

TRAILS HEAD HISTORY PART #7 - 2011 THROUGH 2015

2011

CHAPTER MEETING HELD **FEBRUARY 5**

The first Trails Head Chapter meeting of 2011 was held at 1:00 p.m. on **Saturday, February 5** at the Monticello Community Historical Museum at 23860 W. 83rd Street in Lenexa. Present were members **Eva Allen, Bob Boland, Mary Conrad, Pete Cuppage, Jim Kullberg, Ross Marshall** and six others who were members of the Museum Historical Society.

Secretary Mary Conrad opened the meeting since all other officers were absent. **Ross** reviewed preparations for the OCTA Convention in **2012** in Lawrence. He passed around a copy of a draft of the convention logo for comments. He announced the date and place for the next convention meeting which will be **February 22**.

Ross also discussed the upcoming Trek XXXVIII on **May 7** which will cover the trails, Kansas Territorial history, Quantrill, John Brown and various sites in both Lawrence and Topeka.

After the general meeting of Trails Head, **Bertha Cameron** of the Monticello Community Historical Society presented a program on the history of the Monticello Community Historical Society and of the Monticello Township.



Pictured above are the attendees at the Feb. 5 meeting. Mary Conrad is presiding at the far end and presenter Bertha Cameron is standing.

The west part of the building was constructed in 1975 as a township hall. The attached metal building houses a volunteer fire department.

Monticello Township touches the Kansas River on the north. Three ferry crossings were in that area. Gleason Road may be the oldest trail within Monticello Township. This road from 83rd Street north to 75th still appears to be on the same roadbed as the first route of the Military Road which angled from 75th Street toward the river to the Tiblow Ferry.

The Tiblow Ferry, one of the Chouteau ferries, was situated near the second location of the Chouteau Four Houses trading post and probably was in use by 1827. Henry Tiblow, an interpreter for the Shawnees and Delawares, managed that ferry for the Chouteaus. The area of

Tiblow was renamed Bonner Springs. The Monticello Ferry Company, chartered in 1863, and other ferry operations continued to operate ferries in the area of Bonner until about 1900.

The Chouteau Ferry, located close to the mouth of Mill Creek in the vicinity of where Edwardsville now is situated, was managed by Frederick Chouteau, the youngest of the Chouteau brothers.

The above Chouteau ferry could have been accessed via what would become Monticello Road. The route that became Monticello Road was chartered in 1859 as Territorial Road #5. Monticello Road now runs just a few feet east of that early roadbed.

The third ferry crossing was located just east of the Monticello Township line, but the road to the ferry came from Monticello. This crossing was located about where I-435 now spans the river. Edward Tooley, a Shawnee Indian whose surname had a variety of spellings, managed Tooley's Ferry. The first advertisement for the Tooley Ferry appeared in The Weekly Kansas Herald on May 2, 1857, just a month before the founding of Monticello.

The road from Tooley's Ferry went through Monticello and connected with the Westport to Lawrence (California) Road about where Barker Road now is situated.

The founding fathers of Monticello came from Leavenworth. They placed the town where the Westport to Lawrence (California) Road and the territorial road (a military road) intersected. A young lady from the Salt Creek area of Leavenworth named the town after Thomas Jefferson's home but the locals pronounced the "c" differently than Jefferson did. He said 'ch'.

On June 19, 1857, the founders celebrated the beginning of the town with a feast. They dubbed the area "Monticello City" as they expected the town to become a big city.

Monticello was not burned when Olathe, Shawnee, and Lawrence were burned by Quantrill's party in the fall of 1862, as Quantrill's men went through Aubry to the south at about 190th Street or so until they reached Gardner.

The California Road from Westport to Lawrence went through Monticello Township. In his notes, Shalor Eldridge mentioned going through the community of Monticello on his way to Lawrence in 1855 to build his hotel. The Monticello Hotel was a stagecoach stop where the stagecoach drivers exchanged horses.

Cameron suspects a campsite was located off Shawnee Mission Parkway at about Monticello Road. This would have been about midway between Lawrence and Westport where seven springs were active south of Clear Creek and west of Mill Creek. Cameron thinks Confederate David Rice Atchison's troops may have camped at that locale when Atchison led troops to Lawrence in September of 1856.

A sore-footed Bill Hickok walked into Monticello and stayed for only a couple of years. He became the constable in 1858. Years later this man gained the reputation as "Wild Bill Hickok."

Monticello did not become the major city as the founding fathers had hoped. Monticello was on a hill. When the railroad came to the area, the tracks were constructed to the north, below the bluff away from the community.

Most of the township already had been taken by Shawnees who did not want the prairie land. An 1854 treaty required Shawnees to include their existing improvements in the allotments they took. Each Shawnee received 200 acres so a family of four received 800 acres. At the time of settlement in the 1850s, the unoccupied available land in the township was prairie.

After the explanation of this history, Cameron took the group to tour the museum.

PLANNING MEETING

The first chapter planning meeting was held **February 21** at **Pat's Place** with 12 present; **Eva Allen, Bob Boland, Kelly Breen, Mary Conrad, Rob Cook, Shirley Coupal, Pete Cuppage, Jim Kullberg, John Mark Lambertson, Ross Marshall, Dick Nelson** and **Pat Traffas**.

President Pat Traffas opened the meeting at **3:00 p.m.** The recent meeting at Monticello was discussed concerning the great historical information **Bertha Cameron** presented to everyone.

Ross said planning was going good for the **May 7** bus tour. Those present discussed a meeting at Haskell Institute in Lawrence.

The planners decided to have the Annual Meeting at Trailside Center in south Kansas City.

Several of those present decided to attend the March Mid-Year Board meeting later this week in Cedar City, Utah.

After reviewing Convention **2012** planning, the meeting was adjourned.

MAJORS HOUSE SAVED

One of the most important historical sites in the Kansas City area now has a certain future!

With the death of **Terry Chapman**, trustee of the foundation that owns the Majors Historical House and Museum, in **January, 2010**, its future became somewhat uncertain.

The Majors House Board and several members of The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City explored several options.

A special fundraising event was held last **July, 2011**. Over a hundred people attended and members of the Wornall House Board of Directors were there.

They were impressed and saw both the possibility of the privately-funded Wornall House operating the Majors House. The result was that the Wornall House Board on **October 27** voted to merge with the Majors House and Museum! It will again be open for tours and events as in the past. Under the professional staff and operations of the Wornall House, the Majors House should have a secure future.

Ross Marshall, Trails Head member and editor of Trails Head *Tidings* newsletter, was Executive Director of the House from **May, 1993 to January, 1996**.

2012 OCTA CONVENTION PLANNING

Planning meetings for Trails Head's hosting of the convention in Lawrence, have been held about once a month since spring of 2010 and planning is proceeding nicely.



Pictured above is the logo produced by **Jim Conway**, with considerable input and reviews from the Steering Committee.

You will notice the graphics interpret the 2012 theme at the top and the host city Lawrence is in large font. There is no border on the west side because when Kansas was a territory the border was the Rocky Mountains in Colorado.

Eva Allen and **Dick Nelson** have arranged for T-shirts and caps to be produced by Sunshine Graphics in Independence. These will be offered for sale at the OCTA Convention in Rock Springs, WY in August, as well as to Trails Head Members as soon as they are produced.

The five tours to be offered are tentatively planned as follows (each will go twice):

#1 - Independence Route - Independence Landing to Gardner Junction

#2 - Westport to Lawrence - Westport Landing (Town of Kansas) – Strang Park – Monticello - Hwy 10 – Wakarusa River Crossing – Lawrence

#3 - River Run to Ft. Ly – L/C Point - Kaw Point – Grinter Hse – Mil. Rd – Lvwth. and Ft. Ly.

#4 – Lawrence Trails – Black Jack - Lawrence – LeCompton - Topeka (on Santa Fe and Oregon-Cal Trails) Great Overland Station – ruts

#5 - Quantrill Raid - Baldwin (his escape. route.) – Olathe - Stilwell (Aubry) - Gardner - O.T. to Lawrence on Quantrill’s attack route

LONE ELM PARK ARTIFACTS

When the City of Olathe purchased the roughly 156-acre Willsey farm a decade ago, at 167th and Lone Elm Road where the Lone Elm Campground was located, professional archeologist Bert Wetherill supervised volunteers from the Kansas City Archaeological Society and from the Midwestern Artifact Society, a club for metal detecting enthusiasts as well as other volunteers.

A large amount of artifacts were found relating to both military and emigrant wagon train use, as well as relating to agricultural usage.

Some of the most significant artifacts resulting from that project already had been cleaned and are on display in the Heritage Center at the Mahaffie Historic Site in Olathe. In **June, 2010**, volunteers cleaned 7½ of the 8½ banker’s boxes of Lone Elm Artifacts, waiting to be cleaned.

TRAILS HEAD TREK XXXVIII – May 7, 2011 – Lawrence/Topeka, Trails & Border War

Trails Head Chapter had a great tour on **May 7** in Douglas and Shawnee Counties with nearly a full bus. Tour participants left from the Johnson County Community College at **8:30 a.m.** and returned at **5:00 p.m.** The weather was great and tour participants saw lots of trail sites.

The purpose of the tour, besides just having some fun, was to confirm that this is a tour that would work for the OCTA convention in **2012** with the theme of *Trails, Tribes and Territories*.

And the answer was a resounding yes! The **May, 2011** journey was completely in the 1830 Permanent Indian Frontier, traversed by historic trails that became Kansas Territory in 1854. The tour people also saw sites that related to the Border War of the 1850s and 1860s, the Quantrill Raid, and the settlement of Lawrence.

The first stop was at the Black Jack Battle site and ruts east of Baldwin City which have been greatly expanded and enhanced recently.

The tour followed the Santa Fe Trail for a few miles as the bus headed toward Lawrence to link up with the Oregon-California Trail. On the way participants saw and discussed several sites relating to the Border War and also Quantrill’s escape route in 1863.

The bus went north on Massachusetts Street through downtown Lawrence and west on Highway 40.

The Oregon-California Trail along Highway 40 brought them to Lecompton to visit the historic Constitution Hall building built in 1855. They had a delightful lunch in the United Methodist Church served by the Lecompton Historical Society accompanied by a superb Border War era presentation by a group of Lecompton Society's leaders in costume.

Returning to the trail route, everyone saw several rut sites and trail markers on the way to Topeka. In Topeka the bus stopped at the Great Overland Station on the north side of the Kansas River, the approximate location of the 1840s ferry of the Pappan brothers.

Attendees were led on a tour of the Station which was built by Union Pacific in 1927 and has been recently greatly renovated and enhanced by the City of Topeka.

The next stop was on the west side of Topeka at Cedar Crest, the Kansas Governor's Mansion.



Cedar Crest Mansion, looking from southwest

There the participants were joined by **Doug Mauck**, a Topeka resident, who has been researching and walking this area in recent years. He has found, just south of the Mansion, a swale that crosses a large grassy field in front of the mansion on the south side. This swale continues intermittently on around the hill to the west.

It approximates the route that emigrants would have used from Pappan's Ferry when it was backed up, which was often, to go to the Smith Ferry near the Kansas Historical Society Museum or to the ferry farther west at the current village of Willard.



Doug Mauck (right) talks to the group near the Cedar Crest Mansion. Far left is Trails Head Chapter President Pat Traffas, and at far right is Secretary Mary Conrad.

The group is looking (pictured above at right) down a swale that heads west and around the right side of the far hill intermittently, just south of Cedar Crest Mansion.

One of the problems along this area of Topeka north of the Kansas River is that no 1850s General Land Office Surveys were done because it was part of Indian Reserves. Therefore, the usual survey evidence for the location of the trail is missing.

It is in about the right location and looks good, but it would be nice to have some old maps that would prove this beyond any doubt.

Trails Head appreciated **Doug** being with us and for everyone that joined the tour.

TRAIL BILL SCOPING MEETING HELD

On the evening of **May 11**, National Park Service held a ‘Scoping Meeting’ public hearing in Independence, one of a series of such hearings held across the western part of the U.S. in 2011.

The purpose is to allow public review and comment on the 64 individual new routes and cut-offs on the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express National Historic Trails that are part of a Feasibility Study Bill included in the 2009 Omnibus Public Lands Management Act passed by the U.S. Congress.

This is a bill that OCTA had been trying to get passed for nearly a decade to enable these trail segments to be included as part of the National Historic Trails. Some were just simply omitted decades ago when the original feasibility studies were done, some were discovered later and some were removed arbitrarily (ARGH!) by NPS when the California NHT Comprehensive Management Plan was completed a dozen years ago. **Ross Marshall** remembers that call from **Jere Krakow** of the NPS then, of that arbitrary action that disappointed both **Jere** and **Ross**. Among the local routes studied by the NPS are ones from and through Ft. Leavenworth, plus OCTA is trying to get the Westport Route, already included in the Santa Fe NHT, to be designated as part of the Oregon and California NHTs.

Thanks to **Dick Nelson**, who presented the Westport Route issue, and to others that attended like **Travis Boley, Jim Budde, Kathy Conway, Sharon Snyder and Eric Fowler**. The meeting was led by three people from NPS led by **Superintendent Aaron Mahr**.

OCTA CONVENTION 2011

Lotsa trails to see in southwest Wyoming! And attendees managed to see most of them in **August** as the Wyoming Chapter and coordinator **Fern Linton** hosted the annual OCTA convention at Rock Springs, Wyoming.

The bus tours and an impressive array of speakers with power point presentations taught and showed us a lot about the trail history of that area.

Trails Head had a special chapter table with handouts about Lawrence and the Holiday Inn, standup placards with information and graphics about the convention next year at Lawrence, and the hot-selling shirts and caps displaying the 2012 OCTA convention logo.

Thanks to **Pat Traffas, Shirley Coupal, Jean Coupal-Smith, Dick and Ruby Nelson, Kendall McNabney, Kelly Breen, Shirley and Ross Marshall**, who manned our table.

Trails Head convention attendees learned some things to do next year and some things that Trails Head might do better. Thanks to the Wyoming Chapter, Trails Head came home with several kinds of items and materials that will come in handy next year.

It was a fun week at the OCTA convention!

Eva Allen and **Dick Nelson** have an inventory of T-shirts and caps with the convention logo. They sold very well in Rock Springs at the recent OCTA convention.

Trails Head Chapter has a webpage set up on OCTA’s website now so the chapter can begin advertising information right away and can be viewed at www.OCTA-Trails.org. (temporary)

Trails Head planners are working on articles for convention booklets, bus tour scripts, bus bids, and a myriad of other details for the OCTA convention in 2012.

CHAPTER MEETING

On **Saturday September 17**, Trails Head held our chapter meeting at the Watkins Museum in Lawrence. Arriving at noon, attendees toured the facility guided by Director **Steve Nowak**.



Pictured above at the Museum is (l-r) Mary Conrad, Lilian Six, Bob Burkhart, Rick Anderson and speaker Fred Six.

The exhibits are full of information about trails and the colorful history of Lawrence, especially in the Territorial and early statehood days of the 1850s and 1860s. But the delightful surprise was the unique history of the building itself.

The building was built in 1888 by J. B. Watkins, who was in the land mortgage business internationally and who arrived in Lawrence in 1873. An ambitious and successful man, who had a variety of businesses across the country, Watkins managed to ruffle a few local feathers as he pursued his various interests.

He finally decided to abandon the then small downtown area and build at the 'far south end of town' at the northwest corner of 11th and Massachusetts, on a dirt road leading out of town. Today, of course, this location is part of the downtown area.

Watkins spared no expense and built this three-story edifice that would attract business. Huge windows, high quality brick work, mosaic floors, walnut millwork, marble everywhere and very high ceilings are very impressive features.

After J. B. died in 1921 leaving an estate worth about \$2 million, his wife donated the building to the city in 1929 and it served as the Lawrence City Hall until 1970.

After a few brief business items, the main speaker **Fred Six** and his wife **Lilian** were introduced, who then presented a very fine slide presentation.

Long-time Trails Head Member **Fred** is a retired State Appellate Court Judge. **Fred** and his wife are also the owners of the property south of Lawrence on which the Blanton Bridge was located at a principal Oregon-California Trail crossing of the Wakarusa River.

The bridge was built by Napoleon Bonaparte (Bony) Blanton in 1856, the year after he had settled on this claim. It was the site of the famous 'Branson Rescue' in November, 1855 when a local free-soil group gathered to free Jacob Branson from a posse that had been led by the pro-slave Douglas County Sheriff Sam Jones.

After the tour, attendees had refreshments and **President Pat Traffas** opened our business meeting. Present were **Mary Conrad, Dick Nelson, Pat Traffas, Eva Allen, Laura and Rick Anderson, Kelly Breen, Bob Burkhart, Ross and Shirley Marshall, Steve Nowak, Fred and Lilian Six and LaDene Votruba.**

Those present discussed the activities at the recent OCTA Convention in Rock Springs, Wyoming, plus what Trails Head should or should not do at the Lawrence convention in 2012. **Dick Nelson** reported that the chapter sold 54 t-shirts and still has about 100 for our convention next year.

Several members have volunteered to write articles for the Convention 2012 booklet. **Pat Traffas** and **Craig Crease** will edit the articles.

After other miscellaneous discussions, **Pat** introduced Trails Head member **Fred Six**, who presented a slide program about Blanton's Bridge over the Wakarusa River just south of Lawrence. **Fred** and **Lilian** own the site.

Fred has done a lot of research on the history of the site. Trails Head member **Rick Anderson** of the Kansas Historical Society has been reviewing this history and physical evidences for a possible nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

ANNUAL MEETING

At the delightful Trailside Center (9901 Holmes Road) the chapter held the annual membership and awards meeting on **November 5, 2011.**

Vice-President Dick Nelson presided in the absence of **President Pat Traffas** who had some recent surgery.

He first welcomed everyone and reviewed the various activities of the chapter in 2011:

- Feb. 5** - Monticello Museum with **Bertha Cameron** as speaker, plus museum tour.
- May 7** - Trek XXXVIII Bus tour of Douglas County to Topeka.
- Sept. 17** - Watkins Museum in Lawrence with **Fred Six** as speaker, plus a museum tour.
- 2012** OCTA convention planning all year.

Treasurer Arnold Cole's report showed a checking account balance of \$4,288.58.

The next item of business was the election of officers as recommended by the nominating committee chaired by **Eva Allen**, with **Kelly Breen** and **Bob Burkhart** members:

President – **Pat Traffas** (re-election)
Vice President – **Dick Nelson** (re-election)
Secretary – **Mary Conrad** (re-election)
Treasurer - **Arnold Cole** (re-election)

The awards presentations were handled by Awards Committee Chair **Dick Nelson**, who had **Mary Conrad** and **Ross Marshall** as members.

The first award was the Award of Appreciation given to **Peggy Smith** by **Mary Conrad**. The award read: *In recognition of her decades of researching and promoting historic trails and area history with Trails Head Chapter and as a librarian, specifically for naming Lewis and Clark Viaduct and for raising awareness of Jim Bridger throughout the area with street names and sculpture.*



(l-r) Mary Conrad and Peggy Smith



(l-r) – Dick Nelson and Ross Marshall

Next, the **Meritorious Achievement Award** was presented to **Dick Nelson** by **Ross Marshall**. It read: *In recognition of his many years of personal leadership in OCTA and Trails Head activities, including serving as chapter president, and outstanding achievements with historical organizations and area historic trail projects.*

Mary and **Ross** outvoted **Dick** on the above award. Even though **Dick** was the committee chair, the other two members wouldn't take no for an answer!

Those present were privileged to listen to a real artist at the meeting! Introduced by **Mary Conrad**, **Charles Goslin** has been known to many for many years as the most accurate artist associated with historic trails in the Kansas City area.



