



3-1-1989

Westview: Vol. 8, Iss. 3 (Spring 1989)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), [Nonfiction Commons](#), [Photography Commons](#), and the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(1989) "Westview: Vol. 8, Iss. 3 (Spring 1989)," *Westview*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 3 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol8/iss3/1>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.



W E S T V I E W

A JOURNAL OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA

VOLUME 8

NUMBER 3

SPRING 1989

\$3.00

WESTERN OKLAHOMA FESTIVALS



FOREWORD

During these almost nine years of WESTVIEW, we have discovered that things usually work out. For a few minutes, we allowed ourselves to be concerned that we wouldn't have enough copy for this issue. This may not be one of our biggest issues, but it could easily be one of our best.

Our error that caused us some alarm was that we weren't considering the possibility of using some good springtime entries. After all, the general theme is "Western Oklahoma Festivals," but it's also coming out in the spring of 1989. So why not have a double emphasis? That's what we decided to do. Voila! The Spring 1989 issue now emerges, and we dedicate at least parts of it to our "nature lovers."

We beg our readers to understand that since this is a human venture, there will likely be errors. For those we have made in the past — typos and others —, have made in this issue, and will make in the future, we ask your indulgence.

Hopefully indulged,

Leroy Thomas

Leroy Thomas
Editor

**WESTVIEW DESIGN AND GRAPHIC ART
PRODUCTION BY SOUTHWESTERN OKLA-
HOMA STATE UNIVERSITY COMMERCIAL
ART STUDENTS**

ADVERTISING LAYOUT I

AMY WILLIAMSON
KAREN SULLIVAN
SUE McGUIRE
SHANNON BOWER
JERRY TOPPAH
CANUKY ALWERT
TREY WRIGHT
CINDY KOEHN

ADVERTISING LAYOUT II

CHRIS T. COFFEY
MICHAEL J. HUBENER
TONY NEELY
JANIE DODD
JEFF JOHNSON
KEDRON SMITH
MONTE GARRETT YORK

*Correction: The SOD HOUSE shown in the Winter
WESTVIEW is located in Aline instead
of near Homestead, as cited in the caption.*

Foreword

Leroy Thomas

ANYPLACE

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| 4 | Strung Out | Sheryl L. Nelms |
| 5 | Celebrators | |
| | Classified | Dr. Tal D. Bonham |
| 7 | Fishing for Monsters | Sheryl L. Nelms |

WESTERN

ERICK

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 8 | Erick's Annual Honey Festival: | |
| | Bee There | Margie Snowden North |
| 10 | The Pansy | Clintora Byrne-Harris |

MOUNTAIN VIEW

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 11 | Leaves | David Klaassen |
| 12 | Dedicated Mountain | |
| | View Artist | Mickie Jeanne Bennett |

ART SHOWCASE

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--|
| 14 | SOSU Student Artwork | |
|----|----------------------|--|

EVERYWHERE

- | | | |
|----|---------------|-------------|
| 18 | Air Show | Sandra Soli |
| 20 | Special Night | Pat Kourt |

RUSH SPRINGS

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|------------|
| 21 | Rush Springs' Unique | |
| | Watermelon Festival | Keith Long |

WESTVIEW

PUBLISHED BY SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
WEATHERFORD, OKLAHOMA

COVER DESIGN AND PHOTOGRAPH BY SOSU COM-
MERCIAL ART SENIOR, TONY NEELY.

SOMEPLACE

- 24 Sucker Day
at _____ Kate Jackson Lewis
- 26 Roots Along the
Stone Dr. Robert S. Lackey

WEATHERFORD — EARLY

- 28 Changing Times —
Indian Fairs Elmer M. Mills

WEATHERFORD — MODERN

- 30 Community Involvement
in Weatherford Linda Dixon

SPECIALS

- 34 HAUNTED BY HOME:
A Review Dr. Leroy Thomas
- 35 Stylesheet for WESTVIEW
Contributors Editorial Board
- 36 Future Issues Staff

The Oklahoma Heritage Association has announced that WESTVIEW has been named recipient of a Distinguished Editorial Award. The award was presented at the annual luncheon of the Association held at noon on March 17, 1989, at the Sheraton Kensington Hotel in Tulsa. The award presented to WESTVIEW was one of ten general awards presented and one of only two Distinguished Editorial awards.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Publisher Dr. Donald Hamm
Editor Dr. Leroy Thomas
Assistant Editor Dr. Roger Bromert

Assistant Editor Dr. Jeanne Ellinger
Art Director J. Don Wood

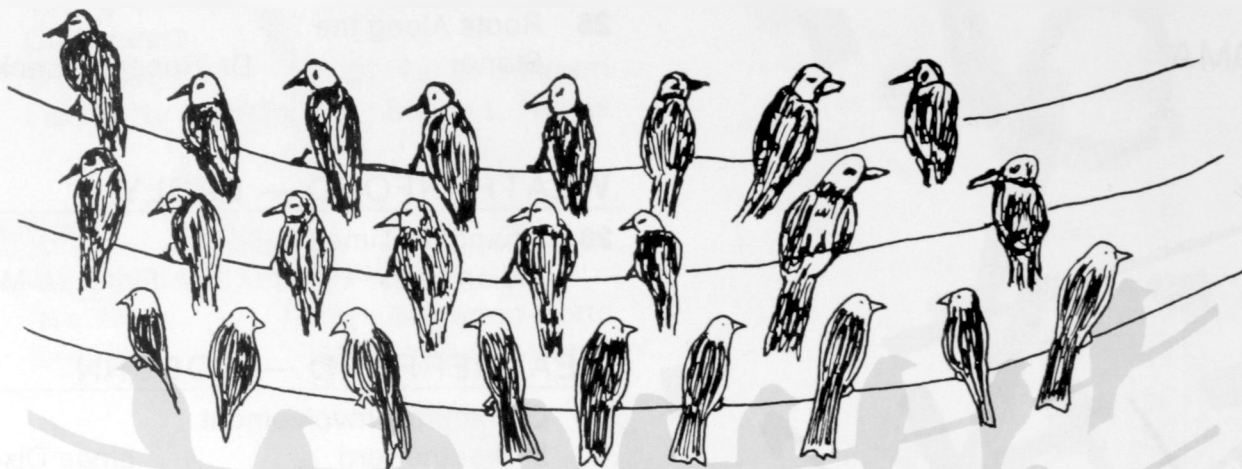
WESTVIEW is the official quarterly of the Southwestern Center for Regional Studies. To be published in the journal are scholarly articles, local history sketches, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, graphic arts, book reviews, and creative writing. Submissions along with SASE are to be sent to: Dr. Leroy Thomas, Editor, WESTVIEW, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096. All works appearing herein are copyrighted by the Southwestern Center for Regional Studies of Weatherford, Oklahoma.

ANYPLACE

Strung Out

By

Sheryl L. Nelms



creation

Illustration by Jeff Johnson

starlings
line
the telephone wire
one one one one one
by by by by

perfectly spaced
black beads

on a thin
string

exactly
two wing spans

apart

SHERYL L. NELMS, formerly of Kansas, South Dakota, Texas, and Arizona, now lives on Organ Mountain near Las Cruces, NM. She is a prolific, prize-winning poet whose works have appeared often in WESTVIEW.

CLASSIFIEDS

Celebrators Classified

THERE SEEM TO BE THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE IN EVERY ORGANIZATION, INCLUDING THOSE INVOLVED IN PLANNING A TOWN FESTIVAL OR CELEBRATION — THOSE WHO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN, THOSE WHO WATCH THINGS HAPPEN, AND THOSE WHO HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS HAPPENING.

THE INITIATORS GET THINGS DONE. THEY ARE SELF-STARTING. THEY DO THEIR OWN THINKING, PLANNING, AND ACTING. MOST TOWNS OR CITIES WOULD BE DEAD INDEED WITHOUT SOME OF THESE PEOPLE AROUND. THEY MAKE UP THE 20% WHO SUBSCRIBE 80% OF THE BUDGET AND DO 80% OF THE WORK.

THE SPECTATORS WATCH OTHER PEOPLE DO THEIR WORK. THEY MAY BE SYMPATHETIC, BUT THEY DO VERY LITTLE PARTICIPATING. SOMEONE ELSE HAS PLANNED EVERY FUNCTION THEY ATTEND. THEY LIVE ALL THEIR LIVES IN THE GRANDSTAND. THEY ENJOY WATCHING OTHERS SWEAT, BUT THEY EXPEND LITTLE ENERGY, TIME, OR MONEY THROUGH THEIR ORGANIZATION.

