

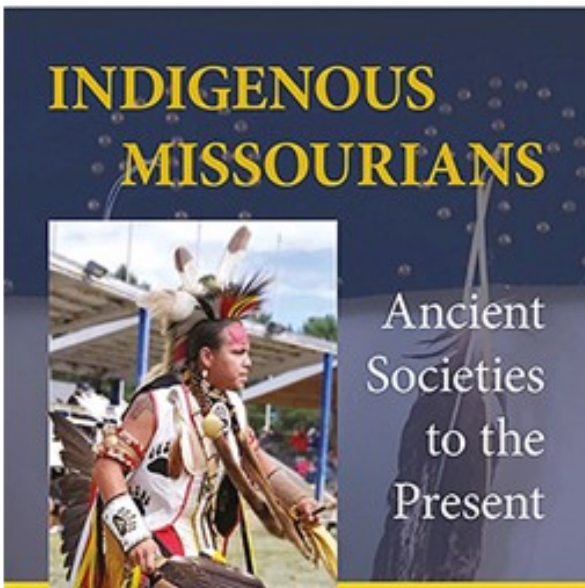
Missouri Folklore Society Newsletter

P.O. Box 1757, Columbia MO 65202

<http://missourifolkloresociety.truman.edu>

Volume 47, Nos. 3-4

Fall 2023



The Missouri Folklore Society met in Historic Boonville November 2-4, organized by Brett and Evelyn Rogers, who surmounted numerous challenges to bring us a vibrant and exciting event. Greg Olson provided the keynote address with “Points, Pots, Pipes and Powwows,” a celebration of the resilience of Missouri’s indigenous peoples. See inside for details of presentations; readers are invited to get in touch with speakers to ask follow-up questions. The festivities were enlivened by the usual folk jams, and Judy Domeny Bowen again honored us with her auctioneering gifts.





Missouri Folklore Society

Minutes for Board Meeting: Thursday November 2, 2023

Call to order 5:10

Present: Rachel Gholson, Honorio Caballa Jr., John Fisher, Carol Fisher, Lyn Wolz, Susan Bryson, Gracie Doolin, Lucy McCormick, Don Carlson, Mim Carlson, Erika Gerrity, Dave Para, Evelyn Rogers, Brett Rogers, Adam Davis

Reports of Secretary and Treasurer (Davis and Para)

Adam reported recovery from lapsed nonprofit filing status with the state.

Interest rates have been friendly!

Do we have tax returns to file? It's a postcard sort of thing; Dave located it.

Report moved and approved

Announcements regarding Boonville meeting (Brett & Evelyn Rogers)

We'll be here at 8 am

Lunch at noon

Some old MFSJ copies available

The whole meeting takes place in the church basement; totally accessible.

Plans for meetings in 2024 (Mark Livengood, Story Center)

Needs a vote on Saturday to approve dates

Are Lyn and Susan willing? Adam is willing to organize the program

Might be in conflict with the Albuquerque folk festival.

Publications reports (Davis) -- MFSJ newsletter, website
Newsletter to come after meeting
Website continues in rebuild
Would like to post things on YouTube channel
No longer interested in the embargo process; want to move ahead

2025

Kirksville a possibility

New Business

Spring meeting – online -- date? Not April 8, because of eclipse; Big Muddy is 5th & 6th
13th and 20th are possible. Tentatively 13th.

Adjourn 5:50

General Meeting, Saturday November 4, 2023

Missouri Folklore Society General Meeting, Boonville, Mo.

Nov. 4, 2023 meeting called at 11:38 a.m.

Thanks to Brett, Evelyn, and Adam for diligent work in the face of adversity.

Treasurer's report approved again without specific updates, meeting maybe broke even, auction more than \$400.

Voted to have 2024 meeting at story center at Mid Continent Public Library Oct. 17-19 if that is workable for membership.

Susan, Lyn, Ginger Hendrickson will help Mark Livengood. Lyn and Susan co-president, Ginger vice president.

Work on the website is continuing for publications and updates. Members are asked to send photos of the meeting. Revising or being creative with the journal format is an interesting idea. We should make society recordings accessible online at either the website or the YouTube channel.

One advantage to using WordPress for our website is that it allows for different editors, which could share some of Adam's responsibilities for the website. Susan Bryson will talk to Adam.

The Spring Board Meeting will be April 13, 2024, on zoom

In a discussion on the future of the society, the importance of networking was emphasized. Also, if we are not going to restrict the newsletter and journal to members only, perhaps we could provide links to members or attendees to annual meeting materials used in presentations.

