

Speaking of Kansas

Washburn Center for Kansas Studies



Kansas Studies Newsletter

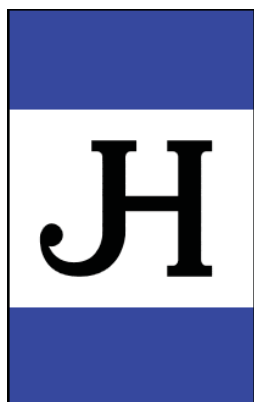
Spring 2013

Kansas Studies Courses Fall Semester 2013

- **AN300 Archaeology of Kansas/Great Plains** • 5:30-8:00 pm • M • Hoard
- **GL103 Historical Geology** • 5:30-6:45 pm • MW • Gilliland
- **HI300 John Brown** • 1:00-2:15 pm • TR • Erby
- **HI397 Internship in Historical Agencies** • Goossen
- **PO107 American State & Local Government** • 9:30-10:45 am, • TR • Peterson
- **PO307 Internship, State & Local Government** • Peterson
- **PO371 Topics, American Government, Kansas** • 1:00-2:15 • MW • Beatty

For those interested in the historic highways of Kansas, the **Jefferson Highway Association** held their second annual meeting in Olathe on April 26-27. The Association was organized in March of 2011 for “charitable, educational, and scientific purposes” and to “promote the preservation of the Jefferson Highway in the United States of America and Canada.” The highway ran from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Winnipeg, Manitoba, and was known as the Palm to Pine route. Towns

along the route in Kansas were Stilwell, Paola, Ft. Scott, Pittsburg and Baxter Springs. A branch of the highway went through Missouri and passed through Carthage, Nevada, Lee’s Summit, Kansas City and St. Joseph. For more information see this link: <http://www.jeffersonhighway.org/>



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Deborah Altus, Human Services
Tom Averill, English
Bob Beatty, Political Science
Patti Bender, Health
Roy Bird, KS State Library
Marcia Cebulska, Playwright
Jeannie Chinn, KSHS
Charles Cranston, Mass Media
Virgil Dean, KSHS
Tambra Eifert, Geology
Kelly Erby, History
William Gilliland, Geology
Rachel Goossen, History
Chris Hamilton, Political Science
Robert Hull, Finance
Reinhild Janzen, Art
Jim Kelly, KTWU
David Kendall, KTWU
Robert Lawson, English
Gabrielle Lunte, Modern Languages
Bruce Mactavish, History
Judith McConnell-Farmer, Education
Eric McHenry, English
Linsey Modellmog, Political Science
Marguerite Perret, Art
Mark Peterson, Political Science
J. Karen Ray, English
Leslie Reynard, Communication
William Roach, Business
Tom Schmiedeler, Geography
Robin Shrimplin, History
Bradley Siebert, English
Sarah Smarsh, English
Margaret Stewart, English
William Wagnon, History
Marydorsej Wanless, Art
David Winchester, Mabee Library
Margaret Wood, Soc./Anthropology
Carol Yoho, SCHS

Center for Kansas Studies
www.washburn.edu/cks

A Kansas Renga in 150 Vocies

The Center for Kansas Studies sponsored a poetry reading in Mabee Library on March 7th to explore and celebrate Kansas in verse. This reading consisted of 30 selections from the **Kansas Renga**, a project initiated by **Kansas Poet Laureate, Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg, Ph.D.**, to celebrate the sesquicentennial of Kansas. A renga is a collaborative poem based on an ancient Japanese literary form. The Kansas Renga includes 150 poems, with each poet contributing a ten-line portion that builds on a preceding idea. The Kansas Renga was recently published in book form: **To the Stars Through Difficulties: A Kansas**

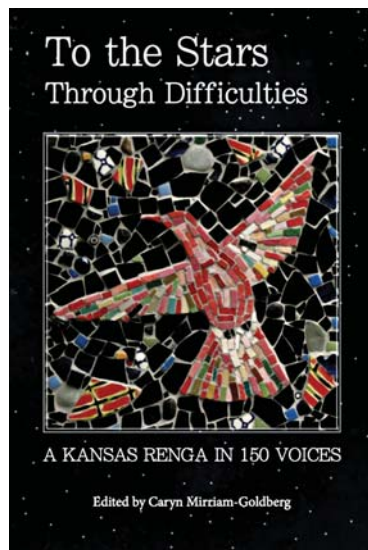
by **Dr. Deborah Altus**
Professor
Dept. of Human Services
School of Applied Studies

Renga in 150 Voices, edited by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg (2012, Mammoth Publications).

