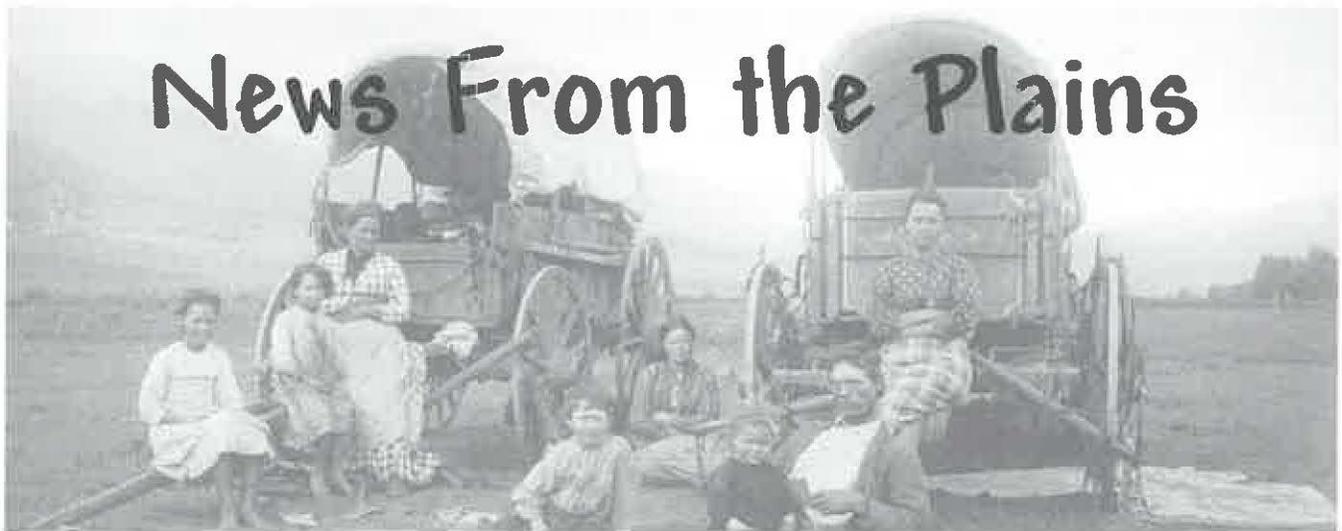


# News From the Plains



Vol. XXI. No. 3

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Summer 2007

## Western Nebraska Ready for OCTA

By Barb Netherland

By now I hope everyone has received a registration book for the convention, if not call OCTA headquarters toll free at 888-811-6282 and one will be sent to you. Plans are moving along nicely and we are

looking forward to your visit. The OCTA convention has created a lot of buzz in our area and some great things are beginning to happen. Most importantly locals are taking a second look at the incredible scenic beauty and the abundant history that cuts such a wide swath through the

North Platte River Valley. So thanks, OCTA, for giving western Nebraska the opportunity to remind itself of its unique role in our nation's history.

*Continued on Page 3*

## The City of Gering Welcomes OCTA

The Gering Convention and Visitor's Bureau unveiled its new banners and marketing campaign in late May. Twenty-eight banners will inform visitors and remind locals that Gering's "M" Street is part of the historic Oregon Trail. The banners, a cooperative effort funded by local business and Keno dollars, came about after a valiant, but failed attempt to change the name of "M" St. to Old Oregon Trail Road. The banners will be placed the week before the OCTA Convention.

Gering CVB's marketing campaign is entitled "101 Oregon Trail Adventures to Fun." Local residents are asked to submit ideas, which will be compiled and available to OCTA members at the convention.



Jodi Ruzicka, President of the Gering CVB, left, and Karla Niedan-Streeks, Executive Director, right, prepare for OCTA to arrive. (Photo by Rick Myers, Star Herald)

## 2007 OCTA Officers

**Vern Gorzitze**, *President*, 3026 Metropolitan Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84109; [vergor@viawest.net](mailto:vergor@viawest.net)

**Glenn Harrison**, *Vice President*, 1132 30th PL. SW, Albany, OR 97321-3419; [glennharrison@cmug.com](mailto:glennharrison@cmug.com)

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**Dave Welch**, *National Preservation Officer*, 4374 Vashon Dr. NE Lacey, WA 98516; 360-923-0438; [welchdj@comcast.net](mailto:welchdj@comcast.net)

**Randy Wagner**, *Past President*, 1007 Monroe Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82001-6617; [rwagnerfoto@aol.com](mailto:rwagnerfoto@aol.com)

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**Officers are voting members of the Board**

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**NFP Fall Issue Deadline  
August 25, 2007**



### News From the Plains

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# Convention Plans Finalized

*Continued from Front Page*

Several people have contacted us with travel/transportation related questions so we want to give some general information:

## Airports

Scottsbluff has an airport – an extremely nice one, actually. As an option you can fly to Denver and take the Denver Coach to Gering/Scottsbluff or you can rent a car and drive (about a four-hour trip).

Gering/Scottsbluff does not have a public transportation system. Cars can be rented through Hertz, located at the Scotts Bluff County Airport, or Enterprise, which is located in Scottsbluff. The motels listed in the registration book have shuttles to pick up guests from the airport (except for the Circle S Lodge.) The Gering Convention and Visitors Bureau and the convention committee are working with motels and volunteers to arrange “limited” transportation from Scottsbluff motels to the Gering Civic Center for those who do not have transportation.

The pre- and post-convention tours, other than the Gering/Scottsbluff attractions tour, are located some distance from Gering/Scottsbluff. Hopefully, the following information is helpful in your planning.

• **Randy Brown’s Sunday tour** ending at Fort Laramie is an hour’s drive (53 miles) from Gering/Scottsbluff and the Monday tour ending in Glendo, WY is two hours (100 miles) away. Hint: Don’t speed, especially in Lingle!

• **Linda Tacey’s tour** in Sutherland, NE is three hours away (180 miles) from Gering/Scottsbluff and is in the **Central Time zone** (western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming are in the Mountain Time zone). North

Platte (Central Time zone) or Ogallala (Mountain Time zone) are about 25 miles from Sutherland (one east, one west) and have fine motels.

• **Bill Peterson’s tour** will begin near Ogallala, two and a half hours (145 miles) from Gering/Scottsbluff and ends in Julesburg, CO, two hours (120 miles) from Gering/Scottsbluff.

• **Signal Bluff hiking tour** is located near Ash Hollow at Lewellen, NE (pop. 280). Ogallala, 30 miles from Lewellen, and Bridgeport, about 60 miles from Lewellen, both have nice motels. Signal Bluff is about 100 miles from Gering/Scottsbluff.

Hint: Don’t speed, especially in Lewellen.

• **The Oregon Trail Wagon Train** is near Bayard about 20 miles east of Gering/Scottsbluff.

Transportation to Tuesday’s evening event at Scotts Bluff and Friday’s evening activity at Five Rocks is on your own, but if you need transportation assistance, please let us know in advance by contacting Loren Pospisil at 308-586-2581, e-mail: [chimrock@scottsbluff.net](mailto:chimrock@scottsbluff.net) or Barb Netherland at 308-436-5411, e-mail: [npvm@earthlink.net](mailto:npvm@earthlink.net)

Busses will be available Saturday night, Aug. 11, to reach the steak cook-out at the Oregon Trail Wagon Train in Bayard.

**Another helpful hint when traveling in western Nebraska:** When referring to the National Monument or the county – Scotts Bluff is two words. When referring to the city – Scottsbluff is one word. Knowing this little tidbit can help ease a lot of frustration.

