

MEMORIAL FOR CALVIN HAVERFIELD AND MARTHA BARNHARDT

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*Portrait of Calvin Haverfield.
Photo courtesy of Cathy Lucas*



*Portrait of Martha Barnhardt.
Photo courtesy of Rebecca Barnhardt*

Photo of the Barnhardt/Haverfield ranches

This past summer, AOK received the sad news of both Calvin Haverfield's and Martha Barnhardt's passing. The Haverfield and Barnhardt families have been a large part of the very successful reintroduction of black-footed ferrets to the shortgrass prairies of western Kansas through their protection of prairie dogs. The Haverfield/Barnhardt/Blank Ranch Complex is home of the largest and quite probably the most ecologically important prairie dog complex in the state of Kansas. Although both black-footed ferrets and prairie dogs now thrive on the Haverfield, Barnhardt, and Blank properties, the families had to endure legal battles and setbacks as the county tried to enforce their legal right to kill prairie dogs on private land under a 1901 Kansas statute (See the 2012/2013 issue of *Prairie Wings* at audubonofkansas.org/prairie-wings). AOK would like to honor the lives of Calvin and Martha for their dedication to conservation, community, and their families.

Calvin Haverfield

In many ways, Calvin was born to be a rancher. At just four years old, his father, Larry Haverfield, began to show Calvin the ropes of ranching, preparing the eldest son for his life's work. By age nine, he was driving a sky-blue pickup truck down the country roads as part of his work around the farm. Though all the neighbors knew it was Calvin behind the wheel, they could scarcely see his forehead peeking up through the windows, and it looked as if a ghost were driving the truck. Calvin's childhood chores laid the foundation for a life of hard work and dedication to ranching. Much of this can be attributed to Larry, who served as a role model for Calvin as well as the impetus for the entire family to become more environmentally aware and conservation focused. Larry made the decision to change the grazing practices of his livestock and to allow prairie dogs

to live on the land. According to Calvin's sister, Cathy Lucas, Calvin took his father's legacy to heart and dutifully carried it on after Larry's passing. He recognized the value of such efforts and saw that profitable ranching could go hand in hand with the prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets.

"Keep everything... Keep as much wildlife as possible."

This was the belief that Calvin lived by when it came to the land and its inhabitants. He was a steward of the prairie, a protector and lover of animals both managed and wild. The cattle and cow dogs were treated very well under Calvin's care. As Calvin spent time with the cattle, he observed that "cattle are smarter than people think, and if you're around them a lot, you start thinking like them." Calvin also enjoyed seeing the many native prairie species that lived alongside the cattle. His wife, Lillie, shared that he was always so in awe of the showy vibrance of prairie-chickens that he forgot to take photos; he just stood there admiring them, frozen in place. He stood firm against killing animals and wouldn't even kill a snake out of his deep respect for the balance of nature. He recognized that there were many people who didn't agree with having prairie dogs on the land, but he would approach those discussions with a very calm disposition each and every time. He would simply say, "This is what we see," then listen to their thoughts to understand where they were coming from. These prairie dogs were necessary for a successful reintroduction of black-footed ferrets in 2007, and that initial release led to a lot of joy for Calvin. The ferret release events in the years that followed put a smile on Calvin's face that stretched from ear to ear. He loved being a part of the spotlight surveys, keeping a watchful eye on the reaches of his property for the telltale emerald eye shine of a black-footed ferret.

While Calvin's father instilled in him a love for wildlife as a young child, Calvin found a continued


love as an adult with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. His wife, Lillie, said that Calvin believed that the land "was given from the Lord above, and he needed to take care of it and be a steward." Beyond his land, Calvin was a bishop in the Scott City ward and served his community dutifully. Cathy shared that he enjoyed visiting people in their homes and provided an encouraging presence especially for those that had health issues. Calvin said, "If someone is having health concerns, people think they shouldn't visit them, but that's when people need a visit most." Calvin was a compassionate listener and a gentle, kind-hearted man to all. Within his community, he also served as a volunteer firefighter for a time and as a young men's leader.

Above all, Calvin was a man who put his family first. He was married to his wife Lillie for over 30 years, and he loved their four children dearly. Calvin enjoyed spending time with his 12 grandchildren and attending their basketball games, wrestling matches, and all their other activities. After the passing of their father, Lillie remembers, Calvin would spend hours out on the land and call it "my time with dad."

Calvin's loved ones will remember him as the Kansas sunrise stretching across the land he loved so dearly and stewarded over.