Charles Goslin and Ann O'Hare

Charles (pictured above with Trailside Center Co-Director **Ann O'Hare**) is not only an excellent painter, but also an exceptional sculptor of historic trail scenes, historic sites, Christian art, etc., mostly in the Kansas City metropolitan area, but not entirely.

Goslin said he was turned on to history by his grandfather telling about ancestors in early Missouri, including on the Santa Fe Trail. He received his education at the KC Art Institute.

He had prints of a number of his paintings on display and talked about how he researches each one so that it is authentic and real-life. The clothing and personal appearance of each person as well as the design of wagons and structures, depiction of animals, and color selections in his artwork are as authentic as possible.

His paintings and sculptures not only depict local scenes and stories, but also other locations on the Oregon-California and Santa Fe Trails such as the now-vanished Fort DeCavignal near Leavenworth, the Hollenberg Pony Express Station and Council Grove, just to name a few.

His works are displayed throughout our area, especially in Shawnee, KS, but also at the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence, area churches, and also on countless National Park Service interpretive markers on our trails in the Greater Kansas City area.

He said some of the people depicted in his work on our trails are modeled after actual people. In fact, he humorously will put his own image, as an incidental person, in many of his paintings!

Charles' presentation was not only interesting but very warm and informative, which is the kind of person he is.

At the close of his talk, **Goslin** presented to the Trailside Center an antique Mexican ox yoke.

NEW RED BRIDGE DEDICATED

The historic 'Red Bridge' trail crossing of the Big Blue River now has a high clear-span bridge that crosses not only the river but also the railroad tracks. It was dedicated **November 17, 2011**.



Pictured above are various public officials at the ribbon cutting **November 17**. The man on the right is **Dave Jackson**, Archivist of the Jackson County Historical Society. To his right are **Chuck Eddy** and **Kathy Jolley**, former KC Council members from the sixth district,

Dave Jackson was the keynote speaker and talked about this historic site on the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails. This crossing was used by emigrant and freighter wagon trains on those trails for more than 30 years from about 1840. And it has remained a key crossing since those days.

The first bridge across the crossing was built in 1859 by a contractor and his son, stone masons from Canada. The son was **George Todd**, who three years later was riding with **William Quantrill** as one of his chief lieutenants. That first bridge was a wood covered bridge and the **Todds** painted it red, therefore yielding the name **Red Bridge**.

George was killed on **October 21, 1864** on the ridge just west of the Little Blue River Crossing near Highway 24 east of Independence, on the first day of the three-day Battle of Westport.

That bridge was replaced in 1910 by a steel bridge, which was replaced in the early 1930s by the current steel truss bridge, also painted red. The 1930s truss bridge has been left in place to be a part of the hiking-biking trail system while vehicular traffic uses the newly built 2011 bridge.

Craig Crease, **Dave Jackson** and **Ross Marshall** are working on text and graphics for three interpretive panels and ten bios of people that likely used this crossing.

2012

HAROLD SMITH PASSES

Long-time OCTA and Trails Head Chapter member **Harold Smith** passed away **January 17**. A resident of Parkville and Library Director at Park College for many years, he had also helped to support the National Frontier Trails Museum and had served on the NFTM Board. **Smith** and **Niel Johnson** were the interviewers for the Trails Head 1996-1997 oral history project.

As the Park College Library Director, Smith also served as the College Archivist. **Smith** was extremely pleased when he found a particular photo in the archives, that is, a photo of Ezra Meeker on one of his early 20th Century travels across the route of the Oregon Trails.

Harold was a friendly man who was interested in historic trails and he will be missed.

RED BRIDGE BIO MARKERS DEDICATED

A second dedication at the new Red Bridge took place on **March 26, 2012**. This was a fairly brief ceremony attended by a dozen people or so that recognized the ten new picture ‘silhouettes’ that have been installed on the ten railing columns along the bridge deck.

The ten personalities were selected by a rather large committee made up of Kansas City Council people, their committees, consultants and a couple of trail representatives on the private side. The ten selected may not be the best examples of who actually crossed the Big Blue River at this site, but they are ‘culturally diverse’ and come from the trails period.

The ten silhouette personalities chosen were **Jim Bridger, James Beckwourth, Kit Carson, Don Felipe Chavez, Alexander Doniphan, Susan Shelby McGoffin, Alexander Majors, John Calvin McCoy** and **Amache Ochinee Prowers**.

In addition, four wayside exhibits will be put on the bridge that will explain the history of the trail crossing at this site and also the overview story of the National Historic Trails in the Kansas City area. **David Jackson, Ross Marshall** and **Craig Crease** have been working over the past several months to get these completed on time.

A third dedication date is not firm yet, but could be in June. Trails Head Chapter will let all know when it is finally decided. The new Red Bridge itself was dedicated **November 17, 2011**.

STRANG PARK MARKERS DEDICATED

A slightly damp day didn’t dampen the crowd’s enthusiasm as four new National Park Service wayside exhibits were dedicated at Strang Park, located at 88th Terrace and Farley in Overland Park, on **Saturday morning, April 7, 2012**.

It was the culmination of a three-year project involving partners National Park Service, Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, Trails Head Chapter and Overland Park Parks Department.

Ross Marshall spoke first about the history of the trails, which is the subject of three markers.



**Strang Park and the four interpretive panels
being dedicated on April 7**

Florent Wagner

Florent Wagner (above), President of the Overland Park Historical Society, told those attending how William Strang Jr. founded Overland Park in 1905 out away from the main part of Kansas City along this route of historic trails, the South Branch of the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail. He also built the Strang Line, a street car line connecting Kansas City to Overland Park and on to Olathe, so that people could build homes here and work in downtown Kansas City. This story is depicted on one of the waysides.

This was the second marker project dedicated in Overland Park. The first was about a half-mile north at Sapling Grove Park on **June 19, 2008**. The Overland Park Parks Department has been a very helpful partner and perhaps Trails Head Chapter will be working with the Parks Department again in the future.

Thanks also to three of our members who helped on this project; **Dick Nelson, Ross Marshall and Craig Crease** met at all the meetings and worked with the text and graphics that were used.

Plan to go by and see these very informative and attractive exhibits at Farley and 88th Terrace in Overland Park, KS. The new high pressure laminate exhibit panels that NPS has incorporated into the panels on recent projects is truly impressive and is proving to be longer-lasting.

KANSAS CITY AREA WAYSIDE EXHIBITS AS OF 2012

Someone recently asked how many interpretive exhibits are now in place on our Kansas City area National Historic Trails, and also how all these exhibits began.

Before Trails Head Chapter hosted the OCTA 2000 Convention in Kansas City, very little interpretation was in place along the Kansas City metropolitan area on our trails.

The first National Park Service 24"x36" wayside exhibit was installed in 1996 in Harmon Park in Prairie Village.

The second project was at Minor Park (two NPS waysides) and New Santa Fe at 123rd and State Line (two NPS waysides), which were installed in the spring of 2000.

The watershed event was the Olathe Parks Department, in about 2002, purchasing the Lone Elm Farm at 167th and Lone Elm Road south of Olathe. Within the next three years, that 156 acres became a multi-use park, and had four new wayside exhibits installed (not NPS).

About the year 2000, the work of the Partnership for the National Trails System began to pay off. The Santa Fe National Park Service office began to receive substantial appropriations for trails and things began to move rapidly.

In about 2005, the Hickman Mills School property at about 89th and Old Santa Fe Road in south Kansas City received three NPS exhibits and lotsa exciting full-sized silhouettes.

In 2007, the large covered wagon sculpture on Shawnee Mission Parkway just west of I-35 was installed in the new Pioneer Crossing Park, plus four waysides (not NPS), by City of Shawnee.

In 2008, the Independence Landing Park was constructed with five new NPS waysides.

Soon after, the large Gardner Junction Park was totally renovated and received three new exhibits plus three large vertical exhibits, all NPS.

In 2008, Sapling Grove Park (new name) at 83rd and Grant in Overland Park received three new NPS exhibits.

Since that time, Kansas City area trail groups have been working on a number of projects:

--Strang Park just had four NPS exhibits dedicated.

--Town of Kansas will soon have nine new NPS exhibits dedicated.

--McCoy Park in Independence before summer will receive five new NPS markers.

- The new Red Bridge will get four new exhibits (not NPS) before summer.
- Kansas City area trail groups are beginning work on a new Santa Fe Trail kiosk project at Salem Park on Blue Mills Road and Highway 24 in Independence.
- Conversations are underway on a number of other projects, but those will be a later story.
- And the above listing has not even mentioned all the Lewis and Clark exhibits, plus others, around town or all the street signage in place. Pretty exciting!

RED BRIDGE EXHIBITS DEDICATED

On **July 27 2012**, four new interpretive wayside exhibits were dedicated at the new Red Bridge near Minor Park, the third dedication at this site on Red Bridge Road. The first was **November 17, 2011** when the bridge was opened. The second was on **March 26** when the ten ‘silhouette’ portraits on the bridge columns were dedicated commemorating famous historical figures that likely could have crossed the Big Blue River at this trail crossing site.



Pictured above is Trails Head member **Gary Hicks** speaking to the crowd in first-person as Alexander Majors. Behind him (l-r) is 6th District Councilman **Scott Taylor**, KC Parks Director **Mark L. McHenry**, and 6th District Councilman **John Sharp**, all of whom spoke to the crowd.

In the distance at rear, is the new clear-span bridge which crosses over the Big Blue River crossing, the railroad, and the width of the valley.

One of the four wayside exhibits on the bridge shows the national trails map and the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails as they traverse the nation. It also discusses why the trail went where it did in order to have water and grass plus wood for cooking food.

Another of the waysides shows the history of the site, with diary quotes of wagon trains that used this crossing on the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails.

Two of the waysides contain bios and pictures of the ten silhouette personalities.

Above at right is the adjacent existing Red Bridge, the third near this trail crossing site since 1859. It has been repainted and is used as part of the MetroGreen hiking-biking trail, which is a 1000-mile network of trails in our five-county area.

TRAILS HEAD CHAPTER 2012 CONVENTION A GREAT SUCCESS

About 260 OCTA members and guests enjoyed the 30th Anniversary Convention in Historic Lawrence, Kansas, held **August 6-11**. Ten bus tours, an outstanding series of speakers, workshops, meetings and dinner events during the week made this convention one to remember!

Hosted by Trails Head Chapter, the convention was held at the Holiday Inn in Lawrence that featured roomy meeting areas and cooperative personnel to support events. At the opening ceremonies on Wednesday, **Lawrence Mayor Bob Schumm** warmly welcomed all attendees.

The convention events which were led by committee chairs, tour guides and other volunteers brought smiles to everyone all during the week. Beginning with the opening night reception and entertainment by the Lizard Creek String Band, the week featured a number of highlights.

One of them was a smashing Power Point presentation Friday night at the 30th Anniversary Dinner by **Roger Blair**, an OCTA founder and past-president, from his vast collection of photographs that date from the OCTA founding meeting in Denver on **August 11, 1982**. About a dozen of the charter members attending the convention were recognized and made a few remarks about memories from the early years of OCTA. A very enjoyable and memorable event.

Another highlight was the ten bus tours that covered five different tours in the Kansas City, Leavenworth, Baldwin City, Lawrence, Lecompton and Lawrence areas. These tours traveled four National Historic Trails; the Oregon, California, Santa Fe, and Lewis and Clark Trails. But what made them special was the 21 well-trained and prepared tour guides thanks to the leadership of **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall**.

The guides were **Eva Allen, John Atkinson, Bob Boland, Kelly Breen, Arnold Cole, Mary Conrad, Sarah Elder, Gary Hicks, Terry Hobbs, Jim Howk, Jim Kullberg, Jeff and Karen Marshall, Ryan Marshall, Dick Nelson, Frank McMillian, Carol and Vern Osborne, Fred Sawin, Dan Sturdevant** and **Pat Traffas**.

11 different speakers presented a variety of subject matter under the *Trails, Tribes, Territories* convention theme, illustrating the various periods of history of Lawrence and the surrounding area. All were coordinated by **Mary Conrad**, who also helped with a number of other areas.

The Awards Dinner on Wednesday night honored many deserving OCTA members and others who have worked to preserve the Oregon-California Trail. Coordinated by **Dick Nelson**, who also coordinated the Saturday night barbeque, it was well-paced and left sufficient time for the always entertaining and productive live auction led by **John Winner**.

Authors Night on Thursday, as coordinated by **Mary Beth Kullberg** who also coordinated the bookroom, featured 16 authors and entertainment by the Gum Spring Serenaders. A very relaxed and enjoyable evening.

The various workshops were assembled and managed by **Sandra Wiechert**, an OCTA charter member of Lawrence, who also called on potential sponsors and other key contacts in the Lawrence area. **Sandy** was an invaluable help.

Jean Coupal-Smith did a super job coordinating the silent auction and raffle room, as well as creating the attractive table center-pieces, making the nametags, and helping in other areas.

Eva Allen handled the registration process both at the convention and for the preceding months and did a splendid job.

And last but not least, **Trails Head Chapter President Pat Traffas**, along with **Craig Crease**, edited and produced the marvelous Convention Booklet in vivid colors that featured dozens of articles by various authors covering our convention theme.

When the chapter voted to host the OCTA 30th Anniversary convention at the membership meeting in **November, 2009**, Trails Head members knew it would be a lot of work. But when a team of members and other volunteers can be assembled who work with purpose and in harmony with each other, the job becomes fun and fulfilling.

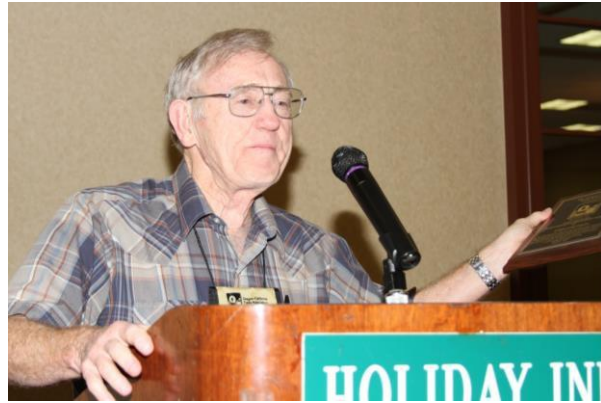
The enthusiasm and harmony within the chapter will continue to be enjoyed in future years.

A well-deserved thank you to each of you! **Ross Marshall**, coordinator

Geography compelled the trailhead location of the three great frontier trails in the Kansas City area. Dictated by the great northern bend of the Missouri River in the Kansas City area, the genesis of the westward frontier trails was the Santa Fe Trail.



Craig Crease



John Atkinson

Pictured above at left is **Craig Crease**, who was one of the speakers at the convention. His talk was entitled *West From The Missouri River; The Evolution of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California Trails in the Kansas City Area and Beyond*.

A nationally recognized historian of the Santa Fe Trail, **Craig** did groundbreaking research in the 1990s into the actual routes and locations of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails in the Kansas City metropolitan area. For this work, he received the OCTA Meritorious Achievement Award at the Kansas City OCTA convention in 2000.

Along with writing numerous award-winning articles and lecturing on historic trails and various aspects of the American frontier, **Craig** was the leader of the Santa Fe Trail Rediscovery Expedition on behalf of the National Park Service in 2006. He has also served as president of the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association for a decade before retiring in 2010 to coastal South Carolina to live near the ocean.

Above at right is **John Atkinson**, long-time Trails Head Chapter member, accepting the Greg Franzwa Meritorious Achievement Award at the 2012 Convention; OCTA's highest award.

It was in recognition of his many years of outstanding achievements in leadership, research, preservation, placing trail markers, educating and leading tours on the Oregon, California and Santa Fe National Historic Trails.

John is again the Gateway Chapter President and is a past vice president of the Santa Fe Trail Association. A few years ago, **John** was president of the OCTA Gateway Chapter and the SFTA Missouri River Outfitters Chapter at the same time! In recent times, he researched the entire General Land Office surveys in Topeka for the Santa Fe Trail in Kansas. He coordinated the very extensive Gardner Junction Project and is the Kiosk Committee Chair for SFTA.

John has been a long-time leader of historic trails work and this award was well-deserved.



OCTA President Duane Iles and Leo Pellant



Nathan Anderson

Nearly 20 years ago, the late **John Leamon** and **Ross Marshall** were driving west on U.S. Highway 40 along the Oregon-California Trail between Lawrence and Topeka. Both knew about several trail swales along that stretch, but as they were nearing Tecumseh they wondered if there were any more that might not be known about. **John** and **Ross** saw a couple of men putting in new mailboxes at the side of the road and stopped to ask them.

Leo Pellant smiled and motioned with his hand toward the front yard of his new house and **John** and **Ross** saw three dramatic swales that we didn't know about!

From that time on, **Leo** and his family have welcomed any visitors to see the swales, including two buses that stopped during the recent 2012 OCTA Convention in Lawrence.

Leo has long been a member of OCTA and Trails Head Chapter and well deserved receiving OCTA's Friend of the Trail Award at the Lawrence Convention.

Pictured above at right is **Nathan Anderson**, who received the 2012 Young OCTAN Award for his work on the trail in Kansas with his father **Rick Anderson**, who works for the Kansas Historical Society. **Nathan** has helped survey trail swales with GPS software and in creating maps so that sites can be added to the National Register.

He is a very active 16-year-old in his school, on church mission trips, on OCTA activities, and also at home with his dad. We need more youths like **Nathan** out on the trail!

McCOY PARK EXHIBITS DEDICATED

The five exhibits dedicated **August 11, 2012** covered the Independence Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California trails going from the Independence Landing on the Missouri River three miles to the north, down to the square a half-mile to the southeast.



Aaron Mahr



The large crowd

The exhibits also covered the story of Hiram Young, a free Black who was a famous wagon maker and lived adjacent to the park. The exhibits also cover the history and role played by the city of Independence as an outfitting point for emigrant and freighting wagon trains heading west, and the Independence and Missouri River Railroad which operated between the river and the square. That railroad had wood rails and the cars were mule drawn.

Aaron Mahr, Superintendent of Long Distance Trails in Santa Fe, addressed the crowd. Seated are **Sharon Snyder** on the left who organized the event and OCTA Association Manager **Travis Boley** on the right, who was a speaker. **Ross Marshall** also made some remarks.

Over 100 people attended the event. The five exhibits are mounted in an attractive existing covered pavilion in the left background.

Other Independence historic trail marker projects are planned. Pretty exciting!

PLANNING MEETING

On **Sunday afternoon August 19**, Trails Head had a chapter planning meeting, the first time all year because of working on the Convention. In attendance were **President Pat Traffas, Eva Allen, Secretary Mary Conrad, Shirley Coupal, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Gary and Louise Hicks and Sandy Wiechert.**

Pat presided and announced that Trails Head picked up 12 new members from the convention!

Basically, the meeting was a review of Trails Head's convention chapter meeting and a look at the future for events that were few and far between the last few months. No firm dates were set on any events. But an annual meeting sometime in November was firm.

NFTM HAS NEW DIRECTOR AND PLAN



At the chapter meeting on **September 15, 2012** at the National Frontier Trails Museum, those attending were able to view some of the expansion plans for the museum (see map above) and to become better acquainted with the museum's new director, **Dave Aamodt**, pictured above.

Dave has been the archivist for the museum for several years and, due to the retirement of long-time **Director John Mark Lambertson**, has now received this new assignment.

Dave presented a Power Point review of the plans for a \$10 million museum expansion. The museum property is owned by the state of Missouri and is leased and operated by the city of Independence.