We adjourned at 12:28 p.m.



Left, Judy Domeny Bowen and Dave Para share a memory; right, Ginger Hendrickson recalls living in Harry Truman's neighborhood. Below, Rachel Gholson leads a workshop in making cordage



THE MISSOURI FOLKLORE SOCIETY

*P. O. Box 1757
Columbia, MO 65205-1757
(phone 660.882.7821)*

Officers and Board of Directors

President:

[Lyn Wolz](#), Susan Bryson

Vice President:

[Ginger Hendrickson](#)

Executive Secretary:

[Adam Davis](#)

Treasurer:

[Dave Para](#)

Corresponding Secretary:

Archivist:

2023-2026

[Gary Buxton](#), Doniphan, MO

[George Caudle](#), Bonne Terre

[Jan Caudle](#), Bonne Terre

[Jim Caudle](#), Bonne Terre

[Gladys Coggsweil](#), Kansas City

[Judy Domeny](#), Rogersville

[Gene Edson](#), Richmond

[John Fisher](#), Kennett

[Carol Fisher](#), Kennett

[Betty Henderson](#), Monett

[Antonio F. Holland](#), Kansas City

[Donna Jurich](#), Tucson AZ

[Gordon McCann](#), Springfield

[Mettazee Morris](#), St. Louis

[Lynn Morrow](#), Jefferson City

[Frank Nickell](#), Cape Girardeau

[Annette Richter](#), Moorhead, MN

[Brett Rogers](#), Boonville

[Paul Schwartzkopf](#), Quincy IL

[Jim Vandergriff](#), Tucson AZ

[Lyn Wolz](#), Lenexa KS

2021-2024

[Jeanelle Ash](#), Kimberling City

[Ray Brassieur](#), Lafayette LA

[Sharon Brock](#), Columbia

[Adam Davis](#), Kirksville

[Andrea Davis](#), Kirksville

[Betsy Delmonico](#), Kirksville

[Neil Delmonico](#), Kirksville

[Liz Faries](#), Terre du Lac

[Annie Fuller](#), St. Louis

[Rachel Gholson](#), Springfield

[Debra Greene](#), Jefferson City

[Sam Griffin](#), Columbia

[Holly Hobbs](#), Columbia

[Roger Jungmeyer](#), Jefferson City

[Leon Keens](#), Kansas City

[Austin Krueger](#), St. Louis

[Julie McCollum](#), New Haven

[Meredith Rau](#), St. Charles

[Lu Anne Roth](#), Columbia

[Loretta Washington](#), Florissant

[Hester Wise](#), Rolla

2022-2025

[Anthony Bodnar](#), Troy, IL

[Jean Brand](#), Columbia

[Susan Bryson](#), Lenexa, KS

[Ken Burch](#), Sikeston

[Janelle Burch](#), Sikeston

[Norma Cantu](#), Kansas City

[Don Carlson](#), Leavenworth KS

[Mim Carlson](#), Leavenworth KS

[Howard W. Marshall](#), Fulton

[Patrick McGlasson](#), Mississippi

[Margot McMillen](#), Fulton

[Dave Para](#), Albuquerque, N.M.

[Barbara Price](#), Kirksville

[Bruce Scovill](#), Jefferson City

[John Shewmaker](#), Columbia

[Richard Shewmaker](#), Columbia

[Debra Thompson](#), Harrisburg

[Scott White](#), Belleville, IL

[Julie Henigan](#), Springfield

[Joe Slama](#)

[Evelyn Rogers](#), Boonville



Above left, Bola Ojo; right, Honorio Caballa Jr. and Rachel Gholson. Below, the program on historical fiction organized by Evelyn Somers Rogers.

Missouri Folklore Society Presents:

Fraud, Tragedy, & War:

Three Missouri Novelists Talk about Writing Historical Fiction

Saturday, November 4
10:00 A.M.