THE FREELOADERS COULDN'T TELL ANYONE ELSE WHAT THEIR ORGANIZATION IS DOING IF THEIR LIVES DEPENDED ON IT. THEY POUR WHATEVER INTEREST THEY HAVE INTO ONE TINY SEGMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION. THEY NEVER ATTEND PLANNING MEETINGS OR TRAINING SESSIONS. THEY MAKE THEMSELVES AS INCONSPICUOUS AS POSSIBLE IF THEY HAPPEN TO ATTEND THE FUNCTION PLANNED BY THEIR ORGANIZATION, AND THEY SLIP AWAY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BUT STILL THEY EXPECT PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FROM THOSE WHO HAVE DONE THE WORK.

THOSE WHO ARE IN PLACES OF LEADERSHIP IN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONAL EVENTS ARE INDEED FORTUNATE IF THERE ARE SEVERAL INITIATORS IN THEIR RANKS. PERHAPS THE TIME HAS COME FOR ALL OF US TO FIND OUT WHAT OUR OWN OQ (ORGANIZATIONAL QUOTIENT) IS ■

DR. TAL D. BONHAM, who was reared in Clinton and earned a B.A. degree at OBU, is now Executive Director-Treasurer of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. His books on church humor are in demand nationwide.

WESTVIEW PATRONS

WEATHERFORD NEW CAR AUTO DEALERS ASSOCIATION
SOUTHWEST STATE BANK, SENTINEL
KELLEY JEWELERS, WEATHERFORD
ALLEN PHARMACY, INC., WEATHERFORD
UNITED COMMUNITY BANK, WEATHERFORD, FDIC

ED BERRONG INSURANCE AGENCY

Insurance
Real Estate
Bonds

"THE AGENCY SERVICE BUILT"

520 East Main Street
Weatherford, OK 73096
405-772-3329



GREAT PLAINS FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

SERVING YOU AT

CLINTON

1002 W. Frisco 323-0730

AND

WEATHERFORD

109 E. Franklin 772-7441



it was dough balls
and stink bait
mixed days
before

then we had to wait
for the night
of the full
moon

we'd go at dusk

spread out
Grandma's old quilt

bait the hooks
loft them out
set the tensions and wait

in the darkening night
with the water-cooled breeze
chattering the cottonwood leaves

we would listen
for the whine of a reel
or the flop of a giant cat

as the cicadas packed seventeen years of buzz
into one blitz

and late in the night we would eat
white bread sandwiches
of cheddar cheese and mustard

and I would squint
at the moon-rippled water
from the spot
between Mom
and Dad.

and imagine
my life

FISHING FOR MONSTERS

BY SHERYL L. NELMS

ILLUSTRATION BY KEDRON SMITH

ERICK'S ANNUAL

What do you get when you cross a bee with a lion? A Bee-a-Lion, naturally, and a prize-winning float a few years back that promoted the Erick Lions Club and the Erick Honey Festival all in one package.

The impressive Bee-a-Lion float is just one example of the way Erick folks put their hearts into the sweetest festival in Oklahoma. A sampling of parade entries in any given year might include California raisins coming out of their box to sing "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," horses and a buggy driven by Ervin Stehr of Clinton, a clown named Lynn pulling a wagonload of children known as the Honey Bunch, or a beehive swarming with a bevy of bees including the Queen Bee, Little Honey Bee, and Little Stinger contestants.

At age six, Erick's festival is a healthy youngster and still growing. However, few know the full extent of travail that went into its inception and birth. "Our biggest obstacle was getting the town in favor of the festival in the first place," Maxine Wilhelm says.

Maxine, along with her husband, Olin, operated the Wilhelm Honey Farm since 1962. From the very first year, they had what they termed Open House, during which they displayed candles and arrangements and conducted special tours. July was the month chosen that first year, but Oklahoma summers are not conducive to comfort, and the next year November was decided upon. Maxine felt that November would not only provide cooler temperatures but that it was close enough to Christmas to attract holiday shoppers.

As the years passed, the crowds grew and the Wilhelms' vision began to grow with it. They had learned through a beekeeper's newsletter about a city-wide honey festival in Lebanon, Ohio that attracted festival-goers from all over the United States. Why not attempt the same thing in Erick, Oklahoma?

Maxine says, "I would tell individual members of the Chamber of Commerce, "If you would work with us on this, it could be a really big event."

Reception from these small-town friends and business associates, while sympathetic, was not overwhelmingly in favor of what seemed a monumental and perhaps even

impossible venture. After all, they pointed out, Lebanon abounded with beekeepers; Erick had only one. Lebanon, as county seat, boasted over 7,000 population; Erick's was just over 1,200.

So Maxine and Olin's request for an official city-wide festival was shelved again for lack of enthusiasm. "On our twentieth year," Maxine says, "we got mad!" She laughs, so it is understood that they were not angry in the usual sense of the word, but simply more determined than ever.

There was a visit to a Chamber meeting. As fate would have it, the president at that time, Lane Chaney, was young and energetic and enthusiastic. "He picked up the idea and ran with it," Maxine says. "The rest is history."

Although no official statistics are available, it has been estimated that from six to seven thousand attended the festival last year (1987). There were perhaps two thousand fewer in 1988 because of the strained economy, but enthusiasm did not waver and festival-goers were not disappointed. There were scheduled events to please every taste — from the Parade and the Antique and Classic Car Show to the Honey Cooking Contest, the Quilt Show and Sale, the special exhibits at both the 100th Meridian Museum and the J. D. Martin Honey Farm, the three-act play presented by the Red Carpet

HONEY FESTIVAL: BEE THERE

By Margie Snowden North

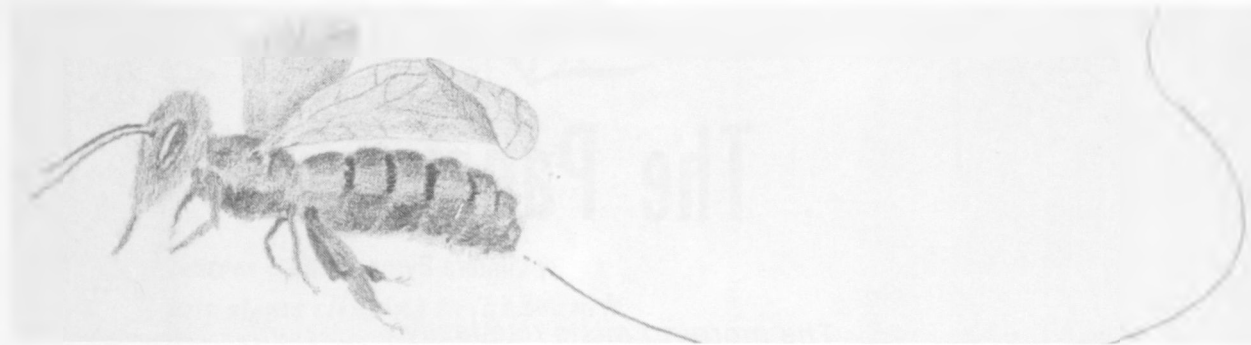


ILLUSTRATION BY KEDRON SMITH

Community Theater of Elk City, and, of course the ever-popular Arts and Crafts Show which has grown from 25 booths the first year to 90 this year.

Present Chamber president, Lonnie Olson, like Lane Chaney, is young and enthusiastic and doesn't mind expending energy on behalf of the festival. He and Chamber secretary, Glenda West, sent press releases to 40 area newspapers including THE AMARILLO DAILY NEWS and THE DAILY OKLAHOMAN. They invited TV coverage and talked with at least two magazine editors about feature stories. The results have not all panned out; "If we can't prove to the news media that it's big, they won't cover it," Lonnie says.

But some publicity has been achieved and word of mouth has played a big part in the success story. Consequently, on the second weekend in November of each year, activity buses and numerous other out-of-county (and some out-of-state) vehicles can be seen pulling into Erick and spilling out eager festival-goers, all of whom soon find that Erick's Annual Honey Festival is a honey of a place to bee.

(Side Bar) In January of 1988, the Wilhelms sold their honey farm to J. D. Martin, OU track and field coach for 25 years, and one of Erick's favorite sons. On the Friday evening

before the 1988 festival was to begin the next day, J. D. and his wife, Vina, and her son and his wife, Rick and Teri Gardner, were doing last-minute chores when a calamity occurred. Just as they finished cleaning one end of the Candle Shop, the other end was struck by lightning, which caused a fire that took the Erick Volunteer Fire Department three hours to bring under control.

