

Speaking of Kansas

Washburn Center for Kansas Studies



Kansas Studies Newsletter

Spring 2014

Kansas Studies Courses Fall Semester 2014

- **GL103C Historical Geology**, 3 credits, 6:45pm, MW, ST-118, Gilliland
- **HI1397 Internship in History Agencies**, XA, Goossen
Prerequisites: HI111 and HI112 and 6 hours upper division History and consent
- **PO106A US Government**, 3 credits, 12:00pm MWF, HC-208, Beatty
- **PO107 Amer State & Local Gov't**, 3 credits, 9:30am TR, HC-208, Peterson
- **PO304 Political Behavior**, 3 credits, 1:00pm TR, HC-203, Beatty
- **PO307 Intern-State & Local Gov't**, 3 credits, XA, Peterson
Prerequisites: PO107 and Jr. or Sr. Status and/or consent of instructor
- **PO371 Topics-KS Governors & People**, 3 credits, 1:00pm TR, HC-203, Beatty

William Stafford Celebration

by **Thomas Fox Averill**, English Department

On March 31, 2014, poets from across Kansas and Missouri gathered at Washburn University for a celebration of the life and work of **William Stafford**, National Book Award winner, consultant to the Library of Congress, and prolific poet and teacher of writing, who was born 100 years ago in Hutchinson. As part of "100 Years of Poetry and Peace," nearly 50 poets, after a greeting by Kansas Poet Laureate Wyatt Townley, read one poem by Stafford, and one by themselves. Staf-



cont. on p. 2 ►

Photo: Kim Stafford, son of William Stafford, speaks about his father.

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Deborah Altus, Human Services
Tom Averill, English
Bob Beatty, Political Science
Patti Bender, Health
Roy Bird, KHC Speaker
Marcia Cebulka, 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
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, Free State Media
Margaret Stewart, English
William Wagnon, History
Marydorsej Wanless, Art
David Winchester, Mabee Library
Margaret Wood, Soc./Anthropology
Carol Yoho, SCHS

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William Stafford Celebration, cont.



ford's son and literary executor, Kim Stafford, read from his work after lunch, and then delivered the keynote address that evening: "You Must Revise Your Life: 100 Years of Poetry and Peace." For those who want to be re-inspired by Kim's words, the address is now available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBsIISQ_DhE

Although the readings were continuous, plenty of those gathered took time to purchase books by Kim and William Stafford, to visit with each other, to donate materials to the Washburn Library, and to browse a collection of Stafford's books and letters. Kay McIntyre, host of KPR Presents, discussed the conference in a recent broadcast.

Visit <http://www.kansaspublicradio.org/news/kpr-presents>

The event was sponsored by the Center for Kansas Studies, the English Department, the History Department, Friends of Mabee Library, the Thomas Fox Averill Kansas Studies Collection, and the Dean's office in the College of Arts and Sciences.



Photos: Book sales, group photo, Kansas Poet Laureate Wyatt Townley with Kim Stafford's book about his father.

Mulvane Art Museum presents

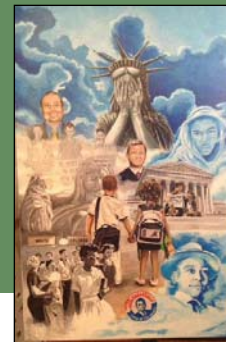
The Mulvane Art Museum at Washburn is currently presenting three art exhibitions: **Contemporary Reflections: Brown v. Board of Education After Sixty Years; "Teach Your Children Well:" Shane Evans' Images of African American Resistance; and Art for Social Change**, to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Brown v. Board decision and the fiftieth anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. "We are excited to participate in this community conversation about civil and human rights," says Connie Gibbons, Director for the Mulvane Art Museum. "The artworks in the exhibitions

serve as visual 'texts.' They have the potential to inform our ideas about a particular event, place, or idea." The exhibition will run from March 1 to June 8.

