

Speaking of Kansas

Washburn Center for Kansas Studies



Fall 2011

Kansas Studies Courses Spring Semester 2011

- CN 330**, CRN 10861, *Communication in Conflict and Negotiation*
TR 1-2:15, Reynard
- EN 138A**, CRN 12333, *Mapping Kansas Literature* T 1-3:40,
Averill
- EN 339C**, CRN 12334, *Mapping Kansas Literature* T 1-3:40,
Averill
- HN 201E**, CRN 12996, *Mapping Kansas Literature* T 1-3:40,
Averill
- GL 103C**, CRN 11408, *Historical Geology (with Kansas emphasis)*
MW 5:30-6:45, Gilliland
- PO 106C**, CRN 11380, *U.S. Government (with Kansas emphasis)*
TR 12-12:50, Beatty
- PO 309A**, CRN 11204, *Kansas Legislative Experience (Internships/Externships-Exper)* Beatty

Tom Schmiedeler, Director
785-670-1559
tom.schmiedeler@washburn.edu

Deborah Altus, Human Services
Sharon Ashworth, Biology
Tom Averill, English
Bob Beatty, Political Science
Patti Bender, Health
Roy Bird, KS State Library
Marcia Cebulka, Playwright
Jeannie Chinn, KSHS
Marion Cott, KHC
Charles Cranston, Mass Media
Virgil Dean, KSHS
Tambra Eifert, Geology
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
Linsey Modellmog, Political Science
Judith McConnell-Farmer, Education
Eric McHenry, English
Jay Memmott, Social Work
Marguerite Perret, Art
Mark Peterson, Political Science
J. Karen Ray, English
Leslie Reynard, Communication
William Roach, Business
Betsy Kanabe Roe, Art
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, Art



Fellow **Bob Beatty** has initiated the **Kansas Institute for Politics** web site (www.kspolitics.org) with support from the Center for Kansas Studies. The site includes sections on Kansas Governors, Kansas Candidate Debates, Kansas Political Ads and Kansas Elections. It also provides links to the Kansas Governors video documentaries (available in full- and short-length versions) and to Washburn's Political Science Department. Other links are for accessing information about legislative internships, the Center for Kansas Studies, a list of



Kansas political experts, a variety of published articles about Kansas politics, and numerous candid photos of ex-governors of Kansas, the Iowa caucus and several presidential campaigns. A space for listing upcoming events is also provided.

Visit www.kspolitics.org

Center for Kansas Studies
www.washburn.edu/cks

Fellows News

2012 History Day

Rachael Goossen, History department, announces plans for the **Annual District 3 History Day** competition for students in grades 6-12. This event will be held on the Washburn University campus on Saturday, February 25, 2012. The event's theme is "Revolution, Reaction, and Reform in History." Volunteer judges are needed; please contact Rachel Goossen (rachel.goossen@washburn.edu).

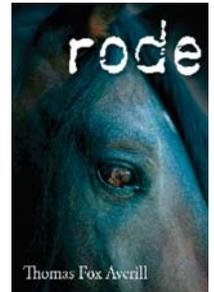
CKS fellow Betsy Knabe Roe, artist-in-residence at Bird Runner Wildlife Refuge in eastern Geary County, was named the winner of the Rachel Snyder Landscape Award at the Kansas Native Plant Society's annual convention in Lawrence on Sept. 17. Roe received the award for her creations "Revival" and "Etain," interactive installations on a prairie restoration site at the refuge. These outdoor sculptures were designed to harmonize with natural processes through which a native plant community can reemerge, even on a thoroughly disturbed site, as well as with maintenance practices used with native prairie itself.

For "Revival," Roe created 27 sculptures using the branches of invasive dogwood gathered when the shrubs were cleared from native prairie. For "Etain," named for a Celtic figure of transformation, Roe asked participants to lie down among the sculptures while she outlined their bodies with native wildflower seeds. "Revival" and "Etain" were dedicated to the memory of conservationist Jan Garton, whose ashes are scattered at the refuge.