Although the new Honey Farm owners lost two rooms full of Christmas wreaths, candles and arrangements, and a night's sleep, they participated fully in the festival the following day. They greeted visitors who were quick to understand their predicament, enjoyed brisk honey sales, manned a booth at the Arts and Crafts Show, and won First in Theme Float in the parade with J. D. depicting the harried beekeeper trying to protect his "bees" and keep the honey bear from stealing his money. They began rebuilding and reorganizing immediately after the fire and are eagerly awaiting next year's festival. ■

MARGIE SNOWDEN NORTH of Erick keeps busy with a variety of activities, including being "idea girl" and regular writer for WESTVIEW.



The Pansy

By Clintora Byrne-Harris

*The morning mists rise lazily
Among the leaves on tender boughs
Of trees that line the winding creek.
A tiny pansy lifts its face
Upward in soft adoration
To the supplier of its needs
And the morning sun continues
Its steady climb through deep blue skies.*

*Then disastrous storm clouds roll in
Blotting out the midday sunshine.
The pansy bends beneath the storm
Until a break in the clouds lets
A shaft of light come flooding through
Illuminating a deep pool of
Water near the drenched flower
Providing hope for the future.*

*As the violent storm moves on,
One massive cloud is outlined with
A bright band of shining silver.
High above the purple pansy,
Nestling among the dripping pines,
The band slowly widens until
The evening sun slips out to bathe
The woods in the spotlight of faith.* ■

CLINTORA BYRNE-HARRIS, now deceased, was a longtime resident of Hinton and then moved to Weatherford. She was also a student at SOSU and a member of Weatherford Wordhandlers, a club for both amateur and professional writers.

MOUNTAIN VIEW

creationery likenesses

Leaves

By David Klaassen

*L*eaves

Their stems clinging to the branch

Where they have grown

For days

Months

Maybe even years

Slowly drifting

In the warm autumn breeze

*A*nd sometimes

When the wind grows stronger

And a big gale comes along

They band together

Pounding against one another

Until the wind dies down again

Then they lazily hang there

Not knowing what their next move will be

DAVID KLAASSEN, Co-Valedictorian of the Weatherford High School 1988 graduating class, is now a freshman at OBU.

Dedicated Mountain View Artist

By Mickie Jeanne Bennett



Courtesy of Johnny Tracy II

Johnny Tracy II is a prestigious artist from Mountain View; in fact, he has lived in Mountain View all his life. After graduating from Mountain View High School in 1967, he married a Gotebo girl named Mickey Garner; and the couple now has two sons, John III and Jay.

When Johnny first began as an artist, he didn't do paintings. He began with lettering and stripping stock cars during the time he was attending a private drafting school in Oklahoma City. So for several years, he worked devotedly nights and days.

Mickey Tracy is also very talented and is a great asset to her husband. She does all the color coordinating, matting, and framing of his paintings, thus leaving Johnny more time to create his works.

The type of work Johnny does now is quite different from his early works. He now concentrates solely on realistic scenes of the Southwest, on wildlife, clowns, and character studies. A few of the media techniques he uses are water colors, etching, and embossing. Some of



Courtesy of Mickie Bennett

these techniques, such as etching, can be tedious. His realistic water color paintings are mostly of scenes of the Southwest.

His works have been exhibited throughout the United States in public and one-man shows. He has won numerous awards in juried and international-juried shows. He has received awards and merits throughout the United States. He has won purchase awards several years from the Museum of the Great Plains. In short, it's an unusual year that Johnny Tracy doesn't win top awards in the shows in which he participates. In fact, he won the BEST OF SHOW in 1986 in the Hobart Art Festival and in the Heart of Oklahoma Art Show.

Johnny's paintings hang in private and public collections throughout the country. He also sells his paintings at his home and at art festivals as he travels around the country. He has spent his life painting, embossing, etching, and using other media. All of his works are easily worth a fortune in care and hard work

— not to mention their dollar value. The largest private collection of his paintings is owned by the Liberty National Bank of Oklahoma City. And there is also a collection of his works at the Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City.

Johnny, Mickey, and their family continue to make their home in Mountain View, showing paintings in their home. Johnny hopes that someday soon he will have a private gallery in Mountain View. The Tracys enjoy being artists, which makes all the hard work worthwhile. (Written during Summer Session 1986 in Editor Thomas' Composition class) ■

MICKIE JEANNE BENNETT attended the Jane Brooks School for eight years and then graduated from Mountain View High School. She is now a Senior at SOSU majoring in Accounting and minoring in Computer.



S.O.S.U. ART DEPARTMENT

1989 SHOWCASE

for STUDENT ARTISTS



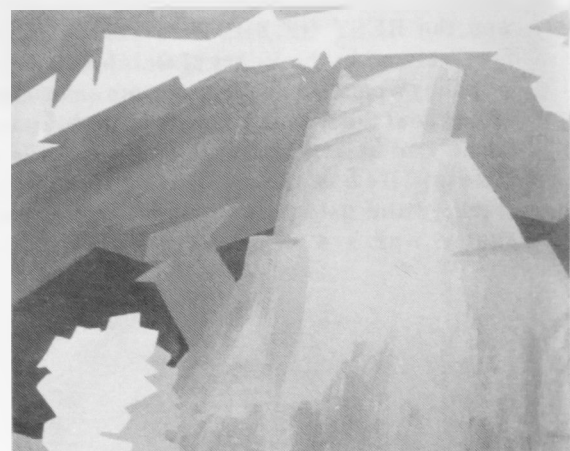
by Jay Hollopeter

Pencil

Untitled

by Twila Sutton

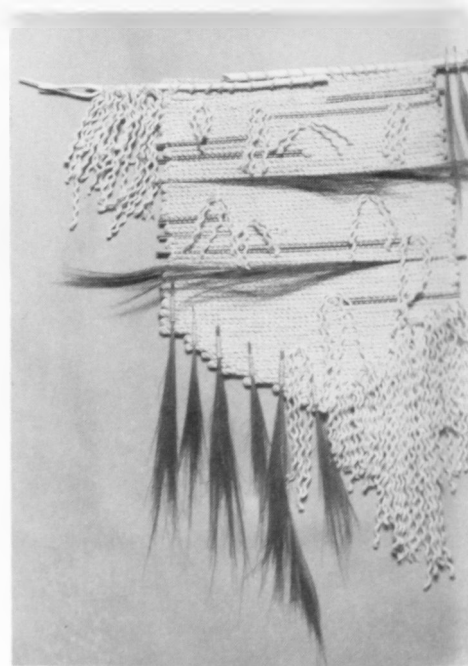
Silver Point



"Ghost Mound"

by John Hubener

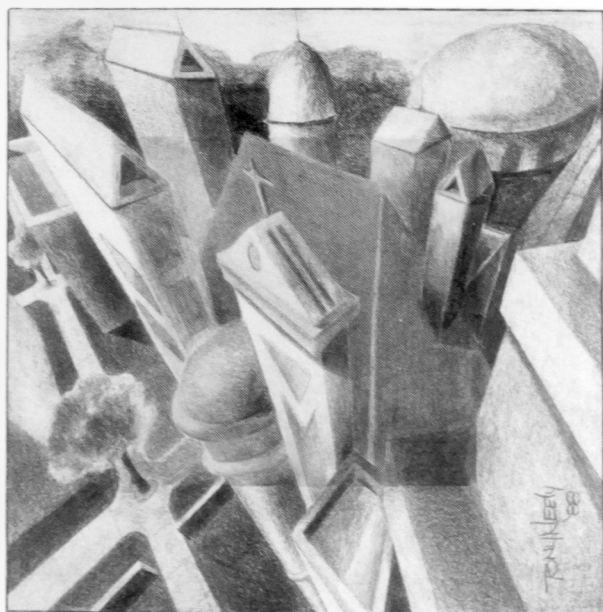
Acrylic



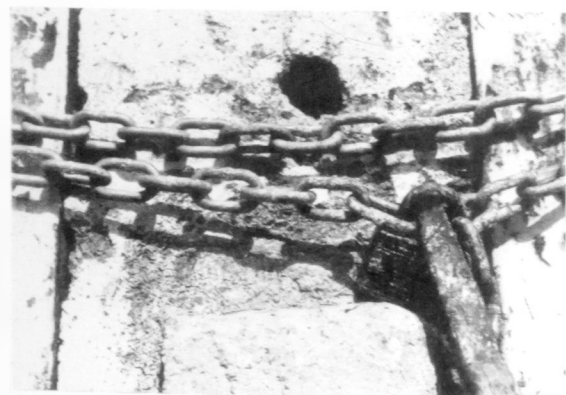
"Oklahoma"

