

# Story<sup>the</sup>Catcher

A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society

## Story Catcher Writing Workshop & Festival

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. Writers of all levels are invited to attend and explore their creativity and gain insight from noted authors.

A festival, open to the workshop attendees and the public, will be held on Saturday, June 2, at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Center in Chadron, Neb.

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

Classes will be taught on these genres:

- Poetry (Performance & Spoken Word)
- Poetry (Contemporary Verse)
- Fiction (Fantasy & Science Fiction)
- Fiction (General Fiction)
- Non-Fiction - Prose I (TBA)
- Non-Fiction - Prose II (TBA)

For updates on instructors and to register, go to [www.storycatcherworkshop.com](http://www.storycatcherworkshop.com).

Registration deadline is May 7, 2012. Participants will register for one of the workshops, which will take place in four sessions over two days. Each workshop category is limited to 12 participants each, so early registration is advised.

## Story Catcher Summer Writing Workshop & Festival



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

All classes are held at Chadron State College. Field trips will take participants to Fort Robinson State Park, Chadron State Park, Museum of the Fur Trade or the Fort Robinson Playhouse for theater productions. 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. ❀

## 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.

## Schedule of Workshops and Events

### Wednesday, May 30

(Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center Atrium)

- 3 to 5 pm Check-in & Registration
- 5-6 pm Opening Ceremonies and Reception
- 6-7 pm Students meet with instructors

### Thursday, May 31

(Chadron State College)

- 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Workshop Sessions
- 3:30 p.m. Field trips and activities (May include writing excursions, retreats or nature hikes.)

### Friday, June 1

(Chadron State College)

- 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Workshop Sessions
- 3:30 p.m. Field trips and activities

### WRITING FESTIVAL - Open to the Public

#### Saturday, June 2 • 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

(Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center Atrium)

- 9 to 11:30 a.m. Readings from session participants or talks by authors, publishers and others associated with writing.
- 12 to 1:30 p.m. Banquet with Keynote Address by a noted author (charge for lunch to participants.)
- A fair with booksellers and other vendors.

### Registration and Costs

1. Tuition: \$300 per person (Includes a non-refundable deposit of \$50). Tuition covers four writing sessions, opening reception, breakfasts and access to activities and field trips. (Some activities may require additional fees).
2. Students over age 16: \$250 (Must provide copy of student ID with registration)
3. Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Members: \$270 (Current, paid members only)
4. Guest Registration. Society members not participating in the workshop may instead sponsor up to ONE student or low-income participant (for member rate).
5. Festival - Register online for lunch.

Please visit the workshop website for updates and the most current information, as well procedures for registering for the workshop or attending the festival <http://www.storycatcherworkshop.com>. ❀

# About the Writing Workshop

By Matt Evertson

The Story Catcher Writing Workshop takes its inspiration from one of Nebraska's most famous writers, Mari Sandoz (1896-1966), who grew up in the region on the homesteads her family settled in the late 1800s.

In addition to building an impressive career as an author, Sandoz went to great lengths to encourage other writers, conducting summer writing workshops on college campuses, reviewing manuscripts sent to her by aspiring authors from all over the nation, and teaching creative writing through programming produced by Nebraska Public Television.

Her advice to anyone who wanted to become a writer was the same approach she took to her work: "pick a subject you know well, and write about it."

A prolific writer and dogged researcher, her works crossed the boundaries of history, fiction, biography, memoir, journalism, ethnography, ecology, activism and advocacy for marginalized groups, such as Native Americans.

It is fitting, therefore, that this passionate teacher of writing who captured so many stories from this region—from ancient past to the speculative future, from a wide variety of approaches and perspectives—should be the inspiration for our workshop.

The workshop and festival itself

takes its name from *The Story Catcher*, Sandoz's last published novel, and winner of the Levi Strauss Golden Saddleman Award in 1963 and the Western Writers of America Spur Award for best juvenile fiction in 1964.

Set in the same high plains region of our workshop, the novella follows the trials and tribulations of Lance, a young Oglala Sioux searching for his place within a mid-nineteenth century tribal society facing white encroachment and continued conflict with neighboring tribes.

Turning his back on the honors he might gain as a warrior, Lance trades his weapons for the charcoal and color sticks and animal skins that he uses to capture the daily life, hunts, battles, rituals and visions of his tribe, eventually winning honor and a new name: "Story Catcher," recorder of the history of his people.

