KicKapoo Tribe integral to KU professor’s movie

Associated Press

HORTON — Despite limited acting experience, Tammy Wahwassuck and about 20 members of the Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas have small roles in the upcoming movie “The Only Good Indian.”

The movie was filmed in locations throughout Kansas and uses the Kickapoo language.

Wahwassuck said her acting experience before this movie didn’t extend much beyond childhood performances in the living room with her cousins.

But now she’s part of the film, starring American Indian actor Wes Studi.

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The movie is set in Kansas during the early 1900s and is about a young American Indian boy who flees from a school that assimilates Indians into the “white” world.

Studi, who has appeared in “Dances with Wolves” and “The Last of the Mohicans,” portrays an American Indian bounty hunter who intends to take the boy back to the school.

Wahwassuck played a crazy woman in a mental institution filmed in Topeka.

In the scene, she pleads in the Kickapoo tongue for help from Studi’s character.

“It’s hard to describe,” she said of her experience. “It’s an adrena-light rush.”

Steve Cadue, Kickapoo Tribal chairman, said it was important that the film portray American Indians accurately and without prejudice.

He became acquainted with the writers and the producers before the Kickapoo Tribal government gave formal approval for the use of the language.

“They gave us good assurances that it would be a positive type of film,” said Cadue, who didn’t volunteer as an extra, but watched from the sidelines.

The reservation is hopeful that Studi will accept its invitation to speak at the Kickapoo school.

“I think he’s a great individual,” Cadue said. “I think he works hard and I think he tries to give back to the Native American community. He is contributing to Indian education and correct historic accounts of Native American people.”

The crew plans to attempt to sell the movie to a distributor once it is completed in mid-2008, said Scott Richardson, a producer.

The film’s director, Kevin Willmott, an assistant professor of film at the University of Kansas, was also the writer and director of “C.S.A.: Confederate States of America,” a satire of what the United States would be like had the South won the Civil War. It was shown in the 2004 Sundance Film Festival.

Willmott also is writer, director and producer of “Bunker Hill,” another film shot in Kansas.
Oread hotel plan stirs debate in Lawrence

Associated Press

LAWRENCE — A proposal to build an upscale hotel on Mount Oread has stirred concern about the city's skyline and the preservation of a historic neighborhood at the center of the University of Kansas campus.

The seven-story Oread Inn would be close to the student union and would replace a few rundown buildings and already-closed businesses. The proposal also includes retail businesses.

Some architects and historic preservationists say the hotel's design doesn't fit with the historic neighborhood. They worry that a hotel atop the hill will alter the view of the city.

"People don't understand how big and massive this building is going to be," said Dennis Brown, president of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance. "It is going to change the skyline."

A landmark for settlers traveling west, Mount Oread was a staging area for marauders

before the Civil War and was later the site chosen for the university.

Developers say the Oread Inn would fill an upscale niche that's now unfilled at the campus.

"Of the Big 12 schools, we are the only college community that doesn't have a hotel on campus or within one block of campus," said Nancy Longhurst, general manager of the Eldridge and a member of the Oread Inn project team.

City Commissioner Mike Amyx said the project could be a great fit for Lawrence and the university.

"It's a real positive," Amyx said. "It could be a wonderful project for the city, and it's connected pretty closely to the University of Kansas. It would be great for alumni or visitors to the city."

There are two historic districts near the potential hotel site. The city's Historic Resources Commission, which oversees protection of historic buildings, unanimously rejected the hotel project because of its size and design.

City commissioners overruled that decision but sent the project back to the committee when the developers tweaked the design.

The new design had a facade designed to blend better with surrounding buildings, and the overall height was reduced by 6 feet.
Learning to fly

College freshmen survive their first semester, pass on hard-earned wisdom.

By Kristen Roderick
The Hutchinson News
kroderick@hutchnews.com

It's one of life's biggest transitions - and Reno County's college freshmen have survived their first semester.