by Sossee Eskidjian

Weaving



"Crowder Cathedral" by Tony Neely
Color Pencil



by Gina Mitchell B/W Photo



Untitled
by Jay Hollopeter
Silver Point

Untitled

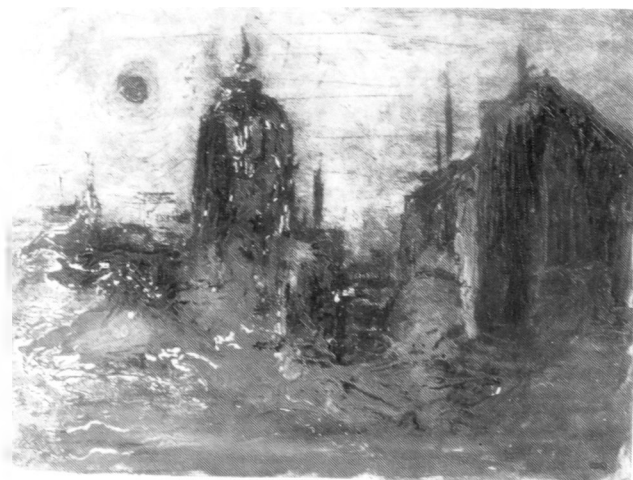
Hand Made Paper



"Mother Earth" by Karen Sullivan

"Northern Light"

by Tony Neely Collagraph



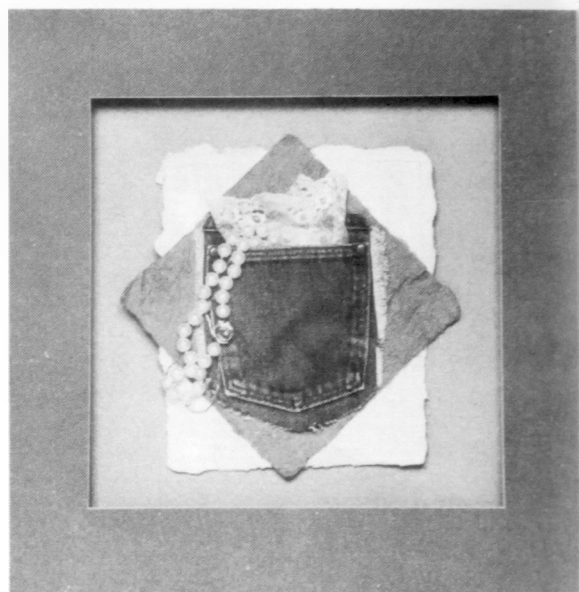


"Morning Exercise" by Patty Lack

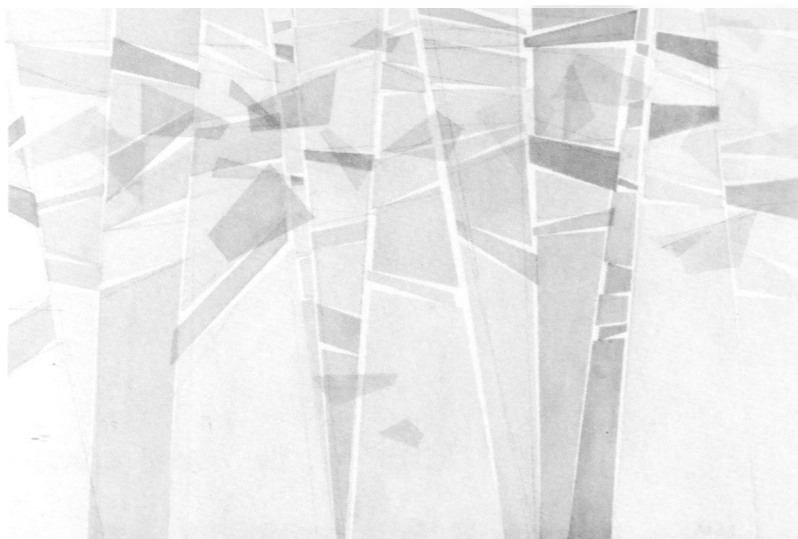
Dry Point Etching Prints

"City Slicker"

Mixed Media



by Sheila Loftiss



"Summer Zephyr"

by Cathy Wells

Watercolor



"Karen" by Janie Dodd

Watercolor

"Feline Ceremonial Mask"

by Sheila Loftiss

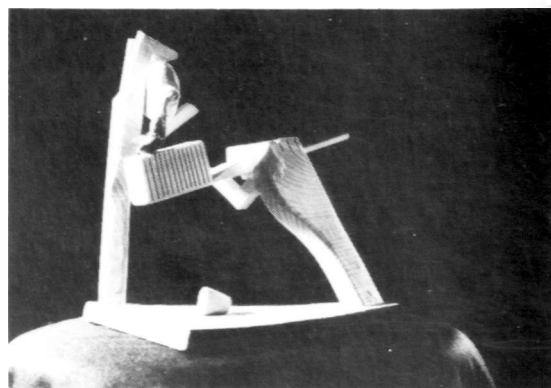
Mixed Media



"Morning Ritual"

by Kedron Smith

Wood Carving





"Night Moves"

by Janie Dodd

Pastel



"American Pride"

by Shannon Bower

Watercolor

"Passage"

by Cathy Wells



B/W Photo

"Two Horses & a Yucca"

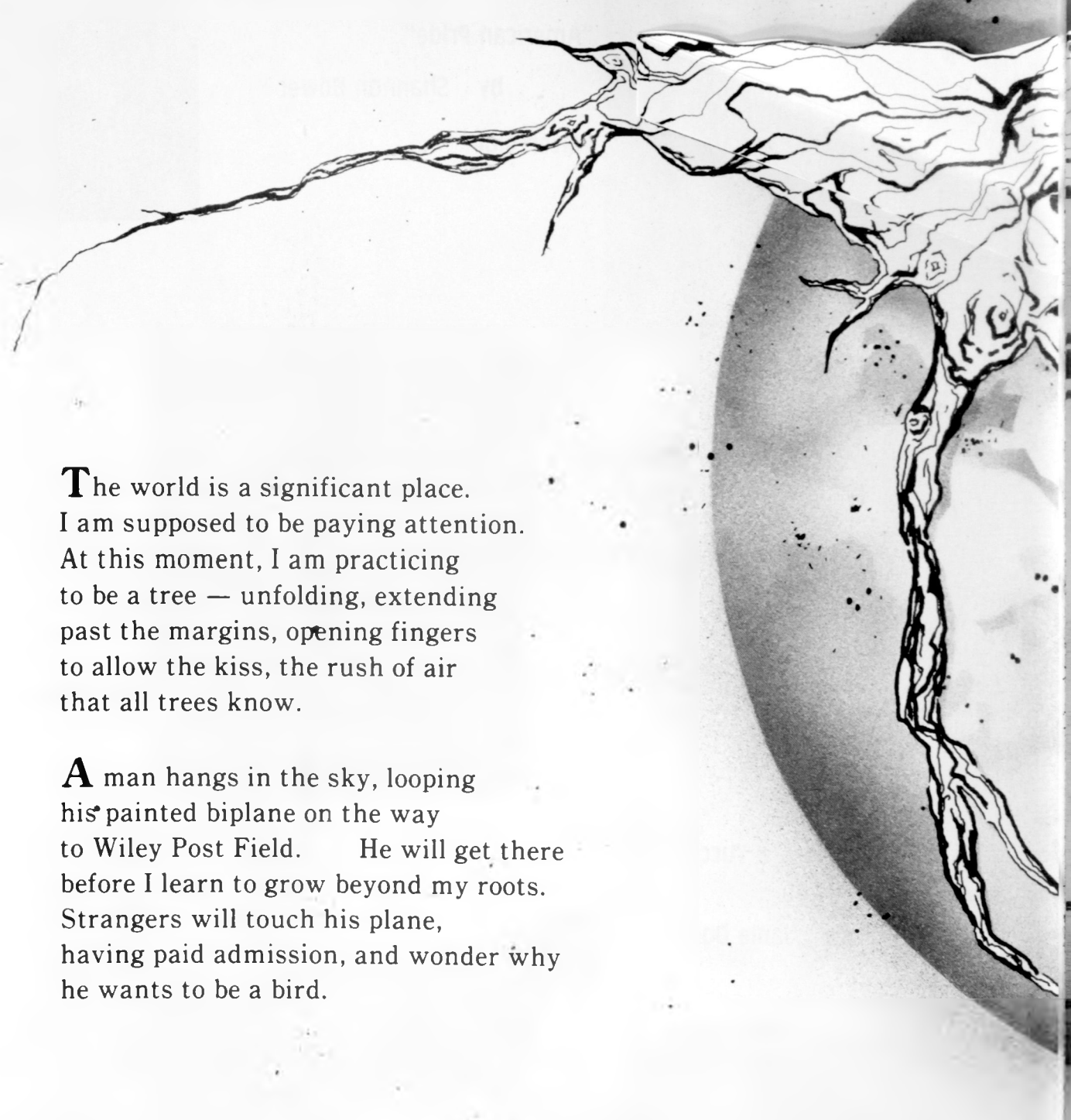
by Janie Dodd

Watercolor



Air Show

By Sandra Soli



The world is a significant place.
I am supposed to be paying attention.
At this moment, I am practicing
to be a tree — unfolding, extending
past the margins, opening fingers
to allow the kiss, the rush of air
that all trees know.