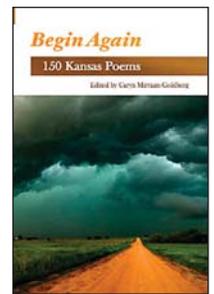
Roe, the creator of many installations in Kansas and Missouri, was also recognized for introducing Kansas to the art of making paper from native

plants and for fostering a native-plant garden at Washburn University.

Thomas Fox Averill, English department and Writer-In-Residence at Washburn, was at the Winfield Bluegrass Festival when he was captivated by Jimmy Driftwood's ballad "Tennessee Stud." After extensive research on the origins of the song, followed by a trek through Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, and Mexico, Averill wrote a novel, *rode*, inspired by the song and the time in which it was written. Averill's book has been published by The University of New Mexico Press in August, 2011.



Robert N. Lawson, professor emeritus of the English department, had his poem "Somewhere Near Abilene" chosen by Kansas Poet Laureate Caryn Merriam-Goldberg for publication among "150 Kansas Poems" in celebration of the Kansas Sesquicentennial. His poem can be read at the "150 Kansas Poems" online blog. The collected work, *Begin Again*, was also published in November, 2011, by Washburn's Woodley Press, and contains poems by other present and past Washburn faculty including **Eric McHenry, Iris Wilkinson, Israel Wasserstein, Dennis Etzel Jr., and Amy Fleury**.



left: **Betsy Knabe Roe's** "Revival" sculpture, samples of forms made with dogwood shrubs cleared from native prairie.

near left: "Etain," humans interact with nature.



The Waiting Room Project

Visit online: thewaitingroomproject.org

Kansas artists start national collaboration, exhibit and related book to be shared this winter

A skeletal, wooden chair frame. Dissembled clock parts within a cushion's springs. Upholstery patterns incorporating the molecular structure of serotonin or the radiology stickers used in mammograms. In *The Waiting Room: Lost and Found* art installation, medical maladies take the form of intricate, three-dimensional chairs.

Long interested in the intersection between art and science, in 2009 Kansas-based artist Marguerite Perret envisioned the medical waiting room as the conceptual framework for an installation exploring women's health issues. She saw the rich psychological context of the waiting room as a liminal space on many levels—between health and illness, between the individual and society and between the personal, intimate body and the medical system that treats it. Additionally, it became clear that the history of women's health was linked to the advancement of women's rights.

The installation quickly became collaborative, involving fellow Kansans Bruce Scherting, director of exhibits and design at KU's Natural History Museum; Stephanie Lanter, Emporia State University ceramics instructor (a former visiting professor in art at Washburn); and Robin Lasser, professor of art at San Jose State University. Together they brainstormed a series of conceptual, sculptural "chairs" set in waiting- and examination-room tableaux to represent various issues within the realm

by **Sarah Smarsh**
Assistant Professor, English,
& **Marguerite Perret**
Associate Professor, Art



of women's health: eating disorders, depression, breast cancer, dementia, domestic violence and more. Two years later, the expansive, mixed-media art installation *The Waiting Room: Lost and Found* has journeyed to a women's university in St. Paul, Minn., and will open again in expanded form at the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery in Topeka this January. Meanwhile, the creative collaboration has grown far beyond a visual-art statement.

The Waiting Room Project, as this national dialogue is now known, examines the nature of women's health and health care through aesthetic, scientific, cultural, political and literary lenses. It includes the art show, the forthcoming book and exhibit catalog of scholarly and personal essay *A Waiting Room*

of One's Own: Contexts for The Waiting Room Project, and public events, community collaborations, workshops and lectures. Support for the project has come from the Kansas Arts Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts, Washburn University, the Salina Art Center, the Center for Kansas Studies, Friends of Mabee Library, the Sabatini Gallery at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library and others.

While collaborating artists, writers, physicians and researchers represent East- and West- Coast locales and institutions, the project remains rooted in Kansas. Five visual-arts contributors hail from the northeast region, and ten of the book's fifteen essayists, including Center for Kansas Studies fellows Perret, Rachel Goossen, Reinhild Janzen and Sarah Smarsh, currently reside in the state.

