

MINUTES

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

October 4-5, 2005

Tour of Lucas, Hays, and Salina, Kansas

Members Present

Representative Deena Horst, Chairperson
Senator Peggy Palmer, Vice Chairperson
Senator Marci Francisco
Senator Chris Steineger
Senator Dennis Wilson
Representative Delia Garcia
Representative Lana Gordon
Representative Jo Ann Pottorff

Staff

Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes Office

Tuesday, October 4 Lucas, Kansas

The Committee began its tour at Lucas, Kansas, at 9:00 a.m. Members were welcomed at the Grassroots Art Center by the tour guide, who directed the Committee to a truck parked outside the Center. The modified vehicle contained an exhibit of the largest collection of small items, such as a miniature Superman. The tour guide said that the Center's purpose is to preserve and display various grassroots art as part of the cultural history of the Midwest. It was noted that Kansas ranks third among states in the number of grassroots art sites, after Wisconsin and California. The Center's three galleries display works by Portis stone carver, Inez Marshall; a variety of wood carvings by Glen Stark, Warren Lingg, and Lawrence Reynolds; a glass-studded concrete sculpture by Ed Root; metal totems by Mullinville's M. T. Liggett; a painted environment by Leroy Wilson; aluminum pull-tab sculptures by Herman Divers, and the imaginative machines of Earl Slagle.

Another site the Committee toured in Lucas was the Flying Pig Studio and Gallery of porcelain artist, Eric Abraham. Mr. Abraham's art covers a variety of fantasy themes such as flying pigs adorned with hats. The Committee then proceeded to tour the Garden of Eden, also in Lucas. This structure was built by Samuel Perry Dinsmoor, a retired schoolteacher, Civil War Veteran, farmer, and Populist politician. He started the work in 1907 and worked on it for 22 years. The structure

has various stone displays which include: a cement sculpture of Adam and Eve that greets visitors at each side of a grape arbor at the front gate; an All-Seeing Eye; a sculpture of Eve accepting the apple from a snake; a work of the Devil; and other noteworthy pieces of artistic works. After viewing the Garden of Eden, the Committee traveled to the Hays Art Center, Hays, Kansas.

Hays, Kansas

Members of the Joint Committee gathered at the Hays Art Center at 11:45 a.m., where they were greeted by Brenda Meder, Director. At a luncheon, the Committee was entertained by the Western Kansas String Academy (WKSA). The Committee also heard from conferees about the status of arts and cultural programs. The first presenter was Nancy Selbe of the Deines Cultural Center, Russell. She noted that the Center houses the wood engravings of the nationally known artist, E. Hubert Deines. It also features other artists' works and traveling exhibits on a regular basis. Exhibitions include ceramics, paintings, and sculptures. In addition, the Center sponsors concerts, workshops, and classes, providing quality art programs for the community.

The next conferee was Cathy Drabkin, Acting Director of WKSA ([Attachment 1](#)). Ms. Drabkin told the Committee that the WKSA is a community music institute hosted by the Fort Hays State University Music Department. The Academy operates a Saturday morning youth program from September to May for string students—violin, viola, cello, and bass—throughout the region, for children K-12. Ms. Drabkin said the Academy offers the following:

- Four levels of orchestra, from beginner to very advanced;
- Chamber ensembles;
- Music appreciation classes;
- Private lessons;
- Performance opportunities, both individual and group; and
- Community tours.

Ms. Drabkin said that the WKSA is self-funded through student enrollment fees, parent fundraising activities, and grants. She informed the Committee that there are no school orchestra programs in Northwest Kansas outside of Hays. She also said that there are no independent youth orchestras in Western Kansas besides those in Salina and Hays. This scarcity of string education extends to one violin teacher in Colby; one in Hastings, Nebraska; and one in Russell. To remedy this situation, Ms. Drabkin said that WKSA hopes to extend orchestra programs into communities where there are no school programs by conducting outreach concerts in schools and recruiting beginning students to the WKSA program.

The next conferee was Sharon Wagner, who teaches art at the Felten Middle School, Hays ([Attachment 2](#)). Much of Ms. Wagner's testimony pertained to the federal mandate, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), as it affects arts education. She told the Committee the following:

- Art teachers must pay close attention to vulnerability of the arts under the NCLB mandate;

- The NCLB mandate emphasizes math, reading, writing, science, and social studies;
- NCLB is inadequately funded and state money is lacking; and
- Art programs are being cut or reduced across the nation in spite of the fact that art is a core discipline.

With regard to connecting art to other disciplines, Ms. Wagner favors a complete education for students that includes the arts. She stated that there are many strategies arts teachers can use to promote the discipline. She urged art teachers to demonstrate to administrators, parents, legislators, and school board members how art classes support problem solving, reading, writing, social studies, and science standards. According to Ms. Wagner, public education currently concentrates only on linguistic and mathematical intelligence. By contrast, the arts encompass all types of intelligence by adding to the mix musical, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and environmental intelligence. Ms. Wagner said the Legislature should study the potential benefits of the National Board Certification Process. The process is based on high and rigorous standards that evaluate teaching practices through performance-based assessments.

Following Ms. Wagner's remarks, the Committee boarded a trolley to tour various sites. The first stop for the Committee was the Moss-Thorns Gallery of Art. Here, the Committee viewed the work of the faculty of the Fort Hays State University Department of Art. Works included painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, metal works, fibers, printmaking and graphic design, and photography. Another site the Committee toured was the Pete Felten Stone Gallery. This venue featured works by local artists, and is operated by sculptor Pete Felten, who also produced the noted Kansans in the capital rotunda. Other items of interest included Gallery 711, the home gallery of the artist Michael Jilg, a painter and printmaker and a faculty member at FHSU; the Artist-at-Work Gallery, which features the works of a dedicated group of women artists; and the Salon Ten-O-Seven, a collection of the works of prominent local artists.

With regard to the subject of theater, the Committee toured the Beach/Schmidt Performing Arts Center and the Felten Start Theater. It also toured the post-rock limestone Lutheran Church built in 1903. This structure was sold to local attorneys and renovated as law offices. The Committee then proceeded to the Sternberg Museum where it viewed a display of paintings of the Saturniidae family of moths by the artist, John Cody. The Museum also is known for the replica of a Tyrannosaurus Rex and other prehistoric reptilia. The final site for the Committee was the Hadley Art Collection at the Hays Medical Center. The collection includes over 200 works of art, including paintings, drawings prints, ceramics, sculptures, and fabric by principal Kansas artists. According to the tour guide, the Hadley Collection recognizes the therapeutic value, as well as the aesthetic enrichment of the visual arts of the Medical Center.

Upon completion of the tour of the Hadley Art Collection, the Committee concluded its first day's business.

**Wednesday, October 5
Salina, Kansas**

On the second day of its tour, the Committee traveled to Salina to the Rolling Hills Museum. At this site, the Committee was greeted by the Park Director, Kathy Tolbert. Ms. Tolbert accompanied the Committee through various exhibits, including the African Savannah; the African Waterhole; North America; Northern Tundra and Polar Regions; The Rainforest; The Far East; Middle East and India; and the Archer Daniel's Midland Theater, a Minolta media globe. The Theater featured a five-minute film that stressed the importance of conservation of the earth's natural resources.

Following the tour of the Museum, the Chairperson met with the Committee and noted that staff will notify the Committee of the next meeting dates. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Prepared by Hank Avila

Approved by the Committee on:

November 9, 2005

(date)