See you in August.  
2007 Convention Committee

## 2007 Board Election Results

**By Glenn Harrison  
OCTA Vice President**

The OCTA Board Election has been conducted and the ballots carefully counted. The four candidates receiving the most votes will be elected and confirmed by those attending the OCTA Convention. Because a Board member resignation is anticipated, it is likely that the fifth placed candidate will be elected by the Board to fill the vacancy and also confirmed by those attending the OCTA Convention. So five of the six 2007 candidates should become Board members.

The election results are as follows:

John Mark Lambertson	535
Bill Wilson	497
Pat Etter	466
Fern Linton	385
Brent Reber	383
Bill Petersen	304
<i>Ballots counted</i>	<i>709</i>

## What’s Happening...

**July 21, 2007**

Nevada Hastings Cutoff Tour  
Secret Pass to Overland Pass

**September 8, 2007**

Northwest Chapter Picnic  
Whidbey Island in Puget Sound

**September 15, 2007**

Nevada Tour  
North Fork of the Humboldt

## The President Sounds Off...

Vern Gorzitze  
vergor@viavest.net

### Priorities - Loyalty - Support

*"...our president is wanting to know why more members are not attending the conventions. I think it's time you let the board know the reasons why you don't take off work and drive for days to buy raffle tickets, pay extra for a meal with the president, or attend a meeting to hear decisions that have already been made ...."*

(Extracted from a current OCTA Chapter Newsletter)

I have strong feelings about membership in an organization. I believe my activities and interaction within any group should be built on the foundation of priorities, loyalty and support. As an example, silent auctions, selling holiday wrapping paper, PTA bake sales, Girl Scout cookies, bingo parties, and raffle tickets are tools used in fund raising. Conferences, or conventions as we have chosen to call our yearly gatherings, are all about raising money (a fun way to raise money). Most organizations that I know of need funds for their day to day operations, OCTA is no different. I believe OCTA gives its members something for the money they spend with us.

I would like to paraphrase a story that caused me to stop, sit up, take notice, and think about its meaning. I know the message it tries to send can be applied to our membership in OCTA.

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and the two glasses of wine...

A professor stood before his

philosophy class and had several items in front of him on his desk. When the class began, without a word, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once again if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "yes."

The professor then produced two glasses of wine from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things; your family, your children, your health, your friends, and your favorite passions; things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full." (Your association with OCTA might be considered a favorite passion – it's one of mine).

The Professor continued saying, "The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, and your car," (I know many members of OCTA who would add participation, responsibilities, support, loyalty, and

OCTA friendships).

"The sand is everything else; the small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls."

"The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff" (like looking for reasons not to go somewhere or do something) "you will never have room for the things that are important to you."

"Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children or grandchildren. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal.

"Take care of the golf balls **FIRST** – the things that really matter. Second set your **PRIORITIES**, and give your **LOYALTY** and **SUPPORT**. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the wine represented.

The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of glasses of wine with a friend."

To be Available at the  
2007 OCTA Convention  
**2008 Calendar**  
Artwork by School Children  
Ages 6-12  
Education Committee  
**25th Anniversary Project**  
**\$11.95 plus \$5 (P&H)**

## Headquarters' Manager's Report

Kathy Conway  
Kconway@indepmo.org

There is still time to register for the 2007 OCTA Convention in Gering/Scottsbluff, NE, Aug. 8-12. Join us in the festivities as we celebrate OCTA's 25th Anniversary along the Great Platte River Road. You won't want to miss the tours, wagon rides, cookouts, and an outdoor evening performance at the Five Rocks Amphitheater. And besides, if you don't come Loren Pospisil, this year's convention chair, will be very disappointed that you did not see Chimney Rock under the stars! A place ".....well worth a visit across the Plains to see.....in the dizziness of distance and towering to the heavens." (Gelwicks, 1849)

Your contributions made our Annual Fund Raising Campaign a great success!

200 members responded to this year's appeal and donated to the following funds:

Annual	\$11,950
Education	825
Endowment	817
Loomis Fund	985
Martin Fund	50
Preservation	5,795
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,422</b>

Members contributing to the campaign since February of 2007 are:

Lynne Alvord  
Carol Bachhuber  
Jim Barr  
Mary Glennys Baker Bay  
Brian S. Bean  
Gary J. Bjorge  
Roger Blair and Susan Doyle  
Victor and Nancy Bolon  
Patty and John Brissenden  
Dennis Brown  
Lloyd Brownell  
Marvin and Dorene Burke

Timothy A. Burns  
John and Roseann Carpenter  
George and Marilyn  
Robert and Lyndia  
Don Clark  
Jim and Karin Clawson  
Dick and Cynthia Clover  
Milt, Kay and Rylene Coffman  
Evelyn Colvin  
Nancy and Arthur Costa  
Connye Crump  
Sandra Sue Dragoo  
Howard Dugger  
Lorraine Dyson  
Nicholas H. Edwards  
Janet Higley Elliott  
Bonnie W. Epstein  
David H. Evans  
Thomas Fee  
James Fitzgerald  
Eleanor Fry  
Roger and Karen Gash  
Charlotte Glinski  
Ted and Lois Gobin  
Paul Grunland  
Virginia Hammerness  
Theodore Heil  
James B. Herring  
Gerard Hilferty  
William and Jan Hill  
Joanne Hinchliff  
Allen and Marian Hjelmfelt  
Ted and Arlene Hopkins  
Walter Huebner  
Betty Hughston  
Carl and Sue Jacobson  
Maren Jeppsen  
Nancy Kader  
Edna Kennell  
Earl Kersten  
Philip S. King  
William H. Knight  
Watson M. Laetsch  
Eric A. Lauha  
Kalista S. Lehrer  
David Leroy and Nancy Kauh  
Charles Lewis  
Kent R. Link  
A. S. Littlefield  
Lois B. Lober  
Sarah Lund  
Ed and Dollie Lynch

Hal and Sharon Manhart  
Jon and Suzanne McBride  
Jim McClain  
Larry and Ellie McClure  
Keith Meldahl  
Bob Midkiff  
Dan Miller  
Chuck Milliken  
William Moe  
Robert L. Munkres  
Virginia Nelson  
Daniel A. Netzel  
NW OCTA Chapter  
Mary Olch  
Raechel Parker  
M. Lethene Parks  
Shannon E. Perry  
Joe Pickett  
Jim and Eula Pritchard  
Brooks Ragen  
Jan Redding  
Louis N. Ritten  
Louise Hammer Rossi  
Raymond E. Schoch  
Mark and Beth Ann Schumacher  
Gene Serr  
Gary and Marley Shurtleff  
Art Siverling  
Fred Six  
Theresa Speer  
John D Stiles  
Jay and Leo Stovall  
Richard and Shirley Trevalee  
Richard and Marcia Troop  
Harry L Tuten  
C M Wade  
Lorna Waltz  
Gil Ward  
Roger Weber  
Walter and Jacqueline  
Dick Young

### OCTA Membership Roster

*\$5. S&H included.*

Contact Headquarters to  
order by calling  
888-811-6282

**From the Association Manager...**

Travis Boley  
Tboley@indepmo.org

On August 17, 2006, President Bush signed into law the Pension Protection Act of 2006. Portions of this Act affect the ways in which not-for-profit organizations conduct business, and for that matter, affect the ways in which people who donate to such organizations must keep records. A benefit of this Act is that it allows taxpayers over 70.5 years old to donate money to an organization like OCTA directly from their IRA account. The distributions are tax-free and avoid the penalty on early withdrawals. You are allowed to donate up to \$100,000 per year from your IRA. Since the distribution is not included in taxable income, you are not able to claim a tax deduction for the charitable contribution. This provision will be effective for the years 2006 and 2007 only. This means that if you plan to make a donation from your IRA, you must do it by December 31, 2007.

