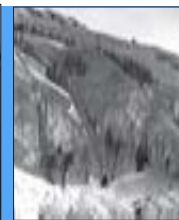


# Heritage Review

Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center Newsletter



Issue 3

Spring 2009

## Trip focuses on helping others

*Tabatha Murphy, Intern*

For one faculty member and seven students, mid-term break in New Orleans, La., was an opportunity to make a difference. Sarah Polak, Director of the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center, took seven students to help the Archdiocese of New Orleans (Catholic) churches in the area with continuing recovery from Hurricane Katrina.

The Catholic churches have been helping with the recovery and repair of wet documents and in the process returned many important and identifying documents to Katrina victims, according to senior Jovan Mays. Mays was one of the students who traveled to New Orleans.

*Please see page 2*



Photo by Sarah Polak

Seniors Jovan Mays and Katie Sobota catalog some of the items found and repaired at one of the archdiocese churches in New Orleans. Mays and Sobota were part of the group that traveled to New Orleans over mid-term break to help with ongoing Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

## Museum Studies program eliminated

*Tabatha Murphy, Intern*

Budget cuts at Chadron State College left many students and faculty disheartened as the college eliminated jobs and academic programs. One such cut hit close to home and at the heart of the Mari Sandoz Center.

College President Dr. Janie Park announced in early March the elimination of the Museum Studies program along with two other academic programs and five

minors.

Senior Katie Sobota was upset about the elimination of the major she has come to love.

"I feel that it is a devastating loss for the school. This is one of the few institutions in the country that offers this degree as a bachelor's and not just a certificate or a few classes. The things I have learned from Sarah (Polak, instructor) during my time here don't only apply to museums and

non-profit organizations, but to the business world in general so I feel as though I received much more than just an applied history degree. When I started, there were only three of us majoring in the classes and it has grown since," she said.

*Please see page 7*



Photo by Sarah Polak



Photo by Jovan Mays

Sophomore Shelley Miller and sponsor Sarah Polak carry one of the many damaged statues for repair.

Left: The group stops for a photo opportunity in New Orleans. The students traveled along with Polak to help the Archdiocese with continued relief efforts from Hurricane Katrina this March.

## Trip continued on page 1

The group also included graduate student Nicole Hagan, seniors Katie Sobota and Breanna Anderson, junior Doug Liewer, sophomore Shelley Miller and freshman Kayley Parker.

The group assisted with the recovery of destroyed Catholic regalia, artifacts and statues. Mays said the group used knowledge gained in museum studies to catalog items and decide what was salvageable. Items unable to be repaired will be used for an exhibit on the effects of Hurricane Katrina, Mays said. Polak and the students with museum studies training and background, Miller, Sobota and Parker, used their training to help with some chemical treatment and cataloging.

Students were not required to have a museum studies background to attend or help out on the trip. All the students did their share of helping out and received some training beforehand. However the greatest lesson for many of them was not in the physical recovery and repair of damaged items.

"The greatest lesson I took away from this experience was the strength of human will and compassion. We got a chance to see some of the tremendous work that was done, not only by the inhabitants but by volunteers from all over the country, in order to bring New Orleans back after its destruction," Miller said.

Mays had similar reactions to the experience. "You learn that sometimes embracing a struggle can help you genuinely know what's good," Mays said of his greatest lesson from the trip.

Mays said that as an outsider we would think that after four years much of the damage must be repaired by now, but after being there it was easier to gauge and grasp the severity of the destruction and the remaining after effects.

"I think that's why these people stay. No matter how bad natural disasters are there is no place like it," he said of New Orleans.

Polak said the members of the group have a better understanding of the world around them and she thinks each of them walked away from the experience with an appreciation for cultural heritage and the work that goes on in museums.

"They understand the value of what they got into. They knew it was important before but got to see it firsthand," she said.



Photo by Sarah Polak

These two pieces of Catholic regalia show the difference after a strong cleaning. The group worked on the cleaning and repair of many items for the Catholic churches in and around New Orleans.



Photo by Jovan Mays

Graduate student Nicole Hagan and junior Doug Liewer get "kissy" with the fishes at the aquarium in New Orleans. While the group spent much of their time working with the Archdiocese, they were able to enjoy some of the local attractions.



Photo courtesy American Heritage Center

"Cowboy Separated from His Herd," no date. Charles J. Belden Collection, American Heritage Center. The photograph is from the "Uphill and Against the Wind: Wyoming Stock Growers Association" exhibit. It will be one of two exhibits on display starting May 20 at the Sandoz Center. The exhibits are from the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyo.

