

Speaking of Kansas

Washburn Center for Kansas Studies



Nov. 2005

Fellows News

Center for Kansas Studies Reprints *Speaking French in Kansas*

As part of its educational mission to print and/or reprint important literary texts either by Kansans, or about Kansas, the center announces the reprint edition of *Speaking French in Kansas*, by Kansan Robert Day. Long considered one of Kansas' best contemporary writers, due in part to the huge success of *The Last Cattle Drive*, Bob Day continues to maintain his relationship—both in residency and in fiction—with Kansas. Professor of English and American Literature at Washington College, in Chestertown, Maryland, Bob and his wife, the artist Kathryn Jankus Day, live in St. Michel de Montaigne, France, and in Ludell, Kansas. Reprint editor Tom Averill, a fellow of the Center, writes: “Although best known for his *The Last Cattle Drive*, Day's two novellas and the short stories in *Speaking French in Kansas* show philosophical and literary sides of Day's work that make the book a must for reprint. This is a wonderful, and teachable, collection of fiction.”

Center Fellows part of Faculty Colloquium on Mapping

Six Center Fellows are participating in this fall's Faculty Colloquium. “Mapping and Beyond” has gathered Washburn faculty whose research involves mapping, charting, representing, predicting and imagining the world—from the two-dimensional to three dimensions, and beyond. **Tom Schmiedeler**, Center director, will present a paper on Midwestern town forms. **Mark Peterson** will talk about

political redistricting in Kansas and how this has affected Kansas's power and voice in the United States. **Gabi Lunte** will present research on mapping German dialects to their original places in Europe. **Margaret Wood** will present on cemeteries as a map of social class and boundaries. **Amy Fleury** will be creating a literary guide to Switzerland. And **Marydorsey Wanless** will be creating a memory map of a farm south of Topeka. **Tom Averill**, faculty coordinator of the colloquium, will share a paper on Kansas and Maps.

Kansas Center for the Book

Roy Bird, adjunct English, became the Director of the Kansas Center for the Book after its move from Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library to the Kansas State Library in July, 2005. The Kansas Center for the Book (KCFB) is dedicated to promoting Kansas authors, Kansas books, libraries, publishers, booksellers, and literary events. It does not use state or federal funds; instead, KCFB is funded by Library and Commercial Affiliates and through its Fellows. The Fellows also provides a pool of volunteers to help with KCFB projects.

KCFB currently is conducting Letters About Literature, a grade 4-12 reading and writing initiative through the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress; a statewide book fair will occur in October 2006; up to 20 Kansas Notable Books 2005 will be recognized in April 2006; a Kansas authors event will be hosted at the annual library conference in April 2006; an adult One State-One Book

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Mary Wanless, Art
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project is being considered; a hard copy newsletter, including book reviews, will be published before the end of 2005; and a new, redesigned website with a Kansas authors database is being developed. The KCFB held its official ribbon cutting featuring Governor Kathleen Sebelius, John Y. Cole, director of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, state Poet Laureate Jonathan Holden, and State Librarian Christie Brandau. Roy has also presented eight programs in Kansas and represented KCFB at the National Book Festival on the National Mall in Washington DC on September 24. If you are interested in becoming a Fellow of the Kansas Center for the Book contact Roy through the English Department or at the State Library, 296-4105.

“The Kansas Governor” Video Unveiled

“The Kansas Governor,” a one-hour film on the role and history of the Governor in the state, was released on May 18, 2005 with an unveiling party at Washburn that featured Governor Kathleen Sebelius and three former governors. The film, produced by Center For Kansas Fellows **Bob Beatty** and **Mark Peterson**, received grant funding from the Center. It aired on public television in August and September in Missouri and in

Kansas including KSNT-TV in Topeka. The documentary is also being sent to every high school in Kansas for use in history, government, and Kansas History classes.

Students Photograph Small Town Life in Kansas

Washburn University photography students are working in conjunction with the Kansas State Historical Society and the Center for Kansas Studies to document small towns in Northeast Kansas. The semester long class is being conducted through the Washburn Art Department under the guidance of art professor **Marydorsey Wanless**.

