

Story^{the}Catcher

Spring 2018 Issue

A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society

University of Wyoming Faculty Headline the 2018 Story Catcher Writers Workshop & Festival

Registration is now open for Mari Sandoz Story Catcher Writing Workshop!

The **2018 Story Catcher Summer Writing Workshop and Festival** sponsored by Chadron State College and the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society returns to scenic Fort Robinson State Park in northwest Nebraska **June 5-8, 2018**. Instructors and aspiring writers will gather in the breath-taking Pine Ridge Region in the historic buildings including the 1890 Brick Officer Quarters where they will receive instruction from renowned writers.

The Story Catcher Writing Workshop and Festival takes its inspiration from Mari Sandoz (1896-1966), who built an impressive career as an author but also went to great lengths to encourage other writers. Far from the Sand Hills homesteads where she grew up, she conducted summer writing workshops on college campuses, reviewing manuscripts sent to her by aspiring authors 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 many stories from the region—from ancient past to the speculative future, from a wide variety of approaches and perspectives—should be the inspiration for the workshop. This year’s instructors include three University of Wyoming faculty members.

Nina McConigley is the author of the story collection *Cowboys and East Indians*, which was the winner of the PEN Open Book Award and winner of a High Plains Book Award. It also was on the longlist for the 2014 Frank O’Connor International Short Story Award. She was born in Singapore and grew up in Wyoming. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Houston, where she was an Inprint Brown Foundation Fellow. She also holds an MA in English from the University of Wyoming and a BA in Literature from Saint Olaf College. She was a recipient of the Wyoming Arts Council’s Frank Nelson Doubleday Memorial Writing Award and was a finalist for the 2011 Flannery O’Connor Short Fiction Award. She currently serves on the board of the Wyoming Arts Council. She teaches at the University of Wyoming and the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers. She is at work on a novel.

Jeff Lockwood was hired as an insect ecologist at the University of Wyoming in 1986. But over the course of 20 years he metamorphosed into a Professor of Natural Sciences & Humanities, with a joint appointment between the Department of Philosophy and in the MFA program in Creative Writing. He teaches courses in natural resource ethics, environmental justice and the philosophy of ecology, along with creative non-fiction writing workshops. His essays have been honored with a Pushcart Prize, a John Burroughs Award, the Albert Schweitzer Sermon Award of the UUA, (continued on page 2)

Story Catcher
Summer Writing Workshop
& Festival



(Story Catcher Workshop continued)

and inclusion in Best American Science & Nature Writing. His most recent books are *Behind the Carbon Curtain: The Energy Industry, Political Censorship, and Free Speech* (University of New Mexico Press); *The Infested Mind: Why Humans*



Fear, Loathe and Love Insects (Oxford) and *Poisoned Justice* (Pen-L; fiction) *Six-Legged Soldiers: Using Insects as Weapons of War* (Oxford) and *Philosophical Foundations for the Practices of Ecology* (Cambridge). Lockwood earned a B.S. degree in biology from New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, where he was the 1982 recipient of the Brown Medal. He received a Ph.D. in entomology from Louisiana State University. He has authored numerous scientific and technical articles.



H.L. Hix was born in Oklahoma and raised in various small towns in the south. After earning his B.A. from Belmont College (now Belmont University) and his Ph.D. (in philosophy) from the University of Texas. He taught at the Kansas City Art Institute and was an administrator at the Cleveland Institute of Art before joining the faculty of the University of Wyoming, where, after a term as director of the creative writing MFA, he now teaches in the Philosophy Department and the Creative Writing Program. Hix has been a visiting professor at Shanghai University, Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer at Yonsei University in Seoul, and the “Distinguished Visitor” at the NEO MFA. His poetry, essays, and other works have been published in *McSweeney’s*, *Georgia Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Boston Review*, *Poetry*, and other journals, been recognized with an NEA Fellowship, the Grolier Prize, the T. S. Eliot Prize, and the Peregrine Smith Award, and been translated into Spanish, Russian, Urdu, and other languages.



Markus Egeler Jones is a special guest writer. He was born in a small town in the Appalachian Mountains of Western North Carolina. His family traveled back and forth between the hollers of Appalachia and the hills of Southern Germany, so he wouldn’t forget his German grandparents. He moved to Kentucky to earn an M.F.A. at Eastern Kentucky University’s Bluegrass Writers Studio. He continued west one state at a time, teaching at the collegiate level, until he landed in the Northwestern corner of Nebraska. He is an Assistant Professor of English at Chadron State College. When not writing or teaching writing he moonlights as a stone mason, or a house husband, or sometimes even, because it makes his wife happy, a bird watcher. The author of numerous published stories, his first novel, *How the Butcher Bird Finds Her Voice* (Five Oaks), will be available soon.



