

Annual Meeting 2014: Cox Education Center

Members met on **Sunday afternoon, December 7, 2014**, for our Annual Meeting. **President David J. Heinemann** reviewed the accomplishments of SCHS during the past year, including education and preservation efforts throughout the year, Ritchie House improvements, ice cream social in August, Capitol Iron Works tour in September, film showing in November, and plans for new historical signage on SCHS property of the two Ritchie houses. Society appreciation for financial support through a grant from the **Topeka Public Schools Foundation**, represented at our meeting by **Pamela Johnson-Betts**, Executive Director, and by **Ryan Hilmer**, President, was acknowledged. SCHS also has the commitment of a \$3500 financial gift from **Glenn and Claire Swogger**. Glenn attended, although Claire could not. All three guests present were given public thank-yous at the meeting. A new [Ritchie House Education Program web site](#) was also announced.



Special guest speaker at the annual meeting was **Ronald D. Parks**, author of *The Darkest Period: The*

***Kanza Indians and Their Last Homeland, 1846-1873.*** Ron signed books and the crowd chatted and enjoyed treats at the end of the meeting.



**Melinda Abitz** decorated the John Ritchie House in period-appropriate holiday ornamentation.



We were also honored to have the **great-great-great grandson of John Ritchie, Adam Ritchie**, attend this Annual Meeting. In this photo he sits near the sign about his ancestors that will be displayed on the Ritchie properties as part of the Pathways of Freedom network.

Our thanks to SCHS President **Dave Heinemann** and to member **Carol Yoho** for event photos.



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Film showing: *The Road to Valhalla*

Shown on **Sunday afternoon, November 6, 2014**, with comments and question sessions led by the film's producer/director, **Ken Spurgeon**. Ken was introduced by SCHS Board Member **George Bernheimer**, who appeared as an extra in the film.





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### Capitol Iron Works Tour

On **Sunday evening, September 14, 2014**, SCHS sponsored the first time public showing of the **Capitol Iron Works Co.** building, 701 SE Adams St., Topeka. The building's owners, **Dave and Renee Stevens**, received a [2014 Historic Preservation Award](#) in May. The tour showcased many of the original documents discovered in the building's safe. Some of these treasures even bear the signature of the company's and Topeka's founder, **Cyrus K. Holliday**. Other historic documents and photographs were also displayed, revealing the construction of a number of Topeka's historic buildings. A video was shown with actual construction footage of Topeka High School using steel fabricated by the company. Refreshments were served.



Our thanks to SCHS President **Dave Heinemann** for event photos.

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Santa Fe Band Concert + Ice Cream Social

Our 3rd annual event was held on on **Sunday evening, August 10, 2014**, at the **Ritchie Properties, 1116 & 1118 SE Madison., Topeka, KS**. Topeka's **Santa Fe Band**, directed by **Aaron Zlatnik**, performed while attendees enjoyed ice cream and beautiful summer weather while listening. In attendance were two **NEW BABIES** (ages 3 and 3.5 weeks) whose families were associated with the band. From musical families, this event was both babies' first band concert!

This event was free to the public, with donations toward the ice cream treats accepted.

— Select a photo to see the larger version —







Our thanks to SCHS President **Dave Heinemann** and to **Carol Yoho** for event photos.

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#### Ritchie House improvements okayed

The building permit has been issued for the **capital improvements to the Ritchie House** from the grant issued by the Topeka City Council's Transient Guest Tax Committee. Changes involve adding insulation to protect the property from extremes of heat and cold and interior electrical work to be updated.

The City Landmark Commission approved the handicapped ramp for the Ritchie House. A walkway on the north side of the Ritchie House will connect the ramp with the sidewalk. The Preservation Committee recommends that the Society connect the sidewalk and ramp with a brick sidewalk to that existing into the west door of the house.

**See also:** [Ritchie House getting ramp, energy upgrades](#), by Megan Hart, *Topeka Capital-Journal*, 6-25-2014

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#### 2014 SCHS Preservation Awards

Awards were presented on behalf of the Shawnee County Historical Society and the Topeka Landmarks Commission on **Sunday afternoon, May 4, 2014**, at **Serendipity, 822 N. Kansas Av., Topeka, KS.**

The featured speaker was **Michael Langfitt** of **Pioneer Group, Inc.**, who also serves as President of Federal Historic Partners, LLC. Mr. Langfitt is in charge of the restoration of the Dillon House for Pioneer Group. He spoke about the Dillon House restoration and other projects of the Pioneer group, including their interest in the Post Office building which is to be sold by the postal service. Refreshments were provided. The event was free and open to the public.