A man hangs in the sky, looping
his painted biplane on the way
to Wiley Post Field. He will get there
before I learn to grow beyond my roots.
Strangers will touch his plane,
having paid admission, and wonder why
he wants to be a bird.

SANDRA SOLI, originally from England, now lives and writes in Oklahoma City. An active worker in the Poetry Society of Oklahoma, she will be a significant part of the meeting in Oklahoma City this year of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies.



Illustration by Tony Neely

vicarious experience

*The midway at the fair unwraps memories of . . .
strings of flickering, flashing lights promising
risky surprises.
a kaleidoscope of reeling rides and mechanical
merry-go-round music.
corn dogs, cotton candy, worn darts, and cheap
aluminum jewelry.
babbling, monotonous barkers crying for anxious,
gullible takers.
wide-eyed children laughing with purple snow-cone
stickiness.
a side show of tiger ladies and sword-swallowing
he-men.
hand-holding sweethearts oblivious of the noisy,
shoving crowd.
fifth-grade boys sneaking a few forbidden chokes on
stolen cigarettes.
brief rests among pesty, swarming flies and greasy,
steamy concessions.*

*soft, cool breezes soothing the warm excitement of
a special night.*

*PAT KOURT — creative-writing teacher, librarian, and
free-lance writer from Thomas — is a SOSU alumna. This
poem is another of her many valued contributions to
WESTVIEW.*

*Serving Weatherford and
surrounding area
since 1944*



King's

Main & Washington
Weatherford, OK 73096
Phone 772-3378

Fresh and silk flowers for all occasions
Plants Hallmark Cards
Unique Gifts Balloons




**Security
State
Bank**

Cheyenne, Oklahoma

Full Service Bank



Since 1912



497-3354

"Growing by Helping Others Grow"

sweet source



Photograph by Raymond O. Gibbs

Rush Springs' Unique Watermelon Festival

By Keith Long

A mid-winter drive through the silent, Sunday-afternoon streets of Rush Springs reveals a few hard facts about the southern Grady County community. When U.S. 81 was re-channeled around the western edge of the town a couple of decades ago, it took all of the traffic and most of the commerce with it.

There are no pizzerias. No golden arches. No fast-food, sack-'em, grab-'em, run-and-eat-'em drive-throughs. No loud, glass-plated, neon-brightened truck stops. No citified country convenience stores. There is one stop-n-shop with a lone, 18-year-old female attendant with a cheerful "Hi ya" and a just-as-cheerful "S'long." There are two coffee shops — Jerry's, which is located in the old City Cafe site, and T. C.'s, which is located where it's always been. Both are closed for Sunday, awaiting Monday morning's stir-and-chatter club.

Any business that is open is on the highway loop-around. In the heart of Rush Springs, at the corner of Old 81 and Blakely Street, traffic consists of an occasional Ford pickup occupied by some high-school kid and an overworked stereo, which echoes strains of Led Zeppelin up and down the two-block business district.

What the winter afternoon does not reveal are the resources that have kept Rush Springs a viable community over the decades while more robust and pretentious towns have fallen to rubble. For below the community runs a river of the purest and sweetest water in the state. And, wrapped like a scarf around the north and west sides of the town, lies a stretch of hardy, replenishing sandhills.

The two geologically grafted features come together to produce one undeniable fact: Rush Springs is watermelon



country. And once a year, on the second Saturday in August (August 12 this year), Rush Springs asserts its title as "Watermelon Capital of the World" with an annual watermelon festival, complete with a melon queen coronation, a carnival, politicking, arts and crafts, and about 50,000 pounds of fresh watermelon for a throng of 15,000 people. The community lives for that single day, and even sleepy, mid-winter days are significant in these parts because it brings the harvest one day closer.

Rush Springs' fresh water and productive soil was never much of a secret. W. S. Nye points out that when the Wichita Indians were forced away from Medicine Bluff by a malaria epidemic in 1850, the small band relocated at the fresh springs which bubbled up near present-day Rush springs (W. S. Nye, cited by Carbine and Lance, *THE STORY OF OLD FORT SILL*, OU Press, p. 15). And when a stage line was established between Fort Sill and Caddo sometime around 1875, Rush Springs was designated as the last nightly stopover before reaching Fort Sill because of the availability — and reliability — of fresh water (Nye, p. 279).

It didn't take long for settlers to take advantage of the area's melon-growing capabilities. Hobart Ragland, in his *HISTORY OF RUSH SPRINGS*, records that although very little land was in cultivation in 1893, by 1901 local

farmers had organized an "Oklahoma Fruit and Melon Growers Association" (Rush Springs, *Gazette Publishing Company*, 1952, pp. 51-52). Ragland quotes James I. Crawford from a September 8, 1937 interview in the *CHICKASHA DAILY EXPRESS*: "We loaded from ten to sixty-one (rail) cars daily, the latter number being our record. We hardly ever loaded less than thirty or forty cars" (p. 52).

Raymond Gibbs, a longtime Rush Springs resident, banker, and goodwill ambassador, notes that the local melon trade loaded up more than 600 boxcars during the 1928 harvest, and that didn't include an ever-increasing percentage of melons shipped by highway.

Gibbs, who began work in Rush Springs as a banker, has been personally involved with the history and development of Rush Springs since that time. Although he sold his interest in banking in 1979 and retired as Chairman of the Board of First National of Rush Springs in 1983, he still keeps an office adjacent to Jerry's Cafe and stays abreast of community news.

According to Gibbs, it was a natural that Rush Springs would organize a festival around its watermelon harvest. The event has grown in commercial appeal since it began in 1940, Gibbs admits, but it retains much of its home-grown quality.

"We still reserve all the booths and concessions for groups in this area, such as the high-school band, the senior citizens center, and the FFA," Gibbs notes. "It's a chance for them to bring in some money. And there's still a lot of friendly competition from the local families to see who can harvest the biggest melon. Bragging rights, I suppose."

Gibbs recalls the meeting that eventually spawned the festival tradition:

"A gentleman by the name of Calvin Horn stood up at a Lion's Club meeting; he was the vocational-agriculture instructor at the high school and lives today in Maysville. I'm not really sure

of the year, but it must have been in 1935 or 1936. Horn said, 'We need to have a watermelon festival. We've got a product here that people will come from miles around to see. It'll be a good way to bring people together, and it'll help our farmers promote and sell their crops.' Well, right away, there were those among the Lions Club who thought the idea was a good one."

It wasn't until 1940 that the Rush Springs Lions — who still stage the festival today — put the first melon feed together.

"There are several things I remember about the first festival," Gibbs said. "Of course, at the time we really didn't know what to expect. We hoped to draw a crowd of 2,000 or so people. But we weren't prepared for what happened."

Gibbs said that he and a few other businessmen from the community made a promotional trip to Oklahoma City just prior to the 1940 event. "We talked with the *OKLAHOMAN*, and the newspaper also controlled one of the major radio stations at that time. The radio people liked our idea and agreed to give us some free publicity."

The radio promoted the free watermelon feed for several days leading up to the festival, and Gibbs said that the result was overwhelming.

"We had about 10,000 people that day. We had never imagined it could have been such a success. We ran out of everything. We operated a little hamburger stand and by mid-afternoon we were sold out. We ran out of hamburger meat and hamburger buns and mustard and everything else you can put on a hamburger. We went all over the area trying to buy more supplies, but we couldn't meet the demand that day. After the festival was over and we tallied everything up, the Lions Club lost around two or three thousand dollars on that first event."

But Gibbs and the rest of the community had seen the light. They knew they had struck something big. Im-

mediately, plans were made for the next festival.

"Another highlight of that first festival — I remember because Ada Mae Timms was the queen that year — was that Governor Red Phillips was set to speak that evening," Gibbs continued. "We didn't have a lot of buildings or any kind of structures around. We had a truck set up in the middle of the park for the speakers to stand on. But about the time Phillips was ready to speak, it began to rain — a cloudburst. We decided to move the program to the high-school auditorium, and the whole party of people went up there.

