

News From The Plains



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Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

January 2001

Marilyn Bryan Named OCTA Treasurer

Marilyn Bryan of St. Joseph, MO, has agreed to accept the position of OCTA Treasurer for a two-year term.

Bryan will succeed Gail Carbiener, whose term expired with the 2000 Convention. Jim Budde had served as interim treasurer until Bryan's appointment was announced.

Bryan's nomination was approved in an e-mail vote of OCTA's Board of Directors.

"We are very fortunate to have someone with Marilyn's qualifications," said OCTA President David Welch. "She has a strong business background that will be beneficial to continued improvement in our operational processes."

Bryan has an extensive background in financial matters and was Vice President, Human Resources, for an international engineering and manufacturing firm prior to her retirement in 1999. Welch noted her experience includes pension fund management, accounting and investment procedures, tax filings, budget management, inventory controls, payroll, employee relations, insurance, audits and reporting to a Board of Directors.

"Marilyn lives in St. Joseph, so she will be able to visit the office as needed," Welch said. "However, I have asked Marilyn to focus on high level management issues and financial oversight, not day-to-day operations."

Bryan has been a member of the Gateway Chapter and OCTA since 1992 and has attended all national conventions since she joined the organizations.

"Although she admits she kept a very low profile," Welch noted, "she enjoyed the history of the trails without organizational politics. Who can fault that? Now she is willing to step forward to assume a major role in OCTA's future."

Bryan, a former high school biology teacher, is a native of St. Joseph. She said her initial interest in the trails began with pioneering stories from her grandmothers, whose families lived along the St. Joe Road in Doniphan County, Kansas. She was led to OCTA because of her fondness for the diaries of pioneer women.

— Bill Martin

OCTA Membership Drive Underway

By Don Popejoy
Membership Chair

As we start the year 2001, OCTA faces new challenges, new objectives, and new issues. But one challenge, objective, and issue that never goes away is that of *membership*.

This is an important year for OCTA, especially in the membership area. So, to confront this "beast" head on, the Membership Committee would like to announce OCTA's First Annual Membership Drive.

The Membership Drive will start January 1 and continue through June 30, 2001. As an incentive, we issue every member a challenge – and offer a reward!

During this six-month period, bring in three new members and receive from the OCTA bookstore your choice of the official OCTA patch or both the OCTA decal and the OCTA bumper sticker.

Sign up four to six new members and receive either the OCTA or Oregon Trail pin.

If you bring in more than six new members, you get a choice of the William Henry Jackson prints of either Independence Rock or Crossing the South Platte, plus either a pin or a patch.

Also, everyone who meets these levels will get recognition in *News From The Plains* and at the 2001 convention in Casper, Wyoming. For those who attend the convention you will receive a special sticker to put on your name tag.

If you have an application form handy, fill it out with the new member(s) name, etc. If you don't have an application form, you can cut out the one on page 19 of this issue of the *NFP* (make as many copies as you need).

Send all applications to me and be sure to sign your name so you get credit. Please recruit for your chapter at the same time and remember that dues have gone up for National, effective January 1, 2001.

The Membership Drive will be a fun challenge for you, will
(continued on Page 10)

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



For the past few months, I've been writing a family history for my children. It has answered some questions, while at the same time raising others, of course. As anyone who has ever delved into genealogy can attest, it can be both a rewarding and frustrating process. It is no wonder that such research requires one to wear a

fairly constant look of either bemusement or bewilderment. Sometimes both.

Much of my research has been aided by the availability of so much information on the internet. It has opened many doors and, in fact, allowed me to make contact with a slew of distant cousins with whom I share distant ancestors.

I've learned a lot about my mother's ancestors who followed Brigham Young into the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, the first arriving from Winter Quarters in 1848 and the last showing up 20 years later direct from England. You can't help but feel some pride when you learn of ancestors who were with the three wagon trains who arrived in Salt Lake in 1848 and others who were in the very last group of wagons to follow the Mormon Trail before the Union Pacific was completed. Mixed with that pride, of course, is empathy for those who lost children and relatives and friends along the way. You feel closer to the Trail when you know that you not only have ancestors who were born on the banks of the Platte River, but others who are buried there.

I've also learned a lot about my father's family, although none of them chose to follow the pioneer trails westward to California or Oregon – at least not until the 1920s. But those

who decided to move from relatively settled Virginia to the wilderness of Kentucky at the turn of the 18th century, and then a few years later moved across the Ohio River into barely populated Indiana, probably balanced the same hopes for the future against the anguish of irrevocable separation as did those who followed the Overland Trails. As one ancestor wrote: "(I) felt it my duty to go, although it was a severe trial to me, in my feelings to leave the pleasing associations that I had formed, but my heart was fixed."

Probably the most important discovery I've made, and the reason I would suggest genealogical research to everyone, is the opportunity to know multi-great-grandfathers and grandmothers as more than simply names in family records. I've discovered no famous relatives or important historical figures – nor, for that matter, did I find outlaws or particularly notorious characters. But I've found a multitude of those common people who, to paraphrase Lincoln, must have been loved by God because he made so many of them. And they were exactly the sort of individuals and families who arrived on American shores in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and gradually spread their spirit, their individualism and their independence across the continent. In every sense of the word, they were pioneers — and I'm proud to be descended from them. You've got them in your family, too. Poke around enough and you'll find them.

You'll note a somewhat different look for the *News From The Plains*. After three years, I decided it was time for a modest "makeover." Hopefully it will meet with your approval. As always, your comments are appreciated.

Submission Guidelines

News From The Plains welcomes news, features and photos related to the work of OETA and its members and to 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 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.

If you have any questions, please call

Editor Bill Martin at (512) 864-7312
or e-mail OETANFP@aol.com

Next Deadline Is March 1, 2001

News From The Plains

Editor Bill Martin

Contributing Editors

Kathy Conway Candy Moulton

Lyndia Carter Dave Welch

Mail Submissions To:

P.O. Box 811, Georgetown TX 78627
(512) 864-7312 Fax: (512) 864-9522
e-mail: OETANFP@aol.com

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Oregon-California Trails Association
P.O. Box 1019 Independence, MO 64051-0519
(816) 252-2276 Fax (816) 836-0989
e-mail: octahqts@gvi.net

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Masthead Photo Courtesy of
Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

From The President . . . by David Welch



As stated in our brochure, OCTA "... is dedicated to the preservation, appreciation and enjoyment of all the trans-Mississippi migration trails to the West." The key word is, of course "preservation" since appreciation and enjoyment would be greatly reduced if all physical evidence were destroyed either by natural or man-induced processes.

But to actively seek preservation inevitably brings us into conflict with property rights. The ultimate success of OCTA depends on our ability to strike a meaningful balance between these often conflicting priorities.

Nowhere is this conflict more evident than in Wyoming. Wonderful stretches of near pristine trail extend across a landscape not unlike that seen by the emigrants. But underneath much of this land lies some of our nation's greatest energy resources.

Disruption of the surface (i.e., desecration of the trails) can be a by-product of the exploitation of the resource. A radical approach would be to oppose all mining and exploration activities. An equally radical approach would be for OCTA to do nothing. Historically OCTA has sought to work between these extremes.

The Wyoming chapter has taken the lead in addressing

problems in their area. One area of concern is the proposal to drill gas wells near the Dry Sandy Crossing, west of South Pass. The chapter is working with the BLM, Wyoming SHPO, the developer, and other preservation groups to make drilling unobtrusive, minimize road networks and assure restoration when work is complete. It is not anticipated that the wells will be long-term major producers.

A second area of concern is the Devils Gate viewscape. Last summer, a gravel mine was proposed for the area. The proposal was vigorously opposed by OCTA and others and was withdrawn. Since that time the chapter has moved aggressively to obtain a special designation for the area as "rare and uncommon" that will provide increased long-term protection.

The Wyoming Chapter is setting examples for all of us. We can pursue our trail preservation goals while respecting the rights of others when they meet us part way. Sometimes we may need to take a firm stance, like the City of Rocks legal action, to achieve our primary goal, trail preservation.

In the course of these actions we may disagree among ourselves, but I hope these disagreements can be minimized. It would be nice if we could sit back and let the trail take care of itself, but I do not think that is possible. — Dave Welch

News From Headquarters . . . by Kathy Conway



Happy New Year to the OCTA Membership from your Headquarters Staff in Independence.

As I look out the window here, the snow swirls and blows from rooftops. The temperature hovers at eight degrees and, as the story goes, we could settle in for a long winter's nap.

But, "not to worry", the Oregon-California Trails Association is alive with activity. December found your OCTA staff busy filling book orders for the Holiday Season. We are delighted to report it has been difficult keeping the books "in stock." We are pleased with the amount of orders and hope the new "look" of the catalog has helped increase sales.

Elsewhere in the organization:

Bob Clark of Spokane, WA now assumes editorship of the *Overland Journal*. The journal is now printed by Sigler Printers of Ames, IA.

President David Welch launched the 2000-2001 Fund Raising Campaign in November. Contributions are steady...and the campaign is still on-going. If you haven't sent your donation, please do so as there is still time.

John Krizek, our new Co-Chair of Public Relations, along with his committee, put together a quality-packed press kit. Included in the kit is information about the threat to the South Pass area by an exploratory natural gas well company. Dick Ackerman, our National Preservation Officer, monitors this situation.

