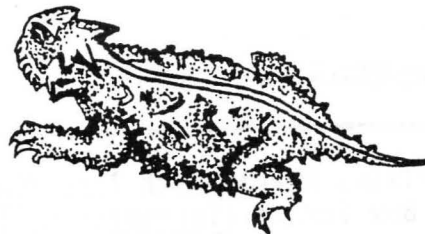


KANSAS
HERPETOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 31

JUNE 1979

KHS JULY MEETING AT SCHERMERHORN PARK

The Kansas Herpetological Society will meet from 20-22 July 1979 at Schermerhorn Park, just south of Galena along the north side of Shoal Creek, Cherokee County, Kansas. All KHS members, their families and friends are urged to attend this meeting. Schermerhorn Park and its associated Ozarkian limestone cave, plus Shoal Creek, are the only known habitat for many rare, endangered and threatened amphibians in Kansas. In addition, Cherokee County hosts an abundant reptile fauna typical of southeastern Kansas.

Members and friends can assemble and camp starting Friday evening outside Schermerhorn Park proper along Shoal Creek (the park officially closes at night). Please remember--the salamanders found in and around the cave are protected by state law. Bring your cameras, but no collecting gear for amphibians. The KHS Executive Council will meet during lunch (noon to 1:00 pm) on Saturday, 21 July, at the park.

This should be a great field trip to a most beautiful and scenic area of Kansas. Y'all come!

BLACK MESA MEETING A HUGE SUCCESS

Members of the KHS, New Mexico Herp Society, Colorado Herp Society, and the Oklahoma Herp Society met jointly at Black Mesa State Park on the New Mexico border along the extreme western edge of the Oklahoma panhandle over the Memorial Day weekend. Despite warnings of gas shortages, nearly 50 individuals from the four societies converged on the small park to collect and observe the interesting local herpetofauna, and dine at the delicious camp table set by Joy and Horace Poteet (NMHS). The Poteet's were incredible--convivial hosts through numerous meals topped off with steaks and crepe suzettes on Sunday evening, they were the hub of all activities.

Along with delightful dining, the weather was great, and the collecting good. The following is a list of the 27 species collected, photographed and observed in and around the Black Mesa area in New Mexico and Oklahoma:

- ✓ Red-spotted Toad (Bufo punctatus)
 - ✓ Woodhouse's Toad (Bufo w. woodhousei)
 - Plains Spadefoot (Scaphiopus bombifrons)
 - Plains Leopard Frog (Rana blairi)
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- ✓ Great Plains Narrowmouth Toad (Gastrophryne olivacea)
 - Ornate Box Turtle (Terrapene o. ornata)
 - Western Spiny Softshell (Trionyx spiniferus hartwegi)
 - Yellow Mud Turtle (Kinosternon f. flavescens)
 - ✓ Collared Lizard (Crotaphytus collaris)
 - Northern Earless Lizard (Holbrookia m. maculata)
 - Texas Horned Lizard (Phrynosoma cornutum)
 - Red-lipped Prairie Lizard (Sceloporus undulatus erythrocheilus)
 - Great Plains Skink (Eumeces obsoletus)
 - Prairie-lined Racerunner (Cnemidophorus sexlineatus viridis)
 - ✓ Colorado Checkered Whiptail (Cnemidophorus tesselatus)
 - ✓ Prairie Ringneck Snake (Diadophis punctatus arnyi)
 - Great Plains Rat Snake (Elaphe guttata emoryi)
 - Plains Hognose Snake (Heterodon n. nasicus)
 - Texas Night Snake (Hypsiglena torquata jani)
 - ✓ Western Coachwhip (Masticophis flagellum testaceus)
 - Bullsnake (Pituophis melanoleucus sayi)
 - ✓ Ground Snake (Sonora semiannulata)
 - Plains Blackhead Snake (Tantilla n. nigriceps)
 - ✓ Western Plains Gartersnake (Thamnophis radix haydeni)
 - Lined Snake (Tropidoclonion lineatum ssp.)
 - New Mexico Blind Snake (Leptotyphlops dulcis dissectus)
 - ✓ Prairie Rattlesnake (Crotalus v. viridis)

Mike Williamson, Larry Miller and J. T. Collins photographed a number of the species listed above using an impromptu "natural background stage" on a picnic table. The amphibians and reptiles photographed were, as usual, most responsive to Collins' delicate touch in posing them for pictures--this may be a result of Collins' experience in photography, but more likely results from fear on the part of the animals.

