

TRAILS HEAD HISTORY PART #8 - 2016 THROUGH AUGUST 2019

2016

PEGGY SMITH PASSES AWAY

Trails Head Charter member **Peggy Smith** passed away on **February 29** at the age of 94. She had been active in the local historical community for many years.



Peggy receives award in 2010 from Dan Sturdevant

Several decades ago **Peggy** had worked with city officials to rename the Intercity Viaduct to the Lewis and Clark Viaduct. And when that sign was replaced in **2009**, she received the award shown above from the local River Bend Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation from **Dan Sturdevant**, their president at the time, who is also a Trails Head member.

Peggy also had a great affinity for Jim Bridger, the famous western frontiersman and trapper. She led the effort to erect a sculpture of Bridger in front of the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence. She also a few years ago, was successful in getting a street renamed in Westport to Bridger Road. Trails Head Chapter gave **Peggy** an Award of Appreciation in 2011.

Peggy was a cheerful lady who worked at the Kansas City Library for many years and was a member of many local historical groups.

JOHNSON COUNTY SIGNS

About a year ago, four Trail Head members jumped in **Ross Marshall's** car and drove the Independence Route through Johnson County from the State Line to the Douglas County line, plotting the correct places for the new Local Tour Route signage.

Now that the Jackson County signage is about complete, it is time to move forward to complete the same signage system in Johnson County. Consequently, **Gary Hicks, Larry Short, Dick Nelson** and **Travis Boley** drove the route again and verified the original locations.

They finalized the map with the locations and sent it to the National Park Service who is partnering with Kansas City Trail groups on all the signs.

When the signs are erected, a person will be able to drive the entire 40-mile corridor from Independence Landing in Sugar Creek to Gardner without getting lost and "retrace the trail". In Johnson County, a driver will also pass the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association "Trail Crossed Here" signs. It will be quite entertaining for local residents!

CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING

A chapter planning meeting was held **Sunday, March 6, 2016** at **Marshall's** house at **2:00 p.m.** Attending were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad** and **Ross Marshall**.

With **Treasurer Arnold Cole's** absence, **Jean** reported \$7351.30 in the treasury.

With **Ruby Nelson** absent as Membership Chair, **Dick** reported 88 memberships including three new ones. **Jean** suggested that the chapter send welcome letters to new members. She will help **Ruby** compose a draft document.

Jean reported that she gave OCTA the Trails Head volunteer totals of 1458 volunteer hours, 31,141 miles traveled and \$7676 in expenses. OCTA will include these numbers in their totals to the National Park Service as part of the annual Volunteer in Parks (VIP) totals that NPS turns in every October 1 to the Department of the Interior to hopefully qualify NPS for more funding.

Jean will also send these totals to the Partnership for the National Trails System. PNTS started this idea back in **1995** to illustrate the great impact and value that the volunteers across the nation have. In fact, the Partnership totals exceed the total Congressional Appropriations to all the National Scenic and Historic Trails. Good illustrations of what public-private partnering is about.

Mary suggested that Trails Head donate \$500 to the National Frontier Museum this year. And perhaps the MRO and KCAHTA would want to do a donation together at the joint meeting on **September 17**.

Ross reported the Flat Rock Creek wayside exhibit that disappeared a year ago has been replaced by Lenexa Parks and Recreation.

Ross also reported that the Military Road plaque attached to a big stone on McAnany Road at about 54th and Nieman in Shawnee has been stolen. He will work with the Shawnee Parks people, **Gary Hicks** and **Craig Crease** to get it replaced.

JOINT MEETING HELD



About 30 attendees & MRO President Larry Short.



Lou speaking with his southeast Kansas City map displayed next to him.

For the second time, a joint meeting was held between Trails Head, MRO and KCAHTA on **Saturday, March 26** at 5904 Bannister Road at Schumacher's Station, **Lou Austin's** office.

After **MRO President Larry Short** conducted a short MRO business meeting starting at **10:00 a.m.**, **Lou** gave a very interesting review of how the Powder Mill Bridge came to be built.

It was a decade-long saga of working with state and local officials, obtaining grants and other funding, and surviving a general contractor that went broke during the bridge construction.

Lou told of one instance where the whole plan nearly disintegrated until he hand-carried a letter from one party to another, saving the project.

Without the leadership and dedicated patience and purpose of **Lou**, this bridge would never have been built!



When **Lou** finished his talk, attendees all went for a half-mile walk westward to the bridge, pictured above. Yes, it was raining the whole time, as the picture at left shows. But note a similar picture at right taken on a dry day.

The length of the bridge exceeds 250 feet. It runs beside the Bannister Road Bridge over I-435, but is not connected to it. It is a totally separate structure.

Ironically, by the time the attendees returned, the rain had essentially stopped. Nevertheless, this is a spectacular bridge that is adjacent to the exact location of the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California National Historic Trails.

The official dedication of this Bridge will occur on **June 9, 2016** as part of one of the mobile workshops during the National Historic Trails Workshop in Independence.

WHERE DOES THE NAME POWDER MILL BRIDGE COME FROM?

The Excelsior Powder Mill Manufacturing Company was begun by Frank P. Gorman **August 3, 1905**. The company, next to a little white schoolhouse, was located on 60 acres in the little village of Holmes Park, which was south of the new Powder Mill Bridge about 1½ miles, and near the current Cerner Office Building which was formerly the main office of the Marion Lab Company until about 10 years ago.

The company manufactured up to 1000 kegs of powerful blasting powder per day. It lasted about 20 years before lawsuits from explosions plus public pressure forced its closure.

WIEDUWILT SWALES NOW A KC PARK

MRO President (also **SFTA Vice President**) **Larry Short** has advised that all transfers of monies and deeds have been finalized and now the Wieduwilt Swales at 85th and Manchester is a Kansas City Park and will be maintained by the KCMO Parks Department. This will protect the swales for generations to come without fear of destruction.

This is the last chapter of a story that began nearly 20 years ago when **Gwen Holt** called **Ross Marshall**. She was the executor of her mother's estate which included this property that formerly had their family house on it. She wondered if the trail swale was of interest to Trails Head Chapter. Of course it was and Trails Head Chapter and Cave Spring Association began fundraising, finally securing \$15,000 to purchase the site in 1999.



Above is a new sign at the site as part of the 3-Trails Corridor Project. Behind to the left is a wayside exhibit dedicated in **2014**. Hidden by the sign is an MRO post sign that tells about the site. Also behind the new sign is the swale itself which is on the Independence Route of the Santa Fe – Oregon – California Trails.

The Cave Spring Association about 1½ miles north of this site agreed to become the owner and has maintained the site all these years.

The site is named after **Paul** and **Sharon Wieduwilt** who live next door and who have been helpful in watching and caring for the site over these years. In fact, a segment of the swale is on their property as well.

This is a very successful outcome to the story and thanks to **Larry Short** and **Lou Austin** for monitoring this transfer to the KCMO Parks Department.

If you have not been by the site lately, stop by and read the various markers and enjoy the swale on this key trail site at 85th and Manchester in Kansas City, Missouri.

KCAHTA MARKER PROJECTS UPDATE

Work is progressing on two more wayside exhibits. One is in Mission Hills on 69th Terrace and State line and the other in Penn Valley Park near Liberty Memorial, both on the Westport Route.

Working under task agreements with the National Park Service, **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall** are nearing the end of writing the texts and arranging the graphics on the markers. Both will be installed this summer and Trails Head will be notified of the dedication dates.

FLAT ROCK CREEK WAYSIDE REPLACED

The original wayside exhibit was installed by the Lenexa Parks and Recreation at Flat Rock Creek Park just east of 103rd and Pflumm. It was dedicated on **June 29, 2002** and, as it happened, it was a very hot day! Trail expert **Craig Crease** was the featured speaker.

The wayside panel was made of the fiberglass chemistry that tends to deteriorate after a decade or so. A couple of years ago, it began to be obvious that the exhibit was deteriorating. Then all of a sudden the frame and everything was gone!

Ross Marshall contacted former Lenexa Parks and Recreation Director Bill Nicks and he said the City was going to replace it. Sometime later last August, **Jenny Doty** of Lenexa Parks and Recreation called **Ross** and said they were working on a replacement. She wondered if **Ross** had a picture of the original because they could not read some of the text very clearly.

Craig Crease worked with **Ross** and former Lenexa Parks Director **Bill Nicks** to develop the texts and graphics, since the original digital records were not available.



Dick and Ruby Nelson at Flat Rock Creek wayside

Bill was able to furnish what **Jenny** needed. And behold, the new wayside was erected in **February, 2016!**

The new wayside is essentially the same as the original and tells about the history of the site, which was the crossing of Flat Rock Creek on the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California National Historic Trails.

BARBARA MAGERL PASSES AWAY

The principal founder of the Trails Head Chapter, **Barbara Magerl**, passed away **April 15, 2016**. Health issues and caring for her husband **Howard** until his passing a few years ago, forced **Barbara** to become inactive. But she was always an OCTA and Trails Head member.

Immediately after OCTA was founded in **August, 1982** in Denver by the so-called “Dirty Dozen” because 12 people were involved, a first national convention was planned for Independence, the east end of the Oregon Trail. **Barbara** was selected by founder **Greg Franzwa** to chair the planning committee for the 1983 Convention.

One of the first things she did was to call people like **Ross Marshall** who had bought **Greg’s** book “*The Oregon Trail Revisited*”. It was a very successful convention and got OCTA off to a great start.

The next year, **Barbara** was elected to the OCTA Board at the **1984** Convention in Oregon City, OR. Since OCTA had begun to form chapters, she was asked by **Greg** to go home and start a chapter in Kansas City.

On **November 10, 1984**, a gathering was held at the Alexander Majors Barn led by **Barbara** to investigate starting a new chapter. Several of “old heads” were there and agreed.

Barbara served as Trails Head Chapter President and was a key leader for the next 15 years or so. She edited the newsletter, which was then called the “*Tidings*”, led some early trail caravan tours, and contributed greatly to the growth of Trails Head Chapter.

Barbara was also very active with the Shawnee Indian Mission, Kansas Historical Society, Johnson County Museum and other groups.

She was a historian and a writer and loved the historic trails.

Barbara contributed greatly to the Trails Head Chapter and will be remembered for it.

CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head Chapter held a planning meeting on **Monday, May 16 at 2:00 p.m.** at **Marshall's** house. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad,** and **Ross Marshall.**

With **Treasurer Arnold Cole** absent, **Jean** reported the present balance is \$6986.73 and that **Arnold** had paid the \$500 chapter's share for the upcoming National Historic Trails Workshop.

Concerning the Workshop on **June 6-9,** Trails Head volunteers will need to transport travelers to and from the airport. **Ross** has got all the bus tours planned. As of now, 42 registrations have been received, plus a few interns attending.

When the Johnson County Heritage Trust Fund disappeared a couple of years ago, KCAHTA President Gary Hicks (also a Trails Head member) approached the County Commissioners about reinstating it somehow, but they were not receptive. Therefore, **Gary** has put together a committee to form a Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation.

Ross has been representing Missouri River Outfitters Chapter on that committee and moved that Trails Head join and pay annual dues. The motion was approved.

OCTA Board Committee A is assigned to OCTA Headquarters. If NFTM expands, all the OCTA belongings will need to be moved from Headquarters and the second floor. More later.

Membership Chair **Ruby** said **Travis Boley's** new intern **Kelsy Sackrey** joined Trails Head.

The next planning meeting will be **August 14.**

CAVE SPRING DEDICATION

On June 4, just prior to the National Historic Trails Workshop held **June 6-9** in Independence, the dedication of a new park bench was held at Cave Spring at the Barnes Enclosure on Blue Ridge Boulevard near Gregory Boulevard.



The text reads: Commemorating the Oregon, California and Santa Fe National Historic Trails which passed through this area in the 19th Century. This Bench is placed by the Oregon-California Trails Association and the Kansas City Regional Association of Realtors.

Attending were members of all the local trails groups, Raytown City Council, the Raytown Historical Society and the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department.

During the 1840s, covered wagons traveling west passed by this site, which was owned and farmed by the Jesse Barnes family. His home was on 72nd Street across Blue Ridge Boulevard, just east of the marker. His land was known as the Barnes Enclosure.

The property was owned by Solomon Young, the maternal grandfather of Harry S Truman from 1874-1877.



One of the key speakers was U.S. Congressman **Emanuel Cleaver**, above at left, who ironically lives about a mile south of this location. He is standing behind a DAR Santa Fe Trail stone marker dated 1909 inscribed with “Cave Spring” at the bottom, which is one of 28 similar markers set in Missouri along the Santa Fe Trail by the Daughters of the American Revolution

Another of the key speakers was OCTA Association Manager **Travis Boley** at right. Also in the picture is Cave Spring Association Director **Al Maddox**, who hosted the ceremonies.

The site is called the Barnes Enclosure, a National Certified Site as designated by the National Park Service. The 36-acre Park is owned by the Jackson County Parks and Recreation.

NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS WORKSHOP

The Partnership for the National Trails System, which is a consortium of all the organizations supporting the 30 National Scenic and Historic Trails, sponsored the very successful biennial National Historic Trails Workshop in the Kansas City area **June 6-9, 2016**.

The headquarters for the Workshop was at the new and very scenic Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center located in Independence at I-70 and I-435. The principal local hosts were Trails Head Chapter, Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of SFTA, and the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association.

Attendees from across the nation, including some from Hawaii, gathered in Independence, Missouri under the theme *Trails Enhancing the Quality of Life* to learn about and see first-hand how the Kansas City area has developed “retracement” trails along the 40-mile-long 3-Trails Corridor from Independence Landing in Sugar Creek to Gardner Junction.



After the opening reception on Monday night, everyone gathered for the first plenary session the next morning opened by **Aaron Mahr**, Superintendent of the National Park Service Intermountain Region in Santa Fe as shown above.

After others addressed the crowd, the first of two Mobile Workshop bus tours left at noon and traveled along the Independence Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails down to Bannister Road near the huge new Cerner 3-Trails Campus, now under construction.

They then made their way back north on I-435 to the Truman Courthouse on Independence Square for the dedication of the Fairbanks Oregon Trail Bronze Medallion.



Above in front of the Medallion are OCTA leaders (l-r) Vice President Pat Traffas, Preservation Chair Jere Krakow, Past President John Krizek, Board members Matt Mallinson and Dick Nelson and President John Winner. At far right is Aaron Mahr, NPS Superintendent, one of the speakers.



The bronze Oregon Trail Medallion cast about 20 years ago, pictured at left above, is quite spectacular both because of its size (three feet in diameter and 200 pounds) and its history.

The Medallion was very appropriately placed on the back of this wonderful Oregon Trail monument which has been at the Courthouse since 1948 telling the public that the Oregon Trail started in Independence, Missouri.

This is the last of a series of Medallions first cast in 1924 by artist and sculptor **Dr. Avard Fairbanks**, in part to commemorate his grandfather having traveled on the Oregon Trail in 1847, ending up in Salt Lake City.

Five other identical Medallions are on display along the Oregon Trail at Seaside, Oregon; Vancouver, Washington; Boise, Idaho; Casper, Wyoming; and Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

His son **Dr. David Fairbanks** from Bethesda, MD donated the Medallion to OCTA in 2004 with the intention of it being permanently installed at the beginning of the Oregon Trail at the Jackson County Historic Truman Courthouse in Independence at a convenient later date. There was a memorandum of understanding to that effect between OCTA and **Dr. David Fairbanks**.

This Medallion is yet another Historic Trail marker around the Truman Courthouse.

The Partnership for the National Trails System conference attendees were privileged to have a Boy Scout Troop present the colors, and students from Nowlin Middle School sing the Star-Spangled Banner. Very fitting to have the youth groups with trails people from all over the U.S.



Shown above are the dedication speakers (l-r) Jackson County Executive Frank White, Independence Mayor Eileen Weir, Matt Mallinson, Aaron Mahr, Travis Boley and Dr. David Fairbanks. Travis was the Master of Ceremonies for the dedication.



After leaving the Courthouse, the Mobile Work-shop continued by arriving at McCoy Park, where five trail markers are under the shelter.

A ground breaking ceremony occurred at a new Inclusive Play Project (see above at right), which is a playground that will feature signs in braille for the visually impaired and special playground equipment designed around a trails theme.

Several of the participants in the above picture portrayed famous historical people such as William McCoy, the first Mayor of Independence, and Alexander Majors (**Gary Hicks**).

Speakers from Independence included **Mayor Eileen Weir** and **Parks Director Eric Urfer**. They were joined by **Aaron Mahr** of NPS.

Most of the Workshop passengers hiked the ½ mile Mill Creek Park Trail north to the Mill Creek Park, where they were picked up by the bus and they headed for Independence Landing to view the site and all the markers.

Members of the Independence School system drama clubs joined the event at the landing and recited stories and diary quotes about emigrants who traveled the trails.



The attendees returned south on River Boulevard to the Mallinson Hall and Vineyard for dinner preceded by several speakers in costume, one of whom was Alexander Majors (**Gary Hicks**), pictured above.

Returning to Tuesday morning, the opening speaker was **PNTS Executive Director Gary Werner**. He introduced **Independence Mayor Eileen Weir** who welcomed everyone.

The next series of presenters were from the National Park Service, opened by Superintendent **Aaron Mahr**, followed by **John Cannella**, **Carole Wendler** and **Kristin Van Fleet**.

They reviewed all the projects in the Kansas City area on which they have partnered with local trails groups over the years. They verbalized how these projects and more to come have created a model of what can happen in other metro areas across the nation.

They look forward to the enormous potential for completing the future “retracement trail” projects that will include the Westport Route, especially since the NPS new agreement with the Mid-American Regional Council (MARC) specifically states this goal. That is the first such agreement in the nation between a federal agency and a local Metro Development Council.



The NPS speakers were followed by **Lou Austin** (above left), who presented an extensive review of all the trails projects, especially in the southeastern quadrant of Kansas City, that have

been developed over the years with many public and private partners. Included were Schumacher Park, the I-435 steel Silhouettes, the Three-Trails Crossing Memorial Highway, all the Cerner partnering, and they literally created the 3-Trails brand name. Pretty exciting!

Next was **Larry Short** (above right), President of the MRO Chapter and Vice President of SFTA, who reviewed all the partnering being done by MRO, Trails Head and the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association. And in addition, what exciting partnering has been occurring with all the suburban cities along the 3-Trails Corridor.



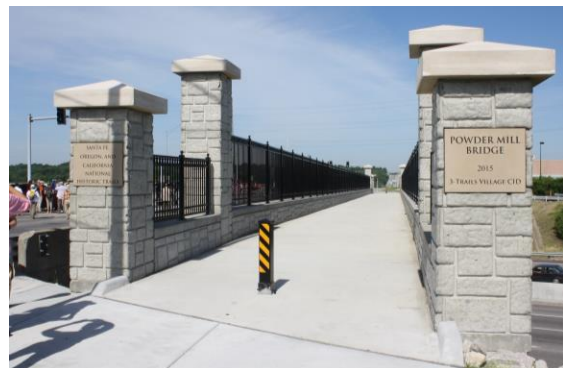
Travis Boley

The last Tuesday morning speaker was **OCTA Manager Travis Boley**. He reviewed partnering with cities, especially Independence and the National Frontier Trails Museum. Last year nearly 1000 students spent several days at the Museum doing trail research in diaries and books of all kinds.