Nelson Memorial United Methodist Church
407 East Spring Street, Boonville, MO
Free and open to all



*Michelle Collins
Anderson*



Jocelyn Cullity



Daren Dean

Missouri Folklore Society
 Boonville, MO.
 November 2, 2023
 Financial Statement from December 31, 2022, to October 31, 2023

	INCOME	
	2022	2023
Membership Dues	\$555.00	\$405.00
Annual Meeting Auction	\$3,098.50	
Donations, Grants	\$25.00	\$100.00
Sales		
Interest	\$46.26	\$566.42
Miscellaneous Refund		
Total	\$3724.76	\$1,067.42

	EXPENSES	
Journal Printing		
Newsletter Printing	\$159.07	
Annual Meeting Refunds	\$5,241.44	
Postage	\$931.55	\$176.00?
Awards		\$99.50
Supplies		
Miscellaneous	\$90.00	
Total	\$3,188.73	\$275.50

Checking Account Balance 12-31-2022	\$6,771.34
CD 12-31-2022	\$19,613.28
Schroeder Endowment Fund CD	\$14,813.75
Total Account Balance 12-31-2022	\$41,198.47

Checking Account Balance 10-31-2023	\$7,199.34	
CD 10-31-2023	\$19,874.76	@ 4% matures 01-24-24
Schroeder Endowment Fund CD	\$15,121.55	@ 2.5% matures 03-01-24
Total Account Balance 10-31-2023	\$42,195.65	

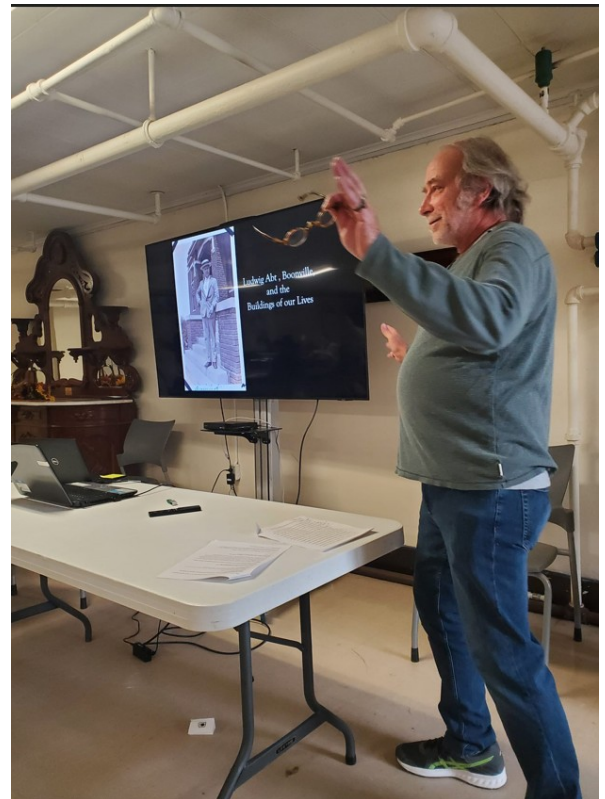
Respectfully Submitted,

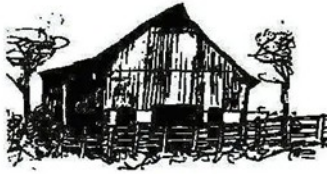
Dave Para



Left, Judy Domeny Bowen reads from her essays on farm life, as Don Carlson and Lyn Wolz listen. Judy has agreed to share her reflective writings via an upcoming issue of *MFSJ*.

Below, Brett Rogers discusses the legacy of prominent local architect Ludwig Abt, many of whose works survive in Boonville and throughout the state.





sketch by Cathy Barton Para

Annual Meeting, The Missouri Folklore Society

November 2-4, 2023

Nelson Memorial United Methodist Church

407 E Spring Street,
Boonville, MO

Thursday November 2

5 pm:

room 1: Board of Directors meeting

Dinner on your own

7 pm - 10 pm

room 1: jam & singalong -- bring instruments, bring voices!

Friday, November 3

8 am-9 am

room 1: open

room 2: open

9 am- 10 am

room 1:

Rachel Gholson (Missouri State University): "The Filipina Phoenix: An Ozarks Story"

Excerpts of an oral history present the story of an eldest child's journey from the Philippines to the Ozarks. Josie's life story is one of repeated rebirths followed by travel. She began her journey as a babe in a Japanese internment camp during WWII; at age 14 she moved to a large city to attend school. After passing her exams, she applied to work in the US and arrived in Chicago. Marriage took her to California and then to the Missouri Ozarks following the turn of the 21st century.

room 2:

Vicki Hobbs: The Disappearance of Black Landowners in Boone County's Cedar Township

Just downriver from Boonville, between the Missouri and Perche Creek floodplains, lies Boone County's Missouri Township. This was the destination of many early settlers who, along with their enslaved, headed west from Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee in search of good land and a prosperous future. While those goals were met by the area's prominent families, the fate of their enslaved servants was far less secure. With emancipation came Black land ownership and the rise of several rural Black communities in and around Missouri and Cedar Townships, but the disappearance in the early 1900s of the area's Black landowners remains a largely unexplored subject. This paper and PowerPoint presentation will delve into the possible reasons and engage participants in a discussion of several case histories.

