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The State Library of Kansas Announces the 2015 Kansas Notable Books *15 books celebrating Kansas cultural heritage*

Topeka, KS — The State Library of Kansas is pleased to announce 15 books featuring quality titles with wide public appeal, either written by Kansans or about a Kansas-related topic. The Kansas Notable Book List is the only honor for Kansas books by Kansans, highlighting our lively contemporary writing community and encouraging readers to enjoy some of the best writing of the authors among us.

A committee of Kansas Center for the Book (KCFB) Affiliates, Fellows, librarians and authors of previous Notable Books identifies these titles from among those published the previous year, and the State Librarian makes the selection for the final List. An awards ceremony will be held at the Kansas Book Festival, September 12, 2015, to recognize the talented Notable Book authors.

Throughout the award year, KCFB promotes all the titles on that year's List electronically, at literary events, and among librarians and booksellers.

For more information about the Kansas Notable Book project, call 785-296-3296, visit www.kslib.info/notablebooks or email infodesk@library.ks.gov.

2015 Kansas Notable Books

999 Kansas Characters: Ad Astra, a Biographical Series

by Dave Webb, Terry Rombeck, and Beccy Tanner

Published by the Kansas Heritage Center

This fact-filled, fully illustrated book features biographical articles about 161 characters with Kansas connections: adventurers, astronauts, discoverers, explorers, pilots, pioneers and scientists. Their adventures and discoveries have helped define the Sunflower State and its colorful heritage. Includes well-known Kansans such as George Washington Carver and Charles and George Sternberg — plus dozens more, like physicist Worth Seagondollar, Elmer McCollum, the discoverer of vitamin B, and cancer researcher Carol Fabian. This is the first in a 3 part planned biographical series.

Bluebird

by Lindsey Yankey

Published by Simply Read Books

The wind is missing! Little Bluebird has never flown without her friend the wind before and is afraid to try. So she sets off on an adventure to find it. Is it making wishes with the dandelions? Playing with the kites? Tickling the grass? Dancing with the balloons? She searches everywhere. In the end, she finds more than her favorite friend--she finds confidence too! This debut book by Lawrence author and illustrator is sure to capture the hearts of children with their enchanting illustrations.

A Carol Dickens Christmas: A Novel

by Thomas Fox Averill

Published by University of New Mexico Press

It's Christmas and Carol Dickens's life is in a major transition. Her son Finn, a talented trumpeter player, is about to leave for college. Her ex-husband, a real-estate wheeler-dealer, wants to sell their properties in Kansas and move to Arizona. Her wheelchair-bound friend, Laurence, has fallen in love with her. To top it all off, Scraps, the family dog, is dying. As her world spins out of control, Carol seeks refuge in her research on the use of the semicolon- and in her ritual of cooking the perfect series of Victorian holiday meals inspired by *A Christmas Carol*.

Chasing Weather: Tornadoes, Tempests, and Thunderous Skies in Word and Image

by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg and Stephen Locke

Published by Ice Cube Press

"The sky is made of rivers before and after they became rivers," writes Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg. Weather subtly shapes our day, infuses our moods and interactions, and at times, completely re-orientes our lives. Catching moments of stunning beauty and surprising shifts in the sky helps make the vibrant world more visible. This book pairs Kansas Poet Laureate Emeritus Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg's evocative poetry with photographer Stephen Locke's stirring imagery for a unique collaboration.

The Darkest Period: The Kanza Indians and Their Last Homeland, 1846-1873

by Ronald D. Parks

Published by University of Oklahoma Press

Before their relocation to the Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma, the Kanza Indians spent twenty-seven years on a reservation near Council Grove. This is the story of those years of decline in Kanza history following the loss of the tribe's original homeland in Kansas. The Kanzas' story is not reduced to one of hapless Indian victims maligned by the American government, but rather demonstrates how the Kanzas persisted in their struggle to exercise political autonomy while maintaining traditional social customs up to the time of removal and beyond.

The Devil's Workshop: A Novel of Scotland Yard's Murder Squad

by Alex Grecian

Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons

London, 1890: Four vicious murderers have escaped from prison, part of a plan gone terribly wrong, and now it is up to Scotland Yard's Murder Squad to hunt down the convicts before the men can resume their bloody spree. But they might already be too late. The killers have retribution in mind, and one of them is heading straight toward a member of the Murder Squad—and his family. And that isn't even the worst of it. During the escape, the killers have stumbled upon the location of another notorious murderer: Jack the Ripper is loose once more.

Field Guide to the Common Grasses of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska

by Iralee Barnard

Published by University Press of Kansas

From the more familiar, like buffalograss, to the less recognized, such as ticklegrass, each of the seventy species profiled in these pages appears in full-color to aide both novice and expert in identifying field grasses. Features such as a handy system of "finding lists" allow quick navigation for identification of an unknown grass. An illustrated glossary, leaf comparison section, and table of flowering dates provide additional information for recognizing and appreciating various species.