Wednesday was all inside, with several speakers from all over the country including a professional lady named **Carol Weisman**. They spoke about everything from how to fundraise, how to recruit Board members and other leaders, and how to work with agencies

Thursday opened with the second Mobile Workshop that included a hike across the new Red Bridge before returning to I-435 and Bannister Road at the 10:00 a.m. Powder Mill Bridge Dedication. This project was actually finished some months ago, but **Lou Austin** of 3-Trails West CID chose to wait for this national event for its dedication.

The bridge was a \$1.5 mm MODOT project funded by the 3-Trails West CID, MODOT and Federal Highway funds. The contractor was LG Barcus & Sons Construction Company of Kansas City, KS.



Above is the dedication ceremonies on the temporarily closed adjacent Bannister Road attended by over 150 people. Speakers included several from MODOT and Kansas City. Above is **Aaron Mahr**, who spoke at all the Partnership Workshop dedications during the week!

Pictured above at right is the east end of the 250-foot long Powder Mill Bridge. On the left the sign says “Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails”. On the right “Powder Mill Bridge, 2015, 3-Trails Village CID”.



The Marching Pythons of KCMO, who led the march across the bridge after the dedication

After the dedication, the bus went over to the nearby wonderful pedestrian bridge (at right) over Hwy 71 built a few years ago, also by **Lou Austin**.

OCTA CONVENTION HELD IN FT. HALL

Those who attended the OCTA **2016** Convention in Fort Hall, Idaho had a great time. Great trails and bus tours, great weather, great speakers, great dinners, and always great to see old friends! About 300 attended including 15 from Trails Head Chapter.

Among other things, they heard a sample of the Native American view of the trails. Several of the Shoshone-Bannock tribe shared their personal and cultural thoughts about that era of history.



At left is Trails Head’s **Sandra Wiechert** (now OCTA’s Secretary) with Randy’L He-dow Teton, a Shoshone Ft. Hall native who was the face of Sacagawea on the 2000 U.S. dollar coin.

At right above is OCTA Association Manager **Travis Boley** displaying a plaque that shows the members of the OCTA Trail Legacy Society, which are those who have dedicated a portion of their estate to OCTA. It now includes Trails Head member **Kelly Breen** at right.

Attendees stayed at the large and fairly new Shoshone-Bannock Hotel and Events Center on the Fort Hall reservation which has 546,500 acres just a few miles north of Pocatello, Idaho.

Tours were taken on the Oregon-California Trail both east and west of Pocatello, the Lander Road and Goodale's Cut-off. Convention attendees saw sites such as the original Fort Hall, Soda Springs, Massacre Rocks, and the Fort Hall Replica in Pocatello.



Above is OCTA Awards Committee Chair **Dick Nelson** (re-elected to OCTA's Board) and Trails Head **President Jean Coupal-Smith**, his helper, after the annual Awards Ceremony

TRAILS HEAD MEETING AT FT. HALL CONVENTION

A brief chapter meeting was held at OCTA Convention at Ft. Hall Idaho on **August 4, 2016**. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Ruby Nelson, Pat Traffas, Ross and Shirley Marshall, Shirley Coupal, Sandra Wiechert, Kelly Breen. Matt Mallinson, Audrey Elder and her mother Sandra Emrick, Jerry and Sue Peppers.**

Membership Chair **Ruby** reported 83 current memberships.

Topics that were discussed were promoting education projects, the new mapping technology, and Trails Head continued work on Headquarters files and library materials. Also discussed were preparations for Trails Head Annual Meeting on **November 12**.

OCTA will have its board meeting in Independence next spring.

CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head held a planning meeting on **Sunday, August 14** at **Marshall's** house at **3:00 p.m.** Attending were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Ross Marshall, Ruby Nelson and Sandy Wiechert.**

Arnold reported \$6972.95 in the account.

Membership Chair **Ruby** reported 83 members. It was 88 recently, but some deaths have occurred such as OCTA former president **Bill Watson** at age 89. He went to WDC as always this spring and gave his report at the recent OCTA Convention a few days ago.

Discussions were had about the convention. **Jean** was happy the OCTA planners did not have the dinner, awards and auction on the same night, which meant that people did not tend to leave after the awards to avoid a long evening and therefore not bidding during the auction. Every night had a scheduled dinner, which pleased many. About 300 attended the convention. **Jean** was very busy as usual with the OCTA table, setting up the auction items, and coordinating a lot of other things.

Discussions were had about ways to promote the Trails Head Chapter concerning membership, events, speakers, etc.

The next joint trails meeting will be **September 18 at 5:00 p.m.** at Baldwin City hosted by the SFTA Douglas County Chapter.

The Trails Head Annual Meeting will be **November 12** at Trailside Center with **Matt Mallinson** and **Audrey Elder** as the speakers.

The next planning meeting will be **Saturday October 9** at **Marshall's** house at **3:00 p.m.**

PAPPAN'S FERRY CHARETTE

An extremely interesting and important Design Charrette was held in Topeka during the week of **August 22** concerning the development of the huge and exciting Oregon Trail Riverfront Park.

The charrette was conducted by the Santa Fe office of the National Park Service, the same office that is the Administrator of nine National Historic Trails including the Santa Fe, Oregon and California NHT's. Several NPS staff members led the week's sessions including **Kristin Van Fleet** and **Carol Clark** whom Kansas City trail leaders frequently work with on Kansas City projects.



The site for the new park is north of downtown Topeka on the north side of the Kansas River in what is known as "NOTO" (North Topeka!). The site is just south of where the Great Overland Station is located at 701 N. Kansas Avenue, where the charrette was held. Built by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1917, it was magnificently restored as a museum over a decade ago as shown above and below.



50 state flags fly in front of the Great Overland Station with information on each state at the base. An impressive scene!

A well-attended Charette!

Beth Fager, chair of the Topeka-Shawnee County Riverfront Authority (and **new member** of OCTA and Trails Head Chapter!), was the overall coordinator for the charette that had roughly 100 people in attendance as shown above.

The Park will commemorate the site of the Pappan brothers ferry that allowed many thousands of emigrants in wagon trains to cross the Kansas River from the early 1840s to the 1850s on their way to Oregon and California. In fact, so many lined up at times to use the Pappan's ferry that other ferries on the west side of Topeka operated on and off.

Trail diaries record that famous wagon trains used the Pappan ferry, such as the California-bound 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson party, the 1843 Great Migration party of nearly 1000 on their way to Oregon, and the 1846 Donner-Reed party. The 1849 Gold Rush flooded their ferry and all others that were operating. The "underground railroad" used the ferry when escaping slaves and their conductors traveled the Lane Trail from Kansas to Nebraska and Iowa.

The huge 1844 flood wiped out houses on the north side of the river and part of them ended up on a new island as the river split around it. But the ferry was back in business in 1845.

Etienne, Joseph and Louis Pappan were French-Canadian trappers who married three Kaw tribe half-sisters who had each received an allotment of one square mile on the north side of the river in 1840. The couples moved onto their lots and their ferry began on their land soon after. It

continued to operate after trail days were over, until 1863, by Louis Pappan's son-in-law Orren A. "Jack" Curtis, whose son was Charles Curtis, born in 1860, who was U.S. Vice President under Herbert Hoover in 1929-1933.



Pictured above are a couple of concept designs of possible developments that will allow family and recreational use of the future planned Oregon Trail Riverfront Park in Topeka.

ROBERTA BONNEWITZ PASSES AWAY-- 1911-2016

Yes, you are reading the above dates correctly! One of Kansas City area premier trail historians, especially of the Raytown, Missouri area, passed away **September 15** at age of 105.

Roberta had been a teacher in the Raytown school system. When she retired, she focused her time on researching and writing about the history of that area, particularly the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Historic Trails along the Independence Route through the Raytown area.

Two of the many books she authored are titled *Fragments of the Santa Fe Trail through Raytown 1849* and *The Rice-Tremonti Home: Old Stories with New Answers*. Roberta helped found the Raytown Historical Society. She also formed the Friends of the Rice-Tremonti Home which was instrumental in purchasing that 1844 historic home on the trail at 66th and Blue Ridge Boulevard. **Roberta** will be missed but her legacy of trail history and information will live on.

JOHNSON COUNTY SIGNAGE UPDATE

The signage plan for Johnson County involving the cities of Leawood, Overland Park, Olathe, Gardner and Edgerton is complete and the paperwork with each city is done. Many of the signs have already been delivered. The signs for the unincorporated areas of Johnson County have also been ordered. This project is being funded by OCTA and SFTA.

When installed, these local tour route signs will enhance the existing KCAHTA signs which mark the crossings of the trails on streets in the county.

Drivers will be able to “retrace” the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails on the Independence Route from Independence Landing on the Missouri River to Gardner Junction in Kansas.

Special thanks to **Kristin Van Fleet**, Landscape Architect for the National Park Service, who produced the map plans in the NPS Santa Fe office. Also thanks to Trails Head members **Larry Short, Dick Nelson, Travis Boley, Gary Hicks** and **Ross Marshall** for the many hours driving the route to determine the accurate location for each sign and for interfacing with local city and county officials to secure their approvals and commitments to install the signs.

CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING

A Trails Head Chapter planning meeting was held **Monday October 9, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.** at **Marshall’s** house. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad, Sandy Wiechert** and **Ross Marshall**.

With **Treasurer Arnold Cole’s** absence, **Jean** reported \$7132.93 in the chapter account.

Jean reported that Membership Chair **Ruby Nelson** said Trails Head had two new memberships. **Jean** had printed 25 copies of her president’s note on card stock for **Ruby** to send to new members. **Jean** will also send a personal invitation for the Trails Head’s annual meeting as well as a survey to each member asking for preferences on events, schedules, etc.

Jean said she wants to put on PowerPoint a Kansas City trail talk similar to what **Ross** has given over the years. She said that **Audrey Elder** and **Matt Mallinson** have agreed to speak at the annual meeting on **November 12**.

Jean appointed **Ross** to chair the nominating committee with **Dick Nelson** and **Pat Traffas** as members. Also, she asked **Ross** to chair the awards committee.

Ross reported that Trails Head does not need to be a 501(c)3 to be a member of the new Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation that **Gary Hicks** is organizing. **Ross** moved that Trails Head become a member of JCKHF. Dues are \$150 (or less) annually and that JCKHF will have at least 14 organization members. **Jean** will represent Trails Head, **Gary Hicks** will represent KCAHTA and **Ross** will represent MRO Chapter. The motion carried.

TRAILS HEAD ANNUAL MEETING

Trail Head Chapter’s Annual Meeting was held at the Trailside Center **Saturday, November 12, 2016** with a couple dozen members and guests in attendance.

President Jean Coupal-Smith called the meeting to order at **10:00 a.m.**

Treasurer Arnold Cole reported \$7133 in chapter bank account.

Membership Chair **Ruby Nelson** was unable to attend, but her report revealed 87 paid chapter memberships, which includes both single and family categories. This high total maintains the record high numbers achieved after the 2012 OCTA Convention in Lawrence.

Trails Head officer elections, per Trails Head bylaws, takes place at the Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee, chaired by **Dick Nelson** with members **Pat Traffas** and **Ross Marshall** nominated the existing officers for re-election and it was unanimous.

Chapter officers are: **President -Jean Coupal-Smith**
Vice President -Dick Nelson
Secretary -Mary Conrad
Treasurer -Arnold Cole

The Awards Committee presented two awards. The first was our Meritorious Achievement Award, posthumously presented to **Barbara Magerl**, accepted by her son **Chuck**. **Chuck** is the manager of the Free State Brewery in Lawrence. See the picture below.

Barbara, who passed away **April 15**, was the principal founder of Trails Head Chapter back in the 1980s. She was our second president, was an OCTA vice president, and hosted the OCTA first convention in 1983 in Independence. **Barbara** was a key leader in Trails Head Chapter for many years as well as with many other historical organizations in Kansas City area.



Above is Chuck Magerl with Ross Marshall at right



(l-r) Ross Marshall, Jenny Doty and Bill Nicks

Above at right is **Jennifer Doty**, Recreation Supervisor for the Lenexa Parks and Recreation, receiving the Distinguished Partner Award on behalf of Lenexa Parks for both the initial placement and the recent replacement of a wayside exhibit at Flat Rock Creek Crossing Park near 103rd and Pflumm. **Craig Crease** and **Ross** worked with **Jenny** to edit the text material for the marker.

Also pictured is **Bill Nicks** who was the Director of the Lenexa Parks and Recreation when the wayside exhibit was first placed in the **1990s**.

Sandra Wiechert, the previous Trails Head Vice President and currently OCTA secretary, made some brief remarks about the recent Pappan's Ferry Charette held in Topeka, **Joy Poole's** book (she is the president of the SFTA End of the Trail Chapter) about Hugh Glass that she presented at the joint meeting in September at the Lodge in Baldwin City, and also the work **Sandra** and her husband **Allen** are doing on the trail signage plan in Lawrence.

OCTA Association Manager **Travis Boley** described the details of the OCTA next convention which will be in Council Bluffs **August 8-12**. Since OCTA does not have a chapter there, **Travis** is functioning as the convention chair. Registration info will be available soon.

It will be a convention involving not only the Oregon and California Trails, but also the Mormon Pioneer Trail, the Lewis and Clark Trail, the Lincoln Highway and the Trans-Continental Railroad. The OCTA 8th convention was held in nearby Omaha in 1990.



(l-r) Audrey Elder and Matt Mallinson

Pictured above are some of the attendees with **Secretary Mary Conrad** (standing) reviewing the minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting with **President Jean** seated at right.

After a brief refreshments break, **Jean** then introduced Trails Head members **Matt Mallinson**, a member of OCTA Board of Directors, and **Audrey Elder**, as pictured above. They co-chair the OCTA Education Outreach Committee.

Matt and **Audrey** have been for the last couple of years developing curriculum ideas and initiatives that will help schools lead their students toward having more interest in history and social studies, especially historic trails. This is especially important today because schools are minimizing their accent on history and social studies.

They have talked with many school board members and other education leaders about the above concepts. Many of these ideas are being put online by **Matt** and **Audrey**, which makes them accessible to any teacher or curriculum for free.

One of the initiatives is to make available an actual Oregon or California Trail journal to each student. Such students each spend a week reading it, sharing it with another student, and then reporting on it to the class.

A year ago or so, Independence 8th grade students were the first to use the curriculum created by OCTA, **Brian Schultz** (Social Studies Director of the Independence School District), and **Matt** and **Audrey**.

All the Independence grade students now spend a month studying trail journals, then take a field trip to the National Frontier Trails Museum to study the journals and discuss them. They also enjoy a campfire style lunch with re-enactors from an Independence High School Drama Club, take a trip through the Independence Square on a mule drawn covered wagon, and end the day at Independence Landing where the Drama Students share monologues from trail journals.

This program gives students a real first-hand experience of what it was like to travel the trails while also giving them exposure to expanded and often lost vocabulary, geographical places, and the science of that time. Giving them this type of opportunity helps to increase student's interest in history. As they are reading they are researching and personally interacting with history.

Students are also encouraged to journal themselves on a daily basis. There is an effort to collect student's journals and archive them for the future, because most people communicate with technology today, which could leave the future with no way of knowing what life was like today.

The Education Outreach Committee has goals to extend the curriculum to other school districts and to introduce more American indigenous history along the trails.

SALEM PARK DEDICATION

On **December 2, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.**, the Salem Park dedication took place at its location at Blue Mills Road and Highway 24 in eastern Independence on the Santa Fe Trail. It was a sunny but chilly morning with over 30 people attending.

This project is the 11th of the SFTA “Kiosk” projects that have been completed in the last eight years or so. Two others are in the Kansas City area at McCoy Park in Independence, MO and Gardner Junction near Gardner, KS. At least four others are planned along the Santa Fe Trail.

The initial planning meeting was on **April 24, 2012**. In attendance were **Gordon Julich** and **Mark Trosen** of the Jackson County Parks and Recreation, **MRO President Roger Slusher** (who passed away a year later), **Larry Short**, **John Atkinson**, **Dick Nelson**, **SFTA Manager Joanne VanCoevern**, her husband **Greg**, and **Ross Marshall**.

Joanne played a very key role in the project by handling the application paperwork for the cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, an important source of the financing for the project. The cost of the three new upright kiosk markers was about \$12,000.



Larry Short (at right in the above left picture), President of the Missouri River Outfitters Chapter and Vice President of SFTA, who had managed the project during its entire design and construction phases over the last three years, greeted everyone and began the ceremony. Also pictured is **Kristin Van Fleet** and **Steve Burns** from the National Park Service in Santa Fe. **Kristin** and **Lynne Mager** were the principal NPS working partners.

Above at right is a picture just before the dedication showing the three new upright exhibits, the existing wayside exhibit at the far left on the 1864 Battle of Westport, the existing 1909 DAR SFT stone monument that was relocated during the project at considerable expense, the concrete slab, the gravel parking area and the barrier to prevent cars from parking on the slab. Behind the camera is an existing Battle of Westport upright marker.

The principal partners on the project were the National Park Service, Jackson County Parks and Recreation, SFTA and the SFTA local Missouri River Outfitters Chapter.



Above is a picture just after the unveiling that shows the crowd that gathered.

When you have a chance, drop by Salem Park and look at all the markers and enjoy this very key trail site. Soon, road markers will be installed that will allow a driving tour of the Santa Fe Trail to the east all the way to Arrow Rock and Old Franklin where the trail began.

The actual Santa Fe Trail is westbound about a mile north of these Salem Park markers.

CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head Chapter held a planning meeting Friday, **December 2, 2016** at **Marshall's** house at **2:00 p.m.** Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Ruby Nelson, Sandy Wiechert** and **Ross Marshall**.

Ross reviewed the Salem Park markers dedication held this morning at **10:00 a.m.** A good crowd was there at this key site on the Santa Fe Trail.

Membership Chair **Ruby** reported 87 memberships. She also reported sending card-stock welcomes to the new members as well as sending reminders to members due for renewal.

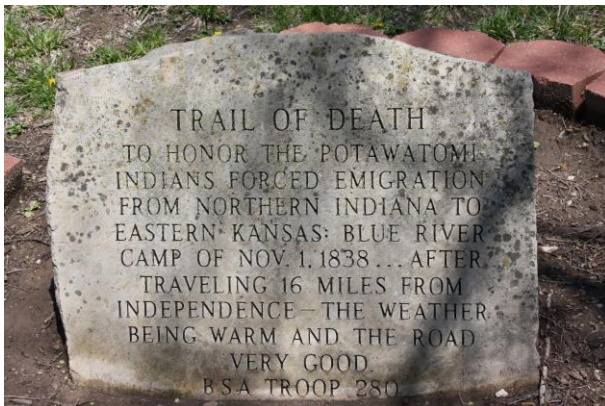
Ross reported that the City of Olathe is purchasing the Elm Grove campground property, which is about two miles southwest of Olathe on highway 56 on the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails. Not certain yet of the size of the purchase.

President Jean would like to have a joint trail picnic at Lone Elm Park, similar to previous events there that would celebrate National Trails Day. A tentative date of **June 3** was selected. She and **Ross** will contact the City of Olathe, caterers, Mahaffie House, Kevin Corbett, etc.

The attendees also discussed roles of Trails Head members in the SFTA 2017 Symposium scheduled for **September 27-30** in Olathe.

It was decided to schedule Trails Head Annual Meeting at Trailside Center. **Dick** suggested donating \$50 to Trailside which was approved.

NEW TRAIL OF DEATH SIGNS



Trail of Death marker about 100 feet south of the Red Bridge on the east bank of Big Blue River

In 1838, the Potawatomi Trail of Death crossed through what is now the Kansas City area. In the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, various entities placed historical markers along that historic trail from northern Indiana into Kansas. In the last few years, many governmental entities have begun installing directional signs.

