



A Chat Between Friends...

The Newsletter of the
Friends of the Leonard H. Axe Library

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In This Issue

Friends of Axe promises to “Lecture them blue in the face!”

“It ain’t the lecturing I mind. I’ll lecture them blue in the face, I will, and not turn a hair.” - Alfred Doolittle, in Act 5 of *Pygmalion*.

To those of us who read *Pygmalion* in college, we may recall the words of that charming, rascally, rhetorically gifted, scene stealing dustman, Alfred P. Doolittle commenting on how lecturing the Wannafeller Moral Reform League on middle class morality was the easy part of his new status as a gentlemen. Well, Friends of Axe, pleased at the excellent response to recent lectures, has decided to take Alfred’s words to heart. We have three lectures planned in the very near future, two for October, 2008 alone and one for February, 2009 in honor of Black History Month.

October 9, 2008 – 11th annual *Gene DeGruson Memorial Lecture*, on *The Little Balkans Review*, a cultural journal published from Pittsburg State University and Axe Library during the eighties and nineties. Lecture will take place in the Special Collections Department (Basement, turn left, through door, then right.) Mr. Shelby Horn, one of Gene’s closest friends and co-editor of the *Review*, will be speaking.

Friends of Axe, in cooperation with the PSU Tilford Group with the support of the Kansas Humanities Council

1. October 30, 2008, 7PM – “L. Frank Baum, Royal Historian of Oz” – To

be presented by Fred Krebs, professor of English, JCCC see article that follows.

2. February, 2009 – “Gordon Parks *Learning Tree Experience*” – To be presented by Dr. J. Edgar Tidwell, professor of literature from KU, Date to be announced.

L. Frank Baum, Royal Historian of OZ

A “History Alive” program brought to you by the Kansas Humanities Council, the Tilford Group and the Friends of the Leonard H. Axe Library.

*October 30, 2008 - 7PM -
Crimson & Gold Ballroom,
Overman Student Center*

L. Frank Baum, one of America’s premier writers of children’s literature, was a native of New York State, Dakota Territory (later, South Dakota), Chicago, IL and, his most loved, California. (Sorry, his only documented presence in Kansas is two nights spent in Lawrence, KS, while performing in a production of his play *The Maid of Arran*. In fact, his bleak descriptions of Kansas were inspired by the drought years in Aberdeen, South Dakota.) Baum was a prolific writer (He wrote 14 installments of the *OZ* series as well as several other fantasy series or individual storybooks for children, plays for adults, and theatrical and cinematic adaptations of his stories.) but he also tried his hand at numerous other trades, such as journalist, shopkeeper, actor, theater owner, filmmaker and chicken breeder. Encouraged by his feminist mother in law, Matilda Jocelyn Gage, to write down the stories he told to his sons at bedtime, he took these stories to publishers more than once and finally had a success with *Father Goose, His Book*. (This is his first collaboration with the illustrator of the first *OZ* book, political cartoonist W.W. Denslow.) Encouraged by the success of *Father Goose...*, Baum and Denslow came out in 1900 with the first American fairy tale *The*



Wonderful Wizard of OZ. In this fairy tale, the magic carpet is a Kansas cyclone. Dorothy, being a practical, plainspoken Kansas farm girl, does not need a Prince Charming to rescue her (Baum was not in favor of love interest in children's books) but makes her own luck and forms her own solutions with the help of such unlikely companions as a brainless scarecrow and a humbug wizard from Omaha. And although Dorothy is astounded by the beauties of nature in OZ, she still longs to go back to Kansas because "There is no place like home." Baum's books also forgo the didactic homilies present in late nineteenth and early 20th century children's literature. His books delight boys and girls alike and are chock full of adventures and one magic land after another. There is the Dainty China Country in ***The Wonderful Wizard of OZ***, where the delicate china from your mother's cabinets can move around and have a life of its own. There is the Land of Mo, in ***The Scarecrow of OZ***, where the only food is candy and it rains lemonade and snows popcorn ("nicely salted and buttered"). And there is the Kingdom of Twi in a non OZ adventure, ***The Enchanted Island of Yew***, where everyone has an identical twin. In the literature of Baum, the children of us mortals have power. They can outwit a wicked witch and liberate the downtrodden people she oppresses and they can overthrow an evil king and demote him to a gardener's boy. And unlike the heroes in Grimm, they do it with a minimum of bloodshed. (Recall Dorothy's lethal bucket of water.)

Baum was, sporadically, a successful business man because several of his creative endeavors were very prosperous. He was astute at writing books to please his public, monitoring the correspondence from his young readers and creating one adventure after another to please them. But his tendency to experiment with theatrical productions and motion pictures were not always financially successful. Also, he was frequently duped by unscrupulous business partners and, when working as a storekeeper in South Dakota, taken advantage of by poverty stricken customers who bought on credit. Also he liked to experiment with many types of children's literature when his chief talent lay in creating the OZ books, which pleased his young audience more than any of his other efforts. Finally, despite the fact that children were very fond of the OZ series, many adults did not appreciate them. Children's literature critics dismissed his books and, perhaps taking their cue from these critics, librarians would not buy them and teachers would not read them to their pupils. Indeed, this controversy continues to this day because of Baum's use of witchcraft. This angers the religious right, whose supporters continue to challenge his books in libraries around the nation.

