



# SVHA News Archive 2006 - 2007

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## 2007

**December, 2007**

### TRAVEL BOOKS TELL OUR STORY

**Two travel books shed new insight into the resources of the Solomon Valley.**

*Kansas Murals, A Traveler's Guide*, by Lora Jost and Dave Loewenstein, University Press of Kansas, 2006, is an assembly of murals, organized by six geographic areas. Viewing this public art collection through 90 images creates a rich impression of the Kansas experience.

The only Solomon Valley mural actually portrayed is found in the county commission meeting room of the Rooks County Courthouse, Stockton. The eight mural panels present a mystery, for the date of creation and the artist are unknown. It is suggested a prisoner in the jail may have done the work in the 1920s. One of the scenes in these murals is the W. G. Thomas farm (Thomas was a county commissioner at the time these paintings were done), showing the magnificent Thomas Barn (which was destroyed by lightning in 1995) and the Thomas House which Bonita Oliva has purchased and is now restoring.

Appendix B of this volume lists other public mural art in Cawker City, Downs, Glasco, Hoxie, Morland, and Stockton.

*Putting A Face on America, The Great American Journey*, by Lyn Hanush, Wine Press Publishing, 2007, is a very personal travelogue, documenting a walk of over 4,000 miles from northwest Washington to Key West, Florida. Three women walked and prayed through rural America, a journey of 14 months that opened them to the kindness of people along the way. A small part of their way was along Highway 24, in November 2003. Walkers have time to linger, and the book lingers on their experiences in Downs, Cawker City, and Glasco.

**October, 2007**

### Pike Marker Restored

The Delphos Pike Trail Marker has been restored. Just eleven months after the bicentennial observance at the marker commemorating Zebulon Pike's Southwest Expedition (1806-1807), significant repair work returned the monument to near original condition. The September 2006 occasion reawakened interest in the historic marker and stimulated community action to repair it.

Pike historian Leo E. Oliva spoke at the re-dedication of the monument in 2006, and he presented an illustrated talk at Delfest on August 11, 2007, "Celebrating the Pike Expedition and the Delphos Pike Monument." A good-sized audience, several coming from Salina, attended. Their interest overcame the 100-degree day. Generous donations and proceeds from Pike book sales were contributed to ongoing care of the Delphos Pike Trail Marker and site.

The SV24 Alliance initiated the Pike observance at the marker and supported the restoration project.

**June, 2007**

### Archaeologists to dig into Nicodemus Past

*Annual training program June 2 - 17 open to public, early registration due May 4, 2007.*

NICODEMUS held promise for hundreds of African Americans in the 19th century. Archeologists hope to gain valuable information about the everyday lives and extraordinary struggles of these settlers in Graham County during a two-week Kansas Archeology Training Program Field School, June 2-17. The Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS) and the Kansas Anthropological Association (KAA) present the annual field school. Other partners are Nicodemus National Historic Site, Midwest Archeological Center, Nicodemus Historical Society, and Washburn University. Visitors are invited to participate in all or part of the activities.

In 1877 a group of five African American men from Kentucky, headed by Reverend W. H. Smith, enlisted the help of W. R. Hill, a white land promoter, in northwest Kansas. Together they claimed a 160-acre town site along the Solomon River. They began recruiting in churches around Lexington and Georgetown in north-central Kentucky and by fall the first group of 350 people left for Kansas—what they hoped would be the “promised land.” Boom times ended, droughts and the Great Depression ensued, and by the 1950s, most of the families had left the community. Designated a National Historic Landmark District in 1976, Nicodemus became a National Historic Site in 1996. The Training Program Field School will examine the dugout ruins from the settlement time.

### **June, 2007**

#### **Denise Low Named next Poet Laureate**

Denise Low has been named the second Poet Laureate of Kansas. Her two-year term begins July 1, 2007. She is a faculty member and dean at Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence.

The Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance is well acquainted with Denise and her passion to connect poetry with the land. She was on our first Literature and Landscape panel in Osborne (January 2005). She participated in the all-day symposium in Downs (October 2005), and was with us in Hill City (October 2006), reflecting on her latest book, Words of a Prairie Alchemist: The Art of Prairie Literature.

She generously serves as one of the judges for our Call for Voices writings. Part of her mission as Poet Laureate is to reach out in the state. Denise plans to continue the Poetry Shoptalk series, visiting with poets, with video teleconferencing accessed at 25 sites in the state. This is a project sponsored by the Kansas Arts Commission. We send our congratulations to Denise.