A fundraising company had been retained and expansion will be done in phases that will be triggered by the pace of the fundraising.

The expansion includes using the existing upper floor as the main entrance, moving OCTA's national headquarters from the building behind the museum to the two-story mill office building west of the museum, and adding a shelter and play area west of the creek.

The present two-story OCTA HQ building will be used for exhibits.

Pictured above at right is the architect's layout of the planned expansion. The proposed expansion is a very exciting plan and will provide a strong boost to the preservation and interpretation of the National Historic Trails in the metropolitan Kansas City area.

Thanks to **Dave** for his great presentation and Trails Head members look forward to working with him and the National Frontier Trails Museum in the future.

President Pat Traffas then called the chapter meeting to order. Present were **Pat Traffas, Kelly Breen, Shirley** and **Ross Marshall, Eva Allen, Allen** and **Sandra Wiechert, Vice President Dick Nelson** and **Kathy Conway**.

Those present discussed the recent OCTA Convention that Trails Head hosted in Lawrence. Good reports from everybody! Trails Head finished with just close to \$25,000 net for OCTA, which is very good.

Attendees also reviewed all the marker dedications in 2012. With the dedication of the nine waysides at Town of Kansas next week, 22 will have been dedicated – very outstanding!

With **Pat** finishing her maximum of two years as president, and with **Dick Nelson** coming on as the new president at the end of the year, **Ross Marshall** will take his place and become the new Awards Committee Chair. **Pat** appointed a nominating committee, which she will chair.

CHAPTER MEETING

On **Saturday September 15, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.** Trails Head held a chapter meeting at the National Frontier Trails Museum (renamed from National Frontier Trails Center). Present were **Dick Nelson, Kelly Breen, Eva Allen, Ross** and **Shirley Marshall, Pat Traffas, Sandy** and **Alan Wiechert** and **Kathy Conway**.

This was a joint meeting with MRO and KCAHTA groups.

Dave Aamodt, Director of the Museum now that **John Mark Lambertson** has retired, introduced **Richard Edwards**, who is the Museum's Director of Education. **Dave** was an Archivist for the Museum for 13 years.

Dave gave a presentation on plans for expansion of the Museum. The major priority in remodeling and expanding the Museum will be to enhance the visitor's experience. When completed, the Museum grounds will include:

- The Pioneer Spring Cabin, now located at Noland Road and Truman Road
- A campsite of the type the trails travelers would have set up
- Picnic shelter and play area, with "covered wagon" play equipment
- Restore the spring that made this a campsite originally, plus a bridge over the small ravine
- The Chicago and Alton depot
- OCTA Headquarters, which will move into the mill office building
- The water tower which will be stabilized

The remodeling of the museum will involve moving the entrance to the east side. The gift shop will be relocated to the second floor of the current OCTA Headquarters space, with a theater on the first floor.

The state of Missouri owns the buildings and land, but the City of Independence leases it.

President Pat Traffas called the business meeting to order at **11:10 a.m.**

Trails Head Chapter ended up with a good profit from the OCTA Convention 2012 in Lawrence. The convention went very well and it was well-attended.

Trails Head decided not to have any bus tours in 2012. The chapter had them all during the convention!

Kansas City area trail folks have received an OK from the National Park Service that they will finance two waysides at Nine-Mile-Point at 69th and State Line.

Trails Head welcomed **Sandra Wiechert**, who is now a chapter member, but also is a charter member of OCTA! She lives in Lawrence and helped greatly with the Lawrence convention.

Those present reviewed the calendar of events including the annual meeting on **November 10** at Mahaffie Farm.

The meeting adjourned at **11:40 a.m.**

TOWN OF KANSAS MARKERS DEDICATION

On **Wednesday, September 19 at 9:00 a.m.**, a half-hour dedication of the nine new permanent National Park Service wayside exhibits was enjoyed at Town of Kansas by over 30 attendees.

Nearly four years in the making, the site at the foot of Main Street is one of the few places that is traversed by four National Historic Trails.

Since the Missouri Riverfront property is owned by the Port Authority, Director **Joanne Collins** acted as Master of Ceremonies. She welcomed everyone and introduced **Ross Marshall**.

Ross spoke for a few minutes about how the project began nearly four years ago when the City secured some funding for upgrading the largely unimproved riverfront. They wanted the upgrade to include site interpretation.

Shannon Jaax, City Planning Director, then gathered several that are in the picture to begin meeting in **January, 2009** to plan this series of interpretive wayside exhibits.

This was the second attempt to put markers on this site. Over a decade ago, **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall** plus others met for over a year and completed texts for over a dozen markers, but the funding did not work out and they were never manufactured.



Pictured above (l-r) are Port Authority Director Joanne Collins, Ross Marshall, Tom Sims from The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater KC, Kellie Johnston and Brad Wolf of the City Planning and Development Department, Branden Criman of the Port Authority, KCAHTA past-president Craig Crease, and Dan Sturdevant, national president of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

Ross then introduced **Dan Sturdevant**, who spoke about Lewis and Clark coming by the site in 1804 and returning in 1806. He also sang his song about Kansas City History entitled *Roll On Mighty River* accompanied by his cell phone into the microphone. As he sang, a river barge came down the river. A rare occurrence these days!

He then introduced **Craig Crease**, who spoke in some detail about each of the nine exhibits, which are Lewis and Clark at the River, The French at Westport Landing, the Real McCoy, From Steamboat Landing to City 1838-55, Three Trails from Westport Landing, Building Through the Bluffs, Gillis House Hotel, Waterfront Town to Metropolis 1856-1880, and Hannibal Bridge, the first bridge across the Missouri River.

Each of the wayside exhibits has text and graphics which tell about the founding and early history of Kansas City, plus the story of the four National Historic Trails, all of which occurred at the Town of Kansas site where Kansas City history began on the banks of the Missouri River.

Many partners, public and private, worked together to complete this project including the National Park Service, City of Kansas City, Port Authority, Trails Head Chapter and Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association.

Attendees walked down to Second Street and Main and walked across the pedestrian bridge to the water's edge, seeing four waysides, then down to ground level to view the other five.

It is not only a significant history project, but is also now a destination for residents and visitors to Kansas City. And it is a beautiful venue!

TRAILS SYMPOSIUM HELD NOV. 10 AND TRAILS HEAD ANNUAL MEETING

Trails Head Chapter of OCTA joined with the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association and the MRO Chapter of SFTA in a Trails Symposium at the Mahaffie Heritage Center in Olathe **Saturday, November 10, 2012**. This is the first time that the three trails organizations have co-sponsored a large event and it was very successful.

About 70 people attended including SFTA President **Roger Slusher**, SFTA Association Manager **Joanne Van Coevern**, OCTA President **Duane Iles**, all of whom addressed the group, and **Mary Frisch**, KSDAR State Regent.

Trails Head member **Jerry Peppers** attended from Scarsdale, New York!

Preceding the symposium was KCAHTA's Executive Committee meeting at **9:00 a.m.**

Trails Head Chapter followed with their annual membership and awards meeting.



Sandra Wiechert, new Trails Head VP



(l-r) Eva Allen and Mary Conrad

President Pat Traffas, chair of the nominating committee presented the officer nominations:

Dick Nelson - President (was vice president)

Sandra Wiechert - Vice-President (new)

Mary Conrad – Secretary (re-elected)

Treasurer – Arnold Cole (re-elected)

The slate was unanimously elected for **2013**.

Treasurer Arnold Cole announced that Trails Head had earned \$2475 as our split with OCTA from the auction sales. In addition, Trails Head made \$363 selling chapter shirts and caps, which gave the chapter an overall total of \$2838. Not too bad! Trails Head also enabled OCTA to make about \$25,000 from the convention.

Also as part of our annual meeting, Awards Committee Chair **Dick Nelson** first called on **Mary Conrad**, who presented the Award of Appreciation (above) to **Eva Allen**:
In recognition of her long-time volunteer service as an officer, leader and participant in Trails Head Chapter, and specifically for her truly valuable and outstanding service as the registration committee chair for the 2012 OCTA Convention in Lawrence.



Duane Iles, Pat Traffas and Ross Marshall



Trails Head Chapter officers: (front l-r) Vice President Sandra Wiechert. Secretary Mary Conrad and President Dick Nelson. At rear is Treasurer Arnold Cole

Dick then called on OCTA President **Duane Iles**, (above with **Pat Traffas** and **Ross Marshall**) to present the Meritorious Achievement Award to **Ross**: *In recognition of his many years as an active leader and researcher for many local and national trail and historical organizations and as an active liaison between local, state and national historical organizations and governmental entities, plus particular recognition for chairing two OCTA conventions hosted by Trails Head.*

The Trails Head Annual meeting was followed by the MRO Chapter's 11:00 dedication of two Santa Fe Trail limestone post markers with plate texts that MRO had recently installed.

Attendees at this Olathe Trail Symposium then had a great barbeque buffet lunch, complimented by beautiful background music played by musician **Anne Mallinson**, who among other things, is secretary of the SFTA Missouri River Outfitters Chapter.

Mahaffee Director **Tim Talbott** presented a video about the history of the Mahaffie family and their nearby 1865 house that is open for tours. The house was a stagecoach stop on the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail.

The first symposium presentation was by KCAHTA President **Shirley Coupal** and Trails Head Chapter President **Pat Traffas**. They are also past Kansas DAR Regents.

They covered the restoration project of the Santa Fe Trail DAR markers through Kansas that was completed a couple of years earlier in partnership with the National Park Service. **Pat** did the narration of the undertaking with a little history of how they became involved 17 years ago. **Shirley** put together a power point presentation of the markers before and after the restorations.

Included were the recently nominated markers to the National Register of Historic Places. The markers that were in the absolutely worst shape were her favorites. A number of DAR members turned out for this program and for the 3:00 p.m. rededication of the Mahaffie DAR plaque.

Greg Van Coevern, an expert on trail and civil war wagons, then presented a Power Point program specifically about ambulances during the Civil War. Attendees followed him outside to see one that he has built that duplicates a model of which only one remains.

Back inside to view **Tim Talbott's** Power Point presentation about the care and training of oxen. **Tim** has had several pair at the Mahaffie historic site, including his current pair Tip and Buck, who now weigh 2200 pounds each.

In addition, Trails Head's old friend **Kevin Corbett**, Director of the Olathe Parks and Recreation, made remarks about Lone Elm Park, the Heritage Center and other Olathe park units.

It was a great symposium that was well attended and brought a lot of private and public partners together to focus on Kansas City area historic trails. Trails Head members all felt that the Symposium exceeded expectations.

A special thanks to Mahaffie Heritage Center and to Director **Tim Talbott** for their hospitality.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

On **Saturday December 29**, Trails Head members had an Executive Committee meeting at **11:00 a.m.** at Johnson County Central Library. Attending were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Sandra Wiechert, Secretary Mary Conrad** and Ross Marshall.

The chapter planners reviewed the highs and some lows of 2012 for Trails Head. The convention certainly was a high point in so many ways; strengthening chapter membership because of participation, the chapter gained nine new members, cleared \$2838 for our account, and OCTA made \$25,000. Trails Head's current balance is \$5227.82.

Dick Nelson, the only chapter member attending OCTA's Mapping Workshop, gave his report.

They talked about having four general chapter meetings as well as our annual meeting in 2013.

Ross, as Trails Head's editor, mentioned he would like to change the name of our newsletter from Tidings, which has no connection to trails, to Traces, which would not only be a convenient word but would connect to trails.

The planners scheduled the next planning meeting for **February 24**.

2013

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

On **Sunday, February 24**, the Trails Head Executive Committee met at **2:00 p.m.** at **Marshall's** house at 14122 Slater in Overland Park. Present were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Sandra Wiechert, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Allen Wiechert** and **Ross Marshall**.

Trails Head's planners reviewed plans for the **March 3** chapter meeting at Johnson County Central Resources Library at 2:00 p.m. **Steve Rhoades** will be the speaker on the Kansas City MetroGreen Trails.

Arnold reported \$7007.22 in the bank.

Ross, who has been the *Tidings* newsletter editor for about a decade, reported that the chapter has about 70 members and that he will be sending out renewal notices with the next newsletter.

As he announced at our **December 29** meeting, he would like to change the newsletter name to *Traces*. All of us agreed with the idea.

Attendees discussed plans to have an **April 28** meeting at Minor Park under their shelter. **Ross** will get it reserved and be the speaker on the history of Minor Park and all the bridges there, including the large new one that recently opened. He will also lead a walking tour of the area.

Ross also announced that Trails Head **President Dick Nelson** has been nominated to the OCTA Board of Directors.

Allen Wiechert mentioned that the 2012 OCTA Convention in Lawrence alerted many people in Lawrence to the significance of the Oregon-California Trail that runs through there. A couple of them have inquired about getting more signs installed. **Ross** said he would send contact information to him about Star Signs that operates in Lawrence.

The history of Trails Head was discussed and **Ross** recounted that ten of Trails Head's prominent members had been interviewed back in **1996**. Those tapes still exist, but now taping has changed and those tape players aren't still around after 17 years. **Sandy** said she would explore the possibilities of someone at KU converting the tapes to CD's. **Ross** said he would volunteer to write an article about Trails Head history and also would write a whole document of Trails Head's history if we could get the tapes transcribed.

Dick asked **Ross** if he would explain the annual spring coordinated trail advocacy efforts in Washington D.C. that has brought trails projects a lot of funding through the National Park Service. **Ross** explained the beginning of the Partnership for the National Trails System back in 1991 at a meeting in Oregon that he helped organize. That led to a partnering effort by many of the trails groups to go to D.C. starting in 1998 and the formation of the Partnership.

Ross and many others across the country go annually to meet with Senators, Representatives and agencies. The Partnership has collected the value of annual volunteer time and travel expenses which was \$34.8 million dollars this past year. The increase in funding to the NPS for trail signage, etc. has been very large in response, to nearly the value of volunteer time.

The upcoming OCTA Mid-Year Board meeting will be in Tucson and five will be going including **Dick Nelson, Pat Traffas, Ross Marshall, Shirley Coupal** and **Jean Coupal-Smith**.

The **2013** OCTA Convention will be in Oregon City.

CHAPTER MEETING HELD



Steve Rhoades



Attendees

Pictured above is **Steve Rhoades**, who presented an outstanding overview of the National Historic Trails in the Kansas City area at the March 3 chapter meeting at the Johnson County Central Resource Library.

In the picture, some of his Power Point images are projected in the background, showing the map of Kansas City with the trails network on it.

Steve, while employed with Patti Banks, Inc., was on loan to the local Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) for years to aid in the planning and development of the MetroGreen, an 1140-mile hiking-biking trail system in the seven-county Kansas City area.

This is a system of trails proposed at a 1991 Kansas City meeting of the Prairie Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

In many places, this system coincides with the historic trails and/or intercepts them. For that reason, Kansas City historic trail groups have worked with **Steve** on a number of trail segments and sites over the years.

In his presentation of some 70 slides, **Steve** showed pictures of many of the historic trail sites from Independence to the Gardner Junction. It was a wonderful overview of Kansas City area historic trails, especially for some who have not had a chance to visit those trail sites.

The MetroGreen is not nearly done, although segments of it exist all over the area.

Several of the segments that are on or near the historic trails are along the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California National Historic Trails. Several of those segments begin at the Hickman Mills School District offices near 87th and Santa Fe Trail Road. Segments exist farther along the historic trail in Marion Park, in the Red Bridge-Minor Park area, near Avila University and on west to State Line Road

Plans are being discussed about completing the MetroGreen trails from the Independence Landing through Independence, incorporating the above segments and ending at State Line Road near 123rd Street.

Steve is repeating this program **April 30** at the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association annual meeting at the same Johnson County library location at 4:30 p.m.

Pictured above are some of the 20 people in attendance who were very impressed with the presentation. Good job, **Steve**!

After **Steve**'s presentation, **President Dick Nelson** called the meeting to order. 16 people were in attendance. Because of **Treasurer Arnold Cole**'s absence, **Mary Conrad** reported \$7007.53 in Trails Head's account.

OCTA MID-YEAR BOARD MEETING

In conjunction with a Symposium sponsored by OCTA's Southern Trails Chapter, OCTA held its annual Mid-year Board meeting in Tucson on **March 14-16, 2013**.

It was a fun event with absolutely wonderful weather in the desert area of Arizona.

Thursday was the board meeting with some speakers and presentations in an adjoining room at the Arizona History Museum. Friday was a day of speakers for everyone.

Jean Coupal-Smith, **Pat Traffas** and **Shirley Coupal** handled registration, handouts, nametags and everything else that happens around the registration table. They did a great job! Also in attendance was **President Dick Nelson** and **Ross Marshall**.

The basic subject matter of the Symposium was the southern trails system through central and southern Arizona which includes routes of the Butterfield Overland Mail, Cooke's Wagon Road, Kearny's Army of the West in 1846, and the south-to-north Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail of 1775-76. Speakers also covered other subjects like the Mormon Community and Spanish horses.

Two bus tours were offered on Saturday. The first went to the south basically along the Anza Route. The second tour was east from Tucson to the Apache Pass area, guided by Southern Trails Chapter member **Pat Fletcher**.

Dick Nelson, Ross Marshall and Trails Head member **Susan Krueger**, took that tour. It went nearly 100 miles east along I-10 to the Apache Pass area including the nearby Fort Bowie site.



(L-R) Dick Nelson and Susan Krueger
after returning from the bus tour.

After the bus went over that mountain chain at Apache Pass, the passengers took a guided tour on a wonderful two-mile-long hiking trail from the bus parking area to the somewhat restored 1862 Fort Bowie. On the way, the bus passed foundations of the 1858 Apache Pass Stage Station on the Butterfield route, the nearby restored Post Cemetery that dated from the 1860s, and most importantly, the Apache Spring which was the only reliable water in that entire area.

Farther on was Fort Bowie and a modern visitor center where the group had lunch and heard a talk given by the Ranger there.

Good history, good tour and a good time in the Southern Trails area of Arizona!

PAT TRAFFAS APPOINTED CHAIR

Trails Head Chapter past-president **Pat Traffas** has been appointed by OCTA as national chair of the History and Archives Committee.

Pat is an excellent researcher and is recognized for her knowledge of historic trail history. This was evidenced by the magnificent 70-page 2012 OCTA Convention Booklet that she and her committee created and edited from a stack of submitted articles.

Living locally as she does will be an asset to her as well as to the OCTA Headquarters Archives collection in Independence.

NEW NEWSLETTER NAME

Trails Head's newsletter is now named "*Traces*".

Since the beginning issues in 1987 edited by **Barbara Magerl**, who was president at the time, it has been called "*Tidings*". Through the next fourteen years with **Mary Conrad** as editor and the last eleven years with **Ross Marshall** as editor, it has continued to be named "*Tidings*".

At the chapter's **February 24** planning meeting, the consensus of the Executive Committee was to experiment with a new name from a list of naming ideas proposed by editor **Ross Marshall**. "*Traces*" was selected. In a sense, the overland trails era left traces on the ground as well as in the written record, so perhaps the name works for a trails organization's newsletter name.

Thanks to **Jim Conway** for his editing help to create the new logo and newsletter header. In a sense, it isn't the name of a newsletter that is important – it's what's in it!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

On **Sunday, April 14** we had an Executive Committee meeting at Marshall's house at **2:00 p.m.** Attending were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Sandy Wiechert, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole** and **Ross Marshall**.

The planners discussed the coming **April 28** Red Bridge and Minor Park picnic and tour.

They also discussed the chapter leader's audio tapes that were done about 16 years ago. **Mary** said they have not been transcribed. **Sandy** said that if the tapes were still viable, she knows a woman in Lawrence that might be able to transcribe them into CD's. **Sandy** said the lady charges \$15/hour and **Sandy** will investigate the possibilities for us.

