

Story^{the}Catcher

Winter Issue 2015

A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society

2015 Story Catcher Workshop June 12-14

“Writing Home: Capturing Your Place in the World” is the theme of the Story Catcher Summer Writing Workshop and Festival **June 12-14** at **Chadron State College**. The event is co-sponsored by the college and the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. This is the first year for a weekend format. Sandoz was a popular Sandhills writer and teacher and was always supportive of helping young writers. That passion was the impetus for the first workshop several years ago. Organizers are trying the weekend format to increase participation among those who can't take time off during the week. The general workshop and retreat costs \$150 which gives participants access to all open workshops and special sessions over three days. There is no deadline for general registration. Students and Mari Sandoz Heritage Society members receive a 20 percent discount and a limited number of scholarships are available for student writers.

This year's writer in residence is **Anna Keesey**, a graduate of Stanford University and the Iowa Writer's Workshop. Her work has appeared in a number of journals and anthologies, including Best American Short Stories. She is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship. Keesey teaches English and creative writing at Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon. Her historical novel *Little Century* (2012 Farrar, Straus & Giroux) has been widely-praised for capturing the drama and tumult of nineteenth-century homesteading, cattle ranching, range-wars and railroads—themes very familiar to residents of the Great Plains. But, the book is set in frontier Oregon, reminding readers that the West extends beyond traditional horizons to the promise of the Oregon Trail itself. More information is on the author's website: www.annakeesey.com

Also on faculty is **Sean Prentiss**, a New England resident who has lived in most parts of the United States from the Pacific Northwest to the Rocky Mountains. Wherever he has lived, writing and the power of stories have always been a part of his life. He focuses on creative and environmental essays, poetry, and a few short stories. He also writes craft essays concerning creative nonfiction. Prentiss is the author of *Finding Abbey: A Search for Edward Abbey and His Hidden Desert Grave* (forthcoming Spring 2015 from University of New Mexico Press). Prentiss is the **(continued p. 2)**

Story Catcher Summer Writing Workshop & Festival

Presented By:
The Mari Sandoz
Heritage Society
and
Chadron State College



Anna Keesey, 2015 Story Catcher Summer Writing Workshop and Festival Writer in Residence

Support the Work of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society **JOIN US TODAY!**

Join us in keeping the spirit and work of Mari Sandoz alive by supporting the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society with a new membership, gift membership or renewal! You can visit our website at www.marisandoz.org and complete the online form, or you can download a copy of the membership form and mail it to us.

Join

Story Catcher (continued from p. 1)



Sean Prentiss

co-editor of an anthology on the craft of creative nonfiction, entitled *The Far Edges of the Fourth Genre*, and the co-author of *Environmental and Nature Writer: A Craft Guide and Anthology* (forthcoming 2016 from Bloomsbury Press). Prentiss is an assistant professor at Norwich University in Vermont. There he runs the Norwich University Writers Series and the Chameleon Literary Journal. He lives on a small lake in northern Vermont with his wife, Sarah.

Alison Stine's first young adult novel, *Supervision*, will be released by HarperVoyager in April. She is also the author of three books of poetry: *Wait* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), *Ohio Violence* (University of North Texas Press, 2009), and *Lot Of My Sister* (The Kent State University Press, 2001). Her work has appeared in more than 90 publications including: *The Nation*, *The Paris Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Tin House*, and *Poetry*. Trained as a performer, her original stage plays and musicals have been produced at the Cleveland Playhouse, the University of Nebraska, La Habra Depot Theatre, and the Trilogy Theatre Group. She was a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University and received the Ruth Lilly Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation. She holds a B.A. from Denison University, an M.F.A. from the University of Maryland, and a Ph.D. from Ohio University. She has taught as the Emerging Writer at Gettysburg College, Visiting Assistant Professor at Grand Valley State University, and Postdoctoral Fellow at Ohio University, and is on faculty at the Reynolds Young Writers' Workshop at Denison University.



Alison Stine

Also on workshop staff is **Dr. Steve Coughlin**, assistant professor of English at Chadron State College. He earned his bachelor's degree in English from the University of Massachusetts Boston, his master's in creative writing (poetry) from the University of Idaho and his Ph.D. from Ohio University in English with an emphasis on creative writing. He teaches creative writing, composition and American literature. While at Ohio University, Coughlin served as Editor of the literary journal *Quarter After Eight*, a nationally recognized publication of innovative literature produced by the graduate students at Ohio University.



Dr. Steve Coughlin

This year's workshop bonus is a presentation on the final day by Poe Ballantine, a well-traveled writer who finally settled in Chadron. He has published four books about his experiences as a wanderer. In 2006, his neighbor Steven Haataja disappeared. The body of the Chadron State College math professor was found 95 days later, bound to a tree and burned to death in the hills behind the campus where he had taught. No one understood the circumstances. Poe had never contemplated writing mystery or true crime, but since he knew all the players, the suspects, the sheriff, the police involved, he and his kindergarten age son set out to find out what might have happened. His memoir of these events, *Love and Death on the Howling Plains of Nowhere* was published to critical acclaim in 2013.