Continued on p. 4...

The Waiting Room Project —cont.

Center fellow Marcia Cebulka's short play *Tick Tock*, inspired by The Waiting Room Project, will be performed at the art show's Topeka opening. Also in January, a mini-installation, performance piece and panel discussion will celebrate the book's release at the Lawrence Arts Center.

Find images of the art show, excerpts from the book (the introduction to which appears below) and more at www.thewaitingroomproject.org, and join the conversation at www.facebook.com/groups/thewaitingroomproject.

Excerpt

From *A Waiting Room of One's Own: Contexts for The Waiting Room Project*
"Editor's Note," by Sarah Smarsh

Today's breast-cancer patient watches news pundits debate changes to mammogram protocol, posts her prognosis in a Facebook "status update," argues with her private health insurer over the cost of an MRI and cheers her pink-shirted brother in a 5K-race fundraiser for cancer research. And yet, ultimately, her experience—whether painful, beautiful, stressful, transformative, fatal—happens at the level of the self.

When one steps into the doctor's office, there too exist layers of exterior and interior, outer and inner, social and personal. First, a lobby of strangers; then, hallways and nurses' rooms; finally, one is alone on a table and a paper sheet, waiting for the healer to arrive. This book, *A Waiting Room of One's Own: Contexts for The Waiting Room Project*, reflects those multiple levels of experience with its mix of general commentary, targeted research and highly intimate narrative.

When artist Marguerite Perret in 2009 conceived of sculptural "chairs" to examine the female relationship to various ailments—*anorexia, depression, breast cancer and dementia*—she set in motion a nationwide creative dialogue on women and health. This dialogue, The Waiting Room Project, now encompasses a traveling art installation called *The Waiting Room: Lost and Found*, community art workshops, an expansive website, public online discussion, a short play and, of course, this book.

The project concept may seem at first glance to be absurdly broad in scope. "Women's health?" I would tell a writing student. "It's too broad, too huge. Narrow it down." But all of The Waiting Room Project's creative expressions—visual, literary or otherwise—share an important thread. Organically and inevitably, they comprise nuanced statements about the potentially stifling space into which the female body is born. In *A Waiting Room of One's Own*, the essays operate at the literal level of observation, argument or personal testimony but also address, if indirectly, the frustration that is deeply and universally ingrained in womanhood.

The project itself may seem a bit passé. A group of women discussing what it means to inhabit the female form? "How '70s," one might think. "Aren't we past that?" But every woman with whom I discuss The Waiting Room Project lights up with a story about the doctor who rolled his eyes last week, the seven-year-old niece somehow nearing puberty, the friend borrowing money for liposuction. So, no, we aren't past it. "Silence marginalizes women," Perret says.

One who refused to be silent, Virginia Woolf, argued eighty years ago in her monumental essay "A Room of One's Own" for a tangible and metaphorical room in which female authors might write. With *A Waiting Room of One's Own* we examine the purgatory in which she awaited society's response. Indeed, the room to which women have always held the key is a waiting room, of sorts. They have waited for the menses that marked their blossoming and for marriage proposals that ensured their survival; for men to return from the hunt and for husbands to return from work; for the right to vote and for a chance at education and vocational fulfillment; for babies to emerge from wombs and for contraceptives to emerge from laboratories.

While they may be born into waiting rooms, to be sure, women today and across time have lived unyieldingly beyond patriarchal confines. The Waiting Room Project only underscores their triumph by recognizing the colossal walls they knocked down. Glass walls, heavy as history.

Personal health is one microcosm of the American woman's waiting room. As the modern health framework is assembled at the broadest level—media reports, policy debates, social mores—we begin here with big-picture essays that introduce The Waiting Room Project's art-historical, sociocultural and contemporary-art relevance. Art historian Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen examines the aesthetics of treatment facilities over the ages; historian Rachel Waltner Goossen mines the life story of a public-health advocate who helped craft the pivotal texts *Our Bodies, Ourselves and Our-*

The Waiting Room Project—cont.

elves, *Growing Older*; writer Gina Kaufmann responds to the art exhibit that inspired these pages.