A chapter meeting in Lawrence will be held **August 3** at the Watkins Museum if that date is available with them.

Dick suggested Trails Head clean our wayside exhibits during this spring. Various members have volunteered to be part of that effort. Planners will set a date later.

The next executive meeting will be held on **Sunday, June 30** here at **Marshall's** house at **2:00**.

CHAPTER EVENT AT RED BRIDGE

About 30 Trails Head Chapter members and guests met on a beautiful warm spring day on **Sunday, April 28, 2013** at the Red Bridge site at the Big Blue River Crossing of the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail.

Trails Head Chapter members met at **1:30 p.m.** at the Minor Park/Red Bridge shelter and had a KFC chicken luncheon with 'all the trimmings'.



Pictured above is the refurbished and repainted 'old' Red Bridge (#3) with the new one (#4) in the background. The 'old' Red Bridge is now part of the MetroGreen hiking/biking trail.

After lunch, President **Dick Nelson** greeted everyone and after some introductions and announcements, he introduced **Ross Marshall** for a few remarks about this historic site.

This site is near the crossing of the Big Blue River on the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California National Historic Trails. He also discussed all the "red bridges" as well as the new one that just opened last year.

Mary Conrad then talked about the 1838 Potawatomi Trail of Death since a boulder marker for that forced journey is just north of the shelter the group was in.

Then **Ross** led a walking tour from the shelter walking north past the above sign toward the new bridge in the background. The original wagon crossing was perhaps 200-300 yards north of the current bridge site. No evidence remains of that crossing today.

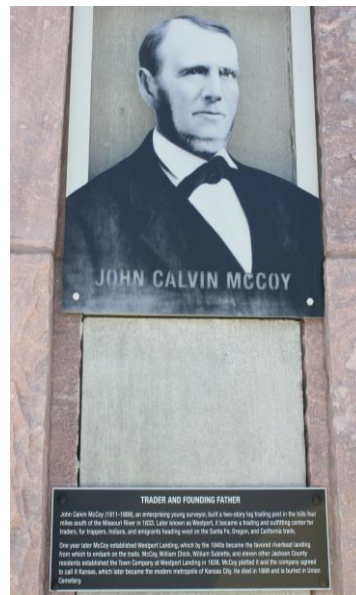
Near that site, the first bridge was built in 1859 by Col. George N. Todd, a 50-year-old Scotsman stonemason from Canada, with the help of his son George M., who became one of Quantrill's chief lieutenants. The son was killed by a sniper on **October 21, 1864** at the battle of Little Blue Crossing east of Salem Church and Blue Mills Road in Independence. This was the first day of the Battle of Westport. He was buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in Independence.

The 100' span wood covered bridge rested on stone piers and was enclosed by red-painted shingling, thus the name.

A steel bridge (called a 'tin' bridge), which was a lightweight steel truss design also painted red, replaced the original bridge in 1892.

Although it was apparently completed in late 1932, Harry S Truman in January, 1933 dedicated and opened the existing red steel truss bridge (#3) designed by Richard N. Wakefield.

Now that the #3 bridge is open only for hiking and biking traffic, it has attracted a number of people who have put padlocks at various places on the railings with their names on them. Called "Locks of Love", they signify the bond between two engaged or married (or otherwise!) people.



The picture above shows most of the attendees on the new bridge standing next to one of the four interpretive panels that have been placed on the walkways that are on both sides of the roadway. The new bridge (#4), was opened to traffic **November 18, 2011** and **dedicated on July 27, 2012**.

There are also 10 silhouette renderings of historically prominent people who may have used this crossing in frontier days. Each of them has a short biography under their silhouette as above. The ten silhouettes are **Jim Bridger, James Beckwourth, Kit Carson, Don Felipe Chavez, Alexander Doniphan, Susan Shelby McGoffin, Alexander Majors, John Calvin McCoy and Amache Ochinee Prowers**.

The exhibits and silhouettes were underwritten by the 6th District of the Kansas City Council. The texts and graphics were produced by **Craig Crease, David Jackson** and **Ross Marshall**, plus some guidance by consultants hired by the 6th District.

The attendees continued across the bridge and paused at one of the four wayside exhibits as shown above. **Mary Conrad**, in front with the blue jacket, presented a short review of this exhibit dedicated in **2012**. She also reviewed the gift to Kansas City of the park land over 60 years ago, which was a farm owned by the Minor family.

Our last stop was also in Minor Park in the huge swale left by the wagon trains that still exists and is marked by a Daughters of the American Revolution stone monument. This monument was placed by the Missouri Chapter of the DAR sometime before 1913 as one of 28 monuments on the Santa Fe Trail in Missouri. They were all dedicated on the same day in **May, 1913** – not by the same people obviously, but by people from each of the counties involved.



Pictured above is some of the group at the DAR monument listening to **Pat Traffas**, second from the right, telling the group about the marker located in the middle of the large swale.

It was a delightful 75° spring day for our visit to a very significant site on our local historic trails system. If you have not visited the site on Red Bridge Road east of Holmes Road, it would be worth your time and effort.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A Trails Head Executive Committee meeting was held **Sunday, June 30, 2013** at **Marshall's** house. Attending was **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Sandy Wiechert, Secretary Mary Conrad** and **Ross Marshall**. **Treasurer Arnold Cole** could not attend.

The attendees spent considerable time planning the chapter meeting on August 24 at Watkins Museum in Lawrence. **Director Steve Nowak** will be the speaker and tour leader through the Museum. We voted to give \$50 to **Steve** and \$50 to the Museum.

Progress on the oral history project was discussed. Probably **Jewell Willhite** in Lawrence will be the transcriber.

The 2014 OCTA Mid-Year Board meeting will be in Independence next March. **OCTA Manager Travis Boley** wants to have a symposium that would also involve KCAHTA and MRO chapters.

The group agreed to have the annual meeting at Mahaffie Heritage Center on November 23.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be at **Marshall's** house on September 18.

ROGER SLUSHER PASSES

A great loss! **Roger** passed away rather suddenly **July 4** as a result of an advanced case of pancreatic cancer. He was a great friend of many of Trails Head members for many years and will be sorely missed by all.

He was serving as president of the Santa Fe Trails Association and had helped found the Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of SFTA, serving as president for many years.

He teamed up with **Ross Marshall** in recent years in Washington D.C. during the annual "Hike the Hill" week in February. Sponsored by the Partnership for the National Trails System, they spent several days calling on members of Congress and some of the public agencies like the National Park Service to tell them what is going on with the National Historic Trails back home and to let them know what the historic trails needs are. **Roger** was very skilled in this effort.

He and his wife **Sandy** were always seen together and were a joy to be around. She still resides in their ante-bellum home in Lexington.

Again, a great loss, but **Roger** is someone the historic trails community will never forget.

OCTA CONVENTION

Over 300 people registered for the 31st OCTA Convention **July 22-26**, in Oregon City, Oregon at the western end of the Oregon National Historic Trail, hosted by the Northwest Chapter.

About a dozen locals from Trails Head Chapter attended including **Dick and Ruby Nelson, Sandra and Allen Wiechert, Shirley Coupal, Jean Coupal-Smith, Eva Allen, Kelly Breen, Jim and Kathy Conway, Shirley and Ross Marshall**, plus new member **Kimberly Knopf**.

Other chapter members present were **Glenn and Carol Harrison, Pat and Jack Fletcher, Tom McCutcheon, Marley Shurtleff, Carl and Irene MacDonald, Vern and Carol Osborne, Lethene Parks, Jerry Peppers, and Duane Iles**.



At the Dinner, (l-r) Jean Coupal-Smith, Shirley Coupal, Kelly Breen, Pat Traffas and Eva Allen



Presentation of awards by Awards Chair Dick Nelson (right) assisted by Jean Coupal-Smith and committee member Roger Blair (left)

One of the highlights of OCTA Conventions is the Awards Dinner, followed by the presentation of awards conducted by Awards Chair **Dick Nelson**, which then is followed by the live auction conducted by **John Winner**, the new OCTA vice president.

One of the bus tours offered was a tour of Oregon City. Participants stopped at the Center as well as other sites such as:

--The 1845 John McLoughlin House. He was the Chief Factor of the Northwest Fur Company, a British company which dominated the fur business in the northwest in the 1820s to 1840s. He built a cabin on the Willamette Falls in 1829 and started what became Oregon City.

--Stevens-Crawford House built by Medorem Crawford who emigrated to Oregon with the 1842 Elijah Young Party, one of the first wagon trains to Oregon. His diary has been published.

--The magnificent Museum of the Oregon Territory which is on the Willamette River bank.

There was also a bus tour down the fertile Willamette Valley, which was the destination of many emigrants as they staked land claims.

A third tour was east along the scenic Columbia River and back west on the historic Barlow Road, a toll road opened in 1846 that replaced the treacherous river as the only route into Oregon. That road included the extremely steep Laurel Hill site. They also saw the remarkable Multnomah Falls and the 11,240 foot Mount Hood. A very scenic and historic tour.



Trails Head Chapter meeting. (l-r) Sandy Wiechert, Shirley Coupal, Eva Allen, Ruby Nelson, Kelly Breen, President Dick Nelson (standing), Jean Coupal-Smith, Shirley Coupal and Pat Traffas

Shown above at left, is the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City, which is not only full of exhibits and trail information, but is housed in a building that sits under a structure symbolizing the framework of a covered wagon. In fact, when it was opened over two decades ago, it had a canvas cover which did not turn out to be durable and is now gone.

On Friday night, to close the convention, an outdoor buffet was held on the grounds of the Center attended not only by OCTA people but other local people as well.

The weather was mild and sunny for the whole week of the 2013 convention, as hosted by the Northwest Chapter and led by **Jim Tompkins**.

CHAPTER MEETING AT CONVENTION - (see picture above)

The **Thursday July 25** meeting was called to order by **President Dick Nelson**. Members in attendance were **Dick and Ruby Nelson, Jean Coupal-Smith, Shirley Coupal, Sandra Wiechert, Pat Traffas, Ross and Shirley Marshall, Eva Allen, Kelly Breen and Jerry Peppers** from Scarsdale, NY.

Also meeting with Trails Head were National Park Service **Superintendent Aaron Mahr** and **OCTA President John Krizek**.

President Nelson spoke about the upcoming chapter meeting in Lawrence, KS on **August 24** at the Watkins Memorial Museum. They will have a display about the Quantrill Raid in Lawrence. **Ross Marshall** spoke about the Mid-Year OCTA Board meeting in Independence, MO next **March, 2014**. It will be a symposium type meeting with other trails groups in the Kansas City area taking part. A possible bus tour is being discussed.

Aaron Mahr spoke about the importance of the trail activities in the Kansas City area. He said that **Travis Boley** and NPS are working on a plan for a hiking/biking trail corridor from Independence Landing to McCoy Park with the cities of Sugar Creek and Independence taking part in the process.

John Krizek spoke briefly about how important chapters are to OCTA and how they can be of support with new members and member retention.

President Nelson thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting.

CHAPTER MEETING

On **Saturday, August 24**, we held a chapter meeting at the Watkins Community Museum at 11th and Massachusetts in Lawrence at **10:00 a.m.** It was just three days after the 150th anniversary of the Quantrill Raid on Lawrence.

The meeting was arranged and hosted by Trails Head's **Vice-President Sandy Wiechert**, who lives in Lawrence, and who was invaluable in the chapter planning efforts for the 2012 OCTA Convention held in Lawrence. Several new members from Lawrence have joined OCTA and this meeting allowed Trails Head members to meet some of them.

Attendees first had the business meeting, called to order by **President Dick Nelson**.

Treasurer Arnold Cole reported \$8051.01 in our account.

Ross Marshall reported that the replacement wayside panels for New Santa Fe and Minor Park have been ordered by the National Park Service. Also, two new waysides for the Nine-Mile site at 78th and State Line Road have been ordered by the Park Service..

He also invited everyone to come to the dedication of the "A Day on the Santa Fe Trail" mural at 80th and Santa Fe Road in Overland Park on **September 28**.

Jean Coupal-Smith reported that NPS wants to collect the volunteer hours and expenses of every Trails Head member every year. This is similar to what we have done for the Partnership for the National Trails System for many years. But this information now will aid our NPS office to secure needed funding from their Washington DC office.

Sandy reported that transcribing the oral tapes is moving along and she should have some of the transcripts very soon. Her friend **Jewel Willhite** is doing them for Trails Head at \$15/hr which is reasonable.

Attendees discussed details of the annual meeting scheduled for **November 24**. Then everyone was free to observe all the exhibits on our own.

It was an enjoyable meeting as all continued to learn more about Lawrence history.

Jabez Bunting Watkins established his Watkins Land Mortgage company in 1873 and it grew rapidly with branches in major cities including London. He was also president of the Merchants Bank in Lawrence.

Conflicts in the business community led him to build this magnificent building several blocks south of the main business district of that time, which also housed a bank on the second floor.

The architecture and interior design, especially on the second floor where the bank was, is truly remarkable and is a wonderful museum venue.



Steve Nowak



Steve addresses part of our group on the 2nd floor

Steve Nowak, Museum Director, addressed Trails Head with a Power Point presentation on the Quantrill Raid. He is an expert on the Raid and also led a tour of the museum to see the special exhibits on the Raid that the museum staff assembled for Lawrence's observance of the anniversary of that 1863 tragedy. These are permanent exhibits that give the complete story of the Raid. If you missed the meeting, those exhibits are still there!

After **Steve** finished, all had some "brunch snacks" and some time to tour the exhibits.

Most left in time to attend the 1:00 program at the Black Jack Park near Baldwin City.

PAT TRAFFAS IS NEW OCTA SECRETARY

Trails Head past president and vice president **Pat Traffas** has been elected OCTA's national secretary. She has also been OCTA national chair of the History and Archives Committee.

Pat has also had long service in leadership with both the National and Kansas Daughters of the American Revolution. Also, she has been on the board of the local River Bend Chapter of Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

On **Wednesday, September 18, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.**, Trails Head planners held an Executive Committee meeting at **Marshall's** house. Attending were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Sandy Wiechert, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Travis Boley, Eva Allen, Shirley Coupal, Jean Coupal-Smith** and **Ross Marshall**.

Sandy Wiechert explained the oral history project since some present had not heard the details of the current project. Wiechert said she had contacted a KU oral history transcriber who had agreed to transcribe Trails Head tapes. After the transcribing started, the transcriber and Wiechert found some of the tapes are not audiotapes, but rather are digital videotapes. The transcriber put her tape recorder by a camcorder, but she could not understand the taped words. Then **Sandy** found that Wolfe's Camera in Topeka could record DVDs from digital audio videos. Next she found Cytek of Topeka could create regular audiotapes from digital audio videos. Wiechert asked those present which conversion would be desired. Those present agreed that resulting audiotapes would be preferred. **Arnold Cole** made a motion for **Wiechert** to have Cytek produce the audiotapes for a price of around \$12 each. **Coupal-Smith** seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Wiechert said that a retired KU professor worked for a couple hours with a 1990s camcorder in hopes he could transfer the digital tapes into regular audiotapes. **Wiechert** said she would like Trails Head to provide some kind of compensation. **Conrad** made a motion for Trails Head to give a \$25 honorarium to **Bruce Linton**. **Eva Allen** seconded the motion; passed unanimously.

At the recent OCTA convention, the OCTA Internet chair **Marley Shurtleff** held a workshop at which **Shirley Coupal, Pat Traffas** and **Ross Marshall** attended. After the convention, **Shurtleff** sent many emails about how to work on websites. **Travis Boley** said a year or two ago he obtained \$1000 for Trails Head to update its website. He said he already had obtained a grant and has paid for a portal for all chapter websites.

Ross Marshall said right after the convention, **Shurtleff** sent a letter asking each chapter for money. **Boley** said the OCTA Board authorized money for all chapters to update their websites at the convention. **Jean** agreed she would send copies of all her emails to **Nelson** and **Marshall**.

Nelson said **Eva Allen** now is managing the Trails Head membership roster and will add emails to the roster. **Eva** will have the title of membership chair. **Duane Iles**, as OCTA membership chair, has challenged Trails Head with a goal of 12 new members. If Trails Head

reaches that goal and has a membership chair, OCTA will give the chapter one free convention registration and one free convention tour.

Nelson said the place and date of the annual meeting have been changed to **November 16** at Trailside Center from **10:00 to noon**. A discussion of a possible speaker for the annual meeting ensued. **Conrad** suggested **Mark Kelly** on the trapper traffic through Kansas City. As a second choice, **Eva** suggested **Ladene Morton** who could talk on the involvement of Waldo with the Santa Fe Trail traffic. **Conrad** will make the arrangement for the speaker.

Conrad and **Marshall** agreed to be on the nominating committee. A few persons suggested **Pat Traffas** as chair. **Marshall** will ask her.

Nelson asked if Trails Head members want to donate to the spring symposium. **Marshall** said he would like to challenge Trails Head, MRO of SFTA, KCAHTA, and the River Bend Chapter of Lewis and Clark to each donate \$500. He suggested presenting this idea at the annual Trails Head meeting.

Conrad made a motion to donate \$50 to the Trailside Center for use of the space for the annual meeting. **Nelson** seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Marshall reminded everyone of the **September 28** dedication of an Overland Park trail mural near 80th and Santa Fe Road.

The meeting adjourned at **3:40 p.m.**

ANNUAL MEETING

The Trails Head Annual Membership/Awards Meeting was held at **10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 16, 2013** at the Trailside Center at 9901 Holmes, KCMO, with 20 people attending.

President Dick Nelson convened the meeting and reviewed 2013 chapter events.

Treasurer Arnold Cole reported a bank balance of \$8,012.74, which reflected annual revenues of \$836.00 and expenses of \$577.64.

Attendees voted for Trails Head to join KCAHTA, MRO, and the Riverbend Chapter of Lewis and Clark THF in contributing \$500 to help with the expenses of the Kansas City Trails Conference in March, sponsored by the Partnership for the National Trails System.

Membership Chair Eva Allen reported a total of 82 chapter members, which is very good. **Ross** presented the officer slate from the nominating committee chaired by **Pat Traffas** with **Mary Conrad** and **Ross** as members. **Pat** was absent due to a DAR meeting. All current officers agreed to serve for another year:

President - Dick Nelson,
Vice President - Sandy Wiechert
Secretary - Mary Conrad
Treasurer Arnold Cole.

Sandy gave an update on the chapter oral history project.

The awards committee, chaired by **Ross Marshall** with members **Dick Nelson** and **Mary Conrad**, presented the following awards.

Mary presented an Award of Appreciation to long-time Trails Head member **Niel Johnson**: *In recognition of being a long-time member of Trails Head Chapter, a supporter of National Historic Trails in the Kansas City area, and specifically for leading the effort fifteen years ago to conduct recorded interviews of chapter members which are now the basis for preserving our chapter history.*



Mary Conrad presenting award to Niel Johnson Heather Runkel and Ross Marshall

Ross Marshall presented the Distinguished Partner Award to the Kansas City Parks and Recreation, accepted by their landscape architect **Heather Runkel**, who was coordinator for the project: *In recognition of being an ongoing supporter of historic and recreational trails in the Kansas City area, specifically for its leadership and support in the development and installation of the interpretive exhibits and silhouettes of famous frontier people on the new Red Bridge at the Blue River Crossing of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails.*



Ross Marshall and Pat Traffas



Mark Kelly

Ross Marshall also announced that **Pat Traffas** (see above) would receive the Meritorious Achievement Award, to be presented later due to her absence. *In recognition of her many years of personal leadership in Trails Head and OCTA activities, including serving as chapter president and OCTA secretary, and her outstanding achievements with many other historical organizations and area historic trails projects.*

Mary Conrad then introduced **Mark Kelly**, who spoke about “The Trapper Routes through the Kansas City Area”. **Mark** is a recognized expert in the trapper and mountain man era of the 1820s-1840s. He recently published the outstanding book “*Lost Voices on the Missouri*”, centered on John Dougherty and the Indian Frontier.