On the upside, students get a sense of freedom when they go from high school to college. Many are away from their families for the first time, and they use this time to discover who they are.

However, this freedom sometimes may not be what the students bargained for as they rip open the package of extra long sheets for their dorm room beds.

Jill Heisler, a Wichita State freshman and 2007 graduate of Hutchinson High School, said one of her biggest challenges was getting over her homesickness.

"It was hard for a little bit, but once my roommate and I started opening our door, it made it easier," she said.

An open door gives other students a chance to step in and say hello, Heisler said.

Becca Braun, a University of Kansas freshman and 2007 graduate of Trinity Catholic High School, said her biggest challenge was getting into a regular routine. Classes are more spaced out, and she doesn't have her parents telling her to do her homework in the free time.

"It's a lot easier to not do as much during the day and put it off until too late in the evening," she said.

Joel Murphy, a Kansas State University freshman and 2007 graduate of Hutch High, and Katelyn Law, a KU freshman and graduate of Hutch High, agreed.

"You have the whole afternoon free, but you need to get your homework done," she said.

Andy Berg, WSU freshman and 2007 graduate of Buhler High, said his foe last semester was procrastination.

Then, there's the dreaded Freshmen 15, where students who aren't used to feeding themselves either gain or lose 15 pounds their first year.

Heisler said there's ways to combat that on any campus.

"Don't drive to class and don't do fast food," she said.

"That's expensive."

However, the transition to college doesn't start when Dad and Mom tearfully drive away after helping their teenagers move in. Law said it should start the minute ink touches scholarship applications.

After the ink dries and students know exactly what school they want to go to, they should check into which professors' classes they want to be in, Braun said. Students can either ask friends who have taken the same courses, or they can visit www.ratemyprofessors.com, where students have graded the instructors.

She said those who want to go to college should look at as many scholarships as possible, because let's face it, college is expensive.

During their first couple of weeks, freshmen should try to get involved, Braun said. Colleges have a lot of organizations for students to join; it's up to the student to take that first step.

"There are all of the new people and new opportunities," she said. "You Kind of realize that there's a lot more out there in the world. A lot of different types of people that you don't see on a regular basis."

But once they get the hang of things, Law said it's worth it.

"Just get ready for a whole lot of responsibility," she said. "But it's fun."
Advice for Upcoming Freshmen

MURPHY
“Have fun, but stay on top of grades. Make sure you get everything done on time.”

- Joel Murphy, freshman at Kansas State, Hutchinson High School alum

HEISLER
“Don’t drive to class and don’t do fast food. That’s expensive.”

- Jill Heisler, freshman at Wichita State University. Hutch High alum

BRAUN
“Just find different groups of people to be involved in and many activities and organizations to extend the network of people in your life.”

- Becca Braun, freshman at University of Kansas, Trinity Catholic High School alum

BENG
“A lot of teachers tell you that you’ll be overwhelmed with schoolwork; it’s not true if you can manage your time. You’ll get through just fine.”

- Andy Beng, freshman at Wichita State University. Buhler High School alum

LAW
“Look for as many scholarships as possible and just prepare yourself for time management and being on your own.”

- Katelyn Law, freshman at KU, Hutch High alum
Republican Mike Huckabee, left, and Democrat Barack Obama won Thursday's Iowa caucuses.

State caucuses could sway nominations

BY BRENT D. WISTROM, CHRISTINA M. WOODS
AND JOE RODRIGUEZ
The Wichita Eagle

The sentiments of a few hundred thousand Iowans may not mean much by the time Kansans pick their favorite party's presidential candidates in February. But that doesn't mean Thursday's caucus victories for Democrat U.S. Sen. Barack Obama and Republican Mike Huckabee won't resonate across Kansas in the meantime in the form of campaign cash and yard signs.

