

# Speaking of Kansas

## Washburn Center for Kansas Studies



## Kansas Studies Newsletter

Fall 2017

### Kansas Studies Courses Spring Semester 2018

**KS 395 A: *Independent Study-Kansas Studies***, 3 credits, CRN 12801, arranged, Steinroetter

**KS 397 XA: *Internship in Kansas Studies***, 3 credits, CRN 12805, arranged, Erby

**KS 399 A: *Kansas History***, 3 credits, CRN 12815, 11:00am-12:15pm TR, GC-131, Mactavish

**KS 399 B: *History in the Community***, 3 credits, CRN 12816, 1:00-2:15pm TR, HC-304, Wynn

**KS 399 C: *Kansas in the Movies***, 3 credits, CRN 12817, 5:30-8:00pm R, M0-137, Etzel

## CKS, Going Forward

—by **Vanessa Steinroetter** & **Kelly Erby**, co-directors of Center for Kansas Studies

As the new co-directors of the Center for Kansas Studies (CKS), we would like to extend a warm welcome to our fellows and friends at the CKS and beyond. We look forward to building on the many exciting learning experiences and research opportunities that the CKS has provided in the past and creating many new opportunities for collaborative learning, teaching, and scholarly exchange. The Center for Kansas Studies is one of the many unique assets that Washburn offers to students, faculty and staff, and the larger community. For students, the minor program in Kansas Studies presents the opportunity to take exciting, interdisciplinary courses that shed new light on aspects of our local and regional cultures and reposition familiar historical topics and events in surprising and thought-provoking contexts. For faculty, CKS provides the chance to teach these innovative courses and collaborate with others from

across the university, in addition to a funding stream for research projects and creative work. As the new co-directors of

*Continued on p. 2* ▶



Vanessa Steinroetter/Kelly Erby  
Co-Directors  
cks@washburn.edu

Deborah Altus, Human Services  
Tom Averill, English  
Bob Beatty, Political Science  
Roy Bird, KHC Speaker  
Chris Bowers, Military Student Success  
Marcia Cebulka, Playwright  
Jeannie Chinn, KSHS  
Virgil Dean, KSHS  
Dennis Etzel, Jr., English  
Kelly Erby, History  
Connie Gibbons, Mulvane Art Museum  
William Gilliland, Geology  
Rachel Goossen, History  
Chris Hamilton, Political Science  
Jonathan Hart, History  
Danielle Head, Art  
Bob Hoard, Sociology/Anthropology  
Jim Kelly, KTWU  
Robert Hull, Finance  
David Kendall, Film Producer  
Louise Krug, English  
Gabrielle Lunte, Modern Languages  
Bruce Mactavish, History  
Judith McConnell-Farmer, Education  
Eric McHenry, English  
Debra Mikulka, KAN TRAIN Grant Mgmt.  
Linsey Modellmog, Political Science  
Laura Murphy, Anthropology  
Marguerite Perret, Art  
Mark Peterson, Political Science  
Leslie Reynard, Communications  
Betsy Roe, TSCPL  
Tom Schmiedeler, Geography  
Robin Shrimplin, History  
Bradley Siebert, English  
Sarah Smarsh, Author  
Vanessa Steinroetter, English  
Laura Stephenson, Dean, LA&S  
Margaret Stewart, English  
Nancy Tate, VP, Academic Affairs  
Kelly Watt, Art  
David Winchester, Mabee Library  
Kerry Wynn, History  
Carol Yoho, Web Editor

Center for Kansas Studies  
www.washburn.edu/cks

## CKS, Going Forward—cont.

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CKS, we take seriously our charge to shepherd CKS into the future, and we invite you to join us as we explore new directions and collaborations for our academic programs, internships, and research projects.

