

News From The Plains



Volume XV, No. 4

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

October 2001



New officers OCTA officers, left to right, Vice President Dick Pingrey, National Trails Preservation Officer Dave Welch, Secretary Lethene Parks, President Randy Wagner, Treasurer Marilyn Bryan, Immediate Past President Roger Blair.

— Photo by Bill Martin

Randy Wagner Assumes OCTA Presidency

Randy Wagner of Cheyenne, WY, has been elected President of the Oregon-California Trails Association for 2001-2002, succeeding David Welch of Steilicoom, WA.

Wagner is a journalist, filmmaker and photographer and is the former Director of the Wyoming Travel Commission. In addition to serving as OCTA Vice President for the past two years, he has been a director of the Frontier Heritage Alliance and the National Historic Trails Center in Casper.

Other officers elected for terms beginning in August 2001 are:

Richard Pingrey, of Selah, WA, vice president

Marilyn Bryan, of St. Joseph, MO, treasurer

Lethene Parks, of Hunters, WA, secretary

In addition, Welch was elected National Preservation Officer, succeeding Dick Ackerman of Salem, OR, who retired.

With Welch's election at NPO, **Roger Blair** of Pendleton, OR, agreed to serve a second two-year term as Immediate Past President.

OCTA Research Library Planned In Sacramento

An OCTA research library will be established within the Special Collections Branch of the California State Library in Sacramento under terms of a Memorandum of Understanding approved by the Board of Directors.

Approval caps a six-year effort by an ad hoc Library Committee of the California/Nevada Chapter to identify a suitable repository for emigrant trail-related materials on the West Coast.

In a letter to the OCTA Board, CA-NV Chapter President Bill Webster said the committee wanted a location to which OCTA members could feel comfortable donating materials and which was readily accessible to California and Nevada members.

"The committee feels that creation of an OCTA emigrant trails collection in one of the finest state libraries in the country would be a real public relations coup for OCTA," Webster said.

The Memorandum of Understanding was to be signed by OCTA's National President, the President of the CA-NV Chapter, and Dr. Gary F. Kurutz, Principal Librarian for the California State Library.

The materials will be held in the State Library's Special Collections Branch and will be known as the Oregon-California Trails Association Emigrant Trails Collection.

The proposal drew a mild expression of concern from John Mark Lambertson, Director and Archivist at the National Frontier Trails Center, home of OCTA's Merrill J. Mattes Library.

In a letter to the Board, while saying he could not disagree with the idea of a research library in California and was "sadly resigned" to it, Lambertson said it might be detrimental to the Independence library as collections being donated to the Sacramento facility might diminish "the potential richness" of the Mattes collection.

Tom Hunt, who presented the California proposal at the Board's Annual Meeting in Casper, said he did not think it would be a problem, but rather would "get people in the mood to get their collections placed."

The proposal won unanimous approval from the Board.

— Bill Martin

From the Editor's Desk . . . by Bill Martin



There are events that define the character of a generation. For my parents' generation, it was World War II. For my generation it was the assassination of President Kennedy and Vietnam. For today's generation, September 11 changed all of us forever.

As this issue of News From The Plains was being finalized, we all were overwhelmed by a heart-breaking national tragedy. We can't even begin to imagine what events will overtake us by the time this issue gets to you.

But we know that attacks on American citizens, on the American way of life, on American soil, are not designed to achieve military victory. They are designed to demoralize our nation. If that is the case, our enemies have seriously underestimated the American spirit.

God bless America.

In accepting his Meritorious Achievement Award at OCTA's annual awards dinner in Casper, a gracious Lee Underbrink focused on the importance of attracting younger members to carry on the work of our organization, a not uncommon theme at OCTA gatherings.

While we are working to preserve our overland trails for future generations, there's always a need to bring in fresh faces and fresh perspectives to help. Sometimes, however, one might wonder if the MTV generation is paying attention. Well, we know for a fact that some of them are.

We've looked at an important bit of source material, which left us convinced that there are members of the younger generation who do, indeed, have an appreciation for our trails heritage.

Our pre-convention wanderings took us along State Route

26 in the Nebraska panhandle and Wyoming, with stops at trail landmarks such as Chimney Rock, Scott's Bluff and Fort Laramie. Well preserved, well protected and worth the visits. But it was time spent at Ash Hollow late on a quiet Sunday afternoon that reaffirmed our hopes for the future of the trails.

In the Visitor's Center at the Ash Hollow State Historical Park near Lewellen, NE, we had a delightful conversation with an engaging young woman behind the counter where we signed the guest book.

Anna Jensen grew up in Lewellen and is just a year or two out of high school, with a year of college behind her. We noticed that she had a library copy of Merrill Mattes' *The Great Platte River Road* at her elbow, which we stereotypically thought was unusual reading for the younger generation.

The talk, of course, turned to the trail. She told us of a local pageant held each year to salute local heritage. "Sometimes I try to imagine what the land used to look like, without the people and the roads, the houses, the railroad tracks . . . and the trees," she told us. "I feel so close to this land."

In those final words can be found the future of trails protection and preservation and, ultimately, the future of OCTA. *I feel so close to this land.*

Rare is the OCTA member who has wandered the ruts and stumbled along the trail and looked at the scenery and hasn't felt close to the land and the people who crossed it. It's nice to know that youngsters like Anna Jensen are growing up with the same sort of appreciation for the prairies.

After we thought about, we realize that Anna probably isn't all that unusual. And with people like her coming along behind us, we like to think that the trails, and OCTA, will be in caring hands.

— Bill Martin



News From The Plains

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Western History Collection

Submission Guidelines

News From The Plains welcomes news, features and photos related to the work of OCTA and its members and to the preservation of our trails heritage. Material is due 30 days prior to publication dates. Material should be sent either on a computer disk (in Word or text format; please make sure you include a hard copy) or via e-mail. Pictures are appreciated and can be sent via e-mail, on a disk (jpg format) or originals for scanning.

Next Deadline Is December 1, 2001

From The President . . .

by Randy Wagner



OCTA's 19th Annual National Convention is history. The State of Wyoming, the City of Casper with Edna Kennell and her crew of Wyoming Chapter volunteers did themselves proud. Some 460 OCTA members got a first-hand experience with the Trails in the vicinity of the Last Crossing of the North Platte River and found it rewarding. For some, those that

attended the first Casper convention some 15 years ago, it was a memory renewal of places never forgotten.

OCTA enters its twentieth year in good shape. The publications program is as strong as it has ever been. *Overland Journal*, *News from the Plains* and the special publications are of a quality equal to any historic society/association publications in the nation. The Association's national historic preservation program has earned the respect and appreciation of developers and trail advocates alike, thanks, in a large part, to the tireless, reasoned and thoughtful work of retiring National Preservation Officer Dick Ackerman. I am entirely confident that vital work will continue under our new NPO Dave Welch.

Our Association's web site is modern, up-to-date, easy to navigate and complete in its content. The Internet mail room serves OCTA members and non-member subscribers alike with a place to pass on informative trail information and search of answers to obscure questions. The mapping, trail marking, graves and sites programs are in good shape in most chapters. Our education program is reaching into more

schools every year. With the help of Bill and Jeanne Watson and the Trails Partnership organization, our presence is being felt in Washington, DC and, with all of your help, state and local politicians are beginning to understand trail needs.

But OCTA does face serious problems. The Board of Directors adopted a negative balance budget for the coming fiscal year during the Casper meeting. That cannot continue. Our membership is stagnant, if not declining. Fund raising efforts have not recently met with the success of years past. Book store sales seem to be trending downward. Attendance at the annual national conventions is not what it should be for an Association our size. Some chapters are having trouble staying alive and active. Collectively, all of these conditions impact the Association's bottom line in a most alarming way.

Every volunteer association I have ever belonged to has experienced these same problems to some degree. None of us joined OCTA to worry about money of other such mundane business matters. We're all here to do the good work of finding, exploring, protecting, preserving and presenting the trails, and to have fun doing it. Fund raising, membership recruitment and public relations initiatives are nobody's idea of fun. Survival never is.