Ginger Hendrickson, Emeritus Faculty, Missouri State University

"Growing Up in Harry Truman's Independence: A Remembrance"

Bess and Harry Truman influenced multiple generations of residents after his years in the White House--most for the positive, but for some difficult.

10 am -11 am

room 1:

Dave Para: The Oral Transmission of the Fiddle Tune "Squirrel Heads and Gravy:" An Example of Fake-Lore

I continue to believe that I could have been the second person to have heard this tune composed and played by Chris Germain in the late 1970s, but it was years before I heard it again played by folks who had no idea of its origin. It was Chris' plan to pass this tune off as traditional, and it seems to have worked well.

Susan Bryson & Lyn Wolz: Fish Tales, Bumper Crop, Killer Rabbits: a look at humorous postcards

room 2:

John Fisher: The Civil War in the Missouri Bootheel: The Legend of Billie Dement

Life in the Missouri Bootheel, like most of Missouri, was difficult during the Civil War. The region suffered significantly from the actions of guerrilla groups representing both the North and the South. More than having strong national or ideological loyalties, many groups simply used the war as an excuse for malicious behavior. Such gangs were sometimes referred to as "bushwhackers," taking food, clothing and other supplies from businesses and individuals and leaving destruction behind. In November 1863 a teenage boy named Billie Dement was found hanged along a road near present-day Campbell. Several versions of the story of his death were told and woven into the folklore of Dunklin County. This paper examines who he might have been and the reasons for his hanging. A granite marker was erected in 1941 to mark the site.

12 noon

room 1: lunch

1 pm - 2 pm

room 1:

Lucy McCormick (Truman State University): Cultural Catholicism in St. Louis and the Function of Non-traditional Traditions

Gracie Doolin (Truman State University): Librarians and Language: Finding the Folkgroup

room 2:

Judy Domeny: Life On The Goat Farm

Longtime MFS member, Judy Domeny Bowen, raises Boer goats. Find out what a Boer goat is and listen as she shares her writings detailing her life on a rocky Ozarks farm.

2 pm - 3 pm

room 1:

Brett Rogers: Abt in Boonville: the Buildings of Our Lives

A study of local work by prominent architect Ludwig Abt.

Bola Ojo & Mark Morgan (University of Missouri School of Natural Resources): Yoruba Animal Folklore

Yoruba is a West African ethnic group who mainly inhabit portions of Nigeria, Benin, & Togo. Some of their beliefs and perceptions about animals have been passed down from one generation to the next through storytelling and eyewitness accounts. This folklore describes the relationship between humans and animals, in addition to taboos associated with these interactions. According to legend, animals are spiritual beings that occupy a special place in human existence, hence Yoruba people attach much importance to them. For example, animals can communicate certain events to humans before they occur. Such omens are why some Yoruba traditions are deeply rooted in animal folklore.

room 2:

Meredith Ludwig: Lives We Weave -- A Cultural Celebration

Selected Video Shorts from Ottawa County, Oklahoma

3 pm - 4 pm

room 1:

Wayne Lammers: The McMahan Fort: a Lost Fort of the Lamine

An account of the attack and total destruction by Indians on the 1814 Lamine settlement, Fort McMahan. Boonville's historian Bob Dyer contacted me in his search for Fort McMahan about 30 years ago. He had located on a map where he thought the fort was located. In 2018 & 2019, we explored the site with metal detectors.

Michael Dickey: Owls in American Indian Lore

This overview will examine how owls figured in the beliefs and lore of several different American Indian nations. Some saw them as harbingers of evil, others as messengers of the Creator. Emphasis will be on the lore of the Osage nation, once the predominant tribe of Missouri.

room 2:

Carol Fisher: Let's Write Some Family Folklore: A Buffet of Family Stories

Writing up family folklore is a great way to record and preserve family history. It can also be a fun and enjoyable experience. Fisher has written her family folklore individually and also has successfully encouraged "family group writing" activities for many years. She will share examples of her family's folklore in the first half of the session. In the second half, she will help attendees try some of her family folklore writing techniques. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A PROFESSIONAL WRITER TO START THIS JOURNEY!! It's all about sharing the stories that count. Come join the fun!