Membership Chair Don Popejoy and committee members have come up with a plan for a membership drive to begin this month through June of this year. Please consider our need

to grow in numbers and bring in a new member. This will guarantee our organization's future and its preeminent goal of PRESERVATION.

Bill Hill, Education Chair, mailed the "Outstanding Educator Award" announcement to hundreds of school administrators and teachers.

Marilyn Bryan of St. Joseph, Missouri agreed to join the National Officers of OCTA as Treasurer. We wish to welcome Marilyn and appreciate her desire to serve!

John Mark Lambertson's article (in this issue) about OCTA's Lizzie Charlton diary will bring the membership up to date with details about this wonderful "find."

Remember to shop for OCTA books and merchandise online at www.OCTA-trails.org — you'll be glad you did! Questions about an order??? Call us toll-free - 888-811-6282.

— Kathy Conway, Headquarters Manager

E-Mail Directory

An e-mail directory of OCTA members will be available from headquarters in the near future. The directory will be distributed to other members when requested. If any member does not wish to have his or her e-mail address listed, please let headquarters know.

The e-mail directory will be governed by the same guidelines covering the existing OCTA roster. It is to be used for communications between members and not to be used for unsolicited mailing or sold as a mailing list.

No Appeal Expected In City of Rocks Court Case

By David Welch
OCTA President

The Access Fund does not plan to appeal a federal judge's decision banning rock climbers on the Twin Sisters at the City of Rocks. Our long battle to preserve the Twin Sisters as a key element within the City of Rocks National Historic Preserve has succeeded.

What have we achieved? While climbers will have access to many areas in the City of Rocks, the Twin Sisters will be off limits. They had previously agreed that climbing on Camp Rock would be banned due to the presence of many inscriptions. It is my understanding that the NPS (or Idaho State Parks, the operator) plans to remove campgrounds from the Twin Sisters area at some time in the future in order to return it to a more pristine state. Soon, it will be possible to view the Sisters much as the emigrant travelers did more than 150 years ago.

Thanks are due to OCTA's past preservation officer, Tom Hunt, and the current preservation officer, Dick Ackerman. The defense was encouraged by Tom and initiated and brought to a conclusion by Dick Ackerman. Over the years,

OCTA's officers and the board of directors supported OCTA's first legal involvement with the commitment of substantial funds. On the legal side, we can thank Steve Corey, Pat Sullivan and Emil Berg for preparing the extensive paperwork. Emil wrote most of the filings and ably represented us at proceedings in Pocatello last year.

On the NPS side we owe a debt of gratitude to Stephanie Toothman and Keith Dunbar in the NPS Seattle Office. The NPS' excellent attorney was Robert C. Grisham, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Idaho. Of course, their management supported them and that made success possible. Both Bob Grisham, and the magistrate who wrote the court decision, demonstrated empathy for and a will to protect a small portion of western history. We could not have done better.

While I do not wish to see OCTA become a litigious organization, it is important that in selected, important cases involving preservation of the trails and key related features that we be willing to pursue a court solution, if required. The City of Rocks case is a good example we can use in the future.

OCTA Raises Concerns About South Pass Gas Drilling

OCTA has raised concerns about proposed natural gas exploration in Wyoming which could threaten the view from the Oregon Trail near South Pass.

OCTA's Public Relations Committee issued a news release on the issue and the Associated Press picked up and elaborated on the statements.

"Plans for an exploratory natural gas well in the Dry Sandy area of Central Wyoming could lead to the permanent desecration of historic South Pass," OCTA President David Welch said in the news release.

"Along the entire 11,000 miles of the National Historic Trails...none are more exemplary and pristine than those in the areas threatened by this development. There are places out there where you can stand in trail ruts today and the view is exactly as the pioneers saw it 150 years ago."

Wolverine Gas and Oil Corp. of Grand Rapid, Michigan, has proposed to sink five wells to look for gas. With the wells will come roads and, if gas is found, pipelines, the AP report noted.

"We'd like to keep that viewshed right there the same," OCTA National Preservation Officer Dick Ackerman said in an AP interview. "It is a treasure for everyone in the United States, not just people in the immediate area. It's something that should be preserved for everyone."

Officials with the Bureau of Land Management and Wolverine Oil said there is no need to worry, according to the AP report, which was published in late November.

BLM researchers have photographed the future well sites. By superimposing pictures of existing drilling sites, they are getting an idea of what the wells, roads and pipelines could

look like from the trail, according to BLM spokesman Mike Brown.

"We recognize their concerns and we're doing everything we can to meet those concerns," Brown told the AP.

Richard Moritz, vice president of land for Wolverine, said the wells will be drilled at an angle to keep them as far from the trail as possible, a mile or two away. He also said the wells and related equipment could be painted in colors like the sagebrush landscape, hidden behind earthen beams or obscured with camouflage netting.

"Within reason, our goal is to work through the issue with the BLM, which in turn...will bring in whatever other groups are necessary as part of the decision-making process," Moritz told the AP.

"The main concern is there is this wonderful, pristine shrine to the American West. South Pass is where everybody went through," AP quoted OCTA Public Relations Chair John Krizek.

The BLM manages South Pass and other public lands in southwest Wyoming. The region is valuable for its natural gas and upward of 2,000 gas wells are planned in the Green River Basin west of South Pass, the BLM's Brown said.

At the same time, South Pass is one of the most widely recognized emigrant trail landmarks and is designated a National Historic Monument.

Ackerman said OCTA is not opposed to drilling for gas.

"If there's a need for the energy, which we understand there is, we're all for it," he told the AP. "But we're also for saving some of this important heritage."

— Bill Martin

Mid-Year Board Meeting Set For March 2-3

The Mid-Year meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oregon-California Trails Association will be held March 2-3 at OCTA headquarters in Independence, MO.

A "workshop" session will be held on Friday, with the official business of the Board to be conducted on Saturday. Agenda items are expected to include committee reports and updates on on-going OCTA programs.

The meetings of the Board are open to all OCTA members. For details, contact OCTA headquarters.

Trails Update Legislation Pending In Congress

OCTA's Trails Liaison Committee is expecting that legislation authorizing an update of the National Historic Trails program will be re-introduced in the new Congress in January.

Efforts to pass the legislation, which could result in about 6,000 miles of trails receiving National Historic Trails status, were not successful during the congressional session which adjourned in December.

Trails Liaison Chairs Bill and Jeanne Watson said they had received assurances from Congressman Doug Bereuter of Nebraska that he would reintroduce the bill. Bereuter sponsored 1992 legislation designating National Historic Trails status for the California and Pony Express Trails.

The Watsons are expected to discuss legislative options with OCTA's Board of Directors during its Mid-Year meeting in Independence in early March.

The legislation would authorize feasibility studies of various routes on the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express National Historic Trails to determine if they qualify as "primary" routes.

A full list of trail segments proposed for study was included in the October 2000 issue of *News From The Plains*.

COED Database Updated

The latest version of the Emigrant Names Database — "Names On The Plains" — is now available at OCTA headquarters.

The new version from COED coordinator Chuck Dodd expands the number of diaries surveyed from 1,936 to 2,263. It expands the names included from about 54,000 to 64,000.

The database can be accessed through a form available on the OCTA website. Go to the website at www.OCTA-trails.org then click on the link labeled "Genealogy" and follow the directions. The form can also be obtained directly from OCTA headquarters.

There is a \$10 charge per name searched. The search will look for the emigrant name in the documents, including diaries, that OCTA has surveyed. Approximate dates of travel (within five years) are requested so that some limits are placed on the search.

Black Rock Trails Legislation Approved

Legislation establishing the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area was passed by Congress in one of its final acts before adjourning on December 15.

The bill, endorsed by OCTA, had been introduced by Nevada Sen. Richard Bryan and includes the Applegate Trail and surrounding areas.

"This legislation will allow countless future generations to enjoy, study and marvel at this unique landscape, as well as maintaining an important part of our Western heritage — the emigrant experience," Bryan said.

The Conservation Area in northwestern Nevada includes the Applegate Trail from near Rye Path Reservoir (about 120 miles west of Reno) across the Black Rock Desert.

Long Distance Trails Office Sees Budget Increased

Overland trails will benefit from a significant increase in the budget for the National Park Service Long Distance Trails Office for fiscal 2000-2001.

OCTA Trails Liaison Co-Chairs Bill and Jeanne Watson said that the increase was approved by a House & Senate Conference Committee.

The Trails Office budget, after being frozen at \$315,000 for several years, was increased to \$725,000, according to Jere Krakow, superintendent of the Trails Office. The increase will impact the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer and Pony Express Trails.

The additional funds will be used for computer mapping of all four trails (Geographic Information System/GIS), signage on auto tour routes of all four trails, brochures for the California & Pony Express Trails, and the start of studies focused on proposed additional routes of all four trails.

According to Krakow, edits of the computer-generated maps (GIS) of trails will be continued through an agreement with the University of Utah, Department of Geography. It is anticipated that the work will be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

In addition, auto tour route signage is underway with agreements in place with Nebraska and Idaho, and discussions are underway with Wyoming, Oregon, and California. The signs should be up for all four trails in Nebraska, Wyoming, and Idaho by the OCTA convention in Casper, Krakow said.

The California brochure is expected to be completed by August 2001 and a draft copy of the Pony Express brochure completed by the end of summer.

Krakow also said a contract has been finalized and work begun to address the proposed additional routes of all four trails. Documenting the route in historical sources, identifying sites and segments, and mapping them is to be completed during the current fiscal year.