The Officers and Board have taken some initial steps to improve OCTA's business operation and to insure that every member's voice is heard and opinion counted. It is a work in progress that will continue into the future. If we do it right, that future will be bright for OCTA and for the western emigrant trails. The OCTA Board will next meet in Salt Lake City on March 8-9, 2002. We would appreciate hearing your thoughts and ideas before that session. Contact me anytime at <Rwagnerfoto@aol.com>.

News From Headquarters . . . by Kathy Conway



OCTA can look back to a very successful convention! The Casper convention crew, headed up by Edna Kennell deserves our thanks many times over.

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Fred Gowans, dazzled his audience with the true tale of the 1836 map of Warren A. Ferris. Those still interested in a copy of this famous map and accompanying brochure may get one by calling us toll free 888-811-6282. It retails for \$25, plus postage and handling.

Visits to Independence Rock, the Martin Handcart Center, the "almost opened" National Historic Trails Center, and watching the unveiling of a bronze Pony Express rider outside the Center were among the highlights of the convention.

Other "good things" that happened at the convention included:

- Chuck Dodd and the 2002 Convention Committee has us looking forward to being in Reno next year.

- Jere Krakow of the Long Distance Trails Office of the NPS released copies of the new California Trails map.

- Lee Underbrink and Jeanne and Bill Watson were honored

with the Meritorious Achievement Awards.

- Judy Budde was honored by being named "Distinguished Volunteer of the Year"

- Our outgoing President, Dave Welch, gave a farewell speech that honored all OCTA past presidents by having them stand and be recognized as leaders who were the living "spirits of Ezra Meeker"

As we look ahead, OCTA has many challenges. Preservation issues will be increasing due to national energy concerns, and maintaining our revenues like in years past is a necessity. Our membership numbers need to increase for OCTA to remain vital.

Headquarters is planning on increasing OCTA's revenues by marketing our newest workbook, *Following Lewis and Clark's Track*. Buy a copy early for Christmas...it will make a nice gift for your child, grandchild or favorite school teacher. We know you will be pleased with this purchase. It's only \$6.95 plus, plus \$2 shipping and handling.

-Kathy Conway

Keynote Speaker Fred Gowans:

Ferris Map Would Have Changed Course of History

Keynote speaker Dr. Fred Gowans enthralled a crowd of more than 450 attending the 19th OCTA Convention in Casper, WY with the lost and found story of a map drawn by mountaineer Warren A. Ferris.

"If (the map) had been published in 1836 when it should have been, it would have literally changed the course of history," said Gowans, the author of several landmark books, including *The Great Fur Trade Road* and *Rocky Mountain Rendezvous*.

Gowans began his keynote address by saluting the OCTA audience, which he described as "very, very academic in their understanding of the history of the trail."

He said the Ferris map was important because of its detail and accuracy, noting that compared to other maps of the era it would be like comparing graduate level work to grade school.

Ferris drew his map based on his experience as a mountaineer between 1830 and 1835, when his travels took him throughout the intermountain West. The journal he kept during those days became the book *Life In The Rockies*.

After returning to his home in Buffalo, NY, Ferris attempted to have his manuscript and map published, but it was turned down by a publisher who had also received Washington Irving's *Astoria*, which the publisher felt would be a more marketable book.

The manuscript eventually was published in the early 1840s in the *Western Literary Messenger*, a periodical edited by Ferris' brother. The original manuscript and map is believed to have accompanied Ferris' to Texas and subsequently to Oklahoma, where they were thought to have been lost in a fire.



Dr. Fred Gowans
- Photo by Doug Crary

The manuscript was published in book form from the edited version which ran in the *Messenger*, but it wasn't until 1946 that it was discovered that a collector in Buffalo had what was either the original map or an original copy made by Ferris.

"It is almost a miracle that we have this map," Gowans said. "From about 1836 to the 1940s, no one ever saw it." He called it, "the greatest map that ever came out of the fur trader era."

The map, now in the possession of Brigham Young Univer-



A panel featuring speakers at the Casper convention concluded two days of educational and entertaining presentations. Standing at left is moderator Larry Keown. Seated, left to right, are Victor Douville, Leslie Wischmann, Levida Heilman, Patricia Fletcher, James Lowe, Susan Badger-Doyle, Dr. Michael Cassity, and John McDermott. — Photo by Bill Martin

sity, is significant in part because it included more than 230 place names, many of which have survived to the present day, and because of the detail it offered.

Gowans' keynote speech highlighted two full days of presentations by a variety of speakers at the convention. Other presentations included"

Susan Badger Doyle, "The Bozeman Trail"

James A. Lowe, "The Bridger Trail"

Dr. Jack Fletcher and Patricia Fletcher, "The Cherokee Overland Trail"

Levida Heilman, "Tar, Paint & Stone"

Victor Douville, "Impact on the Dakotas"

Lesley Wischmann, "The Horse Creek Treaty"

Dr. Michael Cassity, "Red Buttes"

John McDermott, "Upper Platte River Crossings"

— Bill Martin



Left to right, Convention Chair Edna Kennell, OCTA President Dave Welch, and Congresswoman Barbara Cubin, R-Wyoming, who spoke to the Casper Convention.

— Photo by Bill Martin

New Advertising Guidelines, Rates For OCTA Publications

New advertising rates and policies for *News From The Plains* and the *Overland Journal* have been announced by the OCTA Publications Committee.

The new rates and guidelines follow extensive study of advertising rates in similar publications and a review of previous policies by the Board of Directors.

"OCTA as an organization offers significant value to advertisers who want to target their messages to people interested in western history, historic preservation and the trails," said Publications Committee Chair Candy Moulton.

"A flexible policy and competitive rates will allow OCTA to more aggressively pursue advertising revenues to help underwrite the costs of the publications."

The new policy, as recommended to the Board of Directors by a committee headed by Board Member Reba Grandrud, specifies that advertising in OCTA publications should continue to be related to the mission of the organization.

Such advertising, the policy recommends, "may be interpreted to include wide aspects of western history, cultural heritage, historic preservation, public education and trails management." The policy encourages flexibility and adds that "editors, in conjunction with the Publications Committee, should have leeway in considering new advertising."

New rates for the quarterly publications are:

Overland Journal

Inside Front Cover - \$600 (7.25 x 10 inches)

Full Page - \$250 (7.25 x 10 inches)

Half Page - \$150 (7.25 x 4.875 inches or 3.625 x 10 inches)

Quarter Page - \$85 (3.625 x 4.875 inches)

Deadlines are April 1 (Spring), July 1 (Summer), September 1 (Fall) and January 1 (Winter). Submissions should be camera ready or electronic files. For additional information, contact OJ Editor Robert Clark, P.O. Box 14707, Spokane WA 99214, Phone (509) 928-9540, e-mail clarkedserv@home.com

News From The Plains

Full Page - \$150 (7.25 x 9.5 inches)

Half Page - \$100 (7.25 x 4.75 inches)

Quarter Page - \$75 (3.5 x 4.75 inches)

Business Card - \$50 (3.5 x 2 inches)

Deadlines are March 1 for the April issue, June 1 for the July issue, September 1 for the October issue and December 1 for the January issue. Submissions should be camera ready or electronic files. For additional information, contact NFP Editor Bill Martin, P.O. Box 811, Georgetown TX 78627, Phone (512) 864-7312, e-mail octanfp@aol.com.



New OCTA Board members, left to right, Jim Denney, Fran Taplin, Charles Martin Jr., Edna Kennell, and Bob Wier.

— Photo by Bill Martin

Martin, Wier, Denney, Kennell Win OCTA Board Elections

Charles Martin Jr. and Bob Wier have been elected to new three-year terms on the national Board of Directors of the Oregon-California Trails Association.

Also in the annual OCTA elections, Edna Kennell and Jim Denney won their first three-year terms. They replace Reba Grandrud and Vic Bolon, who did not seek re-election.

In addition, Fran Taplin, who finished fifth in the elections, was appointed to serve the remainder of the term of Don Popejoy, who resigned from the Board.