Our main goals at the present are to increase the number of students minoring in Kansas Studies, continue to support and champion the impressive work in which our faculty fellows are engaged, and, finally, draw more attention—from within the university and across the region—to the Center. We believe we have made important first steps in accomplishing these goals this semester. For example, in an effort to further highlight the minor program and streamline advising for minors, we received university approval for a new Kansas Studies—“KS”—course designation. We also received approval for three new Kansas Studies courses, including an internship course that will allow students to receive course credit for completing internships at state agencies. We are further pleased that CKS has been able to provide financial support for a wide range of faculty projects already this year, including an innovative art installation by Marguerite Perret and Marcia Cebulka’s attendance at the national conference of the Alliance for Jewish Theatre in Boston to promote her award-winning play *Visions of Right*.

Regarding the recent activities of our faculty fellows, we want to sing to the rooftops their accomplishments! Tom Averill’s forthcoming novel, Carol Yoho’s photography exhibit at the Coffee Bean in Fairlawn Plaza, Laura Murphy’s Kansas archaeology course (and field trip! See p. #3), Louise Krug’s “Women Coming through it Project,” Bob Beatty’s and Linsey Moddelmog’s forthcoming interview in *Kansas History* with former Kansas governor and United States Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius,

Ramon Powers’ continued efforts to interview former Kansas legislators—this is just a sampling of some of the projects in which CKS fellows are engaged. We hope to continue to use this newsletter as one way of calling attention to this work, and thank long-time fellow Carol Yoho for her labors in creating the newsletter.

Our students and alumni have also been up to exciting pursuits. Johnathan Hart (’17), for example, is completing a joint master’s program in history and library science at Emporia State University. Chris Bowers (’17) is now working for the Military Student Success Center at Washburn. And current Kansas Studies minor student Mallory Lutz leveraged an internship at the *Brown v. Board* national historic site (see below) into a prestigious student employee position with the National Park Service while she finishes up her undergraduate degree.

The following pages highlight some of the additional notable CKS projects and events that unfolded over the course of the fall 2017 semester. One definite highpoint was Aubrey Streit-Krug’s visit to Washburn and public lecture entitled “Healing Roots: Indigenous Plant Knowledge in Tallgrass Prairie Literature” (see p. 5). Streit-Krug, a postdoctoral fellow in ecosphere studies at the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, emphasized the possibilities of regional studies for solving contemporary environmental and social problems. Her talk provided much food for thought and was an inspiring way to begin our tenure co-directing the Center.

If you have ideas as to how CKS might grow into the future, please do not hesitate to get in touch and let us know. Please also keep us updated on your recent activities and accomplishments. We look forward to what’s in store for Kansas Studies at Washburn. 



Mallory Lutz

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**Kansas Studies minor Mallory Lutz** published an article entitled “**The Hidden Cost of Brown v. Board: African American Educators’ Resistance to Desegregating Schools**” in the *Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy*.

Lutz’s research began as part of an internship project she completed at the Brown v. Board national historic site. Using archival sources such as the black press and letters from educators and administrators to state officials and newspapers, Lutz examines the reasons some African American teachers and families were hesitant to desegregate the public school system. Her article is available at <http://www.newprairiepress.org/ojrrp/vol12/iss4/2>

Lutz currently holds a student position at the Brown v. Board site. She will graduate from Washburn in May 2018.

# Fellows News

**CKS Fellow Marcia Cebulka** travelled to Boston to attend the **Alliance for Jewish Theatre's** national conference at which her play **Visions of Right** was being showcased. By attending workshops, lectures, and panel discussions, Marcia expanded her knowledge of the history of Jewish theatre and Jewish humor and learned about the current production needs of Jewish theatres across the country. The president of the National Jewish Theater Foundation invited Marcia to list her play in the foundation's **Holocaust Theater Catalog** and several producers requested the script for possible production.