He touched on the development of the Liberty to Ft. Leavenworth Road that crossed the Falls of the Platte (town of Platte City located there in 1837) and roads to Weston and Council Bluffs.

He also discussed the Military Road from Ft. Leavenworth to Ft. Scott and on south, as well as the Boonslick Road west from St. Louis that predated the Santa Fe Trail.

Of course, he spoke frequently about the fame and activities of John Dougherty, the subject of his book, who built a mansion northeast of Liberty in his later years and was a prominent citizen of what would become the Greater Kansas City area.

Mark is an excellent researcher and presented a lot of info not traditionally known. It was an excellent program for Trails Head’s annual meeting!

NINE-MILE POINT DEDICATION HELD

On a chilly but momentous day, **November 25, 2013**, about 40 people attended the dedication of the two Nine-Mile Point wayside exhibits in Weltner Park, at 78th and State Line Road in Prairie Village. This was a year-long project involving three partners.

The Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, under its long-standing cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, worked with the Prairie Village Public Works Department to complete this project at an important but little known historic site.

In 1823, surveyor Joseph Brown, working south from the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers surveying the western border of the new state of Missouri, erected a ‘nine-mile’ mound of dirt at about the location of Weltner Park. He had erected one at each mile point from the confluence.



Pictured above is (l-r) Prairie Village Mayor Bob Shaffer, Public Works Director Keith Bredehoeft and Craig Crease. All spoke at the dedication.



Keith Bredehoeft convened the ceremony in front of the exhibits as the crowd of 40 people looked on.

Ten chains farther south (660 ft.) he crossed some tracks left by three wagons the year before belonging to William Becknell. These were the very first wagons on the new Santa Fe Trail.

In 1825, George Sibley, under a federal contract to survey this new Santa Fe Trail, passed by this location going west on the trail. He noted in his journal that they were crossing the state line at the nine-mile point. Joseph Brown was with him as the lead surveyor and could easily identify the spot.

The text and graphics on the exhibits were gathered and edited by **Carol Clark** of NPS in Santa Fe, **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall**.

Craig Crease, our premier trail historian, was the principal speaker and covered all the key details about this historic Santa Fe Trail location. **Ross Marshall** made a few remarks about the public-private partnering that enables this kind of trail project to occur.

A very nice dedication completing the project! Be sure to stop at the park and read the exhibits.

CHAPTER HISTORY UPDATE

Trails Head volunteers continue to make significant progress on this oral history project. All 10 of the recorded tapes that were made in 1996-97 have been transcribed into 20 to 40-page documents by **Jewell Willhite**, a Lawrence friend of our **Vice President Sandy Wiechert**.

Mary Conrad has prepared a time-line history of excerpts from chapter newsletters.

Ross Marshall is going through each oral transcription, not deleting any of the transcribed text, but adding names that were not clear to **Jewell** and inserting comments where he thinks the facts or dates are maybe not right. That way the committee can look at the transcriptions and committee members can reach consensus on what is really correct to use in our narrative history of the chapter.

When **Jewell** was unable to play back some of the tapes, **Sandy**, through trial and error, ended up contracting with Cytek of Topeka to produce regular analog audiotapes from the digital tapes.

When the committee members finish this project hopefully this year, the chapter will still have the original tapes, the Cytek tapes, **Jewell's** transcription originals totaling about 300 pages, the edited versions, plus a published narrative and time-line history of Trails Head Chapter. The chapter has spent about \$1300 to retrieve this valuable historic resource, which Trails Head members feared was either lost or unusable. Pretty exciting!

2014

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On **Sunday, January 12 at 2:00 p.m.** Trails Head Executive Committee held a planning meeting for **2014** at Marshall's house. Present were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Sandy Wiechert, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Eva Allen** and **Ross Marshall**.

Arnold reported that the chapter has \$7024.64 in the account.

Nominating Committee Chair **Ross Marshall** presented the officer nominations for 2014. All our current officers were re-elected as follows:

Dick Nelson - President

Sandra Wiechert – Vice President

Mary Conrad – Secretary

Treasurer – Arnold Cole

Sandy reported that the oral history project has progressed very well. The original tapes were recorded in a project led by **Niel Johnson** and **Harold Smith** in 1996 and 1997 by interviewing **Barbara Magerl, Barbara Bernauer, John Leamon, Jim Budde, Duke Sumonia, Rich Nolf, Pauline Fowler, James Lee, Sylvia Mooney** and **Ross Marshall**.

Sandy Wiechert's friend **Jewell Willhite** has finished transcribing the tapes over the past month or two and **Ross Marshall** has volunteered to proof and type these tapes into a hard copy

narrative that could be distributed for reading. He is working on it and will have it done maybe yet this spring.

Ross reported that planning for the March Kansas City Trails Conference is proceeding well, but he and **Travis Boley** have not completed all the details. It will be held at the Drury Inn in Independence. It will involve the OCTA Mid-Year Board meeting and also the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Mid-Year Board meeting. A bus tour of Kansas City historic trails sites is planned. Saturday will be a day-long plenary session at Truman Library.

The planners discussed ideas for the meetings and events for the rest of the year. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

KANSAS CITY TRAILS CONFERENCE HELD MARCH 12-15, 2014

What an exhilarating experience! The out-of-towners, as well as locals, who gathered for this first-ever Kansas City Trails Conference headquartered at the Drury Suites Hotel in Independence, were truly impressed.

This trails conference could potentially guide much of the trail corridor development in Kansas City for years to come.

On Wednesday, the Lewis and Clark Heritage Trails Foundation gathered for the first day of their two-day mid-year national board meeting. At the same time, the Santa Fe Trail Association held an all-day mapping workshop which covered, in detail, the Santa Fe Trail from mid-Missouri into eastern Kansas.

On Thursday, OCTA and SFTA had their mid-year national board meetings as well. This is the first time these three organizations have ever had their board meetings at the same location.

On Friday, about 100 of the attendees, which included several political and social leaders of the Kansas City area, went on two all-day bus tours led by **Craig Crease, Dick Nelson, Steve Rhoades** and **Ross Marshall**.

The tours covered both the Independence and Westport Routes of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails as well as many segments of the MetroGreen hiking-biking trails, many of which follow the same corridors. Both buses went as far as Gardner Junction.



Above are several of the bus riders at Independence Landing that overlooks the Missouri River in Sugar Creek. This landing site has five wayside exhibits – with freshly replaced panels.



With the new Red Bridge in background, several of SFTA and OCTA leaders are shown as they visited Minor Park. The exhibit in the picture had just been completely replaced including the frame, thanks to NPS and the KC Parks Dept.

Tour participants were able to see and/or visit many of the more than 40 trail sites in Kansas City area, many of which have interpretation and/or site name markers and wayside exhibits.

Even if a person has seen all these sites many times, it is almost overwhelming to see in one day how many trail sites really are in the Greater Kansas City metropolitan area.

But the most exciting realization is that public-private partnering has brought all this about. The private-side trail groups include Trails Head Chapter, MRO Chapter, the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, and River Bend Chapter of Lewis and Clark, as well as entities like trails supporter **Lou Austin's** Three Trails West, working in the 87th St. to State Line corridor. The buses stopped at Schumacher Park on 93rd Street east of the old Bannister. **Lou** has been very active for years on both historic and recreational trails in the southeast part of Kansas City.

The public side includes the National Park Service and a good many of the Public Works Departments in our area. And it will be these partners who will lead the work in the future as many continue to develop the Kansas City area trail corridors.



The tour group at Strang Park



Niel Johnson (Harry Truman) and Travis Boley

The tours stopped at Strang Park in Overland Park on the Westport Route. These exhibits, shown above, were dedicated two years ago.

The buses arrived just before 5:00 at the newly opened Mallinson Vineyard & Hall. This site is on River Blvd right on the trail south from Independence Landing. It is a former school house that has been used for many years as a meeting hall named Gilpin Town Hall. William Gilpin, a very ambitious developer in the Sugar Creek area 150 years ago, owned this property.

Matt Mallinson, Sugar Creek Mayor, lives across the street and has renovated this structure, planted vineyards and rents out his building. He was kind enough to host the group that evening for a reception and dinner. **Matt** is also doing a lot for the trails in this area including signage.

The bus tours on Friday were very successful. A good number of people told **Ross Marshall** they were very impressed. They talked about the great bus tours and the excitement they felt at all they saw here on the 'eastern trail'. They were surprised at how much was here.

Saturday was the plenary session, held at the National Frontier Trails Museum. **Travis Boley**, OCTA's Association Manager, led the day, which was only fitting because he was the organizer for the whole conference.

Aaron Mahr, NPS Superintendent, opened the session by complimenting Kansas City for the local work of partnering on the trail. He also discussed how developing urban trail corridors met many of Park Service priorities such as connecting trails to parks, promoting a spirit of preservation on trails, connecting communities to trails, and promoting outdoor recreation.

Ross Marshall spoke next and reviewed the many markers, interpretive panels and sculptures that have been installed in the last decade.

Kristen Van Fleet, landscape architect with NPS, then also did an overview from the NPS's perspective, reviewing all the projects she had worked on in the Kansas City area and what the prospects for future projects are in both historic and recreational trails.

Steve Rhoades then presented his wonderful Power Point review of all the Kansas City trail sites and reviewed the benefits of the MetroGreen trails and how that overall plan is progressing. Still a lot of the projected 1000 miles needs to be built.

Gordon Julich, Jackson County Parks Superintendent and a long-time trail supporter, reviewed all that his department is doing in the county for historic trails. Even **Harry Truman** (Trails Head member **Niel Johnson**) stopped by, as pictured above with **Travis Boley**, and reminded us of how he always liked historic trails and roads. True!

Debbie Ridgeway, head of KC Biking for the City, reviewed how biking trail developments are progressing in the area.

Much of the afternoon until 3:00 was spent in constructive discussions on how our local metro area trail corridors could be further developed and how the trail corridors in other towns where the conference attendees were from could also be developed.

A lot of the points made were how recreation could and should occur on historic trails. One of the strategic goals of historic trails people is always how to get more visitors out on them, which promotes tourism, an attractive result that every city wants.

Independence has already begun to erect local tour route signs along its trails. The City of Raytown is also committed to doing the same thing. Soon the entire trails system in the Kansas City area will hopefully be marked for the convenience of the driving (and hiking) public.

Creating partnerships where diverse entities share common goals is a wonderful outcome. There will be a lot of developments in the Kansas City area as time progresses..

In short, it was an informative day packed with helpful ideas on how to develop historic and recreational trails in urban and suburban areas. But the main theme underlying everything was the public and private sides partnering together.

That is certainly true and it was a wonderful conference that exceeded expectations!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

On **Sunday April 6, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.** Trails Head planners had an Executive Committee meeting at **Marshall's** house. Present were **President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Jean Coupal-Smith** and **Ross Marshall**.

Arnold reported \$6,575.86 in the chapter account.

Ross has edited more than half of the oral history transcripts and will soon be done. **Mary** said she has given all the original tapes, newly created tapes, first drafts of transcripts, and all other accompanying paper work to **Richard Edwards** at the National Frontier Trails Museum.

Dick reported that **Kathy Buob**, OCTA's website editor, asked for permission to go into the Trails Head website and has requested Trails Head send her the chapter mission statement and summaries of our chapter activities to her. **Jean** and **Ross** agreed to work on the statement and send drafts to Trails Head officers before sending the draft to **Kathy**.

Dick asked if Trails Head should examine our bylaws for potential revisions. **Ross** said an occasional review is advisable. Those attending agreed to do it after the website and oral histories have been completed.

The planners agreed to schedule a chapter meeting on **September 6**. **Dick** will contact Trailside Center. **Ross** will contact **Travis Boley** to present an update on MetroGreen and other trails issues.

Ross said that **MRO President Larry Short** is pursuing many projects including completing the Local Auto Tour Route signage on through Raytown and into Johnson County. **Larry** also has an agreement with National Park Service to fund new markers at New Salem Park.

Dick and **Ross** reported on the damage at Minor Park, when a truck became stuck when going up the hill in the park, and had to be pulled out by a big rig. Serious rut damages to the park's trail swales occurred. But they have been repaired by the Jackson County Parks & Rec.

Ross said that he and **Dan Smith** will be leading a Battle of Westport bus tour next Saturday.

MARY CONRAD RECEIVES AWARD

Mary Conrad, Past President and Past Vice President of Trails Head Chapter and currently the Secretary, received the Outstanding Achievement Award at the annual membership and awards meeting of the Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of SFTA on **April 12**.



**Dick Nelson, Trails Head President
and also Awards Chair for MRO Chapter,
presenting the award to Mary Conrad**

The award read as follows:

In recognition of her longtime achievements as a leader with the MRO Chapter and the Santa Fe Trail Association in promoting and preserving the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

Of course, this paragraph only touches the surface of the many years of hard work and leadership that **Mary** has given to Trails Head Chapter and to many historic trails like the Oregon, California, Potawatomi Trail of Death, and many others.

She currently serves as MRO Vice President. Well deserved, **Mary!**

TRAILS HEAD TOUR OF TOWN OF KANSAS

One of the key historic trail sites in Kansas City was toured by the chapter on **May 10**. It was a delightful spring day with the event starting about **10:00 a.m.**

The tour had 17 reservations, but a couple of people ran into parking problems with the Saturday City Market influx of shoppers. After another couple had to leave a little early, the picture below was taken just before lunch at the entrance to the Town of Kansas Pedestrian Bridge near The Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City marker.

We observed the nine National Park Service interpretive exhibits that were dedicated a couple

of years ago and the 1850s excavations on Delaware and Main Streets. The participants had a wonderful walk along the Missouri River along the old Westport Landing site, one of the two



(l-r) OCTA members Shirley Marshall, Dick and Ruby Nelson, Harold Draper, Sandra and Allen Wiechert, Linda and John Gorman, Eugene and Jeanie Anderson, Eva Allen, and Ross Marshall on his knee.



Town of Kansas 1850 mural near 3rd & Wyandotte

beginning points of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails in Kansas City.

In addition, the walkers read historical markers outside the Arabia Museum that told about early French history before Westport Landing began in 1834 and before Town of Kansas was founded in 1838. Then participants walked through the busy City Market Square and had lunch at Minsky's Pizza in a reserved private room.

After lunch attendees walked all around the City Market area looking at the historic old buildings that still exist and looked at some of the sites related to Wild Bill Hickok who used to winter in the old city area in the 1870s. The walkers also looked at two very wonderful murals: Town of Kansas at Westport Landing and also Kaw Point, each on the sides of buildings.

The walkers also saw sites that had to do with early taverns, opera houses, brothels, and River Quay era of violence a few decades ago. They also saw the Pacific House Hotel where General Thomas Ewing signed Order #11 after the 1864 Quantrill Raid on Lawrence, which unleashed the "Burnt District" of farm destruction down the Missouri border south of Kansas City.

There is a lot of early American history at the Town of Kansas area, including the founding of what became Kansas City and the early history of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails. Great tour!

DRIVING ROUTE SIGNS IN MISSOURI



Pictured above is an example of the many Driving Route signs that are being installed in Independence and Raytown by a partnership of MRO Chapter and the National Park Service. Similar ones have been installed on the Santa Fe Trail in Saline and LaFayette Counties.

Eventually, the plan is for these signs to be installed all the way to the State Line at 123rd Street and eventually clear out to Gardner Junction Park.

Also available are MRO Driving Route brochures for Saline and LaFayette Counties as well as for Johnson County, KS.

Many thanks to MRO **President Larry Short** and the chapter for getting this work done!

WAYSIDE EXHIBIT PANELS BEING REPLACED

Another example of partnering with wonderful partners is the Santa Fe office of the National Park Service.

Many of the early NPS interpretive exhibits that were installed in the early days have not lasted as long as anticipated. The NPS staff is working to get them replaced. Since the digital record is still there, it is just a matter of reprinting the panels for the waysides.

The early panels were made of three-layer fiberglass and simply weathered until the black streaks made them almost illegible. In the 2005-2006 era, NPS changed to a new high-pressure laminate material that appears as if it will have a very long life.

The NPS office has responded and just this year has replaced the wayside panel at Minor Park, New Santa Fe, and all five Independence Landing wayside panels.

Larry Short, Trails Head member and President of MRO Chapter, said that the 85th and Manchester exhibit has been delivered and the three waysides at Hickman Mills School at about 88th and Santa Fe St. are being ordered. In addition, a replacement panel is being ordered for the wayside at the Bingham-Waggoner swale site.

Many thanks to **Supt. Aaron Mahr** for his dedication and also **Sharon Brown** for her diligence in following through with each site. We don't have to bug them – NPS calls us! Isn't it great!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

On **Sunday, July 13 at 2:00 p.m.** chapter planners held a meeting at **Marshall's** house. Present were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Sandy Wiechert, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Jean Coupal-Smith, Eva Allen and Ross Marshall.**

Arnold reported a balance of \$6715.49.

Jean reported that she had contacted **Kathy Buob**, OCTA website editor, for procedures and ideas for what to submit to her for Trails Head's website. Right now all we have is a front page. We can send our Trails Head events, trail site photos, maps and our chapter history. **Ross** will assemble some photos and will have the first pages of the chapter's history done soon to 1988.

Some winners of **Jean's** student calendar contest would be good for the website after the convention and any other recent award winners we have. They also considered putting our newsletters on the website when they are a year old so member renewals would not be affected.

Ross reported that he is working with NPS and Mission Hills on a new wayside at 69th Terrace and State Line Road on the Westport Route. He also reported that signs will be installed by Johnson County Parks along the Potawatomi Trail of Death route of 1838 through here.

OCTA CONVENTION

The 32nd annual OCTA Convention was held in Kearney, NE **August 5-9, 2014** and was well attended by over 250 people.

The theme was *Drama on the Medicine Road*, which recalled the 1864 Indian attacks along the Oregon-California Trail in Nebraska. Tension had been building along the trail between the emigrants, new settlers, and broken treaties.

The bus tours and speakers, at least in part, focused on that theme. Very enjoyable were the bus tours, especially the one on the north side of the North Platte River basically along the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

Attending from Trails Head Chapter were about 20 people including **Dick & Ruby Nelson, Allen & Sandy Wiechert, Pat Traffas, Shirley Coupal, Jean Coupal-Smith**, and her grand-niece **Isabella (Izzy) Young, Kelly Breen, Drew and Joanne Bodner, Jim and Kathy Conway, Carl and Irene McDonald, LuAnne Hunter**, and **Ross and Shirley Marshall**.

The weather was not especially hot and even though 4½ inches of rain fell one night, the bus tours were not really affected!

The convention was headquartered at the roomy Holiday Inn Convention Center.

Congratulations to **Bill Peterson** and all of his volunteers for hosting a very enjoyable event.

TRAILS HEAD AWARDS

Trails Head Chapter received the President's Award at the OCTA Convention in Kearney, NE, in August. One of the few ever awarded!

The award was presented for Trails Head's role in recent years in promoting partnering in the Kansas City area for National Historic Trails.

The Greater Kansas City area has become the national showcase among metropolitan areas for the amount of preservation, research, interpretation, signage and public awareness for historic and recreational trails that exist locally.

