam Team that won the National Poetry Slam in Boston. He has achieved notable success as a slam competitor not only locally but also throughout the Midwest. It is Jovan's commitment to community and education in both urban and rural communities that distinguishes him as an organizer and artist.

**Workshop Focus:** The focus of this workshop will be how to make words come alive.

## **R.F. McEwen: *Poetry II (Contemporary Verse)***

R.F. McEwen has been a tree trimmer and English teacher. He is currently a professor of English at Chadron State College, in Chadron, Neb. His poems have appeared in many publications. His poems are written for the most part in blank verse and are more often than not narrative.

**Workshop Focus:** This workshop will be devoted to writing narrative poetry, poetry that tells a story, rather than confessional, emotive poetry that explores one's own feelings.

## **Milton Wolf: *Fiction I: Science Fiction & Fantasy***

Milton Wolf is the author of 94 publications and his book, *Visions of Wonder* (with the prominent editor of science fiction and fantasy, David Hartwell) was adopted by the Science Fiction Research Association as a recommended text for teaching Science Fiction and Fantasy.

**Workshop Focus:** Come join me for a writing workshop that will open wide your eyes of inquiry and yet keep you focused on the final goal of any writer: to be published.

## **Sean Doolittle: *Fiction II (General Fiction)***

Sean Doolittle is the critically-acclaimed author of several crime and suspense novels. His first book, *Dirt*, was named one of the 100 Best Books of 2001 by the editors of Amazon.com.

**Workshop Focus:** Sean will take a hands-on approach to generating ideas, framing solid story structures, fleshing out our characters, and tightening our plots, and reading and discussing each other's material.

## **Linda M. Hasselstrom: *Prose I: Clean as Bone, Pure as Water: Revising Your Writing***

Linda Hasselstrom is a South Dakota rancher and the full-time resident writer at Windbreak House Writing retreats, established in 1996 on her ranch. Her writing has appeared in dozens of anthologies and magazines.

### **Workshop Focus:**

Students will submit up to 20 pages of nonfiction writing by May 10 and she will write line-by-line-comments in the text of each submission. Class time will focus on evaluating and revising essays for potential publication.

## **Poe Ballantine: *Prose II: "Writing Around" (With the Last Beat Left On the Planet)***

Poe Ballantine's work has appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, regularly in *The Sun Magazine*, *Kenyon Review*, and *The Coal City Review*. His second novel, *Decline of the Lawrence Welk Empire*, won *Foreword Magazine's* Book of the Year.

**Workshop Focus:** My workshops are inspired by my years of itinerancy. He will share his insights about process, the importance of the small press, reader psychology, and any other questions, problems, and concerns the budding writer might have.

## The “Fighting Sioux” Are Still Fighting in the Courts

**Correction:** *The article titled, “The Fighting Sioux are Fighting No More” was written by Ty Cyphers - Chadron State Sports Marketing Major and Sandoz Center Student Employee and not Sarah Polak. This is an update.*

*Excerpted from an NPR article*

The state Supreme Court in North Dakota is about to consider this question: Can lawmakers require a college to name its sports teams after a Native American tribe?

For decades, University of North Dakota teams have been known as the “Fighting Sioux.” It’s a name some see as an honor and others find demeaning. Now, the long fight over the Fighting Sioux may be settled in a courtroom.

### A Legal Tangle

UND is the last of the 18 schools to come to terms with the NCAA policy. There have been a series of lawsuits and legislative actions involving the university since 2005, sometimes allowing it to use the name Fighting Sioux and sometimes forbidding it. And some Big Ten schools won’t play colleges with Native American monikers.

UND started removing the Fighting Sioux name and most of its imagery from campus in 2010. But last spring, the state Legislature intervened, passing a bill that not only resurrected the name, but also mandated the university to use it.

Lawmakers repealed the Fighting Sioux law during a special session more than a year ago. But now, a petition drive has forced its reinstatement. There will be a statewide referendum in June if the signatures stand.

North Dakota’s Board of Higher Education wants to retire the name, however, and skip the referendum. And the state’s Supreme Court heard arguments March 21.

### A Controversy Far From Over

Some think there should be a statewide vote on the issue and others that the NCAA has been unfair to schools by granting waivers to some universities, but not others. ❀

## MSHS Annual Conference on Sept. 28 at Mari Sandoz Center

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Conference will be held Friday, Sept. 28, 2012, on the campus of Chadron State College. This year’s conference theme is *Hostiles and Friendlies*, taken from the Mari Sandoz book by the same title.

The new conference format allows more interaction with other members who attend and with the speakers. Popular discussion roundtables will center on two Sandoz books, *Hostiles and Friendlies* and *Cheyenne Autumn*.

In order to participate in the discussion, the conference committee suggests reading, re-reading or brushing up these books.

Conference registration materials will be available online at [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org) in July or in the August 2011 StoryCatcher.

Conference registration is also available online at [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org).

## Correction: Crazy Horse Volksmarch June 2-3

The 27th annual Crazy Horse Volksmarch is an organized 10K (6.2-mile) woodlands ramble to the world’s largest mountain carving. Those attending the Story Catcher Festival in Chadron on June 2 could walk the monument on Sunday June 3.

Each year up to 15,000 people enjoy this popular family event, sponsored by the American Volkssport Association’s Black Hills Chapter and is hosted by the Crazy Horse Memorial.

This is the only time each year the public may hike to the mountain and a walk across the arm of the carving while carving-in-progress. There is no registration, the event costs \$3 per person and people hike at their leisure.

1. Time: 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
2. Event Cost: \$3/person
3. Contact: Wanda Moranti Phone: (605) 342-6188
4. Website: [www.crazyhorsememorial.org/events/volksmarch.html](http://www.crazyhorsememorial.org/events/volksmarch.html) ❀

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