

News from the Plains



Volume XIV, No. 4

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

October 2000



Newly elected OCTA Board members, left to right, Vern Gorzitze, Frank Tortorich, Stan McKee and Tom Laidlaw.

— Photo by Bill Martin

OCTA Board Establishes Committee To Review Grants

by Bill Martin

The Oregon-California Trails Association Board of Directors has approved a policy designed to govern grants made from OCTA endowment funds and has established a Grants Committee to oversee the process.

The action taken at its annual meeting in Kansas City followed expectations that OCTA might receive additional requests for financial assistance after it provided \$5,000 for a Wyoming trail-marking effort.

The policy requires that organizations seeking assistance submit a complete plan for how funding would be used, including a timeline for completion and how the project will benefit the trails and OCTA.

The action followed recommendations from internal Board committees chaired by Chuck Martin and Ken Martin, with substantial input from Treasurer Gail Carbiener.

Grants will be given preference to projects that clearly fall within the definition of OCTA's Statement of Purpose, can be completed within one year, involve many OCTA chapter members and have the potential for favorable OCTA publicity.

(Continued on page 4)

Four Are Elected to OCTA Board of Directors

Vern Gorzitze, Tom Laidlaw, Stan McKee and Frank Tortorich, individuals with diverse trail backgrounds, have been elected to serve three-year terms on the OCTA Board of Directors.

They were installed at the annual OCTA convention in Kansas City and replace Ross Marshall, Ken Martin, Jeanne Watson and Lesley Wischmann, whose terms had expired.

Gorzitze, of Salt Lake City, UT, is a charter member and past president of the Crossroads Chapter and chair of the chapter's Graves, Sites and Marking Committee. He served on the Salt Lake City Convention Committee and designed and supervised construction of the Donner Spring Historical Site, which was dedicated during the convention in 1994. He also is a member of the Utah Governor's Historic Trail Consortium.

Laidlaw, of Vancouver, WA, is a member of the Northwest Chapter. He created the NW OCTA website and two on-line trail experiences, the "Clickable Oregon Trail In Oregon" and the "Oregon Trail Kiosk Tour." He also donated over 400 hours to create the OCTA On-Line Bookstore. For the last five years, Tom has been a volunteer blacksmith and interpreter at Fort Vancouver, where he portrays William Cannon, the first American at the Hudson's Bay Company outpost.

McKee, of Rock Springs, WY, is field manager for the Bureau of Land Management. A member of the Wyoming chapter, McKee has responsibility for eight million acres of public land in southwestern Wyoming, including the most miles of historic trails in the BLM. He is a member of the Sweetwater County Historical Museum Board and the Sweetwater County Historical Foundation.

Tortorich, of Pine Grove, CA, is a founder and past president of the California-Nevada Chapter and author of *Gold Rush Trail, A Guide to the Carson River Tour of the Emigrant Trail*. He has served on OCTA's Archaeology Committee since 1986 and has been involved in planning for five national conventions. He previously served on the OCTA Board in 1989-90 when he was appointed to fill a vacated term. He is a past president of the Amador County Historical Society.

From the Editor's Desk . . .

The OCTA Board of Directors at its annual meeting in Kansas City spent a good amount of time talking about revitalization of the chapters, membership and trails preservation efforts. The three are closely related.

President David Welch told the Board that the organization's eleven chapters are "the heart of OCTA." He expressed concern about the health of some of the chapters and promised to make revitalization a centerpoint of his second year in office. *(See Dave's comments on the facing page for more.)*

Dave also noted that OCTA membership, while a strong 2,300, continues to "trickle down." About 10 to 15 percent of members fail to renew each year, not usual for any organization, but OCTA isn't replacing members in the same numbers.

Chapter involvement in membership development is important, Dave said, and members should be recruiting members. OCTA membership needs to grow to support trails preservation efforts.

Along those lines, National Preservation Officer Dick Ackerman reminded the Board that "every member is a Preservation Officer," adding that there are "unusual and large problems in front of us...and working together we can solve many of them."

Clearly, strong chapters can lead to growing membership, which means better and more effective preservation efforts. OCTA chapters must be the first point of attack for preservation, by monitoring trail activities, developing relationships with private land owners and public agencies, initiating local public awareness efforts and finding solutions which can be

implemented in partnership with the national organization.

One Board member told us that one of the problems the chapters face is they sometimes feel "isolated," by distance or by size. The best way to combat that, it is clear, is to make sure OCTA has chapters which are individually strong and growing and a national organization which works closely with them on issues that are both local and national.

Most OCTA chapters are doing a wonderful job on trails preservation issues, whether that involves mapping trail locations or keeping an eye on local preservation "hot spots." An emphasis on the importance of chapters, by President Dave, Chapters Committee Chair Ross Marshall, and all of the Board members is a solid step in the right direction.

Finally, in terms of membership, allow me to make a suggestion which has been made in this space before. The best and quickest way to grow OCTA is from within. Think of someone among your circle of friends or family who you think shares an appreciation for our heritage and our history. Then, give them a gift of an OCTA membership. Some may not continue as members on their own, but we suspect a lot of them will after they see what OCTA is all about.

And make sure you invite them on a chapter trek. It's hard to imagine anyone who has actually been out on the trails who wouldn't quickly learn to share our deep appreciation for the emigrant experience.

OCTA members owe it to the trails to do everything they can to make sure we have more members, healthy chapters and a vigilant trails preservation program.

-- Bill Martin

Submission Guidelines

News From The Plains welcomes timely submissions of news, features and photos related to the work of the organization and its members and the preservation of our trails heritage.

Material is due 30 days prior to publication dates.

Material is best sent either on a computer disk (in DOS or text format but make sure you include a hard copy) or via e-mail.

Pictures are appreciated but cannot always be returned.

If you have any questions, please call

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Next Deadline Is December 1, 2000

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From The President . . .

by David Welch

Elsewhere in this issue of *News From the Plains*, you will find summaries of the business conducted at the board meeting held in conjunction with the annual convention. The articles will give you a good feel for board activities so I will not repeat them here.

Much was accomplished; much remains to be done. As I look at the year ahead, I wonder how I can accomplish all that I know should be done. However, we have a new president-elect, Randy Wagner, and he is sure to keep the organization moving ahead. So I will pick my objectives carefully.

During the past year I have come to realize how important chapters are to the long-term success of OCTA. If we are to make substantial progress in the preservation of the historic trails, chapters must be at the forefront. Within the chapters there must be strong, sustained leadership with active support from the chapter membership. An expectation that a local problem can be solved by the national organization is, in most cases, unrealistic.

The current status of OCTA chapters fills the spectrum from large, strong and cohesive to small, weak and divided. In troubled chapters leadership is weak or absent, often due to the fact that they have been asked to do too much for too long. The failure to develop future leaders leads to the inevitable deterioration of the chapter organization. "Job One" for the chapter president should be to build a strong, sustaining organization at that level. Chapter members other than the president should take the lead in trail preservation, membership development and public relations.

How can you help? Become involved in your local chapter. Offer your special skills. Trail research, marking and protection are our end product, but assistance with public relations, writing, advocacy and finances are needed to reach that goal.

During the next year I will be asking for specific help from chapters. At the same time, we will be looking at the organization of chapters. Are some too big? Are others too small? What is the right size? Should we reorganize?

I have also started an initiative to re-vitalize our Nebraska Chapter. It appears to me that two chapters are appropriate, one centered on the Omaha/Council Bluffs area that will include eastern Nebraska and Iowa. Another on the west side (a "Pan Handle" chapter) could encompass western Nebraska, northeastern Colorado and perhaps southeastern Wyoming. Of course, these are just my thoughts. A solution needs to be worked out by those directly impacted.

Another proposed initiative is to establish a international "Armchair Chapter." This chapter would have no geographical boundaries and would be a home for our members from New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, England, Japan and elsewhere. Those less inclined toward field work, or unable to travel, could focus on activities that can be done at home or in their locality. Do I have a volunteer to take charge?

In the next year, don't be surprised if I show up at your chapter meeting. I am going to have a little "lame duck" fun. Please contact me with your thoughts and suggestions and contact your chapter president to volunteer.

