



“Wings on the Wind:” the Artist's Perspective

based on an Interview with Matthew Richter

The oil painting, “Wings on the Wind” by Matthew Richter, Kansas artist and KNPS member, was named this past fall as the winning entry in the Siemen’s Wind Power America art competition. Richter’s submission was chosen over thirty-six other entries, including a number of other well-known and admired Kansas artists.



Wings on the Wind by Matthew Richter

On December 3, the five-by-six-foot painting was unveiled in the entrance area of the new Siemens wind turbine nacelle production plant in Hutchinson. It will be displayed at that location for at least the next 5 years. Richter chose to portray the wind through the dramatic image of towering, sunlit thunder-storm clouds, which dominate the painting. However, soon the viewer’s eyes are drawn to other prairie elements: sandhill cranes in flight and golden, warm-season native grasses buffeted by the wind.

Matthew describes the required elements he fulfilled to be considered for the \$2,500 grand prize. “The proposal I submitted is a six-page document, including a digital sketch of the painting in color, three, detailed close ups and an image of me standing beside it for scale.” In addition to the work of art itself, those who entered were required to demonstrate they had “close ties” with Kansas. Matthew continues, “I detailed my Kansas roots as the son of Marilyn Richter, notable painter and sculptor from Topeka.” In addition, Matthew has been a long-time resident of the state, and “professional artist focused on Kansas” for the past thirty years.

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The Kansas Native Plant Society Newsletter is printed four times a year: Winter (January), Spring (April), Summer (July), Fall (October). Readers tell us how much they enjoy the newsletter in color and in the paper format. Contributions help us continue to produce a publication of this length in this form. You may send your gift to KNPS at Kansas Native Plant Society, R.L. McGregor Herbarium, 2045 Constant Avenue, Lawrence, KS 66047-3729.



The mission of the Kansas Native Plant Society is to encourage

awareness and appreciation of the native plants of Kansas in their habitats and in our landscapes by promoting education, stewardship, and scientific knowledge.



KNPS President's Message by Craig Freeman

With the end of the year comes time to reflect on the accomplishments of the Kansas Native Plant Society. By any measure, 2010 was a great year for the Society because of the dedication and passion of our members. Let me highlight a few of our successes.

For the second consecutive year, paid memberships remained around 500, and annual turnover dropped. KNPS has members in 69 Kansas counties and 14 states. Individual and family memberships represent 57% and 26% of all of our memberships, respectively, and we have benefitted greatly from increasing numbers of renewals at the contributing and life levels. To keep other organizations apprised of our work, KNPS shares its newsletter with more than 70 organizations, controlling printing costs by providing access to electronic copies of the newsletter via the web site.

As I have written before, the Society's strength comes from members actively supporting and promoting our mission, volunteering their time and resources, and participating in KNPS-sponsored events. We have more members giving generously of their time and talents than ever before in my 23-year history with KNPS, but there is always room for more members to become involved in our many activities.

The 27-member Board continues to work hard to promote our mission while ensuring fiscal responsibility. More than 70% of our annual income comes from dues; most of the rest is from donations and merchandise sale. In 2010, the Board approved a modest dues increase in our basic membership categories-the first since 2005. We established a Legacy Fund, contributions to which will be used for future special projects.

More than 50% of our budget covers costs to print the newsletter and maintain the web site, our two primary means of communication and outreach. We continue to examine ways to manage those costs without compromising the quality of these essential tools.

There were fantastic accomplishments related to education, the core of our mission. The persistence and vision of Valerie Wright, Nancy Goulden, Phyllis Scherich, and others to have the Kansas Legislature designate Little Bluestem as the Kansas state grass paid off after five years of hard work. You'll find helpful information about this wonderful symbol of the Kansas prairies on the KNPS web site. "Little Blue" figures to be a critical tool for educating children and adults about prairies and their ecology. "Kansas Flint Hills Wildflowers and Grasses," a pocket guide authored by Iralee Barnard, was published in 2010. KNPS was one of five sponsoring organizations, and free copies of this useful and popular guide are widely available. The Society continues to play pivotal roles at the Symphony in the Flint Hills and the Tallgrass Prairie Wildflower Weekend. Finally, we established a Roadside Vegetation Management Committee to help channel the interest, energy, and expertise of members into efforts to promote the benefits of native vegetation into roadside vegetation management. The 8-member committee will provide initial recommendations to the Board in early 2011.

These accomplishments are evidence that KNPS is dynamic, adapting, and most importantly, is making a positive difference in peoples' lives. We plan to solicit input and advice from members more frequently via questionnaires posted on the web site, so watch for announcements about these in the near future. With your continued support, we can make 2011 even more successful than 2010.

Best wishes.



Landscaping with Aromatic Sumac text by Jeff Hansen

The dormant season makes me appreciate our woody plants more. I love how each has its own form and texture. Aromatic sumac is interesting for its winter catkins and the shrub's spherical form. It is found throughout the state of Kansas and across the Great Plains. In the wild, they are often found growing on rocky hillsides. They can be found in woodlands as well as prairies. I've seen them present in floodplains as well as uplands. It seems to be one of the most adaptable of our native shrubs.

The plants reproduce only by seed. They do not spread vegetatively by suckering as their cousins

smooth sumac and winged sumac do. This makes them good candidates for landscaping.



Aromatic Sumac Leaves - Photo by Nancy Goulden

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Their young twigs are a gray-brown to red-brown. The larger branches are brown and covered with ridges. The bruised twigs have an earthy aroma. In the fall and winter, their catkins are noticeable and distinguish it from most other shrubs. The leaves can be smooth or hairy and are made up of three leaflets. They turn a nice orange-red in the fall. Early in the spring the plants are covered with clusters of yellow flowers. The flowers are followed by hairy red fruit in the summer. The fruit often persists into winter. In fall and winter the plants are covered with catkins. The catkins become the flowers in the spring. The fruit can be used to make a lemonade drink by soaking the fruit in water for a few minutes.



Aromatic Sumac Catkins - Photo by Jeff Hansen

The shrubs I have in my yard were grown from wild collected fruit. But there are many horticultural varieties you can purchase. One is known as “gro-low,” and it only grows to 2 feet tall. The wild varieties that I have are about 8 feet tall. The one I have in the sun grows like a globe. The one I have in the shade of an elm tree is more upright and open. In the sun, the plants appear to grow wider than they do tall. My eight-foot-tall plant is about 12 feet wide. The lowest branches grow almost horizontal.

Since it is such an adaptable plant, aromatic sumac can be used in many situations. It can withstand very dry conditions, but doesn't require dry conditions to flourish. It has showy characteristics year round. If you have non-native shrubs in your landscape, try replacing them with aromatic sumac.



Aromatic Sumac Berries - Photo by Nancy Goulden



Meet the Board

Interview with Chelsea Juricek



Chelsea Juricek

1. Where are you from, where do you live, what do you do for a living? I grew up in Crete (southeastern Nebraska) and currently reside in Stockton (northwestern Kansas). I work as an environmental scientist with the Kansas Division of Water Resources in the Stockton field office. My duties typically involve Republican River issues, especially dealing with Colorado and Nebraska. I also check irrigation wells in the Kansas Republican River basin counties of Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton, and Phillips.

2. How did you become interested in wildflowers and other native plants? As a undergraduate at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, I really enjoyed my plant taxonomy class. I also realized how important it is to have a working knowledge of plants as I participated in two summer internships where I studied habitat fragmentation near Waco, Texas, and bedsites of pronghorn antelope fawns in the Oglala National Grassland in northwestern Nebraska. I received a master's degree in plant science from North Dakota

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Meet the Board

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State University in Fargo where I studied management of noxious weeds. My favorite job ever was a summer position as a botanist with the USDA Forest Service in the Little Missouri Grasslands of western North Dakota.

3. What are some of your favorite native plants and why? I love photographing wildflowers; so I'm frequently drawn to showy and colorful flowers. I really enjoy prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*) because of its unusual form. I spent two years as a tour guide for the Sand Sage Bison Range in Garden City; so I will always have a thing for sand snowball verbena (*Abronia fragrans*). I need a bumper sticker that warns other drivers that "I brake for butterfly milkweed."

4. What is your favorite natural area in the state and why? I don't favor any certain area

as each place seems to have its own unique qualities to admire. Accessibility to native areas is often hard to come by, and I recommend the Rocktown hike at Wilson Lake and the trails at Konza Prairie.

5. How did you come to know KNPS? When I moved to Kansas in late 2006, I was searching online for my first Kansas flora guidebooks. I found an excellent selection at agreeable prices on the KNPS website. I then attended my first AWW in 2007 at Hutchinson, and I've been hooked ever since!

6. What do you like best about KNPS? I like that the organization caters to a variety of interests and skill levels. Whether you're a novice gardener, or an expert botanist, what really matters is passion. KNPS provides a forum where a person can express that passion and other members don't think they're weird or boring!

Interview with Allen Casey



Allen Casey

1. Where are you from, where do you live, what do you do for a living? I am originally from McCracken, Kansas, a small town southwest of Hays. While in college, I conducted grassland surveys on private land in Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. Currently I live in Topeka and work for the USDA--Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) at the Manhattan Plant Materials Center (PMC). We breed plants for use in conservation projects, such as CRP plantings, waterways, rangeland and wetland restorations, and other similar projects. We write plant guides and fact sheets for and help maintain the PLANTS Database, found at <http://plants.usda.gov/>

(an invaluable resource for plant enthusiasts). We also experiment with new technologies on how to plant, grow, and harvest plants and then get the information out to the public. I also help organize workshops and field days to educate the public, especially school children, about plants, native pollinators, and other conservation issues.

2. How did you become interested in wildflowers and other native plants? I grew up in a farming and ranching community and worked for many of the local farmers and the local coop throughout junior high and high school. However, when I started college at Fort Hays State University, I wanted to become a fisheries biologist. While there, I was required to take botany and plant taxonomy to get a biology degree. Ironically, I hated botany class, so much so that I even told my parents and my now wife, Kayla, that I thought that all botanists were stupid and that no one in their right mind would study plants. I was dreading taking plant taxonomy the next semester. However, I soon fell in love with being able to identify plants that I had seen most of my life. This really turned my perspective around, and the next semester I changed my biology emphasis to botany. I now have a BS and MS in biology with emphases in botany and ecology, respectively.

3. What are some of your favorite native plants and why? I have to admit that my favorite native plants in general are grasses rather than wildflowers. I think this stems from the fact that you can identify most of them without the flower or reproductive parts, which is the state in which most of them are found in Kansas as they are

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grazed. However, I am also a sucker for wetland plants. My favorite of these are watermeal and duckweed. I think they are so neat because they do not have many of the “normal” flowering-plant parts.

