

# Story <sup>the</sup> Catcher

A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society

## Story Catcher Writing Workshop May 28-30

The second annual Story Catcher Writing Workshop for writers of poetry, fiction and non-fiction will be held, May 29-May 31, 2013, on the Chadron State College (CSC) campus, Chadron, Neb. Registration and an opening reception are scheduled for May 28.

The goal of the writing workshop, underwritten by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, is to carry on Mari Sandoz's work. From her "Mari Sandoz Discusses Creative Writing" series on public television in the 50s to her individual work with students, Sandoz believed that anyone can write.

It is important to the Sandoz Society to continue Mari's writer training legacy through the learning experience offered by the workshops. The workshops offer a place for writers to gather, share their creative work and receive helpful feedback from peers and professional faculty.

All sessions are open to aspiring writers of ages 16 and up and all abilities. Participants will register for either the beginning or advanced workshops.

**Beginning students** can choose between sessions of Fiction, Poetry and Non-Fiction Prose.

**Intermediate/Advanced students** (who have written documents to review) are offered three morning sessions in Memoir Writing/Nonfiction taught by Linda Hasselstrom or Fiction taught by Pamela Carter Joern.

**Registration deadline is May 10, 2013 for advanced classes;** some on-site registration may be available for BASIC sessions—depending on room.

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## Story Catcher Summer Writing Workshop & Festival



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

**For more information or to register, go to  
[www.storycatcherworkshop.com](http://www.storycatcherworkshop.com).**

## Dan L. Flores is Pilster Lecture Speaker

Dan Louie Flores is an American historian who specializes in cultural and environmental studies of the American West.

The Pilster Great Plains Lecture series, sponsored by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, is scheduled for Thursday, September 26, 2013 at 7 p.m. on the CSC campus.

Flores will discuss the natural world, his place and experiences in it and people's fateful impact on it, including drought.

Environmental history is the study of human interaction with the natural world over time. In contrast to other historical disciplines, it emphasizes the active role nature plays in influencing human affairs. Environmental historians study how humans both shape their environment and are shaped by it.

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## 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 an annual symposium, the Pilster Great Plains Lecture Series and presents a writer's workshop.

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*, 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.

## 2013 Story Catcher Schedule

Afternoon sessions for all registered attendees will be taught by various authors and publishers. Notable instructors include Jonis Agee, Paula Bosco Damon, Kwame Dawes and Marianne Kunkel, publisher of *The Prairie Schooner*, a national literary quarterly published at UNL.

### Tuesday, May 28th

- 3 - 5 p.m. Check-in and Registration
- 5 - 6 p.m. Reception Beverages and Snacks
- 6 p.m. Keynote Address by Jonis Agee  
"To Awaken the Sleepers"

To see the complete schedule and information on lodging and registration, go to [storycatcherworkshop.com](http://storycatcherworkshop.com).

### Registration and Tuition Costs:

Workshop Sessions are open to aspiring writers ages 16 and above. (High school juniors or above. Students must show proof of status.)

- ☆ In order to fulfill our commitments to faculty and other participants, we cannot cancel your reservation or offer refunds after May 15.
- ☆ All registration cancellations before May 15 include a non-refundable deposit of \$50.
- ☆ Space is limited in each of the two advanced workshops to 12 writers per class, so early registration is encouraged.

### GENERAL REGISTRATION: Tuition: \$150

Beginning workshop participants pay the general registration fee. This includes access to all beginning workshops, afternoon and special sessions and evening readings over the three days.

### ADVANCED/INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOP

#### **Tuition: \$250**

Advanced workshops are for intermediate writers who have work in progress and are interested in revising and refining their writing for publication with one-on-one feedback from a notable author. Class size is limited.

Advanced registration also includes access to all afternoon workshops and special sessions. When registering for the Advanced Workshop, please select ONE of the following options:

- ▶ Linda Hasselstrom (non-fiction prose/memoir writing)
- ▶ Pamela Carter Joern (fiction)

**See more information on workshop instructors on pages 6-7.**

[www.storycatcherworkshop.com](http://www.storycatcherworkshop.com)

Visit the website for updates, the most current information and to register.

## Mari Sandoz, Folklorist

By Lynn Hamer

*We tend to forget that the homesteaders were not a type, not as alike as biscuits cut out with a baking-powder can. They varied as much as their origins and their reasons for coming west. (Sandoz, 1970, p. 6)*

As a writer from the West competing for publication in a market dominated by the East, Sandoz was well aware of the tendency to lump groups together, like so much dough, and to sterilize and standardize them to assimilate them to a national culture.