Many Indians were removed from their eastern homelands in the 1830s, but a portion of the Potawatomi refused to go west. Thus, Indiana militiamen rounded up at least 800 Potawatomi for an 1838 forced march that proceeded westward on many different established roads to Lexington, Missouri, where the Potawatomi began to follow the Santa Fe Trail. That caravan continued on the Santa Fe Trail until turning south toward the Osawatomie Indian Agency.

Years ago historical markers were placed in the Kansas City area at the following locations: by an Independence pioneer cabin, near the Red Bridge Crossing, at about 215th St. and State Line and in Heritage Park in southern Johnson County. Since the forced march followed the Santa Fe Trail in the Kansas City area, the 215th St. marker was not appropriately placed. When the 215th St. plaque was stolen, that marker was not restored.

In 2014 Johnson County, Kansas joined the movement to place Trail of Death directional signs. Several concerned individuals including **Mary Conrad**, **Jon Boursaw** (of the Citizen Potawatomie Nation), **Ross Marshall**, **Delores Rush** and others had several meetings with **Bill Maasen**, then the Director of the Johnson County Parks and Recreation to determine what the exact 1838 route was in Johnson County and where to place directional signs.

Craig Crease, an authority on Kansas City area historic trails, also helped by reviewing the 1838 diary. He noted that the travelers became lost for a time as they tried to find the new route of the Santa Fe Trail. **Craig** stated that the Santa Fe Trail had begun to use the later Independence Route by 1838. Therefore, it was logical that the Trail of Death that became lost after crossing the Big Blue, must have crossed the Big Blue at the then fairly new Red Bridge crossing and the state line at about 123rd street, following the Santa Fe Trail route that now has been designated the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

Furthermore, although a marker had been placed at Heritage Park (near 159th St.) a number of years ago, **Crease** thinks the Potawatomi more likely camped near 151st St. (Blackbob Park) to the north of Heritage Park.

In the fall of 2016, Johnson County Parks and Recreation, under the direction of **Director Bill Maasen**, began to install Trail of Death directional signs. When all the Johnson County signs are in place, a driver will be able to follow about a dozen directional signs from near 123rd Street and State Line southwesterly to Heritage Park that is bordered by 159th Street on the north.

By continuing to follow signs, a driver will travel west through the park, south on Lackman, west on 175th, south on Ridgeview, and west on 207th before heading south on Harrison to exit the county. When Johnson County has completed installations, Miami County to the south may need to move some of its directional signs so a traveler will be able to continue to follow signs.

Many governmental entities, such as Johnson County Parks and Recreation, continue to install these directional signs along the entire Trail of Death Trail. Eventually anyone will be able to travel 650-plus miles on the trail by following Trail of Death directional signs from Twin Lakes, Indiana to Osawatomie, Kansas.

(**Mary Conrad** wrote most of the above article. She knows the entire route from Indiana to Kansas as well as anybody and has traveled it and researched it for a good many years. Thanks **Mary!**)

2017

CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head held a planning meeting **Sunday February 5 at 2:00 p.m.** at Marshall's house. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Ruby Nelson, and Ross Marshall.**

Arnold reported \$6888.30 in the chapter account.

Membership Chair **Ruby** reported that the chapter now has 89 memberships, including three new members.

The attendees reviewed the details and preparations for the upcoming calendar items such as:

- Penn Valley markers dedication on **February 22**
- Trails Head Chapter meeting **March 18** at Trailside Center with speaker **Bob Courtney** presenting some of the history videos produced by the Olathe Historical Society
- National Trails Day Rendezvous event at Lone Elm Park on **June 3**
- Who is going to OCTA's Mid-Board Meeting in Vancouver, Washington

PENN VALLEY MARKERS DEDICATED

After about a dozen years of patient waiting, the two Santa Fe Trail plaques were re-installed and rededicated, along with a new wayside exhibit, on **Wednesday February 22 at 2:00 p.m.** It was a wonderful day (81 degrees!) and about 42 people in attendance.

The two plaques, pictured below, were mounted on a limestone and masonry monument in front of the old St. Mary's Hospital that was located on Memorial Drive leading up to the WW1 Liberty Memorial in Penn Valley Park.

They were removed when the hospital was torn down a dozen years ago or so to be replaced near the Federal Reserve Bank now at that site. The two plaques were stored by the Kansas City Parks and Recreation, primarily in the custody of **Jocelyn Ball**, who has worked with area historic trail leads to find a way to get them re-installed.

After a period of a few years, KCAHTA was able to partner with the National Park Service to get the new wayside exhibit produced. In return, KC Parks and Rec, coordinated by **Jocelyn Ball**, was able to finance the installation and construction of this marvelous exhibit right smack on the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California within a hundred feet of the original location of the plaques. **Ross Marshall** worked with **Jocelyn** over the last couple of years on this project. She has received an award from KCAHTA for her work.

A very high-profile site for markers on the National Historic Trails in the Kansas City area!



Gary Hicks



Mark McHenry

Above at left is **Gary Hicks**, KCAHTA President, addressing the crowd at the dedication. The wayside exhibit is covered with a blue veil and the limestone monument with the plaques is to the right covered in a black veil.

Above at right is the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Director **Mark McHenry** addressing the crowd, with the Liberty Memorial in the background.

Additional speakers at the Dedication were **Dona Boley**, President, Penn Valley Park Conservancy, who approved the location; **Diane Raley**, Senior Vice President of the Federal Reserve Bank; **Pat Traffas**, KCAHTA Vice President and DAR leader and **Ross Marshall** as moderator.



The limestone monument with the two identical plaques on front and back, plus the wayside.

Above is one of the two mounted plaques, about 19”x26” in size, showing oxen pulling a freight wagon on the Santa Fe Trail. In the two lower corners of the marker are the city seals of Kansas City, MO and Santa Fe, NM at the other end of the Santa Fe Trail.

These two plaques were designed in 1905 by the Kansas City Board of Park Commissioners and the Board of Public Works, in cooperation with the Daughters of the American Revolution. Apparently about a dozen were manufactured and placed along the Santa Fe Trail by the DAR over the next few years. Most of them still remain.



Above is the wayside exhibit manufactured under a grant from the National Park Service. The digital layout was done by the NPS from pictures and diary quotes furnished mostly by Trails Head member **Craig Crease**, long-time trails historian and past president of KCAHTA, with assistance from **Ross Marshall**.

It was a great day and a great project!

CHAPTER MEETING HELD

The first Trails Head Chapter meeting in 2017 was held at Trailside Center on **Saturday, March 18 at 10:30 a.m.** **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Ruby Nelson and Ross Marshall.**

All the officers were there and made reports and various announcements.

Treasurer Arnold Cole reported \$7058.30 in the bank.

Ruby announced that Trails Head has 87 paid members.

Allen Wiechert, who lives in Lawrence with wife **Sandy**, reported on the progress of getting driving route markers installed in Lawrence along the Oregon-California Trail that goes north from the Wakarusa River up through the KU campus and west along the Highway 40 corridor toward Topeka. **Allen** has been working on this project for some time and it is now in progress.



Pictured above is **President Jean Coupal-Smith** addressing the 30 or so attendees.

Pictured at right is **Bob Courtney**, President of the Olathe Historical Society, who is holding one of the videos that he presented to the attendees. Each were about 10-12 minutes long and were entitled: *The Bricklayer*, *The Mahaffie Family*, and *Quantrill's Raid on Lawrence*.

Bob made comments both before and after each video about their content.

The Bricklayer was a man named James Garfield (Indian Joe) Brown who won a bricklaying contest in 1925 on Kansas City Road just north of Olathe. It was the road between the two cities and needed to be bricked. Brown had spent years laying bricks and won the contest with another man by laying around 40,000 bricks that day.

The Mahaffie Family video was about a key family that settled north of Olathe in the 1850s and built a fine home in 1858 that still exists as the Mahaffie House site.

The third video was about William Quantrill's raid on Olathe in September, 1862.

The Olathe Historical Society's current plan is to produce 14 videos. Most are done and currently the Society is working on *Trails to Rails*, about the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails that go through Johnson County. KCAHTA **President Gary Hicks** and **Ross Marshall** worked on the video text material. The videos are very high quality and many have won Emmy awards. They are well-crafted onsite films and extremely entertaining.

Much of the cost of the videos has been donated by a lady named **Marian Moore**, who had actually seen the 1925 brick laying contest!

Great entertainment and a great job by **Bob Courtney** as the presenter.

OCTA VANCOUVER SYMPOSIUM

Several Trails Head members attended the *Layers of History on the Columbia River* Symposium and Board meetings of OCTA and the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, on March 30 to **April 2**.

OCTA conducted both a workshop and Board meeting and LCTHF had a two-day Board meeting. In addition, on **April 2** a bus tour was conducted around Vancouver relating to the Oregon Trail, the Lewis and Clark Trail and lots of other sites along the Columbia River.



Pictured above at the Vancouver OCTA Board meeting are at far left **Pat Traffas**, OCTA Vice President; **Jean Coupal-Smith**, Trails Head President; and **Sandra Wiechert**, OCTA Secretary. At upper right is **Matt Mallinson**, Board member and **John Winner**, OCTA President. All five are Trails Head members. At far right is **Travis Boley**, OCTA Association Manager. **Dick Nelson** and **Ross Marshall** are out of the picture to the right.

CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head Chapter held a planning meeting on **Monday, May 1, 2017** at **Marshall's** house at **10:00 a.m.** Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Sandy Wiechert** and **Ross Marshall**.

Arnold reported a balance of \$4074.22 in the account. He has received two checks recently. One was the OCTA quarterly check for \$240 for chapter dues. The other one was \$30 donated by **Ross** which was his honorarium from speaking to Monticello Community Historical Society.

Arnold also reported that he checked with First Federal Bank regarding interest bearing accounts. The best was a 1% interest. \$50 could be earned annually if Trails Head put \$5000 in that account. The money would be available if needed. Since the chapter has no major project planned at this time, **Ross** moved that the chapter deposit the \$5000. It passed unanimously.

Membership Chair **Ruby Nelson** was absent so **Dick** reported that Trails Head has 87 memberships. **Ruby** has sent several dues reminders to members.

Attendees discussed plans for the **June 3** National Trails Day event at Lone Elm Park. Trails Head, Missouri River Outfitters and Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association members will receive an e-blast about the details. Other local groups will also be contacted. **Jean** is planning to have a choice of brisket, pulled pork and chicken plus sides, drinks and dessert. The cost will be \$12 each. Most of the desired speakers are planning to come.

The group talked about volunteers that will be needed at the OCTA Convention in Council Bluffs in **August**.

PIONEER WOMAN STATUE DEDICATED

On **Thursday, May 11 at 5:00 p.m.**, a dedication ceremony was held at the National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence for the replacement Pioneer Woman Statue, shown above.

The original six-foot statue was dedicated **March 24, 1990**, a year or so after the National Frontier Trails Center (now called Museum) was opened. It was a wonderful piece of art, but it was placed back in between the Museum and the OCTA National Headquarters building and not very visible to the public.



Pictured above are the four speakers at the dedication. (l-r) Sarah Poff, President of the Friends of the National Frontier Trails Museum; Eileen Weir, Mayor of Independence; Charles Goslin, who sculpted the statue; and NFTM Administrator David Aamodt.

That first statue was sculpted by Juan Lombardo of Mexico and was placed when **Barbara Potts** (who was present) was Mayor of Independence.

In **June 2013**, vandals stole the bronze statue, once valued at \$30,000, smashed it to pieces and tried to sell it for scrap. They were caught and sent to prison.

About \$40,000 was raised from private sources to replace the statue. The new one, also of bronze, was sculptured by **Charles Goslin**, who did the magnificent trails murals in the Center.

The new sculpture differs somewhat from the original Pioneer Woman, who held a bucket in one hand and cradled a baby in the other. Now both arms hold a small child.

This Pioneer Woman Statue, like the first one, portrays the family responsibilities and efforts expended by women on the Oregon and California Trails. It is placed in front of the Museum in plain view for the public, similar to the nearby Jim Bridger statue.

Charles Goslin has given the name of “Anna Belle” to the statue because of the inspiration he received from **Anna Belle Cartwright** when in the early 1950s he helped her sculpt the magnificent family pioneer sculpture in Prairie Village on Mission Road at about 69th Street. The pioneer mother in that sculpture displayed a strong pioneer spirit.

The unfortunate loss of the original Pioneer Woman Statue has now been replaced, preserving the valuable heritage of all pioneer woman on the pioneer trails during their way west.

ALLEN WIECHERT - LAWRENCE TRAILS

In an earlier issue of *Traces*, **Allen** wrote an article detailing his work on the Oregon-California Trail through Lawrence. He has been working with the National Park Service on a signage project through Lawrence and he wants the signs to be placed accurately - and good for him!

Ross went to Lawrence and met him and **Sandra** on **May 26** and they sat down and reviewed all of **Allen's** maps as well as **Ross's**, plus other information. Then they drove the route through town and investigated some possible alternative routes that may or may not have been used.

At the conclusion of the time together, **Allen** and **Ross** were pretty certain about the principal route of the trail all the way through Lawrence. **Allen** subsequently communicated that information to **Kristin Van Fleet**, Landscape Architect with NPS and others.

The signs should now be placed accurately. Good job **Allen!**

INDIAN CREEK TRAIL INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE PROJECT

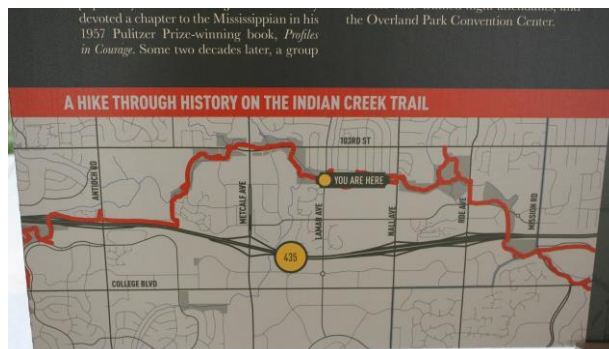
A reception was held on **June 3**, National Trails Day, at Roe Park at 10400 Roe Avenue on Indian Creek, similar to one a year ago on National Trails Day at the same location, displaying markers that will be installed on the Indian Creek Trail, a recreation trail along Indian Creek that flows through Johnson County.

Seven 40"x60" panels were on display with tons of information, pictures, maps and stories about the history of Johnson County. About the same number were on display last year.

The project is being led by Sunflower Republic, a history research consultancy founded by **Henry Fortunato**, a local historian that Kansas City area historic trails leaders know. **Henry** is an active member of the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association.

Various partners including Johnson County Museum, Parks Department of Overland Park, Overland Park Historical Society and Lenexa Historical Society are involved in the research and support of the project.

No, this is not a Historic Trail project, but it is a serious effort to interpret the history of Johnson County to those that use the recreational trail along Indian Creek. And it is interesting stuff, looks very well-researched, brilliantly displayed and easy to read and understand.

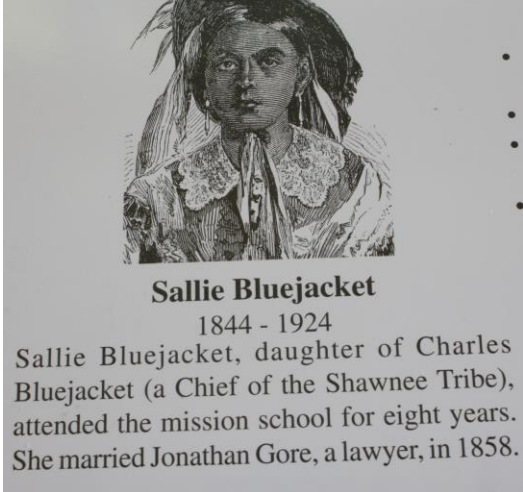


A map on one of the panels that shows Indian Creek and its Trail through part of Johnson County

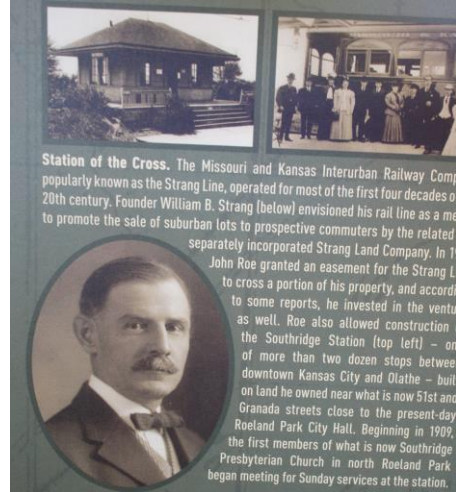
The panels display many stories, including who and what are some of our streets named after, like Lamar, Nall Avenue, Roe Avenue, Antioch Road, Marty, Quivira Road (no, Coronado never slept there!), Pflumm Road, Mission Road, etc.

Others contain biographies of our early settlers and land owners, Native Americans, historic sites, picture and maps.

One of the panels, above, tells the story of William B. Strang, Jr., whose 17-mile long Strang Line Railroad running from near downtown Kansas City southwest along the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail to Olathe, enabled him to develop his "Overland Park" land out in the country at the time. Without his railroad, Overland Park would not exist.



Just a sample of the many stories on the panels



William B. Strang

The Indian Creek Trail is not only picturesque but now is educational as well.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY AT LONE ELM PARK

A very successful event at the Lone Elm Park Rendezvous Shelter! The weather was ideal and 47 people attended. This National Trails Day event on **Saturday, June 3, 2017** was hosted jointly by Trails Head Chapter, Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of SFTA and Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association.



President Jean Coupal Smith



Left is Tim Talbott, Director of Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop & Farmstead, and at right is Kevin Corbett

The agenda began with opening remarks by **President Jean Coupal-Smith** at about 10:30 a.m. Following her was old friend **Kevin Corbett**, retired Olathe Parks and Recreation Director, who had a large part to do with the purchase of the 156-acre farm in 2001 from the **Don Willsey** family. It was one of the most famous campgrounds on the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails for wagon trains in the 1840s and 1850s.

The City of Olathe purchased the farm for \$1.8 million and put over \$4 million into it to construct the Rendezvous Shelter, children's soccer and baseball fields, bridges and hiking trails.

Kevin has been a speaker at all previous National Trails Day events at Lone Elm and other locations and Trails Head Chapter owes him a lot.

Ross Marshall was the next speaker and reviewed some of the other details of that farm purchase and the great example it was to the Greater Kansas City area that Olathe would invest that heavily in a National Trails Site. It opened the door to other suburban cities being very receptive to supporting Kansas City area trails.

Gary Hicks, president of Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association, reviewed how KCAHTA has participated in Johnson County trail signage with over 350 “The Trail Crossed Here” signs in the last 15 years, and through renewed cooperative agreements with the National Park Service has erected over a dozen wayside exhibits, the last being in Penn Valley Park in February.



Larry Short



Travis Boley, OCTA Manager

Larry Short, Trails Head member, president of MRO and vice president of the Santa Fe Trail Association, reviewed the signage project that has resulted in more than 100 signs being erected on the Independence Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails in the last couple of years. Each of the cities, the National Park Service, OCTA and SFTA partnered financially and other ways to complete it. And **Larry’s** fingerprints were over all of it!

Shirley Coupal, past president of KCAHTA and former Kansas Regent of DAR, talked about the preservation of this Lone Elm site and others with DAR markers along the Santa Fe Trail.

OCTA Manager Travis Boley reviewed the expansion of regional trails in the Kansas City area like the KATY Trail that now has right-of-way that will allow the trail to continue into Kansas City, MO.