4. What is your favorite natural area in the state and why? I have had a great opportunity to conduct rangeland surveys throughout the state, and I really love the native sand sagebrush rangeland areas of southwestern and central Kansas. Although the vegetation is sparse, many native plants grow here that are not found anywhere else in the state. This is followed closely by the limestone breaks along the Smokey Hill River in western Kansas from Wallace County east to Russell County. Again, there are plants that grow in this harsh environment that are hard to come by in any other place.

5. How did you come to know KNPS? I knew

that an organization with an interest in wildflowers and other native plants existed since some of my professors were members. When I moved to Topeka, I was able to participate in events such as wildflower tours and the garden show.

6. What do you like best about KNPS? The short answer is EVERYTHING! I really like that the organization strives to educate people how to identify and use native plants. I also enjoy the social aspect of the organization. Everyone that I have met at events is friendly and takes the time to get to know me and share everything that they know about the plants we run across. I love the fact that everyone in the organization is a teacher and a student all of the time. It is a great way to not only learn more about native plants, but also about all things outdoors and nature, as many of the people that I have met through KNPS also enjoy birding, painting, photography, hiking, and every other outdoor “sport” that you can think of. I look forward to serving on the board of such a great organization.



**World's Smallest Flowering Plants
Text and Photo By Allen Casey**

What color of petals do the world's smallest flowering plants have? How many petals do they have? Just how small are these plants, and where can you find them?

Well, the answers to some of these questions are almost as elusive as the plants themselves. Let's start with a brief lesson in taxonomy. The plants are members of the Division *Magnoliophyta* (the flowering plants), in the Family *Lemnaceae* (Duckweed family). The plants are from the genus *Wolffia*, green-colored perennial plants with the common name “watermeal.” Why watermeal? To start with, they are obligate aquatic species, meaning that they are found growing in water. They are also very small in size, less than 1/16 of an inch, and waterfowl, in particular, use them as a food source. Hence, the name watermeal. If you scoop up a bunch of watermeal plants and rub them between your fingers, they will feel like cornmeal (perhaps another reason to be called watermeal).

Watermeal plants have reduced floral structures. The stems and leaves are indistinguishable from each other, and they do not have petals (trick answers to the first two questions). Watermeal flower structure includes one stamen and one pistil. If you happen to come across a watermeal plant that exhibits these structures, consider yourself lucky. Most of the reproduction of watermeal is asexual by budding. Essentially, one plant divides and creates two



Watermeal and Duck Weed

plants; therefore, flowering parts and sex are not necessary. Another anatomical tidbit about *Wolffia* is they do not have roots. They simply absorb the nutrients and water they need from the water they are floating in. Pretty cool, huh? Watermeal is typically found in stagnant pools of water throughout much of Kansas, usually alongside duckweeds (*Lemna sp.*), which are also obligate aquatic plants in the *Lemnaceae* family.

There are three species of watermeal that are identified as existing in Kansas: Columbian watermeal (*Wolffia columbiana*), northern watermeal (*W. borealis*), and Brazilian watermeal (*W. brasiliensis*).

Although I find these plants extremely fascinating, they are not without their negatives. If you have a garden or farm pond that lacks adequate

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World's Smallest Flowering Plants

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circulation, watermeal might form a densely-clustered layer on top of the water, causing a number of problems. They can block sunlight, which is needed for other aquatic plants to grow. They can also deplete the pond of oxygen, causing fish and other aquatic animals to suffocate. There are chemicals that can be used to control watermeal. State and/or local laws may prevent or regulate the use of certain chemicals in certain areas, especially standing water. Other information

about watermeal can be found at www.plants.usda.gov.

Their small size and lack of “pretty” features interfere with making watermeal plants the object of most people’s attention. I tend to like plants that are the “underdog,” those disregarded and neglected by plant enthusiasts and scientists alike. Most people gravitate toward showy plants that have a “wow factor.” In my book, many of these lesser known plant species that exhibit “non-traditional” features, such as not having roots, make them impressive and interesting.



News Notes

Wildflower of the Year. The “Wildflower of the Year” for 2011 is *Ratibida columnifera*, Yellow Prairie Coneflower. This tall, late spring, coneflower puts on a wonderful show in all prairie types. The dark-brown cone with the disk flowers is elongated and makes a nice contrast to the bright -yellow ray flowers. Celebrate Yellow Prairie Coneflower’s special year by going out to the prairie to visit it, or by scattering some seeds around your home or land. Chances are, you will have the joyful flowers for many years.



Yellow Prairie Coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*)

Photo: Clarence Rechenthin, USDA-NRCS Plants Database

Little Bluestem and Kansas Day. Here is an opportunity for you to introduce and promote Little Bluestem as the new Kansas State Grass. January 29th is the Sesquicentennial Kansas Day when

many teachers have students participate in learning activities related to the state icons. We urge you to talk with teachers and educators in your local community about Little Blue. Offer to visit a classroom and share your knowledge about Little Blue. You might encourage students to plant clumps of Little Blue on school property. Definitely point educators to the Little Blue information and learning activities from the website: www.ksnps.org. Let’s all do what we can to launch Little Bluestem as the Kansas State Grass.

