

# News from the Plains



Volume XIV, No. 1

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

January 2000

## Western Emigrant Trails Map Available From OCTA

The September, 1991 *News From the Plains* announced on the cover page the first edition of the *Western Emigrant Trails Map, 1830-1870* and it became an instant hit and best seller. Now both new and old rutnuts will be glad to hear that this trail tool is again available, the *1999 Western Emigrant Trails Map 1820-1870*.

This expanded and enhanced edition has additional trails not shown on earlier editions and is the most comprehensive and historically accurate western emigrant trail map you will find anywhere. A number of OCTA trail experts have been consulted over the years to add their expertise and research.

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## OCTA Bookstore Accessible Via Internet

At last! Now you can browse the OCTA bookstore and order, as well as pay for, your purchases right on line.

The new site has been put together by Tom Laidlaw and a whole bunch of helpers: Gail Carbiener, Lesley Wischmann, Kathy Conway, Dave Welch, and Bob Wier. The URL of the new online bookstore is <http://rutnut.com/octa/store/front.htm>

The new site has been modified from Lesley Wischmann's existing site. It has the look and feel of all the OCTA web pages, but now there are active

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## Judge Hears Arguments In City of Rocks Lawsuit

On December 2 a session was held in the Federal District Court in Pocatello to hear oral arguments in the City of Rocks case (Access Fund vs. the National Park Service).

The Access Fund is attempting to overturn the NPS's decision to close the Twin Sisters to rock climbers although over 75 percent of the remaining rocks are open for climbing.

OCTA has joined the case in support of the NPS (amicus status) as approved by the Board of Directors last March at the mid-year meeting.

The meetings were scheduled on short notice and Roger Blair, OCTA's liaison with the attorneys, was not able to attend due to a work conflict. Dick Ackerman is recovering from knee replacement surgery so OCTA President Dave Welch attended the meetings. Prior to the court session Dave met with OCTA's attorneys in Pendleton and attended a viewing of the City of Rocks with Judge Michael Williams (with all other parties).

The purpose of the court session was to hear oral arguments. The legal issue at hand is whether the NPS followed its own rules in making the decision to ban climbers on the Twin Sisters. The Access Fund, NPS and OCTA presented arguments.

OCTA's attorney buttressed the NPS's case and presented OCTA's perspective. The judge will write a report in the next few weeks for Federal Judge Winmill who will issue the decision. Judge Winmill

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## From the Editor's Desk . . .

Assuming the world didn't go away with the dawn of Y2K (we'll bet the trails are still there, regardless), this is about the time we start to seriously look forward to spring.

OCTA members are anxious to kick off the dust from their winter hibernations (undoubtedly bundled up with trails-related books, another safe bet, acquired certainly from the OCTA Bookstore, right?) and ready to wander off in search of traces, ruts and remnants, and a dust of a much different sort.

Despite the apparent winter quiet (evidenced by a slightly slimmer-than-normal *NFP*), there's much happening just below the surface. There's a good review of OCTA administrative happenings to be gleaned from President Dave Welch's report on the page facing this one. New Treasurer Gail Carbiener has a report on the annual fundraising drive tucked into this issue. A reading of the chapter reports starting on page 10 will acquaint you with the trailside doings of OCTA members. Plus, you'll find everything you need to know about how to get involved in OCTA leadership (see page 4).

While you're waiting for winter to unwind itself, you might also avail yourself of a serious thumbing through of the OCTA Bookstore catalog. There couldn't be a better time to pick up a volume or two to share by the fire on cold winter nights (perhaps while you're waiting for your non-Y2K complaint local power company to drag itself into the new Millennium).

Ordering from the bookstore has never been easier, now that you can buy on line. As is reported in this issue of *NFP*, you're just a few keystrokes and a credit card number away from being able to order any of the publications available from the

Bookstore from the convenience of your Y2K-compliant computer.

On a personal note, a careful reader will notice new snail- and e-mail addresses for your editor. Taking advantage of a mid-life opportunity, I decided to forge some trails of my own. Effective in early December, I left Reno in my rearview mirror (well, it would have been in the mirror if a fifth-wheel trailer hadn't been blocking the view) and took off in search of a new home base, looking to find time for writing, reading, reflecting and occasional opportunities to chase little white balls around strange golf courses (creating new ruts while I go). Generally seeing the country from the ground floor instead of an elevated jet liner.

Through the month of December, I wandered through a good bit of the southwestern part of the United States, settling for the holidays in a sweet little Bureau of Reclamation campground near Georgetown, Texas, where this note is being written. Not sure how long this sojourn will last, but thanks to the wonders of modern technology (lap top computer, cell phone, microwave oven, etc.) I'm pretty much self-contained and Y2K compliant — or at least Y2K immune.

The new phone number, until I decide to settle in somewhere for a while, is (775) 771-0747. The more-or-less permanent e-mail address is OCTANFP@aol.com. For now, there's life to be enjoyed, sights to be seen and books to read. And maybe even books to write. Watch for me. I'm the bright red pickup truck pulling a 25-foot trailer with an OCTA sticker on the kitchen window.

— 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

Editor Bill Martin at (775) 771-0747  
or e-mail OCTANFP@aol.com

**Next Deadline Is March 1, 2000**

### NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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## From The President . . .

David Welch

I would like to report on modest achievements that have been made or are being implemented at this time. As I noted in my last letter, my goals as president are increased preservation activities, expanded membership and improved business operations. With the help of many, we are off to a good start.

The court case involving the National Park Service and OCTA versus the Access Fund (representing rock climbers) has been a focus of preservation activities (see article elsewhere). Dick Ackerman has also been busy addressing problems in Nebraska, Wyoming, Oregon and elsewhere. As we get closer to spring I encourage chapters to increase their trail marking and educational activities.

Gail Carbiener has been working with Kathy Conway and others to streamline and increase our book sales through an Internet bookstore and the ability to process credit cards on the net and at headquarters. Gail also worked with Jim Budde to complete transfer of OCTA's endowment funds to the Kansas City Community Foundation. An official audit of OCTA's finances is being conducted as suggested by both Jim Budde and Gail Carbiener to be completed in December. Finally, an updated membership program was installed at headquarters thanks to Chuck Dodd.

Membership Chair Mary Mueller and Don Popejoy have been working with on ways to increase membership and membership involvement. Encouragement to chapters to increase activities and membership is also part of this effort.

A revised organization structure has been established that emphasizes the role of officers as overseers of committees and the role of the Board of Directors as policy makers. This is a classic business structure that hopefully will help avoid past problems concerning the role of the Board, officers and

committee chairs.

As a result of actions taken at the Board meeting in Chico, the Publications Committee is developing new management and operational procedures for the *Overland Journal* and the *News from the Plains*. Personnel procedures, cost reduction and design are being addressed.

Through all of this Kathy, Mary Jo and Suzanne have been doing the things they normally do at headquarters while coping with all sorts of new requests and suggestions. Their tolerance is greatly appreciated.

On another matter, a long-standing goal of OCTA has been to establish and grow an endowment fund to increase resources for operations and trail preservation activities.