***This year's awards go to:***

- **City of Rossville** for preservation of the **Historic Joe Campbell Memorial Stadium**. The baseball stadium was built as a WPA project in the 1930's and is an important icon in the Rossville community. Rossville has consistently used and maintained it for use by the community and has preserved its deep historic roots. **Matt Campbell**, grandson of **Joe Campbell** has done much of the renovation.



- **David & Renee Stevens**, owners of the **Capital Iron Works Company** building at **701 SE Adams St.** in Topeka have restored this early Topeka family-owned business and plan to continue its use as offices. Their extensive cleanup and rehabilitation of the structure has preserved many important features in keeping with the historic nature of the structure. They discovered many important artifacts, including photos and business records dating back to the 1870's in the vault. These artifacts will be valuable to historians and other researchers. There was a first time showing of some of the artifacts at the event.
- **Wilma J. Kratina Family** has placed an **historic red barn**, used by the family since the 1940's in a trust to preserve it for the future. Mrs. Kratina, age 88 and her daughter, Cynthia have been notified of the award. The barn is located at **4529 NW 35th Street**.
- **Deb Edwards** has restored a lovely home at **419 Taylor** in one of the early Topeka neighborhoods. She was nominated by the **Old Town Neighborhood Association** for her loving and careful restoration. Legend has it that the mother of **Langston Hughes** worked for the home's original owner and as a child, Hughes was often there.
- **Jenny Torrence** owns three properties in the North Topeka **NOTO Arts District** that are being recognized for their restoration and adaptive reuse. The 820 N. Kansas Av. address is currently open to the public as **Serendipity**, a restaurant, bar and meeting space. The 822 N. Kansas Av. address is open as **NOTO Burrito**, a restaurant.

In addition, the Society and Commission offer two Advocacy Awards to individuals who have saved historic properties from demolition. Because of their efforts, these properties will not be destroyed, but restored and reused. Restoration is in progress.

- **Sara Bremer Parks** for her advocacy on behalf of **East Topeka United Methodist Church** which was to be sold by the church conference because it had no need for it. Sara organized community meetings, spoke before the city council, and worked tirelessly to find an alternate solution to demolition. As a result the building was given to another church group for their use.

- **Zach, Don and Edie Snethen and Michael Bradley** for their relentless efforts to save **903 and 905 North Kansas Av.** The buildings have been purchased and stabilized with renovation to come at a later date.

— Select a photo to see the larger version —



**Matt Campbell**, grandson of Joe Campbell, and **Andy Reitcheck**, President of the Rossville City Council, accept award from **David Heinemann** on behalf of **City of Rossville**, for **Joe Campbell Memorial Stadium**.



**Renee Stevens**, shares documents uncovered in restoration of **Capital Iron Works Company**.



**David Heinemann** presents award to **Renee & David Stevens** for **Capital Iron Works Company, Topeka**.



**Aaron Edwards**, son of **Deb Edwards**, accepts award from **David Heinemann** for property at **419 SW Taylor, Topeka**.



**Jenny Torrence** accepts award from **David Heinemann** for three properties in **800 block of Kansas Av., Topeka**.



**Sara Bremer Parks** accepts award from **David Heinemann** for advocacy in saving the church at **708 SE Lime, Topeka**.



**Michael Bradley and Edie, Don & Zach Snethen** accept award from **David Heinemann** for advocacy in efforts to save **903 & 905 N. Kansas Av.**



**Lonnie Martin & Pete Gierer** accept award from **Zach Snethen** for their service to the **Board of the Topeka Landmarks Commission.**



**2014 building preservation projects honored:**



**Joe Campbell Memorial Stadium, Rosville**



**Capital Iron Works Co.**



**Kratina Family 4529 NW 35th St.**



419 SW Taylor St.

800 block of Kansas Av.



*above:* East Topeka Methodist

*right:* 903 & 905 N. Kansas Av.



Exterior photos by **David Heinemann**