See you on the trail.

Dave Welch, President

News From Headquarters

By Kathy Conway, Headquarters Manager

Those of us who attended this year's convention were enriched with a wealth of historic trail information about the river "ports" of Independence and Kansas City and surrounding areas. Early in the week, "Mother Nature" showed her fierceness in the form of a mid-west thunderstorm. Torrential rain and unrelenting lightening made it a awesome experience. It can be concluded that trail travel 150 years ago across these plains was not for the faint-hearted. Tours, five in all; interesting papers; and a visit to the museum, Steamboat Arabia rounded out our engaging convention week.

We want to extend a big "THANK YOU" to Director John Mark Lambertson and his dedicated staff at the National Frontier Trails Center for putting on a wonderful "WELCOME NIGHT" reception for all convention-goers. It was a great opportunity to see the center, visit our Merrill J. Mattes Research Library and tour the Headquarters building. It was an added plus to visit the "mini" Charles Goslin gallery of original trail art.

We know we speak for the entire OCTA organization when we say THANK YOU a thousand times over to our hardworking and committed Trails Head Chapter for a job well done. A special thanks goes to Judy Budde and her Hospitality Committee for making all feel welcomed and "at home" at the

registration station.

We were thrilled to be presented the Lizzie Charlton "trip to Oregon" diary by Shann and Bill Rupp at the General Membership Meeting. The story of how the diary was found is mentioned in our April 2000 *News From The Plains*. This diary will be held at the National Frontier Trails Center on indefinite loan for proper archival treatment and periodic display. Because of news media reports about the diary, a lot more information has been learned about Lizzie, her trip across the plains and what subsequently happened in her life. John Mark Lambertson has been the master sleuth with help from Glenn Harrison of the NW Chapter doing some field research. We now "probably" know who last possessed this diary and why it ended in a trash dump.

Lastly, we have added a couple of great new books at the bookstore. They are available at our on-line bookstore (www.OCTA-trails.org) or call us toll free 1-888-811-6282 to order. They are: *A Newer World: Kit Carson, John C. Fremont, and the Claiming of the American West*, by David Roberts, \$25 (hardback); and *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West*, by Michael Tate \$34.95 (hardback). We would be delighted to mail them to you! Don't forget, OCTA members get a 10 percent discount.

Board Report *(Continued From Page 1)*

Initial members of the Finance and Grants Committee will include the OCTA President, the Treasurer and Board members Reba Grandrud, Chuck Martin Jr., and Tom Laidlaw, plus past Treasurer Jim Budde and others who may be designated by the President. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Directors for final action. A two-thirds vote of the Board is required for final approval.

In other action at the Kansas City Board meeting, directors:

- Approved a reimbursement policy for expenses incurred by OCTA officers and members. Included is a provision that Board members, if they so desire, may be reimbursed for up to \$300 in travel and lodging expenses for the Mid-Year Board meeting. A proposal to reimburse Board members for expenses to attend the Annual Meeting held in conjunction with OCTA's convention was defeated.

- Authorized President David Welch to consult with a copyright attorney to consider what action, if any, should be taken to protect OCTA copyright interests in the 1991 and 1993 Western Emigrant Trails (WET) maps.

- Asked a Board committee led by Robert Kabel to study the existing OCTA "Statement of Purpose" and make a recommendation at the Mid-Year Meeting in March, 2001, as to whether it should be revised or updated.

- Heard progress reports on OCTA conventions planned in Casper, Wyoming in 2001 and Reno, Nevada in 2002. The Board also approved moving the dates of the 2001 convention to the third week of August, instead of the traditional second week, meaning it will be held the week of August 12-18. The 2003 convention is scheduled for Manhattan, Kansas, and a proposal is expected to hold the 2004 convention in Vancouver, Washington.

- Approved a recommendation from the Nominating and Leadership Committee that Bob Clark be named editor of the *Overland Journal*, replacing Marilyn Holt, who did not seek reappointment, and that Bill Martin continue as editor of *News From The Plains*. Committee chair Randy Wagner said a total of 11 applications were received for the two positions. The Board also reaffirmed OCTA's existing policy of keeping the *NFP* and the *OJ* as separate publications. (See separate story on page 9.)

- Authorized President David Welch to work with Chuck Dodd on the COED program, with an emphasis on compiling an Internet-accessible, searchable database of names, dates and locations, tentatively known as "Names on the Plains."

- Reaffirmed that OCTA's name or letterhead may not be used except for official communication and that agreements may not be entered into on OCTA's behalf without the approval of the President and the Board of Directors.

- Approved an Employee Policy Manual for full- and part-time OCTA employees, to be effective October 1, 2000.

- Accepted a report from the Public Relations Committee outlining a comprehensive program designed to increase awareness of OCTA and trail preservation issues. (See separate story on page 7).

- Heard a report from the Collections Committee which

Dues Increase Approved

The Board of Directors of the Oregon-California Trails Association has approved an across-the-board dues increase, effective January 1, 2001.

The increase, approved unanimously at the Board's annual meeting, is the first increase in dues since 1996 and will allow the organization to keep pace with increased operating costs and maintain current revenue goals.

Current members will be able to renew their dues for 2001 at the old rate until December 31, 2000.

"Historically, OCTA has increased its dues by a modest amount about once every five years," noted President David Welch. "It is a financially prudent step for an organization of our size."

Under the increase unanimously approved by the Board, individual dues will go from \$35 to \$40 annually and family dues will increase from \$40 to \$45. Supporting memberships will increase from \$60 to \$75 and Patron designation from \$100 to \$125.

In addition, Institutional dues will increase from \$250 to \$300, Corporate from \$1,000 to \$1,200 and one-time Life Memberships will increase from \$750 to \$1,000.

acknowledged receipt of several books and journals donated to the Merrill J. Mattes Research Library by former OCTA Treasurer Jim Budde.

- Approved a procedure for processing Challenge Cost Share Projects, as recommended by President Dave Welch. The procedure requires that a project first be approved by the local chapter, then go to CCSP Chair Suzette McCord-Rogers, who will submit it to the National Park Service.

- Heard that the Awards Committee chaired by Ross Marshall will review the criteria for all OCTA awards and ways to increase the number and geographical coverage of nominations. A report will be presented at the Mid-Year Board Meeting.

- Approved transfer of \$5,000 from unrestricted endowment funds, if needed, to balance the 1999-2000 budget, reflecting a decision at the Mid-Year Board Meeting to provide financial support for a Wyoming trail marking effort.

- Approved a largely technical amendment to OCTA Articles of Incorporation designating the National Frontier Trails Center as the repository for the Merrill J. Mattes Research Library should OCTA ever cease to exist. The Collections Committee said such a statement is considered appropriate in the museum-historical society fields. The amendment subsequently was approved at the general membership meeting.

- Set March 2-3 as the dates for the Mid-Year Board meeting to be held in Independence.

Casper 2001

w3.trib.com/~rlund/Convention.html

Member Support Needed For Federal Trails Bill

Legislation has been introduced in Congress authorizing a one-time-only update of the National Historic Trails program which could lead to nearly an additional 6,000 miles of trails being given federal recognition.

OCTA members are being urged to contact their federal legislators in support of the bill, according to Bill and Jeanne Watson, co-chairs of the OCTA Trails Liaison Committee.

House Resolution 5014 was introduced by Congressman Douglas Bereuter of Nebraska, lead sponsor for 1992 legislation designating National Historic Trails status for the California and Pony Express Trails.

Under the bill, if feasibility studies determine that a route qualifies as a "primary route" under the National Trails Act, the Secretary of the Interior can add it to the Oregon, California, Pony Express or Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails.

OCTA members are encouraged to write to their representatives in Congress, encouraging their support for the bill and urging them to become co-sponsors. Letters should stress the importance of the legislation to trails preservation. It would be helpful to indicate any of the proposed routes which are in your Congressional district.

Letters to House members should be mailed c/o House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. Senate letters should be sent c/o U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

"Bill and Jeanne deserve a tremendous pat on the back for their outstanding work in bringing this effort to fruition," OCTA President David Welch said when the legislation was introduced. "It is the most important legislative accomplishment since the Cal Trails legislation. Much work remains to be done, but the first hurdle is cleared."