The four-society gathering was exciting and rewarding, marred only by infrequent cactus spines and the fact that only three members of the Oklahoma Herp Society attended--and the meeting/field trip was held in Oklahoma! (You can do better than that, Oklahoma). Plans were tentatively set to hold a similar meeting of the four societies in southwestern Kansas next year.

--KELLY J. IRWIN, KHS PRESIDENT

MARGE PERRY TO TEXAS--AL KAMB TAKES OVER OFFICE

Effective with the July meeting of Schermerhorn Park in Cherokee County, Marjorie Perry will leave the KHS. Marge will be sorely missed, for she has served the KHS ably and well, and kept our society solvent and solid. Marge, like her daughter Janice (KHS editor from 1974 to February 1979), is moving to Texas to relax in the sun. If the Texas herp societies need help, they would be well-advised to seek out Marge. As KHS Secretary-Treasurer, Marge

guided the KHS to its current excellent financial position. In addition, her warm and gracious presence on KHS outings will be a deep loss to all KHS members. Best wishes to Marge in her Lone Star state activities.

Al Kamb, KHS member and the 1977 recipient of the KHS Holbrook Award, will become KHS Secretary-Treasurer for 1979 at the July meeting where he will receive the Society's books and records from Marjorie Perry. Al is curator in the KU Department of Geology, and is well known among KHS members for his casual interest in red milk snakes. The KHS welcomes Al Kamb and wishes him well when he assumes his new duties.

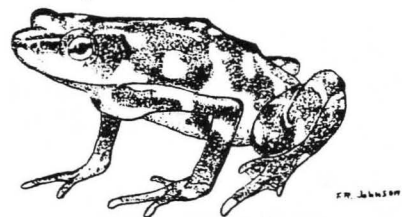
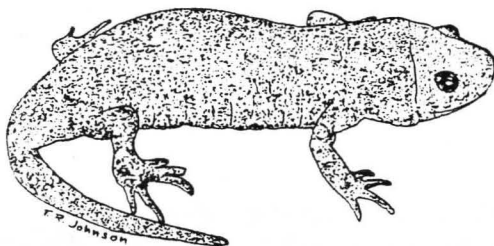
JIM KNIGHT RESIGNS AS EDITOR--HANK GUARISCO ASSUMES DUTIES

Effective immediately, Hank Guarisco will assume the duties of KHS Newsletter editor for the remainder of 1979. The KHS Executive Council appointed Hank to the position when it was learned that Jim Knight would be unable to continue as editor. Jim was committed to field work in Honduras this summer, as well as Army Reserve duties, and this coupled with his research and studies as a graduate student at KU, stretched him a little thin. The KHS thanks Jim for producing the April KHS Newsletter, and wishes him good fortune--hang in there "Skeet."

Additionally, the KHS welcomes Hank as its new editor.

PETER GRAY TO KU

KHS President-elect Peter Gray has been accepted for graduate school in the Department of Systematics and Ecology at the University of Kansas at Lawrence. Peter, who was employed as reptile keeper at the Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, arrived in Lawrence this month to begin his studies. He will be conducting research under William E. Duellman, his major professor, and Stephen R. Edwards, Association of Systematics Collections (headquartered at KU). SCZ loss is KU's gain--congratulations to Peter Gray!



CURRENT LITERATURE

This current literature section has been compiled by J. T. Collins, and contains titles of books and articles on amphibians and reptiles of possible interest to KHS members. Generally, titles listed here are those written by KHS members, those which contain direct reference to Kansas herpetofauna, or those of significance regarding North American amphibians and reptiles.