Martin, of Richmond, IN, has served on the Board since 1998. He previously served from 1987 to 1992 and was OCTA Vice President in 1993-94. He is a retired professor of Geology at Earlham College.

Wier, of Billings, MT, was first elected to the Board in 1998. One of the founders of the OCTA website, he currently teaches at Rocky Mountain College in Billings.

Kennell, of Casper, WY, is Executive Director of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center Foundation. She was chair of the 19th Annual Convention in Casper.

Denney, of Omaha, NB, is the Nebraska Chapter Preservation Officer. A retired writer and photographer, he is also active in the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Taplin, of Eureka, CA, is a retired teacher. A charter member of OCTA, she has been active in the CA-NV chapter and helped plan the Carson City, Sacramento and Chico conventions.

There were 724 valid ballots cast in the election. Because that represents less than half of OCTA's membership, the results were certified at the General Membership Meeting in Casper.

Vote totals were Charles Martin Jr. 509, Bob Wier 486, James Denney 411, Edna Kennell 404, Fran Taplin 328, Richard Pingrey 304, Lethene Parks 291.

Visit the OCTA Bookstore
On the Internet
www.OCTA-trails.org

OCTA Headquarters
New E-Mail Address:
OCTA@indepmo.org

NTPO Report

OCTA Preservation Efforts Focus On Gas Well "Boom"

By Dave Welch, National Trails Preservation Officer

Before giving you an update on recent activities, I refer you to the preservation policy adopted by the board in Casper (adjacent to this article). It provides the guidelines that I will follow as OCTA's National Preservation Officer.



At the Casper convention several members noted that it appears I am jumping from the frying pan into the fire by moving from the OCTA presidency to the preservation officer position. This may be literally true. The fires are, in fact, powered by the

development of gas resources in Wyoming. Oil and gas development are not new to Wyoming; however, we are experiencing a "boom" due to the increased demand for power from this relatively clean source. The trails are in the crisscross of the area of interest.

Our immediate concern is gas wells proposed near the Dry Sandy Crossing about 12 miles west of South Pass. Dick Ackerman has been working this issue continuously since we became aware of the proposal last year (see *NFP*, July 2001 for Dick's last report and a report from the BLM). The licenses were sold to Wolverine Gas in 1998 but we became aware of the possible threat to the trail when the environmental paperwork associated with issuing a drilling permit was published. Now, all requirements have been met and drilling is proceeding.

The sites are on public land managed by the BLM. From a trail protection perspective, the primary constraint is that sites must be at least 0.25 miles from the trail. This may be adequate for protection of ruts and swales, but provides little protection for the associated viewscape. However, Wolverine Gas through its president, Sid Jansma, Jr., expressed a desire to work with the BLM and OCTA to minimize impact on the viewscape as well as the trail. This has resulted in adjustment of drill sites to reduce visibility and an overall sensitivity to the long-term impacts on the trail.

On their own initiative, the Wyoming BLM has undertaken a statewide study to determine the impact of using a corridor width of five miles on each side of the trail rather than 0.25 miles. For study purposes they are examining the feasibility of requiring that no structures above ten feet be visible within the corridor. Note that this does not ban drilling, but it would require careful placement and concealment. Wyoming energy interests have already made a strong negative response, although the study is incomplete.

Wyoming chapter president Ron Lund, former NTPO Dick Ackerman, OCTA board members Edna Kennell, Bob Weir, Stan McKee and Bob Kabel, OCTA members Lee Underbrink and Pinky Ellis and I met with Mr. Jansma and representatives of Shell Oil in Rock Springs on August 20. Wolverine has entered into partnerships with Shell, Texaco and Alberta

Energy for gas development west of South Pass.

We were briefed on their plans and taken to a site north of Farson that was about to begin drilling so that we could see a drill site and rig firsthand. Mr. Jansma's comments concerning their approach were encouraging. Shell concurred with his comments. They will minimize the number of drill sites per square mile using offset drilling techniques, minimize new roads and other visual impacts, use existing pipelines in already disturbed areas and leave as little as possible at the site during and after the production phase. However, they made it clear that they must do what is necessary to make the wells economically successful. Their investment is about \$3 million per drill site.

One thing for all of us to keep in mind is that there is a large difference between the visual impact during the drilling phase and the production phase. During drilling a 140 foot tall rig will be in place operating on a cleared and leveled space about 300 feet by 300 feet. If multiple wells are drilled from the same site, it is likely that the pad will be expanded, but not proportionately. In most cases this is preferable to adding more pads in the area.

A large water reservoir is constructed for the drilling operation and to receive material from the drill hole. All of this will appear soon at site A4-33 that is just southwest of the Dry Sandy Crossing and just north of the highway from Farson to South Pass. Clearly, we would prefer that this not happen, but work has begun with authorization from the BLM.

After about 50 days the drill rig will be disassembled. If and when the well begins production, a small (less than ten foot tall) "Christmas tree" valve structure is installed at the wellhead. Two tanks, which are more intrusive than the Christmas tree, are present to capture fluids produced by the well. Pipelines will carry gas to distribution facilities. All items will be painted to blend with the local environment.

During our meeting, I noted that in an ideal world we would prefer that none of the drilling activities take place. However, Wolverine and others have obtained leases and will be drilling test wells for some time. We will work with the BLM to insure they follow all established procedures. The discussions with Wolverine and Shell have been productive and we hope that similar discussions with others (Texaco, Alberta Energy, etc.) will follow the same course.

I will close with a reminder that it is imperative for all OCTA members to be involved in preservation activities. Local involvement is often more productive than "outsiders" from the national organization. We must become involved at the earliest possible time, preferably before leases are let, if we are to have a significant impact on decision processes.

Your comments and suggestions to me are always welcomed.

You can contact NPO Dave Welch via e-mail at djwelch@cs.com, via telephone at (253) 584-0332, or write to him at 102 Chinook Lane, Steilacoom WA 98388.

OCTA Board Approves \$187,730 Budget; Spending Reduced

by Bill Martin

An OCTA operating budget of \$187,730 for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2001, was approved by the Board of Directors at its annual meeting held in conjunction with the Casper convention.

While the budget represents a five percent reduction in spending from the previous year, Treasurer Marilyn Bryan said OCTA very likely would need to dip into endowment funds to balance the budget.

The approved spending level compares to total income, including interest income, of \$173,600, leaving a projected shortfall of \$14,130, which would be covered by dipping into the principal of OCTA's existing non-restricted endowment.

"There is not much to be done on the expense side without hurting the preservation activities we really want to do," said outgoing OCTA President David Welch. He emphasized the need to increase income rather than cut expenses further.

Budgeted income includes \$97,000 in support from dues and donations; a net \$52,600 in operations revenues, including convention and OCTA bookstore profits; and an expected \$24,000 in interest income from endowments.

Major expense categories include \$76,000 for administration, including headquarters office payroll and membership support, and \$68,400 for publications, including the *Overland Journal* and *News From The Plains*.

Bryan also presented a report showing that as of June 30, 2001, OCTA had \$283,903 in its restricted endowment fund, \$176,509 in its unrestricted endowment fund, and \$188,716 in the Charles W. and Mary C. Martin Restricted Endowment.

The Board discussed, but took no action on, a report from Bryan on revenue enhancement which showed the best potential for revenue enhancement is through increased Bookstore sales, greater convention attendance and fund raising donations.

In other action at the Annual Meeting, the Board:

- Adopted a preservation policy proposed by outgoing President David Welch, who has assumed the position of National Preservation Officer (see separate story on page xx)

- Approved a proposal to allow two votes for all multi-member categories, including Family memberships, when the headquarter's office database is upgraded to support it. Presently Family memberships have only one vote per membership. Student, Institutional and Corporate memberships will continue to have one vote per membership.

- Approved, on a 7-3 vote, the concept of having a January 1 renewal date for all memberships. A further report on timing of the change is planned for the Mid-Year Board meeting in March, 2002.

- Heard brief reports on planning for the 2002 OCTA Convention in Reno and the 2003 Convention in Manhattan, KS, which will have the theme of "Trails, Tall Grass & Trials." The 2004 Convention has been awarded to Vancouver, WA and the Board is ready to consider proposals to host the 2005 and 2006 conventions.