In October, the endowment was formally established at the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. We can be proud of our past good management and success in building this endowment. The fund is substantial, but so are our needs.

Recently you should have received a mailing from OCTA's treasurer, Gail Carbiener, encouraging a contribution to OCTA's annual fund-raising drive. I hope that you will give this request careful consideration. Last year gifts totaled \$15,000 from 175 members. This amount is less than ten percent of our operating budget; we should do better.

How will the gift be used? Funds designated for the endowment are deposited in that account. Income is available for on-going operations such as the office in Independence. Funds may also be designated for preservation, graves and sites, trail marking, education and other activities.

Please join me in supporting the annual fund-raising drive with your contribution.

-- Dave Welch,

## News From Headquarters

By Kathy Conway

As we enter the much-awaited year 2000, your Headquarters staff is looking forward to another successful business year. We are very pleased to announce we now accept VISA and Mastercard for all your OCTA needs. You may now charge your membership dues, catalog orders, donations and your convention registration fees.

With the advent of this new year, we are also delighted to report a new on-line shop-site for you to make your OCTA book and merchandise purchases. (See Tom Laidlaw's announcement on page one of this issue.) Tom has been working extremely hard on getting this site up and ready for your added convenience.

We are gratified to say our new membership program is running smoothly and wish to extend a heartfelt thanks for a "certain" volunteer's many, many hours of devotion to this project. We feel very confident that our data merged correctly

from the old program; but, if you find that your information is, in anyway, incorrect, please advise us.

For your winter pastime, why not get cozy with your favorite trail book that you've wanted to read all season and go to it! If Santa didn't leave it in your Christmas stocking, why not treat yourself and order it from OCTA. To date, some of our best sellers have been the *Cherokee Trail Diaries*; *Along the Trail with Lewis and Clark*; and *Massacre Along the Medicine Road (A Social History of the Indian War of 1864 in Nebraska Territory)*. If you already have these and there's a book you want that we don't offer in our catalog, don't let that stop you from calling us...we will be happy to get it for you. When you order from OCTA, our historic trails are the beneficiaries.

Lastly, and most importantly, we wish to extend a HAPPY NEW MILLENIUM to OCTA's greatest asset, you, our members.

Your Staff, Kathy, Mary Jo, and Suzanne.

## Mid-Year Board Meeting Scheduled In Tacoma

The mid-year meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oregon-California Trails Association will be held in Tacoma, WA, March 3 and 4, 2000.

March 3 will be an informal discussions day, with the board meeting the following day. An outing will be planned for Sunday, March 5, probably to the Meeker Mansion and Steilacoom. Details were not available at press time. Interested persons can contact Dave Welch for more information.

## Women's West Conference

The Fifth Women's West Conference has been scheduled July 27-29 at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington. The conference is sponsored by the WSU History Department Pettyjohn Endowment and the Coalition for Western Women's History.

Building on the tradition of previous Women's West Conferences (1983, 1984, 1987, 1990), the Fifth Women's West Conference will address the connections between place and gender, exploring the theme of "Gender, Race, Class and Religion in the North American West."

According to organizers, the conference "seeks to bring together women and men of different experiences and areas of expertise to discuss scholarship and ideas, to share creative work, to relax, and to imagine new directions in western women's histories."

The conference plans to explore several key issues, including how individuals define themselves, how they define their regional identities, and how they identify their regions has varied over time and space, whether it be the 1790s Great Lakes, the 1890s Yukon, the 1680s Sonora, or the 1930s Dust Bowl.

More information can be obtained from the Women's West website:

<http://www.wsu.edu/~womenwst/home.html>

### Correction

The name of the photographer who contributed some of the convention pictures for the Fall issue of *News From The Plains* was misspelled. As we were gently reminded, it is Doug Crary, not Clary. Our apologies.

-- The Editor

## Nominations Sought For OCTA Board of Directors

Nominations are now being accepted for OCTA's Board of Directors. Each year, the terms of four of the twelve Directors expire. In 2000 terms expire for Ross Marshall, Jeanne Watson, Lesley Wischmann and Ken Martin. Marshall and Watson will complete two consecutive terms and are not eligible for reelection.

Because all OCTA Directors serve at-large, location of residence or chapter affiliation (if any) is not a consideration. According to OCTA's bylaws, all current members are eligible to be nominated and any current OCTA member may submit one or more written nominations.

The following information must be submitted to the Nominating and Leadership Committee before the nomination can be considered:

1. Information about the qualifications and experience of the nominee and the extent to which the nominee has participated in the affairs of OCTA.

2. A brief (about 100 word) statement on the goals and objectives the nominee would like to see OCTA accomplish during the next several years and what the nominee could do to help the Association reach those goals and objectives.

3. A written endorsement from three OCTA members.

4. A statement of willingness to actively serve, if elected, signed by the nominee.

Obviously, trail-related activities are a key consideration for all nominees, but nomination of persons with service on other association boards, or with management and financial expertise, is encouraged. Also, experience as an educator, historian (amateur or professional) or researcher should be noted. A demonstrated interest in all western trails and trail-related history is more important than single trail or event expertise. To assist the Committee, submission of a resume for each nominee is encouraged.

Elected Board members are expected to attend all Board meetings. A minimum of two Board meetings are held each year, one at the National Convention and the other at OCTA headquarters in Independence, MO or at a chapter sponsored site. Travel expenses connected with duties of the Board may be reimbursed by the Association.

The deadline for receiving nominations is April 1, 2000. Nominations should be mailed to the Nominating and Leadership Committee chair:

Randall A. Wagner

P. O. Box 2926

Cheyenne, WY 82003-2926

Ballots will be mailed about May 1, 2000. If you have questions, please contact Randy at (307) 634-4263 or , by E-mail, <[rwagner@wyoming.com](mailto:rwagner@wyoming.com)>. Committee members include Susan Badger Doyle and Ken Martin.

-- Randy Wagner

## OCTA Annual Fundraising Drive Off To Strong Start

It is a wonderful feeling having all the members get behind the "Annual Fund Drive Wagon" and pushing together to reach the top. Contributions received as of December 3rd total \$13,220.25. We have had 158 members contribute, 43 percent for the first time.

I am especially pleased with the significant number of new contributors; all of us working together, new and old members, will provide OCTA with the financial means to make a difference in preserving the trails.

A number of you have asked that we keep you informed on how OCTA is spending this money. Fair question - I will do my best to report in each *News From the Plains* how we are progressing toward our annual financial goals.

Contributors listed below have stepped forward for OCTA. The fund drive will end on February 29, 2000; please let us add your name to the list of OCTA supporters!

