

# Story<sup>the</sup>Catcher

Spring 2019 Issue

A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society

## 2019 Story Catcher Writing Workshop "Far and Away" June 17-19 at Fort Robinson

**Far and Away** is the theme of the 2019 Story Catcher workshop sponsored by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society at Fort Robinson near Chadron, June 17-19.

The workshop is inspired by the "Frontier and Remote" (FAR) location where we have invited writers-in-residence who have developed their talents from environments and experiences quite far away from this region, said workshop coordinator Dr. Matt Everston, a Sandoz board member and Chadron State College professor. The location encourages participants to get outside themselves and explore new places, genres and approaches from diverse perspectives. Set in the breathtaking Pine Ridge Region of Northwest Nebraska, the attendees will gather in the historic buildings and scenic spots around the fort and stay in the 1890 Brick Officer Quarters.

Writers-in-residence will lead sessions focused on crafting and improving writing while providing participants a chance to create new work and receive personalized feedback. This year's writers-in-residence include:

**Frank X Walker**, former Poet Laureate for the state of Kentucky and professor in the department of English and the African American and Africana Studies Program at the University of Kentucky. He is a Cave Canem Fellow and co-founder of the Affrilachian Poets and the author of ten collections of poetry. *The Unghosting of Medgar Evers* (University of Georgia Press, 2013), was the winner of the 2014 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Poetry. He also authored two collections of persona poems exploring the infamous Lewis & Clark expedition from the point of view of Clark's personal slave, *York: When Winter Comes: The Ascension of York* and *Buffalo Dance: The Journey of York* (University of Kentucky, 2008 & 2004). *Buffalo Dance* was winner of the Lillian Smith Book Award and named *A BookSense 76* Spring 2004 Top 10 Poetry Book. Walker is the originator of "Affrilachia" and is dedicated to deconstructing and forcing a new definition of what it means to be Appalachian. A Lannan Poetry Fellowship Award recipient, he has degrees from the University of Kentucky and



Markus Jones reads from his novel "How the Butcher Bird Finds Her Voice" to cap off the first day of the 2018 retreat. Photo credit Matt Everston, Chadron State College

(continued on page 2)

## Storycatcher workshop continued...

Spalding University, as well as four honorary doctorates from the University of Kentucky, Spalding University, Transylvania University and Centre College. He has lectured, conducted workshops and read poetry at over 400 national conferences, arts centers and universities across the globe. He is the recipient of the 2006 Thomas D. Clark Literary Award for Excellence, Actors Theatre's Keeper of the Chronicle Award and a 2005 Recipient of a Lannan Literary Fellowship in Poetry. He has held board positions for the Kentucky Humanities Council, Appalshop and the Kentucky Writers Coalition as well as a government appointment to Cabinet for Education, Arts & Humanities and the Committee on Gifted Education. He has served as vice president of the Kentucky Center for the Arts and the executive director of Kentucky's Governor's School for the Arts. More information is available on his website <http://www.frankxwalker.com>

**Marie Mutsuki Mockett** was born and reared in California to a Japanese mother and American father, she graduated from Columbia University with a degree in East Asian Languages and Civilizations. Her memoir, *Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye* (W.W. Norton, 2015), explores how the Japanese cope with grief and tragedy and is set against the backdrop of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Tōhoku, Japan and her family's 350 – year -- old Buddhist temple. The memoir was a *New York Times* Editors Choice, a Barnes and Noble Discover Pick, an Indie Next Pick, a Finalist for the 2016 Pen Open Book Award, a *San Francisco Chronicle* Best Book of 2015 and a Finalist for the Indies Choice Best Book for Adult Nonfiction for 2016. Her first novel, *Picking Bones from Ash* (Graywolf, 2009) was shortlisted for the Saroyan International Prize for Writing, and a finalist for the Paterson Prize. Her essay, "Letter from a Japanese Crematorium," was anthologized in *Norton's Best Creative Nonfiction 3*. She has written for *The New York Times*, *Salon*, *National Geographic*, *Glamour*, and other publications and has been a guest on *The World*, *Talk of the Nation* and *All Things Considered* on NPR. She enjoys speaking to the public about Japan, modern attitudes toward religion and spirituality and seeing through unconscious bias. In 2013, she was awarded a fellowship by the NEA and Japan US Friendship Commission, which enabled her to live in Japan. While there, she was featured in the NHK (Japanese National Broadcasting) Documentary, *Venerating the Departed*, which was broadcast internationally. She has a work in progress, *A Kernel in God's Eye*, which is set in seven agricultural and heartland states, and is forthcoming from Graywolf Press. Mockett teaches fiction and nonfiction at the Rainier Writing Workshop, in Tacoma, Washington. She lives in San Francisco with her husband and son. More information is available on her website <http://www.mariemockett.com>

