



# Trails Head TIDINGS



A Newsletter of the Trails Head Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

**JANUARY 2012– VOL 10 #1**

## **ANNUAL AWARDS MTG HELD NOV. 5**

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

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

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

**Feb. 5** - Monticello Museum with **Bertha Cameron** as speaker, plus museum tour.

**May 7** - bus tour of Douglas County to Topeka.

**Sept. 17** - Watkins Museum in Lawrence with **Fred Six** as speaker, plus a museum tour.

**2012 OCTA convention** planning all year.

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

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

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

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

The first award was the Award of Appreciation given to **Peggy Smith** by **Mary Conrad** (pictured next column). The award read:

*In recognition of her decades of researching and promoting historic trails and area history with Trails Head Chapter and as a librarian, specifically for naming Lewis and Clark Viaduct and for raising awareness of Jim Bridger throughout the area with street names and sculpture.*



(l-r) Mary Conrad and Peggy Smith



(l-r) – Dick Nelson and Ross Marshall

Next, the **Meritorious Achievement Award** was presented to **Dick Nelson** (pictured above) by your editor. It read:

*In recognition of his many years of personal leadership in OCTA and Trails Head activities, including serving as chapter president, and outstanding achievements with historical organizations and area historic trail projects.*

**Mary** and I outvoted **Dick** on the above award. Even though **Dick** was the committee chair, we said we wouldn't take no for an answer!

**Speaker Charles Goslin**

We were privileged to listen to a real artist at our meeting! Introduced by **Mary Conrad**, Charles has been known to (cont page three)

## PRESIDENTS CORNER

Happy New Year to each member of Trails Head Chapter. 2012 promises to be a very busy and most exciting year as we prepare to host the OCTA Convention in Lawrence, KS. Many thanks to each member who is, and who will be, involved with the convention. Hosting a convention is a huge privilege, with a lot of work involved. This promises to be a wonderful experience for all attending.

While our focus is on the convention, we do want to continue to work on projects and goals previously set. The National Park Service has asked that we participate in a project which will designate trail sites along the Oregon/California Trail in our region for the National Register of Historic Places. **Mary Conrad** and **Rick Anderson** are best versed in this endeavor, but others may wish to join in this effort.

Meeting dates and times have been set, and we hope to see you at each meeting. Best wishes for a wonderful New Year.

Warmest regards,  
**Pat Traffas, President**

### TRAILS HEAD CHAPTER OFFICERS

President ----- Pat Traffas(913)642-3565(w)  
9621 W. 51<sup>st</sup> St.  
Merriam, KS 66203  
henwing@aol.com  
Vice-President –Dick Nelson (913)888-8386  
12812 West 100<sup>th</sup> Terrace  
Lenexa, KS 66215  
kcnelson42@sbcglobal.net  
Secretary ----- Mary Conrad (913)287-4405  
3900 N. 55<sup>th</sup> St.  
Kansas City, KS 66104  
pairish@lycos.com  
Treasurer -----Arnold Cole (913)879-1779  
14201 Slater  
Overland Park, KS 66221  
elocla2002@yahoo.com

**TIDINGS published quarterly**-(Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct). Editor needs your articles and information! Deadline is on the 20<sup>th</sup> preceding. Send to Ross Marshall, 14122 Slater, Overland Park, KS 66221 or to rossmarshall@mindspring.com.

*Have you renewed????????*

## NEW MEMBERS

We wish to welcome the following new members of Trails Head Chapter.

**Nancy Stayton**  
**13810 W. 81<sup>st</sup> Terr**  
**Lenexa, KS 66215**

**Todd Nelson**  
**809 W. 71<sup>st</sup> Terr**  
**KCMO 64114**

**Pat and Jack Fletcher**  
**730 Three Crabs Rd**  
**Sequim, WA 98382**

**Fred and Elizabeth Sawin**  
**2203 Goff**  
**St. Joseph, MO 64505**

---

## CALENDAR

**Mar 2-4** – OCTA National Board meeting at the Drury Inn in Independence  
**Aug 6-11** – OCTA National Convention at Holiday Inn in Lawrence, KS  
**Nov 10** – Trails Head Chapter annual awards and membership meeting  
**Note:** Obviously, with our chapter hosting the annual convention, very little time is left for the usual meetings. - editor

---

## RENEWALS NEEDED!

I started to include a membership roster with this issue of the *Tidings*, but unfortunately quite a few of you have not renewed when your due date came around in the past year.