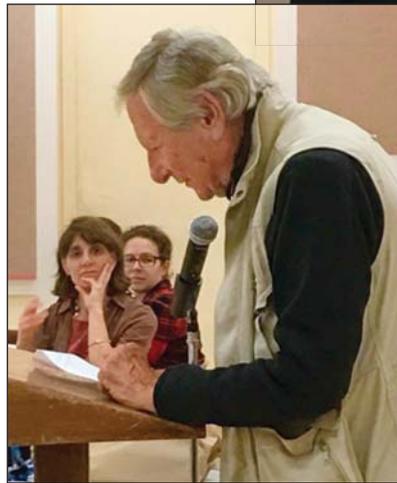
Included here are three photos Marcia shared from her adventure.



above:  
**Marcia Cebulka**, playwright, **Audrey Heller**, and **Darrell Stone** of the Jewish Theatre of Bloomington.



far left:  
Three Artistic Directors take audience questions: **Faye Soliton** of Interplay Theatre in Cleveland, **Ralph Meranto** of Centerstage, Rochester NY, and **Ronda Spinak** of Jewish Women's Theatre in Los Angeles.



left:  
**Robert Brustein**, founder of the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, CT. and American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, MA. at AJT banquet honoring him with the Theodore Bikel Award for Theatre Excellence.

**Dr. Laura Murphy**, Center for Kansas Studies fellow and Washburn University archaeology professor, organized and led an interdisciplinary field trip to several sites in East-Central Kansas on Saturday November 4, 2017.

Students from Murphy's "Kansas Archaeology" course were joined by University of Kansas (KU) graduate students taking an "Anthropocene" seminar co-taught by **Dr. Gregory Cushman**, professor of History and Environmental Studies at KU, and **Dr. Gregory Ludvigson**, a senior scientist at the Kansas Geological Survey. Students gained a first-hand look at archaeological, geomorphological, and ecological concepts they have been studying and discussing in class. The **Claussen archaeological site near Paxico, Kansas**, includes a buried record of both ~9,000 year-old Paleoarchaic hunter-gatherers and Ceramic-aged components dating between ~700 and 1,300 years ago preserved in a Kansas River tributary cutbank (Figure 1).



Figure 1, above:  
Students and professors discuss archaeology and paleoecology at the Claussen site near Paxico, Kansas.

Continued on p. 4 ▶

## Fellows News — cont.

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At the **Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Preserve** near Wamego, Kansas, students were exposed to geology, grassland ecology, prehistoric burial mound practices, and “Bleeding Kansas” history (Figure 2). The joint field trip also included stops at the **Konza Prairie and Flint Hills Discovery Center** in Manhattan, Kansas. The field trip served to bring together Washburn undergraduates and KU graduate students who have been working on interdisciplinary coursework concerning past and present human-environment interactions in Kansas. 

*Figure 2, left:* Students and professors at the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie near Wamego, Kansas, examine a monument set into a Sioux Quartzite boulder that had been deposited in Kansas by glaciers.

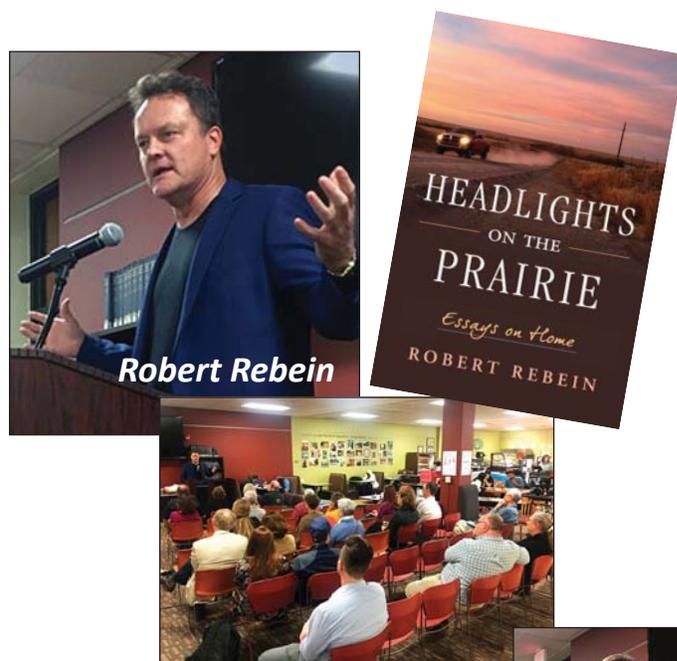
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**Tom Averill**, newly retired Washburn University English professor, arranged for **Robert Rebein** to give a reading on October 16, 2017 at Mabee Library. Rebein read selections from his book of essays about his home town of Dodge City, ***Headlights on the Prairie***. A news release about Rebein’s book from Rebein’s website states:

“Rebein takes us back to the high plains world where his family has farmed and ranched since the 1920s. It is a world populated by feedlot cowboys, stock car drivers, and farm kids dreaming of basketball glory. Here too we find the darker tales of damaged young men returning from war, long-haul truckers addicted to crystal meth, and the sadly heroic residents of a small-town nursing home grandiloquently named Manor of the Plains.”

Two of the essays in the book, “Bullet in the Brain” and “A Fire on the Moon,” were selected by Robert Atwan as Notable Essays of the Year in the anthology *The Best American Essays* (2015 & 2016 editions).

Rebein has a page on Washburn’s **“Map of Kansas Literature”**— <http://www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/mapping/rebein/>



*right:* Tom Averill introduces Robert Rebein.

Rebein currently teaches English at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis. More information about Rebein and his writing is available online on his website: <http://www.robertrebein.com/>

# “Healing Roots: Indigenous Plant Knowledge in Tallgrass Prairie Literature”



**Aubrey Streit Krug**, hosted by the Center for Kansas Studies, presented a public talk, “**Healing Roots: Indigenous Plant Knowledge in Tallgrass Prairie Literature**,” in the Forum Room, Bradbury Thompson Alumni Center, Washburn University, on Tuesday, November 14, 2017.

Streit Krug (<http://aubreystreitkrug.com>) is a writer and teacher in the environmental humanities who researches stories of relationships between humans and plants. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Ecosphere Studies at **The Land Institute** in Salina, Kansas. Streit Krug grew up in Tipton, Kansas, and graduated from Bethany College in Lindsborg. She earned her PhD in English and Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she also became a student of the Omaha language. 



left:  
Guest speaker **Aubrey Streit Krug** with  
co-directors of the Center for Kansas Studies  
**Vanessa Steinroetter** and **Kelly Erby**.

# CKS Meeting Summaries

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## September 5, 2017, Lincoln Room