The Act also affects the tax laws for charitable donations so now you must keep records of all cash donations. Previously, this was only necessary for donations larger than \$250. Now, it affects all donations regardless of size. You must show a receipt from OCTA, a canceled check, or credit card statement to prove your donation. No tax deduction will be allowed if you cannot provide any supporting documentation. When you make a donation to OCTA, we do supply you with a letter stating the amount of your donation as well as the date that it was received. You do not need to mail in the receipts with your tax return, but you will need to keep receipts and other documentation with your copy of your return. This aspect of the Act went into effect on January 1, 2007, so you do not need

to worry about donations smaller than \$250 in tax years 2006 or earlier.

The new law also toughens the rules for non-cash donations. Donated items, such as cars, clothing, and household goods, must be in good condition. However, the new law does not define "good condition." So how are you supposed to know what "good" means? That's the \$64 dollar question. When you donate items other than cash, you must fill out Form 8283 (Non-cash Charitable Contributions) and file it with your return. A caveat, then, would be to take care when filing Form 8283 in the coming years, whether your non-cash contribution is made to OCTA, or any other not-for-profit organization.

Finally, take a moment to contact me about setting up an estate plan to benefit OCTA. I have a plethora of information that I can share.

**Convention Registration**

If you haven't already done so, be sure to fill out your registration materials for OCTA's Silver Anniversary Convention in Gering/Scottsbluff, NE this August. This will be a gala celebration on the heart of the trail, and the cities of Gering and Scottsbluff are rolling out the red carpet for OCTA. Gering is decorating its streets with Oregon Trail banners on their light posts and the local Convention and Visitors Bureau is launching a new marketing campaign centered on the trail's role in its community. Registration materials for the convention were mailed out on April 17, so if for any reason you did not receive them, be sure to download them on the convention website at [www.visitscottsbluff.com/octa](http://www.visitscottsbluff.com/octa). You can also call us toll free at 888-811-

6282 or email us at [contact@octa-trails.org](mailto:contact@octa-trails.org) to request a paper copy.

**OCTA needs your help!**

Since 1997, OCTA has seen a decline of 25 percent in its membership numbers. I have compiled lists of members who chose not to renew dating back to 2001 and have started sharing state and regional lists with local chapters. Some individuals and chapters have begun phone campaigns to call on these ex-members asking them to rejoin or at least to find out why they chose not to rejoin. For example, new OCTA board member Duane Iles of Holton, KS has taken the KANZA Chapter ex-member list and spent a couple minutes each evening calling on a few people. To date, he has enjoyed about a 15 percent success rate in regaining lost members. Just as important, he has seen a 100 percent success rate in gleaning useful information from people as to why they chose not to renew. In most cases, it is because people are simply too busy with other activities, children, or grandchildren. Competition is fierce for organizational memberships, so learning about our competitors is key to ensuring a solid membership base.

So what can you do? Contact me at [tboley@indepmo.org](mailto:tboley@indepmo.org) to request a list of people in your area whose membership has expired. Peruse the list and see if you know any of the names on it. Then, pick up the phone and give them a call. Tell them you miss them. Tell them OCTA needs them now more than ever. It's that personal touch and relationship that makes such a phone campaign a success.

*Continued on Next Page*

## Association Manager's Report

*Continued from Previous Page*

A second method of help you can offer is to assist us in gaining access to other organizations' membership lists. One study I recently read showed that bulk direct mail to similar membership lists typically enjoy a 0.5-1.5 percent rate of success. In the past, OCTA has seen a range of 1-4 percent rates of success. Currently, we are in the midst of mass mailing to four different organizations' lists containing about 11,000 names. A one percent success rate on this mailing would result in 110 new members. If you belong to

another organization similar to OCTA (like a historical society or museum), check to see if they'd be willing to exchange membership lists with us.

When we exchange lists with other organizations, we do delete the information of our members who wish not to be contacted. You have the opportunity to opt-out on your renewal form by simply checking the box indicating you do not wish to have your contact information shared with other historical organizations or museums (our typical exchange partners). If you are not sure if you're on this opt-out list and want to be on it, please e-mail or call us to verify. Rest assured, when we do utilize such exchanges to build our membership base, we only use it once. And the organizations with which we exchange lists also use the list one

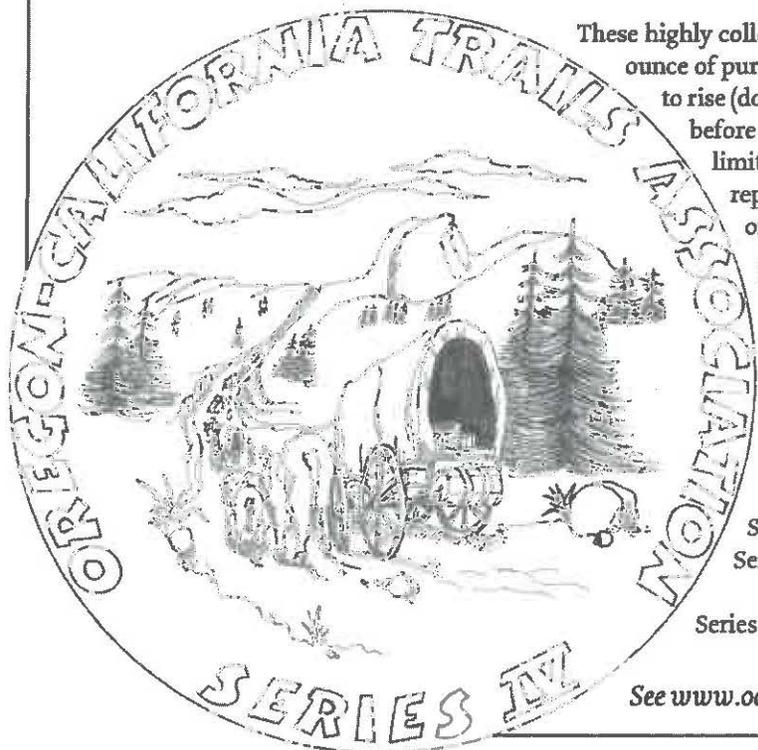
time only. To date, there has been absolutely no problem with these exchanges. Your physical mailing address is the only information exchanged. No phone numbers or e-mail addresses are included in the exchange. Keep in mind that list exchanges are valuable methods for OCTA to keep up its membership numbers. We also hope that you enjoy receiving brochures from other similar organizations from time to time.

Recently, OCTA board member Dave Welch agreed to be the first to serve on OCTA's long-vacant fundraising committee. If you have a desire to assist OCTA in fundraising endeavors, won't you please contact me and let me know?

Thanks for your help. I hope to see you in Nebraska in August.

Your membership number and expiration date are printed on your mailing label. Please check to make sure your membership does not lapse.

### ANNOUNCING SERIES IV OF OCTA'S HISTORIC COIN SERIES— THE 25TH SILVER ANNIVERSARY COIN!



These highly collectible commemorative coins are made of 1 Troy ounce of pure silver, and because the price of silver continues to rise (doubling in the last year alone), be sure to get yours before we are completely sold out. This is an extremely limited edition of only 200 coins and there will be no reprints, so don't miss out! Reserve yours today for only \$39.95 (plus s&h).

Pre-order OCTA's 25th Silver Anniversary coin today by calling us toll free at 888.811.6282 or by emailing us at [contact@octa-trails.org](mailto:contact@octa-trails.org). Coins will arrive from the Mint in early August.

There remains a very limited supply of the earlier three coins. You can own all four coins for only \$99.95 (a \$129.80 value).

- Series I—Lewis & Clark Bi-Centennial (2004)
- Series II—Bent's Fort, Colorado on the Santa Fe and Cherokee Trails (2005)
- Series III—Ezra Meeker Oregon Trail Centennial (2006)

See [www.octa-trails.org/store](http://www.octa-trails.org/store) for more coin information.

## Signal Bluff Tour Includes Remote Area

**Photo and Article**  
by Wilbur "Bill" Petersen

In preparation for the OCTA Silver Anniversary Convention I had thoughts of the visit I had with John and Nancy Orr at their Signal Bluff Ranch in December of 2006 when they told me about remains of tipi rings and signal fires on top of the bluffs on their ranch.

This is a section of the trail that very few people have traveled due to it being entirely on private property and no public roads nearby. With this in mind I requested that a pre- and post-convention tour be scheduled for this area; you will find details in the convention registration booklet.

After our Spring Trek, from Kearney to Gothenburg on April 14, Loren Pospisil, Nancy, and I traveled to Signal Bluff Ranch.

We had previously made reservations at Nancy 'Bs' Back Yard Bunkhouse on the ranch.

Traveling west from Ash Hollow on county road 44 we came to the intersection with county road 195, which is the entrance to the ranch, marked with a U.S. Flag proudly flying. Crossing the cattle guard we noticed a small knoll to the right in a pivot irrigated alfalfa field. This, we later learned, is a grave site of several soldiers and early residents of the 1800s.

Arriving at the ranch house we were welcomed by the Orrs and

escorted to the bunkhouse. Just inside the front door, Nancy Orr introduced us to 'Sam,' a cigar store type Indian. Nancy related the previous owner of 'Sam' had used him in parades, etc. Sam at one time had a problem with whiskey, but now sits holding a Bible, having been 'cured' of the evil spirits. After dark, while outside, I could hear turkeys. We spent a restful



Although not called Signal Bluff during the emigration period, this landmark near Lewellyn is the site of a pre-convention tour thanks to cooperation from landowners John and Nancy Orr.

night in preparation for the hike in the morning. When I commented about the turkeys the Orrs asked if we had seen the elk that were near the bunkhouse at day-break. Sorry we missed that. I did find a turkey feather and added it to Nancy's decorations in the yard.

In the morning, we started the hike up the bluff. Being cautioned, we continually watched where we stepped. This was for safety, maintaining good footing on the climb, and of course, "Jake" the snake and the ever present "cow patty." We did not encounter "Jake" but saw a

lot of wild flowers, dried mushrooms of last year's crop, and of course "patties," both dry and fresh.

Arriving at the summit we were greeted with a grand view of the North Platte River Valley. Across the river, to the north, Blue Water Creek and the battle field of 1855. With a little imagination you can picture the Indian villages spread across the hillside. John had a map of the area depicting village positions and did a fine interpretive talk.

The flat surface of the bluff has numerous circular depressions approximately twenty feet in diameter. A few larger circles are upwards of thirty-five feet and there are additional irregular and smaller shaped depressions caused by wind erosion where the buffalo grass is worn away. The larger circles are probably ceremonial dance sites and the smaller ones would be signal fires or hide and

meat processing sites.

Loren and I agree that this is a very worthwhile tour as it is a part of the trail but there are no public access roads. From the trail itself you don't see the impressive bluff, which was never referred to as "signal" in emigrant diaries and journals.

After a delicious lunch, Nancy Orr took us to meet Clint and Hazel Livingston who operate Blue Creek Traders in Lewellen, Nebraska. Their specialty is tanning hides; buffalo, deer, elk, and antelope. They also produce historic clothing for re-enactors.

## The Founding of OCTA: Showing "Foresight and Wisdom"

**By Roger Blair**

Greg Franzwa recently described the founding meeting of OCTA held in Denver, August 1982 (see *News From the Plains*, Vol. XX, No. 4, Fall 2006). Since he and I are the only attendees at that meeting who regularly participate in OCTA activities, I thought my perceptions and recollections of the meeting might also be of interest to those members not familiar with OCTA's history.

Greg has discussed the precipitating event, the conversion of pristine ruts in eastern Oregon to potato fields. It seems a bit ironic to me that I now reside in the area where that loss of ruts occurred. A picture of those ruts

graced our membership recruitment brochure for the first several years.

I must correct one statement in Greg's article. I am quite sure the meeting was not Saturday, August 14. As a federal civil servant, I know I was not working on a Saturday. The date was Thursday, August 12. I think we can forgive him of this and a couple of other minor mistakes. After all, he is the OLD Man.

I was the statewide outdoor recreation planner for Wyoming BLM at the time. Dr. John Latschar was historian for the Denver Service Center of the National Park Service (NPS). Latschar had been assigned the responsibility for preparing the Oregon Trail Comprehensive

Management and Use Plan. I had been working with John to protect BLM's interest in the Oregon Trail across Wyoming. I also dealt with Mike Beaudry and Bob Kasperek, who worked for the Rocky Mountain Region of the NPS. They were preparing the Mormon Pioneer Comprehensive Management and Use Plan. I had a meeting in Denver with the Mormon trail planners that day and had contacted Latschar about meeting with him at that time also. He informed me of the meeting Franzwa was conducting that day and invited me to attend.

After a short meeting with Beaudry

*Continued on Page 10*



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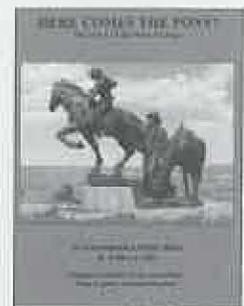
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## OCTA Founders

*Continued from page 9*

and Kasparek, I attended the OCTA founding meeting. Truth be told, I thought I would be able to get Merrill Mattes to sign my copy of his book. In addition to Franzwa, Mattes, and Latschar, others attending the meeting included Jim Johnson, Jim Bowers, Troy and Billie Gray, Bob and Bertha Rennells, and Bob Tucker. Johnson was a Fort Collins attorney recently returned to private practice from a Congressional stint where he had co-sponsored the 1978 National Trails System Act that designated the Oregon Trail and Mormon Pioneer, as well as other trails, as national historic trails. Johnson prepared our articles of incorporation, which is why OCTA was incorporated in the State of Colorado.

Bob Tucker was a retired Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) Denver Regional Office employee who had been a member of the team studying whether the Oregon Trail qualified as a national historic trail under the criteria of the trails act. Excepting the founding, Tucker had no further active role in OCTA.

Merrill Mattes was a retired NPS Superintendent and later regional historian living in Denver. During his career he had been instrumental in establishing and managing Ft. Laramie and Scotts Bluff as units of the Park Service. Jim Bowers was a retired school teacher from the Denver area and a close friend of Mattes. He had worked summers for Mattes and the Park Service in the trail parks as a seasonal employee.