In addition, he mentioned a number of cities across the western part of the U.S. that are now copying the Kansas City initiative of developing “Retracement Trails” displayed by the mileages of pedestrian hiking trails constructed by suburban towns along metro Kansas City Historic Trails corridors.

He also reviewed the OCTA Convention that will be held in Council Bluffs, NE in August.

After a wonderful lunch provided by Smokin’ Joe’s BBQ, **President Jean** (pictured above), reconvened the group and introduced **Tim Talbott** (pictured above), who spoke about wagons and especially oxen that he trains and had brought to some previous Rendezvous events. He couldn’t bring the team this year because one of them was “in heat” and not behaving well.

Kevin Corbett then led several of the attendees over one of the hiking trails and reviewed not only the history of the trail campground but how portions of it were developed, interpreted and preserved by the Olathe Parks and Recreation after the City of Olathe purchase in 2001.

Trails head gives special thanks to **President Jean Coupal-Smith** whose leadership was invaluable in the planning and coordination of the event details!

Overall, a very successful and well-attended National Trails Day event!

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

This national day, always on the first Saturday in June, was developed by American Hiking Society a couple of decades ago to draw attention to the America's National Trails System and to urge people to get out on the trails. It emphasizes the 30 National Historic and Scenic Trails as well as all the hiking and biking recreational trails across the nation, all of which are a part of the National Trails System.

When **Pat Traffas** was president of Trails Head Chapter, we held very successful Rendezvous events in **2006, 2008** and **2010** on National Trails Day at the Lone Elm Rendezvous Shelter. Trails Head did not host one in **2012** because the chapter was hosting the OCTA National Convention in Lawrence and has not had one there since. **Jean Coupal-Smith**, the current president came up with the idea to resume the event on **June 3**, National Trails Day of 2017.

NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT

The NTSA was passed by Congress on **October 2, 1968** creating a family of trails called the National Trails System. The first two trails admitted were the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

The purpose of the NTS was to "promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the nation." It also requested that fourteen more trail routes be studied for possible inclusion.

In **1978**, an amendment was passed allowing trails of national significance relating to their historic values. As a result, Congress designated the Oregon, Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer, and Iditarod Trails as the first four National Historic Trails.

In ensuing years, 16 more National Historic Trails have been designated, including California NHT and the Pony Express NHT in 1992, the Santa Fe Trail NHT and Trail of Tears NHT in 1987, the Old Spanish NHT in 2002, plus eight more along the way.

In addition to the 19 NHTs, a total of 11 NSTs have also been designated. All 30 of the National Scenic and Historic Trails are administered by federal agencies like the National Park Service. And each of the 30 trails support groups are part of the Partnership for the National Trails System. The 50th anniversary of the NTSA will be celebrated across the country in **2018**. Lots of plans are being made.

OCTA CALENDAR CONTEST

Many of you may not know that Trails Head Chapter is a sponsoring chapter of the OCTA Calendar Contest. Since I, **Jean Coupal-Smith** became involved with Trails Head in 2012 and found out about this contest, I was excited to see if I could get my granddaughters school, at that time, to participate.

When I looked at the previous calendars, most of the winners were from the western part of the United States. Nothing wrong with that, but WE in the Independence-Kansas City metro are the beginning of the Trail! We need to be represented and be presenting to our youth this wonderful history. I approached the Principal at St. John Paul II School in Overland Park, KS and the 1st grade teacher at the time, **Mrs. Gorman**. They were thrilled to be able to have extracurricular

material to present to the class. This gave them the opportunity to learn a little about local history, how to search for information and incorporate this into their art work.

This past year Mrs. Gorman retired, but I once again involved her help to give me the name of the new 1st grade teacher so I could see if there was still an interest in doing the contest. To my surprise she emailed me back with not only the 1st grade, but 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade as well. I contacted each of those teachers and they were excited to participate. In March, I dug out my National Trails map with all of my travel pins and Calendar Contest information and spent the morning talking to all four grades. These little kids are the most fun to talk to, their questions are enlightening and their hopes of winning make them ecstatic!

I am happy and excited to announce that we again have two winners this year! From Mrs. Janner's 3rd grade class, we have Maggie Moloney! From Mrs. Kolarik's 4th grade class, we have Samantha Jo Kirk! Congratulations go out to all who participated and especially to our winners and their teachers for taking an interest in this project.

Our previous year's winners, as included in the coming years' calendars, have been: Plants Along the Trails - Edible, Medicinal & Dangerous - 2015 – Grace Ryan & Izzy Young – 1st Grade; Emigrant & Indian Children's Toys & Games - 2016 – Henry Morgan – 1st Grade; Emigrant & Indian Modes of Transportation - 2017 – Sophia Harris – 1st Grade; Emigrant & Indian Musical Instruments – 2018 – Maggie Moloney -- 3rd Grade, and Samantha Jo Kirk -- 4th Grade.

Each winner receives a \$50.00 check and a copy of their calendar. This is a very nice reward for their excellent art work and research time. And my most favorite question from these little ones has been – “They WALKED the WHOLE WAY?” It's hard to imagine in this day and age of speedy travel and electronics what these pioneers endured to get to unknown places that they would eventually call “home”.

By presenting the contest it's a small way to help bring our past history to the present in these young minds. We hope there will be a day they follow in our footsteps of continuing to preserve and share our history stories. Written and led by **Jean Coupal-Smith**

PLANNING MEETING

Monday, July 10, 2017 Trails Head Executive Committee met at **Nelson's** house at **10:00 a.m.** Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Ruby Nelson** and **Ross Marshall.**

Arnold reported \$7234.22 in the account.

Membership Chair **Ruby** reported 86 memberships with two new memberships.

Since the National Trails Day event this year at Lone Elm Park was so successful (it usually is), Trails Head decided to meet there again on National Trails Day in **2018 (first Saturday in June).** **2018** is the 50th anniversary of the passage of the National Trails System Act. **Jean** will contact **Larry Short** and **Gary Hicks** to invite MRO and KCAHTA to join with us and plan for June 2.

The Chapter Annual Meeting is confirmed for **Saturday, November 4, 2017** at Trailside Center and **Aaron Barnhardt**, a former KC Star writer and an author, will be the speaker.

Trails Head will have a chapter meeting at the OCTA Convention in Council Bluffs, which will be **August 8-12**, and the meeting probably will be on that Friday afternoon.

The next chapter planning meeting will be **Monday, October 9** at **Marshall's** at **10:00 a.m.**

KANSAS CITY AREA RETRACEMENT TRAILS

When you have part of a day that you would like to use in a unique way, consider driving the local ‘Retracement Trail’ along the Independence Route of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails from Independence Landing all the way to Gardner, Kansas.

Just follow the signs as you drive and “retrace”! And when you get to Gardner Junction Park, you can turn around and follow the signs and follow the trail back to Independence Landing!

2017 OCTA CONVENTION

A very wonderful convention in Council Bluffs! Attendees were reminded again of how many historical sites and chapters of history there are in the Omaha-Council Bluffs area, and those present were able to see most of them during **August 8-12**.

Omaha/Council Bluffs is one of the principal gateways to the west, so not only was the Oregon-California Trail to be a focus, but also the Lewis and Clark, Mormon Pioneer Trail, Lincoln Highway, Tribal history, the Mormon Battalion, Transcontinental Railroad, Tribal histories, Fur Trapper history, etc.

The last OCTA Convention in that location was in **1990** in Omaha.

It was the first convention since the early 1980s not hosted by a chapter. When the **2017** potential site did not work out, OCTA Association Manager **Travis Boley** took charge. He went to Council Bluffs and enlisted many leaders there who came together as a team, resulting in a very entertaining and well-attended convention. Nice going **Travis!**

Most attendees were lodged in the Holiday Inn, Ameristar Casino and Hampton Inn overlooking the Missouri River from the east bank. The convention meetings and dinners were all in the Ameristar Casino.

Many river parks, the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge across the river, picnic areas, etc. were along the river. Everyone had the convention Saturday night barbeque dinner at one of these park locations on the east bank of the river.

A great setting for the convention! Trails Head had 19 members at the convention.



One of the highlights of OCTA conventions is the awards program. Above is Trails Head President **Jean Coupal-Smith** receiving the Elaine McNabney Distinguished Volunteer Award with Trails Head member **Pat Traffas**, OCTA’s new President, on the left.

Awards Committee Chair **Dick Nelson** (above at right) presents a Distinguished Service Award to the DAR Sacajawea Chapter for that DAR Chapter Centennial Project to restore 11 Oregon

Trail DAR markers that were installed in 1916 in Washington State. Accepting are (l-r) DAR members **Norine Kimmy, Jean Coupal-Smith and Pat Traffas.**

Bus tours were especially entertaining as riders visited the nearby Nebraska and Iowa historic area sites relating to the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails, Lincoln Highway, transcontinental railroads, Union Pacific Railroad, steamboats and Missouri River history, the Western Historic Trails Center, Fort Atkinson, sites relating to freighters Russell, Majors and Waddell, plus many other sites.

Four different all-day bus tours were offered on Thursday and Saturday covering the above sites among many other additional sites as well, some of which are in the pictures below.

The four tours were:

- Railroads, Highways, Steamboats and Forts.
- Lewis and Clark in the Loess Hills
- Mormon Pioneer Trail in Iowa
- Fort Kearney Cutoff/Oxbow Trail

In addition, a post-convention tour was offered on the St. Joe Road/Independence Route for the re-mounted Oregon Trail Memorial Association marker dedication.

This was a re-dedication of a marker that was placed in 1941 by the American Pioneer Trails Association at the junction northwest of Marysville, Kansas, where the St. Joe Route met up with the Independence Route.

Also, a new wayside exhibit was dedicated there at the same time.



Above is a view overlooking the Missouri River at the Lincoln Statue overlook in Council Bluffs



Above is one of the scenes in a spectacular park in downtown Omaha filled with sculptures of wagons, animals and people on their way west. Terrific!

Various speakers presented a variety of topics. Opening the convention were three representatives from the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, who shared songs, drums and other traditions while describing their meanings within the Pawnee culture.

Longtime local historian **Kira Gale**, shared some of her research into some little-mentioned facts of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Mark Kelly, professional archeologist, attorney, historian and environmentalist from Leavenworth, spoke about early 19th century Indian agent John Dougherty (1791–1860), and examined the territory he traveled over and served for nearly four decades before settling near Liberty, MO.

Travis Boley, OCTA Manager, filled in and spoke about the artifacts and equipment excavated from the Steamboat Bertrand, which sank in 1865 near the current DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge north of Council Bluffs. The artifacts are now displayed in the Wildlife Museum.

Carl Scott told about the Latter-Day Saints migrating from Nauvoo, Illinois and establishing the Winter Quarters on the Omaha side of the Missouri River in the winter of 1846-47 before continuing on to the Salt Lake Valley. The Saints established a town, Kanessville, on the east side of the river, which later became Council Bluffs.

Harlan Seyfer from Plattsmouth, NE spoke of the earliest European explorers who reached what is now Nebraska.

John Krizek, OCTA past president, told of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party and others who left Council Bluffs in 1844 to go on the Great Platte River Road as the first parties leaving from there bound for Oregon and California.

Patricia Bounty, coordinator of Iowa Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway, and **Frank Norris**, NPS historian in Santa Fe, both spoke of the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, starting in 1863 westward from Omaha.

Lee Whiteley, historian of western transportation, spoke about the developing of roads in the infancy of the automobile industry.

Janice Gammon, coordinator of Iowa Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway, reviewed the history of the Lincoln Highway Association (LHA) that began in 1912. In 1928, The Lincoln Highway became known as Highway 30.

The OCTA Board met on Tuesday. The usual evening dinners, reception, silent and live auctions and barbeque dinner were held as well as chapter meetings.

An additional fun activity was the Tuesday night reception held at the Joslyn Art Gallery located at the southwest edge of downtown Omaha. Buses transported them to this outstanding art collection of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries housed in a very attractive building. Catlin, Renoir, Bodmer, and many other famous artists' work is displayed. While there we enjoyed some wonderful choices of tasty platters of food.



Above is Trails Head Chapter in a joint chapter meeting with Kanza Chapter attended by **Matt Mallinson, Audrey Elder, Jean Coupal-Smith, Sandy and Allen Wiechert, Dick Nelson, Lila Aamodt, Terry Hobbs, Doug Drummond, D. J. Champagne, Kelly Breen, Gary and Louis Hicks, Ross and Shirley Marshall, Charlie Weickert, Mary Conrad, Helen Gbala, Pat Traffas, Shirley Coupal and Aaron Mahr.**

Presiding is Trails Head **President Jean Coupal-Smith.**

With **Ruby Nelson's** absence, **Dick** reported Trails Head now has 89 memberships. **Ross** commended **Ruby** for her work and that Trails Head has had higher membership numbers since Trails Head hosted the Lawrence 2012 OCTA Convention.

National Park Service Superintendent **Aaron Mahr** said that in 2016 NPS received about \$600,000 in congressional appropriations for the Oregon and California National Historic Trails. 18 to 19% went to OCTA, which includes **Manager Travis Boley's** salary.

Aaron said that in the current financial climate, OCTA should feel positive to receive the same amount next year.

OCTA LEADERS FROM TRAILS HEAD

Trails Head chapter furnishes a lot of the national leadership for OCTA Officers and Board:

Pat Traffas – Vice President and President-Elect

Sandra Wiechert – OCTA Secretary

Dick Nelson – Member of the Board and Awards Committee Chair.

Ross Marshall – Chair of Chapters Committee and Future Convention Sites Committee.

And Trails Head Chapter President **Jean Coupal-Smith** does a lot for headquarters, conventions, etc., etc.

SFTA SYMPOSIUM IN OLATHE

The Santa Fe Trail Association held its biennial Symposium **September 27-30** at the new Olathe Conference Center across from the Mahaffie Heritage Center on Kansas City Road.

This was the first time the SFTA Symposium had been held in the Greater Kansas City area since 2003 when it was in Independence. What a lot of changes have been made in historic trails in the Kansas City metro since then!

Under the leadership of co-chairs **Larry Short**, current president of the Missouri River Outfitters Chapter as well as vice president of SFTA, and **Roger Boyd**, president of the Douglas County Chapter of SFTA, everything went very smoothly.



Pictured above l-r are MRO members Larry Short, Gary Hicks, Rich Lawson, Dick Nelson, Ross Marshall, Sandy Slusher, Mary Conrad, Anne Mallinson, West Huskisson and Lila Aamodt, all of whom had vital roles in the Symposium.

The first day was the Board of Directors meeting followed by a reception that evening in the main meeting room that overlooks a lake and a park.

The next morning (**Thursday**) speakers included:

--**Steve Schmidt**, one of the SFTA real experts on the trail, spoke about the Sibley Survey of the Santa Fe Trail (1825 and 1827). Steve has researched this survey for many years and gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation.

--**Mike Dickey** from Arrow Rock Historic Site spoke on the Indians and the Santa Fe Trail and covered most of the tribes along the trail.

--**David Sneed**, with the National Stagecoach and Freight Wagon Association (NSFWA), gave a very detailed PowerPoint presentation about wagon making and the use of wagons on the trail.

Box lunches were then distributed and people boarded buses. The first two buses went to eastern Jackson County into Lafayette County along Highway 24 and stopped at Fort Osage, led by **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall**.

Craig is a real expert on the Santa Fe Trail and has researched the route that William Becknell took in 1821 with his pack horses, being the first to arrive in Santa Fe after Mexico had won its Independence from Spain. The next year, he took three wagons, the first ones, to Santa Fe. **Craig's** research into the Osage Trace, the Lexington Road and the Missionary Roads is original information and was shared on the tour that explored the region east of Independence.

Dick and **Ruby Nelson** led one bus along the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail from Independence to State Line.

Friday was devoted to the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm with tours, demonstrations, and wagon use led by members of (NSFWA) and including SFTA's **Greg VanCoevern**.

At 4:30 p.m. attendees boarded two buses that ran the Westport Route of the trail through Westport and down to the Arabia Museum for dinner and museum tours. Bus tours were led by **Mary Conrad, Dick Nelson** and **Ross Marshall**.

Saturday morning began with the Membership meeting followed by speakers.

--**Leo Oliva**, perhaps one of the most scholarly Santa Fe Trail experts, spoke about soldiers on the trail, Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny.

--**Doug Hanson**, also with NSFWA, is a real expert on wagon parts, and demonstrated with his PowerPoint how wagon parts changed over the years on the trail.



Pictured above was the closing speaker **Craig Crease**, who spoke about the early development of the Santa Fe Trail and is one of the real experts on that subject. He has done several decades of primary document research.

Again, box lunches were distributed as people boarded buses.

One bus, led by **Mary Conrad** and **Gary Hicks**, retraced about the same route as the Independence Route tour on Thursday.

The second bus went west, guided by Assistant Professors from Baker University: **John Richards** (History) and **Nick Pumphrey** (Religious Studies). That bus left the Community Center and followed Kansas City Road (the actual route of the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Ore-Cal Trail) southwest to the Olathe Courthouse where the trail ran and then the bus went south to Lone Elm Park on 167th Street which is on the Independence Route.

Then they went west to Gardner and stopped at the Gardner Junction on Highway 56 where the Independence and Westport Routes meet and the Ore-Cal Trail breaks off and goes west-northwest toward Lawrence, Nebraska, etc. The Santa Fe Trail continues on southwest.

The bus followed essentially the Santa Fe Trail west on Highway 56, crossing into Douglas County and stopping at the Black Jack Ruts near Baldwin City. The tour continued northwest from Baldwin City along the actual trail ending up at Simmons Point (or Sibley Hill as some call it). The bus then returned to the Center at about **5:00 p.m.**

The banquet dinner was held at **6:00 p.m.**, with music entertainment by The SchoolHouse String Band, led by **Anne Mallinson**, longtime member of MRO and on the SFTA Board. This is a band that she has led for many years and it has provided entertainment at many trails events in the Kansas City area and beyond.



Three award winners were (l-r) **Ross Marshall** (Award of Merit for representing SFTA for 20 years with the Partnership for the National Trails System), **Steve Kidwell** (received Award of Merit for himself and a Pete and Fay Gaines Memorial Heritage Award for his employer **Central Plains Cement Co.** for their preservation and maintenance of the Upper Independence Landing area which Central Plains owns), and **Lou Austin** (Award of Merit for his many years of work on historic trails in southern Kansas City, Missouri).

After dinner, Awards Chair **Linda Colle** took the podium and presented seven Hall of Fame Awards (all deceased) which were accepted by friends or family members.

Then a dozen awards were presented to various SFTA members and others. See the picture above for locals that received awards.

It was a great venue and a truly enjoyable SFTA Symposium! Thanks to **Larry** and **Roger** and all the volunteers who made it happen!

PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head held a chapter planning meeting at 10:00 a.m. Monday, **October 9, 2017** at **Marshall's** house. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Ruby Nelson** and **Ross Marshall**.

Treasurer Arnold Cole was absent, but **Jean** reported \$7124.65 in the account.

Membership Chair **Ruby** reported 90 memberships with two new members who joined at the OCTA Council Bluffs Convention.

The comments about the Council Bluffs Convention were favorable, but the attendance was less than usual. But not too bad, since there is no active chapter there and Manager **Travis Boley** did the whole thing as a fill-in location for a chapter that was scheduled to have it, but did not.

Jean reported on Trails Head VIP (Volunteers in Parks) volunteer hours and expenses that she reported to OCTA, who will send to National Park Service. The annual totals were 2093 hours, 17,836 miles and \$6637.57 expenses. Plus for the Council Bluffs convention only – 865 hours, 8101 miles and \$9157 expenses.