## Upcoming Exhibits: Exhibit highlights the Wyoming plains

*Tabatha Murphy, Intern*

Two exhibits presenting the Wyoming plains from the rancher and cattleman's perspective will be on display May 20 - Aug. 5 at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center.

The first exhibit is a pictographic history of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association titled "Uphill and Against the Wind: 125 Years of W.S.G.A." The exhibit contains 25 framed items that examine the beginnings of the Nebraska and Wyoming Cattleman's Associations.

The second exhibit, "Landscape of the Range," presents a scenic view of Wyoming from the perspective of the rancher. The exhibit has 25 photographs of the plains and forests of Wyoming. The photographs present the ever changing beauty and difficulties of the land for a rancher.

"Often beautiful, sometimes deadly, but always unavoidable the landscape of the range is a force to be reckoned with by those who live and work here," according to the American Heritage Center.

Both of the traveling exhibits are from the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. The Center houses the archives, collections, rare books and manuscripts for the university.

For more information about the exhibits contact Sarah Polak, Director of the Sandoz Center, at 308-432-6401. The Center's hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m.

Information on exhibits provided by the American Heritage Center via Web site <http://ahc.uwyo.edu/default.htm>.

## Exhibits at Center enhance college courses

*Tabatha Murphy, Intern*

Two recent exhibits on display became a part of students' studies this semester at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center. The "Imaging Blackness" and "Wright Morris" exhibits coincided with public events at the Center and many class assignments.

The first exhibit, "Imaging Blackness," was on display at the Center Jan. 5 - March 10. The exhibit consisted of film posters from 1915-2002 from the Indiana University Black Film Center/Archive in Bloomington, Ind. The poster series examines the portrayal of African Americans on the silver screen in the twentieth and early twenty-first century.

The Center hosted a series of free movies, showing three films featured in the exhibit, "The Bronze Venus," "Lilies of the

Field" and "The Great White Hope." The film festival was a celebration for both the exhibit and Black History Month. The exhibit also tied in with several courses being offered at the College, including US History II, Graphic Design and American Popular Culture in Film.

The second exhibit, "Wright Morris: Photographs and Words," opened March 25 and will run through May 15. The exhibit, from Art2Art Circulating Exhibitions, includes photographs by well-known Nebraska author and photographer, Wright Morris. The exhibit accentuated the events of this year's Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Conference, "Mari Sandoz and Her Literary Contemporaries."

For more about the conference, see page 4 of the newsletter. The photographs are also being studied by art, history, and literature students.

# Conference highlights



Photo by Tabatha Murphy

**Dr. Dan Holtz from Peru State College performs a song about the pioneering days during his presentation at the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Conference March 27. Holtz's presentation discussed the similar theme of pioneering in the writings of Mari Sandoz, Bess Streeter Aldrich and Willa Cather.**

*Tabatha Murphy, Intern*

The 2009 Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Conference, "Mari Sandoz and Her Literary Contemporaries," brought scholars, professors and literary enthusiasts to the campus of Chadron State College March 26-28 to discuss Mari Sandoz and her works in relation to other authors of her time.

The theme was selected to show Mari Sandoz as a woman of her time, said Sarah Polak, Director of the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center. Polak said the goal was for people to see Mari in the context of her literary contemporaries to better understand her and her writing in that time.

"Because she wrote about historic things

people don't always see her in a modern context," she said.

The conference kicked off Thursday, March 26 with a Gallery Talk by Phyllis McCain, cousin of the prominent Nebraska author and photographer, Wright Morris. Her discussion corresponded with the photographs on display in the Morris exhibit in the Sandoz Center. McCain discussed more than just the works of Morris but also the relationships within their family.

"I was a pest back then wasn't I and he said 'Oh you sure were.'" McCain said.

Dr. Joseph Wydeven, professor emeritus at Bellevue University, was the keynote speaker for this year's conference. Wydeven also provided an inside perspective on Morris and the special relationship with Mari Sandoz. The presentation was followed by a signing of Wydeven's book "Morris Revisited." (see box on next page).

Friday's events at the conference provoked many questions and discussions from those in attendance. The day began with presenter Dr. Carol Miles Petersen of Omaha. Petersen discussed her paper, "Bess Streeter Aldrich—Mother, Neighbor, Writer."