And it all has been done through partnering with public partners like the National Park Service and various Park Departments, Public Works, and government entities, plus private-side partners like the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, MRO Chapter, and urban developers like **Lou Austin** and other cooperating corporate entities.



Pictured above with the award, are (l-r) Pat Traffas, Matt Mallinson, Travis Boley, Shirley and Ross Marshall, Sandy Wiechert, Ruby Nelson, Jerry Peppers, Kelly Breen, Allen Wiechert and John Krizek.

Admittedly, Trails Head has not always been the lead partner, or even involved in every project, but OCTA wanted to pay tribute to the chapter for our key involvement in what is happening in Kansas City.

The award stated: *To recognize the chapter and its members for their many years of research, promotion and partnering with the National Park Service, city parks departments and other local trails groups to enable the Greater Kansas City area to be a national leader in preserving, interpreting and developing the Oregon-California, Santa Fe, and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails.*

Because Trails Head **President Dick Nelson** is also OCTA Awards Committee Chair, he asked **OCTA President John Krizek** to present the award to Trails Head **Vice President Sandy Wiechert**. **Ross Marshall** then made a few remarks about the value of partnering, the developments in Kansas City, and the various partners involved.

The motive for the OCTA leaders to present this award was the outstanding image conveyed to the attendees, from all over the country, at the Kansas City Trails Conference in March.

It is quite an honor for Trails Head Chapter to receive such an award! And thanks to all Trails Head members who have worked hard over the years!

TRAILS HEAD ADDITIONAL AWARD WINNERS

In addition to Trails Head Chapter receiving an award, two others from the Kansas City area received awards at the OCTA Convention.

The first was **Matthew Danforth (Danny) Mallinson**, who received the OCTA Young OCTAN Award for his work in helping to put a marker on the Independence Route of the trail in Sugar Creek, MO during this past year as part of his Boy Scout Eagle project.

Danny is the son of Sugar Creek, MO Mayor **Matt Mallinson**. **Matt** has also been a very active promoter of the trails in Sugar Creek and has been one of the very valuable partners in the current Trail Corridor Development. **Matt** and **Danny** live on River Boulevard just south of the Independence Landing on the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails. **Matt Mallinson** is the son of the late **Jane Mallinson**, who was a leader with the Missouri DAR and also the Santa Fe Trail Association. Thus **Danny** is a grandson of **Jane**.

The text of the award stated: *For maintaining the five-generation family's Mallinson Vineyard and Hall historic site on the Oregon-California National Historic Trail and specifically for completing his Eagle Scout project of placing an interpretive limestone stone post near Wayne City Landing in Sugar Creek, Missouri.*



OCTA President John Krizek with Young OCTAN Danny Mallinson



Above is OCTA President John Krizek and award-winner Izzy Young with her picture in OCTA's Calendar

Next were two winners in the OCTA Calendar Contest “*Plants along the trail – Edible, Medicinal & Dangerous*”. They were **Grace Ryan**, daughter of **Steve and Rika Ryan**, and **Isabella (Izzy) Young**, daughter of **Jeff and Jessica Young** and grand-niece of **Jean Coupal-Smith**. The following account was written by **Jean**:

Both girls were first-graders at St. John Paul II Catholic School, Overland Park, KS. Their teacher, **Mrs. Sue Gorman**, was excited to have the class enter the Calendar Contest.

During the first part of March, I visited the first grade class at JP II to provide information to the class about OCTA’s Calendar Contest and to talk about Kansas City area trails.

To help make this a more visual and realistic setting for the kids, I took two maps of the trails: one was a National Park Service map that shows the entire National Trails System and one map of the local Kansas City Area trails, provided by the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association.

They were a very excited bunch of kids as we talked about the trails and what times must have been like to walk “all the way” from Independence, MO to Oregon City, OR. Questions were aplenty for sure as inquisitive minds want to know!

I gave instructions on the contest to Mrs. Gorman and the class and provided a couple of books on plant life along the trails as well as some internet research. The rest was up to the class to use their imagination and create what they thought the emigrants would find along the trail during their travels. The class used their art time to draw and color the pictures in the next few weeks.

At the end of March, I returned to JP II to pick up the drawings and entry information and take pictures of the whole class with their artwork. For a group of first-graders they did a wonderful job and had fun learning about something new in the process.

St. John Paul II School and **Mrs. Gorman** were notified the first part of June that they had winners. The letters were then forwarded from the school to the girls. They were two very excited little girls! As contest winners, the school and girls will receive a calendar. The girls will each receive a check for \$50.00 each.

This has been a very rewarding experience to present to this class a bit of our trails history and to see their enthusiasm about what they can find in their own neighborhoods. Trails Head Chapter can be proud of the fact that we will now be represented in this year’s 2015 OCTA Calendar with a school that is at the beginning of the trail. Other thanks go to **William (Bill) Hill**, OCTA’s Education Committee Chair, for his work to promote trail educational opportunities for our youth.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

On **Saturday, September 6, 2014** Trails Head held a General Membership meeting at Trailside Center at **10:00 a.m.** 14 were present.

Treasurer Arnold Cole was absent and **President Dick Nelson** said \$6715.49 is in chapter account. He said the chapter would donate \$50 to Trailside Center, the chapter meeting place.

Dick also reviewed the **2014** OCTA Convention in Kearney, NE, where Trails Head received the very special OCTA President’s Award, which is not awarded every year, He also mentioned the other awards, including two local young girls receiving the OCTA Calendar Contest awards.

Mary Conrad gave a brief update on the progress toward compiling the Trails Head history. **Vice President Sandy Wiechert** had arranged for a Lawrence transcriber to transcribe all the oral history tapes that were recorded many years ago. It was also necessary to have a Topeka company transfer some of the tapes from digital to analog format.

The transcriptions are completed. **Ross Marshall** has annotated all the transcriptions, and has used these and other records to write a narrative of the earliest years of Trails Head activities back in the 1980s. The transcriptions will be used in the writing of narratives of still more years of Trails Head activities.

Dick reported on the volunteer hours that were reported to National Park Service in September. 11 Trails Head members reported 1332 volunteer hours, \$2800 for trail-related expenses and 12,515 trail-related miles for the previous 12 months. This will continue to help NPS obtain an increased amount of funding.

SUGAR CREEK DEDICATION

On **Wednesday September 24, 2014**, a very pivotal dedication was held on North River Boulevard in front of Sugar Creek Mayor **Matt Mallinson's** house, attended by about 35 people.

The ceremony dedicated driving route markers recently installed along the Boulevard from Upper Independence Landing. Likely, other cities will hold dedications later.

Opening remarks were made by **Mayor Matt Mallinson**. He introduced speakers **Aaron Mahr** and **Kristin Van Fleet** of the National Park Service and also representatives of the Missouri DAR. Both entities had provided funding for the project. Speakers also included **OCTA President John Krizek** and **OCTA Association Manager Travis Boley**. In addition, dignitaries from the Sugar Creek School District and the Missouri State Assembly were present.

A luncheon was then held at the Mallinson Vineyard and Hall across the street.



MRO President Larry Short addresses the crowd

WIEDUWILT SWALES DEDICATION

17 years of preparation was culminated on **October 4, 2014** when the newly-named Wieduwilt Swales site was dedicated at 85th and Manchester in south Kansas City.

The site has now been named after the nearby neighbors, **Paul** and **Sharon Wieduwilt**, who have lived right beside the swale property for years and always have been friendly and cooperative. They even have a piece of the swale on their property. Up until recently, the site was just known as “85th and Manchester”.

Sponsored by the Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of SFTA and led by its **President Larry Short**, the ceremony was attended by over 30 people on a nice fall afternoon.

Just recently, through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, an interpretive wayside exhibit has been installed as can be seen in the above picture.

The story of this site began 17 years ago when **Ross Marshall** had a call from **Gwen Holt**, the daughter of **Aleta Jean Norton** who had passed away two or three years before. **Gwen** was the executor of the estate which included this property with the trail swale.

Since there was a swale on the property, she wondered if local trails people would have an interest in buying it. Since historic trail folks all knew about the swale, **Ross** told her likely so. She was very helpful and some local trails people began to figure out how to save this swale.

The next thing that happened was in the spring of **1998** when **Walter Cook** was shaving one morning and heard a bulldozer out his back window on Blue Ridge Blvd. moving dirt near the swale which extended southeast 100 yards all the way to the Wieduwilt swale. **Walter** went out and literally stood in front of the bulldozer to stop it and got his picture in the KC Star!

But there was no legal way to stop the construction. The owner of that end of the swale was the nearby Blue Ridge Bible Church. They needed a soccer field, so the swale had to go!



Pictured above is a MRO post dedicated **September, 2013** by MRO Chapter. The plate on it reads: *This site contains the original swales created during the 19th Century by the many wagons, pack animals and travelers on the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails*

Pictured above, on the right, at the wayside exhibit is (l-r) **Paul Wieduwilt**, **Al Maddox** (director of Cave Spring, the current owner of the site), **Larry Short**, **Sharon Wieduwilt**, **Lou Austin** (main speaker), and Kansas City 6th District **Councilman John Sharp**.

The Cave Spring Association about 1½ miles north of the site agreed to become the owner, but the association had little funds. When **Gwen** agreed to cut her price to \$15,000, a fundraising effort was begun led by CSA founder **Sylvia Mooney**, CSA President **Jodie Smith**, CSA Executive Director **Susan Walsh**, **Barbara Magerl** and **Walter Cook**.

The money was raised over the next year or so with a grant from the KC150 Legacy Fund, other grants, and many individual donations. The sale was completed in **September, 1999** and the swale was saved! It is now a Certified Site on the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails. And now it also has historical interpretation, a new name, and a lot of supportive people. A great trails success story!

PLANNING MEETING

On **Sunday, October 5, 2014** Trails Head held a planning meeting at **2:00 p.m.** at **Marshall's** house. Attending were **President Dick Nelson**, **Treasurer Arnold Cole**, **Eva Allen & Ross Marshall**.

Arnold said the chapter had a balance of \$6639.06 in the account.

Ross reported that all the driving route signs from Independence Landing to Gardner are either in place or are being planned. Similar signs will show the Santa Fe Trail all the way to Saline County in Missouri also.

A wayside is also being worked on for 69th Terrace and State Line in Nymph Park in Mission Hills. Also, the two SFT plaques made in 1906 that were taken down when the remaining section of St. Mary's Hospital was removed have been saved by Kansas City Parks and Rec and will be installed along with a new wayside at the new Federal Reserve Bank, just south of the Liberty Memorial.

Trails Head's nominating committee chair is **Ross** and includes **Eva Allen** and **Mary Conrad**. **Mary** confirmed that **LaDene Morton** will speak at our November 1 Annual meeting. The meeting adjourned at **3:05 p.m.**

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Trails Head Chapter's Annual Membership meeting was held on Saturday, **November 1, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.** at the Trailside Center, 9901 Holmes in KCMO.

President Dick Nelson welcomed about 18 attendees to the meeting and gave a review of the chapter 2014 activities, such as the KC Trails Conference in March, chapter Town of Kansas walking tour May 10, OCTAs Annual Convention in Kearney, NE in August, chapter meeting at Trailside Center September 6, and work on the many wayside exhibits and signs going up in the Kansas City area. Other works in progress were writing the chapter history and beginning to fill out the website.

Treasurer Arnold Cole reported the bank balance was \$6605.27.

One of the key items of business was to elect chapter officers for 2015 (below), presented by the nominating committee consisting of Chair **Ross Marshall**, **Eva Allen** and **Mary Conrad**.



(l-r) President Dick Nelson, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Secretary Mary Conrad and newly elected Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith

The following officers were elected:

President - Dick Nelson (re-elected)
Vice President - Jean Coupal-Smith (new)
Secretary - Mary Conrad,
Treasurer - Arnold Cole

OCTA Association Manager **Travis Boley** gave an update report on progress in the Kansas City area in developing historic and recreational trail corridors. Many of his remarks are reflected in an article below (see green note) authored jointly by **Travis** and **Ross Marshall** for *Pathways*. That is a quarterly publication by the Partnership for the National Trails System, the leading advocate organization with Congress for the trails funding that the National Park Service provides for use in the Kansas City area and elsewhere.

[\(Article starts here\)](#) The Kansas City metropolitan area is unique in terms of National Historic Trails. Three of these trails – the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe – share a common corridor for 40 miles, along the Independence Route, on the east side of Kansas City from the Independence Landing on the Missouri River in Sugar Creek, Missouri to west of Gardner, Kansas, where the Oregon-California Trail separates from the Santa Fe Trail.

Those three NHTs also have a second route, called the Westport Route, that goes through the heart of Kansas City from the foot of Main Street on the Missouri River, south to Westport at about 43rd Street, then uses two different routes to go southwest into Kansas, joining up in Overland Park, Kansas and ending up at the same location, as above, at Gardner Junction Park.

For nearly 15 years the National Park Service's trail administrative office in Santa Fe has focused on the Kansas City area because of the above unique network of National Historic Trails and the active interest of Public Works Departments and private-side entities. This busy partnership has put into place nearly 100 interpretive exhibits, more than 400 driving route and trail crossing signs, plus other interpretations like life-size covered wagon silhouettes, and has also created new city parks.

NPS has selected Kansas City as a sort of “incubator of ideas” on how to develop a National Historic Trail in a heavily-urbanized setting. The “Administration and Development” Section 7 of the National Trails System Act provides the legal framework for such work to be pursued.

Kansas City is unique in another way with regard to National Historic Trails. There is a concerted effort at multiple levels of government, in cooperation with private non-profit groups and other individuals, to build a recreational pedestrian trail in the 40-mile long Independence Route 3-Trail corridor. Likely in the future a similar effort will be along the Westport Route.

This “trail corridor” effort consists of multiple approaches including building a hiking/biking trail (including the implementation of pedestrian signage), installing local auto tour route signs, building interpretive exhibits, enhancing existing city parks and historic buildings/homes, and installing new trailheads for accessing the recreational trail.

Already, the cities of Sugar Creek, Independence, and Raytown have installed both auto tour route and pedestrian signs to guide visitors through these cities in eastern Jackson County, Missouri. This signing program is a cooperative effort with the National Park Service (NPS), which provides funding to the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) and the Santa Fe Trail Association (SFTA) to pay for the fabrication of signs. However, in Sugar Creek, OCTA won a grant in the amount of \$6,800 from the Daughters of the American Revolution to help pay for sign posts in Sugar Creek.

Sugar Creek and Independence worked together at Mill Creek Park, and the city of Independence has already completed a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long, 10 foot wide hiking trail that stretches southward past the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and winds up at the next trailhead in McCoy Park that has five interpretive exhibits.

The Katy Trail, an extremely successful Rails-to-Trails conversion that stretches from the St. Louis suburbs into northwest Missouri, will eventually cross over the 3-Trails corridor in Raytown and eventually bicyclists or hikers can jump onto or off the Katy Trail with ease.

As on the Missouri side, much work is already complete in Kansas. In future years, OCTA plans to partner with SFTA and the NPS to continue the signing program, and parks like Lone Elm Park in Olathe and the Gardner Junction Park west of Gardner, Kansas are already complete. The city of Olathe has built a multi-million dollar education center at the Mahaffie House Stagecoach Stop, and the Mid-America Regional Council's (MARC) master trails plan calls for the eventual completion of a pedestrian trail in the entire 40-mile corridor.

With these authorities, and in cooperation with the eight municipalities in the KC metropolitan area as well as numerous non-profits and other individuals, Kansas City will continue taking advantage of its unique situation to lead the way in developing National Historic Trails in an urban setting. What a privilege to be able to be a national focus for historic trails! (article ends)



After **Travis Boley** spoke at the Trails Head Annual Meeting, **Mary Conrad** (standing above) then introduced Trails Head Chapter member **LaDene Morton**, pictured at right, who has written several books, one of which is on the history of Waldo and its founder David Waldo. She spoke about *“WALDO AND ITS CONNECTION TO HISTORIC TRAILS”*.

In 1820 the Virginians David Waldo and his brothers moved to Gasconade County southwest of St. Louis, just as the state of Missouri was developing. Due to the many incoming settlers and businessmen, the brothers made large sums of money selling timber.

In 1828 David Waldo, by then a physician, moved to the booming town of Independence. Waldo not only became successful as a doctor and a Santa Fe Trail freighter traveling the trail many times, he also bought land in many places throughout Jackson County, Missouri.

These David Waldo holdings included 1000 acres from State Line to Troost and from Gregory (71st Street) to 85th Street. Dr. Waldo continued to reside in Independence, but used the 1000 acres south of Westport for the breeding and pasturing of his mules used in freighting.

After Dr. Waldo died in 1878, Waldo’s son, also named David Waldo, managed many of his father’s properties, including the area south of Westport that had been the Waldo mule farm.

In the 1890s, the son formed the Waldo Land and Investment Company to develop the former mule farm into a residential area with a commercial center at 75th and Wornall. The younger Waldo promoted the construction of homes in the area from Wornall to Holmes between 71st and 75th streets. The most significant catalyst to developing the entire Waldo area was the establishment of a rail line from Westport to Dotson, a community to the south of Waldo. The farmers of the Waldo area welcomed the railroad as an easy means for transporting goods to Westport and to downtown Kansas City. The younger Waldo successfully popularized the name of “Waldo” as the label to be associated with his development. In 1894 the Kansas City Electric Railway changed its name to the Westport and Waldo Railroad.

While the younger Waldo's developments did not occur as quickly as he had intended, the southward expansion of Kansas City finally made Waldo lots quite desirable. By then J. C. Nichols was becoming interested in areas to the south of his Country Club District. In 1909 Nichols convinced the city to extend the city limits into Waldo to 77th Street. Waldo had not been incorporated as a separate entity before the city later annexed the rest of the community.

While Dr. David Waldo had been a quite successful Santa Fe Trail freighter, his legacy in regards to continuing name recognition is associated with the Waldo area of Kansas City, once the location of his mule farm. *(above notes on LaDene's talk written by Mary Conrad)*

LOU AUSTIN AND THE THREE TRAILS CORRIDOR: REVIEW OF 1990-2015

One of the strongest advocates of historic and recreational trails in the Kansas City area for many years has been our good friend **Lou Austin**, pictured below.



Lou Austin

Lou is a second generation trails supporter because his late father **Lou Schumacher** spent several years researching the Independence Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails, especially in the south part of Kansas City. He was a developer and owned property in the 95th Street and Bannister Mall area, as does **Lou Austin** now.

Lou Austin's work has been done along the National Historic Trails through partnerships that involve the National Park Service, City Parks Departments and local and national trails organizations like OCTA and Trails Head Chapter, SFTA and its Missouri River Outfitters Chapter, and the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association. **Lou Austin** has been a wonderful partner over these years as all partners have been focusing on marking local historic trails, including interpretive wayside exhibits, driving route signage and trail crossing signage.

The trails corridor from 85th and Manchester (now called Wieduwilt Park) through the Hickman Mills School property on Old Santa Fe Road, his own Schumacher Park along 93rd St, the property that was Bannister Mall and will be the Cerner Trails Campus, the MetroGreen Trail along Bannister Road, Marion Park, Avila University, and on to New Santa Fe near State Line Road – this whole corridor has been **Lou's** focus for more than two decades.

Certainly his fingerprints have been on everything that has happened in the southeast part of Kansas City. See the article below written by him.

Lou's 3-Trails Corridor efforts originated with the handwritten 3-Trails West objectives circa 1990 – namely to physically construct a ten foot trail/greenway along the traveled way of the

Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails from Sugar Creek, MO to Gardner, Kansas - Lou's foundation document.