— Bill Martin

Cherokee/Overland Trails Ceremonies Likely Late Summer

Public ceremonies commemorating trail marking on the Overland Stage and Cherokee Trail, a project partly funded by a \$5,000 grant from the Oregon-California Trails Association, are tentatively scheduled for late summer of 2001.

Plans to install 150 concrete trail markers last summer were delayed, largely because of four major wildfires which burned approximately 90,000 acres in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, during July and August.

In a report to OCTA Preservation Officer Dick Ackerman, Mike Brown of the Bureau of Land Management said the fires burned over about 35 percent of both historic trails in the project areas – including stakes marking holes where the trail markers were to be placed.



Trail marking volunteers, left to right, Ladale Covington, Belle Lowell, Ralph Lowell, Lois Lowell and Johnny McCuddy, all from Green River, Wyoming.

— Photo Courtesy Bureau of Land Management

National Guard trucks which were scheduled to haul markers to remote locations as part of National Public Lands Day marker installation activities last August 26 were committed to firefighting efforts. Additionally, BLM employees who were to help place markers worked almost exclusively on fire suppression or fire rehabilitation planning.

“Rather than canceling the entire event due to the fires, loss of logistical support and loss of staff, it was decided to scale back the amount of trail marker installation work to be accomplished,” Brown said.

Subsequently, four teams of Boy Scouts and their families, a total of 49 volunteers, installed markers on 50 miles of Overland Stage and Cherokee Trails (the Scouts earned their Eagle ranks in the process.)

As of early November, 41 markers were in the ground. Additional markers have been ordered and Brown noted that the burned-over trails will need to be well-marked while vegetation reestablishes in the fire areas.

“Right now, the parts of the trails that have burned over look like any other two-track road,” Brown said in his report. “It’s amazing how much the vegetation helps locate and iden-

National Educator Awards Nominations Sought

OCTA is calling for nominations for its Outstanding Educator Awards, recognizing outstanding achievement in educating students of all ages about westward migration.

The awards will be presented at OCTA's Annual Awards Banquet which will be held on Thursday, August 16, 2001 during the 2001 convention in Casper, Wyoming.

Nomination for the Outstanding Educator Award is open to any individual and/or group of educators or institution that contributes significantly to students' education about the 19th century westward overland migrations in the United States. The work may reflect a whole unit or special project within the unit or course on westward migration.

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

The work that the recipients will be honored for must have been used during either the 1999-2000 or the 2000-01 school year.

There are five category levels for this award: 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 and receive a framed certificate at the annual OCTA convention. In addition, they will receive their convention registration and room and board for the day of the awards banquet.

For forms and additional information about this award and the nomination process please contact either OCTA headquarters or William E. Hill, OCTA-Education Award, 91 Wood Road, Centereach, NY 11720-1619 (631) 585-2592 - Phone/Fax.

Deadline for applications is March 30, 2001.

— William Hill

tify trail ruts. You don't really realize it until the vegetation is gone. We're thankful we got so much of the trails mapped before the fire.”

Brown said it is expected that the public participation marker installation will be held in late August or early September of next year, after the OCTA Convention in Casper, Wyoming.

Before the fires interrupted, volunteers, including several OCTA members, had assisted in mapping trail segments, parts of the trails were flown and marked by helicopter and marker holes were drilled and staked.

Organizations which had been scheduled to take part in the marking, in addition to OCTA, included the Wyoming Army National Guard, Sweetwater Snowpokes, Sweetwater County, Black Butte Coal Mine, Boy Scouts, City of Green River, Fort Bridger and the general public.

— Bill Martin

OCTA Annual Fund Drive Underway

OCTA's Annual Fund Drive is in full swing, with hopes of exceeding last year's total of \$18,645 raised for trail preservation activities.

Funds raised from the annual drive can be designated for the Endowment Fund, Annual Fund or specific Designated Funds.

The Endowment Fund provides long-term financial stability. Most funds are held in restricted accounts.

The Annual Fund provides support for headquarters operations and related needs. For instance, an upgrade of the headquarters computer system is being planned.

Designated Funds include activities in the areas of preservation, graves and sites, COED, archaeology, trail mapping, education and special publications.

Tax deductible contributions can be sent directly to OCTA at P.O. Box 1019, Independence MO 64051. The Annual Fund Drive will end on February 28.

Contributors through December 10 included:

Joan Kelleher
M.F. Kiber
Harry L. Tuten, Jr.
Bucky Green
Dick and Mary Anna Swinnerton
Harry K. Peterson
Rose W. Burnham
Richard Isakson
Jim and Ardis Everett
Nita R. Spangler
Dr. and Mrs. Harold Smith
Glenn and Peggy Calhoun
Neil McCallum
Rosalie F. Coffey
Dorothy & Robert Magoffin
Jack and Helen Holmes
Charles M. Little
Todd and Betty Berens
Bob and Gayle Bruner
Muriel and Gail Carbiener
Barbara A. Kelly
George and Joan Paulikas
Mary Conrad
Greg Childs
Linda & Herb Crew
Virginia Nelson
Ross and Jana Marshall
Don Popejoy
Alexa & Rosemary Wood
John Latschar
Jerry H. Kirkpatrick
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Jerry and Jackie Lewin
Jim and Margie Sheik
Chuck and Suzanne Hornbuckle
Dick Nelson
Janet Boom
Helen H. Henderson
Victor and Harriet Gardener
Garald & Marilyn Mosher
Roy Welton
D.W. McKenzie
Ms. Joanne Hinchliff
Charley Taylor
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Wilson
Gene and Nancy Serr
Lee Underbrink
Mary Mueller
N. J. Barker
Richard Higgins
Herbert & Lois Hunn
Linda Cook
Olive Gorham
Lt. Col. James T. Owen

Charles Martin Sr. Passes

OCTA charter member, past officer and benefactor Charles W. Martin Sr. died October 21, 2000, in Omaha, Nebraska. He was 91.

It was announced last year that the Martin family had established an endowment valued at about \$200,000 to help cover legal costs incurred in preserving and protecting significant trail sites. *(See story in July 2000 NFP.)*

The Charles W. and Mary Martin Endowed Restricted Fund was established by their children, Charles Martin Jr., an OCTA board member, and Julie Videon, also an OCTA member.

Charles served as OCTA vice president in 1987 and was a recipient of OCTA's highest award, the Meritorious Achievement Award. Mary Martin died in 1999. In addition to his children, Charles is survived by six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

"Charles and Mary Martin were great trail enthusiasts and their gift will make it possible for them to continue to help preserve the trails in the future," said OCTA President David Welch.

Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Edwards
Randy & Betty Wagner
Maureen Beverlin
Clifford H. Fiscus
H.K. Woodward
Keith A. Palmquist
Ms. Lois Revak
Bill and Jacques Arends
Jacqueline Williams
Nelson S. Weller
Dr. Adelard and Princess Everton
Jeanette and John Roberts
Janece Thornton
Frank and Laurie Brown
Paul Grunland
G. N. and Charlotte Thompson
Raymond J. Egan
Baldwin and Ormie Lamson
Victor and Nancy Bolon
Bernard C. Revoir
Dorothy Ross
Robert A. Robinson
Bob and Sharon Evanhoe
Michael Rei
Charlie and Harriet Lewis
George Parrish
Karl and Mae Kawahara
Estaline Carpenter
Richard W. Ralston
Louise Hammer Rossi
Hugh and Carol March
Dr. Robert H. Jones
Thelma Bower Tate
Edna Kennell
James and Kathy Conway

Searching For Lizzie**Unraveling A Trail Diary Mystery**

by John Mark Lambertson

Director, National Frontier Trails Center

An original 1866 trail diary, found in a California landfill, was presented and donated to OCTA at the convention in August by Shann Rupp. The curious, surprise discovery of the diary had been announced in the April 2000 issue of *News From the Plains*, but very little information was known about the diary's authoress, Lizzie Charlton.

Since the convention, a concentrated effort has been made to unravel the mystery of "Lizzie" and her diary, and with great success. Using clues in the diary, census records were studied which located the Charlton family in Missouri in 1860. The hunt got a major boost when a *Kansas City Star* article on the diary, written by Brian Burnes, was picked up by the Associated Press and carried by other newspapers.

As a result of the article, Marcia Rinehart of Leawood, KS called the National Frontier Trails Center to say "I think those Charltons were relatives of mine." She shared genealogical information which dovetailed with the information already found. Another family genealogist, Robert King of Anchorage, Alaska, not only filled in even more blanks of the story but also shared photos of Lizzie and her parents!

We were able to confirm that Lizzie was indeed just a teenager, sixteen, when the diary was made, as Shann Rupp had surmised. But what happened to her?

"The Search for Lizzie" took on a life of its own! OCTA member Glenn Harrison was recruited to head up sleuthing on the Oregon end, and he and other volunteers enthusiastically found numerous items of helpful information, including a detailed bio sketch of Lizzie's father. They also located and photographed the graves of Lizzie, her parents, and other relatives. Amusingly, the Oregon searchers even came up with the price paid for the casket when Lizzie's father died in 1913!

With the major puzzle pieces of Lizzie's story largely put together, attention shifted to the discovery of the diary and an old pair of baby shoes in a tin, English "biscuit box." How did they end up in a Monterey, CA dump?