**Brad Aaron Modlin** is the Reynolds Endowed Chair of Creative Writing at the University of Nebraska at Kearney where he serves as undergraduate and graduate creative writing faculty. His book, *Everyone at This Party Has Two Names*, won the Cowles Prize, and his short collection of short stories, *Surviving in Drought* won The Cupboard's Press annual contest. His nonfiction has appeared in *River Teeth*, *Fourth Genre*, *DIAGRAM*, and others. His work also has been featured by *On Being*, *Service Space*, and [Gratefulness.org](http://Gratefulness.org). He holds an MFA from Bowling Green State and a PhD from Ohio University. More information is available on Modlin's website <http://www.bradaaronmodlin.com>

**More information about the workshop and a link to registration is available at**  
<https://outsideyourself.wordpress.com/story-catcher-workshop>



photos L-R 2019 Workshop writer's in residence Frank X. Walker, Marie Mutsuki Mockett (photo credit Sylvie Rosokoff) and Brad Aaron Modlin

# Fall Pilster Lecturer and Symposium Speakers Announced

San Francisco State University history professor Charles Postel will deliver the 2019 Pilster Lecture at Chadron State College on Thursday September 19. The lecture is part of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society sponsored Symposium on popular Nebraska author Mari Sandoz. Postel will address populism, a political movement historically attributed to Nebraska roots. He said his teaching and research focuses on social movements and politics in the United States, especially political ideas that have inspired radical protest and reform as well as conservative activism. The 7:30 pm (Central) lecture will be at the CSC Student Union and is free and open to the public. The populism theme will continue during the day-long symposium on Friday at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center on the CSC campus. University of Nebraska-Kearney history professor Dr. Jeff Wells will discuss meeting diverse needs of the community and Dr. Maria Munoz of Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, PA, will discuss Latin American populism. Chadron State College professor Dave Nesheim and students will discuss Addison Sheldon, a Chadron newspaper reporter who covered the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890 and was elected on the Populist ticket to the Nebraska Legislature in 1897. He led the state Historical Society as superintendent from 1917 to 1943. Lisa Pollard will speak about "Populism in Sandoz Country."



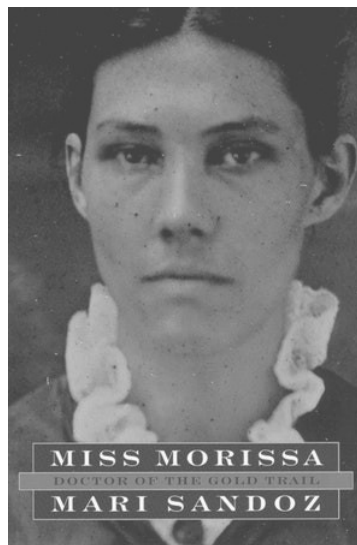
2019 Pilster Lecturer, Charles Postel

**Watch for detailed fall symposium information and registration coming to your mailbox and email inboxes this summer!**

## Next Sandoz Book Discussion in June on *Miss Morissa*

We invite you to join us on **Thursday, June 20, 2019** at **Francie & Finch Bookshop, 130 South 13th Street** in Lincoln for a book discussion on *Miss Morissa: Doctor of the Gold Trail*.

*"Miss Morissa is a dramatic, moving novel of a young pioneering woman doctor on the brawling Nebraska frontier of the 1870s. Fleeing the East and a heartbreaking past, Morissa Kirk finds the North Platte River Valley rife with rumors of gold strikes. Fortune hunters, desperadoes, horse thieves, murderers make up the frontier society, while Indians roam the plains refusing to surrender their land to the gold-hungry white men. Near lawless Clarke Bridge she sets up her practice, treating white and Indian alike, receiving horses (if anything) in return for her services. Then, even as fame spreads of her skill, and acceptance slowly grows, Morissa becomes embroiled in the life-and-death struggle between the cattlemen and the homesteaders, a struggle as destructive as it was inevitable. In the telling of Morissa's story, Mari Sandoz has caught the whole turmoil of the changing frontier in the days of Custer, Calamity Jane, and Buffalo Bill Cody. (University of Nebraska Press)"*



