

# Middle school students go down under during Kansas tour

On Saturday, May 5th, the library took 20 middle school students on a trip "Down Under."

On the trip we visited Underground Tunnels, the Kansas Underground Museum and rounded things out with a bouncing good time at Pump It Up in Wichita.

Our first stop was Ellinwood. The Underground Tunnels in Ellinwood were built during the boom years of the Santa Fe Trail as a result of the German influence in the area.

Underground construction was a traditional way of building in Germany - but completely new to Kansas. Fortunately, before the city of Ellinwood was able to bury all of the tunnels in the 1970s and 80s, a benevolent member of the community named Adrianna Dierolf incurred the costs necessary to restore part of the tunnels.

Thanks to Ms. Dierolf's generosity we were able to visit an underground harness shop, barber shop, and bath shop. You might get a chuckle if you ask one of the stu-



## Jeff Friesen, library link

### ● Pioneer Memorial Library director

dents the meaning of a "soil dove."

Before we made it to the Kansas Underground Museum in Hutchinson we stopped in Lyons, for a "sub-way" sandwich. (get it?) After consuming a few feet of sub sandwich, we were off to the salt mines.

The newly opened Kansas Underground Museum is well worth a visit if you are in the Hutchinson area. As a group, we traveled 650 feet down (or 70 seconds) into the earth to one of the most unique tours in the United States.

A tour guide took us on a tram as we toured a very small section of the

67 miles worth of mined caverns underground. We learned how salt is mined, how the salt is processed, and the history of the salt mine.

After the tram tour, we toured the salt museum and before hitting the gift shop, received a brief overview of the Underground Storage Vault. A constant environment of 68 de-

grees Fahrenheit with 45 percent average relative humidity has made the salt mine a perfect area for preserving and storing records, data, and invaluable assets. And what could be safer than storing something 650 feet underground?

By this time we were old salts and ready for a little action. The plan was to have the students completely exhausted for the long ride back to Colby from Wichita.

To suit our devious plans, Judy Kleinsorge, Children's Librarian, chose Pump It Up as the final destination. Pump It Up is essentially a room full of inflatable structures designed to absorb as much energy from kids while allowing adults a few minutes of downtime. The plan

seemed to work as the trip back home was much more subdued than the trip out.






















Judy Kleinsorge summed up the trip well.

"The Down Under trip will be hard to top. The tour of the Kansas Underground Salt Museum was truly a unique experience, especially since it had just opened to the public. The students really had no idea what to expect except that it would be a little like a cave. As we were touring on the tram, I was thrilled to hear them saying, over and over, 'This is so awesome!,' I think the stop at the pile of salt rocks to load up sacks was the highlight of the tour. Kids and rocks, it couldn't get any better than that."

We had a great trip and would especially like to thank our sponsors who made this trip possible including: the Thomas County Community Foundation, Friends of Pioneer Memorial Library, and Pioneer Memorial Library Foundation, Inc.

Pioneer Memorial Library is located at 375 W. Fourth St. and open seven days a week.

Winter hours are as follows: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. For more information contact the Library at 460-4470 or visit our web site [www.colbylibrary.com](http://www.colbylibrary.com). As always, we are here to serve you.



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