- Assigned to Committee "A" headed by Board member

Bob Kabel, working with the National Preservation Officer, responsibility to work with Chuck Dodd on the COED project, with an interim report planned for the Mid-Year meeting.

- Approved by-law changes to reflect recommended revisions in operations of OCTA's on-going awards programs. See separate story on page xx.

- Approved a \$250 honoraria for winners of OCTA's Outstanding Educator Awards.

- Approve a resolution of appreciation and good wishes for former OCTA Executive Director Jeanne Miller, with instructions that it be delivered in person by a delegation of OCTA representatives.

- Approved new advertising rates for the *Overland Journal* and *News From The Plains*, as recommended by the Publications Committee.

- Received a report from OCTA Website Chair Lesley Wischmann raising a number of issues which need to be addressed as the website continues to operate.

- Held an executive session to discuss office reorganization issues and copyright issues related to the Western Emigrant Trails map. No action was taken and the matters will continue to be studied.

- Heard a report from the Publications Committee that number four in the Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series, Amasa Morgan's 1849 California Trail diary, should be published by spring of 2002; and that the first Special Publication, Randy Brown's compilation of emigrant inscriptions, should be published in the fall.

- Was told that "lawyer delays" have slowed the planned transfer of ownership of California Hill to the Nebraska State Historical Society, but that the transfer should be accomplished in the near future.

- Accepted without comment a policy statement from Committee A, headed by Reba Grandrud, concerning advertising in OCTA publications. The policy states that advertising "should continue to be related to the mission of the organization but may be interpreted to include wide aspects of western history, cultural heritage, historic preservation, public education and trails management. Flexibility is encouraged. Editors, in conjunction with the Publications Committee, should have leeway in considering new advertising."

- Asked the National Preservation Officer to study and report back on alternatives to existing OCTA trails sign materials.

- Approved awards to Joyce Bolerjack and Suzanne Vinduska of Headquarters and Gail and Muriel Carbiener as winners of the first OCTA membership drive. The awards were presented at the General Membership Meeting.

- Heard a report from Public Relations Committee Chair John Krizek concerning plans for a 12-minute educational video on OCTA and its activities. Krizek said most of the field footage should be completed by the end of summer, with plans for editing and interviewing next winter. It is expected to be completed during 2002.

OCTA Awards Programs Gets Revisions

Bylaw changes updating OCTA's awards program have been approved by the Board of Directors following recommendations from Awards Committee Chair Roger Blair.

The purpose of the changes is to "clarify, modify and define various categories of awards," Blair said in a report to the Board. "It also proposes to consolidate the fractionated nature of the current awards."

For example, some awards are supervised by committees other than the Awards Committee, he noted. The changes will consolidate all of the changes under one committee chair.

Another change eliminates a previous requirement that a recipient of a Friend of the Trail Award be a landowner, permitting anyone with close ties to lands containing trail ruts or historic resources who is helpful in trails preservation to receive the award.

Award categories include:

Meritorious Achievement Award -- OCTA's highest honor, presented to an OCTA member, or to small member groups, who has made a substantial effort over a period of years in support of OCTA and its goals.

Distinguished Volunteer Award -- Presented to a member for work on a short-term project or for less visible work over

a longer timeframe.

Distinguished Service Award -- The highest award for contributions by a non-OCTA member to historic trail preservation and education efforts.

Friend of the Trail -- Presented to groups, individuals or organizations with direct ties to lands over which historic trails pass for long-term assistance in trail preservation.

Outstanding Educator Award -- Open to any individual, institution or group of educators making significant contributions to education about the 19th century overland emigration.

Mattes Award for Excellence In Writing -- Presented to the *Overland Journal* article which best represents the goals, objectives and interests of OCTA and its members.

National Certificates of Appreciation -- For individuals and organizations making a particular effort in achieving a short-term OCTA goal.

President's Award -- Given to outgoing presidents in appreciation for leadership service to OCTA.

The deadline for nominations for all awards is June 1. Nominations forms may be obtained from OCTA Headquarters.

New Members Named For OCTA Publications Committee

The OCTA Publications Committee has added three new members, Terry Del Bene of Wyoming, Jim Denney of Nebraska and Bill Hill of New York. All three have extensive publications experience as well as varied interests in the trails.

Del Bene (Indian name: Na'ashchidi'nishlohi) is a graduate of the University of Connecticut (B.A. and Ph.D.) as well as Washington State University (M.A.). He has worked for some 30 years as a professional archaeologist in private industry, for the Navajo Nation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. He has written scores of professional publications and papers and he has drafted two books for which he is seeking a publisher. He is a staff writer for the *Civil War News*, a national newspaper. A widower, he has no children, two dogs, and lots of hobbies. He makes his home in Green River, Wyoming.

Denney of Omaha is retired writer-photographer with *The Omaha World-Herald Sunday Magazine of the Midlands*. He was with *The World-Herald* for 37 years. He is a graduate of Doane College, Crete, Neb., with a bachelor's degree in history and political science. He is a World War II veteran. He currently is doing freelance writing for *The World-Herald* and

a magazine called *Nebraska Life* (it is new and in its first year of publication). Denney grew up in Fairbury, Neb., within seven miles of the Oregon-California Trail and walked along the trail looking for artifacts much of his youth, especially in the area of Rock Creek Station. He is widower, has four children and five grandchildren. He recently was elected to the board of directors of OCTA and also serves as Chairman of Committee C.

Hill of Centereach, NY, is well-known to OCTA membership as the Education Committee Chair and author of many children's books including the recently published book *Following Lewis & Clark's Track: The Story of the Corps of Discovery*. Other titles include *Finding the Right Place: The Story of the Mormon Trail*, *Heading Southwest*, *Heading West*, and *Reading, Writing & Riding Along the Oregon Trail*.

They join existing committee members Candy Moulton, Encampment, WY, chair; Mike Brown of Elko, NV, and Stanley Paher of Reno, NV. Ex officio members of the committee are Bob Clark, *Overland Journal* Editor; Bill Martin, *News From the Plains* Editor; and Susan Badger Doyle, Special Publications Editor.

-- Candy Moulton

Mark Your Calendars — OCTA's 20th Anniversary Convention
August 14-18, 2002—www.wagons-1841/convention2002.htm

OCTA Educator of the Year Award Winners Named

Teachers from Kansas City, Seattle and Casper have won Outstanding Educator of the Year Awards from the Oregon-California Trails Association.

The Awards, which for the first time included \$250 honorariums, were presented at the Casper convention to Janet Wragge of Oregon Trail Elementary in Casper, WY, Erik Gearhart of Lakeside School in Seattle, WA, and Angela Williams in conjunction with the Arabia Steamboat Museum in Kansas City, MO.

Wragge was cited in the Elementary School category for an Oregon Trail thematic unit she teaches for fifth graders that includes social studies, science, language, reading, math and art. The sequence involves speakers in the classroom, including presentations on emigrant families and daily life, soldiers from area military posts and a presentation by a Native American historian.

Her classroom is decorated in an Oregon Trail theme and students research projects related to the trail, including daily life, landmarks, dangers, Native Americans and various cultural groups, such as Mormons, miners, traders, farmers and others.

Also as part of the process, during the last year the students teamed with fifth grade students from a school in Kansas City who were studying the Santa Fe Trail. The students exchanged questions on their trails, allowing students to compare and contrast the history of the two trails. A field trip to Independence Rock and Devil's Gate is also included.

Gearhart was recognized in the Secondary School Category for an outdoor education historical simulation for seventh graders. The simulation involving turning the hills and forests around the school into a learning experience about the trails.

The students use classroom time before the outdoor simulation to hypothesize routes, plan logistics and customize a wagon for the trip. They read trail diary excerpts, interview guest speakers portraying historical characters and work together to overcome obstacles in planning the overland journey.

On the day of the simulation, students transport "supplies" across a marked trail in a nearby park, facing some of the same challenges of the pioneers, including river crossings, mountain storms (teachers with hoses), rumors of short-cuts and decisions on whether to lighten loads or abandon wagons.