Therefore, I decided to postpone preparing a roster until the next issue, so that most or all of you will have renewed and the roster would be current. See page four for the mailing address for both your national and chapter dues.

We want to retain you as a member and to have you keep on receiving our newsletter. So please renew both the national OCTA and Trails Head Chapter dues as soon as you can.

**DON'T DELAY - YOU ARE WANTED!**

(cont from page one)

many of us for many years as the most accurate artist associated with historic trails.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## NEW RED BRIDGE DEDICATED

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



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

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

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

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

That bridge was replaced in 1910 by a steel bridge, which was replaced in the early 1930s by the current steel truss bridge, also painted red.

**Craig Crease**, **Dave Jackson** and your editor are working on text and graphics for three interpretive panels and ten bios of people that likely used this crossing. More detail in the next issue of *Tidings*.

## 2012 CONVENTION PLANNING

Although many of you get the notes by email from our meetings, let me update briefly.

**Tour guides - Tour Committee Chair Craig Crease** has been communicating with those that have volunteered to be tour guides on the five different convention tours, each of which runs twice. But still need some more, so perhaps other readers of this newsletter will respond. We will need nearly two dozen. Give **Craig** or me a holler. Training starts in the spring.

**Tours - Jim Kullberg** and I have been doing dry runs on the five tours. As soon as those are done, I can begin to finalize scripts for the tour guides.

**Speakers - Mary Conrad** just about has all the speakers committed. When it is complete, we will then be able to post these assignments on our website.

**Website**—[www.OCTA-Trails.org/Chapters/Trails Head](http://www.OCTA-Trails.org/Chapters/TrailsHead). I will update the information every month or even more frequently as planning develops. I am a little behind, but will get there.

**Bus company** – We are about to finalize a contract with a very good local company.

**Sponsorships - Bob Burkhardt** has been leading this effort, mostly in Lawrence, with corporate and KU representatives. I have been a part of some of these visits and so has **Dick Nelson**. We have many more visits to make.

**Convention Booklets - Co-chairs Pat Traffas and Craig Crease**, are about to get all these writing assignments made. To anyone who has attended an OCTA convention, these booklets tell much about the trails and history of the area.

Oregon-California Trails Ass'n,  
524 South Osage St.  
P.O. Box 1019  
Independence, MO 64051

---

**TRAILS HEAD DUES**  
**\$10/yr due on January 1**

**To be a member of Trails Head**  
**Chapter, national OCTA dues**  
**must also be paid.**

**Send both dues to the above address**

**Registration forms** – All this information needs to be finalized in March, so time is of the essence in all our planning. But everything is progressing in an orderly way thanks to the many volunteers that have come forward – But we could still use more volunteers! Give me a call.

**Dick Nelson**, as OCTA's national awards committee chair reviewed the award categories as listed in the last issue of *News From the Plains* and stated that the convention host chapter has a wonderful opportunity to make awards to local people and entities since they can more easily attend the awards dinner. We need to be creative and begin to suggest award nominees. The deadline is June 1. Give **Dick** a call or an email if you want to nominate someone.

---

## TOWN OF KANSAS & STRANG PARK

Just a quick update.

All the thirteen panels and mounting hardware have been delivered for the two projects. The Overland Park Parks Department and the Port Authority downtown are just waiting for winter to be over so that everything can be installed at each site.

Dedication dates for both projects will be in the spring and that information will be in the next issue of *Tidings*.

These two sites will be on our convention bus tours and I am sure that everyone will be very impressed.