-- Gail Carbiener, Treasurer

James and Kathy Conway	Norman Barker	Andrew Downs	James A. Banks
Jack Stang	Richard Klein	Gareth and Deann Wilson	Robert and Dorothy Magoffin
Virginia Stanton	Nelson Weller	Glenn Harrison	Louise Perrin
James and Patricia Whitworth	Nicholas Ifft	Warren Schmidgall	Randall A. Wagner
Edwin and Mary Jo Sprague	Dr. Robert Jones	David Smoot	Edna Lee Edwards
William Bundschu	Carl MacDonald	Robert and Alice	Peter G. Fast
Addie and Stanton Rickey	Neil McCallum	Shellenberger	William F. Gloy
Fr. Theodore Bradley	Tim McCullough	Balwin and Ormie Lamson	Dr. Allan and Diane Mattern
John Colver	Tom McCutcheon	Dr. Vauna Pipal	Nebraska State Historical
Gene Sessions	Cornelius O'Sullivan	Jan Butler	Society
David White	Gertrude Van Steyn MD	Rose Burnham	Judson Parsons
Greg Childs	Archie Gordon, in Memory	Joyce Bolerjack	Robert L. King
Jean and Don Rowlett	of Naomi Billings Gordon	William Lindley	Clovis V. McCluskey
Richard Skinner	Fred and Dorothy Clagett	Susan Boyle	Marion Cosner
George Richards	Kenneth La Budde	Robert Christiansen	Dick and Trudy Ackerman
Roy Welton	Jim and Jan Rhine	Lyle and Ruth Taylor	Dr. Adelard and
Charley Taylor	Clara Mattes, in Memory of	R.H. and Judith Chamberlain	Princess Everton
Robert Rothwell, MD	Merrill J. Mattes	James Owen	Richard and Aileen Kennon
Charlie and Nola Little	James King	Harry Peterson	Wayne A. Burck
Clifford Fiscus	Malcolm Smith, Jr.	Carl Woolsey, Sr.	Roy M. Acker
Mike Stocki	Vic and Nancy Bolon	Richard Higgins	Ann Doolen
Carol Ann Buss	Lamar Berrett	Joseph Baumgardner	Jeff McClung
Gene Serr	Tom James	Karl and Mae Kawahara	Jerry H. Kirkpatrick
Edwin Winn	Howard and Bonnie Miller	Hal and Sharon Manhart	Gail and Muriel Carbiener
Beecher and Helen Henderson	Judy Brown	Thomas Creigh, Jr.	Gerald and Susan Carbiener
Estaline Carpenter	Janet Boom	Sharon Stokes	Barbara Krause
Kergan and Jeanne Bruck	Jay and Patricia Haymond	C.M. Wade	Dwight J. Garrison
David Schulte	Carl and Sue Jacobson	Sorensen's Resort	Don Popejoy
Nancy Putnam	Keith Palmquist	Richard and Virginia Davis	Paul C. Sawyer
Lesley Wischmann	Dennis Wentland	Robert and Barbara Kabel	George and Beverly Hesse
Richard Anderson	Scott and Dorothy Hendricks	Glee Willis	Ross and Jana Marshall
Marvin and Dorene Burke	Carol Koroghlanian	Carol Sue Ivory-Carlne	Marcia Shellhammer
Marvin Chmelka	Jonne Markham	Martha R. Barnes	Mary Jo Todd
Caroline Kaszuk	Bucky Green	Charles and Harriet Lewis, Jr.	Gil and Mary Ward
Paul Grunland	Mr. and Mrs. Theodore	Sue C. Bowen	Fred Hart
Howard Cramer	Rischar	Edward Scoles	Peter and Carol Bachhuber
Art Iworsley	Joann and Le Roy Jackson	Alyson Peredes	George E. Parrish
Doug and Eloise Crary	Pat and Jerry Phillips	James B. Frank	John H. Rebenack
Richard Laird	C.M. Robertson	Tim Burns	Dr. Ronald and Sarah Lund
Thelma Tate	Paul Mattes	Laura Cole	Bob and Jean Bennett
Eva Allen	Jack and Jil Stark	Virginia Nelson	

Visit OCTA on the web  
[www.OCTA-trails.org](http://www.OCTA-trails.org)

## City of Rocks *(continued from Page 1)*

is not bound to accept Judge Williams conclusions and recommendations, but it is most likely that he will.

Dave reports that no one in attendance was willing to venture a guess as to the outcome. However, in a report to the Board Dave said, "I came away from the meetings with a renewed feeling that we are doing the right thing, even if the costs are high. This is an important preservation issue and if we are serious about preservation we must proceed. The case is not about allowing climbers on the Twin Sisters... it is whether a site set aside as a national historic reserve (not a recreational facility) is to be maintained as such."

As a reminder it should be noted that OCTA played a key role in establishing the City of Rocks as a National Historic Reserve through the work of Tom Hunt, Bill and Jeanne Watson and others. Tom's letters and other documentation are an important part of the record upon which a decision will ultimately be based. OCTA's participation in this case lends support and encouragement to the NPS to put up a vigorous defense.

-- Dave Welch

## Bookstore *(continued from Page 1)*

purchase links next to each product. Just as with Amazon.com and other stores, clicking on those links will add your products to a shopping cart. When it is time to check out you may enter your credit card information into the secure payments page. The credit card information will be encrypted and unable to be read, except by Kathy in the office. She will then process the order and charge the credit card.

Admittedly there has been some concern about security, but we have investigated this aspect thoroughly and are satisfied that this is a safe and efficient way to do business. If you are still a little hesitant about transmitting your sensitive information you may use the on-line ordering system to create the order, and then opt to pay by paper check, or give your information via an 800 number. Try it, you'll like it.

We hope that this modern approach to marketing will bring added revenue to OCTA. I know for a fact that I will buy more books this way.

-- Tom Laidlaw

## Attention Teachers

If you are a teacher and don't have a copy of the 1996 best seller edition of The Learning Company's Classics "*The Oregon Trail*" CD for Windows or Macintosh, OCTA has a limited number of them available to you and/or your school.

All that is required is that you request the game and enclose a check for four dollars which will cover the shipping and handling. We ask that you put your request on school letterhead, make the check out to OCTA and we will send the copy to you. These will be honored on a first come basis. If you or your school doesn't have it, now is your time to get it.

For more information, contact OCTA headquarters.

## Trails Map *(continued from Page 1)*

There has been continued demand for this map even though it has been out of print for several years. If you have one of the earlier editions, you will want to replace it with this new edition in order to have the most up-to-date information; the result of more research and field work.

Over forty additional trails, cutoffs or alternates have been added to this 1999 edition, along with important related sites, landmarks, and origination dates. It will continue to be a useful tool for trail enthusiasts as well as historians, librarians, teachers and students.

For those not familiar with the map, it is 22 x 33 inches, done to show all trails in detail, with enlarged insets for complex areas. The folded version is handy for travel, while the flat version can be framed or otherwise mounted. A new format is present in this 1999 edition, the professional version, which also comes flat or folded. It is done on a durable, synthetic paper often found for maps that get a lot of use.

Besides being resistant to tearing, it is water, oil and grease resistant. You can stow it in your vehicle for ready use over and over again, or it can be displayed in a high use area of a library or museum.

Now for the nitty gritty on how to obtain one. The regular map is \$8.50, plus shipping and handling, while the professional map is \$15.00 plus shipping and handling. The publisher is Western Emigrant Trails Research Center, P.O. Box 641555, Omaha, NE 68164-1555. You can download an order form for any version of the map at the center's web site at <http://members.aol.com/wetrc> or contact the center via email at [wetrc@aol.com](mailto:wetrc@aol.com). The OCTA catalog includes the regular version of the map; however, the professional version is available exclusively from the publisher,

I wanted to personally make the OCTA membership aware of this new addition, as there is probably no other trail tool I use more than this map. Having a copy of the durable professional version means I can set aside my rather tattered earlier versions and keep this one handy for instant help.

