Upcoming Virginia Garrett Lectures to Focus on Manifest Destiny

The University of Texas at Arlington Library will hold the Ninth Biennial Virginia Garrett Lectures on the History of Cartography on October 16-17. The theme for this year’s lectures will be “The Price of Manifest Destiny: War and American Expansion,” and will feature seven speakers, each of whom will examine various cartographic aspects of nineteenth century U.S. territorial growth and its impact on the nation’s North American neighbors.

On Thursday afternoon, October 16, David Narrett, professor of History, UT Arlington, will speak on the famous Robinson map, which some historians have called a manifesto of Manifest Destiny. His presentation “From the Past to Futurity: John Hamilton Robinson’s Map of Mexico and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1819,” will examine the map’s use of historical events and sites, interweaving the past with the cartographer’s vision of the future, especially with regard to the U.S.-Mexico border-lands.

Dr. Narrett will be followed by Imre Demhardt, who holds the Garrett chair in the History of Cartography at UT Arlington. Dr. Demhardt will present “Fifty Years of Being Tardy: The U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers and its Military Mapping, 1813-1863.” His paper will focus on the achievements and shortcomings of the so-called “Topogs,” whose explorative mapping included the Stephen Long expedition, the Seminole Wars, the U.S.-Mexico War, and the reconnaissance expeditions of the newly annexed territories between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean in the 1850s.

On Friday morning, Jimmy L. Bryan Jr., associate professor of History at Lamar University, will present “Lands Contiguous: Maps and the Imagined Destiny of Expansion.” Bryan will discuss how nineteenth century maps functioned as propaganda, and were consciously designed to inspire and promote American nationalism. Bryan will be followed by Steven E. Woodworth, professor of History at Texas Christian University, who will examine the consequences of the U.S.-Mexico War in “The Mexican Cession and the Coming of the Civil War.” The morning sessions will be concluded by Alexander Hidalgo, assistant professor of History at Texas Christian University, who will present “Coping with Loss: Antonio García Cubas’s Atlas Geográfico (1858) and the Uses of History in Independent Mexico.” One of Mexico’s leading geographers in the second half of the nineteenth century, García Cubas produced a series of illustrated and annotated maps that were shaped by Mexico’s defeat in 1848. Like many leading intellectual figures in Mexico during this period, García Cubas drew heavily from America’s pre-Hispanic and early colonial history to promote a nationalist agenda and legitimate the nation’s remaining territory. On Friday afternoon, Donald S. Frazier, professor of History at McMurry University, will present “Blood and Treasure: Confederate Manifest Destiny and the Invasion of New Mexico.” While trainloads of Confederate soldiers headed east toward Virginia to confront Union forces in 1861, a small army of Texans headed west, in an ill-fated attempt to seize New Mexico. Dr. Frazier will explain how Manifest Destiny became “Confederatized,” as secessionists took up the

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cause of national expansion in their push for a new southern empire.

The keynote speaker at 7 p.m. on Friday evening will be Susan Schulten, University of Denver, who will deliver “The Sectional Crisis and the Remaking of the American West.” As Dr. Schulten notes, the Civil War was not caused by a struggle between North and South over the existence of slavery, but by the possible extension of the “peculiar institution” into the West. Her presentation will seek to integrate the sectional crisis into a single, national story, emphasizing the interdependence of these regions in the early nineteenth century.

An exhibit of approximately 100 rare maps that illustrate the Manifest Destiny theme will be on display during the lectures in the Library’s Special Collections. Highlights of the exhibit will include John Robinson’s Map of Mexico, Louisiana, and the Missouri Territory, the first map to name Pike’s Peak, Stephen F. Austin's map of Texas, and John Disturnell’s “treaty map” used in the negotiations to end the U.S.-Mexico War in 1848. The exhibit will also feature U.S. Army maps relating to various Indian wars and the “Mormon War” of the 1850s, maps relating to the Civil War in the American Southwest, and maps pertaining to the French Intervention in Mexico.

The Garrett Lectures will be held in the Sixth Floor Parlor of the UT Arlington Library. Named in honor of the late Virginia Garrett, who donated her cartographic collection to UT Arlington, the event will be held in conjunction with the fall meetings of the Texas Map Society and the Rocky Mountain Map Society. Attendees may also want to visit “The Map Fair of the West” on Saturday, October 18, which will be open to map collectors and the general public. The map fair will be held at the Museum of Biblical Art, located just north of North Park Shopping Center in Dallas.