The Trails Head Chapter Annual Meeting was confirmed for **Saturday, November 4, 2017** at Trailside Center and **Aaron Barnhardt**, a former KC Star writer and an author, will be the speaker. Trails Head will have a donation check for \$50 for him.

Jean suggested the possibility of a joint meeting next year with Gateway and Kanza Chapters meeting at Marysville, KS. She will follow up with the Kanza Chapter President **Pat Keegan** and Gateway Chapter President **Corky Smith**.

All confirmed the chapter intent to have the National Trails Day event at Lone Elm Park. **Ross** will contact MRO and KCAHTA to see if either has a conflict that day. And he will also make a reservation for the Park with the City of Olathe.

Mary also has checked with Harris-Kearney House in Westport as a possible meeting site for an event. Westport Historical Society has a basic charge of \$50 for a meeting, plus a \$5 per person charge for a tour of the house.

TRAILS HEAD ANNUAL MEETING

Trails Head Annual Membership meeting was wonderful and informative! It was held on **Saturday, November 4, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.** at Trailside Center with something over 35 present.

President Jean Coupal-Smith opened the meeting. After the 2016 annual meeting minutes were approved, she reviewed some of the **2017** activities and events like our **March 18** Chapter meeting at Trailside, OCTA Mid-year Board meeting/Symposium at Vancouver, WA in April, the National Trails Day event at Lone Elm Park on **June 3, 2017**, the Council Bluffs OCTA Convention and the various joint events that many members participated in like marker dedications and the national Santa Fe Trail Association Symposium in Olathe in September.

Treasurer Arnold Cole reported \$7518.15 in the account. Membership Committee Chair **Ruby Nelson** reported 87 current members.



Picture taken on **May 1** at the Executive Committee meeting, (l-r) President Jean Coupal-Smith, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Secretary Mary Conrad, Vice-President Dick Nelson and Sandra Wiechert, OCTA national secretary.

The above four officers were re-elected for 2018.

Larry Short, President of SFTA's local MRO Chapter and SFTA Vice President, reviewed the marvelous work that has now been completed by the installation of 40 miles of Local Tour Route signage from Independence Landing to the Gardner Junction. This has been a multi-year project involving the National Park Service, local cities, and many local historic trail volunteers.

Probably no one has done more work on it than **Larry!** But each of the three presenters in the following pictures have also worked diligently with the city employees receiving the awards.



Gary Hicks, KCAHTA President presents awards to **Mike Burton** of Overland Park Parks & Rec (at left), and Leawood's **Brian Anderson** at right.



Left above is **Lou Austin**, who has worked hard for so many years for trails in southeast Kansas City, presents award to **Masood Alemifar** of the Kansas City Public Works.

OCTA Manager **Travis Boley** (right) presents award to **Independence Mayor Eileen Weir**.

The other cities involved were presented with awards at the April 30 annual meeting of SFTA's Missouri River Outfitters Chapter.

All of the cities in this project were not only willing to work with historic trail leaders, they were eager! Great!



Above at left is **Dave Aamodt**, National Frontier Trails Museum Director, who updated all on the changes that are happening at the Museum. The State of Missouri, who has owned the Museum since its dedication in **1989**, has turned the property over to City of Independence.

This has freed up some funding and enabled renovations to be made that have been planned for some time. It now allows the City to put its full support behind the Museum.

Things like constructing an elevator, repairing some foundations, new HVAC, and constructing new building renovations. **Dave** is excited!

Above at right is **Aaron Barnhart**, author of the book *The Big Divide Travel Guide: Historic and Civil War Sites in the Missouri-Kansas Border Region*, and a former Kansas City Star writer. He presented a PowerPoint entitled *The Border Region – Hinges of History* a review of historic sites on both sides of the border in the Kansas City area and beyond, including trail sites.

Aaron reviewed the following “Hinges” in the Kansas-Missouri border area:

- 1803 Louisiana Purchase, 1803-1806 Lewis and Clark Expedition, Fort Osage built in 1808.
- The Missouri Compromise. Maine was due for statehood, but the only required slave territory that could be added along with it was Missouri. The 36°30” line, the future Arkansas border, was to be the future northern limit for slave territory.
- The 1830 Indian Removal Act which limited western expansion at the Missouri western border.
- The overland Historic Trails - western expansion.
- The 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act which opened up settlement in Kansas.
- 1861 Kansas Statehood.
- The Civil War and the Kansas-Missouri Border War.

A very entertaining and informative presentation about these “hinges” in Kansas City metro local history and beyond!

SAPLING GROVE PARK DEDICATED NOVEMBER 18, 2017



Located in Overland Park at 8210 Grant, the key trail site of Sapling Grove Park has received some extensive renovations as pictured above.

A dedication was held **November 18, 2017** for the new shelter structures, splash pad, playground, landscaping and other amenities. These improvements were done at the same time that Grant Street was being repaved in **2017**.

The site was first dedicated **July 19, 2008** with its new name, replacing the name of Comanche Park. **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall** worked with City of Overland Park to get the new name.

There were three wayside exhibits that told about the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson Party that left this site as the first wagon train to California. Those markers are being replaced with new waysides with the same information by Overland Park Parks and Recreation.

Mike Burton of OPPR called **Ross Marshall** one day last fall and **Ross** was able to get the digital record of the waysides from **Carol Clark** of the National Park Service and give to **Mike** so that he could order the waysides from another source. They will be installed soon.

LOCAL AUTO TOUR ROUTE SIGNS INSTALLED

Have you thought about driving the Independence Route of the Santa Fe–Oregon-California National Historic Trails?



The new Local Tour Route signs as pictured above at left are all (well, almost all) in place and the entire route from Independence Landing to Gardner Junction, Kansas can be driven – not only one way, but you can turn around at any point and drive it back the other way. There is a double set of signs for the whole route!

In Johnson County, Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association has had its familiar brown “Trails Crossed Here” signs (above at right) in place for nearly a couple of decades. When you pass one of the KCAHTA signs, keep going straight until you see one of the new signs (as shown at left). When you do, turn left and soon you will pass another of the “Trails Crossed Here” signs. Keep going and you will see a sign (as shown above) that will tell you to turn right.

Soon you will pass another of the “Trails Crossed Here” signs and soon another Local Tour Route signs will tell you to turn, and so on.

All the signs are also in place for Jackson County, which allows you to drive from Independence Landing down through the cities of Sugar Creek, Independence, Raytown, Kansas City, then crossing State Line into Leawood, Overland Park, Olathe and Gardner to the Gardner Junction Trail Park,

At the **2017 Annual Meeting** of the Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of SFTA and at Trails Head **November** annual meeting, the above cities received awards and had representatives at the meetings to receive them.

It has been very satisfying to experience the enthusiasm and cooperation on the part of our urban cities to not only help with the routing process, but to also install the signs. Funding for the signs has been provided by the National Park Service, the Oregon California Trails Association and the Santa Fe Trail Association.

Special thanks goes to several local trails leaders, especially to **Larry Short**, MRO President and SFTA Vice President, who was the overall leader of this impressive signage project!

PLANNING MEETING

On **Thursday, December 7, 2017** Trails Head Chapter held a planning meeting at **10:00 a.m.** at **Marshall’s** house. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Sandra Wiechert** and **Ross Marshall**.

Arnold reported a current chapter balance of \$7418.58. He has not found a suitable CD investment for \$5000 yet, but he is looking.

With Membership Committee Chair **Ruby Nelson** absent, **Dick** reported 87 memberships. **Ross** reported that OCTA Manager **Travis Boley** has hired an intern, starting in February, for the Gateway Chapter since that chapter is planning to develop trail sites and history in St. Joseph.

Travis has also asked Trails Head to have a presence in Omaha and Grand Island, Nebraska at the Solar Car Race Challenge **July 14-22**. **Jean** said she and **Pat Traffas**, who is now OCTA president, likely will go. The entire Solar Car event will follow the Oregon Trail to Oregon.

Jean said that former NPS leader **Sharon Brown**, who is employed by the OCTA western chapters, will be able to work on the OCTA website. **Ruby Nelson** and **Allen Wiechert** will be working on Trails Head information. Since **Ross** has finished the early history of Trails Head, he could send that information. **Ross** also said that the Trails Head Johnson County trail map could be scanned as is, but the Jackson County map would need some updating. Neither map exists digitally. **Mary** said she could furnish some information for the website also.

Both the SFTA Missouri River Outfitters Chapter and Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association will be able to partner with Trails Head for the 2018 National Trails Day on **June 2**.

Sandy inquired about the success of raising money for the OCTA educational initiative. **Dick** said about \$900 in donations had been received so far.

Ross said the American Association of State and Local History Conference will be held **September 26-29, 2018** at the downtown Marriot Hotel. Conference planners have accepted the OCTA proposal for a **Saturday, September 29** bus tour of Kansas City area historic trails. **Ross** and **Dick** will be the guides. **Mary** wondered if OCTA will have an information table there.

2018

PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head held its first **2018** meeting **Sunday, February 4**, at **Nelson's** house at **1:00 p.m.** Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Ruby Nelson** and **Ross Marshall**.

With **Treasurer Arnold Cole** absent, **Jean** reported a balance of \$7068.58.

Membership Chair **Ruby** reported 87 memberships.

Mary asked if Preservation Chair **Allen Wiechert** needed others on his committee. She suggested **Beth Fager** who lives in Topeka and **Ross** who lives locally at the trails east end.

Ross reported Harmon Park has been in the news. Since Harmon Park is the only public municipal land in Prairie Village, some want to add an amphitheater to the park. **Ross** went to city hall and talked to the assistant city administrator **Alley Williams** and she assured him that the swale in the park would not be disturbed. **Ross** also suggested to **Williams** that the wayside exhibit should be replaced. **Williams** agreed that the city might be a partner for such a project.

Shortly after **Ross** returned home from that city hall, **Council Member Brooke Morehead** called him. Morehead said she had been involved with saving the swale from the beginning, so she assured **Ross** the swale would not be disturbed. **Ross** said the swale area is a certified Santa Fe Trail site. He also said others could read about the possible plans for the park by finding a web article written by Prairie Village reporter **Jay Senter**. **Ross** said apparently various persons agree that money for any such plans is not readily available.

Several leaders from Trails Head are planning to attend the OCTA spring meeting in Gila Bend, AZ.

Jean reported that plans are beginning to firm up for the Tri-chapter spring meeting. Gateway and Kanza Chapters are supportive and a date has been set for March 31 at the Great Overland Station in Topeka. At that **1:30 p.m.** meeting, Trails Head member **Beth Fager** of Topeka will provide an update on the Topeka Charette.

Jean reported that she, **Pat Traffas** and **Mary Conrad** will definitely go to Omaha and Grand Island for the Solar Car Challenge.

Jean also reported that she took information about the 2018 OCTA calendar contest to St. John Paul School. **Mary** gave **Jean** a bag of books on Indian and emigrant dwellings that she could deliver to the school. Student drawings need to be in OCTA headquarters by **April 15, 2018**.

Jean reported that the plan for National Trails Day on **June 2** at Lone Elm is firmed up. MRO and KCAHTA will join. **Jean** has reserved the shelter and **Tim Talbott** will bring his oxen.

Ross reported on the Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation. After the state legislature eliminated a fund that Johnson County used for heritage projects, KCAHTA President **Gary Hicks** had an idea for a new county heritage foundation. The bylaws were finished about a year ago. KCAHTA, Trails Head, and MRO joined last year. **Hicks** had said no 2018 dues will be

collected. **Ross** reported the administrators of the county parks have hired a new development person, **Jay Hinrichs**. The foundation and that person may be cooperating in the future. The foundation already has a web page.

Those present discussed whether to have a chapter website owned by Trails Head or whether to place a Trails Head website on the OCTA website. **Jean** said OCTA **President Pat Traffas** is suggesting each chapter host its own website, as she suspects that in the future OCTA may charge any chapter that wants its website hosted by OCTA on the OCTA website. **Jean** said Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association (KCAHTA) pays \$118 annually for its website, and **Jean** is the KCAHTA web master. **Jean** said she will find out the one-time charge for the domain name and the annual charge. **Ross** said **Jean** will need to ask **Travis Boley** if Trails Head lost its original domain name to a Lawrence man. **Ross** said he would like to see the planning committee vote on a web plan at the next meeting. **Mary** said she just finished one section for the webpage, and she will continue to work on Trails Head web sections as she has time. **Jean** said she will enter what others provide, although she may give the access code to some others, so they could post upcoming events.

OCTA MID-YEAR MTG AT GILA BEND

Several Trails Head members attended the OCTA mid-year Board meeting and Symposium in Gila Bend, AZ on **March 1-5**.

For a small town, OCTA had very fine facilities and motels in Gila Bend for the various meetings, excellent speakers and other activities.

In addition, attendees toured segments of the Mormon Battalion Trail and Butterfield Overland Trail that go through the area, and bus riders also visited the Painted Rocks Petroglyph Site.



Pictured above at rear (l-r) is Pat Traffas, Dick Nelson and Lila Aamodt. In front is Ross Marshall, Jean Coupal-Smith, Sandra Wiechert and OCTA's new St. Joseph intern Lauren Manning. They are standing at the site of the Oatman family massacre.

About 118 people attended the event, hosted by OCTA's Southern Trail Chapter. Coordinated by OCTA Manager **Travis Boley**, aided by several including Trails Head's **Jean Coupal-Smith**, it was very successful financially. That is always a good result! Very well done by everyone.

MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

MARC and the Santa Fe office of the National Park Service have been working in partnership for the last couple of years with local communities as partners, to develop a Strategic Plan for the Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails in the KC area.

A meeting was held at the MARC office at 600 Broadway in KCMO on **March 7, 2017** to move closer to adoption of this plan. **Larry Short, Gary Hicks, Ross Marshall, Lou Austin, Ann O'Hare** plus a couple dozen local city officials along the trails were present.

The plan contains 216 pages and shows not only the trails, but the completed and proposed walking and biking trails (Retracement Trails) that will near completion the next year or two.

Agreement was essentially reached although a few things need to be finalized. MARC is the first Metro-wide group nationally with which NPS has partnered.

SHARING TRAIL HISTORY WITH YOUTH

(by Mary Conrad)

On the evening of **March 12**, trail volunteers **Jean Coupal-Smith, Dick Nelson, Drew Bodner, Pat Traffas, and Mary Conrad** joined an American Heritage Girls Troop to share info about the Kansas City historic trails. **Bodner** supplied his copy of the film, "Trails to Rails," narrated by **Ross Marshall** and produced by the Olathe Historical Society. **Jean** introduced the film.

Mary asked a few questions about the film before **Dick** explained the routes of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails. Since these fourth through eighth graders are working on a hiking badge, **Mary** used a map to show the Westport and Independence routes and to explain that cities and counties are developing walking trails along those routes. She mentioned three hiking trails (Two Trails, Mahaffie, Lone Elm) as trails near historic trail routes that they may wish to hike.



Pictured above are the American Heritage Girls Troop with local trail leaders **Jean Coupal-Smith, Pat Traffas, Drew Bodner, Dick Nelson and Mary Conrad** scattered among the girls and their leaders

Jean supplied a brown KCAHTA sign so everyone would recognize those signs along streets, as indicative of trail crossings.

Mary showed the purpose of sun bonnets before the invention of sunscreens and sunglasses. **Jean** then talked about using the buddy system while hiking.

After an explanation of small toys that might have been taken on western trails, the girls and some brothers played with replica nineteenth-century tops, ball-and-cup sticks, whirligigs, and a Jacob's ladder. The toy session ended with a description of a girl's trail experience when her

family one evening in camp had watched visiting Indian boys shoot at biscuits with bows and arrows. The ones who hit the biscuits with arrows got the biscuits to eat.

Drew talked about various trail aspects, including swales. **Drew** gave KCAHTA maps to the three who guessed the places of three metro swales, i.e. New Santa Fe Cemetery, Harmon Park, and Minor Park. The evening ended with a guessing game as to how many children traveled west on the Oregon Trail.

The volunteers were glad to share info about the Kansas City historic trails with the American Heritage girls, a couple of brothers and some parents, totaling around 32. KCAHTA pens and pamphlets also were distributed.

Nice going **Mary, Pat, Drew, Dick** and **Jean** for spending the time and energy teaching the girls something about our nation's historic trails that traverse through the Kansas City area!

PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head had a planning meeting on **Sunday, March 18, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.** at **Marshall's** house. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Ruby Nelson, Sandra Wiechert** and **Ross Marshall**.

Arnold reported \$7654.51 as the current balance.

Membership Chair **Ruby Nelson** reported 89 memberships with two new members.

Jean reported she sold most of the OCTA items that **Travis Boley** brought to the symposium at Gila Bend, resulting in \$1862 in gross sales including tax, for OCTA.

Jean reported that the presentation to the American Heritage Girls on **March 12** went well.

Jean also reported that she met **Gina Sifers** at Gila Bend. **Gina** agreed that if Trails Head owns and manages its own website, she can easily place that website on the OCTA website.

Jean said that KCAHTA uses the web company 1+1 and **Gina** called the company. Trails Head can take advantage of a first-year promotion fee of \$11.88 that would include the domain cost. In the second year, the cost will become \$111.90. **Mary** moved that Trails Head Chapter use 1+1. **Dick** seconded and it was passed. **Jean** said she will not have time to work on the website for two or three months.

Jean has made all the arrangements for National Trails Day on **June 2**, including the Lone Elm shelter house reservation, Smokin Joe's restaurant food, etc. She will also send a reservation sheet to **Ross, Gary, Dan Sturdevant** and **Larry Short** so that they can e-blast it to their memberships.

Ross reported that **Brian Burnes**, who wrote for the Kansas City Star for years, has been engaged to research Watts Mill, built in 1832, just east of State Line Road on 103rd Street, Kansas City, Missouri. There may be plans to improve that site. At present, the historical sign cannot be read. Over the years, various people have thought Watts Mill was a historic trail site, and Burnes thought that was the case. But that is not true.

Ross talked to **Burnes** so that he would know the real history of the site. Jim Bridger's farm was just to the south of it.

James Nesmith, who kept a diary, wrote that his wagon train left from near Fitzhugh's Mill in 1843 as part of the "Great Migration" to Oregon. That reference is vague, plus **Craig Crease** thinks that a second mill named "Fitzhugh's" must have been at another location, likely in Westport. **Ross** said that Watts Mill was not a trail site.

FIRST TRI-CHAPTER MEETING HELD IN TOPEKA



About 33 members of Trails Head, Kanza and Gateway (all OCTA Chapters) met **Saturday, March 31, 2018 at 12:30 p.m.** in the Great Overland Station (above) in Topeka beside the Kansas River. This is the first time that Trails Head has met in a Tri-Chapter meeting for several years.

The purpose is to promote more partnering efforts between the three chapters at the east end of the Oregon-California Trails. Each chapter has only a small regional area and, while each operates effectively, more and more large projects are underway or being considered in northeast Kansas that could involve each of these OCTA trail chapters.

No particular business was on the agenda. Everyone participated in a half-hour fellowship ‘meet and greet’ period before the meeting started. Many of us also toured the various exhibits of the history of the Union Pacific Rail Station as well as the Pappan Ferry history of the nearby Oregon-California Trail crossing of the Kansas (Kaw) River.



Kanza Chapter President Duane Iles standing at far right opened the meeting and OCTA Manager Travis Boley at far left addresses the crowd about all the things happening in the Kansas City area and the other areas of the three chapters.