The following are the routes proposed for feasibility studies update under HR 5014:

Oregon National Historic Trail Estimated 1,400 miles

Whitman Mission Route, Upper Columbia River, Cowlitz River Route, Meek Cutoff, Free Emigrant Road, North Alternate Oregon Trail, Gooddale's Cutoff, North Side Alternate Route, Cutoff to the Barlow Road, Naches Pass Trail.

California National Historic Trail Estimated 3,700 miles

Missouri Valley Routes: Blue Mills-Independence Road, Westport Landing Road, Westport-Lawrence Road, Fort Leavenworth-Blue River Route, Road to Amazonia, Union Ferry Route, Old Wyoming-Nebraska City Cutoff, Lower Plattsouth Route, Lower Bellevue Route, Woodbury Cutoff, Blue Ridge Cutoff, Westport Road, Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route, Atchison/Independence Creek Routes, Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route, Nebraska City Cutoff Routes, Minersville-Nebraska City Road, Upper Plattsouth Route, Upper Bellevue Route.

Central Routes: Cherokee Trail (including splits), Weber Canyon Route/Hastings Cutoff, Bishop Creek Cutoff, McAuley Cutoff, Diamond Springs Cutoff, Secret Pass, Greenhorn Cutoff, Central Overland Trail.

Western Routes: Bidwell-Bartleson Route, Georgetown/Dagget Pass Trail, Big Trees Road, Grizzly Flat Cutoff, Nevada City Road, Yreka Trail, Hennes Pass Route, Johnson Cutoff, Luther Pass Trail, Volcano Road, Sacramento-Coloma Wagon Road, Burnett Cutoff, Placer County Road to Auburn.

California Authorized Routes with Oregon Shared Use: St. Joe Road, Council Bluffs Road, Sublette Cutoff, Applegate Route, Old Fort Kearny Road (Oxbow Trail), Childs Cutoff, Raft River to Applegate.

\$204,900 OCTA Budget Approved for 2000-2001

The Board of Directors has approved a \$204,900 operating budget for the 2000-2001 fiscal year, with most of the increase reflecting plans for OCTA's Special Publications program.

The budget represents a 12 percent increase over the 1999-2000 budget of \$182,250. Included in the new budget is \$18,000 for Special Publications, which plans up to three publications during the next fiscal year.

Revenues are projected at \$209,700 and call for increased Special Publications sales, increased endowment income and higher-than-budgeted convention income. Convention income was budgeted at \$20,000, consistent with results actually achieved from recent conventions.

In his report to the Board at its Annual Meeting, Treasurer Gail Carbiener said the OCTA Endowment balance at the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation as of July 12, 2000, was \$488,842. The report did not include the new \$200,000 endowment established by the Martin Family for legal expenses. However, those funds are now in the endowment and will be reported in future reports.

The investment mix is 65 percent equities, 30 percent fixed income and five percent money market. A formal performance review was to be conducted after September 30, 2000.

Budget highlights:

	1999-2000	2000-2001
Expenses		
Board/Officers	\$ 15,200	\$ 11,800
Committees	\$ 8,000	\$ 7,600
Headquarters	\$ 90,400	\$ 92,000
Preservation	\$ 12,900	\$ 14,000
Publications	\$ 52,250	\$ 70,500
Other	\$ 3,500	\$ 9,000
Total	\$182,250	\$204,900

Revenues		
Membership	\$ 96,000	\$ 96,500
Donations/Fund Drive	\$ 14,920	\$ 19,000
OJ/NFP	\$ 4,079	\$ 5,000
OCTA Store (net)	\$ 34,843	\$ 25,000
Endowments	\$ 22,000	\$ 30,000
Special Publications	\$ 0	\$ 12,000
Interest	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,000
Convention	\$ 10,000	\$ 20,000
Other/Miscellaneous	\$ 845	\$ 1,200
Total	\$187,687	\$209,700

— Bill Martin

Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail Estimated 800 miles

1846 Subsequent Routes A & B (Lucas and Clark Counties, Iowa), 1856-57 Handcart Route (Iowa City to Council Bluffs), Keokuk Route (Iowa), 1847 Alternate Elkhorn & Loup River Crossings (Nebraska), Fort Leavenworth Road, Ox Bow Route & Alternatives in Kansas & Missouri (Oregon/California routes used by Mormon Emigrants), 1850 Golden Pass Road (Utah).

Pony Express National Historic Trail Estimated 20 miles

South Alternative - Wathena to Troy (Kansas)

Keynote Speakers Highlight Trails, Mountain Men

by Bill Martin

The development of trails in the Kansas City area and the demise of the Mountain Man highlighted a pair of keynote addresses at the 18th Annual Convention of the Oregon-California Trails Association at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Kansas City.

Trails historian Craig Crease of Shawnee, KS, told nearly 400 convention-goers of the "special legacy" that Kansas City offers trail lovers because of its historic link to the Oregon, California and Santa Fe trails.



Craig Crease

Meanwhile, archaeologist and attorney Mark Kelly of Lenexa, KS, offered his take on event that caused the trappers of the first half of the 19th Century to give up "an extraordinarily profitable vocation" and to pursue "trail-oriented careers."

Crease noted the human dramas that played out in varied forms on the trails and today's compelling images of families seeking new lives in the West, images that most commonly

come to the minds of most Americans when they think of the trails.

"Perhaps the greatest tribute should be saved for the nameless thousands we don't know," Crease said, "that carried their hopes and dreams out onto the plains and mountains. That their hopes and dreams were much like ours today is a conceit we must allow ourselves if we are to understand the passions that drove this great old road into the West."

He told his audience that the Kansas City area, marked by the convergence of various trails, offers a special legacy unduplicated anywhere else in America, partly because of a geographic happenstance that offered the Missouri River, rock landings that encouraged crossings and the roads that resulted from river and rock.

"For almost four decades in this area, from the 1820s to the dawn of the Civil War in 1860, countless thousands followed their destiny down this trail and into the West," Crease said.

Crease provided a history of trails development in the area, beginning with French incursions into the area as early as 1680 and the growth of the French fur trade throughout the 1700s. There was also a Spanish presence via the Santa Fe Trail and the Lewis and Clark expedition, followed by a return to the area of William Clark to build Fort Osage, was also important.

He cited as a turning point the year of 1821, when William Becknell led a small group of traders from Fort Osage into the Southwest. A year later, he led the first wagons out over the trace he had blazed. By 1827, Fort Leavenworth was built and the village of Independence was established. During the next

decade, routes of the mountain men and traders began to evolve.

"The founding of Independence gave all travelers west a secure and consistent outfitting point," Crease said, as well as opening secure river landings. It was followed by landings at Westport in 1834 and by the early 1840s most trails had evolved into their final basic forms.

"The great Santa Fe, Oregon and California Trails marked this as their trace until the Civil War drove the main trailheads north of the Kansas City area," Crease said, "and with the end of the Civil War in 1865, the railroads drove the main trailheads further and further west.

In his presentation, Kelly offered a series of reasons for the demise of the Mountain Man, a demise which he said was due to the inevitability of "change punctuated by events, by occurrences, by an indeterminate array of 'uh ohs,' 'oughts,' 'I should have knowns' and 'for cryin' out louds!'"



Mark Kelly

He described the Mountain Men as "career-oriented and profit-motivated – true entrepreneurs of the age." Most were adaptable, able to step back and forth between the uncivilized and the civilized worlds and were probably aware that the times were changing as they approached the end of their existence.

Kelly outlined several causes, including economic challenges caused by speculation and expansion following the War of 1812; political and national security issues which opened the way to large fur trading companies; and efforts to settle Indian questions which included attempts to more closely regulate trade with the natives.

Most Mountain Men adapted to the changes in one way or another, he suggested, and contributed to the coming migration and the opening of the west by returning from their adventures with stories about what was waiting beyond the Missouri River.