For more information about the Garrett Lectures, go to www.texasmapsociety.org.

Center Fellows Publish Major New Books

Two long-time Center Fellows published major monographs this year. In August, the University of North Carolina Press released Dr. David Narrett’s Adventurism and Empire: The Struggle for Mastery in the Louisiana-Florida Borderlands, 1762-1803. In this expansive book, Dr. Narrett explains how the United States emerged as a successor empire to Great Britain as a result of its rivalry with Spain in the Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast. Tracing currents of peace and war over four critical decades—from the close of the Seven Years War to the Louisiana Purchase—Narrett sheds new light on individual colonial adventurers and schemers who shaped history through cross-border trade, settlement projects, and military incursions into Spanish and Indian territories. In so doing, he redefines the important role these North American borderlands had in shaping the history of the Atlantic world.

Also in August, Temple University Press published Dr. Fairbanks’ The War on Slums in the Southwest: Public Housing and Slum Clearance in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, 1935-1965. Dr. Fairbanks examined four Sunbelt cities—Dallas, Houston, Phoenix and San Antonio—all of which experienced explosive growth from the Depression to the mid-1960s—to see how each responded to the Housing Acts of 1937, 1949, and 1954. Notwithstanding the conservative political environment that has characterized the region, these Southwestern cities often handled population growth, urban planning, and economic development in ways that closely mirrored the national effort to eliminate slums and provide public housing for the needy. The War on Slums in the Southwest therefore corrects some misconceptions about the role of slum clearance and public housing in this region, as it seeks to integrate urban policy into the larger understanding of federal and state-based housing policies.
Hall-Kohfeldt, Garrett Award Winners Announced

Bethany Morian has been named the recipient of the Ida V. Hall and George Kohfeldt Scholarship. The scholarship assists students whose work focuses on the Native American Southwest. A graduate student in the English Department working with Dr. Kenneth Roemer, Bethany's research focuses on the Blue Cloud Quarterly, a little-known literary journal published in South Dakota from 1955 to 1988. Founded by Benet Tvedten, a Benedictine monk, the Quarterly specialized in Native American poetry, as well as Native American art and literary criticism. The journal featured the work of many prominent Native American writers, such as Wendy Rose (Hopii, Miwok), Silvestor Brito (Comanche/Tarascan), and the highly esteemed Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo). As the first press of its kind to promote the work of indigenous writers, this largely overlooked publication helped to change the face of American literature. The Ida V. Hall and George Kohfeldt Scholarship has enabled Ms. Morian to travel to Brown University in Providence, RI, where the Blue Cloud Quarterly archives are located.

Robert B. Caldwell Jr. has been awarded the Virginia and Jenkins Garrett Endowed Fellowship for 2014. This

Dr. Ken Roemer Inducted into UT System Academy of Distinguished Teachers

Dr. Ken Roemer, Center Fellow and professor of English, this year became one of only five instructors in the UT System to join the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, which is an active Academy working on improving teaching throughout the system. This honor is one of many teaching awards that Dr. Roemer has received for the depth of his expertise and his ability to inspire students and share his enduring love of learning. He is also a Piper Professor, Distinguished Teaching Professor, and Distinguished Scholar Professor at UTA. His areas of interest include utopian literature, American Indian literature, American literature/culture studies, inventive modeling (composition) and personal narrative writing. In addition to his teaching and research activities, he is a Faculty Advisor for the Native American Students Association at UTA.

Thomas McDonald Makes Gift to Promote Texas History

Fort Worth resident Thomas McDonald has made a $1,000 gift to the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies to promote research by an undergraduate or graduate student in nineteenth century Texas history. A seventh generation Texan, McDonald spent his youth on a Comanche County ranch. He graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas Christian University in 1965 and earned his PhD from Tulane University, where his dissertation focused on the neurochemistry of the retina. Dr. McDonald spent his professional career as an executive in Research and Development at Alcon Laboratories, helping to develop new treatments for eye diseases. Since retiring in 2004, Dr. McDonald has been immersed in a long-term history research project of his own—a study of the lives and times of his ancestors, Sarah Medissa Day and James Hughes Callahan, early settlers along the Guadalupe, San Marcos, and Blanco river valleys. Dr. McDonald is particularly interested in fostering new research into Texas history from the Mexican period to the Civil War. The presentation of the award will be made at next year's Webb Memorial Lectures banquet.