### 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](http://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.

# Chadron Student Wins Mari Sandoz History Award

Students from Chadron, Crawford and Sioux County middle and high schools participated in the annual Western District History Day at Chadron State College, March 1. The top three students in each age division and category advanced to the state competition in Lincoln. The theme for this year's competition was "Triumph and Tragedy." Riley Ambrose of Chadron received the History of the Great Plains Award presented by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society) for his report on Mirage Flats, NE. Other winners, as reported by CSC College Relations, included:

## JUNIOR (grades 6-8) Results

- Group Documentary: *James Koerber and Thomas Smith, Chadron, "City College 1950 Basketball Scandal."*
- Individual Exhibit: *Kamden Victory, Crawford, "A Moment in Time: The Space Shuttle Challenger"; Lauren Rasmussen, Chadron, "The Polio Vaccine"; Jace Lien, Chadron, "Cheyenne Outbreak."*
- Individual Paper: *Uzziah Schwartz, Chadron, "Martin Luther King Jr. and his effects on the Civil Rights Movement."*
- Individual Performance: *Kylah Vogel, Crawford, "Hannah Senesh."*
- Group Website: *Blaine Tewahade and Makinley Fuller, Chadron, "Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad"; Bradd Collins and Noah Brown, "Yellowstone National Park."*
- Individual Website: *Jodean Chesley, Chadron, "1920's Women's Fashion"; Thomas Kaus, Chadron, "The Polish Cipher War: A Polish Triumph That Could Not Prevent a Polish Tragedy"; Micaiah Fuller, Chadron, "The S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald."*

## SENIOR (grades 9-12) Results

- Group Documentary: *Allen McCumbers, Kalen Lotton and Thomas Watson, Sioux County High School, "Iranian Hostage Crisis"; Cassidy Nesheim and Jackson Smith, Chadron, "The Canary Girls: Personal Tragedy for a Triumph for Future Women"; Jordan Summers, London Gillam and William Ackerman, Crawford, "Coal Miners Take Charge: The Coal Strike of 1902."*

- Individual Documentary: *Tyler Kaus, Chadron, "Longitude: The Triumph and Tragedy of Making Time Travel."*
- Group Exhibit: *Hayes Frahm and Tyler Morava, Crawford, "The Triumph of Cortez; the Tragedy of the Aztec."*



Riley Ambrose of Chadron, winner of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Award, poses with Dr. Kurt Kinbacher, CSC associate professor, during the Western District History Day at Chadron State College Friday, March 1, 2019. (Tena L. Cook/Chadron State College)

- Individual Exhibit: *Hadlee Rudloff, Crawford, "In Pursuit of Triumph"; Tylea Underwood, Crawford, "The Triumph and Tragedy of Martha Sharp"; Riley Ambrose, Chadron, "Triumph and Tragedy in the Sandhills: Mirage Flats, NE."*

- Individual Paper: *Maralee Rischling, Chadron, "Triumph and Tragedy in Love Through the Court Case Loving v. Virginia."*

- Individual Performance: *Alexis Konruff, Crawford, "A Single Light in a World of Darkness"; Cambrea Vogel, "I Can..."*

- Group Website: *Grace Sorenson and Lauren Collins, Chadron, "Amelia Earhart: A Triumph for Women and a Tragedy Never Forgotten"; Jameson*

*Margetts and Abigail Hyer, Chadron, "The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire: Learning to Triumph over Tragedy"; Lane Frahm, Rope Anders and Talor Morava, Crawford, "Crazy Horse and Red Cloud: Tragedy in their Triumph."*

## Special Awards

- 20th Century: *Jameson Margetts and Abigail Hyer, Chadron, "The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire: Learning to Triumph over Tragedy."*
- Pre-20th Century: *Tyler Kaus, Chadron, "Longitude: The Triumph and Tragedy of Making Time Travel."*
- Women in History: *Faith Nunn, Grace Skavdahl, Kodie Rempp, and Morgan Edmund, Sioux County High School, "Dorothea Lange."*
- Military History: *Hadlee Rudloff, Crawford, "In Pursuit of Triumph."*

## Follow the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society on Instagram!

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is now on Instagram! Follow us @marisandozsociety