- I. Meeting called to order at 8:08 AM.
  - II. Welcome of CKS Fellows by New Co-directors Kelly Erby and Vanessa Steinroetter.
  - III. CKS Fellows' Introductions & Activities Updates.
    - a. Bradley Siebert- attended the Mennonite Church USA convention and has been pursuing some ideas for articles based on his experience.
    - b. Louise Krug – has been interviewing women with disabilities and mental issues and posting them, along with a selfie of each woman, on her website.
    - c. John Hart- completed courses for his B.A. over the summer and has been pursuing research related to finding the lost Kansas Fort Cavignal.
    - d. Chris Bowers- completed courses for his B.A. and has started working at WU full-time as the military transition coordinator.
    - e. Carol Yoho- has agreed to continue her fantastic work on the CKS semesterly newsletter. Some of her photos will be exhibited at the Aaron Douglas Art Fair. She will be attending the annual Buster Keaton Celebration in Iola, KS and the Authors' Convention in Coffeeville.
    - f. Tom Schmiedeler- is preparing to teach an Osher course on drinks that changed the world.
    - g. Ramon Powers-continues his work on a Kansas Oral History Project interviewing former legislators. With financial assistance from a Kansas Humanities Council grant, 8 more former legislators will be interviewed this year under the auspices of the project.
    - h. Danielle Head- her photography show Within and Without was displayed over the summer at the Lawrence Arts Center and will be exhibited in Wichita. She has a small show opening at Notre Dame and will be presenting at SPU, a photographic conference, on vernacular photography.
    - i. Laura Murphy- taught her first field school over the summer. She is currently teaching Kansas Archeology.
    - j. Tom Averill- is preparing an Osher course on the Wizard of Oz and another on "Burns, Bagpipes, and Barley Corn." His historical novel set in Kansas is due out this winter. He continues to write Oleander commentary for KPR and is working on his Kansas Collection in Mabee Library.
    - k. Marcia Cebulska- play Visions of Right was enthusiastically received at the Jewish Theatre of Bloomington, Indiana. She will be attending the Jewish Theatre Conference in October. Cebulska has also been pursuing some research related to her novel.
  1. Connie Gibbons- discussed some very exciting exhibits opening at the Mulvane this fall, including Detention Nation, which recreates an immigrant detention center and explores the privatization of immigrant detention; Speaking Volumes/Transforming Hate; and the opening of the Rita Blitt Gallery. The Mulvane will also host the Midwestern Chicana Symposium on Art and Resistance in the Age of Extremism Oct. 12–13.
  - m. Marguerite Perret- enjoyed a summer Sweet Sabbatical to Iceland this summer where she explored tourism, reclamation of wetlands, and conservation. She has an interdisciplinary arts-based research show opening in December at the Albrecht Kemper Museum of Art in St. Joseph, and a satellite exhibit at the Wyeth Tootle Mansion in St. Joe, also opening in December.
  - n. Vanessa Steinroetter- is now chair of the English Department in addition to her new role as co-director of CKS. She will be presenting some of her research on literary representations of prairie madness at the Western Literary Association.
  - o. Kelly Erby- added to the Kansas population in April when she had a baby. She continues to serve as book review editor at Kanas History and will have an article published there this fall.
- IV. Discussion of Future Direction of CKS- fellows shared numerous good ideas for increasing the number of students taking Kansas Studies courses and for bringing increased awareness to CKS. These ideas included the creation of a speakers' bureau; new courses in art and English; partnerships with other organizations, including the Mulvane; greater use of the CKS listserv; and to issue press releases highlighting fellows' accomplishments.
- V. Co-directors Steinroetter and Erby updated fellows about new KS course designation and new course creation
- VI. Funding Requests.
  - a. Tom Averill- requested \$200 honorarium for speaker Tom Rabine. Request was approved.
  - b. Marguerite Perret requested \$300 to help

# CKS Meeting Summaries —cont.

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cover moving expenses related to her upcoming shows in St. Joseph. Request was approved.

- VII. Carol Yoho indicated she would continue to design the CKS newsletter each semester. Fellows were encouraged to send stories and images to the co-directors for editing.

## November 6, 2017, Lincoln Room

- I. Meeting called to order 12:12 PM.
- II. Updates from CKS Fellows.
  - a. Marcia Cebulka- traveled to Boston where her play Visions of Right was being showcased at a national conference of the Alliance for Jewish Theatre. This trip was supported by a CKS grant.
  - b. Tom Averill- is working in the Thomas Fox Averill Collection at Mabee Library, which recently received a new donation of Karl Menniger correspondence. He recently visited the Cottonwood Ranch in Sheridan County, Kansas.
  - c. Kerry Wynn- is teaching a HICEP course in the spring with community partner Prairie Town, which has the library of Charles Sheldon. Students will engage in primary source research to create supporting materials for the library and museum.
  - d. Louise Krug- is currently engaged in a project interviewing (mostly) Kansas women about mental and physical disabilities. She recently received a research grant to build a website for the project. She was also pleased to have been nominated for an Art Award based on her work with a writing group for incarcerated women.
  - e. Laura Murphy- led a field trip last weekend in her Kansas Archaeology class to several historic sites in Kansas.
  - f. Dennis Etzel, Jr.- is teaching Kansas in the Movies in the spring. He is also working with U.S. 501 on the annual Freedom Festival to have students write poems about what freedom means to them. He was pleased to be receive an Art Award.
  - g. Ramon Powers- is continuing his work on a project to interview former Kansas legislators. Interviews with Marvin Barkus and R.H. Miller, two former Democratic Speakers of the House, are the most recently completed interviews.
  - h. Carol Yoho- continues her work on the CKS newsletter. Her photography was recently