Williams is Executive Director of Venture Quest Education Programs at the Arabia Museum, which was recognized for Institutional excellence.

In the fall of 2000, Venture Quest implemented an interactive program for students in kindergarten through fourth grade that focused on the preservation of the Steamboat Arabia and pioneer travelers on steamboats going West.

The goal of the two-hour program, conducted during visits to the Museum, is to further students thinking and appreciation for the hardships and sacrifices pioneers made to follow their dreams west.



Left to right, teachers Erik Gearhart and Janet Wragge and OCTA Education Committee Chair Bill Hill —Photo by Bill Martin



Lee Underbrink provides historical perspective to OCTAns visiting Alcova Dam, site of Fremont's 1842 Hot Springs Gate, during the Casper Convention. — Photo by Doug Crary



The Bookstore on Author's Night, always a popular convention destination. — Photo by Bill Martin

Watsons, Underbrink Win Top OCTA Awards

Longtime OCTA activists and supporters **Bill and Jeanne Watson** of Orinda, CA and **Lee Underbrink** of Casper, WY were recipients of OCTA's highest accolade, the Meritorious Achievement Award, at the 2001 Convention in Casper.

The awards were presented during the annual awards banquet held on Thursday night during the convention.

Also at the banquet, **Judy Budde** was presented the OCTA Distinguished Service Award for volunteerism. Friend of the



Jeanne and Bill Watson

Trail Awards, the highest OCTA can bestow on private landowners for preserving the trails, were presented to **Norman and Gaynell Park**, **Elvin and Shirley Holle**, and the **Audubon Spring Creek Prairie**.

In addition, OCTA Certificates of Appreciation were presented to former *Overland Journal* editor **Marilyn Holt**, long-time Wyoming Chapter leader **Ron Lund** and Casper Convention Chair **Edna Kennell**.

Michael Tate was named winner of the Merrill Mattes Award for writing in the *Overland Journal* for his article "From Cooperation to Conflict: Sioux Relations with the Overland Emigrants, 1845-1865," which appeared in the Winter issue.

Bill and Jeanne Watson have served as founders and co-chairs of OCTA's Legislative/Trails Liaison Committee since 1985. Among their first achievements was helping secure National Historic Trails designation for the California and Pony Express Trails in 1992.

Both of the Watsons served two terms on the OCTA Board of Directors and Bill was President of OCTA in 1989-1991, while Jeanne was OCTA Secretary from 1991 to 1994. Jeanne has been chair of the Collections Committee since 1984 and is author of *To the Land of Gold and Wickedness: The 1848-1859 Diary of Lorena L. Hays*. Bill is on the executive committee of the Partnership for the National Historic Trails.

They have also been adopt-a-trail volunteers in California's Eldorado National Forest for 30 years and have been involved in trail marking and maintenance on the Carson Route. In addition, they have conducted Overland Trails programs for historical, community and school groups in California, Illinois and New Jersey.

In nominating the Watsons, former OCTA President Greg Franzwa noted their tireless sharing of the work of the Legislative Committee and said, "their service to OCTA has been selfless and enduring."

Lee Underbrink was one of the founders of the Wyoming chapter of OCTA and chaired the 1987 Convention in Casper. He serves as a consultant for the National Historic Trails Center Foundation in Casper. He is also a former OCTA National Board member.

For the past 15 years, he has organized most of the chapter's treks and field trips, has worked closely with local private landowners to secure access to trails on private lands, and has assisted the Trail Marking Committees in Wyoming.

In nominating Underbrink, Wyoming Chapter President Ron Lund called him "one of the stabilizing assets of our chapter."

Judy Budde has worked tirelessly on behalf of OCTA, helping out wherever she has been needed. She has volunteered to help Headquarters and opened her home to host the Board of Directors and others during Mid-Year meetings. She also has been active in the Trailhead chapter, including serving as chapter president. "Judy Budde is the type of member for which this award was created," said Awards Chair Roger Blair.

Norman and Gaynell Park are owners/operators of the Dumbell Ranch in Alcova, WY. They were honored for their donation of some 2,000 acres of land at Independence Rock that helped protect the landmark from commercial development and kept it available to the public.

Elvin and Shirley Holle of Breman KS own property on which is located the Cottonwood Crossing and campground, important stops on the Oregon-California trail. The Holles have provided access to the KANZA chapter and other organizations and allowed several archeological investigations of the site.

Audubon Spring Creek Prairie in Denton, NE is a 610-acre former cattle ranch that was acquired in 1999 by Audubon Nebraska to preserve a tallgrass prairie area. The site includes 600 to 800 feet of connecting swales and a creek crossing.



Lee Underbrink, left, with OCTA President Dave Welch

OCTA Award Winners



*Friend of the Trail Winners
Norman and Gaynell Park*



*Friend of the Trail
Winner Elvin Holle*



*OCTA's Ken Martin
accepted a Friend of the
Trail award for Audubon
Spring Creek Prairie*



*Distinguished Service Award
winner Judy Budde with
President Dave Welch*



*Outgoing National Trails Preservation
Officer Dick Ackerman, left, received
a special award from Jere Krakow
of the National Park Service
Long Distance Trails Office*



*Certificate of Appreciation
Winner Ron Lund*



*Outgoing OCTA President David
Welch, right, "passes the gavel" to
2001-2002 President Randy Wagoner*

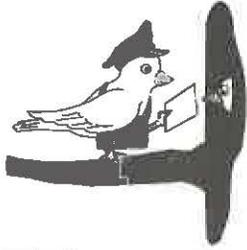


*Outgoing OCTA
Board Member
Vic Bolon*



*Certificate of Appreciation
winner and Convention
Chair Edna Kennell
with David Welch*

Awards Photos by Bill Martin



News From The Chapters

California-Nevada

Some of the 116 CA-NV Chapter members attending the Casper Convention enjoyed the several pre-convention treks and hike.

Those from the west came with four-wheel drive vehicles for the torturous Rocky Ridge & Sweetwater Valley tour, while others chose the two-day auto tour following the Cherokee Trail of 1850. All the hikers from Salaratus Lakes to Independence Rock were blessed with moderate temperatures, easy terrain and the absence of biting insects. Four members flew from California to join the east tour from Fort Laramie.

It was a long day for those of us who left Casper at 5 a.m., but the itinerary provided many experiences of the various trails on both sides of the Platte, with beautiful scenery, wildlife, and interesting history, narrated by Irv Sutton from Pueblo, CO and Ken Sosalla of Waukesha, WI.

The chapter meeting was well attended with 90 members who heard reports on the Memorandum of Understanding between OCTA and California State Library; Wade-Fernley Land Swap progress; the dedication of the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon; update on the 2002 Convention in Reno, and the Winter Symposium in Placerville on January 18-19, 2002.

President Bill Webster announced the elections and introduced the new board members: Carol March, Jim Allison, Pat Loomis, and Bob Iverson.

Tom Fee, Chairman of the Awards Committee, explained the newly created committee and announced recipients of the awards. The three-member committee includes Carol March and Mary Mueller, who suggested the recipients, and Patty Knight, who designed and printed the certificates. Award categories recognize volunteers for overall leadership; for trails mapping, preservation, and research; and for convention and symposium leadership.

Award recipients were Richard and Orsola Silva; George and Beverly Hesse; Joe and Jean Ellingson; and Joanne Hinchliff. In addition, an award was presented to Rick Maddelena, of the U.S. Forest Service, Truckee District, for his efforts toward trails preservation on the California Trail. Rick was recently transferred to another district and we will miss him.

Lastly, the committee wanted to recognize the years of leadership for the chapter and to the trails by Doyle Reed and his life long partner, Fiona. His many friends will want to know that Doyle lives in Santa Rosa at an Alzheimer's Residence and is doing well and we will cherish the memory of Fiona

who passed away last April.

In the past summer the tour leaders have planned their pre-convention tours and are busy through October conducting 4-wheel drive tours and testing the routes by bus to present interesting sites and well-trained guides for the 2002 Convention in Reno.