-- Rose Ann Tompkins

## Trails Symposium Scheduled

The 15th National Trails Symposium will be held September 21-24, 2000 in Redding, California.

The Symposium is sponsored by American Trails. The 14th Symposium was held in Arizona in 1998 and attracted over 600 participants from 46 states and abroad.

The theme of the Year 2000 Symposium is "*Trails and the American Spirit: 2000 and Beyond.*"

For more information, visit the American Trails website at [www.outdoorlink.com/amtrails](http://www.outdoorlink.com/amtrails) or contact the American Trails office at 520-632-1140

## Volunteers Sought For Wyoming Trails Project

*Reprinted from the Casper Star-Tribune*

BLM officials need help in marking two little known historic trails that traverse southwest Wyoming, according to the agency.

BLM officials are seeking volunteers to help with the Overland Stage and Cherokee Trail projects slated for next summer, federal officials said.

Rock Springs Field Manager Stan McKee said in a release that help is needed in mapping and marking the trails as they cross southwest Wyoming. Volunteers will also record emigrant inscriptions and inventory trail resources, he said.

The Overland Trail enters Wyoming south of Saratoga in Carbon County and winds its way west, eventually leaving the state along the Oregon Trail in Lincoln County.

BLM trail teams in Rock Springs have concentrated for the last decade on the 'main' National Historic Trails in southwest Wyoming, including the Oregon, Mormon, California and Pony Express trails, McKee said.

He said thousands of dollars and numerous volunteers went into re-marking the trails and building interpretive sites. "It seems fitting with the new millennium that we turn our attention to this little known trail resource that crosses southern Wyoming," he said.

McKee said development in southern Wyoming is on the rise and "it's important that people know the trails are there . . . education is the single biggest factor in protecting trail resources."

BLM spokesman Mike Brown said persons interested in volunteering to work on the trails next summer should contact [BLM Archeologist] Russ Tanner or Terry Del Bene at the agency's Rock Springs office.

*NOTE: Del Bene is also co-chair of OCTA's Archaeology Committee.*

## Trails Center Acquires Rare Trails Letter

The National Frontier Trails Center in Independence, MO recently acquired a rare letter written by one of the first white women to cross the Rocky Mountains.

Abigail Smith and her husband, Alvin T. Smith, made the journey from Independence to the Oregon Country in 1840, along with two other Congregationalist missionary couples.

Prior to their arrival only eight other white women are known to have made the trip across the mountains, between 1836 and 1839.

The eight-page letter, penned at Fort Walla Walla in 1840, describes the second half of their trip from the fur trappers Rendezvous (Green River, Wyoming) to the Whitman Mission, via Fort Hall and Fort "Bouasa" (Boise).

The Smiths stayed with the Whitmans for several weeks that fall before spending the winter at the Lapwai mission of Henry and Eliza Spaulding.

The letter was written to friends back in Illinois, and evidence suggests it took thirteen months for it to travel to its destination, apparently going by ship around the tip of South America.

The document was purchased from an auctioneer who had acquired it at a sale in Illinois in 1970. The Trails Center was aided in its purchase by a gift from the Friends of the National Frontier Trails Center.

The missive has been transcribed by the NFTC, conservation work performed, and it is now on temporary display at the Center. Attendees at the OCTA 2000 convention in Kansas City will be able to view it. Additional research is being conducted with the intent of submitting a manuscript to the *Overland Journal* for possible publication.

*-- John Mark Lambertson,  
Director/National Frontier Trails  
Center/Independence, Missouri*

## Nominations Open For OCTA Educator Awards

Nomination forms are now available for the annual OCTA Education Awards recognizing outstanding achievement in educating students of all ages about westward migration.

Nominations are open to any individuals who contribute significantly to students' education about the 19th century westward overland migrations in the United States. The work may reflect a whole unit or a special project within the unit or course on westward migration.

Nominees will be considered for their unique or imaginative approach "above and beyond" normal teaching of the topic, appropriateness for the students' level and range of abilities, accuracy of historical presentation, range of student participation, and effectiveness in presenting the topic to the students.

The work that the recipients will be honored for must have been used during either the 1998-99 or the 1999-2000 school year.

Awards will be presented in five categories: 1) Elementary-primary/intermediate grades; 2) Middle school/junior high; 3) High school; 4) Post secondary-college/adult education; 5) Museum-institutional

The recipients will be recognized at the annual OCTA convention, and will receive their convention registration and room and board for the day of the awards banquet.

Applications should be postmarked by March 20, 2000 and received by the end of March. All applicants will receive a CD of The Learning Company's Classics MECC "The Oregon Trail" computer game for the Windows or Macintosh systems.

For forms and additional information about this award and the nomination process contact your local chapter or OCTA headquarters at (816) 252-2276.

*-- William E. Hill, Chair, OCTA-Education Award*

## Following Pioneer Footsteps Across The Black Rock Desert

By Martin Griffith

Associated Press

BLACK ROCK DESERT -- Plodding in the footsteps of the '49ers across the sun-baked Nevada desert, I feel the ghost of Israel Lord tap me on the shoulder.

There, standing above me in High Rock Canyon, is a large, volcanic rock that looks like the profile of a prospector's face -- just as Lord described it during the Gold Rush of 1849.

"Above is a very exact caricature of a Californian done in red basalt," Lord wrote in his diary. "(He has) a pretty large nose, and a decently long chin, but neither are unnatural."

The rock was one of countless connections to Lord I made on my hike of the infamous Applegate-Lassen Trail across the barren high deserts of northwestern Nevada and northeastern California.

With the help of Lord's detailed diary and a decade of research, Jeff Stewart of San Diego and I walked the same dusty stretches of trail and slept under the stars at the same camps exactly 150 years after Lord did.

The 18-day, 175-mile trek over the wildest remaining section of trail traversed by the pioneers gave us a taste of the hardship they endured while chasing dreams of instant wealth in California.

The wagon ruts etch the struggles of the largest, most famous gold rush ever, an event that led to California's statehood in 1850 and forever linked the West with the United States.

We took our first steps near Imlay, where up to a third of all 30,000 argonauts rolled the dice and left the main California Trail for the untested Applegate-Lassen Trail.

The trail took us north through one of the most remote, unspoiled regions in the lower 48. We tramped up the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon before crossing the Warner Mountains near Cedarville, Calif., and descending to Goose Lake near Lakeview, Ore.

The cutoff was supposed to be easier for the gold seekers, but it turned out to be a nightmare because of its waterless stretches and longer-than-expected route to the Chico, Calif., area.

Fortunately, we had a lot better luck than they did. Even though the journey tested us every day, it wasn't the hell it was for them because we didn't have to start at the Missouri River.

Our hike began with a splendid 50-mile stretch of trail to the heart of the Black Rock Desert, one of the greatest scenes of suffering on the entire overland route because of its intense heat and lack of water.

After climbing the same volcanic hill in the Kamma Range where Lord gained his first view of the shimmering expanse, we could imagine the dread he felt.

"Ascending this I have a view so entirely abandoned, so utterly desolate that the rugged barren deserts we have passed, rise up in the mind like the green memories of departed joys," wrote the then 45-year-old homeopathic physician.

On the Black Rock Desert's whitish alkali flats -- one of the biggest flat areas on Earth -- countless pioneers had to aban-

don their covered wagons and prized possessions when their oxen broke down.

We found only an occasional square nail, wagon part or barrel hoop. But dead oxen lined the trail when Lord passed through, and small bone fragments, ribs and leg joints still litter the flats in places.

"The teamsters' hoarse voices as they urged their fainting teams to renewed exertion; the wail of women and children who had left all but what they were carrying on their backs," wrote '49er Joseph Stuart. "One never can realize the horrors of such a situation till called upon to pass through it himself."

The scattered animal bones and temperatures in the low 90s helped us visualize the suffering that took place on the starkly beautiful desert.

The unlucky emigrants had it as bad as it gets. They had only two pitiful water sources over the first 50 miles of the cutoff and temperatures up to 15 degrees higher.

The trail next led across expanses of sage to High Rock Canyon, which remains a welcome oasis because of its water, peaceful meadows and sheer, red-hued walls.

Hundreds of emigrants etched their names in the lower canyon -- near Indian cave that almost every pioneer visited -- and some are still legible.

One of our favorite camps was on a meadow below a gushing spring in the upper canyon. As coyotes serenaded us on a near-full-moon night, we felt closer to Lord's time than our own.

It was hard to believe how busy the place was 150 years ago. We could imagine the weary Lord sitting around a flickering campfire and wondering if the journey would ever end.

It then took several days to reach California's Surprise Valley, where we encountered the first "civilization" of the hike: scattered ranch houses and a paved road.

After a couple of weeks in the desert, we could understand how the valley's name originated. The abundant water and grass along the base of the Warner Mountains were a pleasant surprise.

We saved one of the most dramatic stretches of trail for last: the 2 1/2 -mile, 1,500-foot climb to Fandango Pass, Lord's toughest ascent of the journey.

The deep wagon ruts still lead "almost perpendicular" to the pass, just as Lord described. The climb left us out of breath and wondering how Lord ever got his wagons up.

"They must have really wanted to get to California badly," said Sheryl Phillips of Surprise Valley, who joined us on the climb.

"It was just another bump on the road for them," Stewart added.

A little before the pass, we reached the point where Lord saw a comrade drop dead on the trail. Death was a constant companion of the pioneers and Lord took it in stride.

"We laid him, like a dog, in a hole, without a coffin, a board, or even a blanket," he wrote.

A day later, we bade farewell to Lord after taking our final

*(continued on next page)*

## OCRA? Emigrants' Reality vs. Historians' Perspective

By Bill Martin

The Oregon-California Roads Association? Well, it could have been, based on a recent discussion on the OVERLAND-TRAILS internet listserver.

It started innocently with a question posed by Lesley Wischmann, who referred to a number of diaries and other emigrant documents she had been reading.

"One of the things that struck me was that all the emigrants routinely talk of the 'road(s)'. The road is good, the road is bad, the road is dusty, the road is hilly, the road is flat, the road is steep...lots of variations, but I have yet to see one single emigrant entry referring to a TRAIL," Lesley wrote.

"So, my question is this: Why we always say TRAIL? With the notable exception of Merrill Mattes, who wrote *The Great Platte River ROAD* [capitalization added] and referred to the Council Bluffs ROAD, it seems to me that even the professional historians use the term TRAIL and while the routes are certainly more trail to us than the roads we know, it still seems curious that the term universally used by the emigrants is rarely used by those who discuss and write about their experience."

OCTA members were quick to offer their opinions.

"To us, 150 years later, those roads are trails," noted Tom Laidlaw. "And it sounds farther away and more romantic. And the whole thing is a trail, composed of many roads."

"The reason we use the ahistorical term trail is that 1) Francis Parkman used it in his highly influential *The California and Oregon Trail: Being Sketches of Prairie and Rocky Mountain Life*, whose name was later abridged to 'The Oregon Trail,' a name later adopted and promoted to glory by Ezra Meeker and Disney, too; and 2) romance," noted Will Bagley.

"I challenge anyone to come up with a good, historically valid standard to name trails," he added. "You ought to see the

tortured prose I got from one alleged expert when I asked him this question. Fact is, people who appreciate their history create them and historians assign them pretty much as they please."

Added Don Popejoy: "I have often wondered why our ancestors came out on the trails and not the roads that came west. First there were game trails, then Indian trails, then pioneer trails, then the military made ROADS using sometimes a trail segment. I guess once a trail always a trail. A trail is defined as a trace, track or path whereas a road is a strip prepared for travel. I guess when the first pioneers came west, the trail they followed was already there in a sense, whereas the roads were made for certain types of travel; i.e., military roads, freight roads and stagecoach roads."

"In my textbook, *The Road To Oregon*, I explain that to modern historians a road is constructed and a trail evolves," noted Jim Tompkins. "To the emigrants...any thoroughfare improved enough to take a wagon was a road, which is why the emigrants called the Oregon Trail the ROAD to Oregon and the Barlow Road as Barlow's TRAIL."

"For overland, wagon-bound emigrants," agreed Don Buck, "anything a wagon went over was a road, just as it was back on the farm and country roads. Where a wagon went, it was a road, not a trail. I think that's a distinction most emigrants made as they traveled overland."

"Emigrants repeatedly called the route from Ft. Hall to the Humboldt River 'The Fort Hall Road.' We think the same way today with automobiles. Cars drive on roads, not trails. For our emigrants, trails meant a foot or horse path, something wagons normally didn't go over."

Buck also noted that "the surveyors of the 1850s and 60s often referred to the California Trail (wagon route) along the Humboldt River as 'Old Emigrant Road' or 'Emigrant Road' and on occasion would use 'trail' to indicate a little used path, presumably foot or horse path."

Dennis Fishel pointed out some irony: "Ezra Meeker, who came west in 1852 and wrote of 'roads,' went east by wagon 50 years or so later to convince Congress to do something to commemorate the 'trail.' The stone markers he left as he went all say 'trail.' Maybe they were all engaged in some form of sarcastic rhetoric regarding the quality of travel, although the diaries I've read that begin at the emigrants' homes in Iowa, Missouri, etc. usually speak of dust, mud and difficult conditions long before they reached their jumpoff points."

And Sara Bettencourt notes that the discussion isn't limited to travel by land.

"Since I live on the coast, the first thing that came to mind when Lesley posed her 'road' question," she wrote, "was 'The Bolivar Roads' near me. This isn't a trail, road, or path on land — it's a channel for ships on the way out of Galveston. Maybe a 'road' is 'a way made for traveling?'"

"Exactly," contributed Tom Laidlaw, "and we can see that Lesley's question became the road to a good discussion."

But we still aren't the Oregon-California Roads Association.

## Black Rock

(continued)

steps at Goose Lake on the California-Oregon border.