- Bury, R. B.
1979. Review of the ecology and conservation of the bog turtle, Clemmys muhlenbergii. USDI Fish and Wildlife Serv. Spec. Scient. Report, 219:1-9.
- Campbell, J. A.
1979. A new rattlesnake (Reptilia, Serpentes, Viperidae) from Jalisco, Mexico. Trans. Kansas Acad. Sci., 81(4):365-369.
- Casas A., G. and C. J. McCoy.
1979. Anfibios y reptiles de Mexico. Editorial Limusa, Mexico, D.F. 87 pp. (in Spanish).
- Collins, J. T.
1979. New records of fishes, amphibians and reptiles in Kansas for 1978. Tech. Publ. State Biol. Surv. Kansas, 8:56-66.
- Fitch, H. S.
1979. A field study of the prairie kingsnake (Lampropeltis calligaster). Trans. Kansas Acad. Sci., 81(4):353-363.
- Frost, D. R. and T. R. Van Devender.
1979. The relationship of the groundsnakes Sonora semiannulata and S. episcopa (Serpentes: Colubridae). Occ. Papers Mus. Zool. Louisiana St. Univ., 52:1-9.
- Gillingham, J. C.
1979. Reproductive behavior of the rat snakes of eastern North America, genus Elaphe. Copeia, 1979(2):319-331.
- Harless, M. and H. Morlock (Eds.)
1979. Turtles: Perspectives and research. John Wiley and Sons, New York. ca. 700 pp.
- Iverson, J. B.
1979. A taxonomic reappraisal of the yellow mud turtle, Kinosternon flavescens (Testudines: Kinosternidae). Copeia, 1979(2):212-225.
- Johnson, T. R.
1979. Wood frog. Missouri Conservationist, 40(5):32.
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- Kofron, C. P.
1979. Reproduction of aquatic snakes in south-central Louisiana. *Herpetologica*, 35(1):44-50.
- McKeown, S.
1978. Hawaii reptiles and amphibians. The Oriental Publishing Company, Honolulu. 80 pp.
- Metcalf, E. L. and A. L. Metcalf
1979. Mortality in hibernating ornate box turtles, *Terrapene ornata*. *Herpetologica*, 35(1):93-96.
- Mushinsky, H. R.
1979. Mating behavior of the common water snake, *Nerodia sipedon sipedon* (Reptilia, Serpentes, Colubridae) in eastern Pennsylvania. *Journ. Herp.*, 13(1):127-129.
- Tanner, W. W.
1978. Zoogeography of reptiles and amphibians in the Intermountain Region. pp. 43-53 in Harper, K. T. and J. L. Reveal (Eds.). Intermountain biogeography: A symposium. *Great Basin Nat. Mem.*, 2:1-268.



KHS MEMBER WINS ECOLOGY AWARD FOR POSTER

Jeff Ehlers, KHS member and sixth grade student from Caldwell, Kansas, was recently awarded second place honors for his environmental poster against air and water pollution. The award was given by the Modern Woodman of America organization of Caldwell.

The MWA sponsored the local contest during the last school quarter for fifth and sixth grade students. Jeff competed against approximately 30 entries; rules of the contest required that posters were to deal with the environment. Most of the entries were good, and picking the top three was difficult for the judging team which consisted of Evelyn Rees and her Advanced Science Class at Caldwell High School.

Jeff received a cash award as well as a second place ribbon for his efforts. The KHS congratulates Jeff for a job well done!

TWO KHS MEMBERS OFF TO HONDURAS

Jim Knight and Kelly Irwin, well-known and notorious KHS members, have left for Honduras to do herpetological field work related to Jim's thesis research at KU. They will conduct field studies on the Islas de las Bahias, particularly the islands of Roatan and Guanaja, with the objective of defining the ecology of a colubrid snake (Tretanorhinus). Anticipated return to Kansas for Jim is mid-July. Kelly will dally somewhat longer in Guatemala. We wish them luck and a big banana.

KHS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MET AT BLACK MESA

The KHS Executive Council met at noon on Saturday, 26 May 1979, at Black Mesa State Park in Oklahoma. Present were Kelly Irwin, Larry Miller, J. T. Collins, Chris Stammler, John Tollefson and Hank Guarisco.