As a spokesperson for diverse peoples of the West, Sandoz worked throughout her career to make distinct voices heard. Sandoz did not call herself a folklorist. However, the influence folklorists had on her work and her contributions folklore scholarship tie her closely to that discipline.

Sandoz worked artistically as both "folk" and "folklorist," and as such is part of the New Regionalist movement.

Sandoz's contemporaries, Benjamin Botkin and J. Frank Dobie, defined "folk" as "any group of people not cosmopolitan who, independent of academic means, preserve a body of tradition peculiar to themselves" (Dobie, quoted by Botkin, 1929, p. 12).

As "folk," Sandoz worked largely independent of universities: lacking a high school diploma, she was not allowed by the University of Nebraska to get a degree until they granted her an honorary doctorate in 1950 (Stauffer, 1982, p. 181).

Most of Sandoz's valued knowledge came from oral traditions learned in childhood and from local newspapers, as well as archival study of other oral sources.

Nebraska folklorist Louise Pound referred to Sandoz several times as her informant (1959, pp. 17-19, 111, 130), and Sandoz's own *Old Jules* and *Sandhill Sundays* best represent her incorporation of personally known folklore into literature. Pound encouraged Sandoz to maintain and develop her own Sandhills idiom, saying that anyone could master standard English, but that not just anyone could write with a true regional voice and therefore represent Plains culture (Stauffer, 1982, p. 64; Rippey, 1989, p. 80).

*Continued next column*

## Pilster Lecture (cont.)

The author has held the A. B. Hammond Chair in Western History at the University of Montana since 1992. His specialty is the environmental and cultural history of the American West and he is the author of eight books.

Flores is the author of eight books, including *Visions of the Big Sky: Painting and Photography in the Northern Rocky Mountain West* (2010), *The Natural West: Environmental History in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains* (2001) and *Horizontal Yellow: Nature and History in the Near Southwest* (1999). ✨

## The Climate, Policy and Effect of Drought on the Plains is September Conference Topic

The 2013 Mari Sandoz Conference will be held on the Chadron State College campus on Friday, Sept. 27. The theme is "Drought and Climate in Mari Sandoz Country."

Pilster speaker, Dan Flores, will host a round table discussion and the speakers confirmed will address these subjects:

Dr. Lisa Pollard, Ph.D., Lincoln, will talk about drought, gender and Mari Sandoz's *The Vine*.

Dr. Susan Miller, Arizona State University, will address Indigenous approaches to drought, with particular reference to Plains Indians.

Jesse Starita, Lincoln, will discuss the current drought in the High Plains, plains water policy, ranching and current water issues.

A complete schedule and speaker biographies will be in the August newsletter. ✨

Sandoz's editors requested that she substitute standard grammar and spellings and omit some of her "rougher" colloquialisms, as possibly inaccessible to an eastern audience.

Stauffer believes that Sandoz's staunch refusal to do so was bolstered by Pound's past advice (1982, p. 100).

Benjamin Botkin, who also studied with Pound and later became head of the Folklore Division of

*Continued on page 5*

## Mari Sandoz's Books Move from the 20th Century



Photo of an early postcard marketing Mari Sandoz's books is in contrast to her digital books now available.

## To the 21st Century



"The one thing I miss about print books is the way you can connect with someone because you see what they are reading. Without a book jacket or cover, it's impossible to tell... There have been times where a certain book I am reading will spark a conversation with a new friend just because they like that book."

Erin Hogg, Daily Vidette Columnist. Illinois State University, March 2012 (<http://www.videtteonline.com>.)

## Mari Sandoz, Folklorist (cont.)



Lynn Hamer specializes in folklore and education

the WPA's Federal Writers Project, defined "New Regionalism."

The journal *Folk-Say* was founded at the University of Oklahoma in 1929.

He distinguished "folk literature" from "culture literature": the latter uses

standardized "dead" language, whereas the

former maintains "words and rhythms" that vary "from man to man." Botkin railed against the "easy idealism of the 'common man'" as "the blight of pioneer democracy" (1929, p. 13).

He called for inclusion of individual voices with their idiosyncratic "words and rhythms"—multiple voices that maintain the distinction between individual people. In agreement with Sandoz's aversion to lumping together "the people" (i.e., "homesteaders" or "Indians"), Botkin published Sandoz's essay *Sandhill Sundays* in 1930.