Next, we (a coalition comprised of historic trails supporters, National Park Service, business, government and community leaders and residents) lobbied MARC (Mid-American Regional Council) to include the 3-Trails Corridor in the official MetroGreen regional recreational trails plan, accomplished in 2000.

Next, the coalition worked with KCMO to include the 3-Trails Corridor in the Trails KC Plan adopted by ordinance around 2008. This plan mandated special design standards and protocols be followed for the Historic Trails including involvement of the NPS.

Next, with the support of the coalition, 3-Trails Village CID (Community Improvement District), Martin City CID and 6th District KCMO PIAC (Public Improvements Advisory Committee) funded the 6th District PITC (6th District Pedestrian Intermodal Transportation Connector Plan) trails study which provided a detailed analysis by segments of the 3-Trails Corridor from the 85th and Manchester site to the Missouri/Kansas state line. The PITC trail study was adopted by KCMO ordinance. It includes very detailed specs, signage and design standards for the 3-Trails Corridor.

Around 2000 the coalition completed the initial interpretive exhibits at Schumacher Park with NPS cost-share funds. Soon after the coalition installed the steel historic trails silhouette figures on the Hickman Mills School District site utilizing KCMO neighborhood tourism funds. Shortly thereafter the Hickman Mills School District trail segment was constructed using 6th District PIAC and NPS cost share-funds with the school district donating a thirty-foot easement for the trail. NPS cost-share funds were granted for design plans/interpretive exhibits for 85th and Manchester, Wayne City Landing, Marion Park at the Hart Grove campground site and the Hickman Mills School District simultaneously with the construction of the Hickman Mills School District trail.

The 3-Trails CID with the support of the coalition successfully petitioned the Missouri General Assembly to officially name the "Grandview Triangle" as "3-Trails Crossing Memorial Highway". The CID paid for the initial state MODOT trails signs. This effort was calculated to begin rebranding the entire South KC area around the historic trails legacy.

MODOT, with federal and KCMO PIAC funds, constructed the 3-trails corridor segment from 98th Terrace to Bannister Road at Highway 71, including a dedicated trail/pedestrian bridge over Highway 71 on the west side of Marion Park.

KCMO, with PIAC funds and substantial NPS cost share funds, constructed the Avila University and Hospice segments of the corridor.

KCMO, with bond and PIAC funds, constructed the 91st Street corridor segment from the south end of the Hickman Mills School District west to the KCS (Kansas City Southern) railroad right-of-way. 3-Trails Village CID provided design funds for the segment.

3-Trails Village CID provided design funds for the corridor segment from the end of the 91st Street trail south along the KCS ROW to 93rd Street and west to Schumacher Park.

KCMO, with bond and 5th District PIAC funds, constructed the Schumacher Park trail segment from Newton Avenue to Schumacher Park. 3-Trails Village CID funded additional construction including a new ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliant entrance into Schumacher Park and a new asphalt overlay for the Schumacher park trail. The plans for the segment from 93rd Street north to the west end of the 91st Street segment have been approved by KCMO Public Works. In addition the CID secured the donation of the needed easement for this segment from the adjacent landowner. This segment is shovel ready upon procurement of construction funding.

The KCMO Parks and Recreation Department funded and constructed a corridor segment through Gabriel Park.

KCMO, using federal and PIAC funds, constructed the new Red Bridge and the trail, including on the bridge, from Blue River Road west to Holmes Road. NPS cost share funds were utilized in official corridor monument signage and interpretive exhibits along this segment.

3-Trails Village CID, with NPS cost share and 6th District PIAC funds, designed the corridor trail segment from Elmwood Avenue at Bannister Road into Marion Park providing a loop trail system that connected with the Marion Park Cerner office campus and the new South Patrol police station. These plans have been approved by KCMO public works – application has been made to KCMO 5th District PIAC for construction funding in 2015.

3-Trails Village CID with CID funds and federal transportation grant funds planned the corridor segment on Bannister Road from Elmwood east to Drury Avenue including a dedicated trail pedestrian bridge over I-435 at Bannister Road. This segment is currently under construction with completion anticipated in the spring of 2015.

The Cerner approved TIF (Tax Increment Financing) plan includes construction of the corridor segment from Drury Avenue to Hillcrest Road, north on Hillcrest Road to fire station 41 and east on 93rd Street to Schumacher Park.

KCMO Parks and Recreation with federal and KCMO funds has designed the corridor segment from the new Red Bridge north to Alex George Lake. This segment is out for bid with the corridor segment from Drury Avenue to Hillcrest Road, north on Hillcrest Road to fire station 41 and east on 93rd Street connecting to Schumacher Park. Completion is anticipated in 2015.

Of interest is growing historic trails branding. Besides the 435/470/49 interchange, the new Cerner campus is known as Trails Development; the 400 acre quarry redevelopment site across from the new Cerner office campus is known as Santa Fe Industrial Park; the new 100-acre industrial park development on the south side of 87th street just announced by North Point is called Three Trails. The KCMO community center and MO Visitor Center at 99th and Holmes is known as the Trailside Center. Work is underway with the NPS, SFTA, OCTA and their chapters to install the new official NPS historic trails signage along the entire corridor to further enhance and brand the historic trails. Lou has also noticed increasing references in the media to the “3-trails area” in south Kansas City.

The total dollar amount for all the above, including the 3-Trails Crossing interchange is in excess of \$250 million dollars. (*Submitted by Lou Austin*)

2015

PLANNING MEETING

On **Sunday January 11 at 2:00 p.m.**, Trails Head members held a planning meeting at **Marshall's** house. Those present were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Eva Allen** and **Ross Marshall**.

Arnold reported \$6865.09 in the account. **Eva** reported 77 memberships at the present time.

Jean said she needs info and photos from members to put on the website. She would also like to post a chapter history, even if it is brief. **Ross** said he has the history done up to 1988 which was when the chapter adopted the name “Trails Head”.

Mary said when **Sandy Wiechert** returned the audiotapes to her, **Mary Conrad** had returned all audiotapes to **Richard Edwards** at NFTM.

Ross reported on the following marker projects:

--He said he is working on a wayside for 69th Terrace and State Line Road in Mission Hills and is to make a presentation to Mission Hill's City Council tomorrow night.

--The Kansas City Parks Department has approved placing the two 1906 plaques near the new Federal Reserve building.

--KCAHTA is working with others to place two wayside exhibits near the DAR marker at 80th and Santa Fe in Overland Park. The new mural on the side of a nearby building had to be removed soon after it was finished because the paint just peeled off.

--New text will be written and will replace the post marker at New Santa Fe Cemetery, which had errors on it.

--The company Freight Quote has completed a Jim Bridger marker that it wants to place in the area of State Line and I-435.

--The Lewis and Clark waysides that were placed during the 200th anniversary in 2003-2006 will be replaced from Kansas City to St. Joseph because they are showing age and damage.

--Missouri River Outfitters (MRO) Chapter of SFTA has been working for a year and a half to place "Original Route" signs along the Santa Fe Trail in Missouri. MRO has facilitated the placement of the same signs on the Independence Route from Independence Landing down through Raytown. But, that is the "original route" for the Oregon and California Trails, but not for Santa Fe Trail.

The signs in Johnson County will be "Historic Trail Route" signs. NPS is not yet willing to replace the other signs.

Larry Short and **Ross** will check on the signs on the Missouri side to see how many should be replaced if NPS will agree to furnish them.

Ross reported on the schedule of many of the Trail National Conventions this year across the country including the Lewis and Clark annual meeting which will be at Kansas City area Argosy Casino the first week in **August this year (2015)**. **Ross** will be planning the bus tours for it.

3-TRAILS CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP MEETING

A very productive and well attended meeting of the newly formed 3 Trails Corridor Partnership group was held at NFTM **Saturday, March 21**. Representatives from most of the cities that are located along the corridor were in attendance, including Independence, Sugar Creek and Kansas City in Missouri, plus Leawood and Overland Park in Kansas.



Pictured above is MRO President Larry Short, who moderated the meeting and presented a magnificent Power Point presentation of what is happening along the 3 Trails Corridor.



Lou Austin addressed the crowd. Along with his father Lou Schumacher before him, he has spent many years developing the dream of the 3 Trails Corridor.

Also attending were representatives from Trails Head and MRO Chapters, SFTA, OCTA, KCAHTA, Barnes Enclosure/Cave Spring, Jackson County Parks and Recreation, Trailside Center, South KC Alliance PIAC representative, and other friends of the National Historic Trails.

Participating by video were **Steve Burns** and **Kristin Van Fleet** of the National Park Service in Santa Fe, NM.

This initial meeting of the partnership was, in part, to update all concerned parties about:

- The signing and marking of the trails that has already been accomplished.
- The construction completed of the various segments of the pedestrian/biking trail between
- Independence Landing and Gardner Junction in Kansas.

The work in progress and what is needed to complete the entire length of the corridor. The main goal of this meeting was to establish a consensus between all entities of the entire corridor about developing a working plan with the establishment of the general area where the existing pedestrian/biking trails would be workable by simply adding signage plus areas where new trails would need to be constructed.

The National Park Service will provide the lead in developing an overall plan that will be used by the entire 3-Trails Corridor Partnership to implement the “on the ground” trail. Once this initial plan is developed and agreed on by the affected entities, detailed plans will be completed. Future meetings will be held at various locations along the entire length of the corridor.

PLANNING MEETING

On **Sunday March 22, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.** a Planning Meeting was held at **Marshall's** house. Present were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Eva Allen** and **Ross Marshall**.

Arnold stated the current balance of \$7031.61 is in the account. **Eva** reported that chapter memberships remained at 77.

Ross reported on the 3-Trails Corridor meeting that was held yesterday at National Frontier Trails Museum, hosted by **OCTA Manager Travis Boley**. **MRO President Larry Short** moderated the meeting and presented a 45 minute PowerPoint. He reported that **Aaron Mahr**, NPS Superintendent, has agreed to furnish signs that say “local tour route” rather than “auto tour route” or “driving route”. **Ross** stated the PowerPoint was so good that historic trails people should have a meeting of our three trails groups maybe in August.

Ross reported that **Dick Nelson, Travis Boley, Gary Hicks** and himself drove the Independence Route a week ago in Johnson County to plot where the new signs should be placed. These signs will partner well with the KCAHTA “trail crossed here” signs that have been in place for many years.

JOINT MEETING WITH MRO CHAPTER (March 28, 2015)

The very successful KC Trails Conference a year ago, that headquartered in Independence, brought the national boards of directors of OCTA, SFTA, and Lewis and Clark to the Kansas City area for their mid-year board meetings. Many members of Trails Head and the Missouri River Outfitters Chapters plus the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association were involved.

The basic agenda of that meeting was to show all of them how the local groups are partnering with the National Park Service and local cities to not only interpret local trails for the public but also to develop “retracement trail” corridors along Kansas City area National Historic Trails.

As a result of all the above partnering initiatives, the Kansas City area local three trails groups decided to meet together occasionally just to fellowship and share ideas on how to work together

toward all the above lofty goals. Not that there is any competition between groups, but just to combine their individual strengths as much as possible.



NFTM Curator David Aamodt addresses the crowd about future NFTM plans



Raymond Starzmann

Larry Short, President of MRO, and **Ross Marshall** updated the members on the continued placement of the local tour route signs along the three National Historic Trails in Jackson County, Missouri and Johnson County, Kansas.

Larry also informed the group of the newly established 3-Trails Corridor Partnership, described in the article above.

Accordingly, on Saturday **March 28**, about 30 members of Trails Head and MRO met together at the National Frontier Trails Museum.

Trails Head President Dick Nelson moderated the meeting and, after a few announcements and other items of business, introduced **David Aamodt**, Curator of NFTM, who updated those present on the future enhancements that will be made at the museum. An elevator will be installed allowing access to a second floor where the operational offices will be moved. This will allow for expansion of the library into spaces on the first level currently housing these offices.

The Independence City Council has approved an additional expenditure of \$250,000 per year for the next 3 years to add new features to the museum. The goal is to eventually raise the \$13 million that will increase the size of the museum with both indoor and outdoor displays, relocate the OCTA offices to a currently empty building (the old depot) at the site entrance, and establish a replica campground near the spring on the site.

Dick then introduced the program speaker, **Raymond Starzmann** (above), a local re-enactor and life-long resident of Independence, in a first-person performance as President Harry S Truman. **Mr. Starzmann** reflected on the life and times of President Truman and his long time advocacy of promoting the importance of history on everyday lives. Through true stories those present were enthralled with President Truman's life from his birth in Lamar, Missouri to his return to Independence after his nearly eight years as President.

Following a short video on the upcoming OCTA Convention at Lake Tahoe in September, the group took a guided tour of the National Frontier Trails Museum historic trails exhibits.

A future joint meeting involving Trails Head, MRO and KCAHTA will be held at the Trailside Center at 103rd and Holmes, Kansas City, MO on **August 29, 2015 at 10 a.m.** All members are encouraged to attend.

JOINT BUS TOUR WITH MRO CHAPTER TO FRANKLIN, MO

Jointly sponsored by MRO and Trails Head Chapters, this bus tour on **Tuesday, May 12, 2015** was designed to focus on the many kinds of interpretive and driving route signage (there are many!) that have been done, are being done, and will be done in the future; and on the many public and private partners involved.



Three upright markers, two wayside exhibits and Two upright markers, a DAR SFT stone, an MRO limestone post marker and a bench marker above two other markers at this site in Old Franklin

Pictured above are more than a dozen markers of many kinds and styles at two sites about 100 yards apart at Old Franklin, Missouri. The markers pictured above discuss the Santa Fe Trail, Old Franklin on the north side of the Missouri River across from Boonville, MO and other local history. There are probably more markers here than at any other National Historic Trail site.

After a lunch at a delightful setting near the Visitor Center in Arrow Rock, the participants retraced the Santa Fe Trail all the way to Independence, noting all the new driving route signs. These signs when followed will tell the driver which way to turn to stay on the road along the “original trail” or close to it.

When the bus arrived in Independence, they followed the Independence Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails from Independence Landing south to Blue Ridge Boulevard. This route is fully signed to tell the driver where to turn to stay on the trail and they covered the first segment of the Kansas City area 3 Trails Corridor. When fully marked it will be 40+ miles long.

The Santa Fe Trail driving route signs have been installed in some counties all along the trail and one day will reach “all the way to Santa Fe”!

It was a beautiful day to be out on the trail and all participants saw a lot of signs, which was our purpose of the trip from central Missouri to south Kansas City.

Thanks to **Larry Short** for handling the registration, lunches, snacks and drinks and also paying all the bills. And to **Ross Marshall** for being the tour guide. It was a very enjoyable tour and thanks to everyone that went.

KANSAS CITY – RIVERS AND TRAILS: A REVIEW

The Greater Kansas City area is a national focal point for trails because four National Historic Trails course through the city; Santa Fe, Oregon, California and the Lewis and Clark. The reasons for this confluence are geography and politics.

Geographically, Kansas City is not only located on the Missouri River, but also at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers. In the 1800s, large rivers served travelers as the “superhighways”— in fact, they were the only passageways until trails and roads opened up.



March 14, 2014 - A bus tour during the Kansas City Trails Conference stops at Upper Independence Landing overlooking the Missouri River in Independence, MO. All four of our trails passed this point.



Swale at the Wieduwilt Park site in Raytown, MO on the Independence Route of the trail during the dedication of a wayside exhibit on October 14, 2014.

Politically, the western border of Missouri passes through this confluence. That western border also became the eastern boundary of the Permanent Indian Frontier when the Indian Removal Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1830 and signed into law by President Andrew Jackson. Many of the eastern tribes of American Indians were moved to that frontier and non-tribal people could not settle or establish towns west of that border. Small Missouri towns of Independence (1827), Westport (1834), and the town of Kansas (1838) quickly blossomed because of that law.

Those villages grew in part because they served as starting points and outfitting sites for the Santa Fe Trail, which opened up from central Missouri to Santa Fe in 1821 and became a “Highway Between Nations.” It was a trade route between the new state of Missouri and the new nation of Mexico, both of which were established in 1821. It quickly became a two-way trade route carrying goods between the United States and Mexico. By the early 1830s trade goods and freight moved farther west on the Missouri River to these new landing points and towns.

The three towns also served as trading points for the “Removed” tribes coming from west of the border. These tribal members had received annuities and needed places to spend that money. All Indians living in Indian Territory near the state line of Missouri received the annuities at the Indian Agency office just west of the state line border near the current 45th Street in Kansas City, Missouri, but the closest stores were in Independence, twelve miles away.



On September 19, 2012 Dan Sturdevant, then LCTHF President, addresses the crowd at the dedication of nine wayside exhibits about the historic trails at the Town of Kansas site on the Missouri River in Downtown Kansas City.



Gardner Junction Park near Gardner, KS where the Independence and Westport Routes of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California National Historic Trails merge and the Oregon and California Trails leave the older Santa Fe Trail

In 1834, John McCoy opened a trading post named Westport near the agency to intercept the trade and provide the tribes a closer location.

By the time the Oregon and California trails opened in the early 1840s, most of the emigrants would come west up the Missouri River as far as the steamboats would carry them. Basically, two landings locally served as destinations for the boats; the Independence Landing (about 1830) and Westport Landing, the latter opened by John McCoy in 1834 so that his new trading post in Westport could receive trading goods.

The emigrants had to purchase wagons, teams of oxen or mules, food and supplies of all kinds for the nearly two thousand mile trip on the Oregon or California Trails. All of those goods had to be purchased in these river settlements before “jumping off” because there were no towns to the west of the state line. The three villages of Independence, Westport and Westport Landing/town of Kansas, grew rapidly into prosperous towns with not only the tribal trade but also by outfitting the wagon trains. After 1854, when the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed opening up the “Permanent” Indian Frontier for settlement, most of the tribal trade moved away as did much of the wagon train outfitting. But that is another story!

The Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery used the only available “trail,” the Missouri River, in 1804 as they went west. Arriving in the Greater Kansas City area, they camped on June 23, 1804, at the area that later became Ft. Osage. They stayed in what would become the Kansas City Metropolitan area for a total of eight nights, including three nights at Kaw Point on June 26-28.

When they returned in 1806 they landed briefly at mid-day and Lewis and Clark both climbed a large hill, in the present downtown Kansas City, now called Lewis and Clark Point.

In **March 2014**, a very successful and well-attended Kansas City Trails Conference was held in Independence, MO involving the mid-year board meetings of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, the Santa Fe Trail Association, and the Oregon-California Trails Association, plus many other guests. Bus tours along Kansas City area trails and strategic planning for the development of trail corridors involving both historic trails and hiking-biking recreational trails were also included.

This background on our “Rivers and Trails” in the Kansas City area will illustrate the importance of the Kansas City area in the Westward Movement of the United States.

PLANNING MEETING

On **Monday June 1, 2015** some Trails Head members held a planning meeting at **5:00 p.m.** at **Marshall’s** house. Present were **President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Eva Allen** and **Ross Marshall**.

Arnold reported a balance of \$6998.40 in the chapter bank account. **Eva** reported that Trails Head has 83 memberships.

Ross reported that the Lewis and Clark national convention will be held this **August 1-5, 2015** at the Argosy Casino, hosted by their local Riverbend Chapter. An article authored by **Ross** about Kansas City historic trails appeared in the recent *We Proceeded On*, Lewis and Clark’s publication. He reminded all that the Riverbend Chapter is still seeking sponsors and donations. He moved that Trails Head donate \$200, **Mary Conrad** seconded and it was approved.

Dick has scheduled Trailside Center for Trails Head’s **August 29** joint meeting with Missouri River Outfitters Chapter and Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association. He has also scheduled our annual meeting for **November 7, 2015** at Trailside also.

