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2009**

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September, 2009

DEAR Friends Along This Way,

Transitions may be the theme you detect as you read this issue of the Solomon Valley Anthology. After a long period of preparation, the Smithsonian Museum on Main Journey Stories exhibit has come to the Solomon Valley and gone. Glasco welcomed over 900 visitors at The Corner Store while the exhibit was there. Over 300 attended the supporting events, and there were nine tour groups. There was a strong sense of pride that a small rural community could meet the expectation of the Kansas Humanities Council.

The local complementary exhibit introduced the History of U.S. Highway 24. Extensive research completed by Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance members with Joyce Sullenthrop's guidance, provided the basis for the handsome display. It dovetailed well with the Smithsonian Journey Stories, filling the historical niche between the railroads crossing the country and the interstate system. The Highway 24 exhibit won warm praise from visitors.

This newsletter, the Solomon Valley Anthology, is completing a chapter with the current edition. When we began publishing, we proposed each of the 24 communities in the alliance present its own story. Woodston's history appears in this issue, the last alphabetically in our historical tour.

This raises the question, what next? A committee of Faye Minium from Morland, Linda Clover from Cawker City, and myself, Glasco, will attempt editorial formatting, suggesting organizing themes that our six represented counties will be encouraged to address. We like giving voice to places. This experiment as a themed digest will be a new twist. We welcome volunteers from each county to help make this a success.

A last change to note. It is time to renew membership in the Alliance and to encourage new memberships. To begin in 2010, the alliance board instituted a single membership fee of \$25.00 for all classifications: individuals, families, organizations, businesses, and governing bodies. In addition, a single lifetime membership of \$250.00 is being offered. The support of SV24 members is essential as we dedicate ourselves to understanding, enriching, and promoting the heritage of the Solomon Valley. I hope you will go the next mile with us.

Sincerely, **Joan Nothern**
President, Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance

May, 2009

Dear Friends Along This Way,

Preparing for Journey Stories, the Smithsonian Museum on Main Exhibit to be at Glasco August 14-September 27, 2009, has prompted consideration of "journeys." As we encourage exploring along Highway 24, a historic two-lane route through the Solomon Valley, the sense of a personal journey of discovery is your reward.

Our work together to share stories of our communities and the history of the road itself alerted us to the wonders of journey stories. From the migration of flowers, hollyhock seeds passed from neighbor to neighbor, dame's rocket escaping from gardens to the wild, to exotic quests, journey stories are fascinating! A young man has undertaken working a week in every state in the U.S. Lyn Hamush walked across the U.S., praying in and for each community along the way. Erika Nelson seeks unique roadside vernacular architecture. A man is driven to find and correct spelling and grammar errors on signs and billboards.

Journeys inward. Journeys back. Reminiscences and reunions. Precious personal reconstructions. It has been intriguing turning over the nuances of journeying—noticing the impact of travel and insight.

Now it is time to reflect on our journey together. It was through a series of Democratic Vistas programs by Leo Oliva during the summer of 2000 that the communities along Highway 24 realized the potential for partnership based on their common heritage and rich resources. A partnership with purpose: invite visitors to travel along the Highway 24 corridor—a journey with the whole so much more than the sum of its parts!

Through the Kansas Humanities Council sponsored Democratic Vistas discussions, our Solomon Valley communities envisioned the power of collaboration. Since that time, other regional and theme-based alliances have come into being. Many share goals that relate to those of the SV24HA. The Kansas Barn Alliance strives to preserve both the icons of rural Kansas and their histories. The new Rural Partnership Initiative will offer techniques to energize community promotion. Regional tourism councils define each area's distinct characteristics.

The SV24HA continues to refine its mission, seeking to discover, preserve, and promote our common heritage. We support the museums, artists, authors, and historical societies who share this vision. We will try to work with the other organizations dedicated to rural Kansas' well-being, not duplicating their services, but building together.

Yes, the longest journey starts with the first step. When we began with that first step in 2000 we had no idea what adventures were ahead! I hope you will continue to take this path with us.

Sincerely, **Joan Nothern**
President, Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance

January, 2009

Dear Friends Along This Way,

We worked hard to bring Solomon Valley artists and authors together in a unique project supported by the Kansas Arts Commission. This was truly an inspiring project. Our authors let us see, peopling the prairie with their memories and experiences, painting it with their keen observations. Artists Gary Ozias, Jackie Campbell, and Virgil Deges honored workshop participants by offering serious, yet delightful, instruction in plain air painting, ceramics, and water colors. Each of the three Saturdays, October 18 and 25 and November 1, left all of us amazed by what had transpired and hoping there would be more events built on the same format. Simpson, Hoxie, and Stockton were excellent host sites.

In the meantime, an exhibit of work created during these author/artist happenings will be included in the January 17, 2009 Annual Membership Meeting in Osborne. This will bring the original project to a conclusion.

At the October board meeting, the Alliance renewed its agreement with the Glasco Community Foundation to continue work on the US Highway 24 Museum. Concrete progress is being made, as GCF prepares for the Journey Stories exhibit next summer. The local exhibit component will be based on Highway 24 history through the Solomon Valley. The Kansas Humanities Council selected

Glasco as one of six host sites for the Smithsonian Museum on Main Street Journey Stories exhibit. This opportunity lets us grow in historical perspective, fulfilling our mission as a heritage alliance.

As a representative of the Alliance, I was invited to a meeting sponsored by the Kansas Sampler Foundation that addressed unifying rural Kansas as a tourism entity. We have been building our organization based on a dual vision: our common history and our unique communities. We stand to learn from this new initiative, and perhaps we will have insights to share based on our several years of working together. This is a process we'll watch and report back to you.

The annual membership meeting brings us back to Osborne, where five years ago a panel of authors began our journey, seeking contemporary voices from the Solomon Valley. It will be our privilege to meet and hear the winners of the 4th Annual Call for Voices. Please note the change of time to a noon meeting. We have been challenged by weather and long night drives, and sincerely hope this accommodation will make it easier for all to join us.

Your SV24 board and officers serve for one year terms. We could not attempt all we do without a hardworking board. As the year closes, I wish to acknowledge Faye Minium, who has served as treasurer since our incorporation in November 2000. She is not going to continue as treasurer, but will remain as membership chairman. Eileen Wilson, our vice-president, also is retiring from that position. I thank you both for outstanding contributions to the Heritage Alliance.

Now, Friends Along This Way, please renew your memberships, invite others to join us, and plan to attend the January 17, 2009, Annual Membership Meeting. We have exciting journeys ahead.

Sincerely, **Joan Nothern**
President, Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance