



**President's Message Archive
2016**

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Solomon Valley History
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December, 2016

Dear Friends Along This Way,

Preparations are underway for our Partner Site role in the Smithsonian Water/Ways Initiative with the Kansas Humanities Council. The KHC was intrigued by our proposal to work from Robert McBratney's 1869 diary tracing an exploratory trip in the Solomon Valley. The purpose for the journey was to determine the route for the Junction City–Solomon Valley–Denver Railroad. What he recorded in 1869 is one of the prompts directing our attention as we look at the Solomon Valley for Water/Ways.

We have so much to anticipate! An outstanding program at the annual membership meeting will allow us to celebrate Nicodemus's 20 years as a National Historic Site as part of the National Park Service.

The second Faye Minium Spirit Award recipient will be announced and recognized!

You will find more information about these events in this issue of the SVA.

If you know of special water projects in your community, please let me know so that we can include them in our Solomon Valley Water/Ways story.

Your continued membership is your vote of approval for the effort the SV24HA makes to research, preserve, and promote the heritage of the Solomon Valley. I look forward to continuing this journey together.

–Joan Nothern

September, 2016

Dear Friends Along This Way,

Water, water everywhere! That could be our summer 2016 refrain. It is the topic we have begun exploring as we prepare for the 2017 Water / Ways Initiative with the Kansas Humanities Council. Meetings in Glasco and Osborne sparked some good conversations and goal setting. The current Solomon Valley Anthology's common theme is "River Related Stories." They are an excellent introduction to the Water / Ways exhibit we will share in our Alliance communities.

This is an extraordinary year for Nicodemus as it celebrates its twentieth year as part of the National Park Service. I encourage you to visit soon and often, offering congratulations.

Charlotte Hinger's fine book, *Nicodemus: Post-Reconstruction Politics and Racial Justice in Western Kansas*, is a perfect anniversary gift, one I hope you will be able to open and read soon!

The 12th annual "Call for Voices" is now open. Please look at the submission information on our website, hwy24.org, and add your voice to this rich anthology of poetry and prose.

The first Highway 24 garage sale in June was an occasion for communities to work together. Some good contacts were established, the kind that promise "next year" will be even better.

Signs of working together. Let's look further. Downs Community Garden was initiated to provide fresh produce for the food bank, and has grown to include individual plots. Several towns now support nonprofit cafés. Glasco's Community Pub, Glen Elder's HeBrews, Alton's Bull City Café, and Morland's Prairie Junction are community outreach-sharing hospitality. Please plan to stop!

Having noted examples of behind the scene support, I thank Leo Oliva for his generous gift of editing and publishing the Solomon Valley Anthology. He has helped provide a tool to communicate and to gather our growing valley history. I appreciate this more and more.

—Joan Nothern

June, 2016

Dear Friends Along This Way,

There is both a purpose and a rhythm to the work we do together as the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance. First, we dig a little deeper, discovering again the histories along the valley, and then we find a way to share that news.

In April 2016, the Wichita Times published *Travel Kansas: Discover the Sunflower State*, with a full-page feature "Highway 24 promotes scenic, historic travel along two-lane." In May 2016 the St. Marys Star published *Highway 24: Life Along Route 24*. The magazine featured our work, concentrating on the World War II Veterans Memorial Highway, *A Tour of Remembrance, A Corridor of Service*. This summer we will place an ad in *American Road* – going beyond state lines to attract two-lane travelers. Do you see this emerging pattern? We hope we can continue to discover and then display!

The Kansas Humanities Council is coordinating the Smithsonian Museum on Main Exhibit *Water/ Ways*. The SV24HA has been accepted as a Partner Site, with several communities combining host site responsibilities. The actual exhibit and event dates will be in 2017, but we anticipate the challenge of preparing Solomon Valley water stories in the meantime. This will be a united effort, bringing us together—looking back and around, preparing to look ahead.

With this issue of the newsletter, we open the 12th Call for Voices writing contest. The response of youth and adults to this contest has created a real anthology of insights and local literature. Entry information can be found on our website hwy24.org, You will also find past winning entries printed there for your enjoyment.

A longtime SV24HA member finds the Solomon Valley Anthology a "vigorous celebration of life in the Solomon Valley" and encourages us to make it available wherever people gather in the valley.

I sense that rhythm of preparing and sharing expressed again. Is this an agricultural rhythm?

It will soon be time to go to the county fairs, festivals, homecomings—the gifts of place.

—Joan Nothern

March, 2016

Dear Friends Along This Way,

The results of labors past were evident at the Annual Membership Meeting in January. We were honored to recognize Wilda Carswell of Alton for her years of personal community-building service as we presented her with the first Faye Minium Spirit Award.

We enjoyed meeting Call for Voices authors Ryan Schuckman, Dawne Leiker, Dayna Mannebach and Keith Schlaegel. You will find their work in the Solomon Valley Anthology during the year.

We received firsthand reports on the Kansas Humanities Council project: World War II Veterans Memorial Highway: A Tour of Remembrance, A Corridor of Service. Cynthia Harris described the preservation workshops she conducted in five communities along this corridor, in Riley, Clay Center, Cawker City, Hill City and Colby. Von Rothenberger created a visual tour with photos of the memorials he has located and documented along the 200-mile corridor.

Von's discoveries are now available on our website with a guided tour by county, as well as a printable tour format.

Now we turn our attention to a new year! We want to refresh and refurbish the 24 kiosks that provide visitors with our local stories.

One hundred years ago the Midland Trail Tour Guide 1916 was printed. This transcontinental route, Washington D. C. to San Francisco, included our road through Kansas. We will encourage special events and recognition of this anniversary.

The towns and counties in the SV-24-HA are preparing for fairs and festivals, the places and events where we will meet. They are creating the experiences that become the Solomon Valley Heritage! Let's support their efforts.

—Joan Nothern