Symphony in the Flint Hills. The date (June 11) and location (Fix Pasture in Wabaunsee County) for the 2011 Symphony in the Flint Hills have been named, and KNPS is invited again to lead wildflower hikes in the afternoon. We will send out a call for volunteers later. Especially, those of you who participated in 2010, might be interested in the “99 page magazine with 40 articles and over 150 pictures” documenting the 2010 event. They are available for \$10.00 plus tax from the symphony on-line web store based at www.symphonyintheflindhills.org.

Membership Continues to Increase. When the numbers were tallied up in November, the results showed that KNPS had a total paying membership of 513 and 92 new members in 2010. Jeff Hansen commented, “I can remember when our paying members hovered around 200.” When he looked at the numbers for 2007, he found, “We had 63 new members at the end of that year.”



KNPS TECH CORNER-

Where We Keep You Informed About KNPS Technology Happenings
by Mickey Delfelder

In the past several years, at least 37 of Kansas's 105 counties have hosted a wildflower tour or similar event. If you are interested in hosting a KNPS sponsored Wildflower Tour in your county, the winter is the best time to plan. And we can help! Just click the "Host a Wildflower Tour" link from the front page of our website <http://www.ksnps.org> for a step-by-step guide.

2011 Kansas Area Native Plant and Wildflower Events

Information provided by Kansas Native Plant Society, see more events on our website: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org. Please share this information and contact us about additional events to note. Thank you! [email@KSNPS.org] **Sturdy shoes, long pants, a hat, insect repellent, sunscreen, and water are recommended for outdoor events.**

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend some fabulous happenings!

 **January 15, February 19, March 19, April 16, May 21, June 18, July 16, and August 20:** Volunteers are needed for prairie maintenance and preservation projects. The Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs meet on the third Saturday of every month except December. [www.grasslandheritage.org]. Wear appropriate clothing. No special skills or tools needed. For details, please contact Frank Norman, [Kansas Native Plant Society](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org) Board Member [fjnorman@sunflower.com] (785) 887-6775 (home) or (785) 691-9748 (cell).

 **January 18 through March 29:** Winter Lecture Series at Dyck Arboretum of the Plains in Hesston, KS. Expand your knowledge of Kansas & the Great Plains with lectures by experts at Dyck Arboretum. In January, February and March, a series of lectures on natural history, prairie conservation and ecology, and the arts is held at the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains in Hesston. Before the lecture, guests may enjoy a 6 pm supper with the speaker by reservation, or attend the lecture only at 6:30 pm. For more information about fees and dates, go to [www.dyckarboretum.org]. [arboretum@hesston.edu] or (620) 327-8127.

 **January 22:** [Kansas Native Plant Society](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org) Winter Board Meeting and Outing in Emporia, KS. The meeting will be held in the Science Hall, Room 159, at Emporia State University. The meeting begins at noon. After the meeting (approximately 3pm) some people may be interested in visiting the Schmidt Museum of Natural History, which is also located in Science Hall. It contains a comprehensive collection of approximately 600 taxidermy mounts of birds, mammals, reptiles, and fish from Kansas. Science Hall is on Merchant Street (K-99). Please contact KNPS for more information. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.

January 23: Kaw Valley Eagles Day in Lawrence, KS. Celebrate the return of the eagles and learn about the environment, 11am-4pm. Programs on area Bald eagles and other wildlife. Exhibitors will offer educational resources related to nature, sponsored by the Jayhawk Audubon Society. Location: Free State High School, 1 block north of 6th & Wakarusa. [eishaw@ku.edu] (785) 843-7665

March 16: Spring Wildflowers of Wyandotte County, KS at KCK Public Library's West Wyandotte Branch Library, Kansas City, KS. From dog-toothed violets to Dutchman's breeches, wildflowers carpet our local woodlands. Join Education Specialist Craig Hensley to learn who's what among the flowers of spring, 7-8:30pm. This program will be held at the KCKPL West Wyandotte Branch Library, 1737 N. 82nd Street in Kansas City, KS. Contact: Craig Hensley [chensley@kckpl.org] or (913) 299-2384.

 **April 2-3:** Workshop: Identification of the Bryophytes (Mosses, Liverworts and Hornworts) in Pittsburg, KS. On April 2, the workshop will focus on general characteristics used for the identification of bryophytes. Handouts with illustrations and keys will be provided. On April 3, a field trip will allow participants to see a variety of mosses and some liverworts in native habitat (study shoes are recommended for walking over rock). Hours each day: 8:30am-4pm. Location: Department of Biology, Pittsburg State University, Heckert/Wells Hall --Room 305. If anyone wants to bring specimens for identification, the instructor will be happy to collect them and key them at a later date, then return the IDs to the collector. All specimens will be accessioned into the herbarium. Be sure you provide date of collection, location, county, state, and most importantly, habitat. Instructor Steve Timme is a former [Kansas Native Plant Society](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org) Board Member. Registration is required. Contact Dr. Timme to register: [botanydoctor@hotmail.com] or (417) 658-5473.

April 22: Celebrate Earth Day Outside With Your Family! Contact us about special events so we may share them on our website, [www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org].

 **April 23:** [Kansas Native Plant Society](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org) Spring Board Meeting and Outing. The location and time have not been finalized. Please contact KNPS for more information. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.

April 23rd & 30th: Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sales 7am - noon. Location: City Market, 5th & Walnut, Kansas City, MO. [<http://www.moprairie.org>] (888) 843-6739.