displayed at the Aaron Douglas Art Fair and is currently on view at the Classic Bean in Fairlawn Plaza. She attended the 24th annual Buster Keaton Festival, the last to be held in Iola, Kansas.

- i. Vanessa Steinroetter- presented a paper on prairie madness at the annual conference of the Western Literary Association.
  - j. Kelly Erby- continues her editorial work with the journal Kansas History. She recently published an article in the journal's fall issue.
- III. Funding Requests
    - a. Dennis Etzel, Jr. was approved for \$352.00 to complete research related to public commemorations of the Little House on the Prairie books.
    - b. Tom Averill, on behalf of Stephen Lerner, was approved for \$1000 to complete a film on Garden City, Kansas.
  - IV. Erby updated CKS Fellows about the new KS course prefix and new course creation.
  - V. Steinroetter updated CKS Fellows about ongoing changes to the CKS website.
  - VI. Steinroetter reminded everyone about the upcoming visit by Aubrey Streit-Krug on November 14.
  - VII. The Kansas Day Lecture will take place on January 29, 2018 at 3PM. Erby will be sending an email soliciting nominations for the speaker.
  - VIII. Erby and Yoho reminded CKS fellows to consider sending photos and stories of their work to be featured on Facebook and the newsletter. Submission deadline for the fall newsletter is the last week of November.

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## ANNOUNCING: 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Kansas Silent Film Festival

Feb. 23 & 24, 2018  
White Concert Hall  
Washburn University  
Fri: 7-10:00pm  
Sat.: 9am-10pm

Visit:  
[www.kssilentfilmfest.org](http://www.kssilentfilmfest.org)

Everyone is Welcome-  
THIS IS A FREE EVENT!



**Dennis Etzel Jr.**, Topeka poet, Center for Kansas Studies fellow, and Lecturer in the Washburn English Department, has been highly productive and has received a number of recent honors and awards.



He won one of two **Topeka Human Relations Commission's Troy Scroggins Awards** in September, 2017. (A second award was presented to Topeka poet **Annette Hope Billings**. Billings and Etzel often work together as a team.) *The Topeka Capital-Journal*

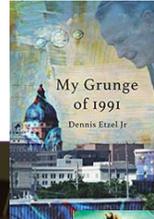
states that both poets convey a "strong message of tolerance and justice" which touches and educates the public. This award is named for Troy Scroggins, a longtime Topeka civil rights activist who died in 2013.

Etzel is a **TALK Scholar** for the **Kansas Humanities Council**, and has several books of poetry in print. Many of them are poetic memoirs. *The Sum of Two Mothers* was published in 2013. *My Graphic Novel* and *My Secret Wars* were both published in 2015, with *My Secret Wars* selected by *The Kansas City Star* as a **Best Poetry Book of 2015**. *Fast-Food Sonnets*, published in 2016, is a **2017 Kansas Notables Book**

(an honor bestowed by the Kansas State Library). *This Removed Utopia*, was published earlier this year. Dennis was awarded the **ArtsConnect 2017 Arty Award for Literature Arts** in November. His newest collection, *My Grunge of 1991*, is about to be published—all keeping Dennis busy with readings and promotions. Visit Etzel's web site (<http://www.dennisetzeljr.com>).



Scroggins Award photo (left column) is by **Susan Etzel**. Arty Award photo (upper-right column) is by **Keith Horinek/Topeka Capital-Journal**. Etzel with books photo (below) is by **Carol Yoho**.



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Fall 2017



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