Butler Center to Celebrate Centennial of Flight at October Conference

Since that fateful day, nearly one hundred years ago, when the Wright brothers proved that humans could literally fly like eagles, the development of aviation has profoundly influenced society and the course of history. The proverbial “flying machine” has brought people and places closer together in time and distance, fundamentally changed the nature of warfare, and forever altered people’s perspective of the world in which they live by providing them with vastly greater ways and opportunities to experience the world around them. While several organizations have planned air shows to commemorate the upcoming centennial of aviation, the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System, is planning a more “down-to-earth,” introspective look at Arkansas’ place in the hundred-year history of flight, featuring a two-day conference and exhibit. The conference, “Aviation in Arkansas: Celebrating the Centennial of Flight,” will be held Friday evening and Saturday, October 24 – 25, 2003, in the Darragh Center auditorium at the Main Library, 100 Rock Street, in Little Rock’s River Market district. The conference is free; advance registration is requested.

The conference will begin on Friday evening, October 24, at 7:00 pm with a reception and display of exhibits highlighting Arkansas’ role in the history of aviation. Along with items from the Butler Center’s collections, objects and documents will be displayed from the Arkansas Aviation Historical Society’s Jay Miller Collection, Aerospace Education Center, McArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History, Arkansas Air Museum, Rogers Historical Museum, and private individuals. Following the reception, Mr. Richard N. Holbert, president of Central Flying Service and a founder of the Arkansas Aviation Historical Society and Aerospace Education Center, will present the keynote program, entitled “From Flying Machine Charlie to Falcon Jet: A Brief History of Aviation in Arkansas.” Holbert will chronicle the evolution of aviation in Arkansas, from the mid-1870s when the Wright brothers were just young boys, to the present, in which Arkansas boasts two national airports, the Air Force’s primary cargo supply training base, two internationally-respected jet modification factories, and other examples of a thriving aviation industry.

The conference will continue on Saturday morning, October 25, at 9:00 am with the display of exhibits and several programs highlighting the diversity of Arkansas’ aviation history. The programs begin with “Those Daring Young Men (and Women!) In Their Flying Machines,” a presentation by Mr. Dave Wallis, a former mayor of Pine Bluff and a respected businessman, local historian, and aviation enthusiast. Wallis will examine the brave men and women who dared to help aviation get off the ground, literally and figuratively, in the early decades of the twentieth century. Next, Dr. William M. Smith, Jr. will present “The Right Plane at the Wrong Time: The Command-Aire Aircraft Company.” Smith, Associate athletic director for communications at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and president of the board of Fayetteville’s Arkansas Air Museum, will discuss the story of Command-Aire, a Little Rock aircraft company that produced award-winning, affordable airplanes but was ruined by the Great Depression. Also scheduled for the morning session is Mr. Thomas E. “Pete” Jordon, director of the Arkansas Post State Museum, who will present “Courage and Daring in the Call to Duty: Arkansas’ Military Aviators,” a look at the many brave Arkansans who answered democracy’s call to duty and sometimes gave their lives for it, serving in command and battle in all types of aircraft, including bombers, fighters, cargo, and rescue planes.

(See “Aviation,” on Page 6)
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Timothy G. Nutt, Editor
Ellen Stern, daughter of the late Dr. Howard Seymour Stern, recently donated sixty artworks by her father to the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies art collection. Included among these sixty pieces are prize winning watercolor paintings, prints and photographs. Howard Stern died last year at the age of 91.

Howard was a surgeon, painter, photographer, writer, poet, world traveler, gunsmith and machinist, Renaissance man, and friend. He never started anything at which he didn’t eventually excel.

He was educated in the Little Rock public schools and attended Washington University at St. Louis, Little Rock Junior College (now UALR), and the University of Arkansas School of Medicine, where he received his doctorate in 1936.

In 1948 Howard and his family moved to Pine Bluff, Arkansas where he continued his surgical practice until he retired in 1980. He was then able to pursue his true love of painting and photography.

Howard’s work is in collections in the United States as well as Europe. He was a past president of the regional Mid-Southern Watercolorists Society, as well as a Signature Member of the National Watercolor Society in California. For several years Howard was an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain.