With our second section, we zoom into the health experience at the community level, the somewhat quantifiable stuff of daily life. Health-communications researcher Natabhona Mabachi explores health-care access among Kansas City's impoverished; psychologist Inge Hansen describes cyclical relationship violence among lesbian couples; breast surgeon Patty Tenofsky tackles recent controversies in her field; communications researcher Crystal Y. Lumpkins laments the disconnect between health-industry advertisers and black consumers; and gender-studies professor Sharon Sullivan extols feminist applications of performance art.

Finally, then, moving even further inward—not unlike the individual who moves from lobby to nurses' area to patient room—we arrive at the very personal health journey. The private moments, the embarrassing secrets, the tears and the laughter. In our final section, you'll find riveting, visceral and occasionally hilarious first-person accounts: transgender activist Stephanie Mott on her first mammogram following a sex change; artist Robin Lasser on her near-fatal

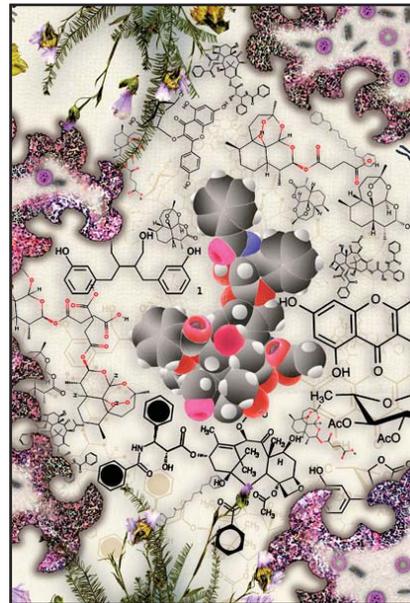
eating disorder in 1968, before "anorexia" was a household word; writer Annie Choi on the perils of peeing sitting down; artist Perret on her family's experience with dementia and, in a separate installment, a surly character named Scar Titty; artist Stephanie Lanter on her ultimately positive connection to the literal waiting room; and this writer on a mentally ill grandmother.

Along the way, we offer snapshots of The Waiting Room Project's community presence and a veritable art catalog with color images of *The Waiting Room: Lost and Found*. That art exhibit, which premiered in the Twin Cities in 2010 and opens in Topeka in January 2012, continues to evolve and expand; soon, it will address several women's-health topics that may seem glaringly absent from these pages: reproductive health, rape, substance abuse and more.

In piecing together these essays, we were aware of that which is lacking. We would have liked to cover even more topics and more perspectives from more women with more backgrounds. But women's health is the sort of theme that has no end. It defies any final statement. It exists in the realm of the unresolved. 



left: "Healing-Botanicals Chair" is the centerpiece of the breast-cancer tableau within the traveling, expanding art exhibit *The Waiting Room: Lost and Found*, which opens at the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery in Topeka this January.



left: The upholstery of "Healing-Botanicals Chair," one of several art pieces exploring women's-health issues in *The Waiting Room: Lost and Found*, features breast-cancer cells from pathology slides and plant-based compounds currently used or researched for breast-cancer treatment.



above: Community members create art at the Salina Art Warehouse in July 2010 during a Waiting Room workshop, one of several that have been held in Kansas and Minnesota.

Writing Greensburg

The tornado was the best thing that ever happened to me.

When I heard him say it, I was standing in the middle of the street across from a double set of stairs that led nowhere. On the other side of the street was 5.4.7 Arts Center designed and built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum perfection by University of Kansas architecture students. Within peripheral eyeshot was a truncated, splintered tree with twisted house siding in its branches. Standing to my left was Peter Ellenstein, Artistic Director of the William Inge Center of the Arts, whose idea it was to initiate a collaboration with Cornerstone Theater, 5.4.7, and the Inge Center to create a theater piece about the devastation and rebuilding of Greensburg. To my right was the local man whose life had been going south before he pulled thirty-some people out of the rubble, became a hero, and started speaking around the country. He was about to give us a tour of the town. My playwright's ears perked up.

