

Renowned writer reads at LAC

Jadon Triplett

A&E Editor

On Oct. 4 the Literary Arts Center hosted William Kittredge, who read from his essay "Redneck Secrets" and his forthcoming, yet-to-be-titled novel. Kittredge managed the impressive feat of not only entertaining the English teachers, but not boring the general audience.

Kittredge taught Creative Writing at the University of Montana for 29 years before retiring in the spring of 1997. He is the author of two collections of essays, "Owning it All," and "Who Owns the West;" two collections of short stories, "The Van Gogh Fields and Other Stories," and "We are not in this Together;" and a memoir, "Hole in the Sky."

Kittredge read first from "Redneck Secrets," introducing it as the first thing he ever had published. Throughout his reading of the essay a pattern of romanticism related to what he called "redneck country" emerged as he spoke of the ups and down of life in the Midwest.

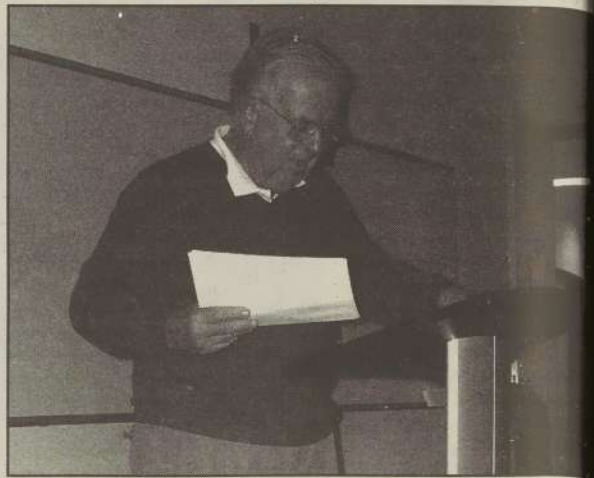
Themes emphasized in his essay include individualism, good people dealing with a hard life, a wariness of the east, and "redneck" as an empowering word rather than a negative stereotype. "Redneck" was used throughout the essay in such a way that it came off more as a pseudonym for "cowboy" than anything else.

After closing "Redneck Secrets" with a deeply anti-industrialist/"progress" sentiment, Kittredge read from his forthcoming novel, a story of a

young cowboy during the Great Depression. An adventure starting a naïve and instantly identifiable central character, the 1930s setting had a genuine air to it, transporting the listener back in time. "Redneck Secrets" was well written and enjoyable, but the portion of this unfinished story that Kittredge read was the real surprise of the reading.

After finishing the reading, Kittredge engaged in a lively question and answer session with the crowd. Highlights included his response to a question of dealing with writer's block ("Just sit down and be foolish. Play."), on the exclusivity of the writing business ("I think it's more of a used car business."), and on Americans' cultural xenophobia ("We're still a colony.").

Kittredge tentatively expects the forthcoming novel to be complete in October 2006.



Kittredge read a selection of his essay "Redneck Secrets" at the Literary Arts Center (Roger Rook Hall 220) on October 4.

COMIX

UH-OH RUNNING LOW BETTER REFILL

FILL THE TRUNK WITH PREMIUM MIDDLE-EASTERN CHILDREN

SURE THING! WHAT ARE THEY FOR?

TO PUSH WHEN GAS GETS EXPENSIVE!

HA HA HA CRAZY AMERICANS

Jesse Lamond

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

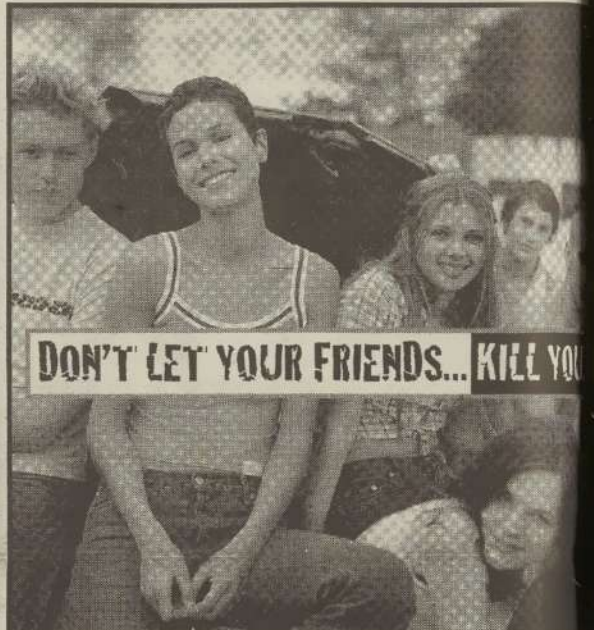
SHH! I LIT A BAG OF DOG CRAP ON FIRE AND LEFT IT ON THIS GUY'S PORCH.

FUNK!

SO WHO'S THE JOKE REALLY ON? YOU WERE THE ONE THAT PICKED UP DOG POO.

DAMMIT! SOME PEOPLE HAVE NO RESPECT FOR THE CLASSICS.

E. E. West and Jeff Sorensen



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