Howard was an expert marksman with both rifle and pistol, winning many trophies with guns he made in his own shop. He was a founder of the Arkansas Muzzle Loading Association, which holds an annual Founder’s Trophy Match in his name.

A Lifetime Looking, his memoir published in 1994 by August House, with George West, is an oral history. It’s a personal account of the art of Howard Stern, told through excerpts from taped conversations with him and other people from different times and places in his life. George West said, “The goal of this approach was to show Howard’s works of an art in a larger dimension—as part of the personal events and relationships in his life and also in terms of the styles and moods of changing times.” Ellen Stern, editor of the book, has said the experience producing a book about one’s parent was a rare and remarkable experience.

Townsend Wolfe, former Director and Chief Curator of the Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock, said in the Introduction to, A Lifetime Looking, “Howard’s humanity flows in his photographs and paintings. The works are of one eye and sensibility. They represent the man, Howard Stern, who is a spirit without constraint.”

To see more of Dr. Howard Stern’s prolific lifetime of work, you will find A Lifetime Looking available to check out at the Central Arkansas Library System.

The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies and the Central Arkansas Library System are very appreciative of such generous donors as Ellen Stern. The addition of these sixty works adds greatly to the depth of our Arkansas art collection and to a greater understanding of the creative spirit in Arkansas past and present. If you have any questions about donating work, or about our collection, please contact Reita Walker Miller, Arkansas Art Coordinator at (501) 918-3090 or at reitam@cals.lib.ar.us
New Collection Documents Antebellum Arkansas

One of the Butler Center’s most historically significant manuscript collections has been processed and is available for research use. Donated by a descendant, the Smith Family Papers contain a virtual goldmine of information relating to Arkansas’ antebellum past.

In 1843 Col. Maurice Smith journeyed from Fayette County, Tennessee to Dallas County, Arkansas with the hope of starting a new life for his family. Col. Smith, a native of Caswell County, North Carolina, ventured into the recently created state with Dr. W.B. Langley and Cornelia (Smith) Langley, his son-in-law and daughter, and their overseers and slaves. In October the group arrived at the hamlet of Tulip, where a new home was soon built. Smith subsequently returned to Tennessee, where he spent the following year, 1844, disposing of his lands and preparing his family for the move to Arkansas. In October of that year the entire family made the arduous trip westward and soon settled into life at Tulip, known as “The Athens of Arkansas.” Thus began the enduring legacy of one Arkansas family.

The papers consist of letters, an autobiography, various publications, photographs, and other materials pertaining to the Smith family. The bulk of the collection is 19th century correspondence among various family members. Col. Smith was a devout Methodist, and a great deal of information can be gleaned from the materials about the denomination. The collection also covers such topics as education, early reminiscences, slavery, economic conditions, the Civil War, and agriculture. Additional items within the papers include genealogical information, financial notes and receipts, newspaper clippings, and memorabilia.

The Smith Family Papers were processed by Manuscripts Coordinator Brian K. Robertson. The collection is catalogued as MSS 02-20. The finding aid, a detailed listing of contents, facilitates use of the collection. The finding aid may be accessed in the Butler Center’s research room or on the Internet at www.butlercenter.org. For more information on the Smith Family Papers or other Butler Center collections contact Brian Robertson at 501-918-3094 or brianr@cals.lib.ar.us

Butler Center Advisory Board Member Dies

The Butler Center and the historical community lost one of its most loyal supporters recently when Peg Newton Smith died peacefully in her sleep on July 20, 2003.

Peg was born in Little Rock to Evelyn Hempstead and Thomas Newton, III on February 10, 1915. Her family history is a who’s who of Arkansas history: Her grandfather was famed historian Fay Hempstead while other ancestors were namesakes of Hempstead and Newton counties. Peg grew up in the Packett House on Lincoln Avenue (Cantrell), one of houses built during the Reconstruction era in an area then known as Carpetbaggers Row due to the number of Northern-born politicians living there.

Throughout her life, Peg was an avid preservationist and a staunch supporter of all things historical. She served on the Historic Arkansas Museum Commission and the Mt. Holly Cemetery Board for many years. She was a charter member of the Butler Center Advisory Board.