OCTA National President Pat Traffas, standing at left, makes a few remarks. Duane Iles is at right.

A well-attended four-day Charette was held in **August, 2016** sponsored by the National Park Service to create some elaborate plans to develop the Pappan and Rail Station sites. **Addie Weddington** of the Santa Fe NPS office was with the attendees Saturday and briefly spoke.

The main speaker was archeologist and author **Susan Holland** from Topeka who is an expert on petroglyphs and pictographs by Indians of the Southwest. Holland also spoke about the Wichita Indian Nation living in Kansas at the time of the Spanish exploration. Her PowerPoint pictures and explanations were interesting and informative.

Thanks to **Duane Iles, Jackie Lewin and Jean Coupal-Smith** for their coordination efforts for the event.

PROCLAMATION BY THE KANSAS GOVERNOR
TO THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS,

WHEREAS, The Oregon Trail transects Topeka, the Capitol City of Kansas, where numerous noted landmarks, such as Pappan’s Ferry, were vital to emigrants moving west; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Trail was an emigrant corridor through the Kansas counties of Johnson, Douglas, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Pottawatomie, Marshall and Washington, and

WHEREAS, vestiges of the Oregon Trail remain to this day where graves are silent reminders of the toils emigrants encountered on KANSAS soil as they succumbed to disease, accidents and hardships on the trail; and

WHEREAS, Alcove Spring, one of the most beautiful sites of the entire Oregon Trail, located in Marshall County, was where the Reed/Donner Party camped, suffered loss and delay due to flooding at Independence Crossing of the Big Blue River; and,

WHEREAS, there are two chapters, Trails Head and Kanza, in Kansas which are vital members of the Oregon-California Trails Association, whose mission is to preserve and promote the Oregon Trail, preserve the emigrant stories, and to educate the public on the significance and history of the trail,

NOW, THEREFORE I, Jeff Colyer M.D., GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF KANSAS, do hereby proclaim **2018** as the **175th ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF THE OREGON TRAIL** and call upon all citizens of Kansas to celebrate its history and promote the understanding of the significance that the Oregon Trail is to Kansas and all the western history of these United States.

DONE: At the Capitol in Topeka under the Great Seal of the State this **23rd day of April, A.D. 2018.**

(signed) BY THE GOVERNOR – Jeff Colyer
Secretary of State - Kris Kobach

Thanks to OCTA **Vice President Pat Traffas** who submitted the Proclamation draft, the Governor invited OCTA leaders to Topeka to his signing of the official 175th Oregon Trail Anniversary Declaration!



Above is (l-r) **Ross Marshall, KCAHTA VP** and **OCTA President Pat Traffas, and OCTA VP and Kanza Chapter President Duane Iles** with the Governor as he signs the Proclamation. Good effort **Pat!**

PARTY LIKE IT'S 1843!

May 18-20 was a three-day celebration of the 175th anniversary of the Oregon Trail by the City of Independence. 1843 was the year of the Great Migration to Oregon, which was upwards of 1000 people and 200 wagons, all moving somewhat together over a reasonably new trail. The City, among other activities, enlisted five speakers to address the crowd in the Brady Court-room in the Courthouse on **Saturday 10:30 to 5:00**.



David Jackson, retired Courthouse Archivist

The second floor Brady Courtroom is the upper story of the original 1830s courthouse. The speakers were:

John Boursaw – Potawatomi Trail of Death

Theresa Hupp – Her Historic Trail Novels

Ross Marshall – Historic Trails in KC Area

David Jackson – Independence in 1843

Travis Boley - KC Historic Trails - 21st Century

Each speaker had 45 minutes to an hour, using PowerPoint slides. Attendees were free to come and go so they could participate in other activities.

It was a good effort to recognize the 175th anniversary of what helped make that early village a key city in the Westward Movement.

3-TRAILS TRANSIT CENTER DEDICATION

About 100 people attended the **12:30 p.m. May 31** dedication co-hosted by Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), 3-Trails West, Inc. (**Lou Austin**) and National Park Service.



Lou Austin speaking

Located at 9449 Blue Ridge Blvd in south Kansas City, it is a major transit hub of six bus routes connecting riders to downtown Kansas City, Waldo, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Hospital Hill, Raytown and other sites in the region.

That location is about ¼ mile southeast of the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails and is recognized by NPS as an official National Historic Trails Trailhead.

It is also adjacent to the 47-mile 3-Trails Corridor Retracement Trail along the Independence Route that has street signs in place and has walkways under construction that will enable both drivers and hikers to retrace the path of the Independence Route of the three National Historic Trails from Independence Landing in Sugar Creek, MO to Gardner, KS.

The station hosts KCATA's first citypost smart digital kiosk. Riders will be able touch a screen for real-time bus information and historic trail information. The kiosk will feature a constant flow of information about city and community events.

Displayed on the outside walls are six panels created by Trails Head old friend **Lou Austin** and NPS, three of which are about the historic trails with maps. The other three are pictures and bios of three significant Black ladies who were associated with the historic trails. They are Emily Fisher (1808-1898), Biddy Mason (1818-1891) and Clara Brown (1802-1885).

Speakers were:

(MC) **Chuck Ferguson**, KCATA VP Regional Planning

--**Robbie Makinen**, KCATA President & CEO

--**Lou Austin**, Director, 3-Trails West, who spoke about the historic trails, displays and the three women

--**John Cannella**, National Park Service, Santa Fe office, who spoke about the value of public-private partnering on the trails

--Council Woman **Alissia Canady**, 5th District

--**Mokhtee Ahmad**, Federal Transit Authority



(l-r) Gary Hicks, Pat Traffas, John Cannella, Travis Boley, Chuck Loomis, Larry Short, Dave Aamodt and (kneeling) Steve Rhoades.

It was a very well-done dedication of a key trailhead site on Kansas City National Trails and included special mention of 2018 being the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System.

Special thanks, as usual, to **Lou Austin** for continuing to lead historic trails development in south Kansas City.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY EVENT AT LONE ELM PARK

In honor of both National Trails Day (observed annually for several decades on the first Saturday in June) and the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act (signed by President Lyndon Johnson on October 2, 1968), historic trails groups held an exciting and informative celebration on **June 2** at Lone Elm Park Rendezvous Shelter south of Olathe at 167th and Lone Elm Road.

The celebration was jointly sponsored by Trails Head Chapter, Missouri River Outfitters Chapter (MRO) of SFTA and Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association (KCAHTA). There were 32 in attendance, a pretty good crowd considering the early morning thunderstorm.



First on the agenda was a presentation by Trails Head Chapter **President Jean Coupal-Smith** (at left above) of a special Certificate of Appreciation to **Kara Friedline** (at right), one of the leaders of the American Heritage Girls Troop. The girls were there to work on requirements for their “trails merit badge” by cleaning the trails and surrounding area before the historic trails event started. This was their way of being able to participate on National Trails Day. They did a great job as well!

Pictured on the center left is **John Cannella**, Deputy Superintendent for the National Park Service office in Santa Fe, being welcomed by **Gary Hicks**, center right, President of KCAHTA who was also our Master of Ceremonies for the event.

Pictured at right is **Travis Boley**, Manager of the Oregon-California Trails Association, who gave an overview of activities along the Oregon National Historic Trail this year, the 175th Anniversary of its beginning in 1843.



Above (left) is **John Cannella** and **Kevin Corbett**, who engineered the 2002 purchase by City of Olathe of the Lone Elm property, and **Pat Traffas**, President of OCTA. **Kevin** is receiving the National Park Service Certification of Lone Elm Campground being designated a National Certified Site on all three trails; Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails.

Above at right (l-r) **Larry Short**, President of MRO Chapter and SFTA Vice President, **Jean** and **Kevin** with the NPS Certifications for not only Lone Elm, but also the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm Certifications that was presented to **Tim Talbott**, the Mahaffie Executive Director, later.



Tim Talbott at left spoke to the group about wagons, teams, equipment and methods during trail days. Above at right **Craig Voorhees**, who is doing trail research in northeastern Kansas and belongs to all three local trails groups, and **John Cannella**.

Ross Marshall addressed the crowd about the significance of the 1968 National Trails System Act. **Dan Sturdevant**, past president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, was present and sang some wonderful songs relating to the days of the trails.

Rendezvous attendees had trail experts from around the nation addressing all present. Add in large servings of barbeque and deserts and it was a very successful Celebration!

MISSION HILLS WAYSIDE EXHIBIT DEDICATED

It was a nice sunny morning for a marker dedication on **Thursday, June 14, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** But glad it was not scheduled for a later hour or it would have been too hot!



Lorelei Gibson, Msn Hills Park Board Chair, Speaks

Twenty-some people gathered at Nymph Park at 69th Terrace and State Line Road in Mission Hills which is a very key site on the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail.

This site is where the southern branch of the trail (which was the preferred branch for the Santa Fe Trail freighters) crossed the western Missouri border into Indian Territory as defined by the 1830 Indian Removal Act. The Westport Route was used by Oregon and California emigrants until the mid-1850s when steamboats enabled emigrants to go to the Council Bluffs landing therefore saving many miles and time.

When the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed by Congress in 1854, the route was designated as a Territorial Road into the new Kansas Territory as the territory moved towards statehood in 1861. It was still heavily used as the Santa Fe Trail by freighters until the late 1860s when the early railroads were constructed out across Kansas.



Beverly Brooks, Mission Hills City Council, addresses the crowd



(l-r) Jennifer Lee, Assistant City Administrator and Jean Coupal Smith, unveil the marker on stones

Historic Trail leaders wish to thank the Mission Hills City and City Council leaders for their cooperation and financing a customized stone masonry support for the wayside. Looks great!

PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head's planning meeting was held **Sunday, June 24, 2018** at **Nelson's** house at **2:00 p.m.** Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Ruby Nelson, Sandra Wiechert, Craig Voorhees and Ross Marshall.**

Arnold reported \$7734.51 in the account. He also reported that he has moved to a new address. He brought all the financial records he has accumulated over the years as Treasurer. The chapter will keep all records over the last seven years. **Ross** will examine the older records and keep any that is part of Trails Head Chapter history.

Membership Chair **Ruby** reported 90 memberships.

Jean reported the annual Solar Car Challenge will start **July 14** and follow the Oregon Trail to Oregon. **Jean, Pat Traffas** and **Travis Boley** will be at the Omaha starting place. She suggested Trails Head donate \$100 to the event to pay for snacks and water. The motion passed.

Craig talked about the possibility of Trails Head paying an annual fee of over \$200 for the use of Terrain Navigator Pro (TNP). This is a software OCTA recommends for use to digitally map segments of the Oregon and California Trails, so that trail mapping can be downloaded into the OCTA mapping Emigrant Trails (MET) database. The California-Nevada Chapter uses TNP. A lot of discussion ensued, but nothing definite was decided, so we tabled the idea for now.

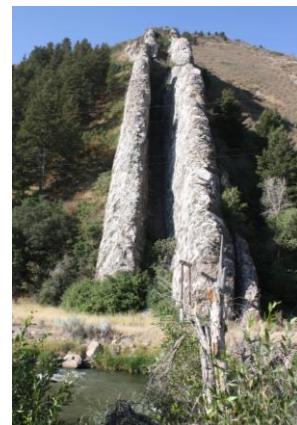
OCTA PROMOTIONS AT SOLAR CAR CHALLENGE IN NEBRASKA

The 2018 American Solar Challenge, a cross-country solar car race, followed the route of the Oregon Trail from Omaha, Nebraska to the state of Oregon. Trails head members **Jean Coupal-Smith** and **Mary Conrad** handed out free snacks and water along with OCTA brochures in downtown Omaha on the afternoon and evening of **July 13** during the opening exhibition of solar cars. **Jean** stayed in Omaha to distribute handouts before the race started in Omaha on the morning of **July 14**, and then joined Mary at Grand Island, Nebraska where snacks, water and brochures were handed out all day. A Grand Island all-day mini-festival was underway before the solar cars began arriving in the afternoon. Trails Head paid for the snacks and water.

GREAT OCTA CONVENTION IN OGDEN

Hosted by the OCTA Crossroads Chapter, the convention held **August 6-10**, was fun and very informative about the key Oregon, California and Mormon National Historic Trails in that area.

Just over 300 members and guests attended and enjoyed the magnificent Ogden Eccles Conference Center right in the center of downtown Ogden where all the events were held.



Devil's Slide

Above is a picture of the Ogden Utah Mormon Temple plus the Rocky Mountains running on the east side of Ogden. Note the statue of a horse on the lower right, typical of scores of similar statues in the downtown area.

The slide at right consists of two parallel limestone strata that have been tilted to lie vertical, protruding 40 feet out of the mountainside. Intervening layers have eroded more quickly forming a channel some 25 feet wide running hundreds of feet down the mountainside.

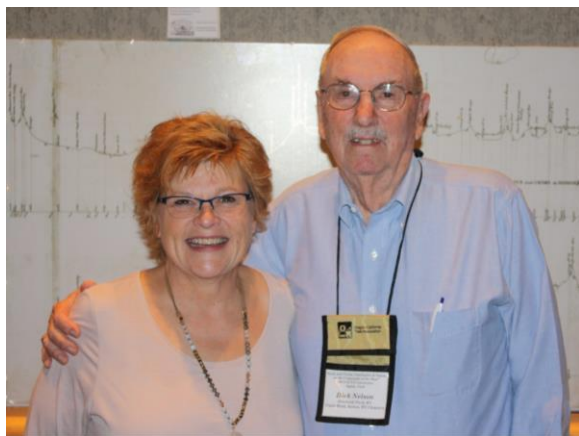
The location is on the south side of the Weber River, north of Ogden, which was one of the most difficult trail routes in the Utah area.

About 20 Trails Head members attended and those members all gathered together for a rather brief chapter meeting led by Trails Head **President Jean Coupal-Smith**.

Membership Chair **Ruby Nelson** reported Trails Head now has 89 members.

Preservation Chair **Allen Wiechert** reported that his suggested Oregon-California Trail revisions through Lawrence have been approved by the National Park Service.

Trails Head members also want to get the Trails Head webpage to be linked to the OCTA webpage. Hopefully that can be completed in the next few months.



Trails Head President Jean Coupal-Smith and Awards Committee Chair Dick Nelson



Pat Traffas and Vern Osborne

One of the key events at all OCTA conventions is the annual Awards Dinner conducted by Trails Head member **Dick Nelson**, pictured above, who has been Awards Committee Chair for many years.

Pictured above at right, is Trails Head member and OCTA President **Pat Traffas**, presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to **Vern Osborne**, also a Trails Head member, as he completes his six years of service on OCTA's Board of Directors.

At Ogden, Trails Head had a chapter meeting on **Thursday August 9, 2018**. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Vice President Dick Nelson, Treasurer Arnold Cole, Lila Aamodt, Kelly Breen, Shirley Coupal, Gary and Louise Hicks, Ruby Nelson, Ross and Shirley Marshall, Pat Traffas, Allen and Sandra Wiechert** and guests **Lindsay Burks and Dave Aamodt**. With **Secretary Mary Conrad** absent, **Sandra** did minutes.

Arnold reported about \$7500 in the chapter account. Membership Chair **Ruby** reported that Trails Head has 89 memberships including one new member.

Frontier Trail Museum's Collections Manager **Lindsay Burks** and Director **Dave Aamodt** reported that the work on the NFTM elevator in Independence, MO is almost done. The next challenge will be to stabilize a corner of the building.

Allen Wiechert reported there have been disagreements over where the Oregon Trail ascended Mt. Oread in Lawrence. After three years of research and numerous interviews, he presented his findings about the probable route to **Frank Norris** of NPS in Santa Fe. **Norris** approved the

route, but said routes can't be changed officially very easily. **Ross** agreed and said that it might be possible to include this information in the studies that have been submitted to Congress over the whole Oregon Trail.

There were 289 registered for the convention.

PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head held a planning meeting on **Sunday, September 9, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.** at **Marshall's** house. Present were **President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad, Ross Marshall, Sandy and Allen Wiechert.**

With **Treasurer Arnold** absent, he called **Ross** during the meeting to give the current balance of \$7,617.25.

Those present tentatively picked the afternoon of **November 3** for Trails Head's Annual Meeting. **Ross** again will chair the Awards Committee. **Jean** will ask **Dick Nelson** to chair the Nominating Committee. **Mary** agreed to schedule the speakers for the Trails Head's annual meeting and also for the OCTA Board Meeting and Symposium next spring.

The spring **2019** OCTA Board will be in Independence on **March 14-16**. A two-day symposium will follow on **March 15 and 16**. **Jean** said OCTA wants Trails Head to be the sponsoring chapter. OCTA President **Pat Traffas** has requested that Trails Head plan a tour and talks for **March 15**, and that these talks and tour can be repeated on the following day, so all participants will have the opportunity to participate in both venues.

ANNUAL MEETING

About 34 members and guests assembled at the Trailside Center on **Saturday evening November 3, 2018** for Trails Head Annual Membership Meeting.

President Jean Coupal-Smith opened the meeting at **6:30 p.m.** and welcomed everyone as pictured below, .

Treasurer Arnold Cole reported about \$7500 in the Trails Head bank account. He and our new treasurer **Kelly Breen** are working on transferring signatures on the bank account.

Membership Chair **Ruby Nelson** reported that Trails Head has 88 members and that she has sent out 12 reminders to some members to renew.



Trails Head new officers. (l-r) Treasurer Kelly Breen, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad and President Lila Aamodt.

The first action was to elect the new officers, all for a two-year term as called for in the revised bylaws. Nominating Committee Chair **Dick Nelson** nominated the above, who were elected.

The next order of business was the presentation of the 2018 Calendar Winners Certificates by **Jean** - her 5th year for doing this. There were five total awardees, but only two of them were present as shown below. Other winners were 1st grader Carmen Balderas and 3rd graders Lucy Harrod and Ava Moran. **Jean** delivered the certificates to those two. (see below at left)

The Awards Committee, with members **Dick Nelson**, **Mary Conrad**, and **Ross Marshall** as chair, then presented three awards.



(l-r) 4th grade winner Avery Strong and 3rd grade winner Aubrey Massoth receiving their awards from Jean



l-r) Larry Short and Dick Nelson

Dick Nelson, above at right, presented the Meritorious Achievement Award to **Larry Short**, at left. The award recognized his many years of personal leadership with local trails groups and organizations, and working with the National Park Service, cities and counties from central Missouri to central Kansas to complete the Local Tour Route signage along the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails.

Larry is the current president of the Missouri River Outfitters Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association and next year will become president of SFTA. He is a hard working guy for trails!



Above at left is **Arnold Cole** receiving from **Dick** the Award of Appreciation for his long-time volunteer service as president, treasurer and an active member of Trails Head Chapter plus his devotion to the promotion and preservation of the Oregon and California National Historic Trails in our area.

Ross, above at right, then presented the Distinguished Partner Award to the Mid-American Regional Council (MARC), accepted by **Aaron Bartlett**, for MARC partnering with the National Park Service, cities from Sugar Creek, MO to Gardner, KS, plus local trails groups like Trails Head Chapter in the development of the 40-mile long 3-Trails Corridor and “retracement recreation trails” along that Corridor.

Jean passed out copies of proposed amended bylaws (first in 14 years!). A couple of minor edits were proposed and the updated bylaws were adopted. A copy will be sent to members.

OCTA Association Manager Travis Boley reported that the National Park Service has sent out their 215-page trail map set showing the current Retracement Trail System in the Kansas City area. He has been working with **Lee Black** and **Cecelia Bell** of OCTA’s Southern Trails Chapter to help prepare for the 2019 OCTA Convention in Santa Fe, the first time OCTA has had a convention on the Southern Trails that carried lotsa emigrants to California.