NPS, MARC AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS MEET FOR THREE DAYS – August 16, 17, 22
A busy summer for trails in Kansas City!



Speaking is Rep. Bill Kidd, the Missouri House of Representatives member from NE Independence.



Above are (l-r) Kristin Van Fleet and Steve Burns of NPS, MRO President Larry Short, OCTA Association Manager Travis Boley, and Lou Austin, long-time 3 Trails Corridor champion in southeast Kansas City.

Pictured above at left are some of the 80 or so attendees at the new Mallinson Vineyard and Hall in Sugar Creek, MO the evening of **Sunday, August 16** for a Pig Roast and Fellowship. The purpose was to share the plans for the continued development of the 3 Trails Corridor Retracement Trail along the Independence Route.

Matt Mallinson is the Sugar Creek Mayor and is also a member of OCTA and Trails Head Chapter. His Hall is at 3029 N. River Boulevard, which is the Independence Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails.

Steve Burns and **Kristin Van Fleet** of the National Park Service Santa Fe office were there, plus many public officials invited by **Matt**. Among the Trails Head members present were **Gary** and **Louise Hicks**, **Mary Conrad**, **Dick** and **Ruby Nelson**, **Larry Short**, **Travis Boley**, **Mayor Matt**, **Audrey Elder** and **Ross Marshall**.

The Retracement Trail is a concept of providing not only Local Tour Route signs which will show drivers where to turn on the streets and roads in order to follow the trail, but also to encourage the construction of hiking/biking trails along the same trail corridor, along with interpretive trail markers.

In other words, Kansas City historic trails folks want to provide hikers, bikers and automobile travelers an opportunity to be on the historic trails, providing both access and knowledge of where the trail is so that they can ‘retrace’ the historic trails.

The Kansas City Metro area is the largest city in the nation that has four National Historic Trails and is the focal point of NPS funds for developing the first urban Retracement Trail plan.

A second meeting (see picture above at right) was held downtown on August 17 with the Mid-American Regional Council (MARC), a consortium of representatives from cities and counties all over the KC Metro area, attended by most of the above named people plus **Ross Marshall**. The purpose was to share information as we continue the partnering relationship with MARC for the 3-Trails Corridor Project that will later also involve the Westport Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails.

A third meeting was on **August 22** at Trailside Center at 99th and Holmes, involving many of the same people plus other trails people that were able to attend. Also included were Raytown, Kansas City, and Leawood city officials, plus MoDOT, MARC and Cave Spring representatives.

After introductions by **Larry Short**, details of the MARC (Mid-American Regional Council) meeting held the day before were provided and a basic plan of implementation was discussed.

Larry then introduced **Lou Austin** who reviewed the excellent progress of constructing additional segments of the MetroGreen hiking and biking trails from about 85th and Blue Ridge Boulevard to 123rd and State Line Road. Included is the recently constructed pedestrian overpass on I-49 (Hwy 71) just south of Bannister Road and the current construction of the nearby larger Powder Mill pedestrian overpass across I-435.

Lou has been a pioneer for three decades in the development of the project and it is amazing to hear about his fundraising, accomplishments and plans for completion in the near future.



Lou Austin (right) addresses the audience at Trailside Center concerning the 3-Trails Corridor on the third day



(l-r) Steve Burns, OCTA President John Krizek, Kristin Van Fleet and Travis Boley, also on the third day at Trailside Center

Kansas City area long-time trails friend **Steve Rhoades** next spoke about his involvement developing the cooperative agreement between NPS and MARC for the 3 Trails Corridor Project and said it should be complete later this year.

Steve Burns spoke about the enthusiastic support NPS has, both financially and for technical support, for the project and the agreement.

The next day, **Steve** and **Kristin** accompanied OCTA Manager **Travis Boley** to the Lawrence and Topeka area to review potential placement of signs along the Oregon-California Trails there.

The following day, **Steve, Kristin** and **Larry Short** met with **Gordon Julich**, Jackson County Director of Parks and Recreation, to review status on the Salem Park Kiosk Marker Project on Highway 24 in eastern Independence.

By the end of the busy week, we had a better understanding of the implementation and direction of this new comprehensive plan to establish a Retracement Trail along the local Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails.

The future looks bright for the local trails in the Greater Kansas City area not only along the 40-mile 3-Trails Corridor of the Independence Route but also later it will include the Westport Route from Westport Landing to Gardner Junction.

The Kansas City area historic trails groups value all our partners – the National Park Service, the Mid-American Regional Council, **Steve Rhoades, Lou Austin**, and each of the many cities along the routes.

TRAILS HEAD, MRO, KCAHTA JOINT MEETING

For the first time, the membership of all three Kansas City area historic trails groups met in a joint meeting at the Trailside Center on **Saturday, August 29, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.**

Although each organization has its own projects and areas of activity, the groups share the same basic mission – the promotion, preservation and interpretation of our local historic trails. And several individuals are members of all three.

As we proceed deeper into the 3-Trails Corridor planning and development, the three organizations will be working together fairly constantly.

Approximately 50 members plus a few guests were in attendance as pictured above! Among the attendees were **Dr. Ron Slepitz** from Avila University, incoming president of the Santa Fe Trail Association **Larry Justice** and **SFTA Manager Joanne VanCoevern**.



Lou Austin addresses the Joint meeting crowd



MRO President Larry Short

Part of the program was presented (above) by **MRO President Larry Short**. It was a PowerPoint presentation showing all the progress that has been made in Jackson County the past couple of years on the 3-Trails Corridor Project.

Kansas City is a core project of the entire nation in the area of building Retracement Trails along National Historic Trail corridors. It was very informative and **Larry** does a good job with these kinds of presentations.

A second presentation was made by **Lou Austin** on all the work he has done in southeast Kansas City for many years. **Lou** will be speaker at Trail Head's annual meeting **November 7**.

Two preservation awards were presented to the Cave Spring Association and also the Friends of the Rice-Tremonti Home for their years of preserving their key trail sites.

Among the out-of town guests were **SFTA Association Manager Joanne** and husband **Greg VanCoevern** from Salina, plus **SFTA President Larry Justice**, of Wichita. Several new members joined the three groups during the meeting.

OCTA CONVENTION **SEPTEMBER 22-25**

A great OCTA 2015 Convention at Lake Tahoe, Nevada! We had great speakers and some great tours. How can you not be thrilled to go on the Donner Route or the Carson Route through the Sierras? No way to beat the scenery, the trails history and the fall weather in that area!

About 400 were registered including more than a dozen locals of Trails Head Chapter: **Dick** and **Ruby Nelson**, **Pat Traffas**, **Jean Coupal-Smith**, **Matt Mallinson**, **Audrey Elder**, **Shirley**

Coupal, Jim and Mary Kullberg, Kelly Breen, Arnold and Merle Cole, Allen and Sandra Wiechert and Ross and Shirley Marshall.

Most stayed at the Harvey Casino and Hotel in downtown Lake Tahoe, a great place.

One of the tours was along the Donner Party route on the north side of Lake Tahoe, which is known basically as the Truckee Route.

Trails Head held a chapter meeting there, conducted by Trails Head **President Dick Nelson**. **Treasurer Arnold Cole** said that about \$7300 was in our chapter's account.

Dick asked for everyone to turn in volunteer hours and expenses for the NPS's VIP totals.

Allen Wiechert said that the City of Lawrence will be aiding the effort to erect Oregon Trail signs through Lawrence.

Ruby Nelson mentioned that a lovely trail has been completed on the campus of Overland Park Regional Medical Center and will connect to the Flat Rock Creek Park area. At the park, the wayside replacement will be completed soon.

Ross Marshall was appointed chair of Trails Head nominating committee to present a slate of officer nominations at the annual meeting in November.

Past OCTA President **John Krizek** joined the meeting briefly to thank Trails Head for our efforts on behalf of OCTA.



NEW OCTA OFFICERS



Craig Crease

Pictured above (left) is **Pat Traffas**, the new OCTA Vice President, and **Sandy Wiechert** (center), the new OCTA Secretary.

Pat is a past president and vice president of Trails Head Chapter and has just recently served as OCTA Secretary. **Sandy** has recently served as Trails Head Vice President.

Not often has OCTA had two people serving as national officers at the same time (president, vice president, secretary or treasurer) from the same chapter. Trails Head Chapter 25 years ago had **Ross Marshall** as OCTA President and **Jim Budde** as OCTA Treasurer at the same time.

Congratulations to both **Pat** and **Sandy** for this national recognition!

In addition, **Trails Head President Dick Nelson** serves on OCTA's Board and **Matt Mallinson** was just elected to the Board.

CRAIG CREASE WINS WRITING AWARD

Pictured above at far right is **Craig Crease**, long-time Trails Head member and premier trails historian, who received the Mark Simmons Writing Award from the Santa Fe Trail Association at the Three Trails Conference in Santa Fe, NM **September 16-19, 2015**.

The award was for his article in the August 2014 issue of Wagon Tracks, the quarterly publication of SFTA, entitled "Without a Trace: The Becknell Five". The article dealt with the

five companions of William Becknell on his trading expedition to Santa Fe in 1821 that is credited as the beginning of the Santa Fe Trail.

Becknell did not keep a diary and his five companions' names are still a mystery. **Craig** has done years of research, but has only come up with some guesses in this long-standing mystery.

This is not the first writing award that Craig has received and may not be the last!

CAVE SPRING SITE NOW A NPS CERTIFIED SITE

The National Park Service has now approved the Barnes Enclosure/Cave Spring site at Gregory Boulevard and Blue Ridge Boulevard as an official NPS National Certified Site along the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails. **MRO President Larry Short** had prepared the application for submission to the National Park Service.

This action has been taken after several years of examining the diaries and trail history of the site. One of the problems has been that, while several diaries mention camping near the site, the spring itself was never directly mentioned in any diaries.

The Barnes Enclosure name attached to the property now stems from Jesse Barnes settling on the land in 1836 and later building a house just east of the Cave Spring site. Trail diaries and journals in the 1840s mention camping on Barnes farm, but no mention of the spring. Two of the most famous diaries were recorded in June, 1846 by Santa Fe Trail travelers Susan McGoffin and also by the Glasgow Brothers.

The spring was there, but the name Cave Spring was not applied to the site until years later.

It is nice to have the site certified because it is not only on the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails, but has been well preserved and now is a Jackson County Park, officially known as the William M. Klein Park.

At the recent joint meeting of Trails Head, MRO and KCAHTA on **August 29, 2015**, the Cave Spring Association received an award for its preservation work, not only for the Cave Spring site, but also for being the owners of the Wieduwilt Swale site at 85th and Manchester that had a new NPS wayside exhibit erected and dedicated a year ago.

PLANNING MEETING

On **Sunday October 11, 2015**, Trails Head held a Planning Meeting at **Marshall's** house at **2:00 p.m.** Present were **President Dick Nelson, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad, Eva Allen, Sandy Wiechert** and **Ross Marshall**.

Dick reported that **Treasurer Arnold Cole** told him the chapter has a balance of \$7054.00.

Eva reported Trails Head has 81 current memberships including seven new members this year.

Jean distributed a Volunteer In Parks (VIP) form to enable members to keep track of volunteer hours and expenses in the coming year to be turned into the National Park Service.

Dick announced that the Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, **November 7, 2015**. He also reported that the nominating committee chair is **Ross**, with **Dick** and **Mary** as members.

Ross reported that the wayside exhibit at Flat Rock Creek Park had disappeared and that the City of Lenexa will replace it. He also mentioned the Jim Bridger marker that he is working on with others. **Mary** mentioned that new Overland Park Regional Medical Center heritage trail that will have several markers on it.

Ross mentioned now that the early Trails Head oral histories have been transcribed, he will start work on editing them and also begin work on the chapter's early history back to 1983.

Jean said she will find some time to work on the website and also start revision of the bylaws.

Dick said that even though Trails Head doesn't have anyone skilled in electronic mapping, **Ross** is preparing a regional signage document.

Ross announced that the Partnership for the National Trails System is planning its annual meeting next year to be in Kansas City on **June 6-9, 2016**.

Ross also said that the OCTA 2017 Convention in Council Bluffs is being planned by OCTA Manager **Travis Boley**, because OCTA has no chapter in eastern Nebraska.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

On **Saturday, November 7, 2015** Trails Head's Annual Meeting was held at Trailside Center at **10:00 a.m.** **President Dick Nelson** welcomed everyone and gave a brief summary of all the Trails Head meetings and accomplishments of 2015. No financial report was given because **Treasurer Arnold Cole** was on a trip.

Membership Chair **Eva Allen** reported 83 current memberships. Nine were new this year, mostly from outside chapter boundaries.

Nominating Committee Chair **Ross Marshall** presented the following nominations for 2016 officers, all of which were elected.

President – Jean Coupal-Smith (Jean and Dick switched places because of
Vice President – Dick Nelson the two-year limit for those two offices)
Mary Conrad - Secretary (re-election)
Arnold Cole – Treasurer (re-election)

Ross also gave some details about the Historic Trails Workshop that will be held in the Kansas City area **June 6-9, 2016** by the Partnership for the National Trails System.

Dick reported that he and **MRO Chapter President Larry Short** staffed an informational booth at the Shawnee Indian Mission Fall Festival the second weekend in October.

OCTA Manager Travis Boley reviewed his busy schedule of speaking to key groups in the Kansas City area, both in the public and private arenas, about historic trails and what is happening and how OCTA can support the work.



President Dick Nelson welcomes the crowd



Lou Austin



Darby Trotter receiving award on site



Above is a magnificent piece of stone work near the wayside exhibit depicting a "flat rock" scene

Ross, as Awards Committee Chair, announced that **Darby Trotter** will be the recipient of our Distinguished Partner Award. **Darby** was unable to attend the meeting because he is in the hospital. **Darby** was influential in working with the City of Kansas City that allowed nine wayside exhibits to be placed at Town of Kansas three years ago. He was also the driving force in calling for the Overland Park Heritage Trail to be built behind the Overland Park Medical Center that connects with the site of Flat Rock Creek that was crossed by the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail. Several historical markers were placed thanks to his leadership. **Ross** will meet with him soon and present the award.

Ross then introduced **Lou Austin**, the scheduled speaker who has done so much to promote historic trails and build infrastructure, markers, etc. in southeast Kansas City in the last few years. The new Powder Mill Bridge over I-435 is nearing completion and a new 3-Trails Transit Station will soon be built near Blue Ridge Parkway and Bannister Road. Lou spoke about all his efforts along the 3-Trails Corridor from 87th Street to State Line Road during the past few years.

MARKERS DEDICATION **NOVEMBER 13**

A crowd in excess of 90 people gathered on the northeast corner of 80th and Santa Fe Drive in downtown Overland Park to help dedicate the *A Day on the Trail* project on **November 13, 2015**.

It has been a three-year multi-faceted project with the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, the Images Art Gallery and the City of Overland Park playing leading roles.



The mural that had to be removed after two years



DAR SFT stone marker

Volunteers and students from Images Art Gallery spent approximately 1500 hours and created the artwork in 2013 on the west side of the Wild Bird House building that houses the Gallery, located just east of this site. It was a project to highlight the history of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail that passed through present-day Overland Park. A portion of the 94-foot long Mural is shown above as it was dedicated **September 28, 2013**.

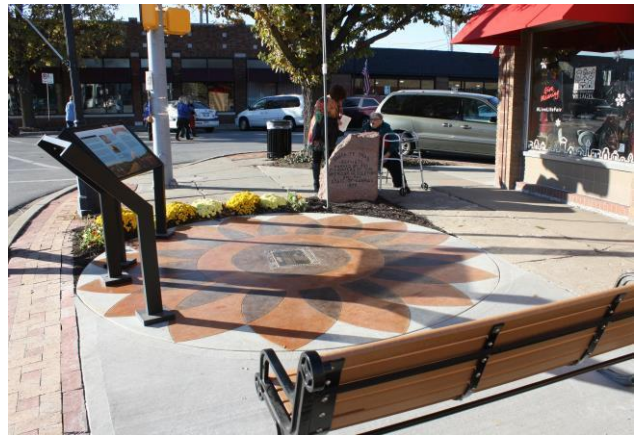
However, in just a few months the mural paint began to peel away, apparently from a chemical reaction of some sort between the mural base coat and existing wall coating. All proper steps were taken in the painting preparation stages to assure adherence and durability of the mural. However, by the next summer, all the mural was removed.

KCAHTA and many of its members had generously contributed \$2000 toward the cost of the mural. Fortunately, an anonymous donor subsequently replaced that money to KCAHTA.

KCAHTA **Treasurer Jean Coupal-Smith** (who is the new president of Trails Head) suggested using that money to construct a wayside exhibit to display the mural image and tell the story about the “A Day on the Trail” mural and the Santa Fe Trail. Thus the project was born.



Two wayside exhibits



Shown above is the whole site & all exhibits

The National Park Service said it would help with the digital layout process for the wayside. NPS suggested using two 24”x36” standard-size wayside exhibits, rather than one, which would allow the entire mural to be displayed. Those two waysides are pictured above.

Trails Head member **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall** spent several months working on the two wayside exhibits texts and graphics, plus working with the NPS on layout and final editing.

The City of Overland Park provided the site and designed and installed the various components of the project. City workers did an excellent job as always.



The text of the nameplate above is:

KCAHTA President Gary Hicks speaks

F. E. Cuppage, M.D.

August 17, 1932 – February 21, 2015

Beloved Husband, Father, Grandfather, Brother, Friend,

Westward Trails Historian

Professor of Pathology University of Kansas Medical Center.

On February 21, 2015 long-time Trails Head and KCAHTA member **Pete Cuppage** passed away. He was a medical doctor, faithful supporter of historic trails, and great friend of all of us.

Since the site plan called for a bench to match other benches in the immediate area, it was decided to designate it as a memorial to **Pete**. The bench and nameplate tribute to **Pete** are pictured above.

Pictured above at right is the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) granite Santa Fe Trail marker which is at the site. It is the most easterly of all the 96 DAR SFT granite markers placed in the state of Kansas along the trail in 1906-1907.

The DAR marker was first placed across the street in 1906, about 100 feet southwest of this site, near where the current William Strang statue is located. It was moved to this site on the east side of the street in 1925. The stone is now turned 180 degrees to enable visibility from the new circle of markers.

Shirley Coupal, past Kansas State Regent of the DAR and a Trails Head member, addressed the crowd and presented the history of the DAR and of the DAR marking of historic trails and historic sites across the nation since 1890.

KCAHTA President Gary Hicks and Trails Head member was the master of ceremonies for the dedication and reviewed the progress of the project and all who played a part in it. **Gary** was the lead person with the City and went to many meetings to finalize the plans and agreements. The unfortunate failure of the original mural has nevertheless resulted in a magnificent historic trail interpretive site in the Johnson County area and is a tribute to the benefits of collaborative partnering!

AVILA TRAIL DEDICATED DECEMBER 2



Above (looking north) is the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the close of the Avila University Trail Dedication on Wednesday, December 2, 2015.

Helping to hold and cut the ribbon are the speakers **Chairman/District Manager 3-Trails CID Lou Austin, MRO President and SFTA Vice President Larry Short, KCMO 6th**

District Councilmen Scott Taylor and Kevin McManus, Avila University President Dr. Ron Slepitza, Stacy Johnson Cosby and John Sharp of the PIAC 6th District, KCMO Parks and Recreation Director Mark McHenry, Red Bridge Homes Association President Larry Marsh and KCAHTA President Gary Hicks (at right holding the ribbon.)

Above at right, looking south, is the Trail with Wornall Road on the right and Avila University on the left.

The Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails goes along the south edge of Avila and this new recreation trail now circles the University.