4 pm -5 pm

room 1:

John C. Fisher: The 1939 Southeast Missouri Sharecropper Demonstration

The drainage and clearing of the lowlands in the Missouri Bootheel during the first two decades of the twentieth century opened thousands of acres of new land for agriculture. Simultaneous with this, the boll weevil had devastated cotton production in the traditional cotton growing regions of the South. The boll weevil had not made an impact in the Bootheel and upper delta yet thousands of sharecroppers migrated into the region looking for farms where they could continue sharecropping cotton. Plummeting prices in the 1930s reduced cotton profitability making the life of the sharecropper even more difficult.

Unintended consequences of government programs left many sharecroppers without housing. Their plight led to the formation of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in Tyronza, Arkansas and eventually to a roadside demonstration in 1939 along highways 60 and 61 in Scott, New Madrid, Pemiscot, and Mississippi counties that drew national attention to the sharecropper system.

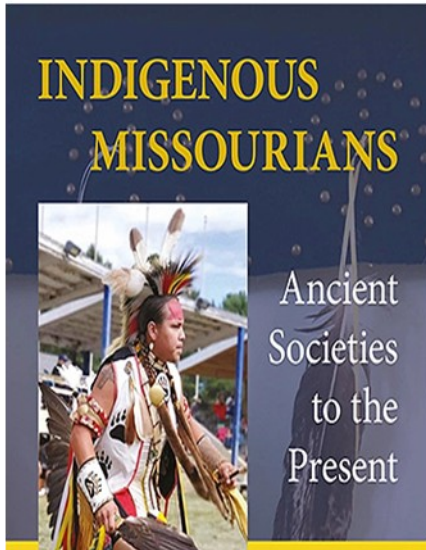
room 2:

Margot McMillen: Ghosts on Reddit: Storytelling in a New Medium

room 2:

Rachel Gholson: workshop on foraging and making cordage

In 2021 I was encouraged to look into food foraging on Instagram by a past folklore student who introduced me to Alexis Nicole (@blackforager) during magnolia blooming season. This led to a summer in 2023 of learning foraging for clothes dyeing and cordage making. Based on these 3 experiences, I propose that becoming a topical or dedicated Instagram follower is so closely akin to an informal apprenticeship in folklore that the process should be studied under the nomenclature, self-directed apprenticeship.



6:00 pm: room 1: dinner followed by keynote address:

Greg Olson: Points, Pots, Pipes, and Powwows

History books tend to include Missouri's Indigenous population only during periods when they were a threat to the state's white settlement. These histories overlook the fact that Native people have lived here for at least twelve thousand years and continue to call Missouri home today.

Historian Greg Olson will talk about the centuries of Indigenous presence in the state. He will discuss the inventiveness and adaptability that have enabled Missouri's Indigenous population to change and evolve in the face of the extreme challenges they encountered. Olson will show how this resilience, allowed Indigenous people and their traditions to survive in Missouri in the twenty-first century.

Friday evening after dinner -- jam and auction with Judy Domeny!

Saturday, November 4

room 1: open

room 2: open

9 am - 10 am

room 1:

Chris Otto (Jefferson College): The Potawatomi Trail of Death

While the most infamous instance of Indian removal involved the Cherokee Nation and is often referred to as the "Trail of Tears," similar removals were happening throughout the United States, including in Missouri. These removals resulted in significant hardships and suffering for Indigenous communities as they were forcibly uprooted from their homes and ancestral lands. The Potawatomi Trail of Death recognizes the forced removal of the Potawatomi Indians from north central Indiana to eastern Kansas in the fall of 1838. The trail begins at the statue of Chief Menominee south of Plymouth, Indiana, extends east to west on Old Highway 24 running through Palmyra, Paris, Moberly, Huntsville, Keytesville, Brunswick, Carrollton, Richmond, Lexington, Independence, and Grand View, MO and ends at the St. Philippine Duchesne Memorial Park south of Osawatomie, Kansas. This presentation will examine the Potawatomi Trail of Death and Missouri history.

room 2:open

10 am-11 am

room 1:


Evelyn Rogers, host: Fraud, Tragedy, & War: Three Missouri Novelists Turn Historical Events into Compelling Stories

Missouri Folklore Society Presents:


Fraud, Tragedy, & War:

Three Missouri Novelists Talk about Writing Historical Fiction


Saturday, November 4
10:00 A.M.
Nelson Memorial United Methodist Church
407 East Spring Street, Boonville, MO
Free and open to all