Nine area poets participated in the reading, including Mirriam-Goldberg and four Washburn faculty members: **Tom Averill, Karen Barron, Iris Wilkinson** and **Deborah Altus**. Assistant Dean of Mabee Library, **Sean Bird**, welcomed audience

members to the library, and English Department faculty member, **Karen Barron**, gave the introduction to the reading. **Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg** provided background on the Renga project and information on the Kansas Poet Laureate program. Several other area poets from Kansas City, Lawrence, and Salina participated in the reading, including **Gail Sloan, Elizabeth Black, Lydia Lowe** and **Tom Reynolds**.

Mirriam-Goldberg explained that the state motto, *Ad Astra per Aspera* (with its English translation, "to the stars through difficulties," gracing the cover of the Kansas Renga), came true in her work as Kansas Poet Lau-



Poetry Reading

To the Stars Through Difficulties:
A Kansas Renga in 150 Voices

Area poets will read entries in a Kansas Renga, a conversational poem compiled from entries by 150 Kansas voices, in celebration of the 150th birthday of the State of Kansas.

Thurs., Mar. 7 • iRead Lounge, Mabee Library, Washburn University • 4pm

Readers include:

- Tom Averill
- Iris Wilkinson
- Lydia Lowe
- Karen Barron
- Deborah Altus
- Matt Porubsky
- Israel Wasserstein
- Elizabeth Black
- Gail Sloan
- Tom Reynolds
- Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

A "renga" is a collaborative Japanese-style conversational poem, often about nature. In *To the Stars Through Difficulties: A Kansas Renga in 150 Voices*, poets in the chain take readers across the mythological as well as physical landscape of Kansas. Poet laureate of the state, professional writers, and newcomers blend traditional and experimental approaches. The writers celebrate the startling beauty of the Kansas grasslands and brilliant skies, including dimensions of reverie as well as plain air descriptions. *This compilation, edited by Kansas Poet Laureate Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg, will be made available for sale at this event.*

Our thanks to Washburn's Center for Kansas Studies for their help in sponsoring this event.
Free & open to the public • Refreshments will be served



- A. Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg
- B. Karen Barron
- C. Thomas Fox Averill
- D. Sean Bird
- E. Theatre professor Penny Weiner and Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg
- F. Karen Barron, Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg and Sean Bird

A Kansas Renga in 150 Vocies *cont.*

reate when the Kansas Arts Commission, which housed the poet laureate program, was shut down. She writes, “the difficulties were obvious, but so were the stars”—the latter including the Kansas Renga and the sub-

sequent decision of the Kansas Humanities Council to sponsor the poet laureate program.

Deborah Altus received a grant from the Center for Kansas Studies to hold the reading, and received help with the event

from **Carol Yoho**, who designed the flyer, and **Karen Barron**, who assisted with logistics.

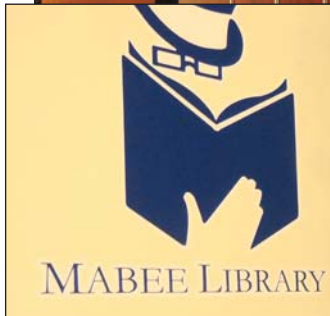
Read **A Kansas Renga** online at:
www.150kansaspems.wordpress.com/



B



E



MABEE LIBRARY



C



D



F

Fellows Meetings: *Minutes*

January 24, 2013

Fellows of the Center for Kansas Studies met for a luncheon meeting on Thursday, January 24, in the Cottonwood Room of the Washburn Union. Attending the meeting were **Deborah Altus, Bill Roach, Carol Yoho, Rachel Goossen, Bob Beatty, David Winchester, Bradley Siebert, Will Gilliland, Marcia Cebulska** and **Tom Schmiedeler**. Director Tom Schmiedeler mentioned that some funding remains in the annual budget for a couple of worthy projects in the second semester. He reminded fellows that spring newsletter submissions should be made to Carol Yoho by April 1 and the annual **Kansas Day presentation** by **Leonard Zeskind** was forthcoming this Monday beginning at 3:30 in Henderson Hall, room 208.

Deborah Altus requested funding in support of a poetry reading at Washburn based on contributions to a book of poems by Kansas poets titled *To the Stars through Difficulties: A Renga in 150 Voices*. The book, edited by Kansas Poet Laureate **Caryn Goldberg**, has contributions by several Washburn faculty. Readings are planned throughout the state. Deborah's funding request of \$300 for producing and printing a promotional flyer and for refreshments at the event was approved by fellows. For more information on the book and on scheduled readings see: <http://150kansaspoe.ms.wordpress.com/readings/>