Troy and Billie Gray were from Dallas, Texas. Retired, Troy had adopted the Sublette Cutoff, in particular, for his trail attention. Bob and Bertha Rennells were from La Grande, Oregon. Bob was a retired highway department employee and

had helped map the "Old Oregon Trail" in 1959 prior to the construction of I-84 across Oregon, but had been a long-time Oregon Trail advocate. Franzwa owned a public relations firm in St. Louis, in addition to running his own publishing company, the Patrice Press.

My most vivid memory of the meeting was my introduction to Troy Gray, who upon learning that I worked for Wyoming BLM, demanded to know why BLM was allowing destruction of a segment of the Sublette route. I was unaware of anything threatening the trail there. I could accurately describe Troy as "the pitbull of OCTA." He was not particularly accepting of my plea of ignorance. Jim Johnson went into his Congressman mode and demanded a report on his desk in two weeks. After some later discussion Troy calmed down and seemed satisfied. Johnson never did get his report.

After that disruption, the meeting resumed cordially. Franzwa moderated the meeting. There was discussion about what to call the organization. I believe Troy Gray offered "Oregon Trail Association," but Merrill Mattes suggested "Oregon-California Trails Association." An official publication was proposed. I don't recall who suggested the name *Overland Journal*, but believe it was Franzwa. I do recall Franzwa's insistence that it be a high quality publication. A separate in-house communication organ was proposed, with Latschar suggesting the name *News From The Plains*, derived from the emigrants' own descriptions of their letters and the newspaper headlines for correspondence from the emigrants.

Organization and management was then discussed. The organizational

structure appears a bit odd, perhaps humorous, in retrospect. Most of those in attendance accepted some office or other. The number of directors was set at twelve, each to serve three year terms. In addition to those at the meeting accepting board directorships, a list of contacts to round out the board was identified. Those I specifically recall being mentioned were Tom Hunt, Stanley Kimball, Merle Wells, Charlie Martin, Sr., and E. G. "Frenchy" Chouinard. To establish a rotating makeup of the board, one-third of those who agreed to serve were arbitrarily slotted for three-year terms, another third for two years, and the remainder for one year. There has been confusion whether Merle Wells attended the founding meeting or not, probably due to Ruth Anderson incorrectly identifying him at the meeting in her history of OCTA, *Preserving Our Historic Overland Trails: The Story of OCTA*. Merle was not present, but subsequently accepted a one-year board position on the inaugural board. I replaced him on the board at the first convention in Independence.

A final important additional action was to plan the first of what was decided to be annual conventions one year later in August 1983. Upon adjourning, Troy Gray wished to show his collection of trail artifacts that he had in the back of his pickup. Once outside, someone suggested the occasion warranted a photo. Bertha Rennells, the only one with a camera, volunteered hers and I snapped the picture. Following the group photo, someone suggested crossing the highway to a local restaurant to celebrate and congratulate themselves for their foresight and wisdom. We should all now celebrate that momentous occasion.

## Oregon Governor Approves Extensive Trail Survey

By **Stafford Hazelett**

The first scientific survey of the Oregon Trail in Oregon was conducted by Captain John C. Fremont of the Topographical Engineers in 1843. Captain Fremont's sextant readings and the notes of his cartographer, Charles Preuss, were filed in a report to Congress. Congress ordered the report and maps to be published and distributed to promote emigration to Oregon and the report became a popular guide for locating the Oregon Trail for emigrants during the 1840s.

The second scientific survey of locations along the Oregon Trail in Oregon was the work of the surveyors for the General Land Office during the latter half of the nineteenth century which sometimes improved on the accuracy of the report of Captain Fremont. Because the GLO surveys were conducted for a different reason, the Oregon Trail is an incidental note in the township surveys.

The longevity of the GLO work also produced gaps in the historic record because identifiable and meaningful traces of the Oregon Trail were either no longer noticeable to the surveyors or, even though visible, the route was no longer used as a road.

The third scientific survey of the Oregon Trail in Oregon was conducted by a group of engineers working for the Oregon State Highway Department, now known as the Oregon Department of Transportation. Lead responsibility was originally assigned in 1956 to Howard G. Smith, chief construction engineer for the OSHD, who then assigned the main project to Earl Bickmore, an assistant division

engineer stationed in La Grande. According to Bickmore's final report in January 1959, "little time could be spared the project during working hours. Therefore the project was carried on almost entirely on weekends and holidays. Nearly every weekend through 1957 and most of 1958 were devoted to this purpose." Relying primarily on diaries and informed by local information and by walking over all the suspected

then produced a pamphlet of the 10 maps at a reduced size which were distributed freely as part of the celebration of Oregon's Statehood Centennial in 1959.

The 1959 map production was followed in 1971 by an aerial photography survey, also conducted by the Oregon State Highway Department. The 1971 aerial photography survey was based on the 1959 map.

In 1972, the Bureau of Land Management assigned Percy J. C. Brown to review its records, any other relevant records, and determine the best evidence of the Oregon Trail in Oregon. Brown reviewed the BLM's records, reviewed documents in the Oregon Historical Society Library, and obtained the Oregon State Highway Department maps and aerial photographs. Brown created a set of maps based in part on the Highway Department's maps and photographs and added information from other

sources. While Brown was working on the project for the BLM, Aubrey Haines arrived in Oregon conducting a study of the locations of the Oregon Trail for the National Park Service in 1972-1973. Brown provided Haines with access to the Oregon State Highway Department maps and aerial photographs and assisted Haines with creating a set of maps for Haines's report. Brown distributed copies of his maps to the field offices of the BLM in Oregon. Haines filed his report with the National Park Service and his report and maps formed an important foundation for the 1978 National Historic Trails Act which recognized the Oregon Trail as an



Four Mile Canyon, Oregon.  
(Photo by Stafford Hazelett)

locations, Bickmore concluded, "The two years of research and study involved are hard to express, but I do feel confident that my findings on the location of the Old Oregon Trail are as accurate as is possible to determine them with the information available to me." Bickmore was assisted by Larry Smitton, Paul Van Scoy, Lloyd Johnson, and J. S. "Josh" Sawyer. Their notes and manuscript maps were turned over to the Highway Department in January 1959. The Highway Department then produced a set of 10 strip maps, approximately 10 inches by 30 inches, with the Oregon Trail overlaid on the county road base map. From that set of 10 large strip maps, the Highway Department

*Continued on Page 12*

## Oregon Survey to Begin

*Continued from Page 11*

important historical and cultural location in the nation's history.

The State of Oregon has a chance to begin the fourth great survey of the Oregon Trail in Oregon. The Oregon Legislative Assembly was expected to authorize the State Parks and Recreation Department (OSPRD) to "complete a comprehensive cultural resource survey of the Oregon Trail from the Idaho state line at Ontario and Nyssa to Oregon City for the purpose of identifying significant trail segments and the associated sites and features that (a) have potential for preservation and interpretation; and (b) may benefit from limitations on inconsistent development. The survey must (a) include maps, photographs and descriptive text; (b) be prepared

in a format that is appropriate for a cultural resource survey; and (c) utilize current technologies that allow for integration of survey information into data and mapping systems used by the State of Oregon and local governments." The legislature planned to receive a completion report from the Heritage Division of the Oregon State Parks & Recreation Department in January 2009. However, at press time, the enabling actions had not been confirmed despite a public declaration of intent.

The Oregon-California Trails Association already has two Challenge Cost Share Grants from the National Park Service for aspects of the same project. Oregon Trail location work was done in the Vale District of the

BLM in 2005 and the Blue Mountains of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in 2006. Another project was organized and supervised by Paul Masee for the Northwest Chapter at the ascent into the Blue Mountains from the city of La Grande in June 2007.