Students have received extensive training in documentary research. Speakers include Tom Averill, Literature of Kansas; Dale Nimz, Kansas Rural Architecture; Jim Kelly, KTWU Sunflower Journeys; Dr. Tom Schmiedeler, Geography and Layouts of Kansas Towns; Paul Fecteau, Memory Maps; Dean Bruce MacTavish, History of NE Kansas; Brett Knappe, History of Documentary Photography; Nancy Sherbert, Photography Collection of Kansas State Historical Society; and Pat Michaelis, Researching and Interviewing Techniques. Students will research and present an indepth research paper comparing the present to the “hay-day” of rural Kansas towns in the early 1900s.

Jim Richardson of National Geographic will be visiting the photography class in

“The Kansas Governor” video debut. *L-R:* Governor William Avery, Governor Kathleen Sebelius, Governor John Anderson, Governor Mike Hayden.

November. Mr. Richardson’s photographic essay on Cuba, Kansas, was published in the magazine in May 2004. He will direct the students in editing their projects.

Towns were selected for the project based on population size (approximately 500–1200 residents), proximity to Topeka, student/town relations, self-sufficiency, and community pride. Towns included are Onaga, Alma, Eskridge, Burlingame, Lyndon, Overbrook, Valley Falls, Hoyt, Oskaloosa, Centralia, and Sabetha. There are 18 students involved in the project, and they will be working in their assigned town for the entire Fall 2005 semester.

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The film for the project was donated by the Center for Kansas Studies. All finished photographs and the negatives will be donated to the Kansas State Historical Society. The Historical Society is also donating copies of old photographs from its collection for the final exhibition, which will take place at the Mabee Library on the Washburn campus beginning in early December through the end of March. All towns involved will receive copies of the photographs for their archives.

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The students welcome any help from residents and friends. Although the students are documenting the present, they would like to see old photographs, letters, diaries, etc., as well as hear the concerns that local residents have about the future of small rural towns in Kansas. To contact the students, call:

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The Edge of Kansas: Observations on the Southern Periphery of the Sunflower State

No Man's Land, Cherokee Strip, Cherokee Outlet and Osage Reserve are all historic names associated with the state's southern perimeter. They suggest raw edges to borderland settlement and discontinuities in the evolving patterns of economic development. Such has been the case with the noted exception of the first two decades of the twentieth century when mineral deposits brought wealth to southeastern Kansas counties. Most of the border region belongs to the great North American grasslands but considerable diversity exists within this four hundred mile swath. Consider that it begins on the extreme margins of what is identified as the Ozark Plateau, a relatively humid, forested outlier of the Southern Appalachians, and ends on the semiarid High Plains just a few miles from the Cimarron Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Between lie the limestone escarpments of the Osage Cuesta, the Cross Timbers parkland of the Chautauqua Hills, the tall grass prairie of the Flint Hills, the level expanse of the Wellington Lowland, and the butte and mesa topography of the Red Hills.

Isolated from the main economic cores by its location and hampered by poor interstate and intrastate accessibility, the southern edge remains for many Kansans as much a *terra incognita* as it did when the Sooners toed the line in 1889. Yet an economic awakening has occurred in the last ten years with the emergence of several enterprises, ranging from ecotourism to book publishing, that have been generated largely by external forces who see the region's isolation, stagnant economies and prairie ecology as resources rather than liabilities. Two southeastern Kansas towns, Coffeyville and Independence in Montgomery County, are cases in point. Both towns have

by **Tom Schmiedeler,**
Geography

attracted multinational corporations in the last decade. In April, 1999, Amazon.com opened a distribution center in Coffeyville, a town best known for the notorious Dalton gang, who in 1892 attempted, remarkably and unsuccessfully, to rob the C.M. Condon and Company Bank and the First National Bank at the same time. Amazon employs about 250 workers but seasonal fourth-quarter hires can raise the number to about 1,500 (Attoun). From the beginning, company officials in Coffeyville and at the international headquarters in Seattle have been reticent to discuss why the company moved to the city, but obviously the availability of a 750,000 square-foot facility, formerly owned by Western Publishing (Golden Books), was a significant factor.