KHS President Kelly Irwin called the meeting to order, and the Council conducted the following business:

- 1) Kelly Irwin read a letter of resignation from KHS Secretary-Treasurer Marjorie Perry. The Council expressed its deep regret that Marge will no longer continue in this position, but wished her the best in future endeavors.
- 2) Kelly Irwin read the secretary-treasurer's report sent by Marge Perry. Current balance in the KHS treasury was \$456.12 (as of 26 May 1979)--Marge reported 163 paid members.
- 3) The Council voted to explore the possibility of KHS-NMHS-OHS-CHS joint meeting in southwestern Kansas in 1980.
- 4) The Council asked J. T. Collins to seek a candidate for KHS Secretary-Treasurer (see appointment of Al Kamb elsewhere in this newsletter).
- 5) J. T. Collins reported that, due to other commitments, Jim Knight would not be able to continue as KHS editor (see appointment of Hank Guarisco to this post elsewhere in this newsletter).

It being warm and sunny, the Council meeting adjourned promptly at 1:00 PM in order to go forth and (gently) molest the herpetofauna.

--KELLY J. IRWIN, KHS PRESIDENT AND ACTING SECRETARY-TREASURER

LIFE IN KANSAS AND OKLAHOMA ONCE AGAIN THREATENED BY PESTICIDES

Pesticides often cause concern when they are used to control insects and other unwanted animals, but the real problems surface when they are used by irresponsible people. The careless use of many of these deadly chemicals can cause irreversible damage to the environment.