"Perhaps there truly were a few unimaginative men who persisted in the fur trade till their dying day, continuing to search for that last unharvested stream or that lost herd," Kelly said. "But most, if not all, embraced the change with a willingness to exploit the next opportunity, in the true entrepreneurial spirit. And so they did. After all, they had planted the seeds for the coming migration by the telling of tales."

Twin Sisters Victory For OCTA and National Parks

A federal judge in Idaho has tossed out objections filed by the Access Fund which had challenged a National Park Service ban on climbing on the Twin Sisters at the City of Rocks. OCTA had joined the legal action on the side of the NPS.

In mid-August came word that a federal judge had accepted earlier rulings and had dismissed the Access Fund suit.

"The federal judge has affirmed the decision of the federal magistrate and entered judgment in favor of the United States, et al, and against the Access Fund," said OCTA's attorney, Steve Corey of Pendleton, OR. "The case now is dismissed 'in its entirety.'"

The Access Fund may yet appeal the decision to the United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

Aubrey Haines Passes

Aubrey L. Haines, a charter member of OCTA and one of the organizers of the Southwest Chapter, died on Sunday, September 10, in Tucson, Arizona. He was 86.

Haines was author of more than 140 books and other publications, including *Historic Sites Along The Oregon Trail*, during a 32-year career with the National Park Service and later in retirement.

He also authored *The Yellowstone Story*, considered the definitive history of Yellowstone National Park. In his memory, flags at the park were lowered to half staff. He was named as Yellowstone's first park historian in 1960. He retired in 1969.

He is survived by his wife, Wilma, and two sons, Alan and Calvin Haines, who said the family would maintain Aubrey Haines' research collection and continue to make it available for research and history buffs.

Spanish Trail Feasibility Study Issued by National Park Service

A National Park Service feasibility study has determined that the Old Spanish Trail does not meet the criterion for national significance under the National Trails System Act.

The draft report on the Old Spanish Trail National Historic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment was released for a 90-day public review and comment period in mid-July.

The Park Service was directed by Congress to evaluate the feasibility and eligibility of designating the Old Spanish Trail a National Historic Trail. The Old Spanish Trail was primarily a horse and mule pack route between Los Angeles, California and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Parts of the route went through present-day California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico.

According to a NPS news release, the trail met all but one of the criteria for eligibility as a national historic trail and there is

Public Relations Committee Plans Broad-Based Effort

by John Krizek, Public Relations Chair

A new OCTA Public Relations Committee, chaired by California-Nevada chapter member John Krizek, has been established by president Dave Welch to provide more emphasis on the "traditional" PR functions of media relations and organizational outreach.

The new committee is separate from the growing website "nerve center" information function which has been developed by former public relations chair Lesley Wischmann. Lesley, who will continue in the "webmaster" role, is a member of the new committee.

The committee met July 13-14 in Salt Lake City, hosted by Jere Krakow of the Long Distance Trails Office of the National Park Service. Also on the committee and participating was Randy Wagner, OCTA vice president. Mike Brown and Terry Del Bene of the BLM were unable to attend due to the wildfire situation in Wyoming, but Terry and Leslie were patched in by conference call. President Dave and Don Popejoy, Membership Committee chair, sat in on the meeting.

The committee discussed a range of issues including organizational structure, relationships and support for chapters and other committees – especially those involved in the legislative, preservation and membership functions – strategic partnerships, and an overall work plan.

A basic press kit is being assembled to provide ammunition in dealing with media opportunities at all levels. The creation of an educational video and the development of a speakers bureau were also discussed. A detailed report was provided to the board at the meeting in Kansas City.

President Dave agreed to ask each chapter to appoint a public relations chair to work with, and be supported by, the new committee. The identification of media outlets and qualified spokespersons are on the "to do" list. Also, each chapter will be asked to identify libraries, museums and trails center which might be added to the mailing list to receive complimentary copies of the *Overland Journal*.

Submission of ideas, suggestions, media contacts and news clippings is encouraged. John Krizek can be reached at 13615 Debby Street, Van Nuys CA 91401. E-mail jkrizek@aol.com.

currently insufficient information upon which to conclusively base a determination of national significance.

"With respect to a number of historic themes and uses that were evaluated, the Old Spanish Trail is found to be of state or local significance," the Service said. "Therefore, the trail does not meet the criterion for national significance in section 5(b)(11)(B) of the National Trails System Act."

The study cites what it calls "a marked lack of consensus among historians" as to the significance of the trail. However, it presents an alternative that could be implemented by private organizations and the states to help preserve and interpret the Trail. Federal land management agencies could participate using existing authorities, or Congress could prescribe additional federal involvement.

Preservation Office Report

By Dick Ackerman, National Preservation Officer

Some of the things that threaten the integrity of the migration trails from the East to the West:

We are in touch with developers of the **Iron Horse Community Development** between Omaha and Lincoln, NE. This upscale housing golf course development is right across the Ox Bow Trail and we will undoubtedly lose trail remnants in the area. We hope to be able to sign some of the locations so future trail nuts will be able to identify where the trail was located.

A farmer in western Nebraska who bought a ranch where trail ruts are prevalent near the base of **Chimney Rock** has put the ranch up for sale. We will be monitoring the situation.

The Wyoming Chapter is watching plans by the Colorado Interstate Gas Company to build the **Medicine Bow Lateral Pipeline**. We are also watching plans by the Pioneer Pipe Line Company to install a pipe line between Sinclair, WY and Croydon UT.

A large natural gas development planned for along the **Lander Road** southwest of Pinedale WY is moving ahead. This is being watched by the Wyoming Chapter.

There is a proposal to install a water pipe line down the **East Canyon** near Salt Lake City. This is a real threat to remnants of the Mormon Trail and the Pony Express Trail. The local chapter is watching this for us.

The National Park Service and OCTA are watching a proposal to build a spur railroad track in **Skull Valley**, UT which would cross the Hasting Cutoff. Railroad officials say they will do their best to save the trail in the area.

A power line is being planned by Sierra Pacific Power Co. for northern Nevada that intercepts the **California Trail** in some locations and a tower is planned near Gravelly Ford. We are watching the situation.

We are monitoring a threat to the **Barlow Road Trail** on the western slopes of the Cascades. Several public meetings have been held and we have written a letter in opposition to the project. This is off-again, on-again.

The Oregon highway department is planning to build new garages and shops at its facility at **Government Camp**, near the Barlow Trail. It appears there should be no disruption of the trail in the area, although we will continue to monitor the situation.

Excerpted from a report at the OCTA Annual Board Meeting in Kansas City.

Future Convention Dates

Casper, Wyoming August 15-19, 2001

Reno, Nevada August 14-18, 2002

Manhattan, Kansas August 13-17, 2003

Membership Committee Report

By Don Popejoy, Membership Chair

Well, the great Kansas City Convention is behind us and I would like to take this opportunity to say "Congratulations" to everyone, from organizers to participants! Which is my point: OCTA just keeps on getting better.

Here are a few things to get excited about! The local chapters have done a lot in regard to trail marking, trail preservation and trail outings in 1999 and so far in 2000. The last two years have seen a new infusion of positive, forward looking board directors and officers. Those who have left the board and/or officer positions, will continue to support OCTA through volunteer efforts and by supporting their local chapters. The decade of the new millennium will bring the Oregon and California Trails and their alternates and cutoffs together as never before.

To name just a few of the "happenings" within OCTA just this past year:

- The progress made in protecting the City of Rocks Twin Sisters from rock climbers;
- The Board of Directors voted unanimously to give the Wyoming chapter a \$5,000 grant for trail marking and preservation;
- The *Overland Journal* has been updated and revised (note the last two issues) and the *NFP* just keeps getting better;
- This past July, a meeting was held in Salt Lake City with Dave Welch, Randy Wagner, John Krizek (the new Chair of the Public Relations Committee) and myself at the office of Jere Krakow. Two days of open discussion developed both long- and short-range plans that will bring to the public a new and energized OCTA.
- Also, a legislative initiative is seeking to add over 60 additional routes and cutoffs to the National trails system.