**"This isn't strong
union country."**

—Mike Blake,
Cooperative Refineries, Cherryvale

Shortly after the opening, Mike Blake, a metal trades' union official at Cooperative Refineries in nearby Cherryvale, alluded to another reason why Amazon came to Coffeyville: cheap labor. As Blake noted: "This isn't strong union country." Daniel Ries, a dot-com analyst with C.E./Unterberg, Towbin in New York City echoed Blake's viewpoint: "Amazon hasn't chosen to put its distribution plants in places like Coffeyville for nothing...Labor costs are a factor in deciding where to put jobs" (*Lawrence Journal World*). Although

the starting wage at the Coffeyville facility when it opened was around \$9 an hour, \$4 less than in Seattle, the Coffeyville wage was considered competitive in Montgomery County where unemployment rates have been 1-2% higher than the state average over the past several years. The average annual wage for 2004 for Montgomery County was about \$8,000 less than the state average (Kansas Labor Market Information, 2005). The starting wage today has barely risen from what it was five years ago.

Cessna Aircraft Company, historically a Kansas corporate mainstay, is another international firm established in the past decade in Montgomery County near Independence. Except for a three-year period during the early Depression, Cessna had manufactured planes in Wichita since 1927. Cessna, however, suspended production of single-engine, piston aircraft there in 1986 in large part because liability lawsuits had sent insurance rates soaring well beyond acceptable levels. In 1994 Congress passed the General Aviation Revitalization Act which restricted liability lawsuits and allowed for the return of single-engine production. Immediately after President Clinton signed the bill into law, Cessna CEO, Russ Myer, announced plans for a new state-of-the-art, single-engine aircraft manufacturing plant (Rodengen). Although the company received better offers from locations in other states, Myer had committed to building the new plant in Kansas as compensation for the efforts of then Kansas Senators Bob Dole and Nancy Kassebaum and Representative Dan Glickman in securing passage of the act.

Cessna officials pared the original list of sixteen Kansas communities, each of which were competing for a

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new 500,000 square-foot facility, 1,000 new jobs and an annual payroll of \$40 million, down to five. Officials evaluated these communities on the basis of airport and transportation facilities, labor and utilities costs, educational resources, fringe benefits provided by area employers for their employees and taxes. Independence ranked at or near the top in nearly all of the criteria. A sales tax to help pay for plant construction and a ten-year property tax abatement were part of the entitlements offered to Cessna, but, like those of Coffeyville, the lower labor costs were probably the most important lure for locating in Independence. Employment opportunities will expand greatly in early 2006 when Cessna completes a \$20.4 million expansion involving two new buildings. An additional 500 workers will be needed over the next several years to support production of single-engine, piston aircraft and Cessna's new entry-level business jet, the Citation Mustang. Current employment levels are about 600 (Aviation News).

The next two sites of dynamic economic development are in the Chautauqua Hills and Red Hills, two comparatively obscure, trans-border physiographic regions that have recently gained a higher level of recognition statewide because of the economic investments of two relatively well-known media personalities. The Chautauqua Hills, a finger-shaped area of surface sandstone projecting northward from Oklahoma's Cross Timbers region, lie about thirty miles to the west of Independence. Sedan, the Chautauqua county seat with a population of about 1300, is the principal town in the region.

In the 1980s thirteen Sedan busi-

nesses closed. As a means of revitalizing the town's business district, resident Jeane McCann suggested they capitalize on Kansas' association with *The Wizard of Oz*. McCann,



along with gift store operator, Nita Jones and others, formed the Save Our Sedan Committee and encouraged the City of Sedan to create their own version of the Yellow Brick Road by selling yellow bricks, each inscribed with the names of the buyers and their hometowns, for \$10 (later \$15). The city has sold over 10,000 bricks to people, including some celebrities, from every state and from twenty-eight foreign countries (Dornaus). Funds have been utilized to create the "Hollow," a flower garden that was a junk yard for seventy-five years. Additionally, the city spent some of the money on restoration of a building housing the Emmet Kelly Museum, which honors the American circus performer, cartoonist and actor born in Sedan.