It is our goal to channel this spirit of Sandoz and *The Story Catcher*—to guide and encourage the participants of our workshop in capturing their own creative ideas, to help transform those ideas into written works that can then be shared, discussed and revised, and to celebrate the best qualities of writing from this workshop—and this region—in a festival that may inspire the story catcher in all of us. ❀

## Mari Sandoz Taught Writers

Mari Sandoz combined her love of teaching with her sincere desire to help aspiring writers by teaching an eight-week, summer writers workshop at the University of Wisconsin from 1947 to 1956.

According to Helen Winter Stauffer's book, *Mari Sandoz Story Catcher of the Plain*, "She would go over their manuscripts, painstakingly, encouraging any signs of talent, patiently indicating ways to improve their writing. When a work showed promise, she would send it to her agents, publishers or editor friends." ❀

## Crazy Horse Volksmarch April 2-3

The 27th annual Crazy Horse Volksmarch is an organized 10K (6.2-mile) woodlands ramble to the world's largest mountain carving.

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) ❀



# The “Fighting Sioux” Are Fighting No More

By Sarah Polak

In 2005, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) banned all “hostile” Indian nicknames, mascots, and logos from use by schools belonging to the NCAA. This ban affected thirty schools within the NCAA from Division I to Division III, such as Florida State University (Florida Seminoles), University of Illinois (Fighting Illini’), University of North Dakota (Fighting Sioux) and Carthage College (Redmen).

Each school was threatened with sanctions amounting to the exclusion of being able to host postseason games and the prohibiting of schools wearing nicknames and logos on uniforms during postseason play. NCAA executive committee chairman, Walter Harrison, said, “What we are trying to say is that we find these mascots to be unacceptable for NCAA championship competition.”

Depending on how long schools resisted the NCAA changes, the stricter the sanctions become. Although the NCAA is cracking down on potentially discriminating nicknames, there is a door left open to schools wishing to keep their names. Schools may escape sanctions if they are able to gain permission from the namesake tribe to which the nickname refers.

This route was taken by Florida State University when they were given permission from the Seminole Tribe of Florida despite the conflicting opinion of Seminole tribes found in other states.

Furthering the conflict is the mascot of the University of North Dakota (UND), the “Fighting Sioux.” The college has sports programs in both Division I and Division II in the NCAA, but by far their most recognized sports program is their hockey team, which is a top competitor in the country’s most successful



This 30-foot granite Fighting Sioux logo is on the main concourse floor of the “Taj Mahal” of hockey arenas for the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, No. Dak.

hockey conference, the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA).

Since officially establishing a hockey program in 1946, the school has won seven national championships and 15 WCHA titles. All of the accolades serve as a great source of pride to the people of North Dakota.

An interesting side note to the controversy is that the current logo, adopted during the 2001-2002 athletic season, was designed by Native American artist,

Bennett Brien, who graduated from UND with a master of fine arts.

When the NCAA policy was put into action, the University of North Dakota gained the permission from the state’s attorney general to sue the NCAA. By October, 2007 the NCAA and UND reached an agreement that the university had three years to gain the approval of the two main Sioux tribes in North Dakota, the Spirit Lake Tribe and Standing Rock Nation.

The Spirit Lake Tribe voted to allow UND to use the Fighting Sioux mascot in 2008.

The Standing Rock Nation decided not to hold a formal vote and wouldn’t discuss the matter until the State Board of Higher Education made a decision on the name. This move stalled the process because the board needed the approval or disapproval of the mascot by the tribes in order to make the final decision.

Because of the inability to gain approval from both tribes, the State Board of Higher Education put in place a plan to retire the nickname by August 2011. The decision was accepted by some but disregarded by others, namely the North Dakota legislature who passed a law mandating that the school keep its mascot regardless of NCAA sanctions.

*(Continued next page)*

## “Fighting Sioux” cont.

With the State of North Dakota establishing a law protecting the Fighting Sioux name, the University of North Dakota and its programs using the name were put in a tight spot between major school funding sources and opinions both accepting and rejecting the mascot.

Even with the new law, the NCAA notified the school that sanctions would be upheld and that refusing removal of the mascot could keep UND from joining the Big Sky Conference in the future.

Besides the social and legal aspects of this argument, finances are impacted because of the effect a new mascot would have on donations by alumni, funding by the state, merchandising deals and the cost for removing the existing logos and implementing a new logo.

The NCAA pulled all UND merchandise with the Fighting Sioux name and logo off its website until the name is changed, which decreased the amount of revenue brought in.

To demonstrate some of the economic pressures placed on the school, State Representative Mike Schatz requested a cost estimate for developing a new logo and retiring the Fighting Sioux logo. The numbers were staggering putting the cost of the change at \$750,000 (\$575,000 used to create a new nickname and logo for the school).