In news from fellows, **Carol Yoho** announced that the 17th Annual Kansas Silent Film Festival will be held on February 22-23 in White Concert Hall on the Washburn campus. Featured this year will be Mary Pickford and her husband Douglas Fairbanks. Saturday morning will showcase Pre-History and the afternoon will feature Westerns. Learn more at this link: <http://www.kssilentfilmfest.org/kssff2013/> Carol also discussed an exhibit at the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery of the Topeka and Shaw-

nee County Public Library which opened on Friday, January 18. The community-based exhibit, "Most Valued Possessions," is of collectible, rare and homespun objects. As the web site suggests, you may learn a new meaning of the word "value" from fellow citizens. For more information see: <http://tscpl.org/tag/most-valued-possession/>

Marcia Cebulska thanked the Center for past support in the production of her play *The Bones of Butterflies* that was performed by the Tonantzin Society's Dia de los Muertos Festival on October 28 in Topeka and on October 29 in Kansas City. **Bob Beatty** noted his appreciation for support from the Center for the development of the Kansas Institute for Politics web site by him and **Carol Yoho**. The site now includes such topics as Kansas Political Ads, Kansas Governors, Kansas Candidate Debates, Kansas Governor Documentary and Kansas Elections. Access the site at: <http://www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/politics/index.html>

Rachel Goossen reminded everyone of the need for History Day judges. History Day District 3 Competition is **February 23, 2013**. The National History Day theme for 2013 is "Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, and Events."

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.
Minutes submitted by **Tom Schmiedeler**

Washburn launched a celebration leading up to its 150th birthday at the start of the school year in the fall of 2011. Events and media emphasis are being added regularly, including several video Washburn history lessons. Additions will continue and conclude with a Grand Homecoming celebration in the fall of 2015.

Visit: www.washburn.edu/about/150/

Kansas Day 2013 Speaker: Leonard Zeskind

In his Kansas Day program, Leonard Zeskind, an internationally recognized expert on the evolution of the white supremacist movement of the last three-plus decades, tied together seemingly disparate strands of the movement including neo-Nazi skin heads, Holocaust deniers, David Duke, members of Christian Identity churches and various militias. In his book *Blood and Politics: The History of White Nationalism from the Margins to the Mainstream*, Zeskind demonstrated how these various factions have evolved into a normative social movement that looks like a demographic slice of white America that includes blue collar and middle class members with lawyers and PhDs among their leaders.

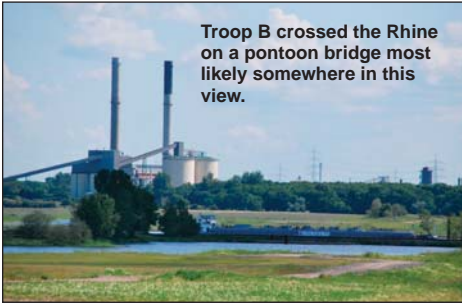
Zeskind has written widely on the radical right for publications such as *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The American Prospect*, *The Nation*, *Rolling Stone*, and the *Forward*. His honors include a MacArthur Fellowship, a Petra Foundation Fellowship, the Paul H. Tobenkin Prize, and the Bayard Rustin Award.



Thomas Fox Averill, English department, reports that Spring Semester has been productive in regard to growth of the Map of Kansas Literature. With the aid of work study student Joran Loomis, the web site has added approximately 25 additional Kansas writers and poets

to the map. Search online for “Map of Kansas Literature” to read biographies, lists of published work, Kansas map locations, writing samples, author interviews and other details about a current count of 101 Kansas authors. *The work of adding more authors will continue.*

The Topeka Capital Journal published a front-page article in their Sunday, February 17, 2013, edition about a part of a Sweet Sabbatical taken last summer by **Tom Schmiedeler**, Director of the Center for Kansas Studies. Tom traveled through Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and the Czech Republic while tracing his father's route as a member of Troop B of the



Troop B crossed the Rhine on a pontoon bridge most likely somewhere in this view.

88th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized. Tom followed his father's route with the aid of the *Diary of Troop B*, a detailed account with maps of the Troop's movement beginning in January, 1945. Initial combat occurred in the province of Limburg in southeastern Netherlands and continued as the Troop approached the Rhine River near Rhineberg. The troop then traveled quickly across the northern Ruhr District to the area of the eastern "Ruhr Pocket" for reconnaissance of smaller towns. Their objective was to confiscate all weapons and to capture or kill enemy troops.

The troop had its worst single-day loss in one of the Ruhr Pocket towns, Berlingsen, where several mines being moved by released Russian prisoners of war exploded in a courtyard killing five GIs and several German and Russian prisoners, and wounding Tom's father. Through consultation with a 93-year-old, local woman, Tom learned the location of the courtyard. Another long "march" brought the Troop to former East Germany where Tom interviewed an official in the city information bureau and learned much about the town and his experiences growing up under Communism. The final stage of the journey was to Plzen, Czech Republic, where the Troop disbanded in early September, 1945.



Rebuilt courtyard and buildings where Troop B sustained its worst single-day casualties in World War II.