 **May 7:** Barber County Wildflower Tour. Meet at the Medicine Lodge High School, 8:30am. Enjoy continental breakfast and slides of flowers we expect to see. Buses provide transportation. Morning participants will return to the school at noon. Full-day participants will enjoy a delicious lunch and entertainment at a tree-shaded country park. Ride through the beautiful gyp hills to a second site. Refreshments will be served before we return to the school around 3:30pm.

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🌸 Kansas Area Native Plant Wildflower Events - Continued 🌸

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🌸 **May 7:** Barber County Wildflower Tour Barber Co. Conservation District and Kansas Native Plant Society are co-sponsors. Pre-paid reservations should be sent before May 4th, \$8 half-day, \$15 full-day. Barber Co Conservation, 800 W. 3rd Ave. Medicine Lodge, KS 67104-8002, phone (620) 886-3721, ext. 3.

🌸 **May 13-16:** FloraKansas: Great Plains Plant Bazaar at Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, KS. This plant sale features hard-to-find native perennials plus classes and tours. Kansas Native Plant Society co-sponsors Dyck Arboretum events. Ask about member's only sale dates; 10% members discount on all days. Admission charge is by donation. [arboretum@Hesston.edu] (620) 327-8127

May 15: Wildflower Plant & Seed Sale at Prairie Park Nature Center, Lawrence, KS, 1-4pm. (785) 832-7980.

🌸 **May 21:** Rock Springs Wildflower Tour. Come and explore the spring wildflowers of the Flint Hills with KNPS guides at Rock Springs 4-H Center near Junction City, Kansas, in Geary County. The fee for the Wildflower tour is \$15 dollars per person, which covers breakfast refreshments and a hot lunch in the Rock Springs dining hall. Wildflower treasure-hunting will conclude at 2:00. Contact Chelsea Shrack at (785) 257-3551, cshrack@rocksprings.net. [www.rocksprings.net]

🌸 **May 22:** Wildflower Walk: Search for Mead's Milkweed near Pomona, KS. Join Kansas Native Plant Society in exploring this private 12-acre prairie hay meadow. We will help the owner, a KNPS member, see if she has Mead's Milkweed on her property. We will also see what woodland wildflowers are growing in the adjoining woods. Meet at the corner of K-68 & Main Street in Pomona at 1pm to caravan to the property. This walk will last approximately 2 hours. Contact: Jeff Hansen [email@ksnps.org] or (785) 806-6917.

🌸 June is Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month! Each year Kansas Native Plant Society makes a formal appeal to the Governor for June to be proclaimed as Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month. This opportunity promotes greater appreciation for the diversity, value, and beauty of Kansas native plants and their habitats. [www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org]

June 4: Spring Wildflower Tour at Maxwell Wildlife Refuge, McPherson County, KS. Board the tram for a tour of the prairie with wildflowers and bison, 10am, or a self guided walking tour with flowers flagged. The Refuge is located 6 miles north of Canton, KS. [<http://www.cyberkraft.com/maxwell/>] (620)-628-4455.

June 4: Sand Hills State Park Field Trip near Wichita, KS. Birders on this early summer trip should expect some of the local specialties and an abundance of wildflowers and butterflies. Event sponsor: Wichita Audubon Society. Depart at 7am from the King's-X Restaurant at 21st and Amidon in Wichita. Leader: Cheryl Miller [avian67226@gmail.com] or (316) 683-5499.

🌸 **June 6-10:** Earth Partnership for Schools Summer Institute at Dyck Arboretum of the Plains in Hesston, KS. This 40-hour institute for school teachers and staff will train you in the award-winning Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) Program that you can share with your students and colleagues for years to come. Learn to engage your students in the process of prairie gardening on school grounds, earn three hours of graduate credit, take home an extensive curriculum, eat good food for a week, and have a fun and meaningful experience at the Dyck Arboretum! Contact Brad Guhr for more information: [bradg@hesston.edu] or (620) 327-8127.

🌸 **June 11:** 6th Annual Symphony in the Flint Hills. Enjoy this unique pairing of music and prairie! The vision of this concert is to heighten appreciation and knowledge of the Flint Hills as the last major intact tallgrass prairie on the North American continent. Wildflower tours will be led by Kansas Native Plant Society volunteers. Featured is an outdoor concert performed by the Kansas City Symphony. [www.symphonyintheflinthills.org] (620) 273-8955.

June 11: Konza Prairie Field Trip with Topeka Audubon Society. Meet at the Topeka Zoo parking lot (635 Southwest Gage Blvd) to carpool to Konza for a wildflower and birding field trip, 6:30-11:30am. (785) 836-2351 .

June 18: Birds, Butterflies, & Breakfast at Chaplin Nature Center near Wichita, KS. Start the day with a melody of birds as you eat breakfast on the porch of the visitor's center, 7:30am. After breakfast we will walk the trails in search of butterflies and wildflowers. Event sponsor: Wichita Audubon Society. Please register with Shawn at least 2 days in advance so we'll have enough breakfast. Leader: Shawn Silliman [cnc@wichitaaudubon.org] or (620) 442-4133.

🌸 **July 16:** Kansas Native Plant Society Summer Board Meeting and Outing. The location and time have not been finalized. Please contact KNPS for more information. [email@KSNPS.org] (785) 864-3453.



