



**President's Message Archive
2013**

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December, 2013

Dear Friends Along This Way,

Here we are again, in that moment looking both back and ahead, with efforts to recognize and plans to share.

We must all acknowledge the significant achievement celebrated with a ribbon cutting on November 16 in Morland. After years of dedicated work, the Morland Mercantile had its grand opening on a bright November Saturday. Well-wishers from across the state, including Governor Sam Brownback who wielded the scissors, recognized this landmark event, opening a new grocery store in Morland. Plans for a community kitchen where local residents can make products to sell in the store, make this creative venture still a work in progress. The Morland Community Foundation oversaw the renovation and creation of the Morland Mercantile.

I learned of a different kind of achievement from the radio. In fact, I stopped my car on a country road to listen to NPR's "All Things Considered" tell a story about Hoxie. Our Hoxie's story was being told nationwide. There, farmers have agreed to pump 20% less water for the next five years, making a calculated sacrifice in order to help preserve the Ogallala Aquifer—and the future of agriculture as we know it in Northwest Kansas.

Angela Bates at Nicodemus, one of the founding members of the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance, community historian, and author of books about this unique town, has opened The Nicodemus Livery and Mercantile Gift Shop and Ernestine's BBQ on Highway 24. We wish her well in this endeavor.

As an alliance, we are aware of sustained efforts, looking toward the long-term benefit for rural Kansas, such as these in Morland, Hoxie, and Nicodemus, and we applaud their work!

Carldon Broadbent presented his collection of original editions of the work of Margaret Hill McCarter to Steve Richardson. This body of Kansas literature will be placed in the Historical Library in Cawker City, a preservation undertaking by Steve that is nearing completion.

The Voices shared in this issue again reflect youths' power and pride in place. The adults open our hearts to other journeys, sacred journeys.

On January 18, 2014, we will host the annual SV-24-HA membership meeting in Osborne. I believe it will be of interest to everyone! We will have information about the Centennial of the Midland Trail, an alliance project that has already inspired Kansas artist David DeArmond to travel the complete Kansas link of the Transcontinental Midland Trail. He painted each designated town and has created a beautiful book of these paintings and the route through Kansas.

We have invited Kansas Humanities Speaker Edgar Tidwell to be with us. His topic "Creativity as Art and Labor" will complement the years of writing we have encouraged with our "Call for Voices."

In closing, I pause to convey the loss of Sharon Treaster. She was a founding member of SV-24-HA, representing Mitchell County until the time of her death, November 13, 2013. Our sympathy is extended to her family and many friends.

Please plan on being with us at the annual meeting. We will continue the gentle process of growing together.

–Joan Nothern

October, 2013

DEAR Friends Along This Way,

In this issue of the Solomon Valley Anthology you will find the fourth part of Ron Parks' article "Nepaholla Dreams." In the course of a year, Mr. Parks has acted as our guide, traveling first west from Manhattan to Waconda, then east to the Big Red Rock. His article is a perfect example of enlightened exploring-attending first to the actual physical world encountered, and then to the stories that enrich the traveler's experience of place. We are indebted to him for being our guide, for sharing this fine series with us.

On July 21, I attended the 3rd Annual Wakonda Indian Festival, held at Glen Elder State Park /Waconda Lake. This was a moving experience, returning to the lakeside where Waconda Spring now lies under water-but where contemporary Indian artists and storytellers gathered to share their culture. I hope Solomon Valley Explorers will try to attend the 4th Annual Wakonda Indian Festival next July.

The SV24 Alliance Board, as advocates for exploring the Solomon Valley, has pledged to lead the way. We hope to be able to share stories of these experiences in future Explorer Columns in the Solomon Valley Anthology. Your stories are welcome! We have a vibrant present to celebrate.

Do you remember the Youth Essays printed in the last two issues of the Anthology? In the Spring edition, Garrett McClair of Beloit took us on a "Road Trip" along Highway 24, and in the Summer edition, Sheila Elmore of Downs told "Why I Love My Home." They are great ambassadors for this place. Let's try to follow their example and share our stories with brief Explorer reports! Remember to travel east and west on 24.

–Joan Nothern

June, 2013

DEAR Friends Along This Way,

Sometimes we discover we have been befriended. . . . that others actively appreciate the places and efforts we as the Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance strive to support. I want to tell you about three such connections.

David DeArmond is a painter from Merriam, Kansas, who has painted in every county in Kansas at least four times. He has shared his gentle water colors of the Solomon Valley, and has allowed us to create postcards from some of them. DeArmond's paintings reflect a kindly eye appreciating his discoveries as he travels.

Ann Miner, Director of Education and Programming at the Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby, has initiated a discussion with the museums in the Solomon Valley, opening the way for collaborations that might increase visitation and development of common themes. The first meeting was held May 16 at the Rooks County Historical Museum in Stockton, with representation from four communities beginning this conversation.

Suzanne Waring, whose essay "Closing the Farm House" appeared in the Spring 2013 SVA, stopped in Glasco on March 27 to meet the first-grade students at Glasco Grade School. They had enjoyed her book, *In Search of a Special Place*, page by page, and discussed it with her in person.

David, Ann, and Suzanne are thoughtful, caring people. They are explorers, connecting with us. The SV24 Board of Directors has considered encouraging organized explorations of the valley. As a first step the Board members committed to getting out and about themselves, being visible advocates for getting to know each other better.

The 9th Call for Voices is formally raised at this time. The written insights of past participants were gifts to all of us. We look forward to the new responses to "Call for Voices" from the Solomon Valley. Remember to travel east and west on 24!

–Joan Nothern

March, 2013

DEAR Friends Along This Way,

At the annual meeting, January 26 in Osborne, we were thrilled to hear three of the winning authors from Call for Voices 2012 read their work! We offer a special thanks to Sharon Arnold, Glasco, Don Downing, Prairie Village, and Keith Schlaegel, Stockton, for allowing us to really hear their voices.

You will be able to read their prize-winning works and those of the other honored 2012 participants in the Solomon Valley Anthology during the year. In this issue, you'll find the youth essay "Road Trip" by Garrett McBlair which recreates the rhythm of a family car trip. He takes time to appreciate, to wonder, to discover. He has the perfect attitude for finding excitement in plain things.

In the last issue of Solomon Valley Anthology we asked for a show of interest in a video workshop. There was not enough to warrant our going ahead providing one. But perhaps there are concerns that we should take to heart. The Kansas Preservation Alliance has placed Kansas rural downtowns on the KPA's 2012 Most Endangered List. Might this not be a signal to alert photographers to document the downtowns of our Solomon Valley communities?

Spring calls. It is time to renew friendships in the Solomon Valley. Travel east and west on 24. There is much to see and do as you explore.

–Joan Nothern