



April Meeting

The April meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was held on April 22, 2023 in the Webb Center at Carona, KS. There were 25 members and one guest present. Minutes of the meeting can be found at the end of this newsletter. Members in attendance were: John Chambers, Connie & Mike Payton, Bob & Suzy Still, Jim McKeel, Ivan & Denzil Voorhees, Paul Morgan, Larry & Kathy Spahn, David & Connie Wallace, Rob McKnight, Jack Evans, Brian Carlson, Darrell Cave, Carol Lewis, Joe Murphey, Dora Firmin, Lois & Jim Carlson, David Calwell, Don Richardson and Tom Johnston.

Heartlands - YouTube

Check out our YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMIkqWyCxfDlf_ezgw3UyQ

Heartlands Receives Donation

The Heart of the Heartlands recently was chosen as a recipient of a \$1,000 donation from Dittman Insurance of Pittsburg, Kansas. Dittman Insurance had posted on Facebook asking for nominations for local 501-C non-profit organizations. Five awards of \$1,000 each were awarded. Other recipients were: Dream Big Little One, Miners Hall Museum, Children’s Advocacy Center, Inc. and SEK Animal Advocates. The Heartlands wishes to thank all who nominated our organization. Kip Bollinger of Dittman Insurance presented the check to President Larry Spahn at the Carona museum. Thank you to Dittman Insurance for their ongoing support of our local non-profit organizations.



- Photo by Kathy Spahn

Shelves Donated to the Museum

John Parsons recently donated two more shelving units to the Heartlands. These shelves are a result of the renovation of the Gay Parita Ball Room. John even had the shelving delivered. The renovation of the Gay Parita is moving right along with much work having already been done on the inside of the building as well as repair and coating of the roof. New windows are being installed and sheet rock will soon be put up. The siding on the outside is being repaired and replaced. Work has been done beneath the building with many of the floor joists having been replaced.



The painted sign on the side of the building will be repainted. Thank you to John Parsons for saving this structure, the Gay Parita Ballroom holds many memories for the residents of the local area.

- Photos by John Chambers

From our Past

We will be featuring photos from our past for awhile.



This photo was taken in 2010 on the Bartlesville Ride. The view is at the SantaFe-Katy depot in Bartlesville. Photo is from the Larry Spahn collection.

Announcements

- Kathy Bernard recently made a \$50 donation to the Heartlands. Thank you Kathy!
- Jim Van Becelaere recently donated some paperwork from the Joplin & Pittsburg Railway. He also donated some Missouri Pacific pocket calendars.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be May 13, 2023 at 1:00 pm at the Webb Center in Carona.

Heart of the Heartlands

Any questions, comments or suggestions, contact:

Brian Carlson

bcarlson@ckt.net

620-820-9665 (leave message)

Miners Hall Presentation

Long time Heartland member, Dick Rauniker presented “The Emergence of the Railroads in Rural Kansas” at 2:00 pm, Sunday, April 23rd at the Miners Hall Museum in Franklin, Kansas. Mr. Rauniker is a resident of McCune, Kansas and has a vast knowledge of the railroads in our area.

Heartlands Slide-Media Show

Saturday, June 24th from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm there will be a slide-media show at Carona. The theme will be a salute to the KCS but other items are welcome to be shown. Presentations are asked to be no longer than an hour. Lunch is on your own, but feel free to bring snacks to share.

Board Vacancy

The Heart of the Heartlands has a vacancy on the Board of Directors. John Chambers resigned his position when he agreed to manage the museum during our extended hours. As a result, we will need to elect a board member to fill the remainder of John’s term. The term runs through 2025.

Track Crew Work

This past month, a track crew from Watco was working on replacing four switch ties along the tracks through the Museum Complex.

- Photos by John Chambers



April 22, 2023 - Heart of the Heartlands - Minutes

The April 22, 2023 meeting of the Heart of the Heartlands was brought to order by President Larry Spahn at 1:00 p.m. Thanks was given to all of the Heartland's members that provided food for the meal held prior to the meeting. All of the members were thanked for their work and time and is always appreciated and not taken for granted.

