

FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

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ALUMNI NEWS

Just a quick note of thanks to those alumni who helped supply the office with addresses and employer information for use in our current Assessment Surveys.

The annual FHSU Endowment Association Callathon was a tremendous success again this year thanks to the generous contributions of many alumni. A record 30 volunteers from the Department assisted with the event on Nov. 6; a long list of undergraduate students active in the Biology Club, as well as most graduate students "personed" the phones. Virtually all of the current faculty, as well as recently-retired Dr. Gene Fleharty, were also in attendance. One of several options for donations is the Fleharty Graduate Assistantship, which due to Gene's ongoing efforts allows a student to conduct research in lieu of a teaching assignment during the academic year.



FACULTY HAPPENINGS

On October 11, 2001, **Dr. Eric Gillock** gave a talk for the FHSU Chapter of Sigma Xi entitled "Some Activities of Viral Capsid Proteins."

Dr. Elmer Finck and graduate students **Dane Straight**, **Peg Althoff**, and **Jan Steier** operated the FHSU display booth at the State Fair in Hutchinson on September 9. **Dr. Finck** also judged the 4-H Wildlife Project exhibits at the fair on September 8.

Drs. Jerry Choate and Elmer Finck along with graduate students Brian Bartels and Justin Hoffman attended the Central Plains Society of Mammalogists meeting at Emporia State University on October 12-14. Dr. Finck assumed the duties of President for the society at the meeting and Justin was elected as the Nebraska representative to the Board of Directors.

Drs. Bill Stark and **Elmer Finck** attended the Kansas Nongame Advisory Council meeting in Topeka on October 15.

Dr. Elmer Finck attended a Prairie Dog Issues Public Meeting in WaKeeney on October 23.

Michele Reynolds and Dr. Kirk Johnson, Dept. of Earth and Space Sciences. Denver Museum of Nature and Science, and Dr. J. R. Thomasson presented a poster session at the national meeting of Geological Society of America November 5-8. The poster, "A Diverse Megaflora from Early Paleocene Synorogenic Strata in the Denver Basin, Colorado Springs, Colorado", presented a summary of research that has been accomplished with fossil plants from the Scotty's Palms flora located near the U.S. Air Force Academy. The cooperative studies of the fossils are documenting the presence of a high diversity rainforest at the site approximately 60 million years ago shortly after the meteorite impact that occurred at the Cretaceous/Tertiary boundary. This flora was initially excavated by Drs. Thomasson and Frank Potter and students from the biology department at FHSU during two summers in 1992-93 and is the subject of a display at the Sternberg Museum of Natural History.

Drs. Duane Hinton, Joe Thomasson, Frank Potter, and **Elmer Finck** participated in Tiger Day on October 20. Approximately 20 prospective students visited Albertson Hall that day. Several current students and their families participated in activities also scheduled on the 20th for Tiger Friends and Family Day.

On the morning of October 20, faculty members Mark Eberle, Drs. Greg Farley, and Bill Stark and graduate students Brian Bartels and Eric Johnson participated in the Volunteer Work Day

at the Nature Conservancy's Smoky Valley Ranch. This 16,800-acre ranch is located in eastern Logan County, Kansas. Along with five other volunteers, the FHSU group cleaned up debris around the foundation of a building that was originally the site of a Butterfield Overland Dispatch relay station. The BOD operated as a freight and stage line along the Smoky Hill Trail to Denver in the late 1860s. A second group of volunteers removed an old fence line. During the afternoon, the FHSU volunteers hiked across a portion of the extensive grasslands at the ranch in search of interesting flora and fauna before returning to Hays.

On October 26, **Mark Eberle** attended a memorial service at the Natural History Museum in Lawrence for Dr. Frank Cross, retired ichthyologist at the University of Kansas, who passed away in June at the age of 75. Dr. Cross literally wrote the book on Kansas fishes, and he generously offered his time and expertise to the various endeavors of several former and current faculty and students at FHSU. Mark will serve as guest editor of the fall 2002 issue of the Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science, which will include a biography and scientific articles and notes dedicated to Dr. Cross.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate student Curtis Schmidt, junior Travis Trendel, and Sternberg Museum educator Cami Liggett, attended the 28th annual meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society on November 2-4 in Topeka, Kansas. Members kicked off the meeting Friday night with a social at Jeremiah Bullfrog's Bar and Grille. Several technical sessions were held on Saturday and Curtis made an oral presentation focused on the amphibians and reptiles of the Smoky Valley Ranch in Logan County, Kansas, The paper sessions were followed by the business meeting and awards ceremony. Curtis became the inaugural recipient of the Alan H. Kamb Grant for Research on Kansas Snakes, for his work with the Western Rattlesnake (Crotalus viridis) on the Smoky Valley Ranch. He was awarded a certificate and a check for \$100. The meeting reconvened in nearby Wakarusa, Kansas for a social and auction. A short paper session Sunday morning concluded the meeting. The next meeting of the Kansas Herpetological Society will be a field trip to the Cimmarron National Grasslands in southwest Kansas in May. Transportation will be provided by

the Sternberg Museum for all who are interested in attending.

ODDS AND ENDS

The Albertson Hall renovation of \$6,589,000 received the Gold Citation from the American School and University architectural magazine.

Students from Goessel High School (Marion Co.) spent a morning in Albertson Hall this month to view bird study skins and ask questions about ornithology in preparation for an upcoming state-wide "EcoMeet". The displays of mounted specimens in the 3rd floor hallway near the department office, and in the cases in the systematic zoology lab were of particular value. Jim Schmidt (B.S. 1999 and current M.S. candidate) and Dr. Greg Farley assisted with the visit.

Faculty and students participated in a "bioblitz" on the Smoky Valley Ranch in Logan County, Kansas on October 12-13. Bioblitzes have many forms, but in general, consist of a short-term intensive effort to document the presence of floral and faunal elements in a given area. Our secondary goal was to provide a means for a diverse group of faculty to share expertise and experiences with graduate and undergraduate students in a biologically pleasing but less formal setting than the traditional classroom or focused field trip. Discounting the season (late) and a nasty cold front that passed through on Friday, the event was a resounding success, at least as far as the event coordinator was concerned. Approximately 110 plant species were identified during the bioblitz. Vertebrate species included 30 bird, 13 fish, 7 herptile, and 7 mammal species. Invertebrate species were not easily collected given the cool conditions however, a new species of broadheaded bug (Alydidae: Stachyocnemus apicalis) was documented for the state as a result of the bioblitz. The following individuals participated in the event: Faculty: Drs. Rob Channell, Greg Farley, Eric Gillock, Hillary Gillock, Karen Hickman, Bob Nicholson, Rich Packauskas, and Bill Stark. Graduate Students: Matt Bain, Sara Carrell, Eric Johnson, Jason Luginbill, Curtis Schmidt, Dave Spalsbury, Natalie Spalsbury, Jan Steier and Jamie Timson. Undergraduate Students: Cathy Davignon, Regina Green, Valena Hickert, Nicki Lambrecht, Josh Melby, Eric Starkey and Mike Taylor.