As of September 1, Headquarters Manager Kathy Conway reported that we have gotten 15 new members from the Oklahoma University Press mailing list! And more will come in! Also, 17 new members have used the on-line OCTA Bookstore since its inception in December 1999, while three have used the service to renew. Mailings continue to be a very important vehicle for recruiting and a large part of the membership budget is used for that purpose. These are small numbers, but a flood always starts with a trickle, then builds in intensity before reaching flood stage. That's where we are now and you can just feel the excitement that OCTA is generating, can't you?!

Now, this is where we all must come together. We must spread the gospel of OCTA: trail preservation, trail education and trail marking. The Membership Committee will be working on a reward program that will award one point for each new member that a current member brings in for the year. More on that later.

As I mentioned before, mailings are a very effective way to bring in new members, but the best way is by each one of us telling others about what OCTA is all about. Please tell someone today, tomorrow and next Thursday. There are opportunities everyday to talk the talk. Please, just do it!

OCTA Presents Educator of the Year Awards



Left to right, Sister Rosalie Anderson, Eleanor Craig, Patricia White and OCTA Education Chair William Hill.

— Photo by Bill Martin

Editors Named For OCTA Pubs

Publisher and author Robert A. Clark has been named Editor of the *Overland Journal*, the quarterly scholarly publication of the Oregon-California Trails Association.

The appointment was made by the OCTA Board at its meeting in Kansas City. The Board also re-appointed Bill Martin as Editor of *News From The Plains*, the organization's quarterly newsletter, and authorized three-year contracts for both positions.

Clark succeeds Marilyn Holt, who did not seek reappointment. Clark's appointment will take full effect with the Winter 2000-2001 issue of the *OJ*.

Clark, a charter member of OCTA, is president of the Arthur H. Clark Company, a Spokane, WA-based publishing and bookselling firm founded by his grandfather in 1902. He has edited and designed some 200 books and more than 100 historical journals. He has served as editor of *The Pacific Northwestern*, the quarterly publication of Spokane Westerners and is president of Westerners International. He has just completed a nine-year term as a trustee of the Washington State Historical Society and has been elected to serve as regional Vice President for eastern Washington for the society.

Martin, a freelance writer based in Georgetown, Texas, has been editor of *News From The Plains* since January, 1997.

Nebraska TPO Appointed

James Denny of Omaha has been appointed a Deputy Preservation Office of OCTA assigned to the State of Nebraska. The appointment was made by National Preservation Officer Dick Ackerman.

Denny will work with the local Nebraska Chapter on trails preservation issues, including on-going activities with the Iron Horse Development Project, pending land sales in western Nebraska which may impact trail ruts and California Hill.

Educators and educational programs in Oregon and Kansas have been named recipients of Outstanding Educator of the Year Awards from the Oregon-California Trails Association.

The awards were presented at the annual Awards Banquet to Sister Rosalie Anderson of Marylhurst, OR; Eleanor Craig of Kansas City, KS; and Patricia Wright and the Shawnee Indian Mission in Fairway, KS.

Sister Anderson was recognized for a fourth grade program at St. Luke School in Woodburn OR.

"It is my desire to give the youngsters a deep and lasting love for the trail so that there will always be strong advocates for the history and preservation of the trails (and) to give them an accurate historical perspective of the western emigrant with its hardships and joys," Sister Anderson said.

Eleanor Craig was recognized for a summer camp trip organized for students at the Kansas School for the Blind.

"Our learning activities are grounded in the physical trail as it was 150 years ago and as it remains today," she said. "A key perspective of our program is that history is near at hand, inviting us to work in the footsteps of those who went before, letting us experience what they experienced, changing us to journey in our lives with practical courage to equal theirs."

The Shawnee Indian Mission and Wright were recognized for a program involving students at the school. It is the first time at OCTA has presented an education award to an institution.

"I believe hands-on learning experiences relating to real people and having fun are a great way to learn," Wright said.

Casper 2001 Dates Set



Planning is underway for the 2001 OCTA Convention to be held in Casper, Wyoming the week of August 12-19, coinciding with the opening of the new National Historic Trails Center.

The tentative schedule includes treks and hikes visiting the Overland/Cherokee Trails,

Fort Laramie, the Sweetwater and Platte Rivers, Fremont Canyon, Independence Rock, trail grave sites and the Martin Handcart Center.

The Convention's opening session is planned for Wednesday, August 15. The annual awards banquet will be held on Thursday. The theme of the convention is "The Last Crossing." Headquarters hotel will be the Parkway Plaza Hotel in Casper.

Information about the convention has been posted on the Wyoming Chapter's website at w3.trib.com/~rlund/Convention.html.

OCTA Presents Year 2000 Achievement Awards

John Mark Lambertson, director of the National Frontier Trails Center in Independence, MO, and the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association have won OCTA **Distinguished Service Awards**, the top honor presented by the organization.

In addition, OCTA **Meritorious Achievement Awards** were presented to historians John Leamon of Kansas City and Craig Crease of Shawnee, KS, for their work in trails preservation.

The awards were among more than a dozen presented during the annual OCTA Awards Banquet held during the 2000 Convention in Kansas City.

In presenting the award to Lambertson, OCTA Awards Chair Ross Marshall cited his leadership skills and professionalism, as well as his work in the local historical community.

The Trails Association was cited, among other things, for its efforts to place more than 300 trail markers on the Independence Route and the California Road, one of the nation's largest trail marking projects.

Leamon was preservation officer for both the Trails Head and Gateway chapters for many years. His award cited his work in trail preservation, trail mapping and education relating to Missouri River emigrant routes.

Crease is a recognized trails expert in the Kansas City area and has conducted extensive primary research which has corrected many misconceptions about trails history. His award recognized achievements in preservation, research, writing and education.



Lee and Dorothy Kroh of the Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association

Friend of the Trail Award – Marc and Helen Vering of Marysville, KS, for efforts to preserve remnants of the Independence Branch, Lower Blue Crossing and Fremont Springs

Other awards presented in Kansas City included:

Distinguished Volunteer of the Year – Ruth Anderson, in recognition of her years as historian for OCTA and her work in compiling and publishing five and 15 year histories of the organization.

National Media Award – *Kansas City Star*, for efforts in researching and writing the story of Kansas City area trails.

Merrill Mattes Overland Journal Writing Award – Todd Guenther, for his article "The Burnt Ranch Saga: A History of the Last Crossing of the Sweetwater," which appeared in the Winter 1999-2000 issue of the *Overland Journal*.

campground on their property.

National Certificates of Appreciation were presented to:

- Cave Spring Association for initiating "Save the Swale" fundraising and purchasing the 85th and Manchester site on the Independent Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail.

- Friends of Rice-Tremonti Home for fundraising and purchasing the historic 1844 Rice-Tremonti Home on the Independence Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail.

- Walter Cook for efforts on behalf of the 85th and Manchester site on the Independence Route on the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail.

- Westport Historical Society for preserving the history of Westport as an outfitting town for the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail.

- Kansas City Parks and Recreation for partnering with the National

Park Service and local trails organizations in marking and interpreting trail sites in Kansas City.

- City of Westwood for erecting trail markers along the Westport Route of the Santa Fe-Oregon-California Trail.

- Tom Laidlaw for developing, testing and maintaining OCTA's on-line bookstore.

- Charles Goslin for special achievement as an artist and as a historical researcher in the creation of trail scenes for interpretive exhibits and murals along the historic trails.

- Gail Carbiener in recognition of service as OCTA Treasurer.

- Trails Head Chapter for special efforts and long hours devoted to planning the 2000 Convention.

- Ross Marshall for his efforts as chair of the 2000 Convention.



John Mark Lambertson of the National Frontier Trails Center.