Before Peg recently moved from her home of 50 years on Cantrell Road to a new apartment in West Little Rock, she promised to give the Butler Center an historical item a day and she kept that promise. Peg will be greatly missed.
Arkansas Humanities Council Records Acquired by Butler Center

The Butler Center’s biggest collection to date has been processed and is available to researchers. The Arkansas Humanities Council (AHC) Records contain both administrative and project materials dating back to the organization’s creation in 1974. Of special interest to researchers are the files of the various projects proposed to the Council. Both accepted and rejected proposals are inventoried in the collection.

The Arkansas Humanities Council works under the aegis of the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH). During the early 1970s, the NEH created the Division of State Programs with the idea that state councils could make better decisions concerning local expenditures of federal funds. Accordingly, in 1974, the Arkansas Humanities Council began to provide financial support for projects documenting the cultural and historical legacy of the state. In order to get people involved in preservation and research, the Council used several effective public program formats involving local citizens, such as reading/discussion groups for public library patrons, museum exhibits on topics concerning Arkansas prehistory or history, the collection of local oral histories on numerous cultural topics, and many others. The “Persistence of the Spirit” project on African-Arkansans and the documentary “When You Make a Good Crop: Italians in the Delta” were both funded by the Arkansas Humanities Council. The Arkansas Humanities Council Records provide detailed information on these and many other projects.

The Butler Center holdings of the AHC administrative records acquaint the researcher not only with detailed Council business, but also with the decision making process in project approval. The Arkansas Humanities Council Records have been accessioned as MSS 98-19 and are available for research in the Butler Center. A detailed finding aid to the collection can be found on the Butler Center web page at www.butlercenter.org or in the Center’s research room. The collection was processed by Manuscripts Assistant John Lawrence Smith.

For more information about the Arkansas Humanities Council Records or any other manuscript collection held by the Butler Center, contact Brian K. Robertson, Manuscripts Coordinator at (501) 918-3094 or brianr@cals.lib.ar.us.

Arkansas Book Guys Bound for Little Rock Show

The Arkansas Books Guys are returning for their second annual show on November 22, 2003. The two biblohunks (Tom Dillard and Tim Nutt) will once again evaluate, appraise, and discuss rare and not-so-rare Arkansas books. Arkansas authors and collectors will also be interviewed.

The Arkansas Book Guys are modeled on National Public Radio’s “Book Guys” Allen Stypeck and Mike Cuthbert, who will be in Little Rock on November 6, 2003.

More information on the Arkansas Book Guys’ show will be mailed in the upcoming months. Watch your mailbox!

For more information, contact the Butler Center at (501) 918-3056.
Aviation in Arkansas Conference Registration Form

Name_____________________________________________________
Address___________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
City_______________________ State_________Zip_______________
Phone_______________________ Email_________________________

Please reserve me a box lunch at $5.00 each:

_____ Ham _____ Turkey _____ Roast Beef _____ Chicken Salad _____ Vegetarian

Please send reservations (along with a check if ordering lunch) to:
Butler Center, CALS, 100 Rock Street, Little Rock, AR  72201.
Contact Cary Cox at 501-918-3049 or caryc@cals.lib.ar.us for more information.
In Memoriam

Gov. Frank White
Cherry H. Light
Little Rock, Arkansas

Peg Smith
Geri Chandler
Little Rock, Arkansas

Tom & Mary Dillard
Little Rock, Arkansas

Anne Connerley Fowler
Little Rock, Arkansas

Carolyn L. Newbern
Little Rock, Arkansas

Esther D. Nixon
Jacksonville, Arkansas

In Honor Of

Nan Snow
Dorothy D. Stuck
Hot Springs, Arkansas

Encyclopedia of Arkansas

Thomas O. Duncan
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Jeanne M. McDaniel
Little Rock, Arkansas

Jean & Don Riley
North Little Rock, Arkansas

Bonnie A. Routon
Hope, Arkansas

Jessie M. Ehlers
Little Rock, Arkansas

Henry Wilks
Marianna, Arkansas

In Memory of Peg Smith
Susan Pfeifer
Little Rock, Arkansas

P.A.R.T. Endowment Fund

In Memory of Peg Smith
Dr. & Mrs. Cal Ledbetter
Little Rock, Arkansas

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Schmutz
Little Rock, Arkansas