The most important improvements to the townscape, however, have been those associated with Bill Kurtis, broadcast journalist and television producer of several series on the Arts and Entertainment Network including *The New Explorers*, *Investigative Reports* and *American Justice*. Kurtis, who grew up in Independence, has traveled extensively for the *New Explorers*. The Chautauqua Hills reminds him of one of his favorite places—"an escarpment that comes down into the Masai

Mara [Game Reserve] along the Great Rift valley" in East Africa (*Sunflower Journeys*, program number 1213, 1999). Kurtis believes that people have seen the oceans and the mountains; now is the time for them to see the prairie. Therefore, his work in Sedan has been part of a broader effort aimed at developing tourism in the region based on its prairie ecology; a restored, turn-of-the century prairie town, Sedan, is part of that vision.

Using his television expertise, Kurtis produced a video to introduce his revitalization program to the community. Whereas his positive attitude

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and enthusiastic spirit convinced community leaders of his sincerity, his capital investments in the town's commercial district was undoubtedly a greater catalyst for the organization of the community, particularly Sedan merchants, behind his project. Kurtis began by purchasing six buildings in the heart of Sedan's business district and by opening a restaurant and bakery in one of them. Through the past few years he has purchased at least eight additional buildings and established the Art of the Prairie gallery and gift shop with an espresso bar (Jan Biles). Local people have rented some of these refurbished buildings to house their own businesses.

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Kurtis has also purchased an 8000-acre tract where he raises organic, grass-fed beef and bison. He named his ranch *Red Buffalo* after



Bill Kurtis

Perhaps it is a most appropriate name for a ranch that has become a major component of Kurtis' program of revitalizing the area's economy. Today, the ranch offers lodging, guided trail rides on horseback, wagon rides to Prairiehenge (a rock sculpture by Lawrence earth artist Stan Herd), and nature walking trails that include Butcher Falls on the Middle Caney Creek.

The physiography and isolation of the Chautauqua Hills has also contributed to another form of economic development—commercial game hunting—that lures visitors to the region. As the regional oil, farm and ranch economies declined in the 1970s and 1980s, population pressure on rural recreation areas in the East increased. In time several locals recognized a potential economic link between these seemingly disparate trends. They realized that although the region's abundant game found in a relatively secluded setting was something they had taken for granted, for hunters from more densely populated regions of the East, it was something comparable to finding buried treasure on a pristine South Pacific island.

Among the locals is Sedan farmer, Jim Bell, who conducts a hunting operation on a leased ranch a few

what the Osage Indians called a prairie fire, a sometimes spectacular event that ecologists believe is instrumental in rejuvenating the health of native prairie ecosystems.

miles northwest of Sedan. Perched on a hill slope overlooking a relatively large lake on the property is what Bell describes as a former "oil executive party house." After the crash of the oil boom of the 1980s two avid quail hunters from Wichita bought the house and property, but in time lost interest in hunting there. Bell, looking for supplemental income to offset declining farm revenue, approached the property owners with an acceptable comprehensive business plan that stipulated lease conditions, payment of operating and liability insurance expenses, and distribution of profits. The house is a definite advantage for Bell's outdoor operations because the property on which it sits can attract a variety of game enthusiasts year round. Deer hunters are referred to the preserve—the Wildcat Creek Hideaway—by one of the owners and a business associate. The first day after hunters arrive Bell drives the perimeter with them so they know the property boundaries. He then identifies for them potential deer hunting sites in the interior. Bell has also organized spring turkey hunting and summer fishing and boating. Bell uses classified adds to lure those interested in fishing; horseback riding is a potential enticement to the ranch.

About 120 miles west of the Chautauqua Hills are the Red Hills, a physiographic region of butte and mesa topography named for the reddish hue of Permian-aged deposits of shale, siltstone, and sandstone colored by exposure of iron oxide to oxygen. The Red Hills are also called the Gypsum Hills because gypsum is interbedded among the other rock layers. The mining of gypsum, along with ranching, have been the principal economic activities in this relatively

isolated and sparsely populated region, but that situation could potentially change.