— Photo Courtesy of The Examiner, Independence MO

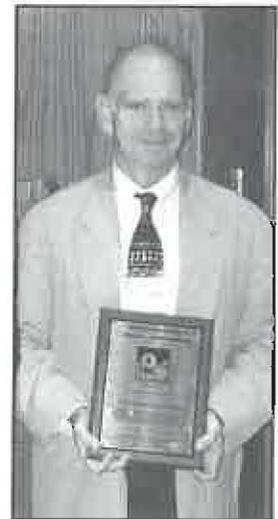
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*Meritorious Achievement Award
Winner Craig Crease*



*Meritorious Achievement Award
Winner John Leamon*



*Monroe Dodd, Editor of the
Kansas City Star, winner of the
National Media Award*

National Certificates of Appreciation:



*Susan Walsh, left, and Jody Smith of the
Cave Spring Association*



*Myrna Jefferson of
Friends of Rice-
Tremonti Home*



Walter Cook



*Bill Bullard, on
behalf of the Trails
Head Chapter*



Charles Goslin



*Chris Combes of
the Westport
Historical Society*



*Jim Donovan, left, and
Marion Leeper,
representing the City
of Westwood*



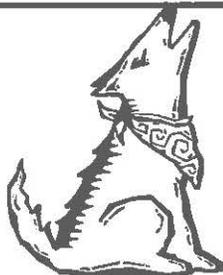
*Bob Lewellen of
Kansas City Parks
& Recreation*



Tom Laidlaw



*OCTA President David Welch,
left, with Convention Chair
Ross Marshall*



NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

Wyoming

Eighteen Wyoming OCTA members checked out the trail over Rocky Ridge on September 9. It became the most interesting and longest trek ever led by Randy Brown. Even old trail hands like the Suttons, Robertsons, Tom McCutcheon and Lee saw sections of the trail that they had not seen before.

We started in Casper and proceeded to the McIntosh Ruts, noted for the seven sets of ruts in one section of rock. We went from the fifth crossing of the Sweetwater through to the ninth crossing at Burnt Ranch. In the past we have thought that Rocky Ridge was wearing down a little but it seemed that this time the rocks raised the occasion to make the difficult crossing. Only Warm Springs Creek had water in it which is highly sulfurous and stinking.

The conclusion was at South Pass with the wind blowing steadily. The Casper members got back to bed at home at 1 a.m. Sunday morning. A fantastic stretch of trail that we will now have to figure out what to skip and what to see on our 2001 Pre Convention trek.

-- Lee Underbrink

Gateway

The Gateway Chapter's summer trek followed the St. Joe Road and Pony Express Trail from the jump-off in St. Joseph, over the Missouri River, across Wolf River and on into Marysville, KS. They then trekked further up the trail to the Hollenberg Pony Express Station. It was not difficult to imagine seeing the dust and image of the Pony Rider as he made his way across the tall grass prairie to change horses at the Hollenberg home and store.

Along Highway 36 is a bronze statue of the horse and rider amidst prairie grass that stands stirrup tall. Then along a ridge-top, a black silhouette appears near the station. The area under the Hollenberg Station was the object of an archaeological dig by the Kansas State Historical Society. The results of that project are now housed in a fine interpretive center adjacent to the original dwelling of the Hollenbergs, who ran a store and stage stop as well as a Pony Express station about ten miles west of Marysville.

It was fascinating to see how the geography and topography of the land supported the best route for the journey westward for folks and mail. Congratulations and appreciation to Kansas and Marysville for such fine preservation and interpretation.

From "Gateway News," the Gateway Chapter newsletter

Crossroads

The Long Distance Trails Office of the National Park Service has arranged with the Utah Department of Transportation to place trail crossing signs on two interstate highways in Utah.

The signs will be located at the point where Hastings Cutoff is bisected by Interstate 80 west of Grassy Mountain and where the Mormon Pioneer Trail in Echo Canyon is bisected by Interstate 15.

Hopefully the location of the special trail crossing signs will eliminate confusion and indicate the historically correct location of these trails in reference to the interstate highways.

Crossroads Chapter members participated in Pony Express Days, held at the Eagle Mountain community development in Cedar Valley in June. Members Eldon and Jan Fletcher were on the organizing committee and arranged for a Pony Express riders' mail exchange in a Pony Express Park which is being developed. Crossroads members Al Mulder, Kathryn Goates and Bryon Anderson joined fiddlers Joanne Hinkel and Kathy Clayton to play a program of old-time fiddle tunes and country music.

The *Tooele Transcript-Bulletin* had a nice article on the Hastings Cutoff Trail and the installation of several steel rail trail markers by Crossroads members and the Bureau of Land Management. A picture of Vern Gorzitze and Jeff Carlstrom was with the article. Eight markers were "planted" on the route between Lake Point and Hope Wells.

From "Crossroads," the newsletter of the Utah Chapter.

Southwest

The Southern Trail Mapping Committee of the Southwest Chapter planned a mapping outing for mid-October.

The group planned to meet at Fort Bowie on Monday, October 16, and spend about a week in the field. The outing was to concentrate on the Fort Bowie area.

Committee members have adopted the name of "Trail Turtles," since they carry their homes with them and move very slowly.

For more information, contact Rose Ann Tompkins at (480) 963-3565 or e-mail roseann2@home.com.

-- From "Desert Tracks," the newsletter of the Southwest Chapter

Kanza

The KANZA Chapter hosted National Trails Day on Saturday and Sunday, June 3rd and 4th at Oregon Trail Park, Westmoreland, Kansas. This park is on the site of an emigrant camp on the Independence Branch of the Oregon-California Trail, Scott Spring.

Chapter members set up exhibits to share the knowledge we have gained with other interested persons.

Exhibits included:

- A map display of the areas in Kansas that our chapter has mapped, measured and marked. Along with the different kind of maps and tools used in this process, including a measuring wheel and a GPS unit, and a carsonite marker.



Visitors enjoy a blacksmithing demonstration at the KANZA Chapter's Trails Day festivities

— Photo by Arleta Martin

- An emigrant camp site, complete with covered wagons.
- Lists of diary quotes, from diarists who traveled through this area. Diaries and other research books and materials that documented the emigrants' crossing .
- An Indian metates and mamos (grinding stones), which was found not too far from Scott Spring; persons could actually grind grain with these stones.
- Gold Rush display, with gold pans, gold rocker and etc.
- Pictures of trails sites and segments, our mapping crew, and known graves in our area. Plus the scrapbooks on all our chapter activities.

- Informations about the National Park Service Comprehensive Management and Use Plan for the trails.

- Information on the Oregon-California Trails Association and our chapter.

- Games children played in the 1800s.

- Hike to view nearby ruts and the Rock Creek Crossing.

Different members talked with our guests and explained to them 'who we are', 'what we are doing' and 'why we are doing this.' We visited with many very interested individuals, and hopefully we will gain new members. It was a fun, educational weekend. Most of the participants camped overnight in the park and we shared our meals together.

— Arleta Martin

Simpson's Hollow Restoration Completed

The Simpson's Hollow Interpretive Site in Wyoming has been completely restored with the installation of a new granite monument at the site 10 miles west of Farson on Wyoming Highway 28.

Simpson's Hollow was struck by shotgun wielding vandals around the Thanksgiving holiday weekend in 1999. Two Bu-



Left to right, Kim Vase, Jeff Mahjanovich and County Coroner Dale Mahjanovich beside the new Simpson's Hollow granite monument.

— Photo by Mike Brown

reau of Land Management interpretive signs and an engraved granite stone were destroyed with several shotgun blasts. The interpretive signs were replaced earlier this year by Rock Springs BLM force account staff.

Placement of the monument followed a generous donation from Vase Funeral Home of Rock Springs.

The Simpson's Hollow Interpretive Site was dedicated on July 5, 1997 as part of the Mormon National Historic Trail Sesquicentennial celebrations. A large crowd attended the event and the Mormon Trail wagon train and handcart company were also present.

The granite stone monument at Simpson's Hollow originally was installed in 1974. It was moved about 100 yards when Highway 28 was paved from Farson to the Green River in the mid 1980s. The site commemorates an incident during the Utah "War" in 1857 when U.S. Army supply wagons attempted to make their way to Salt Lake City.