Admission to the Museum and ArtLab is free and open to the public. Free parking is conveniently located to the west of the Mulvane.

For more information about the exhibits and digital images, please contact **Julia R. Myers**, Visiting Curator, at: julie.myers1@washburn.edu

You may also call 785-670-2425, 785-670-2224 or visit <http://www.washburn.edu/mulvane>



Kansas Day 2014 Speaker: Henry Fortunato

In his special **Kansas Day** program, **Henry Fortunato**, director of public affairs at the Kansas City Public Library, presented “**A Long and Winding Walk to Wichita.**” It wasn't exactly akin to scaling the Matterhorn, but his walk was quite the amazing, and often amusing, adventure nonetheless. Fortunato presented an illustrated talk about his 240-mile trek taken in October, 2012. It began at his front door in Overland Park and ended in downtown Wichita thirteen days later. Henry is doing research for a forthcoming book about his Kansas walks. This well-attended presentation, given on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, in Henderson Rm. 112 at 3:30 p.m., was free and open to the public. After the presentation and a question and answer session, Kansas Day Celebration refreshments were served.

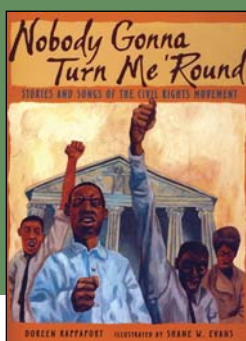
A Long and Winding Walk to Wichita



Henry Fortunato



January 28, 2014



From *Contemporary Reflections: Brown v. Board of Education After Sixty Years*
Henry Dixon, *A Bittersweet Reckoning*
Anthony High, *Separate But Unequal*
Whitney Manney, detail of *Linda*, from *Back to School*
Michael Toombs, *Contemplation of Justice*
 From *Art for Social Change: Elizabeth Layton*, *Censored*
 From "Teach Your Children Well." **Shane Evans** *Images of African American Resistance*
Shane Evans, *Our Rights*

Journalism's Dangerous Restraint

In a newsroom at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, on a summer day in 2000, someone handed me a video tape.

"Log this," she said.

Logging tape was a mundane task that made most interns groan but that I regarded as altogether glamorous. It meant slogging through hours of raw video footage to create a "shot list" of metadata, a time-coded transcription of contents for video-editing purposes. Boring? Usually. But just a couple years prior I'd been slopping hogs on my family farm in southern Kansas. Sure I'd log that tape.

Analog film remained pervasive in newsrooms and beyond, but technologies were changing rapidly: throughout the seventh floor, a handful of boxy, flashing televisions had been replaced with flat things involving "plasma." At a recent rooftop party in Brooklyn, the Twin Towers sparkling behind us, a Geraldo producer had shown me her new "MP3 player"—smaller than a cigarette pack and capable of holding, miraculously, thirty songs. My first email account was in its second year, and I didn't have a cell phone or the cash for long-distance telephone calls; I marveled at sending immediate, digital love letters to my longtime boyfriend in the Midwest but longed to hear his voice.

Just shy of my twentieth birthday, I'd long intended to be a journalist but wasn't sure what sort. Back at my venerable J-school in Kansas, I was a member of the very last class of

by **Sarah Smarsh**
MFA in nonfiction,
Fellow CKS

budding reporters to receive a traditional, hard-ass print training as a historic curriculum overhaul about "media convergence" took hold. But I was interested in broadcasting, all the same. So, via large cordless phone back in Kansas the previous spring, I'd convinced an Emmy-winning investigative reporter-producer duo to put me in its speeding, honking news van. Some days were more newsroom-bound. I sat down at a machine and popped in the tape.

Its contents had been shot during the recent Puerto Rican Day Parade, which attracts three million sweaty people each summer in New York City. The anonymous camera-holder had followed a pack of young men as they strutted about the dense crowd—stripping and assaulting dozens of women.