# Story Catcher “Walk-Ins” Continue Pursuit of Writing

Assistant Professor of English Markus Jones read several excerpts from his short stories and novel during the final Graves Lecture of the fall semester Nov. 27 in the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center. “The Gulf Stream,” paints a portrait of a young child being mistreated by his father on a sandy beach. “Creature of the Dark,” nominated for a 2018 Pushcart Prize, creates a glimpse into a Christian service juxtaposed with a shooting at a mosque in the same community. “Thirst,” from the novel “Postworld,” is about refugees in a truck clambering over bodies for a taste of rain. In “Phone Call,” from “Church Bells in the Night,” Darla calls her lover, Max, to tell him she has finally killed her abusive husband, Sammy. During the lecture, Jones compared two different approaches to writing: plotting versus “pantsing” or flying by the seat of one’s pants. Jones said he prefers the second method. “I go where the story takes me and then I reverse engineer it and design the plot,” he said. Jones said even though it is common writing advice to show, rather than tell, it is still an important concept for writers to remember. “Don’t analyze or interpret. Tap into your subconscious and embrace it,” Jones said. On Dec. 1, Jones received a 2019 Pushcart small press nomination for “Old Man Gloom.” Other awards include two 2018 American Fiction Awards for his novel “How the Butcher Bird Finds Her Voice,” which was nominated in the Literary category and a winner in the Multicultural category. Also, “Cindy Jack and the Town Drunks,” was a semi-finalist for the 2017 Tillie Olsen Short Story Award. Two of the students attending the reading were Lanelle and Jack Kant who said they “discovered” Markus Jones and the college’s growing creative writing program at the Story Catcher Festival in June 2018. They were walk-ins who had heard about the event, said coordinator Matt Evertson. They were so impressed with Markus that they audited his class this Fall, he said. The couple came from New Mexico and have relocated to northwest Nebraska to pursue and explore creative writing in their golden years. *(CSC Marketing Coordinator Tena L. Cook contributed to this story)*

## Former CSC Librarian and Sandoz Society Founder Dies

A former Chadron State College librarian who was among the founders of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, Dr. Judy McDonald, died on Dec. 30, 2018, at Bemidji, Minn., where she had lived since 1977. She was born at her family’s farm near Rockville, Neb., in Sherman County on Jan. 17, 1939. She had polio as a youth and in recent years post-polio syndrome affected her physically. McDonald earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees and a Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. She also received a master’s degree in library science from the University of Denver. During her employment at CSC from 1968 through 1974, McDonald took the lead in founding the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society.

She became the society’s first executive director and was presented the “In the Spirit of Mari Sandoz Award” by the society during its conference at CSC in 2007. “Judy was the founder of the society, nurtured it, built the first early interest in such an enterprise and brought me and many others together to constitute a board in the early 1970,” said Dr. Ron Hull of Lincoln, president of the society when the award was presented. McDonald recalled that the first activities of the society included publishing a quarterly newsletter and having convocations at Chadron State on May 11, Mari’s birthday. The new organization also sponsored a couple of “Sandoz Country” tours that included visits to the “River Place” south of Hay Springs -- where much of Mari’s first book, “Old Jules,” occurs -- and going east through the Sandhills to the ranch where Old Jules relocated and planted orchards. Sandoz grave is at the ranch.

McDonald also did the research and wrote the script for “Song of the Plains: The Story of Mari Sandoz,” a documentary produced in 1976 that featured interviews with all of Mari’s siblings who were still living and had Dick Cavett as host and Dorothy McGuire as narrator. In addition, McDonald interviewed many of Mari’s acquaintances, wrote numerous articles about the author and was instrumental in opening a Mari Sandoz Heritage Room on the main floor of the Rita King Library at Chadron State long before the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center opened in September 2002. She helped organize a week-long workshop on the author that was taught by humorist, folklorist and author Roger Welsch at Chadron State Park and took the lead in nominating Mari Sandoz for the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Sandoz was inducted into the hall of fame in 1976.

After leaving CSC, McDonald worked for UNL in Scottsbluff for two years and completed her doctorate in Lincoln before going to Bemidji State University as a librarian. She later served as dean of the College of Arts and Letters for approximately 15 years.