Following Petersen's presentation was the Literary Influences Panel. Moderated by Dr. Katherine Bahr, professor of English and humanities at CSC, the panel discussed some of Mari Sandoz's contemporaries in whom she found great inspiration and influence. Three speakers presented during the session beginning with Dr. Michael Cartwright, professor emeritus at Chadron State College. Cartwright's paper and presentation drew parallels between Mari Sandoz, Zora Neal Hurston and Ella Deloria, discussing in particular the opposition that all three authors faced and their progression into authorship.

The second speaker during the session was Daniel Schweitzer, a recent graduate from Chadron State College. His paper discussed the main topic in his title 'From One 'Artist and Great Historian' to Another: The Indebtedness of Mari Sandoz to Amos Bad Heart Bull.' Schweitzer compared the similarities in Mari Sandoz's work to the stories of Amos Bad Heart Bull. He also discussed

the use of pictographs.

The third speaker in the session was Dr. Dan Holtz from Peru State College. Holtz opened his presentation with a song about pioneer life—a theme that he related to the three female authors he compared in his paper and presentation, "The Pioneer in Bess Streeter Aldrich, Willa Cather and Mari Sandoz."

Holtz compared the many similarities between the authors and the personal difficulties and tragedies they faced along the way. Holtz discussed the authors' likeness and how they "all wrote about pioneering and used it to explore themes that vary in many different ways." The session ended with an outpouring of questions and comments from the audience as each of the speakers' presentations were examined.

The panel was followed by Tim Anderson, professor of journalism at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Anderson is currently writing a book on Nebraska author John G. Neihardt. His presentation discussed the similar relationships between Mari Sandoz and John Neihardt, titled "Finding Fathers: Mari and Jules Sandoz and John and Nicholas Neihardt."

"'Old Jules' represents her yearning and all of our yearning for a father," Anderson said. He said Neihardt could have been resentful for his father's absence and despite always feeling alienated and abandoned, he never acknowledges his father as being at fault for those feelings.

The conference resumed after lunch with the Literature and Plains Landscape Panel moderated by Dr. Matt Evertson, associate professor of English and humanities. The speakers were Dr. Rodney Rice from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and Dr. Diane Quantic from Wichita State University in Kansas.

Both Rice and Quantic discussed the eloquent way Wright Morris brought landscapes, literature and environment together in his writing and photographs. Quantic discussed these things both in Morris's works and the works of Willa Cather, using a quote from Marcel Proust she captured the purpose of her presentation:

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

*Please see page 5*

# connections to Sandoz



Photo by Tabatha Murphy

**From left to right: Dave Sandoz, Kay Hughes, TR Hughes and Ron Hull show the award given to Hughes at the Sandoz Society conference banquet Friday, March 27. Hughes was honored with the Spirit of Sandoz award for his work and relationship with the Cheyenne tribe.**

The session was followed by a presentation by Mary Ellen Ducey from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Ducey's presentation "Mari Sandoz and Nebraska Literary Collection," looked at the holdings of the

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Archives and Special Collections as they relate to Nebraska authors including Sandoz, Willa Cather and Wright Morris among others.

Friday ended with a banquet for the conference attendees and speakers in the Sandoz Center, along with an award's ceremony for the Spirit of Sandoz Award presented by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society each year. This year's recipient was TR Hughes. Hughes was honored for his long standing dedication and generosity to the Cheyenne Indian tribe. Hughes had donated buffalo to the tribe that have now multiplied. He also helped coordinate and sponsor the Cheyenne Breakout Run from Fort Robinson to the Cheyenne reservation in Montana.

"My life has been richer and more meaningful for the understanding, the insights and friendships I have gained in working with the Northern Cheyenne and other Plains Indian people. I thank the Sandoz Society for honoring me with the Spirit of Sandoz Award. I identify with Mari on many levels," said Hughes in his award speech.

Next year's conference, " 'Son of a Gambler' Man": Identity on the Plains " is scheduled for March 25, 27, 2010. The conference theme is centered around Mari Sandoz's 1960 novel highlighting the life of Robert Henri. For more information contact Director Sarah Polak at 308-432-6401.

## Authors compared during Sandoz Conference

*Con Marshall,  
CSC Information Service*

The keynote speaker at the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society's annual conference at Chadron State College on Thursday night made several comparisons between Sandoz and another Nebraska writer he has thoroughly studied, Wright Morris.

Joseph Wydeven, a retired professor and dean at Bellevue University, said the writers were different with Sandoz placing great emphasis on historical research while Morris had little interest in history, and, in fact, was even a little suspicious of it. Wydeven said Morris primarily focused on literary narrative and often used the term "meta-physical landscape" to describe his work.