In January, 2000, media mogul Ted Turner purchased the Z-Bar Ranch, a tract of over 35,000 acres located about fifteen miles southwest of Medicine Lodge, the Barber County seat and trading center for the Red Hills. Turner assuaged initial fears of neighboring ranchers who believed that, with his vast financial resources, he would quickly buy them out or make it difficult for them to compete for land purchases. In fact, Turner has not tried to expand his initial purchase with extravagant offers to ranchers holding adjacent



Turner raises buffalo for profit on his ranch.

tracts. On the contrary, a few ranchers themselves have approached Turner with offers to sell their adjacent tracts. All have found him to be a cautious and conservative businessman. Despite his great wealth, he has steadfastly refused to pay much more than market value for several of these tracts, which have brought his total holdings to about 42,000 acres of land, seven houses, one mobile home, numerous outbuildings, equipment and assorted cats and dogs.

Turner raises buffalo for profit on his ranch. Like those that graze on his other vast holdings, the Z-Bar buffalo is sold to a New Rockford, North Dakota, slaughter house owned by the North American Bison Cooperative, an organization of 200 bison ranchers. A local oil and gas

well inspector remembers the ranch as a near-pristine, mid-grass prairie with waist-high grasses about thirty years ago, but since then it was severely over grazed and needed time to recover. Fortunately, the process of building the herd from the four hundred heifer bison originally introduced to the present 2,000 head has taken several years, a period of time long enough for the native grasses to recover. Meanwhile, safer management practices have been introduced.

The reaction to Turner's purchase in the Medicine Lodge community was mixed initially because some questioned whether the ranch would remain on the tax rolls. Generally, though, the city has welcomed him and, in the words of Medicine Lodge Mayor Steve Ethridge, residents are "glad to have him as a neighbor and look forward to having a good long relationship with him...." With numerous vacant buildings in downtown Medicine Lodge, community leaders would like for Turner to do for Medicine Lodge what Bill Kurtis has done for Sedan. Turner has abided by his economic credo of purchasing essentials locally, and he has given financial support to local children through the Turner Youth Group but, beyond that, he has not demonstrated any interest in the economic viability of the town. Nevertheless, community leaders believe that the Z-bar ranch is having an indirect, positive impact on the economy of Medicine Lodge by promoting regional tourism. Such optimism is not without merit considering the fact that people are still fascinated by bison and have been taking the opportunity to view a relatively large herd of them from Aetna Road, a gravel, public thoroughfare that runs through the heart of the Z-Bar. Moreover, several groups in Medicine Lodge have been discussing ways of

enhancing tourism since the state designated a forty mile length of U.S. highway 160 west from Medicine Lodge to Coldwater as a "Scenic Byway." A grant from the Federal Aviation Association will help fund a new airport and recent town meetings have focused on the possibility of constructing a reservoir on nearby Elm Creek. One rancher has already implemented spring weekend trail rides complete with covered wagons, meals cooked over an open fire and a night out on the trail. The rides are attracting people from some distance.

The most vibrant of all regional centers along the southern edge of Kansas is Liberal, located about ninety miles west of the Red Hills and just a couple of miles from the Oklahoma border. Liberal, seat of Seward County with a population of about 20,000, is located on the High Plains, a physiographic region whose flat topography is appreciated far less than its subterranean resources. As the regional trading center for much of southwest Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle, Liberal grew rapidly during the 1980s in response to the maturation of its regional economy based primarily on the extraction of its most valued resource—ground water from the Ogallala Aquifer. Geohydrologists estimate that the Ogallala Aquifer, which exists at varying depths and thickness over parts of five states ranging from southwestern South Dakota to northern Texas, held at one time about two billion acre feet of water. Since the 1930s farmers have used the water from the Ogallala to irrigate a variety of crops including cotton, sorghum, and corn. Developing irrigation technology, particularly center pivot systems, along with fuel from

the Hugoton Gas Field, once the world's largest, greatly increased agricultural productivity while engendering the rise of the feed-lot industry in the region. The consolidated meat packing industry was soon to follow.

One of the largest meat packers, National Beef, originally owned by the Jacobsen family, located in Liberal in the late 1960s in response to the abundant grazing and milder winters of the region. Because the company sold beef to Idlewild Farms and to the military, it was protected somewhat from market volatility and, when profits were high, was able to expand its operations to include a feedlot for 70,000 head of cattle and a truck line, National Carriers. The company is currently under the control of Farmland Industries which reinvested profits in expansion so that now the plant can slaughter 6,000 cattle daily. The company today employs about 3,000 workers, of which approximately 75% are Hispanic, 8% Asian and the rest Caucasian. Many of the Hispanic and Asian workers came during the

Dangerous working conditions have assured high turnover rates in the industry, so slaughter houses like those of National Beef are hiring all of the time.