It was a big story, as they say, unprecedented in some ways, and I held the video that would show it to the world. Staring at a TV screen, I stopped and started, stopped and started the tape, creating a second-by-second blueprint of its contents for the producers who would "cut" it in the editing bay. What the nation would glimpse as pared, summarized, three-minute "package," I watched alone in slow motion

and entirety, without censorship or edits: a bright tank top, torn. A brunette teenager, raped by fingers of one hand after another. A young man's sweaty upper lip, turned down at the corners. Long stretches of quiet when women apparently accepted that no one would (or could, as when the men restrained a husband) help them.

I felt dizzy, physically weakened. The empathy journalism school taught me to board up tore loose. My body recognized a story and responded with what it required: tears.

Evening-news coverage of the event was a network race to precise data. How many perpetrators? How many victims? Unacknowledged, uneasy thrills shot about the newsroom as numbers ticked upward. Twenty-two, thirty-seven, more than fifty. Ratings rose accordingly. The term "wilding" surfaced in headlines, recalling for New Yorkers the "Central Park jogger" group rape about a decade prior. During the live evening broadcast, producers cut to parade-route maps labeled with the order, times and exact locations of attacks according to sources, according to my shot list.

This is what my old-school journalism professors lauded as "hard news"—an apt term for a system that "shoots" video, "breaks" the story, surrounds words with "bleed" margins, "cuts" to the next shot. It emphasizes political races over the content of candidates' platforms and explosive wars over the reasons behind them. Didactic and linear in form, it's a

Journalism's Dangerous Restraint, cont.

system built by Anglo-Saxon men during the Industrial Revolution. Its best outcome is efficient, fast, clear communication—the event summaries we once collected at the top of the hour (now in real time, all the time) or from the first halves of articles we skim on front and home pages. Recent technologies have facilitated for the last fifteen years or so a veritable frenzy of such reports. Since waking today, you likely have gotten tight, fast news of more tragedies and triumphs than humans not so long ago learned of in a lifetime. Did you feel much? Probably not. Raw information strikes the mind but peters out somewhere before the body.

It's a disconnect that came to a head in 2012, when the Sandy Hook, Con., massacre reached our computers, televisions, radios and papers in 2012. We saw guns next to our innocents and finally sensed as a nation the embarrassing inadequacy of our daily-news structures. Lauren Ashburn wrote for *The Daily Beast*, "In my television reporting days, I was as dispassionate as the next news gal... But in the wake of what happened in Newtown, it's now clear that too much restraint fails to match the moment when kids are being killed."

We should question a primary-news paradigm whose effectiveness diminishes as the story's import increases.

What is the offending, excessive "restraint" Ashburn cited? (Her current network, Fox, is hardly a paragon of it.) She was talk-

ing, specifically, about restrained *emotions*—journalists putting on stoic faces. But this is an increasingly antiquated idea, and one that never reflected what was going on. The first way we knew 9/11 changed our world was that ash-covered reporters were crying, like the first way we knew our president was dead was that Walter Cronkite removed his heavy glasses. The news media is full of emotion. Outrage fuels talk-show ratings, anxiety drives op-ed pages, and emoting by reporters and anchors lends some mix of genuine humanity and effective ratings bait.

If not feeling, then what does our news system restrain? It's surely not *opinion* that we're missing. Most news now is received via commentary, whether via social media, televised talking heads or radio ideologues. Old conversations about objectivity most often center on these two impulses—emotion and opinion, both of which are rampant in contemporary news reporting and both of which can and should be avoided to varying degree, per context, form and intent.

The troublesome "restraint" Ashburn and many of us sense perverting news coverage has less to do with a reporter's detachment than with the news model we've favored for the last century. It's the restraint of *storytelling*.

Contemporary discussion of "story" as concept—rife, as think-tanks such as Harvard's Nieman Storyboard and MIT's Center for Future Storytelling have mate-

rialized—often suggests that information is on one hand, "story" on the other, as though the latter were wholly qualitative. But you can't make story without quantitative material.