Upcoming Event

Juneteenth in Texas: 150 Years of Freedom

On Saturday, March 28, 2015, the Center will host a half-day workshop for North Texas area secondary school teachers designed to explore the origins and impact of the Juneteenth celebrations. The event will feature two speakers, Shennette Garrett-Scott, University of Mississippi, and Elizabeth Hays-Turner, University of North Texas, both of whom are authorities on the African-American experience. The presentations will be followed by a teachers' workshop led by Robert Edison, of the Barack Obama Leadership Academy, Dallas Independent School District. Focusing on issues that deal with African-Americans--and Texas African-Americans in particular--from Emancipation to the Civil Rights era--the content for this half-day workshop will be geared to social studies teachers at the fifth, seventh, eighth, and eleventh grade levels.

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Center Fellow Updates

Center director Sam W. Haynes attended the Regional Center Directors symposium in Charleston, S.C. and the Consortium of Southwest Centers conference in Durango, Colorado. During the past academic year he continued to direct the A Continent Divided: The U.S.-Mexico War, 1846-48 website project, and co-edited, with Gerald Saxon, Contested Empire: Rethinking the Texas Revolution, to be published next year by Texas A&M University Press. He is currently working on a book-length manuscript on the Texas Republic period.

Stephanie Cole is currently writing on gender, race, and resistance in domestic service in border regions of the antebellum South. She recently received the Richard C. Wade Award for the best full-length article, “Servants and Slaves in Louisville: Race, Ethnicity and Household Labor in an Antebellum Border City,” published in 2011 in Ohio Valley History. She continues to work as well on the formation of Jim Crow Society in Texas, focusing particularly on the role of multiple ethnic groups and questions of sexuality and marriage. Her co-edited volume, Texas Women: Their Histories, Their Lives, will be published by the University of Georgia Press in January 2015.

Christopher Conway’s new book, a cultural history of nineteenth-century Latin America, has been accepted for publication by Vanderbilt University Press. He has also just completed an article titled “Gender Iconoclasm and Aesthetics in Esteban Echeverría’s La Cautiva and the Captivity Paintings of Juan Manuel Blanes,” which will be published by the journal Decimonónica in its 2015 winter issue. The article examines the role of women in 19th century Argentinian captivity narratives and paintings. Dr. Conway is currently researching the enormous cultural impact of westerns on the Spanish-speaking world. He is specifically interested in Mexican comics about the U.S. frontier experience, and Spanish pulp novels set in the wild west.


Sonia Kania had two articles appear in print in 2013, an edition of Part 3 of the Probanza de méritos of Vicente de Zaldivar (1602) in Journal of the Southwest, and an edition of Part 4 in Romance Philology. She is currently working on an edition of Pedro de Najera’s Relación de la jornada de Cibola from 1596, a text dealing with Coronado’s search for the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola.

David Narrett has just completed a new book, Adventurism and Empire: The Struggle for Mastery in the Louisiana-Florida Borderlands, 1763-1803, to be published by the University of North Carolina Press this December (2014). The book focuses on imperial rivalries in the Gulf Coast and Mississippi Valley from the close of the Seven Years War to the Louisiana Purchase. The book offers an original perspective on how colonial adventurers and schemers shaped history through cross-border trade, settlement projects, and military incursions into Spanish and Indian territories.

In April Kenneth Roemer was recognized in Austin for his leadership and commitment to improving teaching and fostering instructional innovation; he was one of five UT System Professors inducted into the UT System Academy of Distinguished Teachers, which is an active Academy working on improving teaching throughout the System. His article on N. Scott Momaday is forthcoming in The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies. He offered two presentations on developments in Utopian Studies at the Society for Utopian Studies Conference and at the Digital Utopias conference at UTA. Currently he is writing an article on the concept of naming in American Indian fiction and is continuing work on his book tentatively entitled In My Father’s House: The Wanna Bés Who Already Were, Probably Not.