Morning sessions at the workshop will focus on crafting and improving participant’s writing, followed by afternoon sessions designed to give them a chance to create new work and receive personalized feedback. The event moves to the Mari Sandoz High Plains Center on the Chadron State College campus the final day for a festival (free and open to the public) celebrating the work of everyone involved in the workshop, from published authors to beginners. The 2018 Mari Sandoz Emerging Writers will lead sessions on Saturday.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION: General registration for the writer’s retreat costs \$350 and includes three days lodging, some meals and refreshment and the writing workshops. Mari Sandoz Heritage Society members, high school and college students can register for the retreat at a reduced rate of \$300.

Registration closes June 1 and is available on-line at <http://www.marisandoz.org>

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

The retreat is limited to 15 writers and early registration is encouraged.

2018 Story Catcher Workshop
Guest Faculty (from top to
bottom): Nina McConigley, Jeff
Lockwood, H.L. Hix and Markus
Egeler Jones.

Focus on Sandoz Life in Lincoln Scheduled for June

A number of scheduled activities in June will bring the focus on Mari Sandoz to Lincoln. Members of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society have teamed up to present several events highlighting the career of the noted author when she lived in the Capital City. The events are free and the public is cordially welcome to attend.

NOON HISTORY BITES

On **Monday, June 4th**, Sandoz Society Board member Jamison Wyatt will discuss Mari Sandoz and Old Jules at the **Nebraska History Museum, 131 Centennial Mall North at NOON (CDT)**. Admission is free.

MARI SANDOZ INTERVIEW SCREENING

On **Saturday, June 9th**, Ron Hull of Nebraska Educational Telecommunications will host a screening of a 1965 NET interview of Mari Sandoz in the auditorium of the **Nebraska History Museum, 131 Centennial Mall North at 2 p.m. (CDT)**. It was Hull who interviewed Sandoz in 1965 and he will enhance the screening with details surrounding that interview as well as providing details of his friendship with the author. Hull is a member of the Society Board. Admission is free.

EXPLORE MARI SANDOZ ARTIFACTS

On **Wednesday, June 13th**, from **4:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. (CDT)** the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association will host an open-house exploration of Mari Sandoz artifacts held at the **Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors, Bennett Martin Public Library, 136 South 14th Street, Lincoln**. Admission is free.

OLD JULES BOOK DISCUSSION

Following the artifact display at **6 pm (CDT) on Wednesday, June 13th**, the Society will host an in-depth discussion of the 1935 biography of Mari's father, Jules Sandoz, at **Francie & Finch Bookshop**, in the historic Telephone Building, **130 S. 13th Street, Lincoln**. Admission is free and refreshments will be provided. For space reasons only, RSVP to Elizabeth Chase: 402-499-3703 or info@marisandoz.org. Old Jules was easily Sandoz' most popular book and tells the story of her father and his life in the Nebraska Sandhills.

MARI SANDOZ WALKING TOUR

The popular walking tour of Sandoz' life in Lincoln will be led by Sandoz Society Board member Jamison Wyatt on **Thursday, June 14th at 7 p.m. (CDT)**. The 90-minute, one-mile tour begins on the **northwest corner of 14th and P Streets**, loops through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus and ends on the west side of the Nebraska State Capitol. Admission is free. Wear comfortable shoes.

MARI SANDOZ HISTORIC MARKER DEDICATION

The culmination of the June activities will be held **Friday, June 15 at 4 p.m. (CDT)** when Board member Michael Smith, former director of the Nebraska State Historical Society, discusses the legacy of Mari Sandoz and Old Jules in the Warner Legislative Chamber at the Nebraska State Capitol. After remarks, the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society will lead a procession two blocks west to the historic location of 1226 J Street (Lincoln Mall) to unveil Nebraska State Historical Society marker commemorating the location where Mari Sandoz wrote *Old Jules*. Admission is free.

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.

Tuesday, June 5th – Friday, June 8th 2018 Writing Retreat



Against the breath-taking backdrop of the Northwest Nebraska Pine Ridge Region, we will gather in the historic buildings and scenic spots around Fort Robinson State Park and will lodge in the 1890 Brick Officer Quarters—and conclude with a Festival on the Chadron State College campus, celebrating the work of the participants.