Michelle Collins
Anderson



Jocelyn Cullity



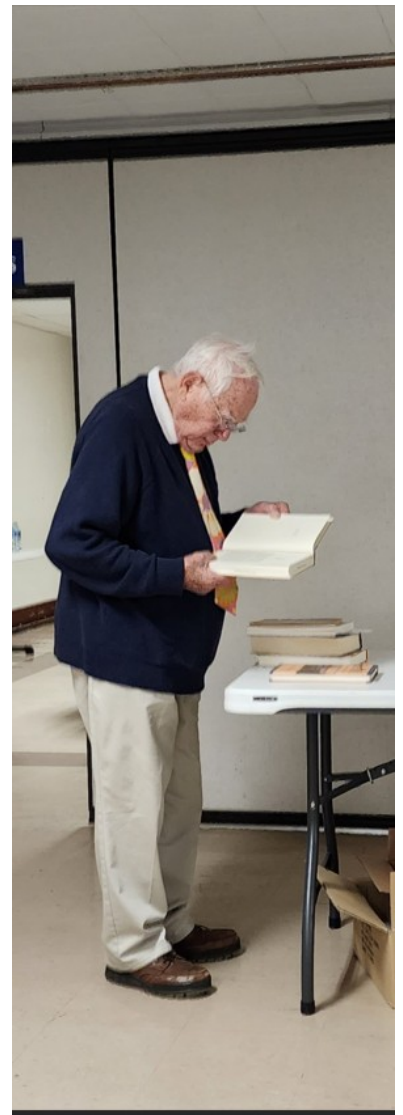
Daren Dean

11 am:

room 1: **general membership meeting** and adjournment until next year at the Story Center (Mid Continent Public Library, Kansas City)



Left, Lucy McCormick and Gracie Doolin; below left, Vicki Hobbs; below right, John Shewmaker



Thanks to Betty Craker Henderson for sharing her Christmas poem!

UPDATE: THANK YOU C. MOORE!

Just the week before Christmas

So busy was I

So tired and so cranky

I wanted to cry.

I paused in my efforts

To a hot cup of joe

And away to the window

I went unfiled with woe.

As I gazed to the west

'On the yard to the pond

It was just past the daybreak

I groaned and I yawned.

When what to my wondering eyes

should appear

But seven, you heard me, seven big deer!

Dancing and prancing all over the place

They twisted and turned and had such a race!

My coffee cup shattered, I let out a cry

The flat liquid splattered, now nothing was dry

I turned once again, number eight was

nowhere

Sailing by the back fence from the woods

through the air.

They ran and danced until they were worn -

And took off from the pond to the woods far

beyond

Eight very large deer had now gone away

It was quiet again in the dawn of the day.

A fresh cup of coffee and a smile on my face

Soon gave me to know I could still win the race

Christmas is coming, the signs are all here -

So gay & all - and he of Gold Cheer

Betty Craker Henderson

Christmas Eve

2023

Make plans now to attend the 2024 Missouri Folklore Society meeting, tentatively scheduled for October 17-19, through the generosity of Mark Livengood and the Woodneath Library Center (Mid-Continent Public Library, Kansas City, MO)

The spring board meeting will be on Saturday, April 13, 2024, via zoom; watch your email and the website for details.

Woodneath Library Center, Mid-Continent Public Library

Mark Livengood, Story Center Director

mlivengood@mymcpl.org; (816) 883-4793

October 27, 2023

Woodneath Library Center



Woodneath Library Center, October 2023

- Physical address: 8900 NE Flintlock Road, Kansas City, MO 64157
- 35,000 square feet branch library opened in 2013 (to right in photograph)
- Woodneath historic home (center), originally built in 1856 and re-opened in November 2021 as The Story Center after award-winning adaptive reuse project. The Woodneath homestead is on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Auditorium (left) opened in August 2022
- 309 parking spaces (8 handicap, 9 low emissions)
- 0.9 mile walking trail features 17 interpretive signs describing cultural and natural history of the Library's 33 acres
- Approximately 1.5 miles from Interstate 35, 4 miles from downtown Liberty, and 15 miles from downtown Kansas City. There are many lodging and dining options within a two-mile radius of Woodneath.
- Friendly Bean coffee shop inside the branch library. We often contract with them to provide coffee and cookies for our programs.
- Regular branch library hours: M-Th, 9:00am – 9:00pm; F, 9:00am – 6:00pm; Saturday, 10:00am – 6:00pm.
- Websites:
 - Mid-Continent Public Library: <https://www.mymcpl.org>
 - The Story Center: <https://www.mymcpl.org/story-center>
 - Woodneath Library Center: <https://www.mymcpl.org/locations/woodneath-library-center>