Of course, I had heard the barebones version of the Greensburg story before, of how on May 4, 2007, this western Kansas town was flattened by a vast tornado 1.7 miles wide. I had applauded when I had heard Governor Kathleen Sebelius declare that



by **Marcia Cebulka**,
Playwright/Screenwriter

Greensburg would be rebuilt as “a green town.” I loved the idea that a town of approximately 1,500 souls in what some would call “No Man’s Land” would be innovative in using groundbreaking technology, that the Kansas that had been getting such a bad rap would be a model for the rest of the world.

And I was bonkers excited about the artistic team. Some twenty years ago, I had heard a presentation from Cornerstone Theater members about how they had set out to bring culture to the hinterland and ended up learning from the people they had set out to teach. I had been impressed by their design aesthetic, their talent, their humility, their heart. One of the first places Cornerstone had ever worked was Norcatour, Kansas. Since then, they have found a permanent home in Los Angeles and have merited a high place in the theater world. Cornerstone’s work of reflecting the stories of communities was featured on the cover of *American Theatre Magazine*. I have worked happily with the nationally-recognized William Inge Center for the Arts as playwright-in-residence and commissioned writer. I found the 5.4.7 Arts Center a breathtaking building and the staff congenial and smart. For me, this project was in the dreams-come-true territory.



Is this the end of the earth?

Thousands of pages have been written about the events of May 4, 2007. TV series have been broadcast about it. Books have been published. When asked about the tornado, some local residents whip out a photo album of tornado pictures, narrating

Writing Greensburg —cont.

the story of deafening sound and deathly quiet, car alarms blasting and buzzards looking for carrion. They will tell you how they feared it was the end of the earth, the wrath of God. Almost every person I have interviewed has wept. Some people have outright told me that they were sick and tired of being asked about the tornado. They wanted to move on.

As a playwright, I have had to consider how to treat the actual disaster. I certainly wanted to honor people's experience but I did not want to cause people to suffer. I made the decision to put the tornado toward the beginning of the play.

It's not about a building, it's about the people.



What is it like to lose your home? What is it like to lose your community? What is left when everything has been blown away? The people of Greensburg lost everything overnight. They walked around in their

pajamas for days because they lost every scrap of clothing. They lacked power for a month. Their animals were dead or wounded. The birds were gone. I decided that the play had to be as much about loss as about gain.

Just a cool sip of water.

As soon as the all-clear was given after the storm, a stream of aid vehicles caravanned into town. The outpouring of generosity was world-wide and enormous. In the immediate aftermath, food and medical supplies came by the truckload. Later, there were grief counselors and toys. Students drove back and



forth from Lawrence and Topeka to pound nails into new roofs. Actress Kirstie Alley sent magazines and sanitary supplies. Mennonites who removed rubble, did grief counseling and built homes have described their effort to me as just offering "a cool sip of water." The people of Greensburg would not have survived without FEMA, the Red Cross, and dozens of other aid organizations.

In the aftermath, counselors were instructed to advise people to take the time to go through the rubble and find some piece of their past to take into the future. The aid workers helped people sort. In most cases, the stricken left with some treasure—a piece of china or a photograph. In one case, a pile of precious findings got bulldozed over. I considered whether it was possible to use large earth-moving equipment on stage.

The disaster was an opportunity.

I was sitting in the Green Bean Café, eating a grilled panini, thinking about how in an earlier Greensburg, I might have been eating a slice of pie at a diner. Our team was gathered to hear from local leaders. Pre-tornado Greensburg tornado had been in decline. Like many small American towns, it had been losing population and income. Sure, tourists stopped to look at The Big Well, but even

We out-of-town theatre folk were taken on a tour.

that was not what it used to be. Many think the town would have died. Building green meant new life for the town and the chance for growth, a future for their children and grandchildren. The downtown public buildings have been rebuilt to a green standard, some of them with living roofs and windmills.

We out-of-town theatre folk were taken on a tour. We were impressed

Continued on p. 8...