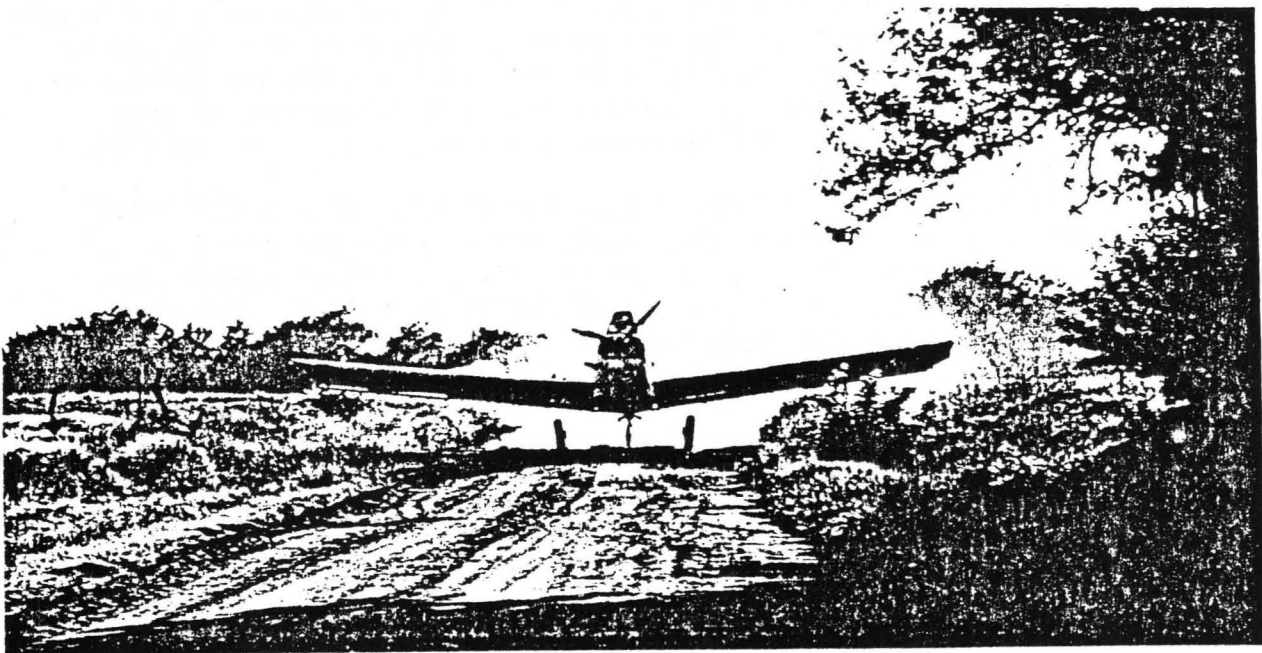
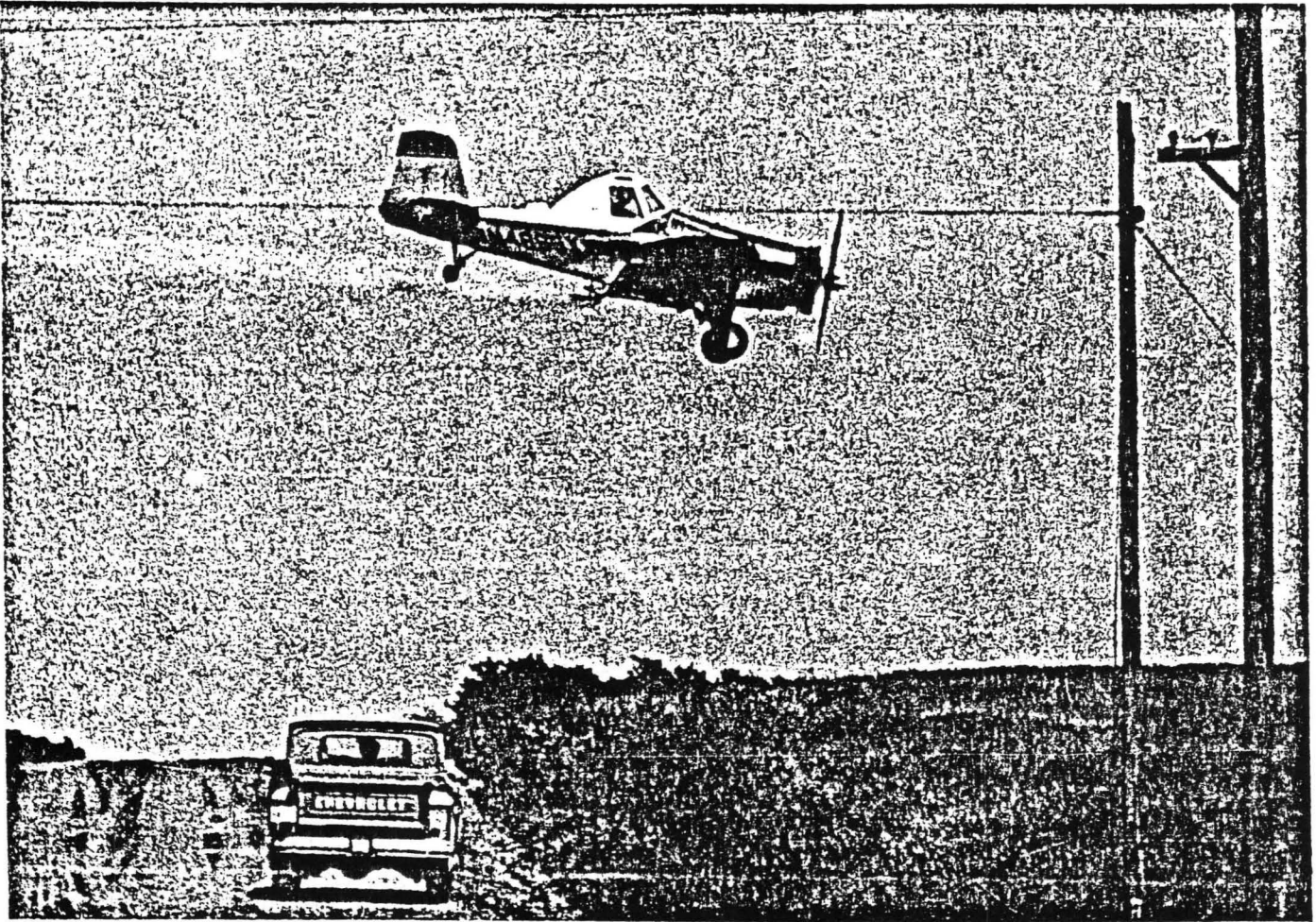
During early 1976 the pesticides endrin, toxaphene, and parathion were sprayed over wheat fields and in some cases roads, towns, lakes, rivers, and farm houses in parts of southern Kansas and northern Oklahoma in an effort to control army cutworms. The result was the worse pesticide disaster in this nations history according to a front page story in the 28 March 1976 issue of THE KANSAS CITY STAR. Millions of wild animals died. Most were fish and amphibians such as leopard frogs, bullfrogs, and several species of toads. Several turtles, snakes, and other reptiles were also found dead in the area as well as birds and small mammals. A few sprayers received fines from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for water pollution, but little other action was taken at the time.