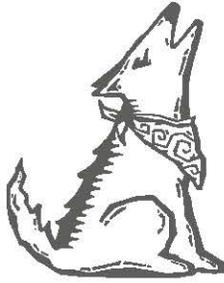
We couldn't help but grow close to him and admire his guts. No matter what obstacles came his way, he seemed to overcome them.

But he still had a long way to go. He didn't reach trail's end until Oct. 31, a month later, and more than six months after leaving home.

"Who says 'hurrah for California?' Not many here, for most are heartily tired of the journey," Lord wrote.

Like most '49ers, Lord had no luck in the gold fields of California. After struggling as a miner, he returned by ship in early 1851 to Illinois, where he resumed his homeopathic practice. In the 1870s he moved with his family to Los Angeles, where he died.

---  
OCTA member Martin Griffith is a long-time journalist and veteran backpacker who lives in Sparks, Nevada.



# NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

## CA-NV

Members of the California-Nevada chapter have been busy since winding up the successful Chico convention.

Long range plans for the 2002 OCTA convention in Reno have been firmed up: committees are being set up, the contract for the August dates at the Flamingo Hilton in Reno has been signed, and prospective tour leaders are already planning for trips that are a major part of all OCTA conventions.

About 25 chapter members attended Tom Hunt's Preservation/Volunteerism Workshop in Sacramento in September at which essential committees were set up. These include mapping, projects, outings, publications, legislation, genealogy, chapter website, and library (establishment of a California location for trails materials).

Bill Rupp, former chapter president, has volunteered to be the chapter's liaison with the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to keep open lines of communication on trail-related issues.

In October, 36 of those who helped with the Chico convention attended a picnic in a park in Lodi, California where they visited the old home of Charles Weber, emigrant with the 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson party, and founder of the nearby city of Stockton and the mountain gold mining settlement of Webersville. Some of the group visited the nearby cemetery where William Lewis Manly of Death Valley fame is buried.

In February, chapter members will attend the annual winter symposium in Stockton, California. Chairman Bob Shellenberger has planned a full day of presentations February 26 on the history of Charles Weber and Stockton; the Big Trees route over the Sierra; John Marsh, California's first physician; and the Chinese legacy of San Joaquin County.

Two chapter members have announced their candidacy for the National board. They are Fran Taplin of Eureka and Frank Tortorich of Pine Grove, California. Both are charter members of the national organization and helped form the California-Nevada chapter back in 1984. Frank is perhaps best known for his work in mapping and preserving the Carson route over the Sierra. For 37 years, Fran taught fourth and fifth grades in the Eureka school system emphasizing the importance of the overland trails, and has helped with OCTA's annual convention raffles.

John Krizek, who heads the chapter's southern California speaker's bureau, continues to work on his Stephens, Townsend, Murphy party video since Jim Rose, Nevada City, developed a slide show to call attention to the importance of

Elisha Stephens of the 1844 party and to enable the naming of a mountain peak at Donner Summit to honor Stephens. Krizek utilized the slides when he was a speaker and became convinced when teachers suggested that the story would be better utilized as a video in the classroom. It has been four years since Krizek combed collections of trails paintings and photographs from depositories all over the United States to augment the visual presentation, has hired professional TV photographers to film many of the sites in the season of time to authenticate and qualify the demands for showing on Public Television. It is fortunate he has advisors from PBS personnel at KTEH (Channel 54) in San Jose, CA -- located coincidentally on Schallenberger Road, named after Moses Schallenberger who was a key member of the wagon party. The station has agreed to broadcast the documentary and to offer it to other PBS stations throughout the West.

Through his research, Krizek has contacted people in Council Bluffs, Iowa, jumping off place for the 1844 party. They have expressed interest in publicizing this little known starting point for the overland journeys. Any Iowan or Nebraska member can contact Krizek through e-mail <jkrizek@aol.com> or mail to John Krizek, 13615 Debby St., Van Nuys, CA 91401-2421.

Although Krizek has received some funding for the project, he still needs donations and sponsorships which may be sent to the nonprofit International Documentary Association, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Suite 201, Los Angeles, California 90035.

-- Pat Loomis

## 2002 Convention In Reno

The 2002 OCTA Convention has officially been awarded to the CA-NV Chapter and will be held in Reno, headquartered at the Flamingo Hilton.

Tom Fee has been named overall convention chairman, with Chuck Dodd as Convention Vice Chair.

To volunteer to help in organizing the convention, contact Fee at (775) 827-3724.

## MORE NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

### Gateway

By 1854, the St. Joe Road of the Oregon-California Trail was a well-defined route up the high bluffs west of the Missouri River. Moving gradually away from the river, the emigrant wagons of the mid-1800's cut west rutting the loose clay soils of both hills and valleys on its way to the Wolf River Crossing.

Only a couple days out, some early emigrants suffered the first sorrows of the trail, stopping atop a hill to bury those who died of cholera or accident. There they established the first graveyard along the St. Joe Road, memorialized by later settlers of north Doniphan County, Kansas, into the Courter-Richey Cemetery, acknowledging graves dated from 1849. Today, near the northeast corner of the cemetery, you can still find stones that may have been the only way to mark these earliest graves. Descendants of the first settlers recall the respect and care their elders placed on these crude markers as they tended those graves in addition to their own family plots.

Further west the trail of the St. Joe Road bends down to "Mesquito" Creek (spelling used on today's street markers) although the emigrants spelled it Mosquito) to result in the first major creek crossing in the Kansas Territory. Immediately upon crossing the creek (correctly pronounced crick in this part of Kansas), the teams ascended a steep hill where the wild beauty of the river bluffs to the north and rolling prairie to the south could be surveyed as

the emigrants headed due west. Today at the top of this vista, swales of the St. Joe Road exist that delineate the route of the wagon trains along the ridgetop.

With the arrival of settlers in 1854, the pressure to till the soil in a manner that would obliterate the route increased year by year. Little by little, the St. Joe Road disappeared under rows of corn, milo, soybeans. One family, along Mesquito Creek, however, held the Road in great respect. From the original



*Doreen Whetstine with OCTA members Jim Jarrett and Bob Hamilton*  
— Photo by Jackie Lewin

settler, the land passed through a succession of owners into the hands Bill and Doreen Whetstine, who have farmed along this section of the Road for more than 40 years. Purposefully, the Whetstines have left these swales untouched and in their native state as a testimonial to those determined emigrants who crossed their land. All total, nearly two miles of the St. Joe Road traverses Whetstine lands. Doreen and Bill are prudent caretakers of the land for agricultural, commercial, and histori-



*Gateway Chapter members on their outing just west of Mosquito Creek.*  
— Photo by Jackie Lewin

Ten members of the Gateway Chapter along with a guest took advantage of Indian summer lasting until November and trekked the St. Joe Road.

Meeting at the Peter Toth Indian Monument located on the south lawn of the Doniphan County, Kansas, Courthouse, the group, led by Suzette McCord-Rogers and Grace Jeschke, headed for Courter-Richey Cemetery, situated adjacent to St. Joe Road about three miles north of Troy. The group found stones purported to have marked the graves of some of the earliest emigrants to die along the trail. This local cemetery official establishment date, 1849 is indicated on the entrance gate. The tombstones read like a history of the settlement of this section of the county, with large family plots identifying the early settlers. At least three Gateway members, have ancestors who are buried in this cemetery alongside the emigrants.

