

News Update on the Voices of the Wind People Pageant 2008

The *Voices of the Wind People*, an outdoor historical pageant that brings the past alive from the points of view of two cultural perspectives – Native American and Euro American. The pageant tells a vital story that weaves together the history of the Santa Fe Trail and the clash of cultures between the Kaw (or Kanza) people, the Indian tribe for whom the state of Kansas is named, and the Euro-Americans of early day Council Grove. The pageant features the beginning of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821, the signing of the 1825 Council Oak Treaty, an 1859 confrontation between Kaw warriors and Euro-Americans in Council Grove, and bushwhackers raiding Council Grove in 1863. The story ends dramatically with the tragic forced removal of the Kaw tribe from Kansas in 1873.

Voices will be presented Friday and Saturday evenings, September 12 and 13 at the Old Neosho Riverbed Amphitheater in Council Grove. Native American Flute Player, TerryLee Whetstone, will perform from 7:00 p.m. until the pageant begins at 8:00 p.m. During both performances, refreshments will be sold by Bowers Community Center volunteers at their concession stand located at the Girl Scout Cabin near the amphitheater. Proceeds fund the Center.

Local weekend events scheduled prior to the Saturday *Voices* performance begin at 9 a.m. at the Kanza Agency site at Allegawaho Memorial Heritage Park when Ron Parks presents "**More than Meets the Eye: A Close Look at the Kanza Agency**". This event, sponsored by the Voices Committee, is free and open to the public. Directions to the park are available at the Kaw Mission State Historic Site; 500 N. Mission; Council Grove KS.

Other Saturday events, sponsored by the Morris County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and the Great Santa Fe Trail Horse Race Endurance Ride who chose Council Grove for the end of the 2008 Ride include: the Kaw Nation Trail Ride in Morris County; an all-equestrian parade and Prairie Art Walk in downtown Council Grove; and, a chuck wagon dinner and free concert featuring Johnny Western and the Diamond W Wranglers at the Ride Village, Kanza View, Council Grove Federal Reservoir.

Sharon Haun predicts, "This weekend promises to be another great weekend for Council Grove."

Tickets are \$12.00 for adults, \$10.00 for K-12 and may be purchased in advance. Please send check or money order to: VOWP; 500 N. Mission; Council Grove, KS 66846. Attention: VOWP Tickets. Seating for about 800 people will be provided in the amphitheater. Stadium seats recommended. Please do not bring lawn chairs. Fifty spaces will be reserved for the disabled; private vehicles carrying disabled persons will be allowed to drive to an unloading zone near the ticket gates. Only very inclement weather during the show will force its cancellation. For information about *Voices of the Wind People*, call 620-767-5410 or visit the websites. Ticket order forms are available at www.voicesofthewindpeople.com or www.kawmission.org. Ticket mailing deadline is September 4, 2008. Tickets will also be available for sale at the amphitheater gate.



Eliza Huffaker played by Sharon Haun, (Current Pageant Committee Chair) with Council Grove townspeople in an early production of *Voices of the Wind People*

The pageant, co-sponsored by the Kaw Nation, Kaw Mission State Historic Site/Kansas Historical Society and the pageant committee of the Friends of Kaw Heritage, Inc., is a multimedia presentation that combines live-action scenes set in a Kaw village and Council Grove in the 1800s and features Council Grove citizens and Kanza Indians. Historical artwork and photographs, images of the Flint Hills, and videotaped segments are projected onto a large screen. The production includes singing, dancing, drumming, fiddling, bagpipe playing, mandolin music, true to life sound effects, and an 1821 Santa Fe Trail horse-drawn pack train and two wagon caravans. Scenes depict the signing of the 1825 Council Oak Treaty, trading at the Seth Hays store, a confrontation between Kaw warriors and Euro-Americans in 1859, bushwhackers raiding Council Grove in 1863, a typical Kaw tipi village, and the forced removal of the Kaw tribe from Kansas.

Kanza chief Allegawaho and Santa Fe Trail trader Seth Hays narrate the pageant. Luther Pepper, great-grandson of Allegawaho, articulates the words of Allegawaho while Ray Ball plays the chief on stage. Council Grove resident Mark Brooks portrays Hays. The Kaw Nation provides more than 30 Native Americans and tribal members as actors, dancers, and singers.



Chief Allegawaho (Carl Ponca) in Scene Depicting the Signing of The Council Oak Treaty of 1825

Members of the *Voices* Committee, director Katy Haun and co-directors Sharon Haun and Cheryl Hayes are currently in rehearsals for this year's productions.

“This pageant is produced with countless volunteer hours”, said Sharon Haun. “There are many important jobs necessary to produce the pageant. We welcome any support you may be able to give. If you are not interested in being a cast member we have many ‘behind the scenes’ responsibilities to fill.” To learn more about how you can support *Voices* contact Sharon Haun, 620-767-2033, khaun@tctelco.net.

“The *Voices* Committee is so happy that the Kaw Nation is again generously co-sponsoring this event with their time, energy and financial resources.” Haun said. “We are especially excited that, this year, there are many shoulder events being planned for this weekend.”