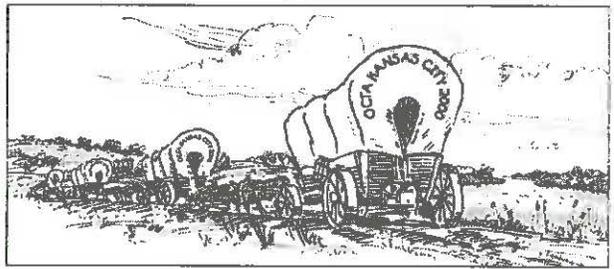
Rock Springs BLM Field Manager Stan McKee said, "When Sweetwater County Coroner Dale Mahjanovich called our office out of the blue last winter and made the offer from Vase Funeral Home to donate the entire stone and installation costs, I was stunned by their generosity. Our staff had contacted the State of Wyoming and learned they could not afford to replace the stone and we knew it was beyond BLM's budget."

— Mike Brown, Bureau of Land Management

Across The Wide Missouri: Scenes From Kansas City



Left to right, outgoing OCTA Board members Lesley Wischmann, Ross Marshall, Jean Watson and Ken Martin, with OCTA President David Welch.



Convention chair Ross Marshall welcomes attendees to Kansas City during the Annual Meeting. Also pictured, left to right, President David Welch, National Trails Preservation Officer Dick Ackerman and Secretary Mary Holden



Office Manager Kathy Conway, second from left, hosted visitors in the OCTA office during Welcome Night Activities at the National Frontier Trails Center



No convention would be complete without the OCTA Trail Band



Kansas City Mayor Kay Waldo Barnes welcomes OCTA during the Annual Meeting



Esther Kreek entertained on the dulcimer during Welcome Night



Autograph signing was a popular activity in the OCTA Book Room



Authors' Night offered an opportunity to have your book purchases personally signed.



Exhibits at the National Frontier Trails Center were entertaining and educational



More than 300 OCTA members were on hand for the Annual Meeting and presentation of papers.

Archaeological Report

The Archaeological Committee has sent out a request to the editor of the Society for Historical Archaeology Newsletter to invite members that organizations to link up with OCTA members on joint projects.

We are holding discussions with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to work on an archaeological project at Fort Hall. There are excavations in progress there which related to development activities. This might be one of the last chances our membership would get to actually walk this historical site.

Work continues on assembling state and federal legislation regarding archaeology for eventual publications and distribution to OCTA membership.

The committee currently is devising activities for the 2001 convention in Casper. We were hoping that the Fort Hall work might be a great pre-convention activity and if that falls through the committee feels that detailed recordation of one of the most intact emigrant registers on the Cherokee/Overland Trails (Sulphur Springs) would be an excellent substitute. The committee has been asked to consider an archaeological workshop during the convention and is looking into that possibility. We're probably overdue for a workshop and would gladly consider organizing one if that would be worked into the facilities and schedule.

We recommend to the Board that at least one archaeological paper or sessions be considered for each convention. There is a lot of trail-related work going on each year and this would be an excellent way to keep the membership informed as to the trail stories being revealed in the dirt.

Terry Del Bene, Russ Tanner, co-chairs, report submitted to the Annual OCTA Board Meeting

Nevada Senator Signs On To Black Rock Proposal

U.S. Senator Harry Reid of Nevada has signed on as a co-sponsor of federal legislation which would protect the emigrant trails and surrounding areas of the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon in northwestern Nevada.

The move is considered significant because the bill's primary sponsor, Sen. Richard Bryan of Nevada, is retiring and legislative action is not considered likely during the current session. Also, Reid as Majority Whip is the second ranking Democrat in the Senate.

In an Associated Press report, Reid said he agreed to co-sponsor the bill after concluding that protection of the Black Rock Desert would have minimal effect on production of geothermal energy in the area.

OCTA has officially endorsed the legislation, Senate Bill 2273. The area includes portions of the Applegate and Lassen Trails, which Bryan called "a unique part of our nation's heritage."

Repairs Made To Nancy Hill Grave

The spirit of young pioneer woman Nancy Hill is resting more peacefully since her grave was restored, thanks to efforts of Oregon-California Trails Association members and the Bureau of Land Management.

In mid-June, six members of OCTA and two BLM Kemmerer Office employees drove to the lonely grave site about 15 miles northwest of Kemmerer, WY on the Sublette Cutoff to rebuild the grave fence which had deteriorated over the years. A wooden pole fence protected a smaller wrought iron fence and the grave itself.

Gail and Muriel Carbiener from Sunriver, OR; Bernie and Janie Rhoades, Edgewood, WA; Dick Klein, Bremerton, WA; Randy Brown, Douglas, WY; and Lynn Harrell and Britt Moeller from the BLM Kemmerer Field Office participated in the project on June 12, 2000.

The story of Nancy Hill is one of the most poignant emigrant tales from the 19th Century. Nancy was 20 years old and traveling with her family and fiancé in 1852 from Monroe County, Missouri headed for a new life in California. Nancy was suddenly stricken with cholera and died July 5, 1852. Her death was a classic example of the stories of "healthy at breakfast, dead at supper" as cholera could be a quick, merciless killer.

Nancy's fiancé - a young man named Wright - helped bury her, grieved at the grave for two days, and continued to California. He never married and three times throughout his life, he traveled from California to visit Nancy's



Left to right, Muriel Carbiener, Dick Klein and Gail Carbiener. — Photo by Mike Brown

Fires Postpone WY Trail Marking Efforts

The summer-long fire devastation in northern states forced postponement of a planned trail-marking effort in Wyoming which was partially funded by OCTA.

The Bureau of Land Management had planned the weekend of August 26-27 for installation of 150 four-inch square concrete markers identifying the route of the Overland Stage/Cherokee Trail.

Volunteers from OCTA and other organizations were to help install the markers, but fires raging in the area forced postponement.

According to Mike Brown of the BLM, groups of Boy Scouts were able to install 36 markers. The public marker installation was rescheduled.

OCTA has contributed \$5,000 toward the \$36,000 cost of the project.



Putting the finished touches on the new fence are, left to right, Gail Carbiener, Brit Moeller, Randy Brown, Bernie Rhoades, Muriel Carbiener and Janie Rhoades. — Photo by Mike Brown

grave and mourn his lost love. His last trip was about 1910.

Residents of Kemmerer heard the story from their parents as it was passed down from generation to generation and local people would tend the grave and look after it. In the early 1930s, Kemmerer residents H.H. Embree and Otto Angelo installed a small wrought iron fence around the grave. Just at the end of World War II in mid-September 1945, the Kemmerer Women's Club held a dedication at Nancy Hill's grave.

In the 1970s and 1980s, descendants of Nancy Hill's family in California searched for the grave they knew of from family stories as being "east of Salt Lake City." Nancy's descendants finally connected with residents of Kemmerer who told them the story. In 1988, the Oregon California Trails Association erected a pole fence to protect the grave from livestock and wildlife and installed an interpretive signing telling the story of Nancy Hill. The 1988 fence was completely replaced by the OCTA volunteers; and now Nancy's final resting place is restored to the dignity her story deserves.

— Mike Brown, Bureau of Land Management

Visit the
OCTA Bookstore
on the web at:

www.OCTA-trails.org



As usual, the annual Awards Banquet attracted a large and appreciative audience.

Trail (Or Trial) By Mule (continued from page 19)

Trail. We were on it at last! Concrete markers are posted along the original pioneer trail making it easy to follow. I was enjoying following the footsteps of the people who made the West. Tinhorn and I rode in the silence and really saw the trail west of Devil's Gate. It was what I had traveled 1,000 miles to do. We plodded along in the alkali dust and into the swampy lands along the Sweetwater. I was attacked by mosquitoes and deerflies, another true pioneer experience! But the roads leading to the trail were washboard surfaced ruts worse than the Oregon Trail itself, and wreaked havoc on my horse trailer and suspension. Sadly, I decided that this wasn't the way to see the trail either, and I went back to Farson and dropped off both mule and trailer.

Now I was going to see the trail by truck. I headed out the next morning for South Pass and spent the whole day poking around in the sagebrush along the trail. South Pass, with its gently rolling hills, was the quietest place I had ever been. Absolutely silent, with nothing to stimulate one's senses except the breathtaking beauty of the treeless prairie. I crossed the divide on foot, knowing that hundreds of thousands of people did that and it was a big milestone to them as well. I slung my canteen over my shoulder, got my tripod and camera, and hiked, just to see the trail as it is supposed to be seen. I looked for swales and places the trail may also have gone, for reasons why it turned when it turned, all the while thinking of the thousands who passed by here, and the hundreds buried beneath me. After my experience with heat exhaustion, I

understood some of the hardships the emigrants faced. Being in the sun and relentless wind and walking on a landscape that didn't seem to change must have dampened some faith and spirits of the travelers. I spent the night in a sheepherder's wagon up on South Pass.