1980s when the town experienced an 11% growth rate. Some are Mexican nationals whose documentation is monitored by the INS. The plant promotes from within into lower management positions. Workers are represented by a union but only about half are members. Dangerous working conditions have assured high turnover rates in the industry, so slaughter houses like those of

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National Beef are hiring all of the time (Schollosser).

Hispanics are also the principal workers at the Tuls Dairy Farm about ten miles northwest of Liberal. Tuls Dairy, owned and managed by

Dairy farms...have come to the High Plains for many of the same reasons as meat-packers.

Pete Tuls, is representative of a growing number of dairy operations that have moved out of their traditional metropolitan milksheds into more remote and rural regions like the High Plains. Tuls is a third generation dairy farmer whose family began dairying in the San Jacinto Valley 75 miles southeast of Los Angeles. In the early 1990s several towns on the High Plains began to offer inducements to dairy farms to relocate. Tuls considered Guymon, Oklahoma and Dodge City, Kansas, each of which offered a good package of incentives but no site. He eventually purchased his farm near Liberal in 1994.

Dairy farms like that of Tuls have come to the High Plains for many of the same reasons as meat-packers. Feed costs, thanks to the Ogallala, are cheaper. Tuls feeds his animals row corn and silage corn that, with the exception of about 20% of the silage corn, is purchased locally. Labor costs are generally low because National Beef had already generated a large Hispanic labor pool before his dairy operation existed. The drier climate of southwest Kansas is also conducive to less cattle stress. Additionally, the Water Quality Board in California did not allow large dairies like that of Tuls in the San Jacinto Valley. This factor

and land costs at \$15,000 to \$20,000 an acre compared to about \$800 an acre in the Liberal area were the most important incentives for Tuls to relocate and expand his operation in Kansas. Tuls markets his milk primarily in Hutchinson or Wichita, about 200 miles from his farm, but he has also sold milk in Missouri and Nebraska, over 500 miles away. Tuls can control most of the variables that affect his operation. Some costs, like transportation, are subcontracted on an annual basis. The one variable he cannot control, however, is the price of milk.



For the last manifestation of dynamic economic development we return to the Land of Oz whose location this time is a block north of highway 54 near downtown Liberal. For some Kansans the Wizard of Oz theme is like a tornado in the Kansas spring; an uninvited visitor that just keeps coming back. Perhaps one can forgive the Kansas Tourism Office for its efforts to promote Kansas as the “Land of Ahs.” And there just may be something to the idea that a pot of gold can be found over the rainbow. At least a Liberal insurance salesman recognized the potential for it after returning from a convention in California at which, upon hearing that he was from Kansas, everyone kept asking him how Dorothy was and where was his dog. After returning to Liberal he met with city commissioners

to formulate a plan for creating a tourist attraction that would replicate various sets from the film. The crux of the plan was to blend the Wizard of Oz theme with Seward County history. Eventually, officials established a Land of Oz site that is operated by the Seward County Historical Society. The site includes Dorothy’s House, Uncle Henry’s barn housing antique farm machinery, Land of Oz Exhibition Hall, the Coronado Museum, and the Seward County Historical Society Museum. In addition the City of Liberal manages a Tourism Information Center with auxiliary gift shop at the site. The Yellow Brick Walk of Fame connects the various components housed on the site.

A local farmer donated a small farmhouse, built in 1907, that became Dorothy’s house. The farmhouse was intended to link the portrayal of Dorothy’s Kansas farm life with that of contemporary rural Liberal, so Dorothy’s room in the house was furnished with local artifacts depicting those from 1939, the year the film was released. The cornerstone of the site, though, is the 5000-square foot Land of Oz Exhibition Hall in which one can walk through various characterizations of the movie set designed from Oz memorabilia and models including those of Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, Cowardly Lion and Glinda. An animated Wizard of Oz completes the set. Linda Windler, a Topeka native, originally produced the models for Halloween from recycled material. Visitors include many international tourists.