“Wings on the Wind” *Continued from Page 1*

Richter generously shared the narrative of the creative and practical processes of creating “Wings on the Wind.” I started the initial idea and composition in my pencil sketch book based on memories of wet lands, tall grass stands, and how I feel about those natural areas. I selected my favored one from six preliminary concept drawings. In this image, I



Matthew Richter in his studio with "Wings on the Wind" in progress

scoured my extensive collection of photographs and finally used somewhere around seven photos. I did a lot of drawing and transparent overlays with the sketch as it developed. These got me involved and developed my inner vision enough to want to continue their beginnings on the canvas as I fleshed out the painting later.”

The centerpiece of the clouds required a technical understanding that Matthew realized he had to learn. “I had researched the formation of thunder storm cells and visualized a vertical scale to place the updrafts and down drafts into the right perspective. In this painting,

I set up the formal problem of a front-lighted upper cloud which reflects down onto a back-lighted group of collapsing cold, down drafts shown in deep navy blues. This was a challenging painting because each of the cloud regions have their own light sources and different light temperatures which reveal the modeling of forms. For the upper clouds in the focal point, I set up a color matrix of sun-highlighted yellows and oblique side-lighting of oranges. The light reflected from earth or shaded/light absorbent clouds are purple-reds. There is indirect highlighting found in the canyons or hollows of the clouds on the left and right sides where the highlight reverses to the cool indirect blue of the upper troposphere instead of the warm yellow of the direct sun and the humidity rich condensation zones. One of the biggest challenges in the upper cloud was to blend the hazy, soft areas of indirect cool blue highlights directly into the adjacent warm yellows without making the transitions into muddy greens.”

Matthew’s analytical and aesthetic probing also carries over to the native plants he includes in his paintings. “Native plants have always been at the heart of my work. If I see Bluestem, I stop and take notice. However, I have rarely done portraits which are species specific. I usually depict them in groupings, which by their color and contours of growth over the land, they define the space I try to describe. I would say I paint them as a rhythm and group, but not for species identification. I have joined KNPS to get a closer look, to understand specific plants through the eyes of other folks and to better tie the character of the wild spaces that interest me to the species enjoying specific habitats. There are certain plants I look for in a place before it becomes deeply interesting, and they are gradually being rendered in more detail as my work progresses.”

You can experience “Wings on the Wind” for yourself by visiting the Siemens manufacturing plant in Hutchinson. Also three of Richter’s new prairie paintings will be on display at The Panhandle Plains Museum in Canyon, Texas, at the Invitational Exhibition opening February 27th. If you are interested in owning a “Matthew Richter Original,” contact the Leopold Gallery in Kansas City. Matthew concludes, “I regularly show in juried and invitational shows around the state; so check my web site, matthewrichter.com where you can also find giclee prints. I always encourage visitors to visit my studio in McPherson, County; so stop by and see what is on the easel.”

NOTE TO READERS: Nothing in the above article, expressed or implied, constitutes an official position of KNPS with respect to the issue of wind power.



Music Review: "Big Bluestem, King of the Prairie" by Iralee Barnard

Finally, a song that extols the virtues of a prairie grass! Annie Wilson, singer and song writer with the Tallgrass Express String Band, describes big bluestem's significance and character in "Big Bluestem, King of the Prairie."

There are many books defining Kansas plants . . . now there is music! The ultimate teacher (she teaches writing and literature to high school juniors and seniors), Annie stuck to her "ligules" and "rhizomes" against advice of friends who said that was too much information for the general public. The song's title "King of the Prairie" came from a County Conservation District contest to find the tallest big bluestem with winners nearly ten feet tall.



Carl Reed, Loren Ratzloff, Annie Wilson, and Charlie Laughridge

"Big Bluestem" is one of 16 songs that celebrate the culture and the flora and fauna of the Kansas Flint Hills on a new CD titled *Clean Curve of Hill Against Sky*. The Tallgrass Express String Band includes three other talented musicians: Charlie Laughridge on fiddle, mandolin, harmonica, concertina; Loren Ratzloff on banjo, mandolin, dobra; and Carl Reed on bass and guitar.

Lyrics, on this the third CD by the Tallgrass Express, depict the beauty of the prairie landscape and Annie's affection for it. Each song tells a story. There are cowboys,

Kaw Indians, cottonwoods, horses, coyotes, evening crickets and starry nights. The diversity of the prairie ecosystem and why prairie grasses and wildflowers have survived in Kansas is explained in "Last Stand of the Tallgrass Prairie." "Sail the Summer Sky" is about six characteristic prairie birds. "Hot Summer Day" is a tribute to photosynthesis (yes, photosynthesis!).

My favorites are waltzes: "The Moon Can Take Me Home" and title song "Clean Curve of Hill Against Sky." A beautiful instrumental, and the only music on the CD not written by Annie, is "Home From the Z Bar" by Charlie Laughridge.

You will find details at www.tallgrassexpress.com. Beginning January 2011 the band has a monthly concert series on the third Saturday of each month at the Emma Chase Café in Cottonwood Falls. If you get a chance to see this group perform in person, don't miss it!

Growing Plants from Seed: Ornamental Native Grass text and photos by Ken O'Dell

Over the years several species and varieties of native grasses have been selected for their beautiful, graceful, and enjoyable forms and colors throughout the year. Native grasses are also easy to plant, easy to maintain and add a smooth gracefulness to our landscapes. After establishing these native grasses in our landscapes, they are as

maintenance-free as you could ask for. They will not require any fertilizer, bug sprays, mulch, or water other than what Mother Nature provides in her great natural ways of wisdom.