April 14-15, 2023



SOUNDINGS

A Promise of Celebration in the Spring

Writing this newsletter sometime during the 12 days of Christmas (I'm a twelver) reminds me of the promise of winter. The naked trees and brush of the bleak landscape echo the cold in the icy winds; the river is low and uninviting; and all give way to the darkness of short days and long nights. The winter solstice, however, marks the rebirth of light as days start to regain length, a cause for communal celebration for 4,000 years. Together we laugh, sing, dance and endure to start the year over again. We can play in the snow.

High above the shallow, ice-bound river, Thespian Hall is also a symbol of promise. Built to encourage and present the artistic talents of members of the community, it was the light of entertainment for the town in the mid-nineteenth century, a place for folks to come together and sing, dance and endure.

The sun will not yet have set when folks come to our 32nd Big Muddy Folk Festival as it happens not too long after the vernal equinox and Spring sings her songs to the landscape. Patrons will enter the hall to a bright celebration of music and the cultural expressions associated with it. We look forward to a variety of musical styles played by artists new to the festival as well as some friends returning to fill the hall with sound.

Who Is Playing
Notorious
Hudspeth and Taylor
Ladyfingers and a Thing 'r Too
Ellie Grace
Stillhouse Junkies
Gareth Pearson
Mariachi Flor de Missouri
Dave Para

The Notoriety Returns



It was in 2013 when **Notorious** played the Big Muddy and wowed an audience who thought they knew what to expect when a fiddler and guitar player walked on stage. What they got was an amazing show of technical genius, dynamic vocal and compositional music extending from American to world music with true passion for the cultural traditions presented.

Since then, **Eden MacAdam-Somer**, playing violin since she was four, has become renowned as a composer, performer, and improviser and a featured soloist. She plays with symphony and chamber orchestras, jazz and swing bands, and Romanian, Jewish, and American folk ensembles. She currently teaches full-time at New England Conservatory and serves as co-chair of its contemporary musical arts department.

Leading the list of the groups Eden plays with is the duet and sometimes larger band with **Larry Unger**, a top tier guitarist in the dance band world. Find him at contra dances, Scottish and English country dances, waltz events, dance weekends, dance and music camps and festivals. He has traveled the world playing guitar, banjo, and bass with many top bands for contra dances, and several of his more than 5,000 original tunes are favored by bands all over. Larry's pieces and recordings have been featured in Ken Burns' films. Mike Snider played his tune "Door County #2" on the "Grand Ole Opry," and "That Schoenberg Rag" was performed by the San Luis Obispo Symphony Orchestra. Like Eden, Larry has a broad understanding of traditional music, and he enjoys recounting the origins of his music and its sources. He spent many hours playing blues with Etta Baker, John Jackson, Turner Foddrell, Ted Bogan, and other masters of the style. He teaches guitar and old-time banjo at the Music Emporium in Lexington, Mass.

COLE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND
Friends of the
Missouri State Archives

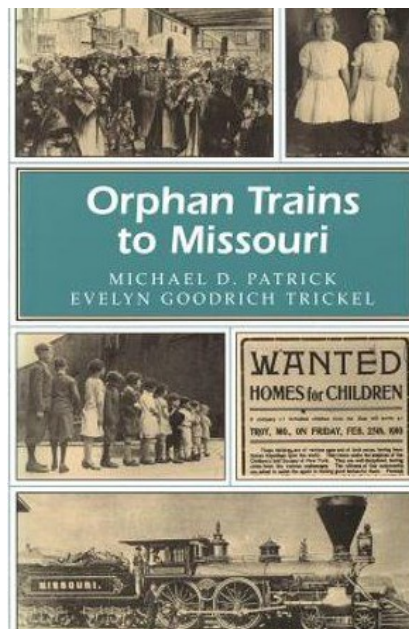
The Orphan Trains...My Mother's Story
with Shirley Andrews

JANUARY 25, 2024

6:00 P.M.