In summary the southern edge of Kansas has attracted economic development because of cheap labor and local natural resources. Amazon.com and Cessna

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have benefitted from a local cheap labor market in a region that was important for mining and processing a century ago. Whereas an imported, cheap labor market contributed to the profitability of mega-dairies and meat-packing facilities in southwest Kansas, the natural resources of the region in the form of the Ogallala Aquifer, relatively inexpensive and flat land, and very productive soils, were more important catalysts for their establishment on the High Plains. The natural resources of the Chautauqua Hills and Red Hills in the form of relatively pristine, scenic prairie landscapes have led to the development of tourism in the form of bison ranching, guided hunting, and trail rides. Community restora-

tion and preservation has followed. Even the Land of Oz has found a home in Kansas.

The question that arises, however, is sustainability of such activities. The Ogallala Aquifer controls indirectly nearly all relevant costs of the mega-dairies and meat-packing facilities. As the water table is lowered, it will become increasingly expensive to maintain commodity production at the current levels. The Chautauqua Hills and Red Hills developments are part of a contemporary No Man's Land, but that is their attraction. They seem poised to handle a modest increase in tourism over the next few decades. The arrival of Cessna Aircraft and Amazon.com in southeast Kansas has provided 1,500 jobs.

Their status is secure for the time, but regardless of their future the communities on this part of the edge of Kansas will find a way to survive just as they did after the last of the glass, tile, brick and cement plants closed down eighty years ago. As for the Land of Ahs, it, too, will survive because as Dorothy has reminded us far too many times, "There is no place like home."



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Geography Field Trip

The eighth annual Kansas Geography Field Trip was held on Saturday, October 8. This year's theme was organic agriculture and market gardening. The group of about fifteen students, faculty and staff left campus at 8:00 A.M. The first stop was the Tall Grass Bison Ranch at Auburn where Wayne Copp met the group at the gate to the pasture on which the bison were grazing. We drove past the bison to a wallow, parked the vans and gathered between them as the bison approached. Wayne said that the bison associate the vehicles with food, though he rarely feeds them from his pickup. After circling the vehicles for awhile at close range, the bison wandered off to greener pastures to resume their grazing. Wayne spoke about

rangeland ecology relative to producing bison the natural way. He was quite proud to report that prairie chicken had returned to the prairie just this year.

Our next stop was at the vegetable farm of Bob and Joy Lominska north of Lawrence. Bob and Joy, with the help of their son Avery, produce organic vegetables for the Lawrence Farmer's Market and for the Rolling Prairie Farmers Alliance, which offers locally grown produce through subscription. After presenting some information on their background, which included service in the Peace Corps in Nicaragua, Bob took the group on a walking tour of the farm. He described the vegetables still growing and the eco-

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nomics of producing vegetables in small markets, particularly as production relates to the larger, corporate food producers. He also discussed their efforts at controlling native browsers such as deer and rabbits, who also enjoy their vegetables, as well as insect populations. Participants enjoyed the beautiful setting of the farm and were reluctant to move on, but shortly before noon the group drove down from the uplands on Winding Stair Road to Lawrence for lunch.

After lunch, our last stop was the Clark poultry farm south of Lawrence. The poultry operation is primarily the work of Margaret Clark and her children, but Fred, her husband, helps out when necessary. The Clarks use a movable pasture pen system in which to raise their turkeys and chickens. Margaret

discussed construction of the pens and their rotation system and how labor intensive the work has become. The children have been a great asset to the operation. She mentioned that the Free State Brewery and individuals have been their most important consumers. Their birds are processed in Kansas's only commercial butcher for poultry, near Iola. Predators, too, were mentioned as a problem in the operation. Upon request, Fred showed the group his shop where he repairs and overhauls farm tractors, trucks and cars. As we were leaving the farm, the discussion turned to Thanksgiving dinner, of course.

The group arrived back at Washburn at approximately 3:00 P.M. after a thoroughly enjoyable day.