Several individuals, nurseries and universities have selected varieties of native grass which have different growth rates, leaf colors in spring, leaf colors in autumn and flower heads in winter. If we look long enough, we can find grass forms that tend to weep a bit more, or grow more upright, have wider leaves, thinner leaves, two-tone or

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variegated leaves, very small growing or very large growing forms of the same grass. Nurseries and Seed Growers have selected many of these, and they add great interest to the overall landscape beauty when properly used.

Our native Switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum*, has several of these selected cultivars. The word “cultivar” is now used and means cultivated variety of a species. Native Switchgrass grows in most Kansas counties, in prairies, roadsides, hayfields and dappled woodlands. Over the past few years, Switchgrass has gained great popularity as a trouble-free ornamental grass to use in the landscape. Growing in strong, full clumps to about 4 feet in height with medium green leaves in spring time, light bluish-grey leaves in late summer and taking on reddish-coppery hues similar to the autumn leaf colors in fall, adorned with loose airy flower heads from late summer well into winter, it is a most wonderful example of our native grasses now being used in landscapes.



Switchgrass seedlings

I live on a small farm, and we have about forty acres of prairie and tens of thousands of beautiful Switchgrass plants, growing naturally in this prairie. Walking through the prairie at different times of the year, I can find Switchgrass with green leaves, some with more coppery red and some with more blue coloring. Autumn and winter colors are also very dramatic. We have planted several Switchgrass clumps from the prairie to our flower beds, at or near the house, so we can enjoy and observe them.

Little Bluestem is another most excellent native grass in our landscapes. Little Bluestem is now our Kansas State Grass, and an excellent choice it is. With a botanical name of *Schizachyrium scoparium*, you have to love this grass. Smaller in all respects than native Switchgrass, Little Bluestem has made its mark in

our landscapes. Growing native in every Kansas county, Little Bluestem is a clump-forming, fine-textured grass with bluish-green leaves in spring and summer and a russet-red to coppery-bronze leaf color through fall and winter. In addition, it has tiny cottony silver flowers up and down the stems that show in fall and winter.



Clump of Little Bluestem

Maintenance of native grasses in our landscapes is very easy. I maintain our grasses by cutting down each clump to about 10 inches tall in late February or by mid March. They will have their full growth as soon as it gets warm as these are warm season grasses that do most of their growing after the spring weather warms up. I do not fertilize our native grasses. After the first few weeks in the ground, I do not give an additional water to our native grasses. Their roots will go deep into the ground in search of water and nutrients.



Little Blue in Seed - Photo by Nancy Goulden

Indian Grass is another wonderful native grass with great ornamental value. I gather seed from our native grasses in late autumn by walking through

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Growing Plants from Seed:

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the prairie with two five-gallon buckets tied to my waist. I strip off the seed heads by hand when I see a nice large clump with good seed heads. I save these



Little Blue Seed

seeds in a paper sack, in the fridge (not freezer) until about mid- January or February. I have some seedling cell packs with 50 cells per 10 x 20 inch

tray. I fill the cells with potting soil that will drain well and then cover the top of the tray with seed so thick that I cannot see any soil. I do not cover the seed with any soil but will gently press it down with my fingers. About half of these seed will germinate and come up within a month or two if I have them in a greenhouse with some heat in the winter. I keep the cell packs just slightly moist but not wet or the seed will rot. If in doubt, let the soil dry out just a bit. This is not rocket science; so adjust depending on cloudy days, sunny days, cold or warm days. They would prefer 72 degrees to germinate, but I do not want to turn the propane up so I run the greenhouses cold or just above freezing. Some days the temp in the greenhouse will be in the 70's, 80's or low 90's just because of a good sunny day. If you do not have a small greenhouse or a sunny window, then you might wait until mid-April to plant the seed in pots or trays and do this outside in a sunny location. When the seedlings get about 2 or 3 inches tall, transplant them to your flower beds.

These native grasses are very easy to grow, and the forms and colors are wonderful to look at through most of the year.



Meet Joyce Fent, Illustrator for "Featured Plant"

The KNPS newsletter staff is pleased to welcome Kansas artist Joyce Fent as a regular illustrator for the "Featured Plant" column. When Joyce moved from Boston in 1954, she was fortunate to locate in the perfect setting, a quarter section in the northern Saline County with 50 acres of virgin prairie. She set about observing, learning, and illustrating the native plants in her meadow.

Joyce attended Boston University for a short while, and has also taken many classes to further her skills. Over the years, she has been very active in art shows and art organizations. She has won numerous awards and has had work selected for juried exhibits in Hays, Lawrence, Emporia, Topeka, and had two winners in the Kansas postcards, the Smokey Hill River Festival 1989 and 1991.

She had the unique opportunity when she was in the Air Force in the Korean War to serve as base artist in Cheyenne, Wyoming. In addition, when lived in Rabat, French Morocco, she designed the logo for the 5th Air Force. In civilian life, Joyce has worked at the Salina Art Center as Outreach Designer and Coordinator. In recent years, Joyce had the privilege of working as a volunteer for the Lincoln Art Center.

Joyce concludes, "As I recall, we (O.S. Fent Family) were charter members of the Kansas Wildflower Society." In addition to having her work published in earlier KNPS newsletters, Joyce also "set up an exhibit of flora watercolors at the annual Wildflower Society meeting in Salina" in May 1991. She prefers to use water colors for her paintings of plants "because it gives them a more lively appearance." We look forward to seeing many more of her water-colored illustrations in future issues.