The next issue of the chapter newsletter, *TRAIL TALK*, will be mailed in October. If you are not a member of the chapter you have time to join and receive the news that will provide more information about these topics and people mentioned above. To join the CA/NV Chapter check the Website at members.home.net/canvocta for a membership application, or contact: Patty Knight P.O. Box 1277 Carson City, NV 89702-1277

-- Pat Loomis & Mary Mueller



A color guard attired as Fort Caspar infantrymen helped open the Convention's general sessions. — Photo by Bill Martin

California Reunion Brings Pioneer Families Together

By Timothy Lemucchi

The Williams Family gravesite at the Evergreen Pioneer Cemetery in Santa Cruz, CA has deteriorated substantially in the 150-odd years since the last Williams was buried there.

The casual observer who walked past the gravesite would have little idea of the heroic deeds of the two adults interred there. That changed on June 2, 2001, when OCTA erected a plaque at the gravesite describing the historic exploits of California pioneers James Williams and his wife, Mary Patterson Williams, and their families.

James Williams was a member of the Chiles-Walker Party to California in 1843 and Mary Patterson was a member of the Stephens-Murphy Party of 1844. The couple was married in Monterey by United States Consul Thomas O. Larkin at the Larkin home in Monterey on August 24, 1845. It may have been the first wedding of Americans in Mexican California.

James Williams, a native of Cape Girardeau County, MO, then age 29, traveled overland to California in 1843 with his three brothers, John, 27, Isaac, 20, and Squire, 19.

Their party of 30 people and eight wagons left Independence, MO, in May, 1843, for Fort Hall, ID, by way of the North Fork of the Platte River. Once there, short of provisions, the party was split. The wagons, women, and children, guided by mountain man Joseph Walker through Northern Nevada and down the eastern Sierra, crossed into California in the snow through Walker Pass, arriving in California on December 3, 1843.

The second group, consisting of Chiles and 12 men, including the four Williams brothers, journeyed by horseback through uncharted territory to California via Fort Bridger, Idaho, eastern Oregon, and northeastern California. After suffering Indian attacks, lack of water, and near starvation the mounted party reached Sutter's Fort on November 10, 1843.

The Williams brothers settled at the Fort, where James worked as a blacksmith and John as a tanner. The brothers joined Captain Sutter in 1845 during the conflict between Governor Micheltorena and former California officials Juan Alvarado and Jose Castro. James fought in the Battle of Santa Clara and, upon returning to the Fort, he met the Patterson family.

The Williams brothers and the Patterson family settled in the Santa Cruz area, where the Williamses leased a sawmill belonging to Captain Isaac Graham and Henry Naile. James and Squire purchased the 4,418-acre Arroyo de la Laguna Rancho ten miles north of Santa Cruz, where the family settled and cut timber and farmed.

Mary Patterson Williams, a native of Jackson County, MO, emigrated to California with the Stephens-Murphy Party of 1844. Mary, then age 16, came with her grandfather, Isaac Hitchcock, age 63; her mother Elizabeth Patterson, a widow, age 36; and her four teenage siblings: Isaac, Lydia, Helen Malinda, and Margaret.

When winter storms caught the emigrant party in the Sierra Nevada it was decided to leave the women and children with two men while the others struggled on. Snowbound, the Pattersons spent the winter in a makeshift cabin with a hide roof. At the end of February, 1845, on the verge of starvation, they were rescued and brought down to Sutter's Fort. The Stephens-Murphy Party was the first group of pioneers to bring wagons over the Sierra Nevada. All the members, including two babies born along the way, survived the arduous trek.

Mary died unexpectedly in childbirth with twins in 1851 and was buried at the Rancho. James died on October 9, 1858, at the age of

44, and was interred at the Evergreen Cemetery.

Before James died, he asked that Mary and the twins, who died in infancy, be re-interred beside him at Evergreen Cemetery. More than 100 descendants of these first California pioneers, the Hitchcocks, the Pattersons and the Williamses, reside in California and other western States.

On June 2 and 3, 2001, 60 descendants of the family gathered in Santa Cruz to "Talk Story" about their ancestors' exploits. The Talk Story began with a private showing of John Krizek's documentary *"The Forgotten Journey"* a film recreation of the Stephens-Murphy Party immigration to California. Betsy Elizabeth Patterson and her children were members of the group. Betsy's daughters, Mary and Lydia, later married two of the Williams brothers, James and Isaac.

On Saturday, the family members read the diary of Pierson Redding, a daily account of the 1843 journey. This was followed by the reading of various letters written by the families back to the home folks in Missouri describing the wonders and tribulations of life in Mexican Alta California.

Included on the agenda were bus tours of the Rancho de la Laguna; the Larkin House in Monterey; the family apple orchards in Watsonville; and other family-related sites.

Highlight of the reunion was the dedication of a new Monument at the gravesite and the installation of the OCTA Plaque.

Timothy Lemucchi, of Bakersfield, CA., is an OCTA member and the great-great-grandson of James Williams and Mary Patterson



Williams and Patterson family members in reunion at the Williams marker in the Evergreen Pioneer Cemetery in Santa Cruz California.

— Photo courtesy of Timothy Lemucchi

Nevada Swale Cleanup Offers Lessons In Collaboration

(Trails preservation means hard work, collaboration, and getting the local community involved. CA-NV Chapter member Tom Fee offers this case study of how it can be done.)

By Tom Fee

The Truckee Branch of the California Trail begins at the Humboldt Bar, crosses over the 40 Mile Desert, passes slightly north of Fernley, NV and then travels over seven grueling miles of difficult sand to the Truckee River at Wadsworth. Within this seven-mile stretch lie deep sand swales of which many OCTA members are very proud. These great swales are the best example of deep sand swales on the entire California Trail.

However, the swales are only a few miles north of Fernley and in an area used for years to dump trash and garbage. For years piles of trash, old furniture, appliances, mattresses, tree branches, and batteries have been dumped in and near the swales or along the roads leading to the swales. A California-Nevada Chapter cleanup was undertaken in June 1998, yet the trash and garbage dumping continued.

Another cleanup effort was scheduled for May 6, 2001 with three goals in mind. First, clean the swales and nearby area of trash and garbage. Second, publicize the Fernley Deep Sand Swales and the California Trail to local officials and residents, with the idea that educating the folks of Fernley might decrease the amount of dumping. Third, involve the community of Fernley in the cleanup effort.

The first step was contacting Nevada BLM and involving archaeologist Gary Bowyer of the Carson City Field Office, under whose jurisdiction the great sand swales fall. Gary arranged for a two-ton flatbed truck with side rails to move the trash.

Another step was to write to Tom Green, vice president of Disposal Services, Inc., which resulted in disposal of swale garbage at the Fernley Transfer Station free of charge.

A third step was to publicize the cleanup to the membership of the CA-NV Chapter via a notice in *Trail Talk*, the chapter newsletter.

The *Leader-Courier* newspaper serves Fernley, Dayton, and neighboring communities. Assistant Editor Betty Aleck was contacted and asked to write an article, including an invitation for Fernley residents to help with the cleanup effort. When she requested more information, I sent her a copy of the September 2000 issue of *National Geographic*, featuring 29 pages on the California Trail; a dramatic 1850 E.S. Ingalls one-page diary quote about the Forty Mile Desert; two pages of emigrant diary quotes regarding the last seven miles of very difficult sand to be crossed prior to reaching the Truckee River; and six pages on the Historical Development of the California Trail, which had been prepared by Don Buck.

The first article in the *Leader-Courier* came out April 18, with the following bold headline: "Citizens urged to help clean historic pioneer emigrant trail." When I phoned Betty to thank her for the article and for her support, I invited her on a tour of the Fernley Deep Sand Swales. We took the tour on April 24 and she took several pictures of the trash and garbage.

A second article promoting the swales cleanup came out on May 2, including a picture of one of the trash piles and information about the penalties for dumping trash on federally pro-



Items not left by emigrants: Volunteers loading trash collected on swales near Fernley, NV. — Photo by Dave Hollecker

tected lands.

