Students traveling with the League of United Latin American Citizens organization met Wednesday at the Statehouse for the beginning of the three-day Latino Youth Leadership Institute annual program.

The 25 students, who came to the Capitol to learn how state government runs, met with Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson and Paul Feleciano, a member of the Kansas Parole Board.

Elias Garcia, policy and advocacy director for the state of Kansas and director of diversity recruitment for the Kansas Department of Corrections, said the events planned by LULAC have been designed to present the students with more opportunities and help them gain better leadership skills.

"We do this to expose the kids to opportunities other than those readily available to them in their communities," Garcia said.

After leaving the Capitol, the group went to The University of Kansas to meet with professionals and educators.

The students who LULAC aids through the program are juniors and seniors in high school or attending community colleges. Garcia said at this point, the students are in the process of deciding career paths, and they may not know what opportunities are available.

"Students are leaving one part of their lives and moving into the next stage," Garcia said. "We want to open their eyes to everything."

The students will return to the Capitol on Friday to hear presenPlease see LULAC, Page 2B

Claudia Ramirez, 17, of Garden City, takes a photo of her friends in the Old Supreme Court Room at the Statehouse on Wednesday during the first day of activities for the Latino Youth Leadership Institute. The institute is sponsored by the League of United Latin American Citizens.
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LULAC: Washburn tour will be final activity

locations on state job opportunities, Latino advocacy and KDOC job opportunities. A tour of Washburn University, where the group will meet with representatives from financial aid and admissions, will be the final activity.

LULAC is a national organization dedicated to preserving the civil rights of Latin American citizens of the United States and Puerto Rico. The organization is the oldest civil rights organization in the United States, beginning in 1929 in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Kansas has four LULAC councils, located in Kansas City, Garden City, Salina and Topeka.

Involvement in the Youth Leadership Institute is operated on a local level. The students involved this year have come from Topeka, Garden City, Liberal and Hays.

The Latino Youth Leadership Institute is partnered with local and state governments. The program is sponsored by the University of Kansas, KDOC, Hispanos Unidos de Liberal Kansas, Garden City Chamber of Commerce and the Garden City LULAC.

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Early Horton photos inspire book

By Michael Hooper
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Author I.E. Quastler is reliving the past through the eyes of Horton photographer Jules Bourquin.

In 2003, Quastler, of Coronado, Calif., published some of Bourquin’s photos in his book “Prairie Railroad Town: The Rock Island Railroad Shops at Horton, Kansas, 1887-1946.” Quastler had visited the Kenneth Spencer Research Library at The University of Kansas to gather photos for “Prairie Railroad Town.” He also received some photos from the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas but didn’t make the trip to Dallas until after “Prairie Railroad Town” was published.

Quastler sold all of his “Prairie Railroad Town” books within a year. Based on that success, he decided to make a trip to Dallas and was richly rewarded with the opportunity to see thousands of other images by Bourquin.

“I was delighted by the number, quality and variety of unpublished photographs there,” Quastler wrote.

“Almost from the start, I felt there was enough material for another book.”


Horton was founded in 1886 by the Chicago, Kansas & Nebraska Railway building a line through Horton. The CK&N Railway was a subsidiary of the Rock Island Railroad. In the early 1900s, more than 800 people worked for the Rock Island Railroad in Horton, most at the shops. The shops closed in 1946, and the Rock Island went out of business in 1980.

Bourquin took pictures for 62 years, starting in 1898. He died at age 86 in 1964.

During his lifetime, he took well over 21,000 exposures, only a fraction of which are of railroads. Most of the rest constitute a wonderful record of people in urban landscapes and community events, Quastler wrote.

Bourquin worked as an optometrist in Horton and was an amateur photographer. In his early working life, he was an apprentice in the Rock Island Railroad shop in Horton. He decided against a railroading career but gained an appreciation for the railroad.

The 160-page book includes photos of shop workers, immigrants, a worker strike, train wrecks and slice-of-life moments.

Quastler, a retired geography professor and author of 11 books, including “The Railroads of Lawrence, Kansas,” leaned on his railroad research and other railroad experts to write the cutlines.

“I have gone where angels fear to tread,” Quastler wrote. “But I found generous help in many quarters, and this is a journey I have taken with no regrets.”

Michael Hooper can be reached at (785) 295-1293 or michael.hooper@cjonline.com.
Ottawa County native is Miss Kansas

Now it's on to Miss America competition for Alyssa George

By GARY DEMUTH

Alyssa George was used to coming in second.

While attending Minneapolis High School, she earned four medals in track and field — all second-place finishes.

“I’m such a competitive person that coming in second was hard to take,” George said.

But as of Saturday, she doesn’t have to worry about second place anymore.

George, 21, was crowned the 2007 Miss Kansas during the annual beauty pageant in Pratt.

She will represent Kansas at the 2008 Miss America competition, which will be nationally broadcast early next year.

Even while standing hand-in-hand with eventual first runner-up Lindsey Hoover, who happened to be a childhood friend from Anthony, George thought she was destined for another second-place finish.