Minutes of previous meeting: Darrell Cave moved to accept the minutes as mailed. Jack Evans seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: After the presentation of the treasurer's report by treasurer Brian Carlson, Darrell Cave moved, Don Richardson seconded the motion to accept the treasurer's report. The motion was passed by the membership in attendance.

Old Business:

Train Rides:

Train rides for this year are still pending due to the large amount of track work and trestle repair throughout the system. This repair work is hampering train scheduling and operations. We are still trying to get something worked out but only time will tell.

Museum Report:

John Chambers gave his monthly museum report. In the report, the following items were mentioned:

- People have been driving by. Some stop, some do not.
- We have been receiving positive feedback from those that visit.
- On May 18th, a group of 18 are planning to attend the museum at approximately 3:30. One of the persons in the group is reported to be the son of John Downes. John Downes donated all the hand carved train models that are currently on display in the museum.
- A group of teacher is planning on coming out on August 1st between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm.
- June 24th has been set for a slide show starting at 10:00 am.
- John expressed the need for better signage at the museum. Something to communicate the days and hours we are opened.
- The need for new brochures and membership cards was brought up and discussed. Brian Carlson will work on getting those things taken care of.
- John also mentioned that he has had several visitors attempt to buy souvenirs but could not do so since we only take cash or check. They only had credit cards. Treasurer Brian Carlson had looked into the possibility of handling cards earlier and will get back with some options for the group in the near future.

New Business:

Dittman Donation:

News was received that the Heart of the Heartlands had been chosen as a recipient of a \$1,000 donation from Dittman Insurance of Pittsburg, KS. Dittman Insurance awarded five awards of \$1,000 each to area 501-C non profit organizations. Kip Bollinger of Dittman Insurance presented the check to President Larry Spahn at the Carona museum.

Miners Hall Presentation:

It was mentioned that long time Heartland member, Dick Rauniker would be presenting “The Emergence of the Railroads in Rural Kansas” at 2:00 pm, Sunday, April 23rd at the Miners Hall Museum in Franklin, KS. Mr. Rauniker is a resident of McCune, KS and has a vast knowledge of the railroads in our area.

Shelving Donation:

John Parsons recently donated two more shelving units to the Heartlands. These shelves are a result of the renovation of the Gay Parita Ball Room. John even had the shelving delivered. The renovation of the Gay Parita is moving right along with much work having already been done on the inside of the building as well as repair and coating of the roof. New windows are being installed and sheet rock will soon be put up. The siding on the outside is being repaired and replaced. Work has been done beneath the building with many of the floor joists having been replaced. The painted sign on the side of the building will be repainted. Thank you to John Parsons for saving this structure, the Gay Parita Ballroom holds many memories for the residents of the local area.

Kathy Bernard Donation:

John Chambers informed the group that Kathy Bernard had made a \$50 donation recently. She also brought some railroad related items out that John will be going through. Kathy also mentioned that she would like to volunteer two to three hours a week at Carona, possibly in the area of data entry.

Jim Van Becelaere Donation:

John Chambers also informed the group that Jim donated some Joplin & Pittsburg paperwork to us along with some Missouri Pacific pocket calendars. Jim’s mother was the secretary-treasurer of the J&P at one time.

Board Member Vacancy:

Due to the resignation of John Chambers from the Board of Directors of the Heart of the Heartlands, there is a vacancy that needs to be filled. Voting of a new board member will be held at the May meeting. If you are interested in being a board member, contact President Larry Spahn or Secretary-Treasurer Brian Carlson.

Announcements:

- Jack Evans announced that Big Brutus will be having a celebration for it’s 60th birthday on May 19th and May 20th. For more information checkout their website.
- Member Dave Calwell mentioned that he was in a recent article talking about selling or donating items from a personal collection. He also talked about his railroad clock collection and that he recently received a very rare SantaFe clock to add to his collection. He also donated a couple of brakemen’s uniforms to the Heartlands.