On May 9, three days after the cleanup, a third article in the Fernley paper included quotes from Fernley resident volunteers and diary quotes on the difficulty traveling over the deep sand toward the Truckee River. There was a picture of one of the Fernley residents hard at work picking up trash.

The efforts of the volunteers resulted in two full loads on the BLM two-ton truck and two full loads on a 3/4 ton pick-up. After the cleanup, everyone remarked how much better the swales and nearby area looked. Volunteer participants included 11 members from OCTA, seven residents from Fernley and surrounding area, six members from Am Arcs of Nevada (amateur archaeologists invited by Gary Bowyer), and two employees of BLM (an archaeologist and a recreation specialist).

A California Trail information packet was sent to the Mayor of Fernley, each member of the Fernley City Council, members of the Lyon County Commission, which represents Fernley, and three leaders of the Fernley Preservation Society. Each of these people was also invited to attend a May 5 trail tour.

I arranged for one hundred copies of the California Trail information packet to be printed, courtesy of the state BLM office in Reno. A set was given to each cleanup volunteer during orientation on May 6. Others were distributed through the *Leader-Courier* office and the Fernley Preservation Society's train depot/museum restoration project.

The three articles in the *Leader-Courier* did an excellent job of informing the citizens of Fernley and nearby communities of the existence of the Great Sand Swales and the California Trail. One reason for the quality and completeness of those articles is the thoroughness of information sent to Betty Aleck. This information made her job easier. Anyone engaged in a trail preservation project of this nature can use a similar approach. Involving the local press, along with civic leaders and interested residents, is a way of enlisting the local community in trail preservation. It's good for them and good for OCTA!

Crossroads

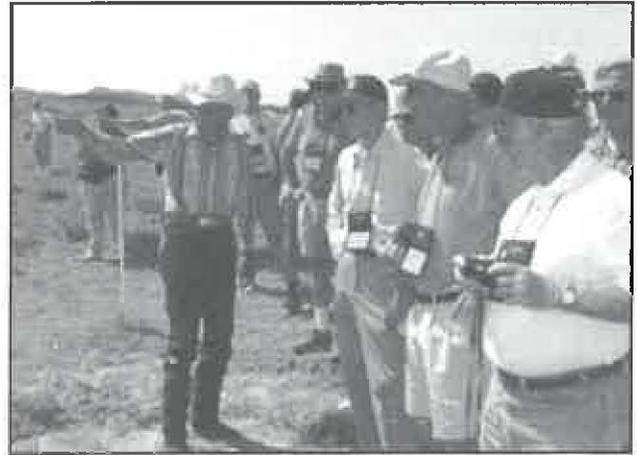
Our thanks and congratulations to the Wyoming Chapter for putting on a great convention in Casper. The hard work of Edna Kennell and the convention committee was evident as all Crossroads members attending the convention enjoyed the many events and activities and appreciated the service and hospitality of the convention committee.

It has been an active summer for most chapter members and the fall meeting and barbeque in September signaled the end of chapter meetings for the year. At this writing, there is still a fall field trip being planned and it will take place in late September or early October. It will either be on the Cherokee Trail south of Rock Springs, or on the Oregon and California Trails from Fort Bridger to Montpelier, Idaho.

Trail Crossing signs have been installed in Echo Canyon and will be placed near Faust where the Pony Express Trail crosses the state highway. A new 5-mile section of the Mormon Pioneer and California Trail between Big Mountain and Little Dell Reservoir has recently been opened up for hikers and bikers. It joins an existing trail route that was used by the Mormon Pioneers, California gold-seekers, and Pony Express riders. Utah Crossroads will be working with the State Parks and Recreation Division to mark the recreational trail segment with carsonite posts.

Historian and chapter member Lyndia Carter was the speaker at the recently dedicated Lombard Ferry site on the Green River. A log replica of the 1847 ferry will be a featured exhibit.

— Al Mulder



Leonard Chamberlain talking to OCTAn's about a trail crossing on his property during a convention bus tour.

— Photo by Dave Hollecker



Left to right, Bill Robinson, Nancy Sicotte, Gail Robinson and Kathy Carter enjoy a handcart experience at Rock Creek.

— Photo courtesy of Bill and Gail Robinson



OCTA Convention-goers on the East Pre-Tour at Porter's Rock. Left to right Nancy Elig, Ron Downs, Jana Marshall, Mary Mueller, Mable Sutton, Pat Loomis, Norine Kimmy, Joanne Jackson, LeRoy Jackson, Alison Portello, Sally Cook, Ed Cook, Ross Marshall and Irv Sutton.

— Photo by Ken Sosalla

Planning Underway For 2002 Reno Convention

Truckee, 40-Mile Tours On Tap

Tours of the Dog Valley segment of the Truckee Trail, Sand Springs Station and the Forty-Mile Desert highlight planning for the 20th OCTA National Convention scheduled in August, 2002, in Reno, NV.

In a report to the Board of Directors meeting in Casper, Convention Chair Chuck Dodd said the Dog Valley tour will follow the route by which emigrants bypassed the treacherous upper Truckee River Canyon and follow the trail from the last crossings of the Truckee River to Donner Lake.

The Sand Springs Station tour will include visits to a 7,000-year-old petroglyph site, the Sand Springs Pony Express Station and trail traces near Carson Lake.

The Forty Mile Desert tour will visit the trail near the infamous Humboldt Sink where emigrants struggled through sand and heat to reach the Truckee or Carson rivers.

Pre- and post-convention tours will include the Fort Hall Road, the Humboldt River, the Truckee River and the Applegate Trail.

Headquarters for the convention will be the Flamingo Hilton in downtown Reno. A barbeque will be held at the Harrah Automobile Museum.

To keep track of planning for the convention, visit the website at www.wagons-1841.com/convention2002.htm

Call For Papers Issued

A Call for Papers and program presentations has been issued for the 2002 OCTA Convention scheduled in Reno, NV.

Possible topics might include:

- Lesser-known routes into California, including the Nobles Trail, Henness Pass, Carson Pass, Sonora Pass, Big Trees Wagon Road, Georgetown Cutoff and others.
- Southern Trails into Southern California, including the Gila Route and the Old Spanish Trail.
- Salt Lake City to Los Angeles Trail
- New ideas about traditional Sierra crossings, including the Truckee Route and Lassen Trail.
- Experiences of women and children on the trail

- Cattle drives over the Sierra
- Pony Express and Corpenning (mule mail) routes across Nevada
- Associated topics about crossings and incidents, Death Valley crossing, for example

Organizers are also interested in vignettes on topics that don't warrant a full 50-minute presentation.

Proposals should be submitted by December 1, 2001, to Charles L. Convis, 2185 Courtside Circle, Carson City NV 89703. Phone (775) 888-9867. Fax (775) 888-0908.



Photo Album Planned

A 20th Year Photo Album, featuring events from all previous conventions, is being put together for the OCTA Convention in Reno in August 2002.

The theme of the convention is "What's Ahead on the Trail," but organizers plan some fun looking back while they are looking ahead.

The photo album will show people and activities from the last 19 conventions and your help is needed. Dust off your old albums and send in some of your favorite OCTA convention photos.

Photo contributions should be to Norine Kimmy, 1437 Piedmont Road, San Jose CA 95132-2431. Please include the convention year, a description and names of those in the photo.

Every effort will be made to return the photos to you. However, if you a photo you can't afford to lose, consider sending a copy. All pictures are appreciated. If you have questions, please call Norine at (408) 926-6952 or e-mail nkimmy@batnet.com



Representatives from the CA-NV Chapter were on hand in Casper to answer questions about the Reno Convention planned for 2002. — Photo by Bill Martin

Meanwhile, In 2003

Planning is well underway for the 2003 OCTA Convention, to be hosted by the KANZA Chapter in Manhattan, KS. The theme of the convention will be "Trails, Tall Grass and Trials." The convention coincides with the 150th anniversary of Fort Riley.

Membership Committee

The Board of Directors has agreed to a recommendation from the Membership Committee and taken a step towards allowing up to two votes per Family membership.