# Call For Proposals

## Mari Sandoz Research Award

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society encourages college students to conduct research on Mari Sandoz and her work at the undergraduate and graduate level by offering an annual research award of \$1,000 for proposals that emphasize new insights on Sandoz or new approaches to her life and work. Topics to consider include: feminism; American Indian topics; environmental issues; activism. The award recipient will present the research at the Mari Sandoz Symposium at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska, held annually during the fall. One award of \$1,000 will be disbursed in two payments: An initial payment of \$500 will be presented with award notification to the recipient with the balance of \$500 paid the following year when the research is completed and presented at the symposium.

### Requirements:

- Undergraduate or graduate student at any college or University
- Deadline for application proposals: July 31, 2019
- Notification of Award: Fall 2019
- Research Timeline: 1 year
- Research Presentation: Mari Sandoz Symposium Fall 2020

The online application can be found here: [https://www.marisandoz.org/events\\_activities/mari-sandoz-research-award/mari-sandoz-research-award-application.html](https://www.marisandoz.org/events_activities/mari-sandoz-research-award/mari-sandoz-research-award-application.html)

### Application Evaluation:

- The articulation of the research question
- The context of the broader theoretical/historiographical issues significant to the topic
- The significance of the overall project to the field of Sandoz research
- The decision of the Sandoz Research Award committee is final. Applicants will receive email notification of their proposal status following final review of the proposals.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE VOORHEES ENDOWMENT

The Voorhees Endowment at Chadron State College provides stipends in the form of Voorhees Grants for researchers using the archival resources of the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center. Applicants are required to define their proposed project(s) and describe how endowment funds will be used.

Funding may be used for travel to the Center; lodging during research trip to the Center and preparation of research project findings into various media formats. Priority will be given to individual researchers or research teams from schools in the Chadron State College service area, including reservation schools. Mari Sandoz Research Award Applicants are encouraged to apply for these funds. Please use the online endowment application form found here: <http://www.marisandoz.org/funding-endowments/endowment-request-form.html>

*Mari Sandoz*  
HERITAGE SOCIETY

Mari Sandoz Research Award Committee

P.O. Box 6808

Lincoln, NE 68506

[www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org)

Questions? [info@marisandoz.org](mailto:info@marisandoz.org)

# Sandoz Love of Horses Featured in Exhibit at Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center in Chadron

“Heavenly Horses,” an exhibit comprised of 17 photos of Mari Sandoz visiting the Lazy VV horse farm near Nederland, Colorado, in the 1940s, is currently on display in the gallery of the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center on the campus of Chadron State College.

According to a CSC College Relations news release, the show also includes mixed media artwork from Edgemont, South Dakota, artist Tami Bauer, and customized Breyer model horses by Chadron resident Lori Fisher.

Sandoz’s posthumously published “Foal of Heaven” was inspired by her month-long annual summer visits to the Colorado horse farm owned by Lynn and Rose Van Vleet, according to Rangeland Program Coordinator Laure Sinn, who organized the exhibit with CSC alumna Holly Counts. Sandoz was one of many international luminaries photographed socializing and riding the Van Vleet’s Arabian horses.

Chadron State College graduate Holly Counts said part of the display includes a 1940 photo of Mari Sandoz riding an Arabian horse owned by Lynn and Rose Van Vleet at their horse farm.

To learn more about the exhibit that closes May 31, 2019 call the Sandoz Center at 308-432-6401.



## Heavenly Horses

April 13, 2019 - May 31, 2019

**Featuring:**

Photos of Mari at the Lazy VV Ranch  
Mari's Niece Eleanor's Arabian Farm  
Art from Mud Puddle Moon Studio  
Breyer Horses by Lori Fisher

**Reception:**

April 13, 2019 1-3 pm

Tami Bauer of Mud Puddle Moon Studio  
Artist in Residence for a Day  
April 29, 2019

**Contact for more information**

(308) 432-6401  
www.sandozcenter.com  
1000 Main Street, Chadron, Nebraska  
Check us out on Facebook



# Support the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Through Membership!

Thank you for your support! Your membership is important to the Society’s programs and activities. Each dollar helps us preserve and share the important work of Mari Sandoz. Members receive our newsletter, advanced notice of special events, and discounted registration for the annual Story Catcher Writers Workshop and the annual Fall Sandoz Symposium.

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The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Membership is annual.

MAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO:

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**P.O. Box 6808**  
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The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society welcomes scholarly writing and news contributions to our newsletter. If you have something you would like to share, please contact our public relations coordinator J.L. Schmidt at [jlschmidt67@gmail.com](mailto:jlschmidt67@gmail.com)

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