True story comprises two strands, spiraling: the specific and the universal. The objective and the subjective. Earthly and transcendent, literal and metaphorical, tangible and intangible. What binds them, any creative writer knows, is the art of storytelling. Without the envelope of narrative—most reliably, scenes brought to life by character development, description, setting, structure, metaphor—data collected in the journalistic field is no less important but certainly less coherent to the human brain, which longs to interpret. (And to the human body, which recognizes true story with goosebumps—I tell students they're "truthbumps"—and laughter and tears.) When storytelling, the bonding agent for fact and meaning, is restrained, we get a TV anchor awkwardly interviewing six-year-old witnesses to a shooting rampage, or an article squeezing military suicides into inverted pyramids, tallies and quotes in descending order of deemed significance. This approach ultimately desensitizes or disturbs us. It fails to match the moment.

Sarah Smarsh is developing *Free State Media*, a Kansas storytelling platform that received early support from the Center for Kansas Studies. See sarahsmarsh.com

CKS Meeting Summary

January 23, 2014

Fellows of the Center for Kansas Studies met for a luncheon meeting on January 23. Attending the meeting were **Tom Averill, Deborah Altus, Carol Yoho, Bob Beatty, Sarah Smarsh, Rachel Goossen, David Winchester, Will Gilliland, Kelly Erby, Marguerite Perret, Julie Myers, Marcia Cebul-ska, Kelly Watt, Connie Gibbons** and **Tom Schmiedeler**. Director **Tom Schmiedeler**, in a brief discussion of the budget, noted that he estimated remaining available funds for projects at \$500. He encouraged attendance at the Kansas Day presentation on Tuesday, January 28, beginning at 3:30 in room 112 of Hender-son Hall. He also encouraged contributions to the spring edition of *Speaking of Kansas*, the Center's bi-annual newsletter. Tom is organiz- ing a meeting of those Center faculty who have indicated a desire to participate in the new fall course, *Kansas Studies*.

Tom Averill reminded Fellows of the forthcom- ing **Stafford Conference** to be held on March 31 at the Washburn Union. He announced, relevant to the **Kansas Day presentation by Henry Fortunato** "A Long and Winding Walk to Wichita," the theme of this year's Collage of Arts and Sciences Faculty Colloquium is WALK. He will have call for proposals brochures available for interested faculty from across the university at the Kansas Day event and will discuss the forthcoming colloquium when he introduces Henry Fortunato.

Julia Myers and **Connie Gibbons** discussed the exhibition "**Watching Curry Work: Sketch- es for His Kansas Capitol Murals**" which is currently running through February 23 at the Washburn Mulvane Art Museum. Accompany- ing this exhibition are a performance/presen- tation by **Don Lambert** as Curry, followed by a reception on February 4, at 6:00 pm. Addition- ally, **Julia** will give a lecture entitled "**Contro- versy and Compromise: John Steuart Cur-**

ry's Kansas Capitol Murals" on February 11 at 6:00 pm

Julia also spoke about three forthcoming art exhibitions at the Mulvane. They include "**Con- temporary Reflections: Brown v. Board of Education after Sixty Years,**" which will ex- plore the lasting significance of this landmark Supreme Court decision and will feature new work on a variety of viewpoints related to this theme by twenty African American artists from Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri. A second ex- hibition, "**Teach Your Children Well: Shane Evans' Images of African American Resis- tance,**" will showcase the work of renowned Kansas City children's book illustrator **Shane Evans**. The exhibition features the original art for the illustrations for **Doreen Rappaport's** book *Nobody Gonna Turn Me 'Round: Stories and Songs of the Civil Rights Movement*. Fittingly these works focus on the ten turbulent years between the 1954 Brown decision and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The third exhibition, "**Art for Social Change,**" will display works from the Mulvane's permanent collection and from the Spencer Museum of Art that take on some of the major social and political issues of the last one-hundred years. The exhibition is divided into two sections: "**The 1930s**" and "**The 1960s and Beyond.**" Not surprisingly, the Great Depression generated a lot of social protest art, and works in the exhibition treat such themes as strikes, breadlines and the de- plorable working conditions of miners. Works from The 1960s and Beyond explore Civil Rights, women's rights, gay rights, police bru- tality, nuclear proliferation, and environmental issues. These thought-provoking works dem- onstrate the importance of art as an agent for social change. For more information and please contact **Julia R. Myers**, Visiting Curator, at: julie.myers1@washburn.edu You may also call 785-670-2425, 785-670-2224 or visit <http://www.washburn.edu/mulvane>

CKS Meeting Summary, cont.

In a related item, **Marcia Cebulka** discussed the **sixtieth anniversary of the historic Brown v. Topeka Board of Education Supreme Court decision**. To celebrate, the Topeka theater community will have several performances of Marcia's play "**Now Let Me Fly**," a work commissioned for the national celebration for the fiftieth anniversary of the decision. This year's production will be a collaborative effort of the Topeka 501 Arts Magnet Schools, Ad Astra Theatre Company and the Brown v. Board National Historic Site. The youth version of the play will be performed by children for an audience of children both at the Historic Site and at one of the magnet schools. Marcia requested \$500 from the Center as an honoraria for musicians to play traditional African-American spirituals, and jazz and blues selections in support of the chorus of children who will be singing and acting. Fellows approved the funding request.

In other news from the Fellows, **Rachel Goossen** encouraged participation as judges in the annual **History Day** event to be held at Washburn on February 22. **Sarah Smarsh** gave an update on **Free State Press**, which has received funding from the Center. Current plans for the project are for a one-year, four-issue Web platform for Kansans to share topical stories, the first of which will be based on the theme of water.

David Winchester announced an **expansion of library hours** to a full twenty-four hours from Sunday to Friday. **Bob Beatty** spoke of the **additions of Bill Graves and Jim Slattery campaign ads to the Kansas Politics web site**. **Bill Roach** announced his retirement at the end of the spring semester.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45.
Minutes by **Tom Schmiedeler**

Lambert reenacts John Stewart Curry

Don Lambert's performance as John Stewart Curry was combined with a talk on Curry by Julie Myers, Visiting Curator at the Mulvane Art Museum. Both took place on Tuesday February 11, at the Mulvane. A reception followed these

events, giving attendees the chance to enjoy the Mulvane show, "**Watching Curry Work: Sketches for his Kansas Capitol Murals**," which ran December 20, 2013, to February 23, 2014.



Shared by Keith Goering of Iola, KS:

You may want to see the new film, **Tim's Vermeer**. Briefly, this is a documentary about how a non-painter, Tim Jenison, using simple optical tools, painted a highly convincing facsimile of a Vermeer painting.

Tim Jenison once lived in Topeka where he headed up the team that developed the "Video Toaster." Bill Shaffer, producer-director at KTWU Channel 11, used one of these for awhile as production equipment at the television station. It ran on an Amiga computer and for its time, produced some spectacular titles and effects. In 1993 it was given an EMMY for technical achievement.

One of Tim's associates was engineer Brad Carvey, brother of actor/comedian Dana Carvey. (I think I recall rumors that Dana wore

a Toaster T-shirt in one of the Wayne's World flicks.) Jenison and his group worked out of a facility at Forbes Field.

The movie was produced by Penn Gillette of the Penn and Teller magic team.

The film's trailer is on YouTube (2:04 min):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94pCNUu6qFY>

A longer YouTube video (6:34 min) ties this film to research by Professor Philip Steadman (UCL Bartlett School of Graduate Studies and the UCL Energy Institute) who published a book called *Vermeer's Camera*, showing evidence for the great seventeenth-century Dutch painter using a camera obscura to make his images.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rXRevUKrKI>



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Center for Kansas Studies

Department: Geography

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