

MINUTES

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

November 17-18, 2003
Tour of Concordia, Lindsborg, and Salina

Members Present

Representative Deena Horst, Chairperson
Representative Ruby Gilbert
Representative Lana Gordon
Representative Jo Ann Pottorff
Representative Candy Ruff
Senator Jay Emler
Senator Jean Schodorf (first day)
Senator Chris Steineger (first day)

Members Absent

Senator Les Donovan
Senator Henry Helgersen

November 17 Concordia and Lindsborg Tour

Concordia

The Joint Committee began its tour at the Brown Grand Theatre in downtown Concordia, Kansas, where it was welcomed by Susie Haver, Curator of the Theatre, and Representative Joann Freeborn. Ms. Haver began the discussion with a history and events held at the Theatre. She noted that the Theatre was constructed by Earl Brown in 1906 and 1907, and serves as a rural tourist attraction and a performing arts center for North Central Kansas. She noted that the Theatre has two balconies, eight box seats, and features a grand drape, which is a reproduction of a Horace Vernet painting entitled "Napoleon at Austerlitz." Ms. Haver also informed the Committee that the Theatre is listed in the *National Historic Register*. Representative Freeborn also spoke to the Committee about the Theatre and the popularity of the events staged there.

Another conferee, Carla Kuhn, of the Courtland Arts Council, traveled to Concordia specifically to address the Committee about that community's successes in staging various arts-related functions. She passed out a Fall Arts Calendar that contained Courtland's Arts Reach Program (on file with the Kansas Legislative Research Department). Ms. Kuhn indicated that the town of Courtland, with a population of 300, has experienced high attendance rates at its

performances. She thanked the Joint Committee for its support and urged continued support for the Kansas Arts Commission (KAC).

The next stop for the Committee was the Concordia Elementary School, where it viewed the school's stained glass windows. Ms. Haver explained the various stained glass squares located on the glass windows of the school building. She noted that each stained glass square has a specific theme associated with education. Following this tour site, the Committee departed for Lindsborg, Kansas.

Lindsborg

The Committee arrived at Lindsborg and met for lunch at the Butcher, the Baker, and the Candlestick Maker. After lunch, the Committee toured the Sandzén Memorial Art Gallery. Birger Sandzén was an artist and teacher at Bethany College. After Sandzén's death, the Gallery was established and made part of Bethany College. It was noted that Sandzén was a generous artist who gave many of his drawings to anyone he thought would appreciate or be uplifted by his art. Following the Sandzén exhibit, the Committee was escorted to the McPherson County Old Mill Museum. This flour-producing mill, which was built in 1898, stands on the banks of the Smoky Hill River and was operational until the 1950s. The Committee was escorted through three floors of the structure and given an explanation of how the facility functioned. The Joint Committee then toured the Westuck School, a one-room school used from 1903 to 1950. Another site was the Swedish Pavilion, prefabricated in Sweden and then shipped to the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. After the Fair closed, the structure was purchased by the U.S. Minister to Sweden and Norway and donated to Bethany College, where it was used to house a classroom for domestic sciences, a library, a museum, and an art department. It was noted that the Pavilion is one of very few international buildings remaining from the St. Louis World Fair. Following the Pavilion exhibit, the Committee proceeded to the Red Barn Studio, the working studio of the artist Lester Raymer. The studio contains Raymer's masks, banners, ceramics, mosaic wall pieces, cast figurines and planters, metal work, painted and carved furniture, tin ornaments, prints, jewelry, and carved boxes. This visit was followed by a tour of the Hemsloj, a factory where the Dala wooden horses are manufactured. The Lindsborg tour was concluded at the Courtyard Gallery, a source of a variety of fine art from the Midwest. Following the tour of Lindsborg sites, the Committee departed for Salina for a reception at the Stiefel Theater for the Performing Arts.

November 18 Salina Tour

The Committee began the Salina morning tour at the Salina Art Center. Here the Center's Director escorted the Committee through an art exhibit entitled "Conflicting Memories." She explained that the exhibition is a collaboration between the Salina Art Center and the Spencer Museum of Art of the University of Kansas. The exhibit explores the role of art in creating and influencing a culture's record of its past. It is organized in two sections. The first is a collection of prints, drawings, and photographs, that exhibit ways that the idea of memory has been incorporated in the arts. The second section presents works of contemporary artists who engage with the past by intertwining and overlaying cultural and personal memory with a focus on specific cultural areas. The next site on the Committee's agenda was the Salina Community Theatre. This theater is the largest subscription-based community theater in Kansas, having over 3,000 subscribers. It has a

capacity of 319 people and stages six mainstage productions each year. It also puts on two onstage shows a year, two local children's theater productions, and two youth theater productions. Children's and adult classes are also conducted throughout the year.

Another site the Committee visited was the Bergen art studio. Dr. Richard Bergen is the Salina sculptor who created Ad Astra, a bronze Kanza Indian, which was placed on top of the dome of the State Capitol Building in Topeka.

The final Committee site visit of the day was the Smoky Hill Museum. At the Museum, the Committee viewed, among other items, various quilts and the preservation capacity of the Museum. As part of the Museum tour, a local actress performed the part of a historical character. It was noted that this performance was funded by the Arts Infusion Program of the KAC. Following the Museum tour, the Committee was welcomed by the Executive Director of the Salina Arts and Humanities Commission and a city commissioner. The Committee was also entertained by a harpist, who was the recipient of a Horizon grant from the Salina Arts and Humanities Commission.

Committee Discussion and Related Matters

Following the Museum tour, the Committee met to discuss budget issues of the KAC. Dave Wilson, Executive Director of KAC, updated the Committee on the agency's budget requests. He told the Committee that KAC's requests are intended to restore cuts made since FY 2002. He added that the agency was asking for \$50,000 for a study that would measure the impact of the arts on the Kansas economy ([Attachment 1](#)). He also reported that the reduced resources package of \$75,514 for FY 2005 submitted by the KAC had been reduced by the Division of Budget. Instead, the Budget Division recommended a \$35,000 cut, which is about one-half of the amount submitted by the KAC. The Committee also discussed the Committee report and agreed to support the programs and goals of the KAC and other agencies that provide funds for arts and humanities programs. The Committee further agreed that because arts and humanities programs enhance not only the quality of life of Kansans, but also the economic development of communities, the Legislature should explore other ways to fund arts and humanities programs. Finally, the Committee approved the minutes of the June 25-26, 2003, meeting. Following this discussion, the Committee adjourned to attend a luncheon where participants discussed ways of conveying the importance of the arts to the Legislature.

Prepared by Hank Avila

Approved by Committee on:

December 12, 2003

(date)