Mr. & Mrs. Samuel B. Caruthers, Jr.
Little Rock, Arkansas

Mr. & Mrs. C. Brantly Buck
Little Rock, Arkansas

James A. Mclarty, III
Newport, Arkansas

Valerie Thwing & Bob Razer
Little Rock, Arkansas

Bobby Roberts
Little Rock, Arkansas

Books and Materials

Dr. & Mrs. George Ackerman
Little Rock, Arkansas

Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society
Arkansas Chapter
Little Rock, Arkansas

Desmond Walls Allen
Conway, Arkansas

Sissy Brandon
Little Rock, Arkansas

Wensil Clark
Little Rock, Arkansas

James Corallo
Ozone Park, New York

Jeff Davis
Little Rock, Arkansas

Paul Dolle
Rogers, Arkansas

Thomas O. Duncan
Little Rock, Arkansas

Dee Eanes
Lamar, Arkansas

Dr. Laurie Fisher
Lamar, Arkansas

Raymond Fitzgibbon
Little Rock, Arkansas

Eleanor Frank
Little Rock, Arkansas

Louis & Elsie Freund Estate
Little Rock, Arkansas

Shirley Houser Galloway
Bakersfield, California

Mort Gitelman
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Mary Ann & Wayne Glenn
Little Rock, Arkansas

Ray Hanley
Little Rock, Arkansas

Jean Harris
Little Rock, Arkansas

Dr. Fred O. Henker
Little Rock, Arkansas

Heritage Seekers
North Little Rock, Arkansas

Gene Hull
North Little Rock, Arkansas

Freed S. Little
Houston, Texas

Magale Library
Southern Arkansas University
Magnolia, Arkansas

Memphis-Shelby County Public Library
Memphis, Tennessee

Ruth Mitchell
Little Rock, Arkansas

Archie Moore, Jr.
Little Rock, Arkansas

Freddie Nixon
Little Rock, Arkansas

Howard Norton
Vilonia, Arkansas

Victor Oliver
Bismarck, Arkansas

Wendy Pennington
Little Rock, Arkansas

Mike Polston
Cabot, Arkansas

Bob Razer
Little Rock, Arkansas

Ruth H. Red
Mabelvale, Arkansas

Tom Reed
Chicago, Illinois

Mary Ellen Sanders
Carmen, Arkansas

Bill Sayger
Biscoe, Arkansas

Mamie Van Hoose Sayre
Little Rock, Arkansas

Nan Selz
Little Rock, Arkansas

Jeff Sharp
Odenton, Maryland

South Arkansas Historical Foundation
El Dorado, Arkansas

Ellen Stern
Little Rock, Arkansas

Lucille Swann
Little Rock, Arkansas

Ralph Wilcox
Little Rock, Arkansas

Billie Sue Wilson
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

Mary Worthen
Little Rock, Arkansas

Floyd Zula
Fullerton, California

Rice Art Conservation Fund
G. Grimsley Graham, Jr.
Carol Graham
Rogers, Arkansas
Photographs by architectural photographer Tod Swiecichowski are on exhibit in the Showcase Arkansas Art Gallery. The “It Takes an Image” exhibit features fifty color images of Arkansas buildings and landscapes.

Tod Swiecichowski grew up in Milwaukee, Wisc. After living in Atlanta, Ga., he moved to Little Rock twelve years ago. He works throughout the country as an architectural photographer. Much of his award winning work was photographed for the American Institute of Architects design award programs as well as for print and publication.

He is a past recipient of the Foster-Harris Memorial Award at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre where he has donated and shown his work for the past nine years.

Swiechichowski’s photographs will be for sale during the exhibit with 30% of the proceeds going to benefit the Butler Center’s art conservation and acquisition program.

The photographic exhibit may be viewed Monday -Friday, 9:00-5:00 or Saturday 9-4:00 in the Showcase Arkansas Gallery, which is located on the third floor of the Cox Creative Center on the Main Library’s campus. The “It Takes an Image” photograph exhibit will remain open through October 18, 2003. For further information, contact Reita Walker Miller at (501) 918-3090 or email reitam@cals.lib.ar.us.