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"Little Balkans Review"

Shelby Horn

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Gene DeGruson Memorial Lecture Eleventh Annual - October 9th, 2008

"Little Balkans Review"

Shelby Horn, speaker

Special Collections Department, Axe Library

7:00 p.m.

October 9, 2008 will mark the 11th annual Gene DeGruson Memorial Lecture. And to commemorate this occasion, we have invited Mr. Shelby Horn, attorney and one of Gene's best friends and closest collaborators to present a talk about Gene's much loved pet project *The Little Balkans Review*.

In 1980, Gene decided to launch a literary, historical and cultural journal from Pittsburg State University. His talented stable of editors, authors and artists included Shelby, Dr. Charles Cagle, professor of English at PSU (now retired), J. T. Knoll, who contributed poems since Winter 1980-81, and who is still employed as our Prevention and Wellness Coordinator here at PSU and Ted Watts, renowned Oswego artist. These are only a very few of the scholars who contributed articles, poems, photographs, drawings and paintings.

Between 1980 and 1989 eighteen issues were produced. Then, in 1999, two years after Gene passed away, a final issue was produced in honor of Gene himself. The issues of the Review were full of artwork by Ted Watts and numerous other artists as well as poems, folktales, short stories, memoirs, biographies and pieces of journalism, all pertaining to the history and culture of Southeast Kansas.

In the Fall-Winter issue of 1984 there is the biography of the remarkable professor of English, Rebecca Patterson, who taught at Pittsburg State University for twenty-one years and who was much maligned for her revolutionary theories on Emily Dickinson. There was a series on the "Bender Hills Mystery" which ran in chapters in each issue, and which related the story of the notorious family of Kansas serial killers "the Bloody Benders", keepers of the "Devil's Inn" in Labette County. There were Lebanese folktales collected from inhabitants of Pittsburg who were of Lebanese descent. There were photo essays, such as one on artist Marjorie Schick's remarkable wearable art (entitled "Body Sculpture", Winter 1988-89). There were histories, such as Betty Vequist's article "Andrew Carnegie's Tear-Rusted Blood Stained Gift", which tells us how the Pittsburg miners, laborers and Socialists greeted the gift of our handsome Carnegie library, fresh from the hands of the villain of the Homestead Steel Strike.

And poems, poems, poems! At least ten or twenty an issue, on nature, love, sadness, travel, history, family, death etc.; sometimes by our own local talent, sometimes by the very famous; frequently decorated with a sketch of the author.

So, please come and see us on October 9, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Special Collections of Axe

Library. Refreshments will be served in the first floor Browsing Area after the lecture and a good time will be had by everyone.