"Sandoz, having lived history, pursued the facts of history throughout her life," Wydeven said, "but rarely felt comfortable revealing the intimate details of her own life."

The speaker, who wrote his doctoral

dissertation on Morris, said the Central City native emphasized the emotional meanings of personal experience. "He was intrigued by mysterious hidden and psychic qualities of character," Wydeven said of Morris.

The two authors concentrated on different physical territories. While Sandoz's work often focused on what Wydeven described as "the region around northwest Nebraska," he said Morris was extremely wary of being considered "only" a regional novelist, and sought recognition as an "American" writer.

There were numerous similarities between the writers, Wydeven pointed out.

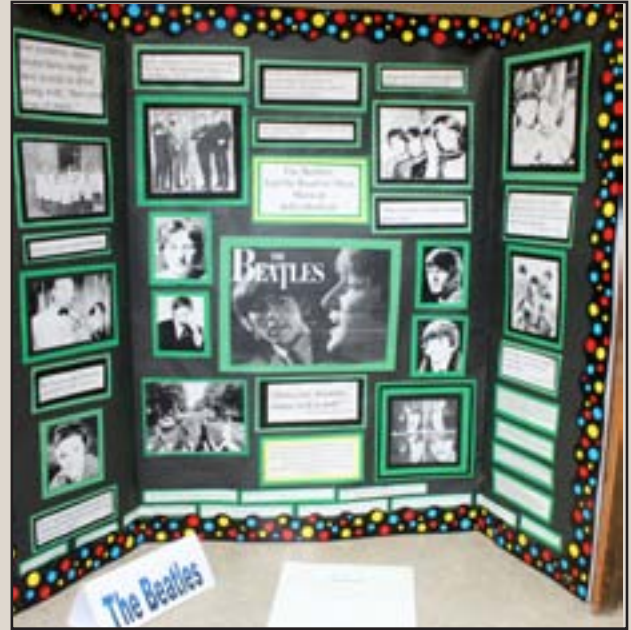
For instance, both Sandoz and Morris found the pioneer past compelling. Wydeven noted that Sandoz, who was born in 1896, had lived through it while Morris, who was born in 1910, regretted not having experienced it.

Neither was overly complimentary of succeeding generations, feeling that greed had replaced some of the values that had been needed to survive on the frontier.

Wydeven made several other comparisons between the authors. He said both had problems with their unique, unconventional fathers; included several suicide incidents in their works; were critical of Nebraska hero Buffalo Bill; went to considerable lengths to gather material; and shared a "certain complexity of language" that makes some of their works complex and difficult to read.

In conclusion, Wydeven said Sandoz had earned her the title of "beloved Nebraskan," and her reputation as a regional writer will no doubt continue to grow. However, Morris' work has been less well accepted in Nebraska and it is difficult to say how he will be perceived in the future, Wydeven stated. However, he anticipates "that two or three of his Nebraska novels will continue to force themselves upon the Nebraska consciousness."

The speaker also commented that both authors are due more critical attention than they currently receive.



Photos by Tabatha Murphy

One of the many exhibits at the competition, this one is a tribute to the Beatles. The creator, Olivia Joyce, tied with Travis Johnson for second place in the Senior Individual Exhibits category. Left: Levi Wilson and Meagan Federle examine a violin during their performance about Oskar Schindler at the National History Day Western District competition March 6. The group won first place in the Junior Group Performance category.

# Living History

## District competition hosted at Sandoz Center

*Tabatha Murphy, Moni Hourt*

The 2009 National History Day in the Western District brought out the best in many students this March at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center.

Students from Chadron, Crawford and Sioux County schools displayed their works after months of preparation in hopes to qualify for this year's state and national competitions.

"I never get tired of watching students use skills they never thought they had, create History Day projects," Western

District Coordinator Moni Hourt said in a press release.

Hourt, who has coordinated the Western District competition for three years, has worked with students all to prepare for all levels of the competition for over ten years.

"...Students not only learn to research using both primary and secondary resources, they learn to analyze, synthesize and organize their new-found knowledge into a project that communicates that knowledge. I am so honored that the teachers of our region and the

students are willing to put out the effort to enter this competition. It isn't easy, but nothing that's worth anything is easy."

Judges from on and off campus examined and scrutinized the students' projects which ranged in a variety of topics from John Neihardt to the Beatles to the courage of women like Nellie Bly and Jeannette Rankin.