Gerald D. Saxon is currently associate professor of history at UT Arlington after having spent twenty-five years in library administration at the university, including seven years as dean of the library. He is working on a biography of Texas empresario Sterling Clack Robertson (1785-1842). In March 2013 he received the John H. Jenkins Award for the best research proposal on Texas history sponsored by the Texas State Historical Association, the oldest learned organization in the state. His two most recent books are Collecting Texas, with Thomas Krenkeck, published by the Book Club of Texas in 2010, and Historic Texas from the Air; with David Buisseret, Jack Graves, and Richard Francaviglia, published by the University of Texas Press in 2009. He is also president of the Texas Map Society.

Center Fellows

Sam Haynes, Professor of History and Center Director
Stephanie Cole, Associate Professor of History
Chris Conway, Associate Professor of Modern Languages
Imre Demhardt (Ex-Officio), Professor and Garrett Endowed Chair in the History of Cartography
Robert Fairbanks, Professor of History
Sonia Kania, Associate Professor of Modern Languages
David Narrett, Associate Professor of History
Ken Roemer, Professor of English
Gerald Saxon, Associate Professor of History
Given the general public's long-standing fascination with the Anglo-American frontier in Texas, it is perhaps surprising that there has never been a serious study of the city of Austin's early days. Jeffrey Stuart Kerr seeks to fill this void in the literature with *The Seat of Empire: The Embattled Birth of Austin, Texas* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2013), which examines the history of the state's capital from its founding in the late 1830s to the annexation of Texas to the United States in 1845. The story of Austin during this period is in many ways illustrative of the Texas Republic itself. The town featured prominently in the problems the fledgling nation faced during its brief history, as Comanche Indians and Mexican armies sought to deny Anglo-Americans a foothold in Central Texas. No less compelling is the role the town played in the feud between two remarkable political personalities, Mirabeau Lamar and Sam Houston.

The capital of Texas traces its origins to Waterloo, a settlement of four families living along the Colorado River in the years after the Battle of San Jacinto. Visiting the region while on a buffalo hunt in 1838, the visionary Lamar, a determined advocate of Texas nationalism, judged the site to be an appropriate venue for the capital city of the new republic, which he hoped would one day extend far into the American Southwest. Almost immediately, the makings of a town appeared on the banks of the Colorado, with a presidential "mansion," a capitol, and no less than 28 government buildings.

Nonetheless, the town's early years were tumultuous ones. Located on the western fringe of Anglo settlement, the capital was subject to unrelenting depredations from Comanche raiding parties throughout the Republic period. In addition, its exposed position left it vulnerable to possible capture from Mexican military forays into Texas. When Mexican armies twice captured San Antonio in 1842, many residents fled to the interior. Deeming the town unsafe, Sam Houston, then serving his second presidential term, ordered the capital removed, first to Houston City and then to Washington-on-the Brazos. Austinites refused to give up the government archives, however, defying an order from Houston to remove them.

When a group of men acting on the president's orders carted off the official papers in a predawn raid, Angelina Eberly famously fired a cannon to alert the local townsfolk. Angry residents gave chase, forcing Houston's men to return the papers, an episode which would become known in Texas history as the "Archives War." The town languished in the years that followed, but Texas voters chose to return the capital to Austin when the Republic joined the Union in 1845.

While the Archives War makes for entertaining reading, it also reveals an important if less colorful aspect of the early growth of Austin. Notwithstanding its remote location, the future metropolis was the subject of intense land speculation during the Republic period. Thus economic motives, much more than civic pride, lay behind local residents' determination to keep the capital in Austin. Kerr explains the more prosaic story of frontier town-building in a clear and comprehensible manner, while never losing sight of the larger political drama that unfolds between Lamar and Houston and their various supporters.

It is increasingly rare to find a book which succeeds as both a popular history and an academic one. A solid piece of scholarship that is also engagingly written, *Seat of Empire* is the exception to the rule. As Kerr notes in the introduction, the book is written primarily for a general audience. As a result, the author employs a lively prose style that is refreshingly free of academic jargon, and he writes with a keen eye for anecdotal detail. Nonetheless the book is very well-researched; Kerr makes excellent use of the extant newspapers and published primary sources, as well as the many manuscript collections in various state archives. The footnotes are extensively annotated, and offer much useful additional information.

*Seat of Empire* presents an entertaining story of the early Anglo Texas frontier, but it is also a valuable addition to the literature of the Republic period, and as such will be useful to scholars.