Following the St. Joe Road west was made simple, by following the carsonite markers from Courter-Richey to Mesquito Creek placed by Gateway members, students from Doniphan County and St. Joseph, Missouri, schools and scouts. On the November 7 trek, the group installed an additional four markers west of the crossing of the creek, along a definitive swale, and on the ridgetop as the trail traversed on west on the property of Bill and Doreen Whetstine. Doreen also took the group to an artificial mound located on their property that is suspected to be an ancient Indian mound. The

*(continued on next page)*

cal use. It was with great pleasure and sincere gratitude that the Gateway Chapter awarded the Friend of the Trail Certificate of Appreciation to Doreen Whetstine during a trail trek on November 7.

## MORE NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS



*Idaho Chapter members Mary Alice Wilson, Jean Thomas and Jim Thomas at the top of the Emigrant Trail in the Hagerman Fossil Beds.*

### Gateway (continued from previous page)

Whetstones are careful not to disturb the mound during any of their agricultural or commercial operations.

Making the trek and assisting with marking the trail, in addition to Suzette and Grace, were Bob Hamilton, Jackie Lewin, Jim and Judy Budde, Jim and Maureen Jarrett, Glendon Hartman, and Marilyn Bryan. Linda Joseph, art instructor at Highland, Kansas, elementary school, whose students had helped marked the trail, joined the trek as guest.

Gateway Trekkers along the St. Joe Road pictured are Bob Hamilton, Jim Budde, Grace Jeschke, Marilyn Bryan, Maureen Jarrett, Jim Jarrett, Judy Budde, Suzette McCord-Rogers, Glendon Hartman, Linda Joseph.

### Gateway Elects New Officers

The Gateway Chapter has elected new officers for the ensuing year. They are: Suzette McCord-Rogers, President; Bob Hamilton, Vice President; Mary Jo Sprague, Secretary; and Marilyn Bryan, Treasurer. Jim Jarrett will chair the Nominations Committee. Other members of the Nominating Committee are Glenda Leimbach, Jackie Lewin, Harmon Motherhead, and Grace Jeschke.

Visit OCTA on the web  
[www.OCTA-trails.org](http://www.OCTA-trails.org)

## Idaho

The Fall meeting of the Idaho Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association was held at the Jerome Public Library. The meeting was called to order by President Bill Wilson with ten members present.

Bill Wilson reported that the Cost Share mapping project was done. The BLM Boise office is supposed to Y2K the GPS and the computer for us, but it may take awhile to get done.

A Certificate of Appreciation was presented to the Jerome Highway District on September 28. The local TV station had a clip of it on the news that evening. Pictures of the presentation were also passed around. A short explanation and discussion followed to update the members on how the District had changed the route of the road to preserve the Trail.

Bill Wilson, Ralph Maughn, and the Burley BLM staff marked the California Trail between Almo and Conner Creek in September as well. Bill and Ralph gave a brief discussion on that trip. Ralph explained how they were able to find the survey marker at the corner of Idaho, Utah, and Nevada.

President Bill also attended the opening of the Montpelier Visitors Center this summer in behalf of OCTA.

Wally Meyers reported on the newly released NPS long distance trails management plan. It is available at the NPS offices.

The Chico Convention was enjoyed by all who attended. Our own Larry Shiflet did an excellent job. Virginia Ricketts won the Oregon Trail afghan from the raffle.

Under New Business a discussion of splitting the chapter into east and west Idaho occurred. Jim Thomas made the motion that we stay as one chapter as our charter states. The motion carried. In the discussion the south central Idaho people would be willing to set up the two meeting places in this area for the two annual meetings.

Election of Officers for 2000 took place. The slate of officers presented were: President Bill Wilson, Secretary Afton Patrick, Treasurer Kathy Shiflet, Preservation Officer Wally Meyers.

Bill Wilson brought up for discussion future projects. Fencing Register Rock at Goose Creek on the Bedke Ranch, keeping abreast of the mining and easement requests at Granite Pass, and a possible national convention in the Twin Falls area in 2005. Because of the Lewis and Clark emphasis that year we felt an OCTA convention would be too much of a strain on the people of Idaho.

Bill will be asking OCTA members in the Boise area to form a calendar committee for 2000. This committee would set up a calendar for the year that could be sent out early. The annual spring meeting will be April 15, 2000, and the fall meeting on October 7, 2000. Times and places have yet to be decided.

After lunch, the group enjoyed a trip across the old Owsley Bridge and explored the Emigrant Trail of the Hagerman Fossil Beds.

-- Afton Patrick

## MORE NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

### Northwest

On June 19th a caravan of 24 cars and 53 people from the NW and ID/MT chapters were led by Don Shannon, author of "The Utter Disaster on the Oregon Trail."

Some of the Oregon Trail sites that we saw included the Ward Massacre site, the Boise River crossing, the reconstruction of Fort Boise, and the Old Fort Boise site on the Snake River. On Sunday, June 20th, our force was cut in half, 12 cars and 24 people, followed Dick Ackerman and Marley Shurtleff through Sumpter Valley and over to the Flagstaff Hill Interpretive Center for a dinner of Buffalo stew, a performance by The Grizzlies (their song "Ghosts on the Prairie" will bring tears to your eyes) and a silent bidding auction on items provided by the interpretive center and staff.

June 21st brought eight hearty OCTA members out for a Virtue Flats hike. The weather was cool and the hike was led by three Trail Tenders and one BLM representative. We were off early in the morning and the four-mile trek was over by noon.

Another joint meeting with the ID/MT chapter is in the works for next year.

July 28-31 brought many OCTA members from the various chapters to Bozeman, Montana for the Bozeman Trail Heritage Conference. This conference was three years in the making for the MHS and the well-known scholar on the Bozeman Trail, Susan Badger Doyle.

Some of the speakers were Dan Flores, Jerome A. Greene, Paul Hedren, Susan Badger Doyle, Joyce Badgley Hunsaker, James P. Ronda, Sherry Smith, Robert M. Utley, Elliott West and Richard White. With this impressive lineup of speakers, you can imagine what a wonderful time we all had. Two field trips were also offered following the Bozeman Trail.

During the week of August 23-29, two courageous members of the NW chapter found themselves canoeing the "Wild and Scenic Upper Missouri River" from Fort Benton to Kipp State Park, a distance of 147 miles. Along with myself, Gail Carbiener and his son Dave, two river guides, a human pack mule and a gourmet chef survived seven days and six nights following the Lewis and Clark water routes of May 5, 1805 to June 12, 1805 and July 28, 1808 to July 30, 1806.

For a upclose and personal account of this adventure of ours go to [www.vpds.wsu.edu/LCExpedition/Resources/wa\\_lcthf.html](http://www.vpds.wsu.edu/LCExpedition/Resources/wa_lcthf.html). Washington State Chapter: Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation website and look under the Winter Newsletter, 1999 for the article.