At the Fort Robinson Retreat, our University of Wyoming Writers-In-Residence will lead morning sessions focused on crafting and improving our writing, followed by afternoon sessions designed to give participants a chance to create new work and receive personalized feedback. This inspirational setting fosters a wonderful writing community focused on exploring the wild terrains of our lives.



Featuring Writing Faculty From The University of Wyoming

Jeffrey A. Lockwood -- Nonfiction Writer-in-Residence

Jeff Lockwood was hired as an insect ecologist at the University of Wyoming in 1986. But over the course of 20 years he metamorphosed into a Professor of Natural Sciences & Humanities, with a joint appointment between the Department of Philosophy and in the MFA program in Creative Writing. He teaches courses in natural resource ethics, environmental justice and the philosophy of ecology, along with creative non-fiction writing workshops. His essays have been honored with a Pushcart Prize, a John Burroughs Award, the Albert Schweitzer Sermon Award of the UUA, and inclusion in Best American Science & Nature Writing. His most recent books are *Behind the Carbon Curtain: The Energy Industry, Political Censorship, and Free Speech* (University of New Mexico Press); *The Infested Mind: Why Humans Fear, Loathe and Love Insects* (Oxford) and *Poisoned Justice* (Pen-L; fiction) *Six-Legged Soldiers: Using Insects as Weapons of War* (Oxford) and *Philosophical Foundations for the Practices of Ecology* (Cambridge).

Nina S. McConigley -- Fiction Writer-in-Residence

Nina McConigley is the author of the story collection *Cowboys and East Indians*, which was the winner of the 2014 PEN Open Book Award and winner of a High Plains Book Award. It also was on the longlist for the 2014 Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award. She has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and for *The Best New American Voices*. Her story "Curating Your Life" was a notable story in *Best American Nonrequired Reading 2010* edited by Dave Eggers. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Orion*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Salon*, *American Short Fiction*, *Memorious*, *Slice Magazine*, *Asian American Literary Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, and *Forklift, Ohio*. She was the 2010 recipient of the Wyoming Arts Council's *Frank Nelson Doubleday Memorial Writing Award* and was a finalist for the 2011 *Flannery O'Connor Short Fiction Award*. She currently serves on the board of the Wyoming Arts Council. She teaches at the University of Wyoming and the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers.

H. L. Hix -- Poet-in-Residence

H. L. Hix was born in Oklahoma and raised in various small towns in the south. After earning his B.A. from Belmont College (now Belmont University) and his Ph.D. (in philosophy) from the University of Texas, Hix taught at the Kansas City Art Institute and was an administrator at the Cleveland Institute of Art, before joining the faculty of the University of Wyoming, where, after a term as director of the creative writing MFA, he now teaches in the Philosophy Department and the Creative Writing Program. His poetry, essays, and other works have been published in *McSweeney's*, *Georgia Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Boston Review*, *Poetry*, and other journals, been recognized with an NEA Fellowship, the Grolier Prize, the T. S. Eliot Prize, and the Peregrine Smith Award, and been translated into Spanish, Russian, Urdu, and other languages. His most recent book is *Rain Inscription (2017)*. Others of his recent poetry collections include *American Anger*, *First Fire*, *Then Birds: Obsessionals 1985-2010*, *Incident Light*, *Legible Heavens*, and *Chromatic* (a finalist for the National Book Award).

Find out more: www.storycatcherworkshop.org

Scenic, affordable, friendly and accessible! A GREAT PLACE TO CREATE!

(Some moments captured from the 2017 Retreat)



Poet-in-Residence Mark Halliday leads morning workshop



Nonfiction Writer-in-Residence Ken Ilgunas reads from "Walden on Wheels" on the porch of the historic officer's quarters opening night.



Fiction Writer-in-Residence Lisa Sandlin gives an evening reading from her novel "The Do Right" in the historic officer's quarters.



Participants enjoying an evening under western skies



Cookout in front of the historical officer's quarters on opening night.



Mark Halliday shares insights with an emerging writer

Displays Featuring World War I at the Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center at CSC Thanks to Support from the MSHS

Two exhibits honoring the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War I have been featured at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center on the campus of Chadron State College.

The first was "Over Here: Americans at Home in World War I," featuring the war from the perspective of America and how it impacted the country on several levels. The exhibit was set up by a volunteer who used to be in the museums studies class at the college. It was displayed through March 16.