Girl in Reverse

by Barbara Stuber

Published by Margaret K. McElderry Books

With the Korean War raging and the fear of "Comms" everywhere, Lily's Asian heritage makes her a target at school. She is sick of the racism she faces, a fact her adoptive parents won't take seriously. Then her brainy little brother, Ralph, finds a box containing clues to her past that lead them to rare Chinese artifacts at the art museum. With help from

Ralph, the school janitor, and an artistic genius named Elliot, Lily summons the courage to confront her own remarkable story.

The Kansas Relays: Track and Field Tradition in the Heartland

by Joe D. Schrag

Published by Adina Publishing

This is the first book devoted to the rich history of the classic track and field celebration that makes up the Kansas Relays. The author introduces readers to historic events, talented people, and unique moments that have made Lawrence, Kansas a springtime destination for track and field enthusiasts since 1923. This well researched collection of compelling stories, both familiar and new, is illustrated with photos of people and memorabilia from the Relays. Includes six appendices of historical information.

Michael Pearce's Taste of the Kansas Outdoors Cookbook by Michael Pearce

Published by the Wichita Eagle and Beacon Publishing Co.

This undeniably Kansas cookbook contains more than 50 proven recipes mixed with some of outdoor journalist, Michael Pearce's favorite hunting and fishing stories and photographs. These recipes with accompanying photos encourage readers to experience the unique flavor of the Kansas Outdoors. The recipes range from simple to complex and often include step-by-step procedures on how to prepare the game. Venison Hawaiian Sliders, Pheasant Macaroons, Mustard Fried Crappie — you won't find these recipes on the menu at...well, pretty much anywhere. But make no mistake, it's Kansas dining at its finest.

Music I Once Could Dance To

by Roy J. Beckemeyer

Published by Coal City Press

This first collection of poetry by Roy Beckemeyer uses the theme of music to poetically travel to the interior and across the prairie and the earth. Whether writing about the cold morning moon of January ("the glossy white 20-pound bond moon/ the cotton-ball moon") or how "center-pivot sprinklers/ dance a spindly-legged/ ballet around the fields" in August in western Kansas, he helps readers see the extraordinary in the ordinary. He instinctively trusts the image of the poem to convey the poem's layers of meaning, and he also leaps off any familiar edge to try new forms and inspirations.

The Ogallala Road: A Memoir of Love and Reckoning

by Julene Bair

Published by Viking/Penguin

Julene Bair has inherited part of a large farm and fallen in love with a rancher from Kansas's beautiful Smoky Valley. A single mother, she means to provide her son with the father he longs for and preserve the Bair farm for the next generation, honoring her own father's wish and commandment, "Hang on to your land!" But part of her legacy is a share of the ecological harm the Bair Farm has done: each growing season her family—like many other irrigators—pumps over two hundred million gallons out of the Ogallala aquifer. The rapidly disappearing aquifer is the sole source of water on the vast western plains, and her family's role in its depletion haunts her.

Railroad Empire across the Heartland: Rephotographing Alexander Gardner's Westward Journey

by James E. Sherow, photographs by John R. Charlton

Published by University of New Mexico Press

Photographer Alexander Gardner documented the construction of the Union Pacific Railway across Kansas in 1867. This book presents 90 pairs of recent photographs by John R. Charlton paired with scenes Gardner recorded, duplicating the exact location and time of day of the originals. James E. Sherow uses the paired images to show how Indian and Anglo-American land-use practices affected the landscape. Charlton's rephotography captures the transformation of the grasslands, harnessed by the powerful forces of the railroad.

Soldiers in the Army of Freedom: The 1st Kansas Colored, the Civil War's First African American Combat Unit

by Ian Michael Spurgeon

Published by University of Oklahoma Press

Composed primarily of former slaves, the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry saw major combat in the trans-Mississippi theater of the Civil War. The author draws upon sources such as pension applications to chart military service, and to reveal the regiment's role in countering white prejudices by defying stereotypes. Despite naysayers' bigoted predictions, these black soldiers proved themselves as capable as their white counterparts, and so helped shape the evolving attitudes of leading politicians. This long-overdue reconstruction of the regiment brings to life the men of the 1st Kansas Colored as they battled both the Confederate forces and skepticism within Union ranks.

Waiting on the Sky: More Flyover People Essays

by Cheryl Unruh

Published by Quincy Press

In this collection of 72 essays, Cheryl Unruh once again connects with Kansas on a personal level. She writes about growing up on this open land, seeing the Arkansas River at flood stage in 1965, the virtues of wing windows in cars, and about telling ghost stories with her brother and cousins in the spooky upstairs of her grandmother's farmhouse. The Kansas sky and weather are characters in her lifelong story. "We who live on the prairie love our sky. It is as much a part of the landscape as the land itself. While the earth gives us roots ... the sky gives us flight, imagination..."

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