Sept. 25 and 26 found OCTA members going to Spokane, Wa. for the first Mullan Military Road outing. The MMR goes from Fort Walla Walla, WA, to Fort Benton, MT, a distance of 624 miles. Lethene Parks and Don Popejoy led a group of 23 people from Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Montana from Malden, WA, about 45 miles south of Spokane to the Cataldo Mission in Idaho. The two days of hiking/driving and talking about the MMR was highlighted by a dinner at Casey's Restaurant with the guest speaker, Cliff Carl, relating in song and story his five-year adventure of following the MMR. Like the Oregon Trail, the MMR has many miles of surviving traces and ruts to follow, many of which can be seen in the Spokane area. Next year we plan to do MMR II, from Walla Walla to Spokane.

Oct. 20th brought out the trail markers lead by Victor Bolon. Operating out of Hermiston, Oregon Tom Laidlaw (aka the Green Visor), Roy Schapler (our bungie jumping expert), Dick Klein (our map guru), Chuck Hornbuckle (the GPS expert), Billy Joe Arends (our live entertainment also referred to as our standup comedian), Dick Pingrey (our most notable air pilot), Rich Herman (our big Teddy Bear), and myself (no comment) marked the trail from Corral Springs, just south of Echo to Cecil a distance of 30 miles. We covered from Butter Creek to Sand Hollow and then from Wells Springs to Willow Creek. With the help of newly acquired aerial photos and the generous support of landowners George Miller, Charles Ramos, Lawrence Lindsay, and Henry Krebs difficult and inaccessible parts of the trail were marked.

On Nov. 8th, a historic teleconference was held between the officers and board members of the chapter. All agreed that this was a very good way to conduct a board session, but nothing replaces the personal contact of meetings where the warmth of friends and their smiles can be felt and seen.

-- Don Popejoy

### Northwest Chapter Website

The current web version of the Northwest OCTA Update & Journal is now on line at:  
<http://www.rutnut.com/nwocta/newsletters/99oct/issue.html>

It contains several convention reports with great color pictures and word pictures.

There is also a report on our recent Mullan Road Trek.

Also check out our latest trailmarking effort at:

<http://www.rutnut.com/nwocta/trailmarking/99/cecil/marking.html>

-- Tom Laidlaw

## MORE NEWS FROM THE CHAPTERS

### Trailshead

The Trailshead Chapter held a joint meeting with the Friends of the National Frontier Trails Center on September 16th. Kevin Phillips, who is a tour guide at the Arabia Steamboat Museum, gave a nice presentation on "Riverboat Travel Heading West."

On October 16th, the Chapter sponsored a bus tour covering the Independence Route to Gardner. Ross Marshall guided the tour which will be repeated during OCTA's Annual Convention in August, 2000.

The Chapter's Annual meeting for the election of officers for the upcoming year was held on November 16th at Elaine McNabney's house. The new officers are:

President: Bill Bullard  
 Vice-President: Dick Nelson  
 Secretary: Eva Allen  
 Treasurer: Jim Budde

Convention 2000 will be the main focus for the upcoming year and we are looking forward to welcoming the members of OCTA in August, 2000.  
 --Judith L. Budde

### Nebraska-Iowa

*From the Nebraska-Iowa newsletter:*

"The Great Platte River Road Archway monument now stretches across Interstate 80 just east of Kearney, NE. Is it a dream come to reality or a tourist trap?"

"Construction of the supports on either side of I-80 was completed while the arch was being constructed along I-80. The arch was placed on skids and moved over I-80 during the night of Aug. 16, 1999 while the highway was closed to traffic.

"Even though the monument will not be open until mid-year 2000, the structure has created near traffic congestion as surprised motorists stop to take pictures and try to figure out just what it is!"

"This monument is called a bridge between the past and the future and will contain exhibits depicting this pathway of progress. The Platte River Road has long been known as the corridor of the Plains Indians, fur traders, buffalo herds, Oregon, California and the Mormon trail of emigrants, railroad, Pony Express, telegraph, Lincoln Highway and now the Interstate highway.

"If history is correctly and tastefully displayed this monument could be a stopping place of interest for any one who travels the interstate today. At this time there is no access to the structure, but when it is completed it will provide a walking path through history.

"We will reserve final judgment on the project until it is completed. The site should be open to the public next spring."

### Crossroad

A number of Utah Crossroad members participated in the Utah Historic Trails Consortium's "Echo Canyon Day of History" field trip.

Two auto caravan groups and one busload of trail enthusiasts toured ten historic sites and heard presentations at each site.

The special day was organized under the direction of Consortium Chairman (and OCTA member) George Ivory, assisted by members of the Consortium organizations.

Chapter president Vern Gorzitze and Jerry Dunton led the first auto group; Ron Andersen was the bus tour guide; and George and Matthew Ivory led the last auto group.

Several Crossroad members served as presenters/lecturers at the different stops. Mike Landon, LaMar Berrett, Jess Petersen, Kristin Johnson, John Eldredge, Jerry Anderson and Al Mulder gave lectures and displayed exhibits at the various historic sites.

The "Day of History" tour was a big success and will serve as a model for future one-day field trips. Contact George Ivory if you would like one of the excellent tour books.

-- From the Utah Crossroads Chapter newsletter

### Kansas City Convention 2000 Update

The convention 2000 Planning Committee continues progress with monthly meetings and lots of work in between.

Ten speakers have been confirmed to date covering the jumping off process, Missouri River travel, emigrants' hopes and expectations, and Native Americans. A tour booklet will also have brief related biographies of trail era personalities.

Six tours are being fine tuned, tour guides recruited, and six workshops arranged. The registration and hospitality committee plans a warm welcome for all, especially first timers.

Famous Kansas City barbeque will be served at the 1856 Steamboat Arabia Museum, a site which has drawn national praise (recent *Reader's Digest* article) and established the owners as consultants on preserving marine artifacts. This is an event no one should miss. Great food, great history!

The committee aims for February publication of convention details. Meanwhile, an impressive web site has been created. If you haven't tried it yet, do so soon at [www.trailshead.org](http://www.trailshead.org).

-- Barbara Magerl

Nominate A Winner:

## **Annual OCTA Awards Program**

**Nominations are being sought for various annual awards which will be presented at OCTA's annual convention in August.**

**All deadlines are June 1. For more information, contact the appropriate committee chair.**

- MERITORIOUS ACHEVEMENT**
- DISTINGUISHED SERVICE**
- OCTA VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**
- MEDIA AWARD**
- NATIONAL CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION**

**Contact: Awards Committee Chair Ross Marshall 6624 Craig Street, Merriam KS 66202-3747. Phone (913) 262-6445.**

### **FRIEND OF THE TRAIL AWARD**

**This award honors those whose land or residence is on the trail.**

**Contact: Friend of the Trail Chair Karen Rennels, P.O. Box 308, 607 Sublett Cutoff Co Rd 318, La Barge WY 83123-0308. Phone (307) 386-2321.**

**Nomination forms are available from the Committee Chairs, from OCTA Headquarters or from Chapter Presidents.**

**(For information on OCTA's Education Awards, see separate story on page 7).**

# **OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION**

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