Family genealogical records pointed to a lone granddaughter of Lizzie's as being the logical last owner of the items. But little was known of her other than a couple of butchered spellings of her birth name and an approximate year of birth. Her unusual name, Natheel Donaca, provided the only clue needed.

A search of Oregon and California death records eventually located a Natheel Irwin who died in 1990 and proved to be Lizzie's granddaughter. And Mrs. Irwin died at Monterey,



Lizzie Charlton

(Photo Courtesy National Frontier Trails Center)

CA, where the diary was found in the dump!

Even the research came "full circle." The couple who upon request looked up and copied Natheel's obituary were Mona Burk and Rick Smith -- Rick being the salvage man who spied the diary some fifteen years ago at the dump! After its rescue, the tin box and contents rested in Rick's garage for many years before eventually being placed in the hands of Shann Rupp.

OCTA is in the business of preserving, marking, and publicizing the history of the Oregon-California Trails. Research of this nature helps to capture public attention, and intrigue, with the trails by giving a human "face" to a specific trails story. "The Search for Lizzie" has had that kind of broad appeal.

The story prompted half a dozen newspaper articles in the Kansas City area, two of which were picked up by the Associated Press, and even some television coverage. Giving each trails story that human "face" is what we strive to do at the National Frontier Trails Center, and we are always pleased to partner with OCTA in such ventures.

John Mark Lambertson was presented with the prestigious Distinguished Service Award at the 2000 OCTA Convention.

Mark Your Calendar: Casper 2001 OCTA Convention August 12-18

Who Was Lizzie Charlton?

Elizabeth Catherine Charlton was born November 19, 1849 in Jefferson County, Iowa to James Kyle and Martha Lane Keltner Charlton. She grew up in Putnam County, Missouri but her family had moved to Story County, IA before embarking on their covered wagon trip to Oregon in 1866.

The trip west was not the first one for her father. He, two brothers and a brother-in-law had set off for California during the gold rush in 1850, when Lizzie was just a few months old. But cholera claimed the brother-in-law, Addison Wheeler, near South Pass, making the Charlton brothers uneasy about continuing on through the sickness to California.

Instead, they detoured to Oregon, worked the winter and made their way down to the gold fields the following spring. Disappointed in their success in California, the two brothers, Joseph J. and Charles Charlton, returned to Oregon. James K. Charlton returned to his family in Iowa via Panama and New York.

Apparently years of glowing reports from the two uncles finally prompted several relatives of Lizzie's to make the trip to Oregon in 1865, including her aged grandmother. Lizzie's family followed the next year, using the Bear River Divide Route north from Fort Bridger to Bear Valley and on to Soda Springs. By 1866 the road to Oregon had obviously improved as the Charltons reached Harrisburg on July 30th, less than four months after their departure from Iowa.

We now know that Lizzie did not set out for Oregon with her diary in hand. A nearly indecipherable scrawl inside the back cover states that the journal was purchased at Columbus, Nebraska Territory, which was one of the last villages they

passed through as they started their trek.

She began penciling her day-to-day accounts on April 30th, writing in the present tense, and leaving the first five pages blank. She returned to those pages to "catch up" the first four weeks of the trip, with an abbreviated version that included some past tense phrasing.



Lizzie's father, James Kyle Charlton, and his son, James Jeffries Charlton
Courtesy National Frontier Trails Center



Lizzie's mother, Martha Lane Keltner Walker Charlton.
Courtesy National Frontier Trails Center

With two blank pages still remaining, Lizzie filled them by practicing her schoolgirl penmanship by repeatedly writing her name, the various places she had lived, and a listing of all of the states and territories in the union. (The places she lived proved key to tracing her family in census and other records.)

In Oregon, her father became a successful businessman and later the sheriff of Linn County.

In 1867, the year after her trip, Lizzie married John Martin, a carpenter and ferryman, at Harrisburg, OR. It is uncertain

what happened to Martin, but they had at least three children, Otto, E.A., and Belle. In the 1880 census she and her children were living with her father.

In 1884, Lizzie married George M. Paul, a union which may have ended in divorce. Lizzie died in 1899 at the age of 49 of unknown causes. She is buried with her parents at the Masonic Cemetery at Lebanon, OR with the inscription, "Mrs. E. C. Martin."

Her daughter Belle, who most likely was the owner of the baby shoes found with the diary, was apparently the only child to reach adulthood. She married three times and had just one child, the Natheel Irwin who died in 1990 at Monterey, CA. Her obituary listed her husband, a son Martin, and five grandchildren.

— John Mark Lambertson

OCTA Officer Directory

President Dave Welch
102 Chinook Lane, Steilacoom WA 98388
(253) 584-0332/djwelch@compuserve.com

Vice President Randy Wagner
1007 Monroe Avenue, Cheyenne WY 82001
(307) 634-4263/rwagner@wyoming.com

Treasurer Marilyn Bryan
3018 Cronkite, St. Joseph MD 65340
(816) 671-0138/marilynbry@aol.com

Secretary Mary Holden
3580 East 8th Street, Casper WY 82609
(307) 234-5041/mrhldn@coffey.com

National Preservation Officer Dick Ackerman
3027 Twin Oak Pl NW, Salem OR 97304
(503) 581-0328

Overland Journal Update

By Bob Clark
 Editor, *Overland Journal*
Overland Journal needs you.

As the new editor, I'm going to need the help of all of you to keep our quarterly interesting, informative, and of real value to all its readers.

Please keep *OJ* in mind for the following:

Articles & Projects: If you have any comments regarding *OJ*, let me know. If you are working on a trails project that might become an article, or have an article in preparation, I'd be interested in knowing about it.

Letters to the editor: If you would like to comment on a recent article, review, or other portions of the *Journal*, send it along. We will be printing letters to the editor in forthcoming issues when available.

New ideas: If there is some topic or special area of interest that you would like to see addressed in *OJ*, let me know. Or a new section apart from articles and reviews that might be added to the *Journal*, please make the suggestion.

Book reviews: If you know of any new publications which should be reviewed or listed for the benefit of the readers, let me know as soon as possible, along with any information you might have regarding the publisher. We will be listing all recently published books we can identify in each issue of *OJ*, whether or not they will later be reviewed in detail. And if you are interested in reviewing books, let me know your particular area of interest and specialization and your contact address.

Thanks very much for supporting our trail history. I look forward to working with many of you.

Overland Journal Editor Robert Clark can be reached at P.O. Box 14707, Spokane, WA 99214. Phone 509-928-9540. FAX 509-928-436. E-mail clarkedserv@home.com.

Membership (Continued from Page 1)

bring in new members and revenue, and give you the satisfaction of knowing that you helped make OCTA stronger.

Send new applications to: Don Popejoy, East 308 Weile Ave. #3, Spokane, WA. 99208

New dues effective January 1, 2001: Individual \$40, Family \$45, Supporting \$75. Student dues remain at \$15.

The Membership Committee (Don Popejoy, Joyce Bolerjack, Carol Osborne, Arleta Martin) thanks you and encourages everyone to make that special effort.

OCTA Bookstore
On the Web
www.OCTA-trails.org

Awards Nominations Needed

Nominations are now being solicited for OCTA service awards and Friend of the Trail awards to be presented at the August convention in Casper, Wyoming.

The success of OCTA is due to the many dedicated volunteers who work to improve and strengthen the organization, preserve existing trail ruts and historic resources, and educate the public about OCTA and America's historic trails. Our awards program is a small way to recognize and thank these individuals for their dedication.

Please take a few minutes to nominate one or more deserving individuals or organizations for their untiring efforts and many hours of service. Deadline for submission of nominations is June 1.

Categories include the Meritorious Achievement Award, the highest award OCTA can give to recognize long-term and significant contributions to OCTA. Other awards are given to individual OCTA members as Volunteer of the Year.

In addition, individuals or organizations who help with specific shorter-term projects qualify for National Certificates of Appreciation.

Friend of the Trail awards are also given to recognize landowners or other individuals who live along the trails and are intimately associated with preserving and protecting on-the-ground trail segments. A Friend of the Trail nominee need not be an OCTA member to qualify.

Letters of nomination should be sent to Roger Blair, 524 NW 3rd Street, Pendleton, Oregon 97801 (note new address, not in the OCTA directory), telephone 541-966-8854, e-mail rblair@oregontrail.net. Nominations should include specific details as to why the nominee deserves recognition.

— Roger Blair, Awards Chair

Member Deaths

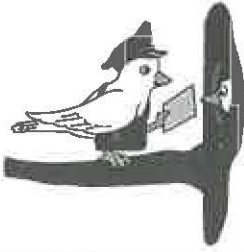
Word has been received of the deaths of four members of OCTA.

Bob Rennells was one of the founding fathers who met in Denver in 1982 to create OCTA and was on the inaugural Board of Directors. According to former OCTA president Roger Blair, Rennells' concern about loss of some trail ruts near Echo, Oregon prompted him to write Greg Franzwa to see what could be done. That led to an August 1982 meeting and formation of OCTA.

Dr. Merle Wells was a noted Idaho historian and also a founder of OCTA. He was Idaho's state historian emeritus and founding editor of *Idaho Yesterdays*, the quarterly journal of the Idaho State Historical Society.

Headquarters also received notice of the death of **Beecher Henderson** of Webster Groves, MO. Beecher and his wife, Helen, were charter members of OCTA.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Crowder, of Portola Valley, CA, a member of the CA-NV chapter and an environmentalist, died in an auto accident on September 29.



News From The Chapters

Northwest

Another year has ended, but the memories will last forever. Well, at least until next year's trail marking and outings season starts again!

In June the Northwest chapter was led along the Whitman's 1836 route across the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon. Tour guides Chuck & Suzanne Hornbuckle followed the U.S. Forest Service trail through the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests. A dry camp was set up the night of June 10 at a remote site near the North Flat springs. This was the Hornbuckle's second such tour in the last 3 years.

Meanwhile, everyone should have the opportunity to do what the Intrepid Trail Markers under the leadership of Vic Bolon were able to do during the last week of June. Beginning in Cecil, Oregon, the TMs located and marked a heretofore overlooked section of the Oregon Trail that took the immigrants down into Willow Creek. Willow Creek must have been a welcome sight after miles of no water since leaving Well Spring. From Willow Creek it's about 16 miles to the next water at Cedar Springs.

Basically the trail is essentially due west with one section from Eight Mile Canyon to the Weatherford Monument on Highway 19, particularly rough due to the deep sand and deep canyons to negotiate. From Cedar Springs the trail continues west to the John Day River. The TMs had to detour south and west and follow the Lower Rock Creek Road to get to the place where the immigrants descended from the plateau to the John Day River.

As we stood there analyzing how the wagons could possibly come over the bluff and reach the John Day, we were simply awed by the courage and ingenuity that would be required to accomplish that leg of the journey. From our vantage point, the two trails that descend are almost straight up and down. It seemed to all of us that wagons would surely run over the oxen that preceded them down from the heights of over 1000 feet.

The climb out of the John Day Canyon at McDonalds Ford is as difficult as the descent into it. Besides being very, very, very steep there is one stretch of some 150 yards that is unbelievable along a side hill. The effort required to keep the wagons upright along this section of the bluff (this is definitely a bluff as opposed to a hill) boggles the mind. (Note: Vic Bolon's report can be read in its entirety on the NW chapter's website under current newsletter > www.nwocta.com.)

On June 2, 2001 Vic will lead a hike along the Oregon Trail to McDonalds Ford and the crossing of the John Day River.



Left to right, Chuck Hornbuckle, Gail Carbiener and Vic Bolon marking the McDonald Ford crossing of the John Day River.

— Photo by Don Popejoy

On July 15-16, Lowell Tiller lead a group along Meek's Cutoff and this two-day event was well attended. Rumor has it that Lowell found the Blue Bucket Mine, at least according to Joyce Bolerjack and Carol Buss, who found him muttering something about not having enough pockets to stuff!

September 16-17 was the last chapter outing of the year. Don Popejoy and Lethene Parks lead a car caravan from old Fort Walla Walla, through the Palouse farm country and on to Plante's Ferry on the Spokane River. This was an extension of last year's Mullan Military Road adventure. On Saturday morning, before the actual tour started, Don showed the group some Lewis and Clark sites along the Walla Walla River, the Columbia River and along the eastward (1806) overland trail known as the Old Celilo Falls Trail.

September 14 was a most important day for the Intrepid Trail Markers. At about 3:30 in the afternoon they completed our initial project of marking the trail into The Dallas. We even drank a couple of cold ones to celebrate the occasion. When looking back at our initial efforts beginning in La Grande (April 1998) and realized that we finally had made it to The Dallas, it was nothing short of the deepest kind of satisfaction.

The Trail Markers owe Jim a debt of immense gratitude for his leadership on trail activities. Since Jim's time as president, the goal of reaching The Dallas has always been a clear and strong motivation. The chapter also wants to acknowledge the

(continued on page 13)

Trails Head



Trails Head President Bill Bullard makes a point during the chapter's "expedition" to Wilderness Park.

— Photo by Barb Maegr

The Last Crossing: Casper 2001

A tentative schedule is in place for "The Last Crossing," the 2001 OCTA Convention to be held in Casper, Wyoming August 12-18.

Two-day pre-convention tours will highlight the Cherokee Trail, while day-long pre-convention bus tours on Monday, August 13, will include Fort Laramie to Glendo and Rock Springs across Rocky Ridge to Casper.



The OCTA Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday, August 14, and those who do not attend the Board meeting can hike in ruts at Independence Rock or go on a bus tour of Fremont Canyon and dams along the North Platte River.

Official opening of the convention will be on Wednesday, August 15, with a keynote address by Dr. Frederick Gowans, author and noted Mountain Man expert. The general membership meeting and chapter meetings will also be held on Wednesday and the day will be capped off with Authors' Night in the OCTA Book Room.

Speakers for sessions on Thursday, August 16, will include Susan Badger Doyle, Jim Lowe, Jack and Patricia Fletcher and Levida Hileman. A panel discussion is also planned.

Also Thursday, there will be tours of the new National Historic Trails Center and workshops on a variety of topics, with the OCTA Awards Banquet on Thursday night.

Bus tours on Friday and Saturday will cover trails and sites both east and west of Casper and there will be a bar-becue at Fort Casper on Friday night, with entertainment by Dorene Ludwig.

Convention information posted on the Wyoming chapter website: w3.trib.com/~rlund/Convention.html

On November 4, a crisp but sunny Saturday morning, sixteen members of Trails Head Chapter answered president Bill Bullard's invitation to the chapter's first "expedition."

Near the western edge of Johnson County, Kansas is Wilderness Park, appropriately named. Once part of the U. S. government's Sunflower Ordnance Plant, the largest production facility of its type in World War II, a parcel of land just outside the government reservation was later given to the nearby city of De Soto for public use. Much of it is maintained by Boy Scouts and a group was camped there November 4.

Raytown historian Walter Cook (honored at the OCTA convention for his preservation work) owns a vast collection of diaries and journals. Although several 1840s diaries mentioned the Captain's Creek area, including the burial of an 1849 cholera victim, it was an 1852 diary that inspired the expedition. Because of a day-long lay over, it described the Captain's Creek area in detail and mentioned a rock inscribed with names. Captain's Creek snakes through Wilderness Park.

Walter, formerly involved in surveys for the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, marked a current map with most likely locations for the rock, based on the diary's remarks. A 1942 newspaper item indicated the rock was there at that time. With this information Sylvia and Charles Mooney checked the park several weeks before the group outing, and prepared sketch maps with key markings.

On the expedition, Bill Bullard led one team and the Mooneys led the other as members explored two separate routes through the park, hiking mostly through brushy, hilly terrain on both sides of the creek with its steep banks. Boy Scout leaders on site indicated the location of a large outcropping of rock which became obvious as the reason for the two different routes. The 1852 path saved some time by staying south of the rock impediment, which members examined without success.

Over brown bag lunches, comments were shared about hopes -- dashed and kindled -- and ideas on where to look next. When the group finally headed home, there were no tangible 'finds,' but a keen sense of camaraderie and the desire to return someday.

Bill Bullard will serve as "Information Center" for individuals or small groups who return to the site in the next few months, tracking who has concentrated on specific areas of the land and what leads they find.

"If we locate the rock, it will be an historic find, indeed," Bullard says. "We never assumed there would be a stone monument at the beginning of the trail."

As for leaving empty-handed, he is philosophical about that. "If it was an easy search, earlier people would have already located it."

Trails Head also has elected new officers for 2001. President Bill Bullard, Vice President Dick Nelson, Secretary Elaine McNabney, Treasurer, Jim Budde.

— Barb Maegr

Southwest

The October 2000 mapping week was the eleventh time the committee has spent extended time in the field since the fall of 1995. We have been as far east as Ft. Smith, Arkansas and as far west as Rancho del Chino, California.

Most work, however, has been in southwest New Mexico and southeast Arizona. Our skills have increased and various new technologies have been utilized, thus the trail work has benefited.

The big challenge has been knowing where to look for the trails. Knowing the general corridor used by travelers is not usually enough to find the actual path without preparation, deduction, keen eyes and luck.

Field work is preceded by documentary research. Trail diaries are carefully read for information about where they traveled, mileages, landmarks, and directions. Historic maps include General Land Office maps, early military maps and early topographic maps. Prior to each time in the field, packets of pertinent material are prepared for the working area. Each person has a copy for his or her use as we progress.

Multiple Garmin GPS units are used by the group. FRS radios keep us in contact as we scatter to look for trail. Photographs are taken by several, using both digital and conventional cameras. Each night the GPS data and digital photographs are downloaded into a laptop computer. Waypoint notes are kept about each GPS waypoint and added to the downloaded GPS information in the computer.

Progress has been slow in many areas where the terrain is flat with semi-arid vegetation. Rain tends to come in large amounts when it does come, causing sheet erosion through these flats. Trail evidence may be impossible to find on the surface after years of this weathering, especially if there are no surface rocks to hold rust from the wagon wheels.

Participants come self-contained in their vehicles with the capability to dry camp wherever we find ourselves at the end of a mapping day. While a campground with facilities is nice, they are usually not available in the areas where we may be. This also means we can pick right up in the morning and continue. All vehicles are 4WD but, unfortunately, they are not cactus proof. Flat tires from cactus spines and creosote stems tend to be our biggest hazard. The vehicles get us to the area, but hiking does the rest of the job.

The project has been a learning experience for those involved. We have become more adept at finding trail signs,

forming good working relationships within the group as well as with private landowners and government agencies. We have learned what works best for living and working in the rugged areas which confront us. We continue to use OCTA's "Mapping Emigrant Trails" manual as our basic text.