As Northwest Chapter chairman of mapping and marking, I have been in contact with the Heritage Division of the OSPRD to offer records and technical assistance including aerial mapping.

At press time, the Northwest Chapter and the Heritage Division of the OSPRD were planning to meet to form a plan of action but no date and time had been set.

## Follow the Walker River Trail over Sonora Pass as you never have before!

OCTA member David Johnson's new book, *Sonora Pass Pioneers*, takes the reader over trails in the Sierra Nevada wilderness used by Bidwell, Fremont, Grizzly Adams, Ebbetts, and emigrant settlers like Trahern, Duckwall, Kerrick and Stubblefield.

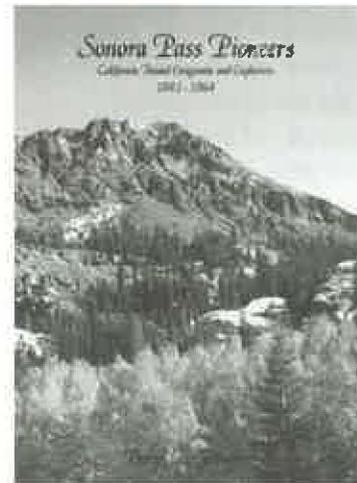
Over the past 20 years the author explored and mapped the rugged Walker River Trail over Sonora Pass and researched the lives of the pioneers who took this road less traveled. Mr. Johnson's thumbnail biographical sketches, 16 pages of color photographs of the trail, and pictures of many Sonora Pass pioneers help acquaint the reader with these brave souls.

"This book is the ultimate in research on the Sonora crossings, focusing on the Walker River trail . . . a great read!"

Dick Davis

"I feel confident that this book will be the unchallenged resource for future historians of the Emigrant Pass, and a model for other works of a similar nature."

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## Preservation Officer Report

David Welch  
welchdj@comcast.net

At the March board meeting I announced that I would not seek re-election to the position of National Preservation Officer (NPO) in August 2008. The March announcement was made to allow sufficient time to find my successor. We are now in this process and I would like to use my article this month to describe the position and its qualifications.

What follows may scare some off, but I want to assure you that every hour and dollar that I have invested in the position has paid dividends many times over. If you are interested in doing something that will keep your mind and body active and at the same time help OCTA fulfill its primary mission of trail preservation, then please apply.

The first requirement is time. With development activities spreading from the Midwest to the West Coast, preservation work could easily equate to a full time job. As a volunteer, that is an unreasonable expectation. I have set limits (on average about eight to twelve hours per week) and try to work on the most important items within that allocation. No one should expect more.

From the financial side there is considerable flexibility. I have traveled much over the past five years, mostly at my own expense. However, while I might be doing

OCTA business, it is an adventure to Wendy and me. We have visited sites along the trail with OCTA members, developers, and ranchers that we would never have seen as ordinary OCTA members. We have also enjoyed the many acquaintances we have made along the trail. On the other hand, little travel is actually required. Ninety-five percent of what I do is done by e-mail, letters, and phone calls. A facility with e-mail and basic office software is a pre-requisite for the job.

While I have funded much of my travel (like many OCTA volunteers), the NPO does receive an OCTA budget and funds are available from the NPS for attendance at special meetings like Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service conferences. All in all, I have found the demands on my time and treasure to be "manageable."

What does the NPO do? It is easier to say what the NPO does not do: The NPO does not (or should not) spend time writing angry letters of protest. There are occasions where a forceful letter can be helpful when all else fails, but that is the exception. Also, it is not the NPO's job to take on all the trail preservation work that needs to be done. That is done by others, usually at the chapter level.

From its beginning, OCTA's approach to trail preservation has been non-confrontational. If it had been otherwise, I would not have taken the job. Our efforts are focused on working out solutions that are respectful of the rights of all involved. Preservation law does require "mitigation" for "adverse effects" (legally defined terms) and it is our job to see that these processes are followed. This usually means that

even if we desired, we can not block a project. But we can insist that it is done "right" (a subjective term). Restoration is an under-emphasized aspect of the resolution of adverse effects.

The NPO's job at the highest level is to implement OCTA's preservation policy. The NPO's responsibilities include:

(1) Review and sign for OCTA all agreements involving preservation issues.

(2) Define and encourage chapter trail preservation work.

(3) Encourage and oversee the activities of OCTA's Preservation, Mapping, Marking, Graves and Sites, and Archaeology committees.

(4) Act as a clearing house for information and training on historic preservation laws, regulations, and procedures.

(5) Work on preservation issues with a national scope or with relevance above a local chapter, including coordination with the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management on preservation issues.

(6) Report to the board biannually on preservation work and issues.

An understanding of the relevant historic preservation and environmental protection laws, the National Trails System Act, and various implementing regulations is needed, but all this requires is a desire to learn. I had little knowledge when I began and I am still learning. Training will be provided.

After all of this, I hope you are still interested. It is one of OCTA's most challenging volunteer jobs, but it also provides great personal satisfaction and a chance to learn about the trails and the threats to the trails.

The briefings that constitute the preservation training class and the OCTA trail marking policy are now online at the OCTA website, [www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)

## Wyoming Chapter Senator Thomas Supported Trails

By Edna Kennell  
OCTA National Board Member

Wyoming OCTA and trail enthusiasts have lost a dear friend and trail advocate with the death of Senator Craig Thomas. It was with the assistance and co-sponsorship of Craig Thomas that the Historic Trails Center Foundation was able to obtain funds to build the Historic Trails Center in Casper, WY. His office in Washington was always open and receptive to any information we could share with him about the trails and trails center. Help and friends like this are difficult to find.

I heard from Senator Thomas as recently as May 14, 2007, indicating support for Senate Bill 589 introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), updating the Historic Trails Act. At the time he indicated he was ranking member of the National Parks Subcommittee and he would support and keep the Trail's interests in mind.

Senator Thomas was an enthusiastic supporter of Wyoming and its many cultural and historic aspects. Whenever he had doubts, he would research the effect it would have on Wyoming and Wyoming people. He believed in preservation of all of the trails that passed through Wyoming. Many times he could help us by convincing others to support the same causes. He was a trails friend that will be greatly missed by the National Historic Trails Center and OCTA.

## OCTA Prepares Documentary Film, Education Products

By Glenn Harrison  
Documentary Committee Chair

The OCTA Documentary Video team formed at the March 2007 board meeting has been working hard. Thanks to the Malcolm Smith gift of \$100,000, plans are underway for a useful set of videos plus educational materials that will reach out to the next generation of trail enthusiasts. The focus will be on youth, but it will appeal to all ages. Children in period dress and modern kids will add much to the story.

Would your family be capable of packing all of their belongings into a wagon about the size of a minivan, and then, move west in the next few weeks? Could you do it knowing you were going to have to walk over 2,000 miles and take about six months getting to your destination? And, why would you even bother setting off on such a journey?

Funded in part by the Malcolm Smith donation, OCTA is producing a documentary for use in the classroom and airing on public television that will address these questions.

With additional grants or other funding, there will be three 15-minute segments on the Platte River Road, the Oregon Trail, and the California Trail for use in classrooms or short programs. The segments will be combined into a documentary for use by Public Television or other one hour history related television programs.