**Award Winners**

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annual award recognizes the best undergraduate or graduate student doing work in the field of the American Southwest using the holdings of the UT Arlington Libraries Special Collections. A Ph.D. student in the Transatlantic History program, Robert plans to study the linkages between the Córdova Rebellion and the expulsion of the Cherokee during the Texas Republic.
Utopian communities, experimental communities, intentional communities—scholars have used many different labels to describe a community consisting of adults and children from different families whose lifestyle represents shared values that are typically different from the lifestyles and values of their society. Intentional community is the preferred term today. If you visit the Fellowship for Intentional Communities Directory website, you will discover that, as of 20 May 2014, there were 2,432 intentional communities listed, including 75 in Texas. But you won’t find the name of one of the most interesting and successful intentional communities in Texas, indeed, in the United States—Whitehawk.

And for good reasons. “There was a time when we welcomed lots of attention,” Jude Craddock, one of the early members, told me (Phone Call 8 Aug. 2008). Indeed they did get attention. In the early 1980s, Whitehawk hosted tours and workshops with as many as 100 in attendance, including visitors from as far away as Thailand (Interview 2007). President Jimmy Carter’s mother, Lillian, sister, Ruth, and brother, Billy, came because one of Whitehawk’s sculptors, George Smith, designed a chapel (not at Whitehawk) for Ruth, an evangelist minister. Hollywood even took notice. Part of a 1982 film, Split Image, starring Peter Fonda, Karen Allen, and Michael O’Keefe, was shot at Whitehawk.

One element of that film helps to explain why the community decided not to submit an entry to the Directory. The hero in the film gets drawn into a cult. Whitehawk has never been a religious cult; their emphasis is on sustainable living. But any community that experiments with a lifestyle different from the mainstream inevitably draws suspicion and spawns rumors. Keeping the community out of the Internet limelight helps to minimize both. (Note: Out of respect for their privacy, I have agreed not to identify the location of the community.)

This development raises an obvious question: why is it relevant to take interest in Whitehawk? The community is not seeking wide publicity; the population is small (42), as are the land base (80 acres: 50% Wildlife Preserve; 50% private lots) and in number of occupied dwellings (16). One obvious answer to this question is because Whitehawk has been successful on so many levels.

The longevity criterion is almost always applied to intentional communities. In Commitment and Community (1972), Rosabeth Moss Kanter offers a standard success benchmark, 25 years. Most 20th and 21st-century intentional communities fall far short of that marker. Whitehawk is approaching its 40-year anniversary. There have been deaths and people have moved on. Only four of the first settlers still live in Whitehawk today. But a significant number of those who came in the late 1970s and early 1980s still live in Whitehawk, and the community is now experiencing its third generation. Eleven of the 42 residents are children.

The increase in the children and the arrival of some of the new members over the years have spawned a revival of sorts. In August 2007, I held a group interview with two of the original members, Bill Craddock and Robin Foote, and one of the early members, Phil Knox. All three could agree on the first three “stages” of Whitehawk’s history. From 1977 to 1980, the shared values were “Appropriate Technologies” or “Voluntary Simplicity.” There was a pioneering spirit that inspired planning and cooperative building. Robin Foote called the period of the early to mid-80s the public “Intentional Community” stage, when newspaper and magazine reporters, tour seekers, President Carter’s relatives, and the film crew visited. The “Nesting Stage” was the label they agreed upon for the mid-1980s through much of the 1990s when raising families was a priority. But when they came to defining the 21st century stage, they were unsure. There were new members, but the population was aging. Was Whitehawk destined to become an intriguing gated retirement community? In November of the same year, I met with twelve of the women who were either still living at Whitehawk or had lived there, including Ruth Foote, one of the founders. Although their perspective was sometimes different from the men’s, they also sensed an aging. There was an undertone of nostalgia for the days when people from neighboring communities and school friends would gather in Whitehawk for fall carnivals, Easter egg hunts, drumming, and potlucks.