An interesting presentation on a topic often discussed by MFS' own Evelyn Trickel



OBITUARY

Paul Alan Fotsch

FEBRUARY 23, 1949 - JULY 23, 2023



Paul Alan Fotsch (known as Paul Grace from 1986-2010) passed away suddenly and without warning on July 23, 2023. He is survived by his beloved wife, Barbara Keen Fotsch, his daughter, Leela Grace Barr, her husband Seth Barr, his daughter Ellie Grace and her wife Ami Freeberg, grandchildren Arizona and Afton Barr and Milo Freeberg, his stepdaughters Jessica Raymond and Alison Shortal, his brother Dan (Jackie) Fotsch and sister Chris (Joe) Gladden, nieces, nephews, and many many friends, fellow musicians, fans, and community members who deeply grieve his unexpected passing.

Paul was born on February 23, 1949 in St. Louis, Missouri. He was the second son of Margaret “Peg” and Robert “Bob” Fotsch. He loved to make people laugh from a young age and referred to himself as the class clown during his school years. He was an early adopter of the “dad” joke and was always on the hunt for new jokes to elicit chuckles and groans. He had a mischievous twinkle that stayed in his kind, blue eyes his whole life.

At age 14, inspired by the Kingston Trio and (as he called it) “the great folk scare” of the ‘60s, he took up the guitar, which became his constant companion and great joy to his final day. He graduated from Southwest High School in St. Louis and moved to Columbia, Missouri in 1967 to attend the University of Missouri. He graduated from MU in 1971 with a degree in Forestry. Though he did not end up working in this field, his love of and care for the natural world remained a fundamental part of his life. He stayed in Columbia after school and became a beloved figure in the community.

In 1986, he could no longer ignore the call of the music and began touring as a full-time professional musician. It is hard to quantify the delight and comfort he brought to hundreds of thousands of people all across North America over his lifetime as a musician. As he used to jokingly say, "I am really famous; just not very many people know it."

Whether appearing at a protest, headlining a national folk festival, singing his young daughters to sleep, performing at the Lincoln Center, joining the Unity band, presenting an evening concert, jamming with friends, or playing fiddle for his delighted grandchildren, he devoted his life to spreading the joy of music. He was a full-time touring musician from 1986 - 2006 as a member of The Grace Family, Paul & Win Grace, and The Discovery Stringband (with Cathy Barton, Dave Para, and Bob Dyer), and he continued part-time until his death. He released eight celebrated studio albums (including A Place in the Choir, Fifty Miles of Elbow Room, Carved Out of Time, In Dreams I Hear the Music, Dance Upon the Earth, Love's Lasting Light, and Most Perfect Harmony) and appeared as a featured guest on innumerable compilations and recordings by other artists. He drove the highways and byways from coast to coast and from Mississippi to Manitoba performing at schools, festivals, historical reenactments, coffeehouses, and concert halls...bringing music and laughter to every corner of North America. As he told curious school children, "Boys and girls, you can make tens of dollars as a folk musician." He spent his last day on this earth sharing his contagious music and warm smile at the Columbia Farmer's Market. His daughters are both carrying on his legacy as professional musicians.

In 2006, Paul joined the team at Woodhaven as a home coordinator. He worked with individuals with developmental disabilities to support them in living independently and participating in all aspects of community life. In this work, he learned American Sign Language and began teaching ASL classes to fellow caregivers. He was adored and respected by the residents, their families, and colleagues until he retired in 2020.

Paul met Barbara Keen in 2009, and, after many happy years together, they married in 2019. They enjoyed attending Unity of Columbia, where Paul was active in the music ministry. They found joy in outdoor activities such as hiking and bicycling, spending time with grandchildren, as well as in quiet times at home. They shared a love of music, service, and community, and Paul was a caring father figure to Barbara's daughter, Jessica.

Paul was a student of spirituality, most recently studying the teachings of Thich Nhat Hahn. He truly lived his principles of acceptance, bringing non-judgmental kindness to all who crossed his path. He was a gentle friend to every animal he met – a devoted vegetarian, a proud cat dad, a beekeeper, and even the owner of a pet milk cow during his homesteading days. Most of all, he was a deeply loving, supportive, caring, playful, and adventurous father and grandfather. His daughters are eternally grateful to have grown up with Paul as their dad and to see him shine so brightly as a grandpa. He will always be loved and missed.



A celebration of life will be held at Unity of Columbia, 1600 W. Broadway on October 1st at 1:30 PM. A music gathering open to all will follow at Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary shelter, 3300 W. Rollins. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Paul's honor to a memorial fund for his grandchildren: <https://everloved.com/life-of/paul-fotsch/>

You can leave memories and messages at:

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/columbia-mo/paul-fotsch-11382288>