"Phillips — who was a burly fellow and must've weighed 250 or 260 pounds — finally got his speech off. Then when he and his political buddies — he'd brought several big names with

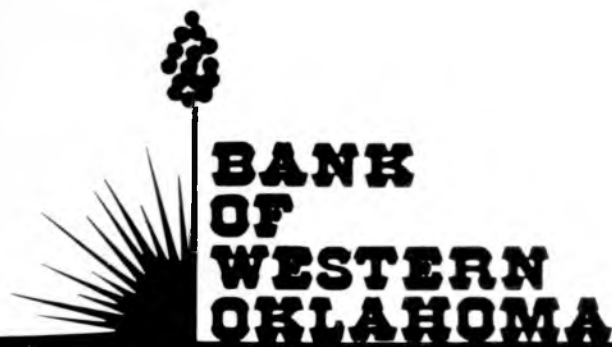
him — were ready to leave, the battery on their car was dead. So here it was, maybe 9:30 or 10:00 p.m., and it would take a couple of hours for someone to drive to Chickasha to get another battery.

"We were all standing around wondering what to do with the time, and Phillips says, 'Let's play some dominoes.' Someone produced a set, and the next thing you know the Governor, the director of the Highway Commission, and a number of other dignitaries were playing dominoes in the middle of the bank building. They were having a high time, chiding each other for silly plays, and accusing the Governor of not counting his spots correctly. And there was a big crowd of townspeople pushed around to watch the game. Everyone was really enjoying themselves — I think we were all sorry

when the guy got back with the new battery."

So it goes with the Rush Springs festival. Every year has its own unique flavor. This year, when upwards of 15,000 people flock into Jess Davis Park, the festival may not conclude with Governor Bellmon shuffling the bones for a game of Forty-two in the village square, but chances are good that something just as delightful is likely to happen. ■

KEITH LONG, originally from Grady County, has an M.A. in English from OSU, and is now in his first year as Instructor of English at SOSU.



**Supporting Western
Oklahoma**

Member F.D.I.C.

Elk City, Oklahoma

Phone (405) 225-3434

SOMEPLACE

Sucker Day At _____

By Kate Jackson Lewis

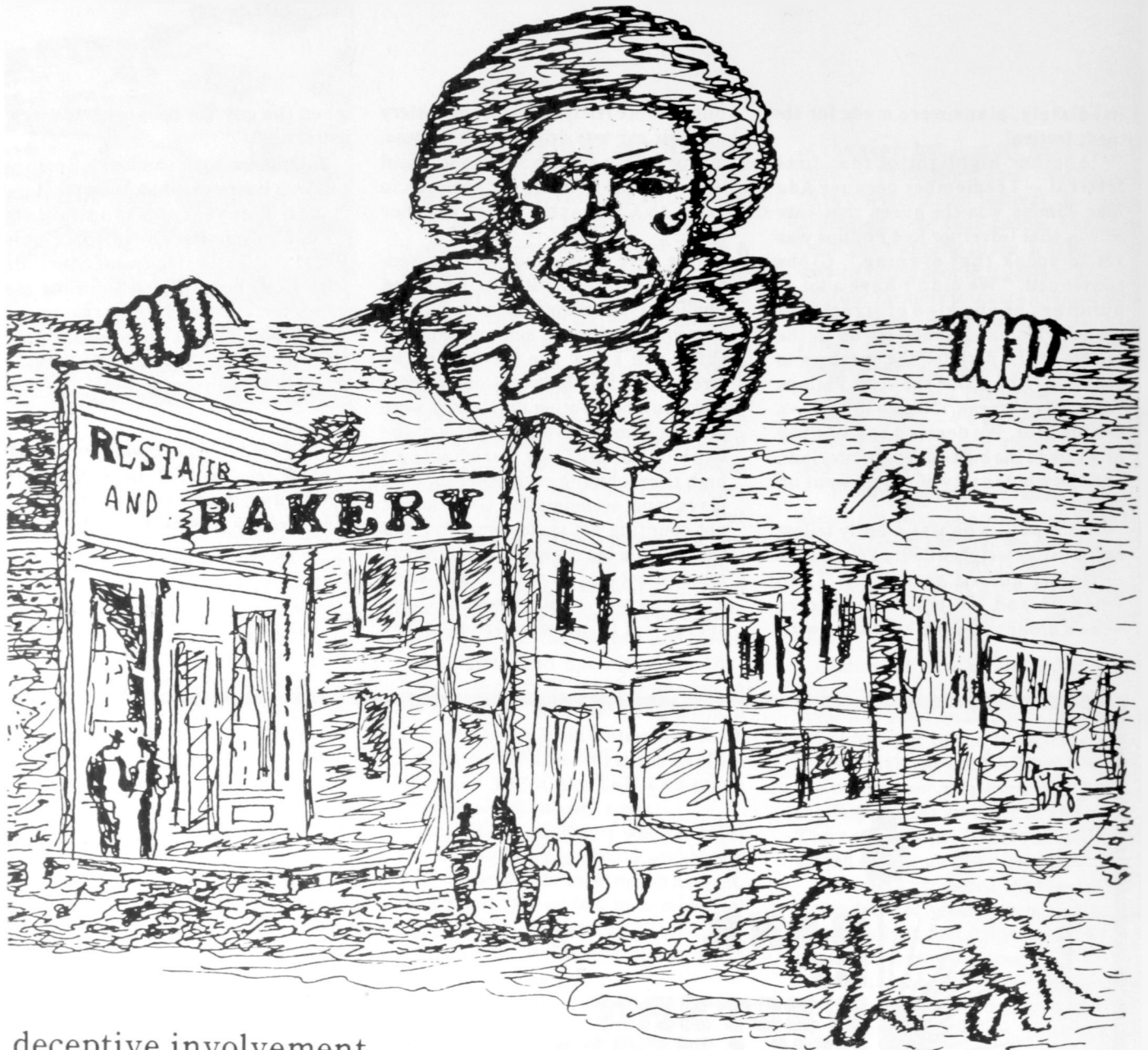


Illustration by Jeff Johnson

deceptive involvement

Even if you've never been the object of an April Fool's prank — isn't it true that you look at April 1 with a suspicious eye?

But when an outlandish prankster hoodwiners the populace of an entire town the size of _____ population 1687, it just about proves "that a sucker is born every minute."

Back in 1950, _____, folks were like those in most other small towns — they could always use a boost in business. That was a natural setup for one J. Bam

Morrison, master craftsman in the art of grafting. His clean, neat look and suave manner could have sold electric fans to Eskimo sledders near the Arctic Circle.

What he did was sell people in _____ the idea of a circus, complete with tent, animals, and performers. It would draw crowds from a hundred miles around — he promised the _____ County residents.

The idea sown by J. Bam grew and blossomed as the conniving man patiently waited for the desired effect. At the proper time, he casually mentioned that he was a bit short

on cash since he hadn't been home for some time. The unsuspecting men of the town thought nothing of supplying the entrepreneur with a little folding money to take care of his board, lodging, and a few other incidentals. They even went so far as to tell him where the classier people traded, ate, and slept.

Thanking his new friends for their generosity, J. Bam Morrison had his hair cut, his suit cleaned, and bought himself a new shirt. He even paid the dentist a visit and had his teeth brightened. To businessmen who extended credit, he promised exclusive concession rights under or nearest the biggest tent.

The small town became a whirl of activity as the haystack for elephants grew. Every business in town heaped up enormous stacks of goods in preparation for the big day. Boy Scouts tacked up thousands of posters and distributed handbills to every address in town.

J. Bam spent his time strolling up and down Main Street as if he were a movie idol lately returned home. He made a big point of remembering names and repeating stories of his renowned and eventful life, concluding each by touting the upcoming circus.

The promised day of celebration arrived — but no circus!!!!

Crowds of people flocked in from nearby Western Oklahoma communities as well as from faraway communities — but still no J. Bam Morrison there to greet them. In fact, J. Bam had vanished.

Hay was there in abundance for the elephants — but no elephants!

Plenty of gloom was evident that day in _____, and no more joy prevailed than was prevalent on the day that mighty Casey struck out.

The crowd milled around in stunned disappointment until noon. A few ate hotdogs but made no headway on the large quantities of franks and buns.

Somewhere in the midst of this mess, up stepped the least likely to be seen or heard person. Mounting the platform, this "What's-His-Name" character gained a few listeners to whom he made a likely suggestion, "Why not admit we're suckers," he said, "and promote a SUCKER DAY, advertise it, stage a ropin' and ridin', put on a parade, and then sell our soda pop and hotdogs?"

One can imagine some ironic person shouting out degradingly, "And sell a ticket to J. Bam Morrison!"