OCTA Southern Trail Chapter will also be renewing chapter efforts to push Congress to designate that trail system as a National Trail.

He is also working more with the Mormon Trails Association that is fairly inactive, to jointly work on the Mormon Trail that follows virtually the same route as the Oregon-California Trails.

OCTA will receive a grant for a 2019 intern, and **Travis** hopes that the intern will do research on subjects related to trails in the Kansas City area.

Pat Traffas, a Trails Head member, is the current OCTA president. **Traffas** shared that she and **Travis Boley**, OCTA association manager, have finished visiting all OCTA chapters, except for the Crossroads Chapter which they will visit.

Traffas also shared the following items:

- OCTA soon will host a NPS charrette in St. Joseph next Monday and **Pat** has been scanning Louise Barry’s history book for St. Joe trail info.
- OCTA is assisting the Westport Historical Society by looking for trail info about the Harris-Kearney House so the Society can apply for trail site certification.
- OCTA is also asking each chapter to encourage at least five businesses to become OCTA members.
- OCTA is hoping to schedule a mapping workshop and a land owner easement workshop in the Kansas City area sometime in the near future.



Mary Conrad introduced the speaker **Erin Blackshere-Pouppirt**, a descendant of the Kaw-French Pappan Family that ran an Oregon Trail ferry in the Topeka area.

Erin began the talk by welcoming everyone in both French and Kaw. While her mother is of both Kaw and Ponca ancestry, **Erin** has chosen to be enrolled with the Kaw Nation of

Oklahoma, as presently an American Indian can be enrolled in only one tribe. **Erin** explained that today she chose to wear her non-traditional regalia that she sometimes wears at Kaw powwows. **Erin** does have a fan of eagle feathers for use when dancing.

On PowerPoint, **Erin** showed images of chiefs to show her ancestry. Osage Chief Pawhuska was her sixth great-grandfather. Kaw Chief White Plume was her fifth great-grandfather.

Blackshere gradually expanded the Power Point to include the Dhegiha Siouan-speaking Plains Indians that are the Osage, Kaw, Omaha, Ponca, and Quapaw. Before historic times, these tribes split from each other when they gradually migrated as a group from the East. These splits occurred after they moved west from the Ohio River valley. Despite splitting into five tribes, the languages of the five tribes retain similarities.

Thanks to all Trail Head members who were able to attend. It was a very nice and interesting meeting, and all welcome the new officers!

U.S. CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE STOPS IN KANSAS CITY AND INDEPENDENCE



In early November, the U.S. Capitol Christmas tree was cut in Oregon's Willamette National Forest and prepared for the more than 3000-mile journey that commemorates the 175th anniversary of the Oregon Trail by following a reverse path of the trail. With stops in Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri, there were lots of opportunities for OCTA to interact with the general public. The 80-foot long trailer above contained the tree that was headed for Washington DC. It was at Union Station (above) on **November 20** and in Independence the next morning.



The picture above at Union Station shows **Pat Traffas, Gary and Louise Hicks, Jean Coupal-Smith** and **Ross Marshall** (shadowed under the “Happy Holidays”), plus grandchildren of **Pat** and **Jean**. Good publicity for the Oregon National Historic Trail from coast to coast!

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION HELD



Larry Short, Jean Coupal-Smith and Gary Hicks

About 32 people were in attendance, as shown above, at Ophelia’s Restaurant on the Square in Independence for a Holiday Celebration lunch on Saturday, December 1, 2018.

It was hosted by MRO, KCAHTA and Trails Head under the leadership of MRO **President Larry Short**, to celebrate the partnering that the three organizations do for local Historic Trails.

After lunch, the three presidents, **Larry**, Trails Head Chapter **Jean Coupal-Smith** and KCAHTA **Gary Hicks**, addressed the group and reviewed all that has been going on in the Kansas City area with Historic Trails in the last few years.

It was a great celebration by these partners!



SFTA leaders (l-r) Board Member Rich Lawson, Greg VanCoevern, SFTA Manager Joanne VanCoevern and Vice-President Larry Short



Trails Head members (l-r) Lila Aamodt, Dick and Ruby Nelson, Shirley Marshall, Rob Cook, Jean Coupal-Smith and Shirley Coupal

PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head held a planning meeting **December 7, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.** at **Marshall’s** house. Present were **President Lila Aamodt, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad, Treasurer Kelly Breen and Ross Marshall.**

Vice President **Jean Coupal-Smith** presided. This was a meeting to familiarize new President **Lila Aamodt** and new Treasurer **Kelly Breen** with the business affairs of Trails Head.

Planning for the OCTA Spring Symposium and Board Meeting in Independence, **March 14-16, 2019** was discussed. The committee is **Travis Boley, Kathy Conway, Jean Coupal-Smith and Pat Traffas**. Drury Inn is the meeting hotel, with talks and activities. One evening will be at National Frontier Trails Museum. Trails Head will provide lunch for Board meeting as usual.

Also discussed was the transfer of our bank account from former treasurer **Arnold Cole** to the new treasurer **Kelly Breen**. **Dick Nelson** will remain the second signatory on the account.

NEW PRESIDENT LILA AAMODT'S GREETING

It is an honor to have been asked to serve as your OCTA Trails Head chapter president. I am surrounded by very dedicated trail enthusiasts who have become like family.

My grandmother's cousins went on the Oregon Trail by wagon train from Polo, MO in 1880 to Washington taking just three months. But I knew nothing of that as I grew up in Minnesota. Six years ago I moved to Mission, Kansas and became fascinated with history of the area.

Participating this year in Living History 1849 in Independence and touring the Missouri portion of the Santa Fe Trail with **Ross Marshall** hooked me on trail lore.

Your Trails Head Chapter officers are planning a number of events for next year. Follow the quarterly *Traces* newsletter news and join us for dedications, symposia, and more. **Lila Aamodt**

2019

Sunflower State Trails Appreciation Day Topeka, Kansas – January 31



Trails Head Chapter President **Lila Aamodt**, flanked above by **Kansas Representative William Pannbacker** from Seneca (along the St. Joe Road) and Representative **Rui Xu** from Westwood (along the Westport Route), staffed the table in the Topeka statehouse at the Sunflower State Trails Appreciation Day on **January 31, 2019**.

Lila was joined by OCTA Kanza Chapter President and National Board Member (also a Trails Head member) **Duane Iles**, who shared space, promoting Alcove Spring.

Lila and **Duane** both reported that this was an excellent event in which trails in Kansas received a lot of notice from elected officials.

PLANNING MEETING

On **Sunday February 17, 2019**, Trails Head held a planning meeting at **2:00 p.m.** at **Nelson's** house. Present were **President Lila Aamodt, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Secretary Mary Conrad, Dick and Ruby Nelson, and Ross Marshall.**

Since **Treasurer Kelly Breen** injured her right hand and was absent, **Dick** reported \$7786.74 in the account. **Dick** will be prepared to fill in for her for a while until her hand heals.

Mary moved that we donate \$50 to Trailside Center for holding the annual meeting there, as usual. It was approved.

Membership Chair **Ruby Nelson** reported 87 memberships including three new ones.

Unfortunately, **Ross** reported that Trails Head member and trails researcher and mapper **Lee Kroh** passed away this morning. All were disappointed to hear this, although not unexpected.

Jean had already emailed the website proposal to those at this planning committee meeting.

Trails Head member **Gina Sifers** of Bella Media Services (of Independence) created the new OCTA website and the new Gateway Chapter website. **Jean** said the cost for web development using Squarespace.com and Google domain hosting will total \$2,028.

Jean said OCTA Association Manager **Travis Boley** has included this amount in the OCTA corporate agreement with the NPS. This likely will be approved. If it is not approved before it is needed, Trails Head would pay the bill and OCTA later would reimburse the chapter.

Jean said she immediately will sign the agreement with the company of **Gina's**, but she likely would not begin working with **Gina** until after **April 1st**. That is when **Jean** will need others to give her info that can be placed on the chapter website.

Mary said in September and October she went through all Trails Head newsletters repeatedly and made many lists for the website, but she still needs to type these. The lists involve Trails Head history, like all the names of those who have held each officer position from the beginning of the chapter. There are other lists too. **Jean** said **Gina** hopes to finish the development of the website in 10 months. Then the chapter would pay an annual fee of \$200 plus.

Mary made a motion for **Jean** to pursue construction of a chapter website as delineated in the website proposal that was emailed. **Dick Nelson** seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Lila said OCTA Association Manager **Travis Boley** had asked her to staff a historic trail table for OCTA at the first annual Sunflower State Trail Appreciation Day in the Kansas Capitol in Topeka. OCTA and Alcove Spring Preservation Association shared a table that day, **January 31.**

Lila said **Boley** has talked at 15 Rotary and Kiwanis meetings in the metro area to promote the mid-year OCTA symposium. The Olathe Rotary joined as an OCTA business member at one of those meetings.

Missouri River Outfitters President **Larry Short** has planned an Arrow Rock bus tour for National Trails Day on **June 1, 2019**. Trails Head and KCAHTA will partner with this event. The bus reservation was made last fall. **Ross** will plan the tour and do the dry run next week.

Ross suggested that **Lila**, as President, attend the Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation meeting as Trails Head representative **next Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.** She agreed to do so.

OCTA MID-YEAR BOARD MEETING & SYMPOSIUM IN INDEPENDENCE

As has been the custom for well over a decade, the OCTA mid-year board meeting has been combined with a two-day symposium in various locations along the Oregon or California Trails.

This year it was in Independence **March 14-16**, entitled "Truman and the Trails". A very accurate title because Harry Truman, whose home was in Independence, loved trails and was president of National Old Trails Road Ass'n from 1926 until he became a U.S. Senator in 1934.

In addition, his grandfather Solomon Young was a freighter on the trails.



Niel Johnson (Truman), with Sandi Black, as he speaks at the Thursday Reception

Niel Johnson, a member of Trails Head, has been a long-time portrayer of Truman. Essentially a dead-ringer, he is shown above as Truman as he spoke to the group.

Symposium speakers were **Ann Mallinson** (The Roots that Grew an Oak: Harry Truman and Politics), **David Jackson** (1840s Independence), **Lou Austin** (Utilizing Historic Trails for Community Improvement), **Jon Taylor** (When Histories Compete, Who Wins?), and **Greg Hatten** (Where Wild Rivers Meet Historic Trails).



(l-r) Independence Ass't City Mgr, Mark Randall, Lou Austin and SFTA Vice President Larry Short were participants in a panel discussion on trails



Mallinson Vineyard and Hall

Friday evening found attendees at the Mallinson Vineyard and Hall (above right) for a very tasty dinner and some great music by a guest violinist. **Matt Mallinson** is on OCTA's Board.

You can't have a trails event in the Kansas City area without some trail tours! And that is what the symposium attendees did.

These were not bus tours, but rented van tours. Amazing how well that worked out. Each van, except for the front seat occupied by the driver and guide, held 12 passengers on four back seats.

Each tour left at **8:00 a.m.** from Drury Inn in eastern Independence and ended up at the National Frontier Trails Museum at **1:00 p.m.**

There were three vans full on **Friday** as they toured the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trails from Independence Landing to the Kansas State Line at New Santa Fe. They stopped at NFTM, Wieduwilt Swale Park and Minor Park.

On **Saturday**, the tours had two full vans and toured the Westport Route, stopping at Westport Landing at the foot of Main Street, Union Station and Pioneer Park in Westport. The vans paused at Shawnee Indian Mission, stopped at Pioneer Park in Shawnee, Sapling Grove and Strang Park.



The group stopped (above at left) at Pioneer Crossing Park in Shawnee. Displayed is covered wagons and oxen sculpted by artist **George Goslin** plus five wayside exhibits.

It is slightly west of the Westport Route, but just south of the fork in the Fort Leavenworth Military Road. Erected for about one million dollars by the Shawnee Parks and Recreation more than a decade ago, it is truly a spectacular site.

A few minutes later, the group stopped briefly at Sapling Grove (above at right), previously named Comanche Park. With efforts by the local subdivision, Trails Head member **Craig Crease** and **Ross Marshall** over a decade ago, the City of Overland Park renamed it.

It was the campsite where the historic Bidwell-Bartleson Party left for California in 1841, the first wagon train to go to California.

The group is shown above, gathered around the three wayside exhibits on this sunny day.



The last stop on **Saturday** was at Strang Park (above left), which is near the junction of the North and South Branches of the Westport Route.

They viewed the four wayside exhibits erected in 2012 that interprets the Westport Route and the history of Strang Park. Thanks to Trails Head members **Dick Nelson** and **Gary Hicks** for helping lead these tours!

JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Above at right is the **Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation** at a recent monthly meeting. Trails Head President **Lila Aamodt** is second from the left. Trails Head is a member of JCKHF and **Lila** is our representative.

The Foundation seeks donors that will enable it to provide grant money to its organization members, which hopefully will benefit us in the future.

A salute to Trails Head member and KCAHTA President **Gary Hicks** for forming JCKHF.

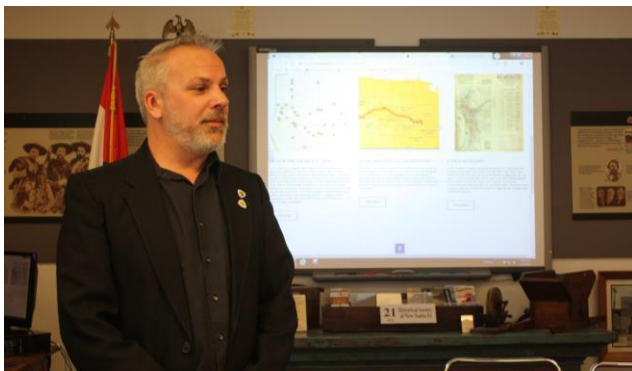
TRAILS HEAD MEETING

On a snowy Saturday morning **March 31**, Trails Head met at Trailside Center for a chapter meeting at **10:00 a.m.** Yes, attendees were hampered by the weather, but **President Lila Aamodt** warmed the audience with her greetings and remarks about the National Old Trails Road (circa 1912) and the Lincoln Highway (circa 1927).

The NOTR Association was formed in Kansas City in 1912. Harry Truman was NOTR President starting in 1927.

Lila then introduced OCTA Manager **Travis Boley**, pictured below, who presented a very informative PowerPoint program about the St. Jo Charrette held the week of November 5, 2018.

It was facilitated by the NPS National Trails Intermountain Region office in Santa Fe, NM which administers the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails.



Travis Boley

Superintendent Aaron Mahr and four staff people were at the St. Joseph Charrette from NPS. Omaha NPS also participated in the charrette because the Omaha office administers the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

St. Joseph is very prominent trail-wise because it sits on three National Historic Trails; the California, Pony Express and Lewis and Clark. Also, many Oregon Trail travelers started from there, though it is not officially on the Oregon NHT yet.

However, in the 10-year NPS Study that has been submitted to the Department of the Interior, the Oregon Trail is included along the St. Jo Route. An Oregon Trail Retracement Trail is being planned through the downtown area to the river.

A Pony Express Retracement Trail is also being planned from the Pony Express Museum to the Riverfront with horseshoe prints on the sidewalks!

The Missouri River goes along the west edge of downtown, so a lot of trail sites are along the Riverfront Park today and more can be added.

Lauren Manning is an OCTA intern there, even though she lives in Kansas City. She is funded through a grant from the Partnership for the National Trail System and is now in her second year. She has done a lot of research and digital mapping of the St. Joseph area. Much of her work was reflected on the PowerPoint that **Travis** presented.

There is an active OCTA Chapter in the St. Joseph area, called Gateway Chapter. And also they have a great president in **Jackie Lewin**, past president of OCTA and a long-time member of Trails Head.

Jackie has searched all diaries of trail travelers which will provide much information for the future plans.

Travis said that in partnering with the St. Joseph Museum, there is now a Gateway website with the digitization of trail diaries, letters, and reminiscences of emigrants who jumped off from St. Joseph and the immediate surrounding area. There is also a Gateway website section containing some Pony Express materials. This digitization will be an invaluable tool for researchers, genealogists, and students.

Around 50 people were in attendance on the first day of the St. Joseph Charrette, including the Mayor plus county and business leaders.

A lot of planning is being done, so we will need to be alert in the coming months and years. But certainly a lot is going to happen fairly soon!

BIG SIGNS AT MAHAFFIE UPDATED

The two historic site signs at the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm and the adjacent Heritage Center on Kansas City Road just northeast of Olathe were recently updated. Both signs now include a 90"x22" bottom sign that displays the triangular logos, as shown below, of all three National Historic Trails, the Santa Fe, Oregon and California, that go by the Mahaffie House and adjacent Heritage Center on the Westport Route.



Shown above is (l-r) OCTA President Pat Traffas, Mahaffie Executive Director Tim Talbott and Santa Fe Trail Association Vice President/MRO Chapter President Larry Short.

Missouri River Outfitters Chapter President Larry Short worked with the Olathe Parks and Recreation Department and the National Park Service to develop the new signs. Once approved by both entities, the 90"x22" signs were ordered, shipped, and then attached by the Olathe Parks and Recreation Department.

The Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm is an officially certified site on all three trails.

If you have not had a chance to visit this fantastic historic site, take time to do so. It is a great family venue and you can learn more about the site on the Mahaffie website

<https://www.mahaffie.org>.

This has been a great experience for the three Kansas City area local trails groups, MRO Chapter, Trails Head Chapter and KCAHTA to continue to work together to promote historic trails in the Greater Kansas City area.

The chapters are currently working with the Harris-Kearney House in Westport to update its sign to include all three National Historic Trail logos.

MARY CONRAD RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

On **April 13** at the Kansas Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Trails Head Chapter Secretary **Mary Conrad** received the KAA Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mary has contributed immeasurably to the KAA for over 30 years, not only through her



service on the executive board and consistent supervision of the cleaning labs at Kansas City Archaeological Association, but her prolific writing on all of it.

She has been very active with historic trails for many years not only locally, but across the nation. And she has been a leader with Trails Head since shortly after it began over 30 years ago. Congratulations **Mary** for this recognition!

TRAIL HISTORY SHARED WITH SCOUTS



Scouts plus Drew Bodner, Lila Aamodt and Dick Nelson at far right



Drew Bodner

About 36 Boy Scouts from St Andrew's Episcopal Church, located at 6401 Wornall Terrace in Kansas City, increased their awareness of the historic trails in our area through presentations by three Trails Head members at a meeting **May 20**.

Drew Bodner (above at right) began by sharing some of his scout memorabilia and stories. He introduced the trails by saying that Kansas City is home to four National Historic Trails. He also talked about the long distances traveled by walking.

He then showed the DVD video "Trails to Rails" produced by Olathe Historical Society. It demonstrates trail travel realities.

Dick Nelson described swales and where one might find them. He used maps to point out the routes of Lewis & Clark, the commercial Santa Fe Trail, Oregon pioneer trail, and the California pioneer trail, all of which passed through the Kansas City area.

He explained some high points of the three trails (Santa Fe, Oregon and California) that went past present day Gardner, Kansas.

Lila Aamodt asked the scouts what they might do on the trail during a day of heavy rain such as we were experiencing that day. What dangers were encountered?

She talked about games such as tag and hide-and-seek the youngsters might have played during any free time. The scouts also had a chance to try their hand at small toys such as Jacob's ladder, tops, spinners, and ball-and-cup sticks that travelers might have made and brought along.