The place I wanted to see most was the Parting of the Ways. There I spent quite a bit of time marveling at the split, imagining the wagons turning left or right, hearing the sorrowful good-byes. I sat on the "Y" and took in all of this magical place. I felt complete, despite all the disappointments in my journey. I was happy to have still been able to make it to that place, however it was achieved.

I was depressed when I returned home to California, because with everything that went wrong it seemed as if my planning was for naught. But I did learn an awful lot about weather, altitude, dehydration, hardships, faith, people, humor, endurance and history. I missed the day to day monotony that was part of the real pioneers' life, but was lucky to be able to salvage the trip and experience even though my plans got changed on the first day.

I feel like the souls and spirits of the emigrants are still along the trail, I could see it all so clearly. One person told me that the ghosts of pioneers who died are the ones who stopped me at Devil's Gate, to keep me from harm on the trail. I took the trip partially to seek solitude, but instead learned why the emigrants traveled en mass. People really count on each other and help each other out. Even if those people are from the past.

Letters . . . Letters

To All OCTA Members:

On behalf of Trails Head Chapter, members, volunteers and everyone who had a part in hosting the recent Convention 2000 in Kansas City, I want to express our sincere appreciation to all who came to share convention week with us and to make it not only a safe week but also an enjoyable one. As usual, the congeniality of OCTA people was on display and the Adam's Mark Hotel management noticed that also and expressed their appreciation

We had a total of 385 registered for the convention and we appreciate the high numbers of people that went on the bus tours and participated in the other events and activities. It was our pleasure to show you our trails network and to just simply extend hospitality to each of you. We look forward to joining each of you next year in Casper for another successful OCTA convention.

Ross Marshall, Merriam, KS
Convention 2000 Chair

Dear Editor:

Further to your July 2000 issue, Page 15: The insert showing Harold Drake and Ron Volk standing before a trail sign on "a three-day hike in the beautiful Sierra." The trail they hiked (using a map prepared by David Johnson) was the Walker River-Sonora Emigrant Road, from Leavitt Meadow to Chain-of-Lakes, roughly eleven miles out, and almost 2000 feet up.

The trail information sign stands at the entry to the Toiyabe Wilderness at about 7,300 feet. A similar "kiosk" stands at the west end of the trail where it exists the wilderness in the Stanislaus Forest above Pine Crest.

These kiosks were designed and built and installed by my brother and fellow trail packer, Donald W. Davis. The Bridgeport Ranger Station in the Toiyabe and the Summit Ranger Station in the Stanislaus (USFS) cooperated in the effort and helped write the text which describes the 1852-1853 emigrant wagon crossings.

The picture in the upper left is a very realistic one showing a wagon team struggling up a granite ledge past a dead ox - in reality, the "road" was much worse!

The credit at the bottom of the text goes to the two national forests and to OCTA - a good example of cooperation!

Dick Davis, San Francisco, CA

OCTA Officer Directory

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Secretary Mary Holden

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National Preservation Officer Dick Ackerman

(503) 581-0328

To All OCTA members,

I wish to thank the members who supported me by electing me to OCTA's National Board of Directors. I am humbled by all the positive support and encouragement I have received. I hope to work diligently to prove myself to you and others who may have not voted for me.

Please, understand that I am here to represent you to the Board and want you to feel free to express your concerns and suggestions or just ask me questions. I believe that every member has a right to be heard and I will do my best to represent your feelings and your positions to the board on the issues even if they differ from mine. Should I not hear from you, I have no choice but to vote my conscience and that could be scary.

I believe we have a group of conscientious directors and officers working on this Board for OCTA and its goals. You can be sure that I plan to hit the job running and voice my opinions, for that I am already known. I will do my best to keep you informed about what is happening concerning the business of OCTA.

Finally, since I feel so strongly that chapters are the workhorses of OCTA, I plan to support their special needs as best I can.

Frank Tortorich, Pine Grove CA
Phone/fax 209-296-7242
e-mail wagonwheel@volcano.net

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“A true pioneer experience: dehydration and heat exhaustion”

Like many of us, Shawnee Cavnar-Brown dreamed of walking the Oregon Trail. After years of dreaming it, the trip finally became a reality last July. For the 38-year-old Simi Valley, CA, mother of two, it became a journey of mixed blessing. She shared her experience – the good and the bad – with the NFP.

By Shawnee Cavnar-Brown

So I had this big plan to see the Oregon Trail, walking solo with a pack mule, sleeping under the stars, breaking camp at dawn, discovering the wonders of dried vegetables...

I would walk, alone, a 125-mile stretch of the Trail in Wyoming, leading my pack mule, Tinhorn, who would carry my supplies. I expected it would take 10 to 12 days and I was prepared for it.

It took me months to obtain all the landowners' names and permission to cross their land. I poured over topographical maps and trail guides. I plotted water sources, river crossings and areas where the trail was visible, not visible or eradicated altogether. I arranged for drop boxes along the way. I took care of every detail, much as I imagined the emigrants might have done 150 years ago.

I had the romantic notion of starting the trip at Independence Rock on Independence Day and I did. It was one of the last things that went as scheduled, despite my planning.

Early on the morning of the Fourth of July, at the Independence Rock Visitors Center, I loaded Tinhorn, hoisted my backpack and started off – only to be stopped almost immediately by a cattle guard and a gate too narrow for my heavily laden mule. Instead of the trail, we ended up having to walk the highway towards Devil's Gate, six miles away.

Despite the rocky start, I was undaunted. After all, it was just a few miles and then we'd be on the trail itself. But as the morning wore on, my cheerful attitude soon changed. I was trudging along, feeling heavier and slower and hotter and more irritated. I was hot and tired, and wondering why I was not feeling the great joy I should have been as I took the first steps of a trip I had dreamed about for so long.



The view of the Oregon Trail from the back of a westbound mule.



The author at South Pass

Instead, I was irritated at Tinhorn, who was walking too close to me, his panniers bumping into my backpack, knocking me forward every other step. I kept moving aside, speeding up, moving him over, but he seemed to want to walk with his nose right in my ear. "125 miles of this, huh?," I told him. "We are going to have to work out a better system." Normally, I don't need a break on a six-mile walk. Nor do I get tired. But I was today. So we rested a few minutes and started walking again. Huge semis whizzed past us, tourists slowed to take pictures, families waved from air-conditioned mini-vans. Tin and I trudged on up the highway, slower and slower.

Soon we came to the old road that lead to Devil's Gate. By now, I was breathing through my mouth, feeling irritable and tired, and just wanting to take a break. A bit down the road, I lay down. Flat. Spread-eagled right on the pavement. I didn't have an ounce of energy. Tourists drove by and slowed, and I sat up to show them I was okay. I dragged myself up and ducked my arms back into my backpack straps, and tugged Tin along. By the time I got to Devil's Gate I was incredibly tired, more tired than I had ever been before. I just wanted to lie down. I was having a true pioneer experience: dehydration and heat exhaustion. After sleeping a few hours and drinking a few gallons, I re-thought the remainder of the trip. Ahead of me was a 33-mile stretch with no people, no trees, nothing. And 90-degree temperatures. Were I to suffer heat exhaustion again I would quickly be feeding buzzards.

Despite all the planning, I decided not to continue in that manner and got a ride back to Farson to retrieve my trailer and a borrowed saddle. I'd ride the trail instead, piece by piece, determined not to give up seeing the Oregon Trail with my mule. I figured I could trailer the mule a bit, get out and ride sections of the trail. So the next day I did just that, armed with water bottles iced down in my cooler.

At Jackson Lake Campground, eight miles west of Devil's Gate, we came to a set of old corrals on a hill and I saddled Tin up and we headed down the dirt road towards the Oregon

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