After the fog cleared, plans were made and carried out for several successful Sucker Day money makers. Then, someone remembered hearing the jab about selling a ticket to J. Bam Morrison. Perhaps that wasn't a bad idea, after all. So a move began to locate the notorious character. His address found, a letter was sent, inviting J. Bam to return to the scene, not for punishment, but to act as Parade Marshal down Main Street.

Sending his regrets, he explained that it would be impossible for him to attend, for he was in an Arkansas jail.

When August 28, 1989 rolls around, _____ will once again celebrate "Sucker Day" with the usual parade, Sucker Queen Coronation, and other fanfare.

It is doubtful that J. Bam Morrison will grace the townspeople by making a surprise appearance.

KATE JACKSON LEWIS of Purcell is a retired Western Oklahoma public-school Language Arts teacher. Her works have often graced the pages of this journal. ■

See our Trust Department to
provide professional management
for your assets and security
for your families.



FIRST NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST COMPANY IN CLINTON

Fifth and Frisco • Clinton, Oklahoma • Member FDIC

The First National Bank

of
Custer City
MEMBER F.D.I.C.



Custer City, Okla. 73639

Phone 593-2291

P.O. Box 100

Roots Along The Stone

By Robert Samuel Lackey

Amidst the rubble of your dreams,
Beneath the swirling dust and
Fading embers of a scream
That clogged your throat
When you first heard the news,
Now silence sits.

Heavy, a great stone on your chest
Each breath slips out like water
Through your hands. . .to get it back
Requires a supreme act of will
And memory.
Time itself hangs freeze-frame in the
Eye.

Yet into this stark crater in your life
Will tumble strange new soil.
Fragments falling in from other lives.
Broken loose by shock,
Often igneous. . .shaped and shattered
By the heat.

And in the pit, where all you tilled
Was blasted to the rock
Deep waters trickle in from hidden
veins.
And roots once stopped by stone,
Find bright fissures and pass through —
To deeper soil.

Time drops new seeds and passes on.
And there's no need now
To plow around the stones.
For it is in the end
That new life can break through.
And it is in the end
That we begin again.

DR. ROBERT SAMUEL LACKEY, a Walt Whitman scholar, is an Assistant Professor in the SOSU Language Arts Department, where he has taught the past twenty years.

Photograph by Tony Neely



Changing Times —

I don't know how long ago it was that the Indian fairs of Weatherford, Oklahoma first started. We moved to Weatherford while I was around five years of age, and I recall them as far back as I can remember.

Seven thousand Indians, Arapaho and Cheyenne, and Whites once a year would gather for their festival at our town of 1500 Whites and Blacks. What a time that would be — the Whites and Reds celebrating in a friendly atmosphere, but with still lingering thoughts of the yesteryears smoldering just beneath the skin.

The two main things I remember the most were the long parades of the cowboys and the Indians as they marched down Main Street. The big chief was always at the beginning of the long procession with his war bonnet of eagle feathers. "Cowboys and Indians" was the everpopular game of our childhood. As he plowed through us kids, brushing us aside like the hull of a ship parting the waves,

the big chief and his steed pawed their way forward. I can still see that the chief's stern and stately face, erect and sober, centered among those beautiful feathers, with war paint that glowed like sunshine on a cloudy day. With head held erect, he glanced down at me, in particular, which I considered an honor. He looked so stately and proud, as if he had just won a great battle.

But the battle had not been fought yet. The sham battle-to-be was after the parade and was held on the fairgrounds at the south edge of town. Talk about a sight! **There** was a sight to be seen! All of the Indians and cowboys in the parade put on one of the most realistic and spectacular sham battles ever held.

In those days, there were no motion picture cameramen around, but the mock battle would have been ideal film clips for Hollywood. But there weren't any, I'm sure, for if I didn't see any, being a "see-all, hear-all," there weren't any.

The battle was on a place as big

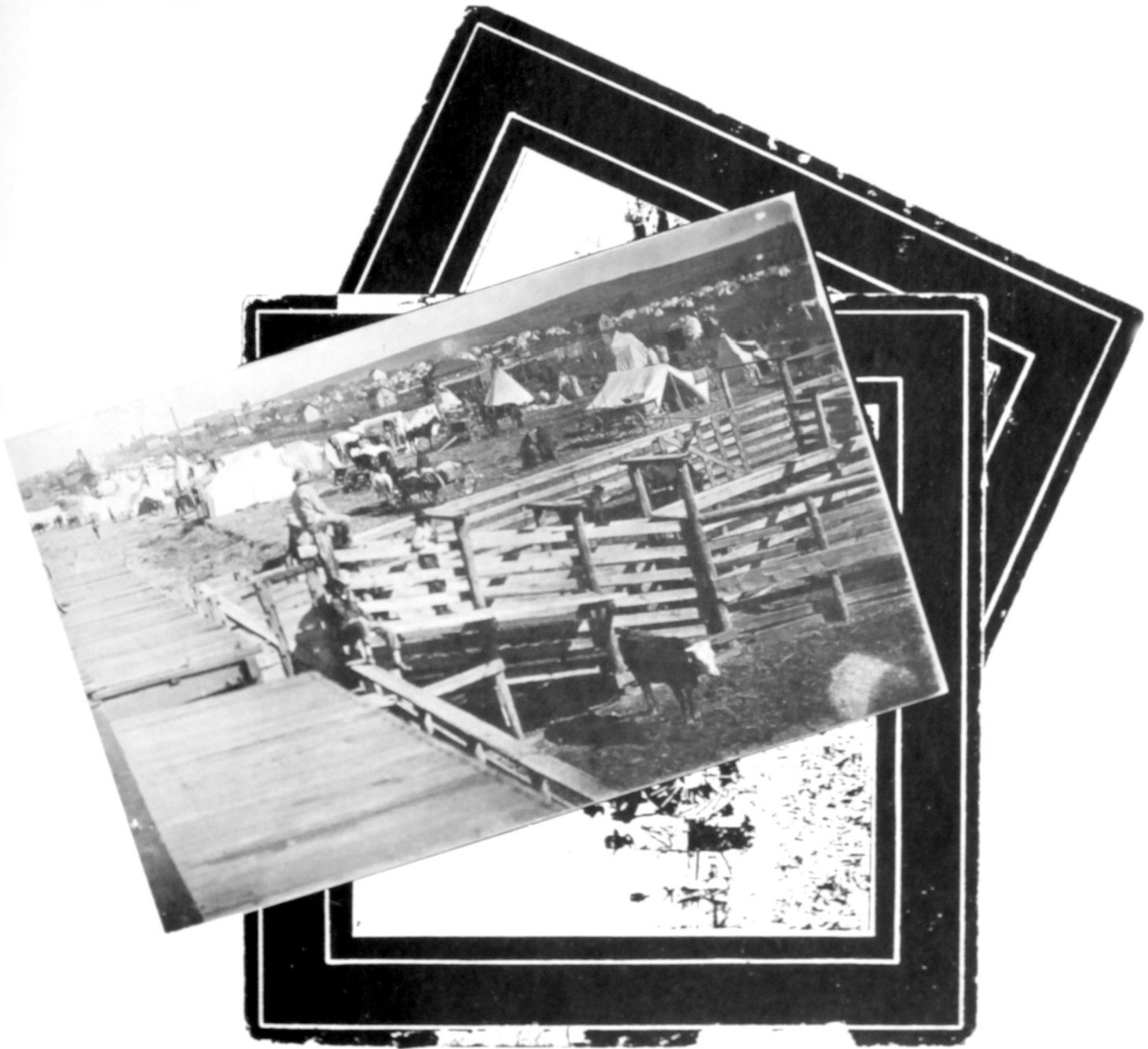
as a football field. There they lined up and charged, firing away at one another, of course with blanks, even using bows and arrows. Each side used the most surprising and skillful tactics at its command — shooting over the backs of the horses while crouching on the other side. Actually, they were falling from their horses, lying as if dead all over the battleground. There couldn't have been any better battle fought that would depict the true realism of those tragic eras. Undoubtedly, this drama must have been directed by "old salties" of past battles.

The Indian fairs lasted only five or six years longer, putting me about nine years of age in 1915. Changing times were in style even back in those days. But anyhow, I'm thankful for the memories. ■

ELMER M. MILLS, now of Seneca, Missouri, has sent many of his memories for WESTVIEW readers through his granddaughter-agent Lori LeBahn. His memory of the Indian fairs is his second.