In 2013 when I spoke to several of the same men and women, there was less emphasis on “aging” and more on revival. Joyce Little was especially encouraged by the rebirth of the fall carnival that attracted 44 children and the fact that her daughter was teaching sustainability at a community college and was going to move to Whitehawk with her family. So, it appears that for Whitehawk, longevity may not just mean an impressive number of years but a trans-generational vitality.
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What did the intentional community contribute to our understanding of constructive alternative ways of living? That is another important criterion. The drive for sustainability motivated the members to create the first ferro-cement community in the world. Ferro-cement grain elevators, apartments, and ships – especially in World War II Navy Liberty ships – preceded Whitehawk by decades. But the inventive mind of Ruth Foote’s husband Bob Foote wondered why not turn a ferro-cement boat upside down, face it toward the south or southwest for solar energy, and bury it partially for thermal energy? In the 2007 interview, Bill Craddock offered a concise overview of the construction of one of these upside-down boat homes: a reinforced concrete foundation with a French drain; a half inch steel rebar armature often in dome shapes; a 6” x 6” x 10” steel remesh attached to the armature with small bits of wire; a covering of ¼” or ½” steel mesh sewn together and attached to the remesh with bits of wire; all covered with a cement plaster (a concrete mixture using Portland cement mixed with plaster, sand, and a vinyl bonding agent). The results when done properly and when combined with the thermal energy, solar panels, and small wind generators were energy efficient, incredibly strong, low-cost, and low-maintenance dwellings. For more than a decade (1977–1989) the community was able to stay off of the electric grid. And one standard line of tour guides was, “Maintenance? Yes, we have to mow our roofs.”

Another practical achievement beyond the grasp of many intentional communities is financial solvency. In 1977 Ruth and Bob Foote purchased the land with a 15-year mortgage agreement. The mortgage on all the property was paid off by 1992. Initially membership required $10 monthly dues, used in part to purchase a tractor and other community equipment. Building costs were kept down by communal labor and ingenious ways of obtaining building materials. Terry Parsons recalled collecting 1500 plastic garbage bags for roof insulation; Jacque Walston shared how she and her husband used boat netting to shield the round portion of their roof from excessive sunlight; Robin Foote recalled $2 overstock Winnebago trailer windows; Phil Knox bought spare end cuts of rebar; and Bill Craddock was delighted by the discovery that surplus cork wadding used in the Korean war made excellent insulation: “guns into plowshares,” he joked (Interview 2007). One obvious result of the mortgage retirement, the co-op labor, and the bargain-priced materials, is a low cost of living that enabled members to leave high-stress jobs for less demanding ones that offered more peace of mind (Phil’s “port in the storm”).

The Whitehawk successes of the longevity, sustainable construction techniques, and stable finances are all quantifiable. But what may be the two most important achievements escape quantification: how the Whitehawk experience empowered many of the women and provided an excellent environment for raising children.

The early days were dominated by men; hence the “bachelor club” nickname. Even when Kala Hall arrived in 1981, she recalled wondering, “Where are the women?” She was told (by a woman), “In town working to make money so the men can tinker.” The fact that women contributed substantially to the financial health of Whitehawk certainly suggests empowerment. But there were other empowements; to quote Sandra Schulz, Whitehawk “helped me to do things I never did before.” There were the plastering parties and the co-op wire tying, Joyce Little learned plumbing, and Jacque Walston learned how to use a backhoe. There were times during the 2007 group interview when I felt like I was talking to modern-day pioneer women.

The other dominant theme was raising children: the fall carnivals, the Boy and Girl Scouting adventures, but most of all the sense of community responsibility. Jude Craddock recalled an incident when a child stole money from a community vending machine: “The mother made her apologize in person to every family in the community.” Responsibility also translated into academic discipline: 100% of the first generation of children graduated from college; some went on for graduate and professional degrees.

The multiple successes of Whitehawk make it worthy of our interest. But the successes raise obvious questions: What enabled Whitehawk to be successful? Is Whitehawk a unique phenomenon or a potential model for 21st-century community experiments or even societal transformation?

Whitehawk has a fascinating Founding Father-Founding Mother history/mythology that contributed to its success. In the mid-1970s several of the eventual settlers were attracted to the teachings Bob Foote adapted from José Silva’s “mind control” techniques (Craddock, “Letters” 1). Bob’s interest in adapting the ferro-cement boat construction to housing and establishing a grounded utopian island also intrigued followers. Ruth Foote added to the aura of the beginnings with a sighting: she claimed she saw a white hawk fly over the land—a wonderful sky- born blessing. Hence the name Whitehawk and Ruth’s nickname “Mother Hawk.” Historical depth comes with evidence that a band of Kiowas used the area as a favorite campsite (Craddock, “Letters” 3).