Returning judge Dr. Joel Hyer, professor of history at Chadron State College, said he enjoys judging and over the years has learned to appreciate the efforts the students make.

*Please see page 7*



Photo by Tabatha Murphy

Maddy Rodenbaugh and Kate Kling present their exhibit on Lewis Hine, Friday, March 6 at the Western District National History Day Competition at the Sandoz Center. Rodenbaugh and Kling placed first in the Junior Group Exhibit category.

## History Day *continued from page 6*

"I think one of the greatest lessons for students participating in History Day is that they can conceptualize, create, and carry out a project devoted to history. Often times these projects require hours of effort. It's quite an accomplishment and should inspire them to do even bigger things," Hyer said.

The students are now eligible to compete in the state competition in Lincoln on April 18, 2009. They can compete as either seniors (Grades 9-12) or juniors (Grades 6-8) in the competition.

In all except the paper category, they can compete as a group, choosing from five different project categories: papers, web-page design, documentaries, exhibits, or performances. Every project must be designed around a theme. This year's theme is "Individuals in History."

For more information about the competition, contact Sarah Polak, Director of Sandoz Center and Co-coordinator for the Western District competition, at 308-432-6401.

## Museum Studies *continued from page 1*

Sobota said the program never received a fair chance.

"I found out about Chadron having this degree by default because it was called Applied History. It comes down to the question, 'What's in a name?' Turns out everything. Really, this program could have become much more with the recent name change to Museum Studies because when you Googled the degree Museum Studies, CSC did not pull up. There just wasn't enough time for it to truly blossom in to the program that it could be due to the struggling economy. In the end, CSC is losing out," Sobota said.

Majors from the Museum Studies program will be able to finish the degree, said Sarah Polak, instructor of the Museum Studies courses and Director of the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center.

Polak said she will continue teaching the courses as electives even after the majors have finished their degrees. The changes will not affect her job as Director of the Sandoz Center.

"I'm sad the major was eliminated. However, I am thankful that some form of museum education will continue at Chadron State," she said.

The information science technology and the specialist's in education degree programs were also eliminated. The five minors cut are sociology, humanities, Spanish, geography and political science. Budget cuts came from the Nebraska State College System to help offset budget deficits, according to a press release from the college.

According to Dr. Lois Veath, Vice President for Academic

Affairs at CSC, the NSCS directed the president to eliminate the program after its review by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. The commission scrutinized the program due to the small number of students enrolled in courses and the low graduation rate and concerns were raised.

"I agree that the recent changes last year in the name and total credit hours required for the museum studies major may not have been given a fair chance. However, the CCPE has the authority to terminate programs at any of the state colleges or universities, and has in fact done so in the past," Veath said.

Therefore the elimination of the museum studies program was more related to the CCPE review process and less about budget cuts at the college, explained Veath. Chadron State College will continue to offer all of the museum studies courses, and students will be able to have them appear on their transcript. However, incoming students will no longer be able to declare a major in museum studies, she said.

"I don't have to tell you that we are living through the worst economic times the world has experienced since the Great Depression," Park said in a statement released to the media.

"You hear it on the news every day. Unfortunately Chadron State is not immune to the fallout from the weakening economy."

"I understand that it is not Dr. Park or Dr. Veath's decisions and that they wished much more for the program, too. But I really wish that those even higher up would have given the program a real chance under the new name," Sobota said.

## Meet the Staff: more faces of the Sandoz Center

### ShelleyMiller

Michelle (Shelley) Miller is a student employee at the Mari Sandoz Center. She is a Rangeland Management major (Ecology Option) and working on a minor in Applied Statistics. Shelley works with the Heritage Gardens at the Center, at the front desk and provides other assistance to the Director. This year she has been selected as the International Student Conclave President for the Society for Range Management.

### TylerMurphy

Tyler Murphy is the graduate assistant for both the Mari Sandoz Center and the Social Sciences department at Chadron State Col-

lege. Tyler is working on his master's degree in history education. At the Center he is working on a research project involving the Sandoz family genealogy. Tyler recently accepted a teaching position in Martin, South Dakota.

### LaurenWhite

Lauren White is a sophomore at CSC, originally from Fresno, California, who moved to Chadron in 2005. Her major is Design and Merchandising and hopes to pursue a career in the fashion industry as a hair and make-up artist. At the Sandoz Center, White works as an office assistant. Her primary duties are to work with the collections and enters data into the database. In her spare time, she enjoys reading and sketching original designs.

[See what else is inside the Heritage Review- The Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center Newsletter](#)

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