Martha Barnhardt

Growing up on a farm in southwest rural Kansas, a child can't help but develop a deep connection to animals. Martha Barnhardt was no exception to this, a tomboy through and through with a love for horses, dogs, and cats (despite a cat allergy). Her love for animals blossomed further as an adult, so it's no surprise that her daughters, Brenda and Becky, described Martha as a caretaker and nurturer by nature. When baby barn swallows were left behind during migration, Martha cared for them



as a stand in mother then launched them once they had become healthy adults. The same was true for a flock of motherless quails, Mississippi kites, and purple martins to name a few. The only exceptions to her animal benevolence were the ones that dared to encroach on her front porch; Martha's love for her family rose far above any nest of birds or stray dogs looking for a meal. However, it was often her very own husband and five children that would bring all manner of animals INTO the house! The kids had numerous gerbils and bunnies, and Gordon, Martha's husband, was known to bring a tarantula or two indoors. It was these critters that would cause the most trouble, often removing the lid of the aquarium and crawling along the ceiling or under kitchen counters. But where many people would've tried to kill the misunderstood tarantulas, Martha took it all in stride.

While Gordon may have brought about a few tarantula escapees, he also brought about a stronger conservation ethic in Martha. Together, they were stewards of the prairie. Gordon shared that one of Martha's prime interests was keeping the prairie as near to native as possible. Martha supported the black-footed ferret reintroduction in Logan County from the get-go. It wasn't always a friendly process, but she worked hard to bring the only ferret species native to North America back to this land. While Martha had a strong preference for animals, she tolerated the plants because she knew how foundational they were to the prairie. Gordon maintained several patches of wildflowers around the house, and they would collect the seeds from these flowers to plant in their pastures. "As near to native as possible" not only means helping native species but also removing the invasive ones. The family had a long-standing tradition volunteering to weed out invasive musk thistle, and Martha kept this up well into her 70s and 80s. Brenda and Becky shared that they would pull the heads and dispose of them to prevent seed dispersal then uproot the rest of the plant to prevent regrowth, all in the name of preventing weed killer from being sprayed.

Martha showed her love for all living things native to the prairie throughout her life, and her caregiver nature extended beyond the horizon of shortgrass and sagebrush.

Martha demonstrated an incredible dedication to her Bucklin community and instilled values of community service and supporting local in her kids. She played a very active role in her kids' lives, her grandkids' lives, and even the lives of other kids in town. There was a time when flocks of young boys would be over at Martha's house because of her own sons, Roger, Bob, and John. For kids that lived out of town and had nowhere to go in between school, practice, and ballgames, the Barnhardt home was a welcoming place to spend time, and Martha took an interest in each of the boys' lives. As they played basketball on the driveway or ping pong in the basement, Martha would always make sure they had something to eat. After her passing, many of these boys, now fully grown, wrote to the Barnhardt family and shared the impact that Martha had on them. Aside from the lives of the kids in her community, she was also extremely invested in the game of duplicate bridge. Those games, played in the Dodge City senior center, were a chance for Martha to see her friends and engage in community, and seldom could stop her from making the drive.

Family was by far the most important thing to Martha. She was extremely smart and successful in her field, but she gave up her career as a physical therapist the second her children were born, in order to raise them. Martha showed great kindness and understanding towards her kids, and neither Brenda nor Becky could remember a time when Martha yelled at them. Martha's love extended to in-laws as well. Dan Pace, Brenda's husband, revealed that Martha was a bit afraid of what was going to happen when he showed up, but it wasn't long before Martha started treating him like one of her own. Her own grandchildren described her as extraordinary. Martha will be dearly missed by her family, her community, and her prairie.

She was a mother not just to her own kids, but several boys in her community, and more than a handful of abandoned baby birds.

■ My Experience on the Land

When I accepted an internship with the Audubon of Kansas in August, I never would have imagined that I would participate in black-footed ferret surveys one month later. I admit, I knew next to nothing about the endangered species when I started. While I still have a lot to learn, I now see why so many people—Martha and Calvin included—put so much effort into bringing the ferret back. Dan Mulhern, retired US Fish and Wildlife Service, worked directly on the reintroduction and release of the black-footed ferrets. On the drive over to the ranch property for the first night of surveys, Dan told me that project was the single most frustrating, most rewarding, and most important thing he ever worked on, and I have to say, I agree.

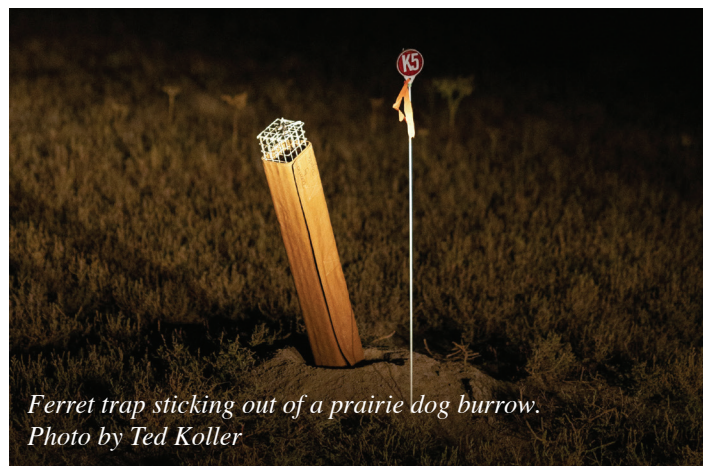
I'm not one to pull all-nighters for any reason, exam related or otherwise, but this seemed as good a reason as any to break that streak. After all, it would only be two nights (September 29th and 30th), so I could surely manage with some help from caffeinated drinks. The caravan of trucks left our hotel at around 6:45 pm on Friday the 29th. Once we reached the property, newcomers were given a surveying crash course, and I absorbed as much knowledge as I possibly could about the process of spotting, trapping, and transporting black-footed ferrets. Spotlights were either mounted to the top of the truck and aimed with a handle extending downwards or handheld. The traps were a lot simpler than I expected; wrapped in a double layer of cloth, the ferret would assume the trap was a continuation of the burrow, climb inside, and a pressure plate would close the trap behind it. Once trapped, a ring reader would be passed over the trap and ferret to check for the presence of a PIT tag: an internal microchip that allows for tracking and identification. Ferrets trapped in previous years would already have a PIT tag implanted, so the ring