When built, the Ralph Engelstad Arena—the school’s hockey arena named after a former UND goalie—was adorned with more than 2,000 images of the logo including a 30-foot granite image on the main concourse floor. The cost for logos removal and replacement is an estimated whopping \$20 million.

Additionally, the \$110 million arena, called the “Taj Mahal of hockey,” is one of the finest hockey arenas in the world and is where UND hosts its hockey games. Although calling “The Ralph” its home arena, the university does not own it, but rather rents it from the Englestad Trust, established after the death of Ralph Englestad in 2002.



When the arena was half-completed, Engelstad said if UND changed the Fighting Sioux name, he would abandon construction on the arena and write the whole project off as a bad investment.

Under the terms of agreement between UND and the Englestad Trust, the University could use the arena as long as the Fighting Sioux name continued. Unfortunately for UND, the school

doesn't take over the rights to the arena until 2031 according to contract.

Because the arena is privately owned, the school technically cannot renovate the arena and put in new logos and the NCAA cannot enforce changes to the arena. With the arena completely designed using the logo, it is not known whether the arena will stay in business with the logo restrictions.

A special session held in the North Dakota Legislature in November 2011 addressed the mascot issue. Governor Jack Dalrymple urged lawmakers to repeal the previous law and power was given back to the State Board of Higher Education. The school was then instructed to drop the nickname.

University of North Dakota President Robert Kelley said much of the initial Fighting Sioux logo removal would be done by the end of December 2011.

According to the Bismarck Tribune, the North Dakota Legislature wants UND to not adopt a new name and logo for three years to let tensions cool off.

During this time period potential mascots and logos will be looked at while remaining conflicts are settled. It seems the Fighting Sioux mascot issue has been settled, but in the three-year waiting period new issues regarding new mascots and logos are sure to come up. Stay tuned. ✨



*Florida State University negotiated with the Florida Seminole Tribes to keep the team name.*



# Tour of Western Nebraska Makes Man a Husker

Larry Fleming of Sidney, Neb. and Tom Kalfa of Cerritos, Cal. were featured in the Mailbox section of January/February issue of Nebraska Life magazine. Tom Kalfa's letter to the magazine said he prepared for his introduction to Nebraska by "devouring" the magazine. After which, he was led on an "eye-opening, consciousness-raising tour of Western Nebraska."

It had taken nearly forty years, but lifelong friends finally made good on their promise to show each other their hometowns. Licking the last vestiges of their tin roof sundaes from their lips they reminisced over how they had gotten to the Potter, Neb. Sundries and Drugs.

Fleming and Kalfa (then of Brooklyn, N.Y.) met in 1972 during a corporate training program. When their training took them to New York, Kalfa showed Larry all the highs and lows and ins and outs of life in the big city. Fleming promised to reciprocate with a tour of Nebraska.

Years passed, with Kalfa taking many opportunities to remind Fleming that he had reneged on the deal. Fleming thought the requests were less than genuine, but finally decided to call Kalfa's bluff. Together with his wife (the former Barbara Olsen of Potter, Neb.), he planned a tour of western Nebraska for Kalfa and his wife, Dottie.

Kalfa's initial reaction was, "Oh, oh...be careful what you wish for."

In a letter to Sarah Polak at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center, he said

"Like most people, my only view of Nebraska has generally been with my nose pressed against the



*This photo of Larry Fleming, of Sidney, Neb. and Tom Kalfa of Cerritos, Cal. with their Tin Roof sundaes appeared in the January/February issue of Nebraska Life magazine.*

window of an airplane. I wasn't sure what to expect, but my wife is from Kansas so I anticipated similar flat, featureless farmland.

"Boy, was I wrong! Nebraska has to be seen from ground level to be appreciated. I was genuinely surprised by the varied topography. There are bluffs and ridges, lakes and forests, rolling green hills and marshy sand dunes and—to this city slicker—even the endless fields of wheat and

corn and the patchwork quilts of farmland have a majestic quality when seen close-up rather than from 40,000 feet."

"There's lots to see and appreciate...the whimsy of Carhenge...the natural beauty of Smith Falls...the proud history of the state as depicted at the Archway Monument...the educational tidbits provided by historical markers and museums...the

discovery of local creative talent like Mari Sandoz, the writer...the awareness of the marvel of American agriculture...the recognition of the farmer's contributions of technical savvy and sweat...the friendliness of the people...the admiration for America's heartland.