The myth, history, and inspiration were backed by practical talent. Many intentional communities fail because they don’t have the right “personnel.” Ruth was a VP of a title company; she knew the land and the law. Bob was a professional engineer who could draw up plans for the buildings. There were also construction contractors, computer and data programmers, and a midwife. The educators ranged from an athletic trainer to art teachers to a philosopher. George Smith, one of the early leaders, combined a hands-on work ethic and artistic vision; he was a sculptor.

The location was also key. Too much isolation can lead to tragic Jonestown scenarios. Too little isolation can lead to too many gawkers and distractions. Whitehawk is not far from suburban and urban areas; the children could attend local schools and the members could have local jobs. Thus there was a continual awareness of what was going on in the “mainstream” world. But the geography — farmland, slightly hilly, trees — renders Whitehawk virtually invisible, though there is some concern about the sprawling suburban march.

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A complex combination of consensus, trust, and size was and is just as important as history/myth, personnel, and location. At the heart of the initial governance were decisions to hold monthly meetings (“the glue that makes Whitehawk work” [Craddock, Interview 2007]) and to act only by consensus. These decisions worked in part because of the small size of the community, which facilitated face-to-face negotiations. Trust, especially during the early uncertain years, was the real key to the consensus approach. Bill Craddock recalls that, “Each month I would put cash in Ruth’s box. [After six months] I thought, wait a minute, maybe I should get a receipt” [which Ruth did provide] (Interview 2007). The trust and consensus helped Whitehawk survive when Bob Foote and later George Smith left the community and Ruth moved to a conventional house just outside the main gate. Unlike intentional communities that fail because of their dependence on one charismatic leader, Whitehawk could successfully weather the loss of leaders.

Up to this paragraph, my depiction of Whitehawk has been distinctly utopian. As the mention of the departure of leaders suggests, life at Whitehawk was not always utopian. This is another reason for the community’s success. Members have maintained their sustainability values despite trials by fire (including fire ants). The litany is impressive: leaks, drainage and ventilation problems, scorpions, cement dust allergies, sewer “only when the sun shines” (Terry Parsons, Interview 2007), a 100-year flood, limited incomes, banks rejecting conventional mortgages, difficulties “balancing jobs and house construction” (Joyce Little, Interview 2007), outside teachers categorizing the children as backward because they couldn’t identify pictures of electric outlets, county regulations forbidding methane generators, noise pollution from conventional generators, inability to respond to school reports of sick children because there was only one communal phone, controversies about connecting to phone lines and the electric grid, the eviction of a family after gun shots were heard from their home, deaths – some natural, some from deadly gas leaks - divorces, and departures – sometimes because of controversies, job offers, or because, as George Smith once asked Robin Foote, “Where did the magic go?” (Interview 2007). Many of these trials are past tense -- now anyone can sew in the dark. But the shared knowledge that the members have made it through tough times helps the community to endure inevitable trials.

Because of its small size and rural location, there are many characteristics of the Whitehawk success story that cannot be transferred to a societal model. But the importance of an inspirational origin history/myth, the need for a trained labor force, a sense of financial responsibility and trust in the government, and a shared dedication to sustainability tested by trials, are certainly relevant to successful communities and societies. So is another characteristic: adaptability. One reason Whitehawk members have coped with their many trials is their willingness to adapt. Computer records replaced Ruth’s collection box; members have retrofitted homes; three-quarters or sometimes majority replaced consensus rule; renters were permitted; and, since 1989, Whitehawk has been on the electric grid. Still there is a strong emphasis on sustainability and community.

The verb, related to adaptation, that I have heard over the years from members is “bend.” One symbol of Whitehawk is George Smith’s sculpture of a huge white hawk, wings outstretched with the tips of the wings covered by old gloves used in plastering parties. A much less dramatic but equally appropriate symbol would be the humble rebar. It is steel, so it’s strong, especially if it is part of a community of rebars working together. But it is also bendable; it can adapt to environmental and artistic goals. Maybe if George Smith ever decided to retrofit his sculpture, he could have one of those gloves grasp a rebar and hold it proudly as a symbol of the community’s dedication to sustainability and its willingness to flex its dedication when necessary.