But this won't be your typical public television documentary. To give these stories immediacy and context,

modern youths will be introduced to the trail by a group of historic re-enactors. They will learn what is packed into wagons, how to handle animals, how to harness and hitch the livestock, and how to find food and water. They will sew clothing, learn about cooking over a buffalo-dung fire, and how to repair a wagon wheel. They will be wrenched from loved ones as they set off on their journey, experience death on the trail, dig graves, and encounter renegades. In traveling a rugged landscape, they will cross rivers, traverse alkali deserts, and negotiate steep hills and treacherous mountain passes.

These are the experiences of the emigrants who found it necessary to be self-sufficient as they crossed the continent in a large-scale, voluntary migration to claim land and gold for themselves and the United States.

Currently research has begun to develop the segments. Candy Moulton is working with Bob Noll of Boston Productions on development of the outlines, story lines, and locations. Edna Kennell is heading the video effort. Lethene Parks is gathering educational ideas. We expect that several people including educators David Vixie, an OCTA National Board member and former Disney Teacher of the Year, and Kim Merchant, a teacher from Casper, WY, who has been recognized with an OCTA Education Award, will assist and that additional educational materials will be developed. John Krizek is heading the marketing effort. Travis Boley is assisting in each area.

Visit the OCTA Store  
[www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)

## Idaho Chapter

By Doug Jenson, President

Most of the activities of the Idaho Chapter are oriented towards preparations for the 2008 national convention in Nampa as we plan tours, check on road conditions, and make arrangements for the details.

There are a number of trail trips planned for the season. See our website at [www.idahoocta.org](http://www.idahoocta.org) for details. Work continues on the Goodale/Jeffrey north road. Some new ruts have been located in the Massacre Rocks area, made visible after a fire last summer.

Chapter members will be attending the 2007 convention, taking lots of notes for application to the next convention.

A recent development is a joint project with the Boise BLM office to develop an Oregon Trail Byway from Glenn's Ferry to Boise. The first task is to prepare a brochure describing the local features, with driving directions, journal excerpts, and photos. This will be done by Jerry Eichhorst and Wally Meyer. The second portion, the actual construction of kiosks and interpretive signs, will be done by BLM.

## Elko Center Building Going Up

Work is continuing on the California National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in Elko, NV.

"The Frazier Masonry crews are continuing to make good progress," said Bureau of Land Management (BLM) California Trail Center Manager Dave Jamiel. By May some of the building walls were in place, or in progress, on the building including the east end gift shop and restrooms.

West Coast Construction compacted the floor areas, installed the vapor barrier and base material in the north half of the building. Spires Concrete completed forming the footings for the four interpretive walls and the three "u-shaped" plaza walls in the plaza

areas. They also formed a main column foundation near the main entry to the building, according to a BLM release.

Additional work underway in May included installation of electrical panels and conduit and placement of structural steel for the steel columns, beams and trusses.



Walls are going up for the California Trails Center. (Photo Courtesy Mike Brown, Elko BLM)

## Nevada Tours on Tap This Year

By Frank and Mary Ann Tortorich

Three tours are to be offered this summer led by Elko's Humboldt Highroads all members of OCTA. The trips will follow along different sections of the California Trail through the area. From 1843 until 1869 when the transcontinental railroad was completed, the Humboldt River was *the* route across Nevada. Some 200,000 people followed this road to California. In northeastern Nevada, many of these trail ruts remain today. All tours will leave from the Northeastern Nevada Museum at 8 a.m. For more information, call Ralph Gamboa, 775-738-3856, or Bob Pearce, 775-738-5680.

The first tour took place on June 2 and covered the area from Emigrant Pass to Gravelly Ford. Tour No. 2 will take place July 21 and include the Hastings Cutoff Secret Pass from Buster Wines' field (the Connolly ranch) in Ruby Valley to Overland Pass. This will be a driving tour over 40 miles of gravel road.

The final tour, to take place Sept. 15, will involve the area from where the North Fork of the Humboldt joins the main portion of the river to Ryndon. It will involve both walking and driving and cover about 2-3 miles over flat ground.

This tour will involve trail sections on private property as well as the town site of Ryndon, which was a non-agency station of the Southern Pacific railroad.

## Treasure Found on the Oregon Trail

By Eula Pritchard

As my husband and I traveled with the Oregon Trail Elderhostel program, I began to feel like I was getting acquainted for the first time with my forebears. I had heard vague tales about my great-grandparents and knew they had come to Oregon in 1853. But that was about it. I had read the memoirs of some of the children, but I had no appreciation of just what they had really gone through.

I had not been aware that ten children came out to Oregon with their parents. After coming over the trail myself, I was really astounded that none of the family was lost, though a child from another family in the wagon train had died.

The accounts I read did not make much of the problems they had, just hints here and there. Like the fact the family started with fourteen oxen but only two oxen arrived in Oregon.

My own trip was a fifteen day education that I will always treasure.

*The above message was read by Eula Pritchard at the Northwest Chapter's Trails Day Symposium in early June. Jim and Eula Pritchard became OCTA members as a result of the Elderhostel tour and are taking part in Northwest chapter activities this year.*

## Northwest Chapter

### Wind Turbines and Trail Protection

By Roger Blair

Windmill developments continue to be a significant activity in Oregon and probably will be for some time. However, the chapter has made gains in getting early notification and opportunity for early involvement. Of particular significance on the preservation front is the passage in the Oregon Senate of S.B.823, The Oregon Trail Protection Act, sponsored by Senator Brad Avakian. It states that public bodies may not approve permits for development within 100 feet of the trail in unincorporated areas from the Idaho border to The Dalles. It does, however, exempt private property, which is where virtually all the planned windmill farms are situated. The bill had the strong backing of the Association of Oregon Counties and the League of Oregon Cities in senate hearings. The bill now goes to the Oregon House of Representatives where Rep. Suzanne Bonamici is the sponsor. NW Chapter Marking and Mapping Chairman Stafford Hazelett deserves the credit for working with the legislative sponsors as well as offering supporting testimony at the senate subcommittee considering its introduction to the full senate.

The summer field season is upon us with a full slate of outings. At a mini-symposium in Pendleton June 2-3, Susan Badger Doyle discussed the network of early trails from Cayuse at the foot of the Blue Mountains to Echo, OR. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation were represented by John Chess,

who discussed the area as a cultural crossroads. Sam Pambrun, local historian and direct descendant of Pierre Pambrun, chief factor for Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Walla Walla, shared his knowledge about the early French traders and settlements in the area.

Another chapter event is the fall picnic scheduled for September 8. The meeting will be held on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. The program theme is the Ebey family and its settlement on the island. You may recall OCTA published W.S. Ebey's journal of his overland trek as part of its historic trails series. This outing will fill in details of "the rest of the story." Any OCTA member is welcome to attend this event or any other chapter outing.

Between these two special events of course, are the usual complement of sign dedications, trail marking and mapping excursions, and sign installations. We are also working on finalizing a date for a metal detector survey of a large property incorporating a probable emigrant camping area at Echo, OR.

The national convention falls within this period also, and the chapter looks forward to celebrating OCTA's twenty-five years of success at the convention. Congratulations, OCTA! As one of the leaders over the past twenty-five years, the NW Chapter looks forward to leading OCTA for the next twenty-five.

See Page 15 for an update on the adopted Oregon Trail Preservation Act.

