



**President's Message Archive  
2017**

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**December, 2017**

Dear Friends Along This Way,

This has been a remarkable year for the SV24HA. Working together we continue to bring the heritage of the Solomon Valley to the public. The Water/Ways story of Taming and Sustaining Life in the Solomon Valley was well received at four venues, from August through November. We are indebted to the local researchers and hosts who made this a successful partnership with the Kansas Humanities Council.

At this time, our 24 blue-roofed kiosks along US 24 are being refurbished. New panels will be installed with updated information, formatted on the Kansas Sampler 8 Rural Elements. This project is supported by the Dane G. Hansen Foundation. Alliance board members Roger Hrabec and Alan LeSage have led the way on this project.

We had a good response to the 13th annual Call for Voices. Our generous reader-judges are reviewing this work. We will meet the winners at the Annual Meeting, January 27, in Osborne.

This is the season of thanks, and as an organization we have many people to thank: all of the board members who ease us along, step-by-step, adding to our cultural resources; the gift of the Solomon Valley Anthology; the judges of Call for Voices; web master Greg German for maintaining <[hwyl24.org](http://hwyl24.org)>, a growing record of the Solomon Valley and 24 communities on US 24; and, finally, we thank you, the members, who support our vision and activities. It is time to renew memberships, to give membership gifts, and to encourage others to join us.

I hope you will plan to attend the Annual Membership Meeting, Saturday, January 27. We will recognize the Faye Minium Spirit Award recipient and announce the 2017 Call for Voices winners. A special program by Ron Parks and Leo Oliva will bring our Water/Ways exploration to a thoughtful conclusion.

Let's continue our journey together!

—Joan Nothern

## **September, 2017**

Dear Friends Along This Way,

I visited the Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit at the Prairie Museum of Art and History in Colby and also saw Colby's local Water/Ways exhibit, a really in-depth history of farming on the High Plains of Kansas. I spent two and a half hours reading and appreciating the science and history captured there. We are truly honored to be the Partner Site for Colby!

A year of work, drawing on years of research, and the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance exhibit is now on the road! Living Off the Water: The Challenge to Tame and Sustain Life in the Solomon Valley tells a unique story. Our Water/Ways story. I hope you will see it in Alton or Beloit, in Stockton or Glasco. You'll see there are special events scheduled at each site.

Perhaps it's a cruel joke that, in this place of agricultural abundance, getting food is a real concern in our alliance communities. New York City papers are writing about small towns without grocery stores. Our SV24 board did an informal survey and found 17 of our 24 communities do not have grocery stores. How do they persist? Maybe the thoughts in the county themes on Cafés found in this issue of the Solomon Valley Anthology will help us understand.

Hint: The 13th Annual Call for Voices is now open. This might be a good time to capture a water story and to share it in our writing contest.

Thank you for your interest in the Solomon Valley!

–Joan Nothern

## **June, 2017**

Dear Friends Along This Way,

Please mark your calendars now for the Water/ Ways special events coming to the Solomon Valley! We've been working for a year choosing themes, gathering stories, finding pictures. The stage is set to compare Robert McBratney's 1869 Solomon Valley observations with what actually followed. We are the rest of the story!

Lots of work was needed to get this far, but some good exchanges are ahead. I hope you'll find them interesting and worthwhile. An introduction to the first three events is included in this issue of the Solomon Valley Anthology.

Drawing attention to how we share an awareness of water is one of the challenges we set for ourselves as Water/Ways Partners. Two examples of this communicating

are: The Alton Library children's summer reading program is going to build on water. Glasco youth shared in a soil conservation project. [Click Here, View Their Work & Story on YouTube](#)

Our motto, "Stories Of Land Of Man Of Nature," drives our activities in the Alliance. Our first major accomplishment was creating and installing kiosks at our 24 member communities, telling the local story on site. The Dane Hansen Foundation has granted funds to renovate the kiosks and update the stories told at each place. This is a big undertaking, overseen by SV24 board members Roger Hrabe and Alan LeSage.

The 13th Call for Voices competition is now open. Youth and adults are encouraged to submit poetry and prose, adding to the grassroots culture being nurtured by this SV24 project. The team of Kansas authors and poets who challenged us to sponsor this literary outreach is still with us as reader-judges. [View Submission Information.](#)

So much to do in the Solomon Valley. It is a good thing to be here.

—Joan Nothern

## **March, 2017**

Dear Friends Along This Way,

Our annual membership meeting was really exciting as we acknowledged accomplishments and places.

The *Faye Minium Spirit Award* was presented to Angela Bates, honoring her tireless effort on behalf of Nicodemus resulting in that community's National Historic Site designation.

Charlotte Hinger, author, was presented an *Award of Merit* in recognition of the significant historical contribution she has made with her book *Nicodemus: Post-Reconstruction Politics and Racial Justice in Western Kansas*.

These two women created a meaningful program, with Charlotte revealing the personal challenges she encountered in her research quest, and Angela reflecting on Nicodemus as it continues to gain attention.

We were pleased to have two, 1st place winners of the 12th Call for Voices with us. Janice McIntosh read the winning autobiography entry, *A Unique Gift From Czar Alexander of Russia*, and Keith Schlaegel read the winning fiction entry, *The Birdhouse*. Throughout the year, the Solomon Valley Anthology will print the winning and honorable-mention entries, completing the circle, as we listen to the voices.

The Board of Directors is the working link to the 24 communities represented in the SV24HA. We thank Sherry Brown for sharing her gifts with us as she steps off the board. And, we welcome two new directors, Susan McFarland, representing Rooks County, and LueCreasea Horne, Graham County.

Our partnership role with the *Smithsonian Water/Ways Initiative* is taking shape! Our valley exhibit will move from Alton to Beloit to Stockton to Glasco to Osborne, from August 2017 through January 2018. We will be looking back, before settlers began their water sagas, considering the American Indians' relation to the land and water, and we will be moved to consider the future of water as revealed in the groundwater histories from Nicodemus to Hoxie.

It is rewarding to work together. We grow in confidence as we refine the *Stories Of Land Of Man Of Nature*, the alliance theme from the beginning. It never fit better!

Please share your local stories of water awareness past and present.

–Joan Nothern