—reported by **Tom Schmiedeler**

CKS Meeting Summary, Fall 2005

Fellows of the Center for Kansas Studies convened at 12:15 Friday, September 9 for the first of two fall meetings. Those attending were **Tom Averill, Bob Beatty, Rachel Goossen, Amy Fleury, Bradley Seibert, Tom Schmiedeler, Bill Roach, Carol Yoho, Gabi Lunte, and Marydorsey Wanless**. After a round-the-table discussion of current activities, which included messages from **Virgil Dean, Roy Bird** and **Marcia Cebulka** in absentia, Director of the Center, Tom Schmiedeler, opened the floor for a discussion of the Center's general business. He reported that the center's annual working budget will be the same as last year. In keeping with what has become standard practice over the past few years, he suggested that the Center fund visiting classroom scholars with a \$100 honoraria and that fellows of the Center authorize him to approve such funding. He asked that Fellows making such requests provide the name, address and social security number of the speaker so that Tom can then complete the necessary paper work.

Tom Schmiedeler asked fellows to submit names and background information on possible Kansas Day speakers. In other general business, fellows approved requests for funding the annual fall Kansas geography field

trip and for Carol Yoho's web services throughout the academic year.

Rachel Goossen informed the group that she and History Department colleagues have applied for a Kansas State Historical Society grant to collect oral history from World War II veterans in northeast Kansas. They will focus on the experience of race in partnership with the Brown Foundation and the Brown vs. Board National Historic Site.

Marydorsey Wanless reported on her documentary photography class of this semester. This class will utilize a number of guest speakers including several fellows of the Center. Clark Balderson, Editor and Photography Curator of *Simple Times*, and Jim Richardson, Photographer for *National Geographic Magazine*, are also scheduled as guest presenters. The class will have an exhibition of the entire semester project from December to March in Mabee Library. Marydorsey anticipates written observations of the exhibit by Tom Averill and, hopefully, by *PrairyErth* author William Least Heat-Moon. Film and prints will be donated to the Kansas State Historical Society for their archives. Center fellows approved Marydorsey's request for \$300 to pay for the cost of film for the project.

Bob Beatty, driving force behind

the documentary film "The Kansas Governor," outlined the overwhelmingly positive media response attained by the film. The film has aired on KTWU and other public television stations, and an uninterrupted broadcast by a Topeka commercial station. Printed media outlets have also enthusiastically responded to the film and the May 18 reception at the Washburn Alumni Center, at which four of the governors were present, was also a great success. Fellows approved the last funding request for this project—\$400 for the purchase of DVDs, most of which will be distributed to Kansas high schools.

Tom Averill mentioned that Jennie Chinn has a new textbook out on Kansas history. He also discussed briefly that he will be a consultant on a project initiated by Charles Cranston of the Department of Mass Media. This project involves the development and production of a dramatic narrative film about the relationships among black, white and native children attending some of the local mission schools in the 1850s. Tom has organized another colloquium for the fall—this one on maps—that has just begun discussion sessions.

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

Fellows News, *cont.* [See also p. 1-2]

Playwrighting/Screenwriting

Thanks to the generous support of the Center for Kansas Studies, Fellow **Marcia Cebulka** has made significant progress on her script about the life and work of Kansas playwright William Inge. The play will premiere on April 26 as part of the William Inge Theatre Festival's 25th anniversary celebration in Independence. Efforts also are being made to try to bring that professional production to Topeka next spring. Marcia has made trips to Independence recently to do interviews, conduct oral histories and delve into the Inge papers.

Marcia also has been asked to write a script for a 30-minute film concerning race relations in Territorial Kansas. The film will be produced and directed by Charles Cranston of Washburn's Mass Media Department. The setting for the film is the Shawnee Mission Indian Manual Training School. The story is based on historical people and events circa 1856. Fellow Tom Averill is a story consultant on the project and Fellow Virgil Dean has provided invaluable research assistance.

"Faces of the Past"

Margaret Wood, one of our Fellows, is involved in a professional organization the Professional Archaeologists of Kansas. This group is selling lovely 2006 calendars which feature photographs of artifacts excavated from sites in Kansas. The theme of this years calendar is "Faces of the Past" so all of the artifacts include faces such as Hopewell effigy figures and stone anthromorph figures. The calendars are \$12 each and are available through Margaret in the So/AN office at 218 Henderson (670-1611 or **margaret.wood@washburn.edu**).



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November 2005
Speaking of Kansas
Center for Kansas Studies

Department: Geography

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