CHRISTOPHER HANEWINCKEL / The Hutchinson News

The new 2007 Miss Kansas Alyssa George is crowned by the 2006 Miss Kansas Michelle Walthers on Saturday in Pratt.
Miss Trained in classical piano

FROM PAGE A1

“I love Lindsey and thought she was well-qualified to be Miss Kansas — and I’ve always been a second-place gal,” she said. “When they called my name, I was so shocked. I didn’t really think I had that much of a chance of winning.”

George competed in the pageant in 2004 and 2005, and in both years didn’t even crack the top 10.

When she made the final 10 out of 21 competitors this year, her mother, Mary Beth George, became cautiously optimistic.

“I was nervous for her,” said Mary Beth, who works in Salina at the Smoky Hill Education Service Center, 605 E. Crawford. “She had worked so hard for this and came up short twice before.”

But when her daughter, trained in classical piano, performed a classical Hungarian piece during the talent portion of the competition, Mary Beth began to sense victory.

“When she really nailed her piano piece, I thought, ‘Oh, my, she could win this thing,’” Mary Beth said.

Better prepared this time

What other factors did Alyssa think contributed to her win this year?

“I think I was much more prepared, overall,” she said. “I was a little bit older, and I went in there with a whole new attitude and vision for what I wanted to do as Miss Kansas.”

For her victory, George received a $5,000 scholarship. She also won the swimsuit competition, which awarded her $100, plus a $250 instrumentalist scholarship and a $500 business award.

As Miss Kansas, George will tour the state, making public appearances and meeting with consultants and pageant sponsors as she prepares for the Miss America pageant. She also will tour Kansas schools, promoting her pageant platform issue: installing anti-bullying programs in public school systems.

George will be paid for each personal appearance as Miss Kansas. She is furnished a car, a place to live, a cell phone, a credit card and a clothing allowance, courtesy of the Miss America organization.

“It’s not just a crown. It’s a job,” Mary Beth said.

Next? Miss America

Because of her newfound responsibilities and to better prepare for the Miss America pageant, George plans to take a year off from college at the University of Kansas, where she is a business major.

“Miss America is a whole new ballgame,” she said. “You have to step up to another level in every area of competition. And I really want to win it. It’s been 10 years since we’ve had a Miss Kansas win, and it’s about time we had one again.”

Reporter Gary Demuth can be reached at 822-1405 or by email at sjgdemuth@saljournal.com.
Alyssa George, Minneapolis, Kan., the 21-year-old daughter of Rod George and Mary Beth George, earned the Miss Kansas crown and title Saturday night at Pratt Community College at the conclusion of a three-hour production reminiscent of “American Idol.”

Early in the evening master of ceremonies Matt Mauro explained that of the 21 contestants, 11 would not compete again this year. At the conclusion of evening wear, swimsuit and talent competitions, five more were dismissed after watching recorded snippets of their week at the Miss Kansas Pageant.

Remaining on stage with George, who had represented the Miss Sedgwick County local pageant, were Miss Wooded Hills Lindsay Hoover of Anthony, Miss Topeka Alex Miller of Derby, Miss Northeast Danielle Coffman of Topeka, and Miss Liberal Shameem Kauffman of Liberal.

George proved the best fit to what judges said, in recorded statements, they were looking for in the next Miss Kansas: confidence, beauty, poise, articulate, organized, businesslike, intelligent, the ability to walk into a room and command attention and committed to a cause, to her community, state, the country and the organization she would represent.

Moments before the crowning, in a backstage interview with Miss Kansas 1998 Jennifer Vannatta Fischer, projected onto screens in the auditorium, George said she was calm and prepared. She reiterated the statement afterwards.

“I have never been so at peace,” she said. “I was so calm and peaceful it (the announcement of her win) was a shock — a nice, pleasant surprise,” which she then revised to “a surprise of my lifetime.”

“I was calm because I prepared to the best of my ability, performed to the best of my ability and it was out of my control,” George said.

Her senior year at the University of Kansas will be put on hold as she assumes her duties as Miss Kansas. She received a $5,000 scholarship donated by The Peoples Bank.

Hoover, 24, accomplished the first runner-up title plus a preliminary evening wear win in her final year of eligibility. A graduate of Kansas State University, she will return to work as a financial services representative at Central National Bank in Anthony on Tuesday. First National Bank in Pratt donated a $1,500 scholarship.

A 17-year-old graduate of Derby High School, Miller will head to the University of Oklahoma with a $1,250 scholarship from First National Bank. She expects to be back in Pratt next June.

“Absolutely,” she said, “you can’t just quit after that” (a second-runner up finish in her first state pageant).

Coffman, age 20, is a junior at Washburn University. She finished as third runner up in her second year of competition, claiming, last year I prepared to compete. This year I prepared to do the job.” She hopes to make another try for the job next year. Pratt Internal Medicine Group donated a $1,000 scholarship.

Kauffman, an 18-year-old graduate of Liberal High School, plans to move to California to attend school and pursue a career in dance, funded in part with a $900 fourth runner up scholarship.