Lest you think we must be about finished with this project, it has hardly begun. Don Buck has estimated there are about 6,000 miles of trail in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Colorado and California that comprise the southern trails complex. There are many years of work ahead of us, even with all the new technologies.

To date the field work amounts to approximately 75 person-weeks. This does not include the hours

spent in pre- and post-trip research and reporting, or travel time.

The October 2000 mapping trip was conducted in two areas. We returned to the Apache Pass area of SE Arizona, continuing to look for trail east of the pass. Some progress was made there. We then worked in the area near Soldiers Farewell Hill in SW New Mexico. The trail forks here, the main Southern Trail leading southwest towards Guadalupe Pass, the Apache Pass alternate leading west. We found evidence of the trail on both of these segments during our time in the area. Heavy rain did end the mapping week a day early.

— Rose Ann Tompkins



Camping in the wide open spaces along the Southern Trail. Left to right, Dave Hollecker, Tracy DeVault, Don Buck, Richard Greene, Marie Greene.

— Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins

Northwest

(continued)

most devoted group of guys anyone would want to work with as they moved the project forward step by step over mountains (The Blues), across deserts (The Boardman Bombing Range) and through canyons (of the John Day and the Deshutes Rivers). Under the leadership of Vic Bolon, those carrying the carsonite markers and the "pounder" were: Chuck Hornbuckle, Roy Schapler, Tom Laidlaw, Wayne Burck, Billy Arends, Dick Pingrey, Gail Carbiener, John Bristow, Bob Coward, Dick Klein, Rich Harmon and Don Popejoy. We owe these very dedicated folks our most sincere appreciation for the job they have done. They are people who get things done and seem to always be able to manipulate their schedules to help out when or where help is needed. Without Vic Bolon's guidance and determination, we would still lost in the Blues. The Trail Markers salute Vic! -- Don Popejoy

Idaho

Opening the fall meeting of the Idaho Chapter, held September 30 in Almo near the City of Rocks, President Bill Wilson announced that he will accept the responsibility of serving as president for another year.

President-elect Don Popejoy of Spokane was scheduled to take over as president at the beginning of the year, but a conflict of interest has prevented him from doing so, said Wilson. The present board was reelected for another year by acclamation.

Wilson announced that the recently updated GPS (Global Positioning System) unit is being put to work by OCTA to accurately pinpoint the course of the Oregon Trail and its variant routes. This will be an on-going project over the next few years, he said.

He recommended that a preservation officer be appointed for Eastern Idaho, but no action was taken on the suggestion.

Following the meeting, held in the City of Rocks headquarters office, the members assembled at the nearby Almo Creek Outpost for lunch, after which a Park Ranger led a caravan of vehicles on a tour of The Silent City of Rocks.

The first stop was the Circle Creek Overlook from which prominent features throughout the Park were pointed out. Next stop was Camp Rock where many of the pioneer wagon trains stopped for shelter, rest and water. Following a visit to the massive Bathtub Rock, the tour assembled at Twin Sisters. A walking tour brought the members to Pinnacle Pass, the narrow corridor through which the pioneers made their way into the next valley. Here a slit in the bordering granite made by sliding cables used to lower the wagons down the smooth and slippery rock surface was pointed out.

Some of the members spent the night under the stars at Twin Sisters while others returned the next morning to explore the course of the Kelton Road, an early stage and freight line running through the City of Rocks and connecting the transcontinental railroad at Kelton, Utah, with the Boise Valley and beyond. There was, of course, no railroad across southern Idaho until 1884 when the Oregon Shortline was completed.

The group made occasional stops going down Birch Creek Canyon to contemplate the route of the stage line along the foothills to the east since they could not go all the way down the narrowing canyon.

Passing through Oakley, it was pointed out that the stage route went south of the present town site to Oakley Meadows, then northwest along the foothills to the mouth of Rock Creek Canyon. There were stage stations at Oakley Meadows, Mountain Meadows (12 miles) and Rock Creek (14 miles). At Rock Creek, the Kelton Road joined the Oregon Trail, coming in from the Burley-Milner area.

Rock Creek Station was established downstream a couple of miles, where a major town site was established with a store, livery stable, blacksmith shop, post office, hotel and a saloon. At one time there were 26 buildings at the Rock Creek Station, according to spokesperson Marian Posey Wilson of Jerome, a member of Friends of Stricker Ranch, the name by

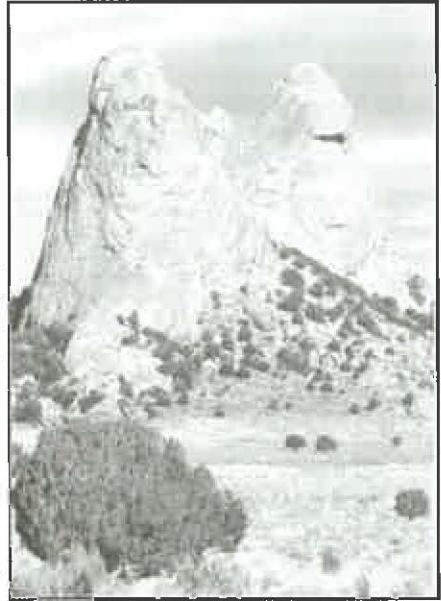
which the site has come to be known. There was even a part-time jail -- in a windowless rock cellar built for storage of supplies for the store.

At the stage station there was a small log house built which later was purchased by Herman Stricker. After that house burned down, Stricker built the present 11-room house in 1900 in which he and his family lived and travelers often spent a restful night.

The Overland Stage Line also joined the Kelton

Road at Rock Creek Station. This was a freight and passenger route "between the Atlantic and Pacific States." A flyer announced that it took only five days to travel from Salt Lake City to Denver and cost "175 Greenbacks." From Boise to Salt Lake also took five days, to be paid with "\$100 Gold Dust." There were "daily coaches" for Omaha, Virginia City and San Francisco.

-- Ralph W. Maughan



Twin Sisters, one of the most prominent features of the City of Rocks area.

--- Photo by Ralph Maughan

CA-NV Spring Symposium

The southern emigrant trails will be the focus on a spring symposium sponsored by the California-Nevada Chapter on Saturday and Sunday, March 10-11, in Temecula, CA.

Saturday's schedule at the Temecula Community Recreation Center will include a full day of presentations, including "The Most Difficult Trail: Salt Lake City to Los Angeles," "Later Travel on the Southern Emigrant Trail," "Mapping Southern Emigrant Trails," and "Colonel Carleton: March Down the Southern Emigrant Trail."

Presenters will include Leo Lyman, John Robinson, Phil Brigandi, Don Buck, Tracy DeVault, Rose Anne Tompkins, Richard Buskenkell and Steve Clugston.

On Sunday there will be an all-day bus tour of the Southern Emigrant Trail and Butterfield Road from Temecula to Vallecito Stage Station in Anza Borrego State Park.

For registration information, contact Joanne Hinchliff, P.O. Box 685, San Jacinto CA 92581.

Crossroads

Winter has arrived with a fury and put a halt to chapter trail treks and trail marking and mapping efforts for this year.

Over 30 Crossroad members managed to get in an excellent field trip October 14-15 which followed Overland Stage Stations from Ham's Fork to Mountain Dell. An outstanding field trip guide book was published by our guide, John Eldredge. John does amazing things with his computer and proved it with his graphics.

Plans for a spring field trip on the Utah section of the Spanish Trail are being discussed and we hope members from other chapters will join us. This year's spring field trip was on the Pony Express Trail in Western Utah. Over 50 members and guests in 20 vehicles participated. On the second day of the outing, we visited the old Wendover Air Base museum and toured the WWII facilities where the atom bomb was assembled and loaded. OCTA members traveling through Wendover should take the time to visit the historic facility.

There are still threats to the emigrant trail routes in Utah and, like other chapters, we are trying to head off projects that will negatively impact the little physical evidence remaining of the Hastings/California Trail routes through Utah. On October 25, several members of Utah Crossroads, regional BLM representatives, and Long Distance Trails Office Superintendent Jere Krakow, met with representatives of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Private Fuel Storage (PFS) officials.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the eligibility of cultural resource sites in Skull Valley that should be mitigated in the event those sites were adversely impacted by the proposed rail spur. The Hastings Cutoff/California emigrant trail will be mitigated and an archeological survey will be conducted along the length of the trail from Hope Wells to Redlum Spring. A rail spur will definitely mar the "viewscape" across Skull Valley. A proposed water pipeline in East Canyon along the trail corridor of the Donner-Reed, Mormon Pioneer, California and Pony Express trails is still a threat, although those proposing the huge project have "backed off" after being threatened with court action (an impartial environmental impact study was never conducted).

Utah's original statehouse in Fillmore is the oldest federal building still standing west of the Missouri River. Sadly, funds for renovation and improvements for the old building are lacking and the Territorial State Park does not generate enough funds to support the site as a tourist attraction. OCTA members traveling through central Utah might enjoy a stop at the historic building, which was built in 1855. The museum in the old statehouse is a mix of artifacts, many unrelated to the building's history.

Chapter elections take place in January. John Eldredge took over as Chapter President when Steve Berlin had to relinquish his chair due to pressing business matters. Steve will serve as Vice President until the January elections. Steve designed and set up our Utah Crossroads website and has assisted other chapters in getting their websites started.