Folkloristic methods and approaches, as learned by both Botkin and Sandoz under Pound's teaching, were key to the New Regionalism, and naming them provide keys to understanding the nature and genres of Sandoz's work.

### 1. Collection of folklore in context.

An example of this is her telling, in *Old Jules*, the story of the ghost of Crazy Horse 1935, p. 51). Rather than presenting it as an isolated, perhaps ignorant, story, Sandoz contextualizes it in the stories of other lone heroes in which Jules contextualized it.

In context, the story exemplified the lone, self-reliant hero. Sandoz explicitly comments on the importance of understanding stories' meanings in context in *Love Song to the Plains*, stating, "[S]ome stories are told to be believed and some are not; of those intended for belief, only a few are true" (1961, p. 3).

### 2. Use of interviewing and attention to language.

For her major Indian works, Sandoz relied

extensively on interviewing. Stauffer describes Sandoz's and Hinman's trips to Rosebud and Pine Ridge to interview remaining friends and relatives of Crazy Horse (1981, p. 58). In her fieldwork, Sandoz consistently noted the phraseology of her informants, as when she wrote on a notecard: "An old Indian woman said this, 'He walked as always, straight and tireless, but she knew his heart was on the ground'" (Stauffer, 1981, p. 61).

### 3. Awareness of historiography.

Sandoz draws attention throughout her work to history as story, told from particular points of view, with particular motivations, and as having mythic qualities.

Presenting the points of view of those who are on the weaker side in history (Indians, women, farmers and common people), and whose stories are thus usually not told, Sandoz recounts mythic struggles of human against land, and good against evil.

Using a folkloristic approach, Sandoz remained true to her own regional culture and the oral, folk traditions of the many groups within it. She wrote the voices of common people, whose individual voices were too often lost in the romanticization of the West.

Lynne Hamer is Associate Professor in Educational Foundations and Leadership at the University of Toledo, where she specializes in folklore and education and in participatory action research. She is co-editor of *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum* (Utah State University Press, 2011).

### Works Cited

- Botkin, B. (1929). *The Folk in Literature: An Introduction to the New Regionalism*. *Folk-Say*, 1: 9-20.
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  - (1970). *Sandhill Sundays and Other Recollections*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Stauffer, H. (1981). *Two Authors and a Hero: Neihardt, Sandoz, and Crazy Horse*. *Great Plains Quarterly*, 1(1): 54-66.
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## 2013 Story Catcher Writing Workshop Faculty

The Story Catcher Writing Workshop is a wonderful opportunity for aspiring writers to work with published professionals and authors to sharpen their skills. As you will see, the instructors this year are exceptional. Presentations and dates are listed for each author.

### Intermediate/Advanced Workshops

Wednesday, May 29th – Friday, May 31

#### **Memoir/Nonfiction** - Linda M. Hasselstrom



Linda Hasselstrom

is a full-time writer and conducts writing retreats. Her latest nonfiction book, *No Place Like Home: Notes from a Western Life*, won an WILLA award from Women Writing the West.

*Dirt Songs: A Plains Duet*, poetry with Nebraskan Twyla Hansen received the

Nebraska Book Award for Poetry 2012 and was a finalist for best poetry book, a WILLA award for poetry in 2012. Her writing has appeared in dozens of anthologies and magazines. (<http://www.windbreakhouse.com/index.htm>)

#### **Fiction** - Pamela Carter Joern is an award-winning novelist, short story writer, playwright, and a teacher of writing. *The Plain Sense of Things*, was a Midwest Booksellers Association Connections Pick. *The Floor of the Sky* was also an award winner.

Her work has appeared in numerous publications. Joern has written six plays that have been produced in the Twin Cities area. She holds an MFA in creative writing from Hamline University and teaches at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis.

(<http://www.pamelacarterjoern.com>)

### Beginning Workshop Classes

Wednesday, May 29 – Thursday, May 30

#### **Beginning Fiction** - Authors Poe Ballantine & Matthew Evertson.

Poe Ballantine's work has appeared regularly in The



Poe Ballantine

*Atlantic Monthly* and in other publications. His second novel, *Decline of the Lawrence Welk Empire*, won *Foreword Magazine's* Book of the Year. His work often draws comparisons to the life and work of Charles Bukowski and Jack Kerouac. His memoir, *Love and Terror on the Howling Plains of Nowhere*, is being published by Hawthorne Press in September. (<http://hawthornebooks.com/authors/poe-ballantine>)

**Matthew Quinn Evertson** is professor and chair of the Department of English and Humanities at Chadron State College (CSC), where he teaches American Literature, Native American Literature, Western American Literature and Writing. His publications include *Fields of Vision: Human Presence in the Plain Landscapes of Terrence Malick and Wright Morris* in *Terrence Malick Film and Philosophy* and several others.