### **March, 2007**

#### **Jonathan Holden Brings Poetry to the Valley**

Kansas Poet Laureate Jonathan Holden brought poetry to the Solomon Valley for the annual meeting of the SV24 Alliance in Beloit on January 20, 2007. Holden, assisted by Greg German, conducted a poetry work- shop in the late afternoon. Everyone participating discovered the poet within, thanks to Holden’s gentle urging and thoughtful guidelines. He was also the featured speaker after the dinner, business meeting, and presentation of awards to the writing-contest winners, sharing some of his poetry about Kansas. Although the blowing snow was a hindrance, many members and guests ventured out to enjoy this time with Jonathan Holden. Learn More at [www.kansaspoets.com](http://www.kansaspoets.com)

### **June, 2007**

#### **Artists Making the Valley Known**

Active artists are at work in the Solomon Valley. Perhaps they see and know the subtle beauties of the valley in a way only concentrated attention makes possible. As we strive to increase awareness of the gifts found here, we discover the artists among us, engaged in the same effort.

The SV24 Alliance will try to identify artists’ studios and galleries in the valley. We hope they may become destinations as you explore along Highway 24. When the artists are there, they are glad to have their work seen and purchased. Hours tend to fluctuate, allowing time for painting.

In Cawker City, stop at the Limestone Studio, 821 Wisconsin Avenue, to see Cher Olson, and in Downs visit Prairie Wind Art, 810 N Morgan Avenue, to see Gary Ozias. KSHS and KATP in the Valley.

### **June, 2007**

#### **Reporting on the Road Research**

Nearly 400 hours of digging—not with shovels in the soil, but through newspapers and records—have been reported by those researching the history of Highway 24 through the Solomon Valley. Kansas was definitely “on the way” as travelers sought direct routes and sure footing, often right here.

Kansas Humanities Consultant Joyce Suellentrop has braided the tales of the road together, using the information provided by the researchers working from Glasco to Hoxie. The next step is to complete documentation, fill in gaps, and prepare the manu- script for publication.

This has been an enormous undertaking, but the story is remarkable, justifying the quest to find it, to tell it. We will keep you posted on progress.

## **June, 2007**

### **Art, Quilt and Craft Show Successful**

A successful addition to the Morland Lions Club Memorial Weekend activities was an exhibit by local artists, quilters and crafters. Painting with water- colors, tatting, quilting, wheat weaving, and jewelry designing were presented. Local students exhibited art and ceramic school projects. Other popular exhibits included a vintage apron collection, oriental rugs, memory wall hanging, and woodcarving. An- tique friendship quilts were popular exhibits and created numerous opportunities for reminiscing. Organizers considered the show a great success with plans already underway for a show again next year.

## **June, 2007**

### **Traveling on Sunflower Journeys**

The Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance was honored to be the leadoff segment of the Sunflower Journey's twentieth year of broadcasts on public television, a production of KTWU at Wash- burn University in Topeka.

Producer Jim Kelly traveled from Glasco to Downs with Joan Nothern and Leo Oliva, sampling the atmosphere and offerings to be found in the valley. With the band suite Solomon Valley Anthology in the background, Dave Kendall provided nice interpretive voice over, emphasizing that the Heritage Alliance has had impact on the residents of the Solomon Valley, confirming their efforts to make their home a better place and one worth fighting for.

Leo and Joan shared interviews, providing historical background and pointing out several preservation efforts. The program aired February first and third. It will be available in the future

## **March, 2007**

### **WeKan! Conference Builds Capacity of Communities**

The Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance enjoys a fruitful collaboration with the Kansas Sampler Foundation. This nonprofit organization, headed by Marci Penner, developed the concept of the 8 rural cultural elements. Marci worked with us to help our 24 SV Alliance communities view their towns through these elements. The 8 rural cultural elements are prominent on our community kiosks.

March 20 and 21, the Kansas Sampler Foundation is hosting a WeKan! Conference in Salina. This conference will highlight how the 8 rural cultural elements are dynamic concepts, providing ever evolving ways to attract Explorer Tourism.

The SV24 Alliance is sponsoring a session on the cultural element "Geography," at which we will discuss innovative ways to know your own space before you promote it to others. The Alliance will be sharing some of its experience and resources, as Von Rothenberger, Roger Hrabe, and Joan Nothern participate in the discussion sessions.

The Alliance will also contribute a basket of items reflecting the valley, for a silent auction supporting the Sampler Foundation.

SV24 encourages communities to attend this conference, empowering rural leaders to preserve, sustain, and grow rural culture. The Alliance will provide a limited number of incentive stipends to help communities that have never participated in a WeKan! Conference defray expenses to attend this one. Please contact Joan Nothern or a board member in your area for further information.