reader would report back the specific tag number of the ferret; ferrets born in the wild after the last survey would have no tag in place, so no number would be reported by the ring reader. These wild born ferrets with no PIT tag were to be transported to the veterinarian van to get their tracking chip and plague vaccinations (prairie dogs, the primary prey of black-footed ferrets, are known to be very susceptible to plague).

Sometime around 9:00 pm, after memorizing every detail of what I had just been taught, I hopped in the front seat of Dan's truck with two other first-time surveyors, Ted and David, and we headed to our assigned pasture. It only took about 30 minutes of driving through our pasture before we spotted our first shine of nocturnal eyes peeking out at us from a burrow not too far away: not a ferret but a badger (exciting nonetheless!). After the badger sighting came pronghorn, coyote, two more badgers, burrowing owl, more pronghorn, then finally, around 1:00 am, I caught the emerald green eye shine of a ferret at the top of a hill. It was too far away to tell if it was a ferret for sure, but I had a gut feeling. We made our way up the hill, but our line of sight was soon blocked by vegetation; we lost track of the ferret and its chosen hiding place by the time we reached the top. I was sure of what I had seen, so we circled around again to try and spot it for a second time. Sure enough, David caught the ferret in his spotlight beam from the backseat, so we began the ascent again. We lost sight of the ferret exactly as we had the first time, but now the whole truck was filled with determination. For our third approach, we reversed our circle and approached from the top, coming in behind the ferret. This direction provided an unobstructed view of the ferret, and we were able to get a trap set. Not 20 minutes after setting our first trap, I spotted another ferret fully above ground, crouched low as it stared us down. We set a second trap then headed back to check the first. I could hardly contain my excitement (Dan had to remind me to be quiet) as we approached that trap to see a ferret looking back at us. Working as



*Black-footed ferret being released from cage.
Photo by Ted Koller*



*Ferret trap sticking out of a prairie dog burrow.
Photo by Ted Koller*

efficiently as a hissing ferret would allow, we removed the trap from the burrow, then used a ring reader to determine if this was a ferret born within the last year or an older ferret with a PIT tag already in place from a previous trapping. The blank display screen on the reader was all the confirmation we needed; a wild born! Upon transporting the ferret to the vet truck, we learned this feisty female was the first ferret brought in that night. After she was checked over and given her vaccinations, we returned to her original burrow for release.

That first night of surveying, my truck spotted four ferrets and successfully trapped two; the total ferret count ended up being eight spotted and four trapped. Night two was unfortunately much less successful as the wind had picked up significantly. Our spotlights were obstructed by clouds of dust and sand (and moths), but there weren't many animals out and about to see anyways. Predators rely heavily on sound and smell when going after their prey; the howling prairie winds scattered the scents and made for a very difficult hunting situation, so they instead chose to stay underground and out of the wind. I had to leave after two nights since I had classes on Monday, and while my allergies were thankful for the reprieve, I was definitely disappointed that I didn't get to see the survey to the end.

Twenty ferrets were spotted in all with seven being trapped and brought in; of those seven, five were wild born.

In a year with no ferrets released on the property, these numbers represent tremendous success in survival and reproduction of the population. The Barnhardt and Haverfield properties were special places that I was very fortunate to visit, and I can see why both Calvin and Martha loved it so. I saw many wonderful nocturnal creatures that all relied on the prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets in some capacity, and I admit to a bit of jealousy at the levels of biodiversity on those ranches! Though I never knew them, I'm very thankful for Calvin Haverfield's and Martha Barnhardt's dedication to the animals and to keeping everything as wild and native as possible. I thank their families as well for carrying on that conservation legacy and for sharing with me what inspiring people Calvin and Martha were.



Emily Burnett is a junior at Kansas State University pursuing a double major in Environmental Biology and Environmental Science. She is from Overland Park, KS, and grew up traveling to National Parks every summer with her family. Because of this, Emily wishes to work

as an interpretation park ranger in the NPS upon completing her undergraduate degree.