Kaw Tribal Leaders Committed to *Voices* Pageant

The expulsion of the Kanza tribe by the U.S. government in 1873 is a significant event in the history of the tribe. In a meeting in Council Grove the secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior ordered the remaining approximately 600 Kaws to move out of the state bearing their name and resettle on a small reservation in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Head chief Allegawaho spoke eloquently against the removal: “Great father, you whites treat us Kaws like a flock of turkeys. You chase us from one stream, then chase us to another stream. Soon you will chase us over the mountains and into the ocean.”

As the historical Kanza presence in Kansas recedes into the past, both the American Indian and Council Grove producers of *Voices of the Wind People* are more determined than ever to bring the tragic story of the Kanza peoples’ final years in this state to a broader audience.

The pain of the Kanza being separated from the land is a major theme of the drama. Betty Durkee, historic preservation director of the Kaw Nation, offered this perspective: “*Voices* is a living chapter...of the peoples who lived on the land, loved the land, and in the case of the Kaws, were forced to leave their homeland. That story is told beautifully and movingly in this pageant.”

Ron Parks wrote the *Voices* script in 1992 while he served as site administrator of the Kaw Mission State Historic Site in Council Grove. “Wind People” is the English meaning of the tribe’s name. The original script was subject to review by the Kaw Nation Executive Council. All subsequent changes have required the approval of the council as well.

Katy Haun directs the 2008 performances with Sharon Haun, pageant committee chair, and Cheryl Hayes as co-directors. A cast and crew of more than 100, including more than 30 Kaw tribal members and other Native Americans, are involved in the production. Major sponsors are the Friends of Kaw Heritage, Inc., the Kansas Historical Society/Kaw Mission State Historical Site, and the Kaw Nation. This pageant is fully supported with the help of dedicated volunteers and local organizations and foundations that provide additional funding.

Kaw Nation officials are delighted that their people are returning once again to Kansas to tell the story of their ancestors in the outdoor drama, *Voices of the Wind People*. A volunteer cast and crew of more than 100, including more than thirty Native American performers, are involved in the production. The Kaw Nation provides tribal members as actors, dancers, and singers.



Kaw Nation Executive Council Today: Back Row (L/R) - Guyetta Monroe-Martin (Member), Marilyn Mehojah York (Member), Mary Pat Branch (Member), Gay Munsell (Secretary), Front Row (L/R) - Guy Munroe (Chairman/CEO), Luther Pepper (Member), Roy Lee Ball (Vice Chairman)

The protagonist of *Voices of the Wind People*, Allegawaho narrates his peoples' history while living on the Council Grove reservation. Luther Pepper, Kaw Nation executive council member and great-grandson of Allegawaho, delivers this narration.

"I feel honored to be able to portray my great-grandpa's part," said Pepper. "He had a big role in the tribe's history there in Kansas."

While Pepper renders Allegawaho's words off-stage, Ray Ball, director of the Roads and Maintenance Department of the Kaw Nation, portrays the Kaw chief's on-stage presence.

"It makes me feel good; it really does, to play one of my ancestors," said Ray Ball, speaking at the tribal offices in Kaw City, Oklahoma. "I've always enjoyed doing it."

Carl Ponca, a member of the Osage Nation, has performed as the visual Allegawaho in many past pageant productions. "I've always been glad and proud to be a part of the pageant," said Ponca. "This production points out that 150 years ago Native Americans really didn't have much of a choice. *Voices* presents a balanced viewpoint of what actually happened. We're not talking about revisionist history, but we appreciate that the Native American view is presented."

Participation in *Voices* has affected relationships between the Native Americans and whites in a positive way, according to both Ponca and Pepper.

Allegawaho's narrative counterpart is Seth Hays, an early-day Council Grove settler and merchant portrayed by Mark Brooks of Council Grove. The alternating narratives between Allegawaho and Hays create a complex, multi-cultural picture of the relations between the citizens of Council Grove and the Kaws.

Guyetta Monroe-Martin, Kaw Nation executive tribal council member, echoed Ponca's sentiments about the production's veracity: "*Voices* is a true drama of the epic journey of the Kaw people being removed from their beloved home."

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This multimedia presentation tells a vital story that weaves together the history of the Santa Fe Trail and the clash of cultures between the Kaw and the Euro-Americans of early day Council Grove. The pageant features the beginning of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821, the signing of the 1825 Council Oak Treaty, an 1859 confrontation between Kaw warriors and Euro-Americans in Council Grove, and bushwhackers raiding Council Grove in 1863. The story ends dramatically with the tragic forced removal of the Kaw tribe from Kansas.



Horse-drawn Wagons Create a Realistic Atmosphere for the Pageant Production

“This production has made a better understanding between people,” Ponca said. “We learn from one another.”

“We’ve created more than just a friendship between the Kaw people and the folks at Council Grove,” Pepper said. “There’s been a new bonding among the people. There’s been a healing.”

“It touches my heart to know this happened to my tribe,” said JoAnn O’Bregon, member of the Kaw Nation, “but it is a part of history that needs to be told. It’s a learning experience for everyone involved.”