"Over There" opened April 6th and will run through May 25th. It deals with the involvement of America in the war on foreign soil. The U.S. entry into World War I, 1917-1918, marked the beginning of its position as a global power, and dramatically affected the home front. The display captured the patriotic fervor of draft registration, the emotional goodbyes of men leaving for training camps, the hoopla of Liberty Loan drives and the craze for volunteerism.

America underwent a complete mobilization as the war demanded soldiers, pilots and sailors as well as guns, ships and crops from America's factories, shipyards and fields. In addition to stirring patriotic passions and encouraging sacrifice, volunteerism and national service, there was a hint of anti-German hysteria, political unrest and social conflict.

Laure Sinn, an interim coordinator for the Sandoz Center and a member of the Chadron State College faculty organized a reception for "Over Here" and received financial support from the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. Coffee, water, tea and donuts were served. They were staples of similar receptions during the WWI era.

Sinn worked with Sandra Reddish from Gering, a Historic Sites Coordinator with the Nebraska Historical Society, to interpret the display. Reddish gave a talk in the Center's Atrium about World War I and displayed her collection of old uniforms, equipment, original period post cards, recordings of original music and a suitcase Victrola with 1918 records.

Later this Spring, a display of 20 to 30 framed pictures from Sandoz country will be installed, according to Board Member Dan Kusek of Alliance. He said they were last shown at the Alliance Library several years ago.



Over Here: Americans at Home in World War I display at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center (photo courtesy Chadron State College)

In Charles and Mary Beard, *America in Midpassage*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1939, p. 671-2 there is this: "One of the most horrendous family novels was Maria Sandoz's story of her own group in the sandhills of Nebraska. Her father, Old Jules, had been born in Switzerland and studied medicine there in his youth. But he came to the new world and went west to farm. With the ferocity of a lion, he persisted in subduing a cattle region to crop bearing and in the course of his career he struck down everything that stood in his way. His very wives quailed and died in his company but he found new women ready to try living with him. Here was man wrestling with the soil in a terrifying fury, in a strange spot of the earth where nature had incalculable ways herself, the contest between human will and nature's course forming a phase of cyclopean drama of family life in the High Plains."

—Thank you to Richard Voorhees for sharing this interesting selection for the newsletter.

Pilster Lecture, Mari Sandoz Symposium September 20, 21

Susan Power, an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Tribe of the Dakotas and a noted author, will deliver the annual Pilster Lecture on Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 7:30 pm (Mountain Time) at the Chadron State College Student Center in Chadron. Power will present "A Dakota Writer on Stories Powerful Enough to Change the World." The event, sponsored by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, is free and open to the public.

Born in Chicago and educated at Harvard University, Power earned her JD at Harvard Law School and had a short career in law before deciding to become a writer. She worked as a technical writer and editor and did creative writing in her spare time. In 1992 she entered the Master of Fine Arts Program at the Iowa Writer's Workshop. Her 1994 debut novel, *The Grass Dancer*, details four generations of Native Americans, with action stretching from 1864 to 1986. The work received the 1995 Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for Best First Fiction. She has written several other books and has had short fiction published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Paris Review*, *Voice Literary Supplement*, *Ploughshares*, *Story*, and the *Best American Short Stories 1993*. She teaches at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Pilster Lecture is on the eve of the Annual Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Symposium at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Center on the Chadron State College campus. A day of lectures and panel discussions begins at 8:30 a.m. (Mountain) on Friday September 21st with the theme of Native American Activism.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln instructor and author Joe Starita begins the day talking about activist Susan LaFlesche Picotte.

Mary Donahue and Laura Bentz of the CSC art department will give brief presentations about their work and conference attendees will be able to examine the art and discuss the work with the artists.

Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs Executive Director Judi M. gaiashkibos will also address the conference audience.

Kimberlie Lee will discuss Sandoz and Indian Activism. Beth Castle and Madonna Thunder Hawk will make a presentation about their documentary *Warrior Women*.

Watch for more details of the symposium in our next newsletter.

Your Support Helps Us Preserve and Share the Legacy of Mari Sandoz!

If you have not joined or renewed your support for the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, don't wait! Send the form below with payment. You may also renew your support online at www.marisandoz.org

Your gift is important to our 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 discounts for the annual conference and the Story Catcher Writers Retreat & Festival. **Thank you!**

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