To close the gathering, **Drew** asked some trail questions and gave out the KCAHTA Historic Map to four winners. Everyone went away with a History Map published by the Heritage League of Greater Kansas City as well as a Historic Trails Sites brochure.

Good work **Drew, Lila and Dick!** Thanks for taking the time to talk to our kids about historic trails that they may not have yet understood.

PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head held a planning meeting on **Sunday, May 26, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.** at **Marshall's** home. Present were **President Lila Aamodt, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Treasurer Kelly Breen, Secretary Mary Conrad, Dick and Ruby Nelson, and Ross Marshall.**

Kelly reported \$7431.24 in the Trails Head account.

Jean said that work on Trails Head website is on hold until **September.** OCTA Manager **Travis Boley** has placed the Trails Head website in the OCTA budget for **2020.**

The Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation was formed, under KCAHTA President **Gary Hicks** leadership, when Johnson County quit collecting a tax for heritage projects. Since **Lila** is the Trails Head representative now, she wondered if Trails Head ever collected any grants from that county money.

Jean and **Ross** answered in the negative as Trails Head does not do marker projects, etc., but said Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association (KCAHTA) had received three of the earlier heritage grants from the county for their signage. The Johnson County Kansas Heritage Foundation is fairly new. Each of the members of the foundation, including Trails Head, paid \$150 in dues the first year, nothing the second year, and \$50 dues for the current year. **Lila** said the current foundation wants each member to develop a list of projects for grant applications.

Discussion was held about the plans and preparations for the **August 4** hike and picnic at Minor Park at **1:00 p.m.**

Lila said **Sharon Brown** of the NPS has suggested that OCTA chapters take on stewardship of trail sites. **Larry Short**, MRO past president, is making a list of trail sites from Franklin, Missouri to Kansas City. **Ross** has completed a seven-page list of Kansas City-area trail sites, regardless of whether or not the sites have signage. **Ross** said KCAHTA has had quarterly signmaster inspections for years of their 350 or so "Trail Crossed Here" signs.

He also said over the years, Trails Head projects primarily have centered around two activities, i.e. working with OCTA headquarters as needed and giving bus tours. **Ross** said he would like to see Trails Head take on checkups/reviews of trail sites, although he does not know what the "cute" name could be. **Ross** has told **Larry Short** and KCAHTA President **Gary Hicks** that Trails Head may be working on such a project.

Lila gave her ideas. She sees four tasks involved in developing such a program. She listed these in the following manner: (1) thinking of a cute name for the program, (2) writing a job description for the volunteers, (3) dividing the entire route into smaller routes for each volunteer, and (4) deciding on who would do each individual route. **Ross** said he needs to complete the Arrow Rock bus tour before he begins working on this project of stewardship. He likely can present proposals at the **August 3 and/or November 2** Trails Head events.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY BUS TOUR

Yes, 36 passengers had a great spring day on **June 1** (National Trails Day) and stayed dry amidst all the flooding on the Missouri River! It turned out to be a great bus on a great trail!

The bus riders departed at **8:30 a.m. on Saturday morning** from Independence at the Truman Library led by **Ross Marshall** and **SFTA Vice President Larry Short**.

They journeyed east on I-70 to Boonville and over the Missouri River bridge to the north side of the Missouri River to Old Franklin. That was the September 1, 1821 departure point of William Becknell and five others with packhorses on their way to trade and pay off some debts. That was the opening of the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri to Santa Fe.

The access to all the markers at the Old Franklin site was closed, but they could easily see the site. They journeyed on north three miles to New Franklin to view the markers there. Then the bus looped back across the Missouri River through Boonville west to Blackwater.



The tall building on the far right is the Iron Horse Restaurant in Blackwater where everyone had a very delightful lunch. The roadway going north in the distance over the Blackwater River was closed for several days before the tour arrived! The bus riders were lucky!

The tour proceeded on north for 10 miles to Arrow Rock, which was founded in 1829.



Todd's Ferry site is at Arrow Rock and was used by Becknell to cross the Missouri River in 1821. It was a longstanding site on the Santa Fe Trail.

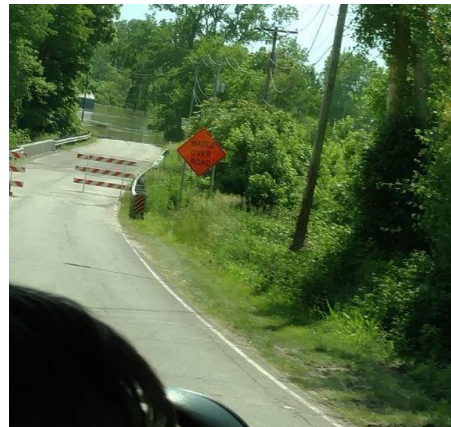
That Arrow Rock site today, as pictured above at left, is owned by **MRO Treasurer Rich Lawson**, who is at left above with **SFTA Vice President Larry Short**.

Behind them is the flood waters that covered much of the old ferry site, which is the location of the "Arrow Rock", which has been gradually cut apart and is basically non-existent today.

Above at right is Main Street in Arrow Rock. All were also able to visit the super Visitors Center and also the Sikes Gun Shop where Friends of Arrow Rock President **Tom Hall** spoke.

Becknell's 1821 journey was successful and he was able to sell all his merchandise in Santa Fe, NM. The Santa Fe Trail was open!

The Province of Mexico had just won its independence from Spain and wanted to trade, unlike Spain who threw everyone in jail that tried to trade with them. Missouri had just been made the 24th U.S. State on August 10. What a year 1821 was with these three great events!



The site above at left is on Highway 24 on the way back with the Missouri River in the background. Above at right is looking west from Lexington at Highway 224 that is completely underwater. Obviously, the tour chose to go west on Highway 24 from Lexington!

The tour followed the corridor of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail on the return, including Malta Bend, Grand Pass, Waverly, Lexington, Levasy and Fort Osage and arrived back at Truman Library in Independence at 5:00 p.m.

It was a great trip learning about Becknell's opening of the Santa Fe Trail, the early history of Boonville, Old Franklin, New Franklin, Arrow Rock, Blackwater, the Boonslick area and the Boonslick Road.

The early history of all the above in the 1808 to 1830s period was recalled and connections to the early Santa Fe Trail. By the early 1840s the Santa Fe Trail, Oregon Trail and California Trail routes would be starting from Independence Landing and Westport Landing in Kansas City.

Thanks to everyone who went and especially to **Larry Short** for making all the arrangements!

MARKERS SURVEY BY TRAILS HEAD

Thanks to Trails Head **President Lila Aamodt's** active thinking process, she has proposed an idea for the maintenance of the historic trail markers in the Kansas City area.

As someone has suggested, marker projects are not finished with installation, but that represents only the start of a lifetime project!

Accordingly, **Lila, Dick Nelson, Gary Hicks and Ross Marshall** spent three full days in early **July, 2019** doing inspections of each marker existing from Fort Osage to Gardner Junction, KS.

This group of four listed exact locations, descriptions, marker titles, marker conditions, dates of installations if known, who sponsored or financed the projects, quality of each marker, replacements or repair needs and any other ideas about the needs of the site or ideas about additional markers.

Basically, Kansas City metro markers have been installed over the past 20+ years.

Some of the markers, especially wayside exhibits, were improved by the group of four with just some cleaning with a wet cloth. And frankly, that idea should be part of the Trails Head future attention.

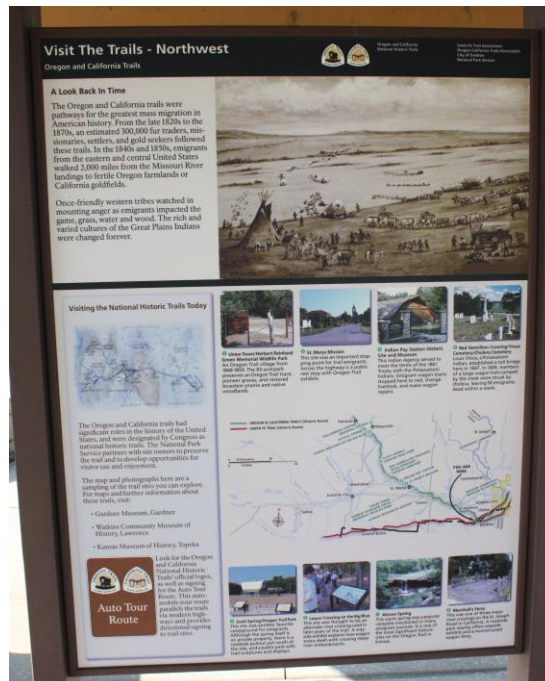
The group of four inspected a total of 70 sites!

The 70 sites contained the following types and totals of markers:



Approximately 70 wayside exhibits (most of them 24"x36") on metal legs were found as the above (left) wayside in McCoy Park in Independence. A few were found to be only 24"x24".

More than 30 limestone posts with one or more small plates on them as shown above (right) were found in several locations.



A dozen mounted upright 36”x48” kiosk markers have also been placed like the above kiosk, which is one of three at Gardner Junction southwest of Gardner.

As you can see, The Kansas City metro has a significant number of very informative historic trail markers on the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails!

RED BRIDGE EVENT VERY SUCCESSFUL

Yeah, it was warm – but not bad for **August 4!**



25 people attended this event at a very historic trails site and Trails Head members and guests had plenty of room in the shelter in Minor Park as you can see above.

At **1:00 p.m.** attendees began the event with a terrific lunch bought and assembled by chapter **Treasurer Jean Coupal-Smith**. Everyone enjoyed fried chicken, and all kinds of sides and desserts.

Afterwards, our **President Lila Aamodt** opened the meeting with introductions and information about the chapter.

Ross Marshall then opened the trail history part of the event by reviewing the significance of the Big Blue River crossing at this site where the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California National Historic Trails crossed during its heyday from about 1840 to 1855 or so.

By that time, the Westport Route from the foot of Main Street downtown became the route chosen by the Santa Fe Trail freighters until the railroads started to be built by 1865. After 1855, Oregon and California emigrants were leaving from Council Bluffs.

The first bridge (#1) at the site, which was about 250 yards south of the actual river crossing, 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 the morning of October 21, 1864 at the battle of the Little Blue Crossing east of Salem Church & Blue Mills Road. 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 “Red Bridge”. It lasted until 1892.

Mary Conrad (as pictured above in her green shirt) began telling us about the **Trail of Death** that occurred in 1838, also crossing the Big Blue just north of this site. A stone with an attached plaque marker near the shelter tells about that event in history which moved some Potawatomi from Indiana to near Ottawa, KS.

That event is similar to the Trail of Tears that went from the southeast to Oklahoma, also in 1838, moving the remaining Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek (Muscogee), and Seminole

Tribes, who had refused to go to Oklahoma earlier. These tribes were called the Five Civilized Tribes.

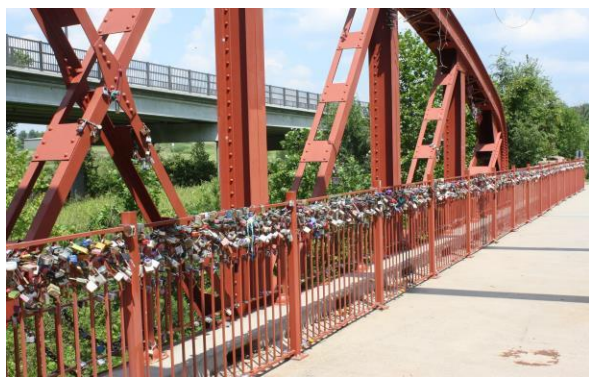
Those two events were basically at the end of the tribes removal to west of the Missouri Border by the 1830 Removal Act by the U.S. Congress.

Most picnickers then went on a hike to see the various sites at the crossing and in Minor Park.

The first stop was at the Potawatomi Trail of Death marker.

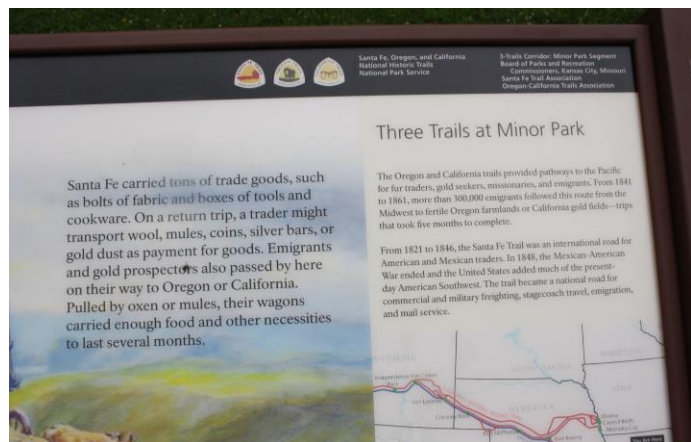
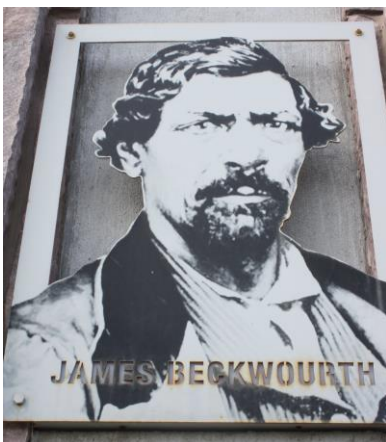
The second stop was the nearby Red Bridge (#3) (below) which was erected in 1932 and dedicated in January, 1933 by Senator Harry S Truman. The picture below shows the preserved Red Bridge which is now a part of the Kansas City MetroGreen Hiking and Biking Trail.

Those hanging locks are called “Lovelocks”. There are many thousands of them, placed there by husbands and wives or just boy and girl friends. Each couple then throws their key away and the Lock of their relationship is “permanent”.



This bridge replaced the “tin bridge” (#2) built in 1892, which was a steel truss frame. It was not very sturdy so it only lasted 30 years. The present bridge, (#4), was opened in late 2011.

Four 24”x36” wayside exhibits (pictured above) are on the walking trails along each side of the bridge. Two waysides are entitled *People And The Trails*. The other two are entitled *River Crossings and Red Bridges* and *Trails Before Highways*. All four are still in good condition.



There are also ten silhouette renderings of historically prominent people, with biographies, who may have used this crossing in frontier days. These are fading rapidly as shown above.

The ten silhouettes are **Jim Bridger, James Beckwourth** (above), **Kit Carson, Don Felipe Chavez, Alexander Doniphan, Susan Shelby McGoffin, Alexander Majors, Hiram Young, John Calvin McCoy** and **Amache Ochinee Prowers**.

Pictured above at right is another wayside in the main part of Minor Park west of the new bridge and just north of the many large swales. Lotsa history. Great day at Minor Park!

PLANNING MEETING

Trails Head held a planning meeting on **Sunday, August 25, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.** at **Marshall's** home. Present were **President Lila Aamodt, Vice President Jean Coupal-Smith, Treasurer Kelly Breen, Secretary Mary Conrad, Dick** and **Ruby Nelson**, and **Ross Marshall**.

Kelly reported \$7404.46 in the Trails Head account.

Membership Chair **Ruby Nelson** reported 88 memberships including three new members: **Collette Fleming** of Mission, KS, and **James Turner** and **Travis Boley**, both of Independence.

Lila said she called 18 Trails Head members who are not regular attendees about coming to the recent Red Bridge event. Seven of them came!

Those present discussed the chapter involvements with national OCTA, which are of course important to both Trails Head and OCTA. **Dick** said he is coming off the OCTA Board after two three-year terms and also this will be his last year as OCTA Awards Committee Chair after many years. Also, since he is coming off the Board, he will not be chair of Committee A that oversees activities at OCTA Headquarters in Independence.

Ross said he is resigning after 26 years as Chair of OCTA Chapters Committee and also as chair of the Future Convention Sites Committee, plus having been president and Board member for many years. Also, he has resigned from leadership activities in the Partnership of the National Trails System which included being president, treasurer and board member for many years, so that he can concentrate on local trails activities.

However, **Jean** will be joining the OCTA Board shortly and she will also be Chair of Committee A. **Pat Traffas** has been serving as OCTA President and **Sandy Wiechert** has been OCTA Secretary for a number of years.

Jean mentioned that creation of the Trails Head webpage is still on the back burner until the start of the OCTA fiscal year on **October 1**.

Ross reported the bus tour to Arrow Rock on **June 1**, National Trails Day, went well and made a few dollars for MRO Chapter who arranged the tour, which he and **Larry Short** led.

The Red Bridge event on **August 4** went well with very good attendance and expenses stayed with the budget.

Lila reported on the local markers survey in **early July** on three full days involving **Lila, Dick, Gary Hicks** and **Ross Marshall**. Over 90 wayside exhibits and upright kiosk markers exist plus over 30 limestone posts with information plates on them, plus 11 DAR markers. **Ross** sent the listings to the committee last week. He said monitoring, cleaning, repairing, and even replacing the markers is an ongoing chapter responsibility.

Lila is anxious to furnish some leadership in all of this along with enlisting some other members' help. This would be similar to what Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association (KCAHTA) has always done with the KCAHTA "Trail Crossed Here" upright road markers. After some discussion, the trail planners decided to call this team of helpers "Marker Monitors".

Mary said last fall (2018) she had attended the Gateway annual meeting, at which everyone was asked to consider how to volunteer. She volunteered to be liaison between Gateway and Trails Head and attends Gateway meetings, including board meetings when she has time.

Gateway members do feel isolated at times and have decided to try to more often participate in Kansas City trail events.

LOU AUSTIN, LONGTIME PARTNER ON KC HISTORIC TRAILS, PASSES AWAY

On **August 27**, the Kansas City historic trails community lost **Lou Austin**, a longtime historic trails partner on South Kansas City trails. He will be difficult to replace, if ever.

Lou had been involved with the National Park Service and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) retracement corridor project of the Santa Fe, Oregon and California National Historic Trails from Independence Landing at Sugar Creek to Gardner Junction with a particular emphasis on South Kansas City, especially from the Wieduwilt Swales at 85th and Manchester to the New Santa Fe Cemetery near State Line Road.



Above, at left, is **Lou** speaking on historic trails, as he often did, at a joint trails meeting on **November 7, 2015** at Trailside Center at 99th and Holmes Rd.

He helped create the TrailsKC plan and the 6th District Pedestrian Intermodal Transportation Connector Trail Plan in **2010** and also the 3-Trails Community Improvement District. **Lou** also has represented the 6th District on the Kansas City Public Improvement Advisory Committee (PIAC), plus leading many more partnership entities.

All historic trails sites in South Kansas City bore his specific leadership such as:

--Pedestrian trails, waysides, markers, and larger-than-life historical silhouettes at Santa Fe Elementary School at 90th and Old Santa Fe Road.

--Many waysides and markers at Schumacher Park on 93rd Street on land donated by his father **Lou Schumacher**.

--The \$1.5 million Powder Mill Pedestrian Bridge over I-435 at Bannister Road. **Lou** secured the funding from the Missouri Department of Transportation and 6th District PIAC.

--The Pedestrian Bridge over I-49 just south of Bannister Road; funding again secured by **Lou**.

--The 3-Trails Transit Center on Blue Ridge Blvd at about 94th Street, dedicated on **May 23, 2018**. **Lou** is speaking above, at right, at the dedication.

--Pedestrian Trail from the Santa Fe Elementary School to Avila University, still in progress.

Many historic trail leaders can say that it was a privilege to know and work with **Lou** all these years and he will be absolutely sorely missed.

But the Kansas City historic trails community will continue to enjoy the fruits of his labors and leadership for many decades to come!