Army worms were once again reported in the same area during late May 1979. Sprayers from all parts of the country quickly flocked to the area to spray these little unwanted insect larva. The farmers considered the worms a threat to their important wheat crops and many of the sprayers knew the little animals were their chance to get rich quick. At \$4.00 to \$5.00 per acre there was lots of money to be made in a very short time. Since a few of the sprayers did not care how they made their money it was the beginning of a nightmare for some of the citizens of Kansas and Oklahoma and another disaster for many of the wild animals. A few of the pilots sprayed cars and towns just like during the 1976 pesticide disaster. Dead frogs, fish, and birds started showing up in several areas. Some planes were reported chasing cattle, deer, and also cars and trucks driving on public roads. People on the ground were sprayed as they worked in their gardens. A young girl was reportedly sprayed as she rode her horse near the small town of Braman, Oklahoma. Peoples lives were threatened by some pilots! Several people even started carrying guns for their own protection.

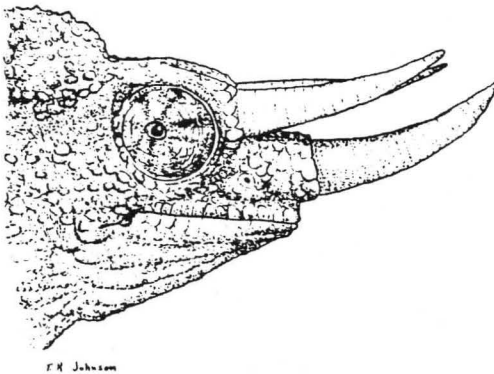
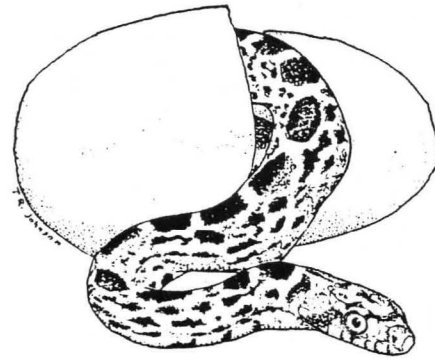
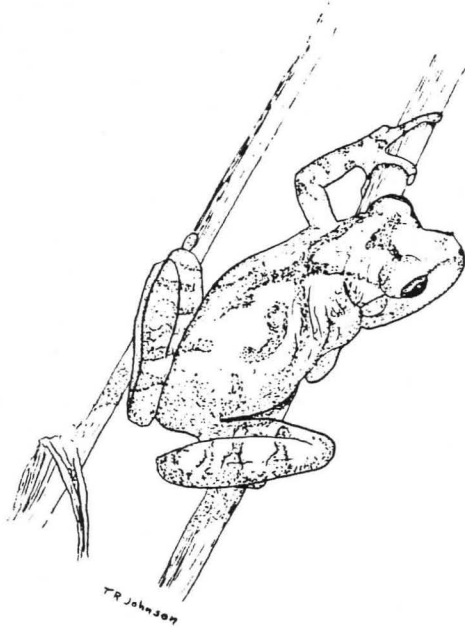
John M. Wylie II, Energy/Environment Reporter for THE KANSAS CITY STAR, drove to the area on 31 May 1979 to investigate the problem and start to document the damage. His first story on the bizarre actions of some of the pilots appeared in the 3 June 1979 issue of THE KANSAS CITY STAR. All state and government agencies were then made aware of the problem.

No official damage reports are available at this time, but it is known that the main chemicals being used were toxaphene and parathion. It is also known that there is damage to some wildlife populations, but as always it may be almost impossible to determine the extent of the total damage to the environment.

---LARRY MILLER, CHAIRPERSON,
KHS CONSERVATION/LEGISLATION COMMITTEE



Figures on preceding page 8: (top) Spray plane emitting toxic pesticide over a truck, (bottom) Spray plane landing on roadway in an attempt to frighten the photographer. Both photos by Larry Miller.



--the KANSAS HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER is issued during February, April, June, August, October and December each year. Hank Guarisco, Editor, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045. See the inside front cover of the KHS NEWSLETTER for other editorial offices and addresses. Hank Guarisco has been appointed to serve for the remainder of 1979 in place of Janice Perry and Jim Knight. Views expressed in articles published in the KHS NEWSLETTER are those of the author(s), and do not necessarily reflect KHS policy.