Writing Greensburg —cont.

by the size of the high school, the contemporary architecture. But people pulled us aside and told us that not everyone agrees with the green initiative. Some complained that they had to drive 30 miles to a pharmacy or to do their shopping. There were ranchers who would not come to Main Street anymore because it no longer looked like their town.

The new buildings look like they come from outer space.

Of course, there would be dissenters. I was torn between utter amazement that the town was able to rise from the ashes and, on the other hand, the feeling of desolation, of the look of a town with empty holes blown through it, like a mouth with teeth missing. One of the Cornerstone members assured me that it was not my job to write a Public Service Announcement for the city. I told myself that conflict is essential to drama. But there was an ache that felt something like guilt creeping into my sensibility about the project.



The Other Side of Oz.

It is a Cornerstone tradition that their plays be Classical adaptations. The idea is to emphasize the universality of the story being told. One of my challenges was to find the right text to adapt. The most obvious was to do something Oz-related and, indeed, the original title Peter Ellenstein chose for the project was “The Other Side of Oz.” “There’s no place like home” echoed repeatedly in my brain. But when we mentioned it to the people of Greensburg, they rolled their eyes or gave small, disappointed smiles. They were tired of hearing about Oz. I decided that

since the storm was of epic proportions, I needed to go epic-reading binge.

I loved the old/new dichotomy in *Gilgamesh*, the rhythm of *The Kalevala*, but ultimately, I decided on *The Odyssey*, that tale of survival and search for home. Cornerstone people put their hands to their hearts and nodded. When I tried out the idea on some Greensburg people, they loved it. My Odysseus would be a rancher named Ulie. My Penelope would quilt instead of weave.

**“There’s no place like home”
echoed repeatedly in my brain.**

A message from God.

I sat on a bar stool alongside Amanda White, then producer of the Greensburg Project. We had come to Greensburg’s one and only bar to relax after a long day of interviewing. We had been informed and moved by the town’s residents but we needed a break, a chance to analyze and understand what we had heard. We also wanted to check out a building that had survived the disaster. Ninety-five percent of Greensburg’s structures had been leveled, including all eight churches. But the bar and the liquor store stood. “A message from God” was the local joke.

The barkeep was accustomed to strangers coming through. She kept a packet of photos protected by plastic covers behind the bar, within easy reach. We drank our low-alcohol brew (Kiowa County was dry until a year before the tornado and some say it was the change that brought on God’s wrath). Before long, the barkeep asked us where we were from. We told her about the play and she told us about the post-tornado use of the bar.

This was the morgue.

Me and my sister, we stayed up all night with the dead.

If I was writing an odyssey, this would be the location of a trip to the Underworld. It would be a chance to honor the lost.

Writing Greensburg —cont.

Let's not sell the soul of the community for the attention of the world.

The attention of the media has been Greensburg's biggest blessing and curse. Without the TV news warning, more people would have died in the tornado. The media coverage has brought a huge outpouring of aid and development money to the town. But when I approached people with pen and pad in hand, I learned that they were skittish about writers.

Are you with the media?

I had to assure people that I was not a reporter and that I would not use their names (thus no names in this article). Greensburg people had been followed from day one by cameras. In some cases, people happily had cooperated with the media, like the engaged woman whose wedding dress miraculously survived the storm. She and her intended got married live on TV with their wedding paid for, with the proviso that they change the date of their wedding. Greensburg students were asked to change the date of their graduation to conform with media coverage but they refused to let the cameras into their prom.



Sometimes, people being filmed had been asked to change what they wore or what they said or the way they walked in the door by TV producers



who had a certain image in mind of what grieving Midwesterners should look like. Tour groups had come through on a daily basis with gawking tourists carrying their own cameras. But the TV people seemed to evoke the greatest suspicion. Green equipment and building materials were promised on screen that were never

delivered. My playwright mind invented "The Recovery Channel." Reporters became Suitors.

The biggest mistake we made in the rebuild was to eliminate the lower economic segment of the community.