Matthew Evertson

**Beginning Poetry** - R.F. McEwen is currently a professor of English at Chadron State College where he has taught since 1986. His poems have appeared in many publications including *The Literary Journal of the Seamus Heaney Center for Poetry*, Belfast. His *Heartwood and Other Poems* was featured on CBS "Sunday Morning." His forthcoming *Bill's Boy's* and other poems is being published and his poem *Stacking Rick Wood: Getting On* is the poem for November in the current Nebraska Poets Calendar. (<http://prairieschooner.unl.edu/?q=fusion/work/quare-garden-dry-end-state>)



R.F. McEwen

**Beginning Non-Fiction Prose** - Rich Kenney writes about hawks herding clouds or old ticket stubs caught in cobwebs or a tiny canes the color of clouds. He is the recipient of a Creative Writing Fellowship from the Arizona Commission on the Arts and has contributed commentaries to National Public Radio. Recent publications include

## 2013 Story Catcher Writing Workshop Faculty

nonfiction prose related to social work and poetry. Kenney holds degrees from the University of Texas (MSSW) and the University of Arizona (BA). He is currently an assistant professor and director of the Social Work Program at CSC.



Rich Kenney

### General Seminars for All Workshop Registrants:



Jonis Agee

Special guest, **Jonis Agee** was born in Omaha, Nebr. and was educated at the University of Iowa and the State University of New York at Binghamton (MA, PhD). She is the Adele Hall Professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she teaches creative writing and twentieth-century fiction. Agee is the author of twelve books, including *The River Wife*, which was selected for several awards. (<http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/ncw/agee>)

Tuesday, May 28 - Keynote: "To Awaken the Sleepers"

Wednesday, May 29 - "A Sense of Where You Are"

Thursday, May 30 - "The First Five Pages"

**Paula Bosco Damon** is an award-winning author, whose short non-fiction has won countless honors. She has taught writing courses at several universities and colleges and she has led numerous writing workshops in South Dakota.



Paula Bosco Damon

She is on the editorial staff for the Briar Cliff University, Sioux City, award-winning literary and art publication, *The Briar Cliff Review*. She holds a master's degree in English and bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of South Dakota. <http://my-story-your-story.blogspot.com/>.

Wednesday, May 29 - "Get Down to Writing"

Friday, May 31 - "Journaling, Blogging/Writing Environment"

**Poe Ballantine** will share insights from years of honing his craft as a working writer and publishing his stories and novels.

Friday, May 31 - "Writing Life"

Special guest, **Kwame Dawes**, is a Ghanaian-born Jamaican poet and the award-winning author of sixteen books of poetry (most recently, *Wheels*, 2011) and numerous books of fiction, non-fiction, criticism and drama.



Kwame Dawes

He is the Glenna Luschei Editor of *Prairie Schooner*, and a Chancellor's Professor of English at the University of Nebraska. Dawes also teaches in the Pacific MFA Writing program. Dawes' book, *Duppy Conqueror: New and Selected Poems* will be published in 2013. (<http://www.kwamedawes.com>)

Thursday, May 30 - "Chameleons of Suffering Poetry"

*This poetry workshop begins with a half-hour exploration of empathy through a short lecture and then a hands-on workshop for poets through a series of exercises and discussion.*

Friday, May 31 - Writing Festival Reading: Kwame Dawes/Marianne Kunkel

**Marianne Kunkel** is the managing editor of the *Prairie Schooner* and a Ph.D. student in poetry at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, with a specialization in women's and gender studies.



Marianne Kunkel

Her poems have appeared in *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Rattle*, *River Styx*, and elsewhere, and her chapbook, *The Laughing Game*, is forthcoming.

Thursday, May 30 - "Publishing in Journals: An Insider's View." Strategies of publishing poetry and prose in contemporary literary journals.

Friday, May 31 - Writing Festival: Reading Kwame Dawes/Marianne Kunkel. ✂

For more information or to register, go to [www.storycatcherworkshop.com](http://www.storycatcherworkshop.com).

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## Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Membership Form

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

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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