## **March, 2007**

### **Highway 24 History Project**

Research is well underway on the history of Highway 24 through the Solomon Valley. Humanities Consultant Joyce Suellentrop spent two weeks this fall (2006) meeting with volunteer researchers at Hoxie, Osborne, Downs, and Glasco, first outlining the scope of the project, then beginning to gather discovered maps, drawings, news articles, and photos that reveal the twists and turns that created the highway connecting our Alliance communities.

The politics of road placement, the impact of changing modes of transportation, the hopes and vision of community fathers, all are revealed in this historic project, underwritten by a Kansas Humanities Council Research Grant and the Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance. Suellentrop is integrating materials submitted up to this point, and pinpointing gaps—hoping to direct research to fill the gaps. She will schedule individual work sessions with volunteers during February or March. The research will be compiled and edited for publication by our SVA editor. Anyone who has time and enjoys a quest is encouraged to contact Joyce at [joycesuellentrop@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joycesuellentrop@sbcglobal.net), so you can be included in this research. Photographs of roads are also being solicited. Let it be known if you have one. Photos will be returned.

**January, 2007**

**Sunflower Journeys to feature SV24 Alliance**

The popular television series about Kansas, Sunflower Journeys, produced by KTWU public television at Washburn University in Topeka, will feature a segment on the SV24 Alliance in its new season, opening in late January 2007. Producer Jim Kelly recently taped material for the program. Unfortunately, his schedule only permitted him to spend time in communities from Glasco to Downs. It will be interesting to see this program. He may return another time for another segment on the western portions of the Alliance.

# 2006

**October 8, 2006**

**Pike Bicentennial: The Pike Expedition in Kansas and the Solomon Valley, Waconda Heritage Village, Waconda Lake**

The SV24 Alliance will sponsor a Pike bicentennial program at the Waconda Heritage Village, Glen Elder Lake, on Sunday, October 8, 2:00 p.m. Speakers will be Richard Gould from the Pawnee Village Museum in Republic County and Leo E. Oliva, member of the Pike Bicentennial Commission.

They will look at the history and significance of Pike's Southwest Expedition, 1806-1807, including Pike in Kansas and on the Solomon River. Pike's party crossed the Solomon west of present Glasco on September 23, 1806, on the way to the Pawnee Village located on the Republican River near present Guide Rock, Nebraska. From that village the expedition headed south, following the trail of a large expedition of Spanish troops that had visited the Pawnees a few weeks ahead of Pike, and camped at the Solomon where the Spanish troops had also camped, in the vicinity of present Lake Waconda, on October 9. This program is free and everyone is welcome.

**August 23, 2006**

**Work Ahead to Tell the Story of Highway 24 -- An alert is being issued by the Solomon Valley-Highway 24-Heritage Alliance.** The Alliance is looking for people interested in community history and the development of roads in and through their communities.

With a supporting grant from the Kansas Humanities Council, the Alliance is coordinating research on the history of Highway 24 in the Solomon Valley from 1900 to the present. This is a story waiting to be told, from trail to highway. Who were the visionaries and workers now hidden in news accounts and old records?

Four libraries in Solomon Valley communities will host workshops conducted by humanities consultant Joyce Suellentrop. These sessions for volunteer researchers will address using local newspapers, documents and records for information. The project is designed to have as thorough coverage of Highway 24 in the Solomon Valley as possible by encouraging volunteers to attend the workshops offered near their town.

**The first workshop schedule is:**

- Monday, September 25, Sheridan County Library, 2:00-4:00 PM; Phone: 785-675-3102
- Tuesday, September 26, Osborne Public Library, 2:00-4:00 PM, Phone: 785-346-5486
- Wednesday, Sept. 27, Downs Carnegie Library, 6:00-8:00 PM, Phone: 785-454-3821
- Thursday, Sept. 28, Glasco City Library, 2:00-4:00 PM, Phone: 785-568-2313

Follow-up support workshops are planned for November and February. In order to accommodate planning, volunteers are encouraged to notify the library site of their intention to participate.

The Solomon Valley-Highway 24-Heritage Alliance was created with the commitment to research, preserve, and promote the heritage of the Solomon Valley. The Alliance has dedicated much energy to the stories of each of the 24 member communities. Now it is challenged to look specifically at the history of the highway that connects the towns. Publication of the findings is planned for 2007.

**January, 2006**

**"First Call" Writing Contest Winners Recognized**

The winning entries in the First Call for Voices writing contest were honored at the annual meeting at Simpson, January 21, with awards presented to the top three writers in each category. The first place authors read their writings.

The 45 entries in four categories were judged by a panel of five eminent Kansas authors (Denise Low, Bob Day, Tom Averill, Jim Hoy, and Fred Whitehead). The following writers received awards, and their writings will be published during the coming year in the Solomon Valley Anthology, beginning with this issue.