I was in the Green Bean again, listening to a prominent member of the rebuilding team. We had established a bond of trust over several months and he was telling me some things that did not make it into the news. How looters had roamed the town disguised as National Guardsmen. How carpetbagger contractors had come in, taken people's money and fled without doing a lick of work or poured basements that crumbled in a year. How there were storm followers who seem to have blown into town with the tornado and stayed until another disaster captured their attention. How there was no longer a place for the people who had lived in inexpensive rentals.

Mentally, I was adding characters to the play from villainous thieves to a young girl whose trailer park family had to relocate to another town after the tornado.

We were like pioneers starting all over again.

Greensburg folks sometimes give their pedigrees when you meet them. I have sat over pulled pork

Continued on p. 10...

Writing Greensburg —cont.

Special thanks to **Larry Schwarm** and **Ann Palmer** for permission to use photos of tornado devastation and recovery in this article. The historical 1915 photo of Greensburg is from **kansasmemory.org**

and listened to family history going back to the 1880s. I have pored over photos of Greensburg's earlier disasters—the cyclone of 1909, the fire of 1913, the cyclone of 1923. Reputedly, the very first photo of any tornado anywhere is one of Greensburg (1915). The town has been entirely moved (1886), rebuilt out of brick (1916), repaired and mended numerous times. I have wondered what has made people stay, what resilience has made them endure and rebuild? Some folks have told me they are square-headed. Others have cited their pioneer heritage. I decided that this rootedness had to be reflected in the play.



I'm a member of the tree board.

After the tornado, I have been told, there were no birds. The trees were uprooted or broken. There is a committee working to plant trees and restore the town's green in the more literal sense. One of the first signs I noticed in town was on a bank, saying "Other banks have branches, we have roots." The rootedness of the people of Greensburg is their most salient feature. Their sense of home is based in the community of people they know and love.

At the end of the *Odyssey*, Penelope tests Odysseus by his knowledge of their marital bed, which he himself had built onto a rooted tree.

I have decided to make a splintered but deeply rooted tree the central metaphor of the play. A stark tree will dominate the playing space, its roots spreading and rising above the ground in places. The roots of the tree provide



cover—like the basements where people took shelter. The tree will become the pole where people left messages for each other immediately after the disaster. The tree will become the tent where people gathered to worship together and decide the future of the town. The tree will have deep roots and nurtured, it will grow.

Between here and gone
Lies my heart and brother
Between here and gone
Father and mother
Between here and gone
Lies my soul and sister
Between here and gone
Oh, how I miss her



A couple of days ago, I was sitting in the sacristy of the Methodist Church in Greensburg. Tears were rolling down my cheeks as I heard Kelley Hunt sing the first song she has composed for our play, entitled "Between Here and Gone." From the outset of this project, I had hoped to have the soulful and bluesy-voiced Kansas singer/songwriter Kelley Hunt as my collaborator. She had been the heart-beat of the premiere production of *Now Let Me Fly*, a play I had written for the *Brown v. Board* 50th anniversary. An Emporia native, she has toured the world with her music and appeared on *Prairie Home Companion*. The Center for Kansas Studies has helped make her inclusion in this project possible. She will write, perform, inspire and lead a chorus. She will be our Muse.

We have a complex story of struggle to tell, intimate in detail, epic in scope. And like every good epic, this one begins with an invocation to the Muse. One of the first lines of this play is—

Muse, bring it...

Rooted will premiere in Greensburg in 2012. The cast will include professional Cornerstone actors and the people of Greensburg.

CKS Meeting Summary, Sept. 8, 2011

Fellows for the Center for Kansas Studies met for a luncheon meeting on Thursday, September 8. Present at the meeting were Sarah Smarsh, Bruce Mactavish, Bob Beatty, Margaret Wood, Rachel Goossen, Bill Roach, Marguerite Perret, Marcia Cebulski, Will Gilliland, Carol Yoho and Tom Schmiedeler. After the round-the-table discussion of summer activities and projects, Director **Tom Schmiedeler** spoke about the Center's budget and called for nominations for the Kansas Day speaker. He also encouraged submissions for the fall newsletter before the November 15 deadline. In this regard, Tom discussed his interview in July with the proprietor of Mo's Place, a microbrewery and restaurant in Beaver, Kansas. Tom intends to write an essay on the economic geography of Mo's Place for the fall newsletter, particularly how it survives in a community of only 28 people.