-- Al Mulder



Crossroads Chapter members receive a briefing on the archeological dig at Fort Bridger.

— Photo by Al Mulder

California Hill Transfer Set

The long-anticipated transfer of ownership of historic California Hill from the Oregon-California Trails Association to the Nebraska State Historical Society was expected to take place by December 31.

California Hill, located west of Brule, NE, was a major landmark for emigrants who crossed the South Platte River at Upper Ford. After the crossing, emigrants climbed California Hill and made an 18 mile journey to the head of Ash Hollow.

Terrain restricted the route wagons could take up the hill and deep ruts from their progress are still visible.

California Hill was gifted to OCTA by Malcom E. Smith Jr. in memory of Irene D. Paden, who dedicated much of her life to retracing and writing about the trails.

New CA-NV Website

The California-Nevada chapter website has moved. The new address is <http://members.home.net/canvocta>

Visit OCTA on the web
www.OCTA-trails.org

2001 Convention Information
W3.trib.com/~rlund/Convention.html

California-Nevada

The final CA/NV Chapter outing of 2000 took place on the weekend of September 29 - 30 when about 25 chapter members fenced and marked the Nancy Ann Allen grave at Bridge Creek on Nobles Trail.

The fencing project was under the direction of Tom Dougherty, and it was a model of pre-planning and efficiency. Everything was pre-cut and drilled, and the entire project was accomplished by lunch time. This included the removal of the badly-deteriorated existing pipe fencing and a general cleaning up of the grave site. The small, existing historical plate was removed and delivered to the custody of the historical museum in nearby Westwood. Following the installation of the marker and fencing, most of the participants accepted the kind invitation of Tom and Jeanine Dougherty to be their guests at a delicious barbecue supper at nearby Bogard Campground adjacent to the historic Lassen and Nobles Trails emigrant camping area on Pine Creek.

The work team was efficient; the company congenial; the autumnal weather delightful, and the supper exceptional. A great time was had by all. For chapter members who may wish to visit the refurbished Nancy Allen grave site in the future, it is most easily reached by leaving Highway 44 to the right (east) at the old Pittville Road junction which is located between Hog Flat Reservoir and Mc Coy Flat Reservoir approximately 10 miles north of the junction of Highway 44 with Highway 36 five miles west of Susanville. It is then approximately four miles to Bridge Creek via the old Pittville Road. The grave is in the large meadow off to the left within a few feet of the creek. Do not attempt this drive before the roads are dry after winter.

The marker inscription at the gravesite reads:

NANCY ALLEN GRAVE—NOBLES EMIGRANT TRAIL

Many hundreds of overland trail emigrants died while crossing the continent during the great westward expansion of the mid-Nineteenth Century. Most of these emigrants were buried in unmarked graves beside the trails, and have been lost to history. This Nancy Ann Allen grave is one of a very few graves which was marked at the time of death on local stone and has survived as a known site down to the present time. It is a very special place for all of those Americans who treasure their national heritage.

The inscription on the gravestone reads:

NANCY ANN ALLEN
Age 25 years
Died Sept. 27, 1857

Research has provided no further biographical information. However, on June 23, 1865, Major Gorham Kimball, driving a flock of sheep to Idaho from California, wrote in his journal: "Found the grave of Mrs. Nancy Allen today. Some poor emigrant woman—on her way to California."

The grave was marked and fenced with iron pipe fencing in



OCTA volunteers working on the Nancy Allen gravesite.

— Photo by Bill Mueller

1924. The inscription on the small attached plate reads: "Restored by 'Women's Study Club' of Westwood 1924." In September, 2000, as part of its program for preserving this nation's overland emigrant trail heritage, the California/Nevada Chapter of OCTA was granted permission by the Fruit Growers Supply Company of Burney, CA to replace the badly-deteriorated and vandalized pipe fencing with this wooden fence and historic marker.

Nobles Trail was opened as an emigrant route into Shasta City and the northern Sacramento Valley in 1852. William Nobles contracted with the merchants of Shasta City to show a party of representatives from that prosperous gold mining settlement the new route in return for the payment of \$2000 with the proviso that "should [the accompanying party] be dissatisfied with the road when they reach the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountain, I shall not consider myself entitled to any remuneration whatsoever." Nobles received his promised fee with the enthusiastic thanks of the party, and continued on to the East, where he was instrumental in the successful effort to establish the Honey Lake, South Pass, Fort Kearny Military Road—the Honey Lake-to-Humboldt-River section of this road being his Nobles Trail.

The route of the trail branched off of the earlier Applegate-Lassen Trail in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada and came by way of Smoke Creek Rush Creek, Honey Lake Valley (Susanville), Bridge Creek, Bogard Station, and Poison Lake. At Poison Lake the trail turned westward and then southward up Butte Creek to enter Lassen National Park at Butte Lake. Here it turned westward again to pass north of Cindercone and Mt. Lassen to Deer Flat Shingletown, Fort Reading, and Shasta City. In later years, branches were opened off of it to Oroville via Lake Almanor and Inskip, to Yreka via Fort Crook and the Old Military Road east of Mt. Shasta. Nobles' route was heavily used in the 1850s and 1860s as a route for bringing large herds of stock into California. -- Mary Mueller

OCTA Members Help Dedicate Emigrant Trail Site

October 20 found OCTA CA-NV Chapter President Bill Webster and his wife Beverly miles from their Bakersfield home in a pretty valley in the Sierra where they had camped with their children over 32 years ago.

The name of this valley? Hope Valley, 25 miles from South Lake Tahoe at the junction of Highways 88 and 89. It is the very same valley that prompted Henry William Bigler, opening the Carson River Route with the first Mormon party on their way to Salt Lake, to write in his journal in 1848: "July 29. Moved across about one mile and half and camped at what we called Hope Valley, as we now began to have hope."

And the very same area used by emigrants "recruiting" after struggling through the three Carson River crossings and before tackling the Devil's Ladder to top Carson Pass and on to the 9,600-foot West Pass to crest the Sierra.

The Websters were among 42 folks gathered for a ribbon-cutting and dedication which marked the opening of a handicap-access fishing area at the old Pickets Junction of Highways 88 (Carson Route) and 89 (south branch of Johnson's Cutoff). But this is a little ahead of the story.

For over 10 years, a group of conservationists under the name of Friends of Hope Valley have been raising awareness and funds to save the valley from developers who envisioned condos and commercial use of this historic area.

Among the most involved were OCTA members John and Patty Brissenden, owners of Sorensen's and Hope Valley Resorts in Woodfords Canyon, just east of Hope Valley. Over 10 years, \$25 million was raised to buy approximately 25,000 acres to make it public land, including \$4 million from California Proposition 70 (money for Parks and Wildlife).

Quoting Richard Flint of the California Department of Fish and Game, approximately 16,000 acres is under his department's protection in the valley. He was very proud of the fact that only two small culverts were used in construction of the new access. The slope and angle of the cement trail means that water flooding up from the river or snow water melting from above will not impact natural flow. The remaining acreage is under the protection of Toiyabe National Forest.

The new asphalt parking area includes four handicapped and eight regular parking places and a handicap-designed restroom. From there a wheelchair can easily roll on an asphalt road (old Highway 89) to the turn onto a wide cement trail that leads gently to two excellent fishing platforms on the river to fish for trout. Cost: \$250,000.

So why is the story of any interest to emigrant trail buffs?

Five yards down the trail from the restroom, old Highway 88 crosses the trail and running parallel with old 88 is the Emigrant Trail. Looking to your left five yards is a beautiful interpretive OCTA sign directly on the Emigrant Trail.

The project was approved over two years ago by the CA-NV Chapter, which agreed to pay half of the cost of the sign, with Fish and Game paying the other half. Tom Hunt, CA-NV Chapter Preservation Officer, supported and helped OCTA Board member Frank Tortorich in the wording of the sign and its procurement. The sign was installed and dedicated by a small group of OCTA members in late July just prior to be-

ginning a two-day chapter work program.

Those present at the dedication included Bob Anderson, representing the Alpine County Chamber of Commerce, and Alpine County Supervisor Herman Zellmer, who have jointly stepped forward to pay for the trash pick-up and pumping of the holding tank in perpetuity; Banky Curtis of the California Department of Fish and Game, a true supporter of this first handicap fishing site in Alpine

County; Georgia Lipphardt of the Wildlife Conservation Board and Judy Warren of Friends of Hope Valley and a CAL Trout Streamkeeper, who represented their organizations which worked with Fish and Game and Caltrans to see this ten-year dream come to fruition; and Frank Tortorich, representing OCTA.

Frank gave a short (well...for him) history of the valley and its importance in the westward migration. He also introduced Bill Webster, who praised Frank for the work he has done in diligently protecting this part of the overland trails that OCTA strives to preserve throughout the West.

After each speaker acknowledged others who were part of the project, Fish and Game brought a truckload of trout for young and old alike to carry buckets of fish to the river and set free in their new home. First to be honored were the children of the contractor who, only days before, joined the family wire-brushing large rocks and boulders of splashed-on cement to enable the site to look its best for the ceremony.

Concluding the activities, Frank Tortorich, Sorensen's eminent Emigrant Trail historian, gave about 20 folks a short tour on the Trail in the area.

As far I know, this is the only handicap accessible interpretive marker on pristine trail in California.

Other OCTA members attending the dedication were Milt and June Otto of Marysville and Mary Ann Tortorich.