"Thanks to Larry, my eyes have been opened wide. Nebraska will never again be passed off as 'flyover country.' Being here is as close as I have ever come to finding the fabric from which the USA, I'm so proud of, is made. I don't recall drinking any Kool-Aid, but the tin roof sundae had the same effect. I'm now a believer. I'm now a Cornhusker." ❀



*Dottie Kalfa, of California, stands with the statue of Mari Sandoz after she, and her husband, Tom, visited the Sandoz Center with friends.*

## Mari Sandoz's Life as a Writer

*Excerpted from an article, **Some Notes on Mari Sandoz**, by John Wunder in the *Prairie Schooner*, published by the University of Nebraska Press (2006).*

"Mari Sandoz knew from her earliest recollections that she wanted to be a writer. She wanted to write fiction, record stories, and chronicle history. Perhaps more than any other Nebraska writer, she embodied her home region, the Great Plains and more precisely Nebraska's Sandhills...

"Sandoz wrote both fiction and history or in what some critics call that blurry canon in between the two literatures. Mari's first publication... was a short story, *The Vine*, that opened the first issue of *Prairie Schooner* in 1927. It won Sandoz, then using her pen name Marie Macumber, immediate national recognition with Edward J. O'Brien's three-star rating and inclusion among such writers as Owen Wister, Ernest Hemingway, and Oliver LaFarge....

"Her books have always had critical acclaim even if not always understanding. . . . Her fiction continued to be rejected, as she fiercely debated with the journal editors over the nature and causes of the rejections and her use of "westernisms" in her written language.

"She insisted on retaining colloquial expressions. Criticism seemed to strengthen her resolve. Her first major effort would be a biography of her father, Jules, and she started in earnest to research the history of the Sandhills for her projected biography...

"Although rejected, Sandoz continued to write. She sent *Old Jules* to Atlantic Press for a nonfiction book contest in October, 1932. Although the press kept the manuscript for eight months, they rejected it in

May 1933. She was dejected after she read a note in the manuscript scribbled by a reader saying the book was a boring one about "a dirty old man."

"...Out went a revised *Old Jules* once again to New York presses; it was again rejected. She then sent it once again, in April 1935, to the Atlantic Press nonfiction contest. This time it won. A telegram arrived for her at the Nebraska State Historical Society: "Happy to announce that your manuscript wins the Atlantic contest . . . Acknowledge this wire, hearty congratulations—Edward Weeks."

"...Mari Sandoz proved herself a prolific writer. Once she established her reputation, her manuscript books and essays attracted publishing houses and journals, and she remained an active publishing historian and novelist for over thirty years....

"As can be said of most writers, their works are a composite of their experiences, and this was certainly true for Mari Sandoz. No one would have predicted that such a diminutive, driven child who survived poverty, ostracism, and life-threatening abuse, as well as natural disasters in the Sandhills, might one day have written such nationally recognized history and fiction of her region."

*(Prairie Schooner, Volume 80, Number 4, Winter 2006, pp. 41-54 (Article))*

*Excerpted from 1999 News Release by Board Member Con Marshall*

### CSC Professor Says Sandoz Also a Folklorist

For years, admirers of Nebraska author Mari Sandoz have discussed whether she was a historian or a novelist. While most will probably agree that she was both, a Chadron State College English professor thinks Sandoz also fits the definition of a folklorist in many ways.

## Center Turns 10

Many significant events have happened on September 9, but few of them mean more to Sandoz Society members than September 9, 2002. That was the date the Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center was dedicated. As we look forward to the tenth anniversary of our opening, we are also looking for best way to celebrate this achievement. Please send your ideas to [spolak@csc.edu](mailto:spolak@csc.edu) and stay tuned.

Michael Cartwright, former Mari Sandoz Heritage Society board member, was a member of a panel that discussed Sandoz's work at an annual meeting of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society.

Cartwright said Sandoz listened to stories, many of them second-hand, told by her father, Indians and pioneers, then recounted them. He said she paid close attention to the values of the people she was listening to and didn't necessarily see one value system as being superior to others.

Her genius was knowing a value system when she saw it and her ability to "get inside other people's skin and think like they did," Cartwright said.

Cartwright said, in her work, Sandoz captured the myths, legends and rituals of a culture, and also preserved the uniqueness of individuals driven by those forces in her books such as *Old Jules* and *Crazy Horse*.

Another of the panel members, Diana Quantic of Wichita State University, called Sandoz one of the most thorough researchers ever and said the author presented extremely clear visual images in her writing. All of the books, Quantic said, are full of vivid descriptions that make them come alive to the reader. ✨

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Yes! I would like to support the work of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. I have enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Your membership payment/gift is tax deductible according to IRS guidelines. We will provide a receipt for tax purposes. To join, mail this form with your check, payable to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, to Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, 2301 NW 50th St., Lincoln, NE 68524.

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