In the past, all membership categories have had one vote. Because family memberships often represent couples who are both OCTA members, someone has been disenfranchised when elections are held.

As soon as the headquarters database is able to support the change, probably in time for the Spring 2002 Board elections, husband and wives will both get to vote. The change will not apply to Institutional, Corporate or student memberships.

The Board also agreed to study having all OCTA memberships expire on the same date, probably January 1, and making it possible for you to pay National and Chapter dues with one check. A report on the idea will be heard at the Board's Mid-Year meeting in March 2002.

In other news, I am convinced that bulk mailings are an excellent way to recruit new members. The recent mailing to members of the Montana State Historical Society brought in over 25 new members. Two more mailings are in the works, one to the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and the other to a list of 250 libraries on the trail.

We'll be back next year with another membership drive. This year's winners were Joyce Bolerjack and Suzanne Vinduska, both level three winners, and Gail and Muriel Carbiener, level one winners.

It continues to be important that each chapter have a membership chair. Each of the Chapter chairs would automatically be a working member of the Membership Committee. Current committee members include Joyce Bolerjack of the Northwest Chapter, Sandra Waggoner of CA-NV, Arleta Martin and Carol Osborne of KANZA, and John Atkinson of Gateway.

We ask all OCTA members to keep in mind the possibility of gift memberships during the Christmas season. It's a great way to expose your friends and family to the benefits of OCTA membership. — Don Popejoy, Membership Chair



Doug, Laura, Melanie and Kath Jenson (plus the family dog), on the Rocky Ridge trek, at a marker placed by Ezra Meeker in 1906.

—Photo courtesy of Bill and Gail Robinson

Legislative Committee

OCTA members are being encouraged to send letters to Congress in support of legislation which would authorize a one-time feasibility study update for the Oregon, California, Mormon and Pony Express trails.

The legislation was approved by the House in a voice vote in June and a companion bill has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah. The bill is S. 213.

In a letter to Senators, Rep. Doug Bereuter of Nebraska, the primary sponsor of the bill in the House, notes the legislation recognizes the fact that there are additional routes and cutoffs which may deserve inclusion in the National Trails System.

Especially important are members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which S. 213 has been referred for hearings. Members of the committee include Senators Bingaman of New Mexico, the chair; Murkowski of Alaska, Akaka of Hawaii, Domenici of New Mexico, Dorgan of North Dakota, Nickles of Oklahoma, Graham of Florida, Craig of Idaho, Wyden of Oregon, Campbell of Colorado, Johnson of South Dakota, Thomas of Wyoming, Landrieu of Louisiana, Shelby of Alabama, Bayh of Indiana, Burns of Montana, Feinstein of California, Kyl of Arizona, Schumer of New York, Hagel of Nebraska, Cantwell of Washington, Smith of Oregon, and Carper of Delaware.

Letters in support of S. 213 can be sent in care of individuals Senators, United State Senates, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Lombard Ferry Site Dedicated

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM Rock Springs, WY, Field Office, and descendants of handcart pioneer Joseph Oborn were to dedicate new facilities at the Lombard Ferry National Historic Trails Interpretive Site on Saturday, August 25. The site is located about 28 miles west of Farson, WY on Highway 28 at the crossing of the Green River.

The Lombard Ferry Interpretive Site was originally constructed as a partnership among the BLM, Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Rock Spring Stake High Priests Quorum in memory of Edwin James. The site was dedicated in 1993 as part of the Oregon National Historic Trail Sesquicentennial celebrations.

In early 2000, the FWS was approached by the Huff family of Ogden, Utah who were searching for the grave of Joseph Oborn, a member of the Willie Handcart Company who died on the banks of the Green River in 1856. The Huff family raised several thousand dollars and donated it to Seedskadee and the BLM to fund two new interpretive signs and park benches for the site. The Bureau of Reclamation constructed a 200-yard paved walking path that goes from the sign displays to the ferry.

"The new facilities at the Lombard Ferry are a continuation of a 14-year effort to interpret and preserve National Historic Trails in southwest Wyoming," said Mike Brown of the BLM. "Every interpretive sign and trail marker installed during the past 14 years has been a local partnership."

— Bureau of Land Management

Letters . . . Letters . . . Letters

Editor:

After all these long years as a devoted hard working member of OCTA, I will finally get to have the wonderful feeling of a vote. I am not alone. There were many other members of OCTA whose spouse claimed the ballot and selfishly voted, leaving us, the other spouses, saddened, frustrated, broken-hearted and vote-less.

How many sleepless, tearful nights did I wonder if only I could have voted, maybe the results would have been different? But now that will all be changing.

At the OCTA Board meeting in Casper, I mustered up my courage, with help from Membership Chair Don Popejoy, and made a motion that all categories of membership (except single, student and organization) who have two adults in the same household will get TWO votes. With support from Reba Grandrud, to my delight and ultimate surprise, the motion passed with no opposition.

As always, there was a lot of discussion about whether we could get it in place. I asked Kathy Conway from Headquarters if it was possible and practical. She did not see much problem, as she felt that OCTA already had most of the information and assured us as soon as the database is capable, the two-vote motion will be enacted. The board is hoping that this will happen by next year's elections.

No longer will I have sit by and watch as Mary Ann marks the ballot, looking at me smugly as if to say "eat your heart out." No longer will our marriage need to have "post-voter counseling" to hold it together. No longer will I have to spend countless hours in therapy in able to cope with the dreaded "non-voters' syndrome." No longer will I have to explain to my children why in America was I denied my right to vote while Mom enjoy the privilege, joy, and ecstasy of voting.

Finally, all us vote-less members of this great organization of OCTA are "Free at Last, Free at Last." Free at last to be among the voting members of the Oregon-California Trails Association.

Frank Tortorich, OCTA Board Member

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Ken Sosalla at the grave of Mary Hurley.—Photo by Mary Mueller



Ed Cook studies the plaque at Warm Springs.—Photo by Mary Mueller



Travel to Oregon in 1848 with Isaac and Abe, two boys who ran away from an orphanage in St. Louis, Missouri.

Isaac: A Journey to Oregon was carefully researched, from the steamboat ride up the Missouri River, across the prairies and mountains and on to the Willamette River of Oregon.

By Kevin Boos

Cover art by Andrea Scott

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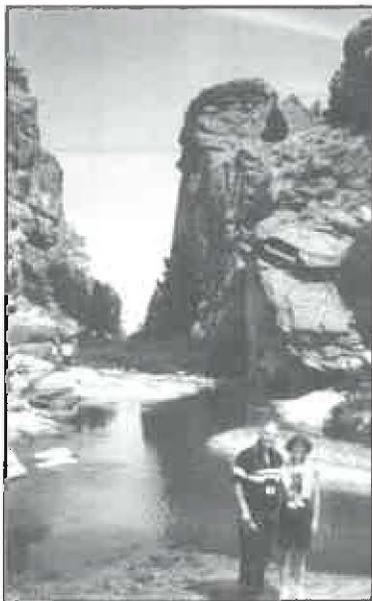
A resource guide is available for upper elementary and middle school classrooms studying western expansion and the Oregon Trail. Order at www.kevinboos.com.



David Fairbanks, son of sculptor Arvid T. Fairbanks, at the unveiling of the Pony Express statue outside the National Historic Trails Center in Casper. — Photo by Bill Martin



U.S. Sen. Craig Thomas of Wyoming at the Pony Express unveiling, under the watchful camera of OCTA President Randy Wagner. — Photo by Bill Martin



Al Mulder and Ffion Wilkes at Devil's Gate. — Photo by Richard Wilkes



Part of the crowd on hand for the unveiling of the Pony Express statue. — Photo by Bill Martin



Pat Loomis and others look over the Big Swale east of Fort Laramie during the East pre-convention tour. — Photo by Ken Sosalla



The OCTA Band grew to orchestra size. — Photo by Bill Martin



Casper Postmaster Dean DiJenno (right) and Clerk John Mullin cancel envelope pictorial postmarks for OCTA members. — Photo by Ward Crowley

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