(SEE SPECIAL NEWSLETTER INSERT FOR ADDITIONAL REGISTRATION AND WORKSHOP INFORMATION)

Endowed Internship Paying Dividends at the Center

This semester two students are working at the Mari Sandoz Center through endowed internships. Christian Ahlers, a History Major with Museum Studies Minor, is working with the archival collections held at the Center. Mr. Ahlers is currently working with the Judy McDonald Collection. McDonald was one the first executive secretary of the Sandoz Society during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Her collection consists of materials related to the early history of the Sandoz Society. He is completing work on the collections started by previous intern Marti Ossman, graduate student from Louisiana State University. He will be completed processing the collection and creating a finding aid for the collection by the end of the semester. He is hopeful that he will also be able to complete the archival collection from the Mari Sandoz Room in Gordon. Center Director and internship supervisor, Sarah Polak, said that archival collections take more time than object or photographic collections. "With objects or photographs, each item is a discrete object. With archival documents, the meaning is collective – you have to understand all of the documents to see how they fit together. This takes much more time than trying to identify a photograph for example. The second intern is Jodi Birch. Jodi is an Art Major with a Gallery and Museum option, who will be graduating in May. Ms. Birch plans to go into collections care, possibly working as a museum curator. She has been working with a variety of collections in the Center, assisting Polak with collections storage. She has also been working extensively with the College's Permanent Art Collection, which now falls under the care of the Sandoz Center. Ms. Birch has been working on creating a comprehensive inventory for the entire fire art collection on campus. Polak said the student help in the collections have been a huge help to getting materials processed and available to researchers, but also in helping to provide experience for students wanting hands-on experience to get a job after graduation.

Sandoz Exhibit Available for Loan!

Thanks to a grant from Humanities Nebraska, the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society will be spreading the word about Mari Sandoz, the Sandhills author and teacher who had an impact on America's understanding of the West. The professional exhibit is portable and features photos of Mari Sandoz and the Great Plains landscape in addition to text about the author (her books and her history) and quotes from her writings. The design, done by Argyle Octopus in Lincoln, reflects the image and spirit of the author and her work as well as the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. This exhibit is comprised of two pull up floor banners, two 16-inch photo spinners, a digital photo frame, table covering, and printed materials about Sandoz and the Society, will be available soon. It is available to libraries, schools, historical societies and museums in Nebraska on a first come, first serve basis. It can be used as part of an existing exhibit or for a special event. If you or your organization are interested in reserving the use of the exhibit, please contact the Society Executive Secretary Elizabeth Chase echase@windstream.net or Public Relations Coordinator J.L. Schmidt jlschmidt67@gmail.com.



Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is on Facebook!

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society has a Facebook page. Keep up to date with Sandoz Society news, events and activities by "liking" our page!

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©(3) non-profit 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 an annual conference, the Pilster Great Plains Lecture Series, and a writer's workshop. Additionally, the Society provides collections on loan to the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska.

Address Changes

Address changes should be mailed to:
P.O. Box 6808, Lincoln, NE 68506

Contributions to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society are tax-deductible. To join the Society contact visit our website at www.marisandoz.org



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*, Sandoz was a tireless researcher, a true storyteller and 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.

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storycatcherworkshop.org



June 12th to 14th 2015

Writing Home: Capturing Your Place in the World

General Workshop & Retreat: Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 12-14,

- General Workshop & Retreat Tuition: \$150, which gains you access to all open workshops and special sessions over the three days.
- There is no deadline for General Registration, and you do not need to sign up for any specific sessions in advance.
- Students and Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Members Receive a 20% discount.
- A limited number of scholarships are available for student writers. See application for details.

ADVANCED Revision Workshop: Pre-Session on Thursday, June 11th

With 2015 Writer-In-Residence, Anna Keesey.

Meeting a day before the general workshop, writers who have prose work (fiction or non-fiction) in progress and are interested in revising and refining their writing for publication will gather in a small writing community for one-on-one feedback with Anna Keesey.

- Advanced Workshop Tuition: \$100 (Advanced & General Workshop Special Rate: \$200)
- Space is limited to 8 writers, so early registration is encouraged.
- **REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MAY 30, 2015**

Mari Sandoz Emerging Writer Instructorship

Graduate students and others who have writing classroom experience (either as a teacher, student or both), and whose work shows promise, may apply for the Emerging Writer Instructorship. The successful applicant will be honored as the "2015 Mari Sandoz Emerging Writer," will have tuition waived for all sessions, including the advanced workshop, will attend all of the conference events for free, and will lead a workshop session of their design for the rest of the Storycatcher participants. A small stipend will be provided for their instruction and to help defray a portion of their travel expenses. See application for details.

Lodging & Meals:

Affordable lodging and dining options are available. Contact us for further details.

For more information about the workshop, a complete schedule and for registration information, please visit us at www.storycatcherworkshop.org or www.facebook.com/storycatcherworkshop or email mevertson@csc.edu