Featured Plant: Western Wahoo - *Euonymus atropurpurea* Jacq. Text by Lorraine J. Kaufman, Illustration by Joyce Fent

Walking along an abandoned country road on a lovely late autumn day I was surprised to see a small shrub clinging to the steep embankment of the ditch. From its sparse branches, on 2-3 inch thin stems dangled small (1/2 - 3/4 inch) deeply

-lobed clusters of fruits in a delightful old-rose shade so soft and subdued that they appeared to be made of suede. I noticed too that some of the fruit capsules had split open to reveal four bright scarlet

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Featured Plant: Western Wahoo - *Euonymus atropurpurea* Jacq.

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Watercolor of Wahoo by Joyce Fent

seeds surrounded by the rose-colored hull. I was amazed. It looked as if Mother Nature was decorating for Christmas already. And so it was that in that out of the way place I became acquainted with the Western Wahoo, *Euonymus atropurpurea* Jacq.

It is a native, perennial shrub scattered in open woods or slopes and along roadsides in eastern Kansas. The Wahoo blooms in May with tiny blossoms of four petals in a deep maroon shade. At maturity, it will be 10 to 15 feet high. It is not invasive as are some species of *Euonymus* found in other parts of the US.

Birds enjoy the colorful fruits that dangle on the shrub through the winter, and what is left feeds our own souls with beauty as it brightens the barren, winter landscape.

The Western Wahoo appears to me to be a rather shy shrub choosing to be a part of the under story with its softly-colored capsules but then surprising and cheering the winter world with its brilliant dangling fruits.

Membership News

NEW MEMBERS FROM 9/27/10 TO 12/11/10

Joey Altenhofen - Augusta
 Dena Berquist - Salina
 Courtney Bosch - Wichita
 Jennifer Boudreau - Wichita
 Timothy Burnham - Rose Hill
 Tyler Caggiano - Wichita
 Stephanie Cash - Wichita
 City of Andover - Andover
 Danielle Colcher - Wichita
 Caroline Coleman - Fredericksburg, VA
 Janelle Cook - Wichita
 Daniel Dailey - Derby
 Matt Eichelberger - Wichita
 Katie Ellington - Park City
 Emporia State University Herbarium - Emporia
 Ashley Espinoza - Goddard
 Pete Ferrell & Ferrell Ranch - Beaumont
 Ryan Fritts - Wichita
 Christen Funk - Park City
 Kelsie Gordon - EIDorado
 Hashim Goronga - Wichita

Kacie Grimes - Valley Center
 Nick Gunzelman - Wichita
 Pearesh Hamal - Wichita
 Amanda Hays - Valley Center
 Jane Withee Hebert - White City
 Ashley Her - Wichita
 Linda Johnston - Gainesville, VA
 Kansas Turnpike Authority - Wichita
 Tusuna Kimball - Newton
 Earnest A. Lehman - Hays
 Kimberly R. Lucas - EIDorado
 Adam Luman - EIDorado
 Ramila Madawela - Wichita
 Amy McDaniel - Park City
 Angela Mclenan - Andover
 Paige R. Mousley - Wichita
 Pendo Jones Mpungala - Wichita
 Christafina Muniz - Wichita
 Ryan Muzzy - Wichita
 Emma Nelson - Wichita
 Dan Neugebauer - Benton
 Maria N. Ngulla - Wichita
 Thuy Nguyen - Wichita

Trang Huyen Nguyen - Wichita
 Mike Peterson - Topeka
 Hillary Phillips - EIDorado
 Tracy Rausch - Clearwater
 Kristina Schafer - Augusta
 Tania Sebastian - Wichita
 Lauren Shaw - Wichita
 Austin Shockey - Derby
 Jennifer Smith - Wichita
 Trudy Sparks - Wichita
 Marlene Spence - Weir
 Carrie A. Taylor - Wichita
 Alissa Terpstra - Valley Center
 Jody Toerber-Clark - Wamego
 Ashley Triana - Wichita
 Pam Turner - Wichita
 Lacy Volz - Wichita
 Josh West - Wichita
 Annie Wilson - Elmdale
 Frederick Wolfe - Wichita

MEMBERS RETURNING AFTER A HIATUS

Patricia McKinney - Mayetta
 Larry Rutter - Meriden

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 Contact us by phone at 785-864-3453



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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL GUIDELINES

Annual dues are for a 12-month period from January 1 through December 31. Dues paid after December 1 are applied to the next year. Note to new members: the first year of annual membership is effective from the date of joining through December 31 of the following calendar year.

Please complete this form or a photocopy. Send the completed form and a check payable to the Kansas Native Plant Society to:

**Kansas Native Plant Society
 R. L. McGregor Herbarium
 2045 Constant Avenue
 Lawrence KS 66047-3729**

A membership in the Kansas Native Plant Society makes a great gift for friends and family members. Recipients of gift memberships will receive notification of your gift membership within two weeks of receipt of your check. The Kansas Native Plant Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Gifts to KNPS are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Membership application/renewal form

Member Information:

Name:	
Address	
City/State:	
Zipcode:	
Phone:	
Email:	
County (if KS):	

Membership Category:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	\$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organization	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contributing	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifetime	\$500.00