The remaining five semi-finalists all receive $850 scholarships. They are: Miss Southwest Alexandra Blasi, Miss Cheney Lake Jennifer Jones, Miss Leavenworth Paula Prosser, Miss Boot Hill Samantha Steckloff and Miss Kansas River Valley Carol Toland.

Non-finalists each receive an $800 scholarship to any college or university.
Miss Kansas 2007 Alyssa George kneels and waits for Miss Kansas 2006 Michelle Walthers to finish putting the crown on her head after winning the title Saturday night. George represented the Miss Sedgwick County pageant.
PRATT — Miss Sedgwick County was crowned Miss Kansas in a ceremony Saturday night.

The winner was Alyssa George, 21, a Minneapolis native who is a business major at the University of Kansas. She will go on to compete for the title of Miss America.

The first runner-up was Lindsay Hoover, 24, Anthony, who competed as Miss Wooded Hills. The second runner-up, Alexandra Miller, 17, competed as Miss Topeka.
Bergman earns honors as political scholar at KU

A pair of area students were honored recently at the University of Kansas Department of Political Science's annual Pi Sigma Alpha initiation and awards banquet.

Jessica Lynn Bergman of Louisburg, a senior in pre-law, received a Nelson Family Fund Scholarship.

Dennis Michael Chanay of Paola, a senior majoring in strategic communications, was inducted into the national political honor society. He also received a Gustafson Scholarship.
Local students earn degrees

- Dustin Taylor Petrik, Manhattan, Ph.D. in Molecular and Cellular Biology, University of Iowa.
- Megan Amber Glessner, Leonardville, doctor of pharmacy, University of Kansas.
- Thomas Ryan O'Leary, Leonardville, bachelor of science in biology, University of Kansas.
- David J. Brandenburg, Riley, doctor of physical therapy, University of Kansas.
- Jennifer Ann Arthur, Manhattan, bachelor of arts in communication studies, bachelor of science in journalism, University of Kansas.
- Christopher R. Bohm, Manhattan, juris doctor, University of Kansas.
- Leanne Coder, Manhattan, doctor of philosophy/business, University of Kansas.
- Edward August Epps, Manhattan, bachelor of arts in French, bachelor of fine arts in art, University of Kansas.
- Mitchell Aaron Graham, Manhattan, bachelor of arts in English, bachelor of arts in political science, University of Kansas.
- Holly Marie Hammerschmidt, Manhattan, bachelor of science in business/marketing, University of Kansas.
- Bridget Anne Hardy, Manhattan, bachelor of science in business/accounting, University of Kansas.
- Rebekah Jean Hartnett, Manhattan, bachelor of arts in African and African-American studies, bachelor of arts in anthropology, University of Kansas.
- Micah Paul Hawkinson, Manhattan, master of arts in English, University of Kansas.
- David Austin Hill, Manhattan, bachelor of arts in human biology, University of Kansas.
- Lee Michael Iversen, Manhattan, bachelor of science in biochemistry, University of Kansas.
- Jared Ray Jevons, Manhattan, bachelor of science in geology, University of Kansas.
- Phoebe Suzanne Michels, Manhattan, bachelor of science in computer science, University of Kansas.
- Helen Janet Miller, Manhattan, master of science in education, University of Kansas.
- Jessica Marie Schuler, Manhattan, bachelor of science in occupational studies, University of Kansas.
- Amber Dawn Seba, Manhattan, doctor of medicine, University of Kansas.
- Adam Christopher Shaner, Manhattan, bachelor of science in microbiology, University of Kansas.
- Lindsay Marie Smith, Manhattan, master of arts in English, University of Kansas.
- Robert Campbell Williams, Manhattan, bachelor of science in business administration and business/finance, University of Kansas.
- Megan Ashli Moore, Manhattan, bachelor of science in preprofessional zoology, Northwest Missouri State University.
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Jamie Cowan Brooksher, Mulberry, Kansas, recently graduated from the University of Kansas School of Law, Lawrence, Kansas. Brooksher, who earned a juris doctorate, is also a 2003 graduate of Pittsburg State University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in history.

While in law school, Brooksher received the CALI Award for Academic Excellence in Labor Law and participated in numerous activities, including the Paul E. Wilson Defender Project and Women in Law. She also completed an internship with the National Labor Relations Board.

Brooksher is a 1997 graduate of Northeast High School, Arma. She and her husband, James, have three children.
Woodhead attending Girls State in Lawrence

Sarah Woodhead, McLouth, has been chosen by American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 393 in McLouth to attend the 65th annual session of Sunflower Girls State on the University of Kansas campus in Lawrence.

The session is ongoing this week and ends Friday. Woodhead is the daughter of Teresa Woodhead, McLouth, and Douglas Woodhead, Overland Park. She is one of roughly 465 girls who just completed their junior year of high school who were to attend the session.

The session simulates the political system of Kansas at the city, county and state level. Speakers were to include Governor Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh and other state, county and city officials.