Even at this early stage, Obama's win in a predominantly white state signaled that he is the nation's first black man to have a genuine chance of winning a party nomination. That struck a historic tone for some people in Wichita and across the country. And the lack of a dominant victory by any candidate gives some state party officials hope that Kansas'
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caucuses in February could be meaningful.

Joe Aistrup, head of Kansas State University's political science department, thinks there's a small chance.

"Right now things are totally topsy-turvy," he said.

If, for example, different candidates land primary victories in states such as New Hampshire and South Carolina, Kansas could be one of the states that tips the scales in one candidate's direction — making him or her the party's presidential nominee for the November general election.

Kansans will caucus Feb. 5, and Republicans will pick their candidates Feb. 9. Wyoming Republicans may host their caucus today, and New Hampshire hosts a primary Tuesday.

"For the fun of it, I'd like to see Kansas matter," Aistrup said.

Christian Morgan, executive director of the Kansas Republican Party, said the Kansas GOP took a gamble on that very scenario when it picked its caucus date.

And if the nomination is up in the air after Feb. 5, when more than 20 states have primaries, Kansas Republican voters will be the center of attention on Feb. 9.

"As long as it remains a close race, the Kansas caucus will be a unique experience," he said.

For some, it's historic

The 2008 presidential election has been unique on many fronts. Although Obama hasn't concentrated on race, many black people in Wichita think that Iowa's results show the country is ready for a change.

And though it's early in the campaigning cycle, they're considering offering Obama their votes.

"It's historical," said Wichitan Dearrick McPherson. "I think we're witnessing history."

McPherson said Obama, 46, represents new thoughts, ideas and politics that many Americans have been waiting for.

"He has a newness in thoughts and ideologies and a way of reaching the people," McPherson said. "And his age, we can relate to. With (New York Sen. Hillary) Clinton and everyone else, they've been in office for so long that people see them as the old hat."

Huckabee also shares a different take on everyday politics, McPherson added.

"People are ready for diverse thoughts — not so much sticking to party lines — and they're really trying to look at the affairs of America and deal with them accordingly instead of just the status quo," McPherson said of both Obama and Huckabee.

Curtis McClintoon, 93, a former Kansas House speaker, said he's proud of Obama's rise as a viable black presidential candidate.

"We have to forget about color and go for the character and the ability of a person," he said.

What's good for black America is good for white America. Racism has been one of our chief holdbacks."

Allan Cigler, professor of political science at the University of Kansas, thinks race is less of an issue than class.

What's important is "whether you're viewed as an educated professional," he said. "Colin Powell was always on that side with the Republicans."

Clinton has been supported by more black voters than Obama in several polls.

"He comes across as a white upper-class professional," Cigler said. "Whites are very comfortable with that, but some blacks are not. Hillary is very popular in the black community. I think it's more a class thing than a race thing."

Hispanic voters hold out

Community activist Emira Palacios, a leader with Sunflower Community Action, was part of a Wichita contingent that traveled to Iowa last month to take part in a presidential candidate forum.

She said she could see then that Obama was popular among potential voters, so she wasn't surprised at the outcome of the Iowa caucus.

But no candidate has won her over.

She hopes they will address immigration.

"Being the biggest minority right now, and a population that continues to grow heavily," said Palacios, who is Hispanic, "I think neglecting this part of the community is really going to reflect badly on them."

She's unsure how important a candidate's race is to Hispanic voters — whether Obama's race alone, for example, is enough to win them over.

"I think people are just looking for change, people are looking for hope — a hope for something better," she said.

Cirilo Arteaga, 83, agrees. Arteaga, a retired U.S. Postal Service employee, is a longtime activist in the Hispanic community.

He admits to being "shocked" that Obama was able to claim such a strong victory in Iowa, because of his race.

"Race is still an issue," he said.

But he, like Palacios, is unsure how race factors in to the Hispanic vote. It's more important to find out candidates' stances on issues, he said.

"But I definitely believe that the country, right now, is ready for change," Palacios said.

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