According to Ron Parks, author of *Voices of the Wind People*, the outdoor drama appeals to more than just local interest. “White people took their land and this state took their name. If you’re interested in your identity as a Kansan, you should learn the story of the original Kansans. And that’s precisely the central theme of this production.”

Wanda Stone, chairperson of the Kaw Nation 1990-2002, cited the realism of the *Voices* production. “The pageant depicts a part of the Kanza history in the State of Kansas with accuracy and true expression,” Stone said. “It’s so realistic in its presentation and has become a milestone for the Kanza people.”

Voices of the Wind People 1992 - 2008: A Rich Pageant History

Creation of *Voices of the Wind People* began early in 1992 when Ron Parks, then curator of the Kaw Mission, was approached by the local Chamber with the idea of producing a reenactment of the Signing of the Treaty at the Council Oak. Parks was asked if he would author a script for such a reenactment. After several months of researching and writing, Parks had penned a script, which he submitted, to the Chamber, the Kaw Nation and a few interested Council Grove residents for review. With revisions made to the script, the Kaw Nation agreed to participate in the production with singers and dancers as well as provide performers for the role of Chief Allegawaho.

A *Voices* committee established a budget and appeals were made to all local service clubs, organizations and foundations for support in terms of funding and volunteers. Parks and Debbie Wiard, then Chamber manager, headed the committee with local drama teacher, Joe Glotzbach, as Director. During the summer of 1992 the eighteen-member committee of volunteers built and painted the sets for town scenes and constructed the screen, the pit and amphitheater with steps and seating made of concrete blocks and planks as well as five tipis and a campfire.



Authentic American Indian Tipis Evoke the Image of a Kaw Village in the 1800s

The production incorporated a pack train and five wagons with teams portraying the Santa Fe Trail activity. The Kaw Nation provided drummers, singers and dancers who performed often throughout the production.

1992 - September 26 - The first performance of *Voices* was a resounding success with nearly 1,200 people in the audience. Kaw tribal member Luther Pepper narrated as Chief Allegawaho, Carl Ponca performed the visual Chief Allegawaho, David Clapsaddle played Seth Hays and Shirley McClintock played Eliza Huffaker.

1993 - September 25 - Parks and Merry Barker co-chaired the committee and Glotzbach directed the second performance. During the summer of 1993 more work was done on the amphitheater area, adding railroad ties for steps and dealing with serious drainage problems. Pepper and Ponca performed dual roles of Allegawaho, Ken McClintock portrayed Seth Hays with Sharon Haun in the role of Eliza Huffaker.

1996 - September 20 & 21 – This performance was scheduled to coincide with the 175th anniversary of the opening of the Santa Fe Trail. The committee decided to expand the production to two nights, hoping that if rain threatened, it would not wipe out two consecutive performances. Barker and Glotzbach co-chaired the committee, Glotzbach directed and Pepper, Ponca, McClintock and Haun played the major roles.

1999 - September 24 & 25 - *Voices* was set to coincide with the Santa Fe Trail Symposium, held in Council Grove during this time. Barker and Glotzbach co-chaired the committee with Glotzbach directing and major roles performed by those who performed them in 1996.

2001 Performance, Sept 21 & 22 - *Voices* was scheduled in 2001 to coincide with the 140th anniversary of Kansas Statehood. Parks and Barker co-chaired the committee and Katy Haun replaced Glotzbach as director. Parks made many revisions and additions to the script, which were reviewed and approved by the Kaw Nation.

A video was produced with horses and riders recruited by the Kaw Nation with an additional twenty-five Council Grove men participating. Portions of the script were expanded adding speaking parts for the Kaw, more dramatic town scenes and music. Lighting and sound were enhanced and the committee spent many hours working to improve amphitheater area. Major performers were cast as in 1999 and a stagecoach was added.

2004 - October 1 & 2 - This performance coincided with the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Kansas Territory. *Voices* was co-chaired by Parks and Barker, directed by K. Haun with Cheryl Hayes & S. Haun as assistant directors. Major performers were cast as before.

2006 - Sept 21 & 22 – *Voices* was chaired by Sharon Haun with K. Haun as director and Hayes & S. Haun as assistant directors. Major performers were cast as before.



Voices 2006 cast members gather for a photo op with Dana Davis, 49abc News, (right) on the Kaw Mission front lawn.

None of the twelve productions of this pageant would have been possible without dedicated volunteers, repeated fund raising activities, generous grants, numerous donations and the invaluable physical and financial support of the Kaw Nation over the years. Volunteer hours too numerous to count have been contributed by Kaw tribal members and Council Grove residents. Each time the pageant was performed, volunteers built and tore down the amphitheater, pit and stage area, recruited cast and crew members, purchased and made 1850's era costumes, painted and re-painted the set, provided props, worked many hours on promotion and advertising and completed all the many details required to produce a performance of this magnitude.

Voices survives as a result of many loyal and devoted human beings who have worked together tirelessly in the past and will do so in 2008 in the spirit and belief that *Voices* is a story that must be told. Plan to join us and celebrate the historic joining of two cultures in another telling of this meaningful story of our combined cultural heritages in September 2008!