Several fellows from the Center are participating in the "Waiting Room" project including **Marguerite Perret, Sarah Smarsh, Rachel Goossen, Betsy Knabe Roe, and Marcia Cebulski**. The Waiting Room project began as a mixed-media art installation but over the past two years, it has evolved into a complex and multi-faceted collaboration between artists, writers, healthcare advocates and the community. Marguerite requested funding from the Center in the amount of \$1,000 to finalize the project. Specifically, the request was for an

umbrella web site for the project, to supplement printing of a book of essays predominately written by Kansas writers and to fund a public program promoting the book and broader project at the Lawrence Arts Center as part of the Final Fridays programming on January 27, 2012. Fellows approved the requested funding. A report on the Waiting Room will appear in the fall newsletter.

Bob Beatty reported on the progress achieved through the work of himself and Fellow **Carol Yoho** on the Kansas Institute for Politics web site. He noted that he has received a matching grant from the Political Science Department and requested additional funding in the amount of \$400 from the Center to complete the project. His request was approved by Fellows.

Marcia Cebulski reported on the Greensburg Project, a collaboration between the William Inge Center for the Arts, Cornerstone Theater Company of Los Angeles, Marcia and the people of Greensburg. The goal is to relate in theatrical form the story of the devastating 2007 tornado, and its aftermath including Greensburg's reconstruction as a green town. Marcia requested funding to help pay for the addition of another Kansas artist to the project—singer/songwriter Kelley Hunt. Kelly is a national touring artist living in Lawrence who has released five CDs and performed on Prairie Home Companion several times. She will perform at all six performances

in May as well as lead a choir of Greensburg citizens as part of the Cornerstone tradition of community involvement in the theatrical performance. Fellows approved \$750 to supplement the addition of Ms. Hunt to the project. Marcia plans to submit an article for publication in the fall newsletter that will emphasize what it is like to research and write about a Kansas town that has gone through devastation and rebuilding.

In an email to the Director, Fellow **Leslie Reynard** announced a Kansas Studies course offering for the spring semester. The course, Communication in Conflict and Negotiation (CN330) is offered regularly, but this coming semester the course will have a Kansas emphasis. Leslie intends to keep the exercises and papers focused on Kansas topics, especially historical conflicts such as the Lecompton/Topeka capital struggle, Jayhawkers and Bushwhackers, the Dred Scott Decision and current conflict over water rights and energy sources (wind, coal nuclear).

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

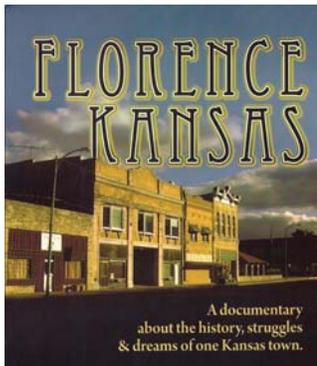
— Minutes submitted by
Tom Schmiedeler, Director



2012 Kansas Day Celebration

Mark Your Calendar!

3:30 PM, Fri., January 27, Henderson 208, Washburn University



We'll show ***Florence, Kansas*** a 25-minute documentary film, with discussion by filmmakers **Frank Barthell** and **Steve Lerner**. The film documents the growth, decline, struggles and dreams of one small Kansas town, told entirely in the voices of people who grew up there.

This work speaks to the challenges facing small towns across America today, where changes in technology and demographics require communities to re-invent themselves if they are to survive in the 21st Century.

The central question asked by this film is captured in the first line of the closing song: "Will you go into the wind, or will you learn to grow again?"

Refusing both nostalgia and despair, the film is a poignant chronicle of the changing rhythms of rural American life. Our event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served after the presentation.



Visit us on-line: www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/

Fall 2011
Speaking of Kansas
Center for Kansas Studies

Department: Geography

WASHBURN UNIVERSITY
1700 SW COLLEGE AV
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66621