Indian Fairs

By Elmer M. Mills



Pictures courtesy of Claris Robinson

joint effort



Community Involvement

The formation of the Arts and Humanities Committee of the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce began in the fall of 1973 through the efforts of local artist Shirley Belanger. She felt that Weatherford had the potential for hosting an annual arts festival. With the help of John Fowler, then the manager of the Chamber of Commerce, she assembled information and sent it to the Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. Soon a grant was provided to start the festival. The Committee was formed and work started. Committee members spent many hours visiting other communities that had hosted arts festivals, studying the judging procedures and gathering information to organize the

festival. They compiled a list of prospective artists and mailed invitations to them. Weatherford's first Arts Festival was held on April 27, 1974 in downtown Weatherford on Custer Street between Main and Franklin. Purchase awards were available, box lunches were planned for artists, and performing arts were featured. Flower carts and balloons gave a festive appearance to the area. Several years later, the Arts Festival was moved to Means-Clark Park and was held in the fall.

The second Saturday in September is the date set aside each year for Weatherford's Annual Southwest Festival of the Arts. It has grown to be one of the largest in the area with over 150 artists and craftsmen participating. Many concessions

are offered, performing artists entertain, and a workshop is available for children.

The Arts and Humanities Committee is formed in January of each year and begins working to prepare for the September Festival. The organizational structure includes a Chairman, Co-Chairman, and eighteen sub-committee chairmen who coordinate the efforts to organize this outstanding event. It takes approximately 200 volunteers, along with employees of the City of Weatherford, working together to make the festival a success.

The Commercial Art Department at Southwestern is invited to participate in the design of the invitation cover going out to all potential artists and craftsmen. There is one



In Weatherford

By Linda Dixon



winner with a \$50 cash prize donated by the Weatherford Board of Realtors. The winning design is also used for various publicity needs of the Festival Committee. The Weatherford Public Schools are called upon to design the publicity poster and the program cover. Prize money for this contest is also donated by the Weatherford Board of Realtors.

The profits made from the Arts Festival are used for promoting the Arts and Humanities within the community. The greatest percentage is used to sponsor art workshops in the

Weatherford Public Schools. Those individuals and places of business that donate prize money to the Festival are greatly appreciated. They enable the Festival to be self-sustaining without having to rely on grants or other outside means of support.

Every year, the Arts Festival grows and continues to improve in quality. It's a privilege for Weatherford to be able to host this year's sixteenth annual Southwest Festival of the Arts. The date will be September 7, 1989 from 9:00 to 5:00. The Festival is a major community



Photos courtesy of Weatherford Daily News



involvement, one of which all of us can be proud. We must all be thankful for our "Festival Pioneers" Shirley Belanger, John Fowler, and the many other volunteers who worked to present the first arts festival.

LINDA DIXON is the wife of Weatherford physician Tom Dixon. The Dixons have lived in Weatherford since September, 1981. They have two children, Elizabeth and Jeff, who attend Weatherford Public Schools. With Jack Smith, Mrs. Dixon was Co-Chairman of the 1988 Festival of the Arts. ■



FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF THOMAS

Customer Satisfaction SINCE 1904

- Two Teller Lanes
- Excellent, Friendly Staff
- Night Depository
- Member FDIC
- Computerized, In-house Processing

Phone 661-3515

301 W. Broadway

Thomas, Oklahoma



Illustration by Janie Dodd

Haunted By Home A Review

By Leroy Thomas

Lynn Riggs is a too honored Oklahoma writer not to be included in this Western Oklahoma journal. Phyllis Cole Braunlich's *HAUNTED BY HOME: THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF LYNN RIGGS* (ISBN 0-8061-2142-4) was published in November, 1988 by the OU Press and will probably prove to be a major breakthrough in Riggs scholarship.

Riggs' most prized work was *GREEN GROW THE LILACS*, upon which the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *OKLAHOMA!* was based.

HAUNTED BY HOME contains eleven chapters, and each title is a drawing card for an interesting expose. Examples include "The Golden World of Santa Fe" (Chapter 1), "Breaking Out: Oklahoma

University" (Chapter 3), "The Big Time: Broadway, Yaddo, and Paris" (Chapter 4), "Success Without Stability: The debut of *GREEN GROW THE LILACS*" (Chapter 6), "Reflected Glory: *GREEN GROW THE LILACS* Returns as *OKLAHOMA!*" (Chapter 10), and "Facing Toward the Western Sky" (Chapter 11). Within these pages, Braunlich describes what Riggs' friend Spud Johnson portrayed as "a long walk, in the rain."

Braunlich's biography is a chronicle of Riggs' association with the literary and cafe society on both coasts and in New Mexico during the twenties, thirties, and forties and reveals his close friends and associates to be Paul Green, Barrett H. Clark, Joan Crawford, and Bette Davis.

Braunlich, a Tulsa writer, cites

Riggs as one who had a "firm but tender love of the word" and says that his "courage and conviction" serve as examples "for writers everywhere who believe in their material and who know that what they have to say must be said in spite of all."

HAUNTED BY HOME has received praise from scholars and writers such as Dr. Paul Ruggiers and Paul Horgan as well as from actress Celeste Holm and director Mary Hunter Wolf.

Braunlich's biography (248 pages, 17 illustrations, notes, and bibliography) is a necessity for the private and public library and may be purchased for \$24.95 from the University of Oklahoma Press (1005 Asp Avenue — Norman 73019; 405-325-5111). ■



525 E. Main
Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096

772-3325

1 BLKS. W. OF 1ST STOP LIGHT E. OF TOWN
NEXT TO MARK RESTAURANT
BEST WESTERN MARK MOTEL



* RESTAURANT * COLOR TELEVISION * FREE HBO MOVIES
* 24 HOUR DIRECT DIAL PHONE * NO CHARGE FOR LOCAL CALLS
* SWIMMING POOL

—FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE OFFICE OPEN 24 HOURS—

1 BLKS FROM DOWNTOWN SHOPPING
1 MINUTES FROM SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY



**Treasured
memories...**

captured by

Blunck's

**photographic
professionals.**

**...the southwest's
outstanding photographers.**

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------|----------|
| Clinton | 614 Frisco | 323-0383 |
| Elk City | 116 W. Broadway | 225-1616 |
| Weatherford | 106 E. College | 772-2559 |

Stylesheet For WESTVIEW Contributors

By The WESTVIEW Editorial Board

Being published in WESTVIEW isn't really an elusive dream. All a writer must do is follow a few simple guidelines:

1. Always mail a submission flat in a manila envelope, remembering to include the SASE for a possible rejection.

2. Use a coversheet that contains name, address, telephone number, suggested issue (e.g., "Western Oklahoma Children").

3. Remember to leave your name and address off the submission itself. We want each contributor to be anonymous during the Board's assessing.

4. Remember the importance of a clean typewritten manuscript (double-spacing for prose and single-spacing for poetry). Use a good grade of 8½ x 11 white paper (no onionskin paper, please). Submit pen-and-ink graphics on white paper. Submit 5x7 b & w photos that may be kept on file in our offices and not returned.

5. Be sure to submit material that is related to Western Oklahoma. The geographical boundary is the area lying west of Interstate 35. However, we don't require that our contributors be current residents of Western Oklahoma.

6. Feeling that your submission will be accepted, you also need to send along a short biographical blurb written in third person. EXAMPLE: RONA DEL RIO, from Weatherford, is a SOSU junior majoring in Computer. The present selection is her first published work.

7. Strive for a natural writing style.

8. Accentuate originality and creativity.

9. After making your submission, sit back and expect the best. ■

FUTURE ISSUES

Spring 1989

Western Oklahoma Festivals

SUMMER, 1989 (Western Oklahoma Celebrations; deadline: 2-15-89)

SUMMER, 1990 (Western Oklahoma's Diverse Voices; deadline: 2-15-90)

FALL, 1989 (Western Oklahoma Cemeteries; deadline: 7-1-89)

FALL, 1990 (Western Oklahoma Friendships; deadline: 7-1-90)

WINTER, 1989 (Western Oklahoma Artisans; deadline: 9-15-89)

WINTER, 1990 (Western Oklahoma Reunions; deadline: 9-15-90)

SPRING, 1990 (Western Oklahoma's Children; (deadline: 12-15-89)

SPRING, 1991 (Western Oklahoma Romance; (deadline: 12-15-90)

We prefer 5 x 7 or 8 x 10 b & w glossies that we can keep, as well as clear, original manuscripts (no copies, please).

Please notice changes in submissions deadlines.

"Your Community Owned Bank"



**NATIONAL BANK AND TRUST COMPANY
OF WEATHERFORD**

772-5575

1100 E. Main



WESTVIEW
SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
WEATHERFORD, OK 73096

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
WEATHERFORD, OKLA.
Permit No. 57