The Kansas Humanities Council, a non profit agency which sponsors lectures and performances throughout the state of Kansas designed to enhance the understanding of the state's history, culture and intellectual life, has very graciously consented to assist the Tilford Group and the Friends of the Leonard H. Axe Library in presenting the "History Alive" program ***L. Frank Baum, Royal Historian of Oz.*** History Alive productions are different from conventional lectures in that they choose an actor/lecturer to actually portray a famous person from history. Fred Krebbs, our L. Frank Baum for the evening, has long experience in portraying historical personalities for the Kansas Humanities Council both at their annual Great Plains Chautauqua as well as in individual lectures and performances. In addition to Baum, he portrays Stephen A. Douglas, William Allen White and Benjamin Franklin. He also does lectures. In fact, in February, 2000, Mr. Krebbs was our guest lecturer, delivering his discourse on the Reverend Charles Sheldon, a social reformer who wrote the famous book ***In His Steps, or What Would Jesus Do?*** At present, Fred is a professor of history at Johnson County Community College. He has a Master of Arts in history from the University of Missouri in Kansas City. The performance will take place at 7PM in the Crimson and Gold Ballroom of the Overman Student Center. Refreshments will be served.

*With Special
Thanks to the...*



Films,– Fall, 2008

With the helpful suggestions of Dr. Melvin Roush, Associate Professor of Accounting, Friends has been able to purchase several films from the Films for the Humanities and Sciences Company. They are:

Corporate Social Responsibility: From Principles to Profit - How product and service providers develop and implement better business practices to satisfy shareholders, customers, employees, and the community.

Global Resources: Management and Competition - Explores economic questions surrounding the management of—and international competition for—natural resources.

Bucking the System: Alternatives to Cash and Capital - Examines ground-breaking monetary systems in the United States, Mexico, India, Poland, and Britain designed to benefit disadvantaged segments of the population and build strength in the small business sector.

Business, Management & Administration - Program profiles a corporate accounting assistant, an administrative assistant, an account director, and a principal at a commercial real estate services firm who discuss the challenges and rewards of their work.

CyberSecurity - Program cautions students about potential hazards to their computers, their careers, finances, and futures that exist online.

25th Annual Faculty Author Reception

Friends of Axe is pleased to assist Axe Library in once again sponsoring the annual Faculty Author Reception. This reception honors faculty members from all departments of PSU who have published books, periodical articles or who have presented papers which were subsequently published. The reception will take place on Thursday, November 6, 2008 at 3:00 PM. Further details will follow.

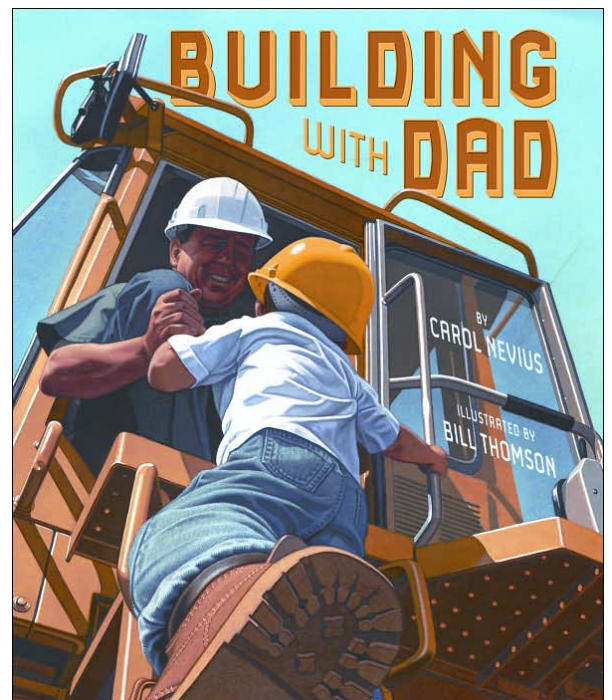
Nature Reach Displays Photographs and Artifacts in the Friends of Axe's Browsing Area Display Cases

Nature Reach, the PSU Biology Department's educational outreach program, has very kindly consented to lend us photographs and preserved

specimens from its collection to exhibit in our browsing area display cases. Among the four large photos are a barred owl, a harris hawk, a bald eagle and a juvenile red tailed hawk. There are also feathers, eggs and other preserved specimens. There are four filled exhibit cases. We would love it if you would drop by.

4th Annual Children's Book Festival, April 18, 2009

Once again, Friends of Axe is having a Children's Book Festival in conjunction with the Young Authors' Conference on April 18, 2009 from 11:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. We are now accumulating a substantial list of books appropriate for readers from pre-school to high school. All books start out at 25% off and all are signed by the author or illustrator. Come and see us for some great bargains.



In *Building with Dad*, by Carol Nevius, a young elementary schooler spends a summer day helping his Dad build his new school. Beautifully illustrated by Bill Thomson.