- Don Richardson announced that Cherryvale, KS will be having their Cherry Blossom Festival soon. Suggested if someone could have a table or something similar to advertise the Heart of the Heartlands.
- Jim McKeel suggested that when the new brochures are made that we get them to area motels and other tourist places to have available for the upcoming tourist season.

Lois Carlson moved to adjourn the meeting. Paul Morgan seconded the motion and it passed by the membership present.

Got a spot?

Don't hesitate to send something in if you have a place you have been or would like to go to. Our members would love to hear about it!

Whistle Stop!



Santa Fe Collection and Dave Calwell

- Article and photos by Heart of the Heartlands member, Lois Carlson

Article originally appeared in the Columbus News Report (Columbus, KS), The Morning Sun (Pittsburg, KS) and the Erie Record (Erie, KS). Reprinted for the newsletter with permission from the author

Sometimes, special treasures are right under our noses so to speak. One of those is the Heart of the Heartlands Railroad Museum and Carona Depot at Carona, KS. Husband Jim and I attended a Saturday luncheon there this past weekend and had an extra treat.

A special guest, Dave Calwell from Topeka, KS and his neighbor Kent Nelson were in attendance. Dave had a 40 year career with the Santa Fe Railroad and retired when the Santa Fe merged with Burlington Northern and it became known as the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway in 1995. Over the years before and since his retirement he has sought Santa Fe memorabilia of all kinds. He managed to acquire a very extensive collection and eventually decided that instead of having it in his home and back yard it needed to be where others could enjoy it. After doing his research, he decided to donate his collection to the Heart of the Heartlands Railroad Museum and Carona Depot. As a result, almost one room at the museum now houses Dave's collection. With the help of good friend and neighbor Kent Nelson the display is one that anyone interested in railroad history would want to see and enjoy. Kent built 4 special display cases as well as the highlight of the display, a facade of a depot ticket window on one side and a dining table complete with Santa Fe chairs, table cover and two styles of porcelain dishes used on the Santa Fe. Making beautiful wood items is a hobby Kent enjoys and helping his friend was special.



There is the authentic baggage cart which helps display a variety of items including diesel horns. There is a uniform from the Santa Fe band which was composed of Santa Fe employees and later relatives of Santa Fe employees. The band will celebrate it's 100th birthday this year, 1923-2023.

Among the twenty-four detailed categories on display you will find those devoted to: Lamps/Lanterns, kerosene to electric; Train step boxes; Signage of various kinds for former and current railroads; authentic ticket window; One special white RR crossing sign is actually porcelain and not wood; uniforms of Santa Fe some workers; large china and glassware collections; framed railroad art/pictures, and much more. One thing I learned as Dave gave a tour of his collection was a railroad practice I had never hear about. Do you know what Tell-Tails are? There are 3 or 4 of those on display but this was something I had never heard of. In earlier RR days, brakemen would work on top of the cars to tighten and release the brakes upon receiving engine whistle signals from the engineer. When approaching a tunnel or maybe an overhead bridge or other structure the train was to pass under, there would be Tell-Tails hanging down from a high bar that would brush against the person on top of the car to warn them of the coming danger. Thus they would lay down on top of the car as the train passed under whatever the low structure might be.

It is almost impossible to think that one person had such an extensive collection of over 2,000 items and all in pristine condition. You would be hard pressed, as they say, to find another collection of a single railroad line as extensive and in excellent condition. The train club is very, very appreciative of this generous collection donation. And it is right here in our own back yard to see and enjoy.

The Museum with three large rooms of display and many outside exhibits including restored train depots, train cars, train engines and more, and is open Wednesday - Sunday, 10 AM - 4 PM. and curator John Chambers gives excellent tours. Donations are appreciated and there is a gift shop. Carona is just 2 miles west jct. of highway 7 & state hwy. 102 and is located just a short distance south of hwy 102. So, if you haven't visited this unique museum you need to put it on your bucket list. One of the gems of Southeast Kansas for young and old.