— Mary Ann Tortorich



Installing the OCTA plaque on the Emigrant Trail are, clockwise from bottom left, Ford Osborn, Garald Mosher, Frank Tortorich and Jim Carman.

— Photo by Mary Ann Tortorich

The Reading Trail . . . by Lyndia Carter



Sometime back, I was discussing children's historical literature with fellow OCTA member Rosemary Palmer, an expert on children's trail experiences. Rosemary suggested, and I totally agree, that actual diaries kept by children and teens on the trail and their reminiscences about their journeys west should form a significant part of historical reading for young people. Real histories can be every bit as engrossing for young readers as historical fiction and much more accurate and informative. Wouldn't it be wonderful if real stories were used, especially if they gripped the child's attention as well as a well-written historical novel? It is fortunate, then, that OCTA members recently have distinguished themselves by writing wonderful historical works for children.

First, *The Overland Memoir of Charles Frederick True: A Teenager on the California Trail, 1859* (by Charles Frederick True, edited by his granddaughter, Sally Ralston True; 1966, republished by the Oregon-California Trails Association, Independence, Missouri, 1993). This book is an excellent trail resource for adults, but let us not miss the benefit of this book as reading for junior and senior high school students who want to know what it was like to be a teenager going west by covered wagon with a family. Charles True was just 16 when he made the journey to California. Many years later, in his seventies, he wrote his memories down. He wrote with absorbing style and good humor, and he literally makes trail life come alive for children today. The past is anything but dead in this fine reminiscence. He was a real person and everything he writes is real – the reasons they went west, his tender feelings for his faithful dog, his relationships with his parents, his worries for his four-year-old sister who breaks her leg under a wagon wheel, how he dealt with the fun, tedium and trials of the long journey. He paints an intimate, authentic picture, one that even the most knowledgeable and skilled fiction writer would have great difficulty equaling. If you already have this book, share it with a teenager. If you don't yet own it in your personal library, it's time to get it now from OCTA headquarters. Read it, research with it, and best of all, make it available to a young person, who will learn that history is made up of young men and women a whole lot like themselves, whose trail adventures and incidents they can vicariously experience only through voices from the past.

OCTA member Violet T. Kimball makes a multitude of real children's actual trail experiences accessible to young history buffs in her book *Stories of Young Pioneers: In Their Own Words* (Missoula, Montana; Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2000). You can purchase the book for \$14 by writing the publishing company at P.O. Box 2399, Missoula, MT 59806, or by calling 1-800-234-5308. Written especially for middle school and junior high school ages (10-15), this well-crafted book is also very readable and useful for high school students. (I found it delightful reading for adults as well.) Kimball's style is easy for students to comprehend, thus maintaining high interest, but she certainly does not insult them by speaking down to them. Pulling from an enormous range of sources from young travelers on the Mormon, Oregon and California trails, she

beautifully blends quotes from reminiscences, autobiographies and actual diaries with her well-researched commentary. She achieves a fine balance between the participants' voices and her own. Kimball's young trail people range in age from six years old to nineteen, thus giving a broad spectrum of experiences and reactions. She organized her chapters thematically and between them inserted profiles of specific children or teens who made the westward journey. This format gives both the whole experience in one person's view and specific information regarding various aspects of trail life. Kimball covers just about everything that kids would be interested in: preparations, daily routine, fun and recreation, work, discipline, Indians, animal life (domestic and otherwise), love and courtship, sickness, death, danger, trials and adventure. Her writing demonstrates skillful scholarship and a commitment to tell the story the way it was. This book will help children feel and experience what those long-ago children lived.

But what if a real someone did not leave his or her own record? T.L. Loftin came to grips with that dilemma in her book *Westward Go! Fremont, Randy & Kit Carson Open Wide the Oregon Trail* (Santa Fe, New Mexico; Toe Loftin Publishers, 2000). Loftin wanted to tell the exciting story of the 1842 Fremont expedition through the eyes of 12-year-old Randolph Benton, who accompanied his brother-in-law John Charles Fremont on his assignment to map the Oregon Trail to South Pass. Fremont left an excellent record, but the boy did not. Fremont made very little mention of Randy. Yet the child was there, experiencing the grand adventure of exploring Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. Loftin dramatizes the story by heavily relying on Fremont's account, other historical documents, books, and opinions of experts, then filling in the blanks with logical speculation, using historical clues and some good creativity to tell what the boy could have been doing. It makes for fascinating reading and brings knowledge of the Fremont expedition within the grasp of young readers who like a good story and don't want to read a textbook rendition. To distinguish fact from speculation, Loftin uses margin notes to inform the reader how she obtains each piece of the story. The book reads like a novel, something that kids will appreciate, and is full of high adventure, emotion and humor. Of course, Randy is in the middle of everything, the hero, as all children would like to be. There are also many illustrations by Beth Berryman. It is well suited for junior high and high school students, but adults will also find it captivating reading. At nearly 500 pages, the book may be a little much for some young readers, so it may be a good idea to read it with him or her, which is a great way to do a book anyway. Avid readers probably won't mind the length because the story will carry them through the pages. In a couple of places, the reading gets a little technical, but otherwise the reader is swept off on a grand, fast-paced adventure with Randy. This is an out-of-the-ordinary work of historical fiction, with a strong documentary base, and it is pleasurable reading. You can purchase it for \$25 from Tee Loftin Publishers, 685 Gonzales Road, Santa Fe, N.M. 87501 (Fax or telephone 305-989-1931).

Membership Roster Update

New National Members of OCTA since October 1, 2000

Bay, Mary Glennys Baker
6401 Stagecoach Rd.
Killeen, TX 76542

Beers, Frank T. III
3008 Hawksdale Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89134
702-242-2682

Bolte, Richard A.
755 Rae Dr.
Hartland, WI 53029

Boos, Kevin
1791 S. 69th Rd.
Nebraska City NE 68410
402-874-9035

Brown, Dr. and Mrs. Dale
2338 St. Joseph Dr.
Schenectady, NY 12309

Carver, Mona
57 Pine Mountain Rd.
Bakersfield, CA 93308

Cherry, Wesley L.
1541 Criteser Loop
Toledo, OR 97391
541-336-2009

Craig, Richard
13428 Mt. Tabor Rd.
Odessa, MO 64076

Crosby, Peter
PO Box 7919
Tahoe City, CA 96145
530-583-9398

Davis, Lynn
15759 213 Ave
Spirit Lake, IA 51360
712-336-4182

Du Pas, Martha
Dexter McCarty Mid-School
4000 SE 5th St.
Gresham, OR 97080

Feldhausen, Alan
1098 10th Rd.
Marysville, KS 66508
785-562-2641

Gaither, Grant
210 Lyon Dr.
Fernley NV 89408

Hitt, Clark
Box 198
Crowell, TX 79227
940-684-1970

Hobson, Nathaniel
1558 Houghton Ave.
Corning, CA 96021
530-824-0798

Ingram, Carma
702 Clovercrest Dr.
Murray, UT 84123
801-268-3027

Isakson, Richard
5072 St. Andrews Dr.
Loveland, CO 80537
970-669-6767

Keane, Melissa
704 E 4th
Tucson, AZ 85719-5013
520-882-0414

**Koenig, Dr. Ken &
Ms. Lisa Rose**
217 National St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-425-8836

Kraft/Lund Family
Rt 1 Box 124A
287 Indian Creek Rd.
Lusk, WY 82225

Lawrence, Amy Marie
15 Lawrence Rd.
Laramie, WY 82070
307-745-5948

Marek, Ernie & Michele
241 N. Wolf Rd.
Des Plaines, IL 60016
847-635-8365

Martin, Wes
4909 Cherokee Rd NE
Albuquerque, NM 87100
505-837-1361

McCormick, Jeane
5625 SE Paulen Rd.
Berryton, KS 66409
785-862-2707

Mesken, Lorraine
2610 W. 49th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55410
612-922-3845

Noonan, Doumina
1649 Halpin Rd.
New Haven, VT 05472

Oddy, John
49195 Bell Acres Rd
Chilliwack, British Columbia
Canada V4Z1C1
604-858-6809

Palmer, John
1400 Watertrough Rd.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Pardue, Jeff
690 NE 6th St.
Hermiston, OR 97838
541-567-2641

Pautz, Maurice E.
3068 S. Pitkin Way
Aurora, CO 80013
303-690-7554

Phillips, Gerald & Patricia
2143 Thomas
Berkley, MI 48072
248-543-4528

Sapp, Mary L.
3405 Creasy Springs Rd.
Columbia, MO 65202
573-442-6230

Smith, Edgar C.
PO Box 6073
Carmel, CA 93921

Smith, Molly
19365 E. Club House Ct.
Sandy, OR 97055
503-622-4838

Stallones, Tia
1010 Dearborne
Caldwell, ID 83605

Teresi, Anthony T.
PO Box 524
Lodi, CA 95241

**Thackrey, Donald E. &
Sherry**
1 Dover Ct.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
734-663-2581

Toole, Nancy Baker
834 Berkshire Dr.
Rockledge, FL 32955

Wesockes, Joan
PO Box 9279
San Diego, CA 92169
858-272-3871

White, Kenneth L.
14 Woodside Dr.
Prescott, AZ 86305
520-445-4036

Wilbur, Joan
5881 Bell Rd.
Redding, CA 96001
530-241-8156

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