## Crossroads Chapter

### Spanish Trail Lecture and Trek Attracts Many

By Al Mulder

Spring activities for the chapter included an excellent lecture and slide presentation on the Spanish Trail, April 12, followed by a two-day field trip on the Spanish Trail April 21 and 22. Both events were well attended by enthusiastic chapter members and friends interested in Utah's Old Spanish Trail history. Colonel A. L. Matheson of Cedar City, UT, was the program presenter and later the guide for the convoy of 17 vehicles and 41 participants as they made their way on the trail from Castle Dale, UT, to the Nevada border. Colonel Matheson's knowledge of the trail route, his detailed commentary, and the numerous Indian petroglyphs on the trail made the field trip a special and memorable experience for members and guests who had never been on the Utah segment of the Spanish Trail.

Crossroads members set up an OCTA display table at the annual



Looking at Antelope Springs near Indian Cave on the Spanish Trail in Iron County Utah. (Photo by Oscar Olson)

Mormon History Association May 24-26. Chapter president Oscar Olson, National President Vern Gorzitze, and other chapter volunteers briefed interested attendee history buffs on the purpose, goals, and interests of OCTA. Aging and health problems of OCTA's older members are causes for declining membership in the chapter and efforts will continue to recruit new members interested in western history and historic emigrant trails. Participation by OCTA members in the activities of other national and local history and trail organizations can help get the word out about our trail preservation efforts and other programs.

This year marks the sesquicentennial of the "Utah War" when President Buchanan ordered military troops to Utah to quell the Mormon "rebellion."

This year and next year, Utah Crossroads will commemorate this major event in Utah history with lectures and field trips that highlight the major events that occurred during the military expedition to Utah. Program Chair Lyndia Carter hopes to present subjects such as the burning of military supply wagons in 1857, major trails



The Oregon-California trail looking east at Green River Crossing. Army units and supply wagons probably took this trail from the Green River to Ham's Fork during the 1857-58 "Utah War." (Photo by Al Mulder)

from Big Sandy River to the Green River, and the major crossings of the Green River used by emigrants and Johnston's Army in 1857-58.

Former chapter president Brent Reber was a candidate for the OCTA Board this year. Brent served four years as Crossroads President and is now serving as President of the Utah Westerners. Chapter President Oscar Olson is now the Crossroads Chapter representative on the Utah Historic Trails Consortium.

I'm looking forward to seeing old friends and making new friends at the OCTA National Convention in Gering, Nebraska, this August. Hope to see you there.

## Southwest Chapter

# Chapter Maps in Arizona and New Mexico

By Rose Ann Tompkins

Nine Trail Turtles met on March 15 at Fort Bowie National Historic Site to begin another mapping week. We were up early the next morning, heading out to the area northeast of the fort site where the trail crossed the flats from the San Simon River. One group worked west from the last waypoint from the November 2006 mapping trip. The other group worked towards them from the ranch road near Little Emigrant Hills. Later in the day, several revisited the San Simon Stage Station site, resolving a question about its location based on a recent author's photograph.

The next day we again broke into two groups, covering an unmapped area north of I-10 towards Doubtful Canyon. One group worked the immediate area near the cars while the other looked for the trail to the east. A levee, cultivated fields, and the corridor containing the railroad and interstate has disturbed a good bit of this part of the trail.

Sunday March 18 found us heading east on I-10 into New Mexico. Again in two groups, we spent the morning looking for trail between the Steins Peak Stage Station and the playa to the east. No trace was found out in the flats, although the area around the stage station yielded evidence. During the afternoon, we drove to Deming to luxuriate in a motel and have dinner at a restaurant.

On Monday, with the group resupplied with gas, ice, and food, we drove to

the I-10 exit at Separ, a place familiar to the Turtles from previous work in the area. However, this time we wanted to begin at the last waypoint from an earlier trip near Soldiers Farewell Stage Station and continue working west. This involved a slow trip down a 4WD pipeline road to intersect the trail crossing. Several

worked both ways from this crossing while another group worked towards them from the previous waypoint. This consumed the day and we found a cozy flat spot for camping while watching the smoke from a wildfire to the south, complete with planes dumping fire retardant.

The last morning of mapping was to visit the site of the Barney Stage Station, located between the Soldiers Farewell and Steins Peak stations. Today this is near the town of Lordsburg. An 1886 GLO map placed this station about a mile east of where the modern USGS maps



Artifacts found in the area of the Barney Stage Station near Lordsburg, NM. (Photo by Ken White)

put it. Today the area is a sparsely vegetated area near the railroad tracks, and next to a large wash. No remnants of the station exist as at Soldiers Farewell or Steins Peak, but we did find bits and pieces of glass, pottery, and metal scattered around. We did not find any definitive trail as it was evident that water has washed over the area at times. The trail did go through modern Lordsburg, but we doubt we will find any traces.

With another week of mapping under our belt, the Trail Turtles headed for home.



View towards the mouth of Doubtful Canyon, seen in center of picture. (Photo by Rose Ann Tompkins)

## Wyoming Senator Craig Thomas Dies in May

By Bill and Jeanne Watson

Craig Thomas was a quiet but very effective spokesman for Wyoming and the concerns of its citizens. He seldom lost a major issue that he supported or opposed. A major exception occurred on June 4, when Senator Thomas lost his battle against the leukemia he was determined to beat.

Senator Thomas was elected to the House of Representatives in 1989 and we visited his office seeking support for the California and Pony Express National Historic Trails authorization bills. He and his staff were always friendly and had lots of questions during these visits. After his 1994 election to the Senate, we had difficulty finding his new office in the basement amid those of other new Senators. We again had a good visit with his staff who were surprised that we had found their temporary office. After Senator Thomas became chairman of the Energy & Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks we testified in support of Senator Hatch's (Utah) and OCTA's trails studies authorization bill which was passed by the 108<sup>th</sup> and 109<sup>th</sup> Congresses. Senator Thomas strongly supported development of the Casper Trails Center and was a proud participant at its opening.

After the National Parks Subcommittee's April 26, 2007, hearing on our bill S-580 and on the Willing Seller bill, Senator Thomas and his staff submitted a number of additional questions, based upon concerns raised by his constituents. We responded with detailed answers that satisfied their concerns. This resulted in his agreeing to the May 23, 2007, favorable report of

OCTA's bill, without amendment, and recommendation for Senate passage. The Willing Seller bill was held back by Senator Thomas. That bill died before his concerns could be addressed.

Over the years we had several private visits with Senator Thomas in his Washington office and one in Casper with he and his wife, Susan, during the OCTA convention and Partnership meeting. His primary concern was the vast amount of Public Lands in Wyoming and that these lands are not on the tax rolls. Senator Thomas questioned us about the need for any more trails in Wyoming and we responded that Congress controls those authorizations. We called his attention to the Cherokee and Overland trails being protected on Wyoming Bureau of Land Management lands because of their historic significance.

Senator Thomas favored the Willing Seller option of trail easement acquisitions which leave those private lands on the tax rolls. He strongly opposed the federal purchase of private lands, which removes them from the tax rolls. OCTA and the National Pony Express Association understood his concerns. On National Trails Day (June 2, 2007) the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail acquired trail easements from Anadarko Petroleum across their Wyoming checkerboard area lands using federal funds provided under Senator Thomas's leadership.

The Senator told us that the Wyoming energy industry's annual fees and taxes cover about half the cost of state government and about sixty percent of their school districts' expenses. This led him to ask OCTA to work with Wyoming Bureau of Land Management to expedite

reviews of energy companies permit applications on public lands adjacent to our trails. Preservation Officer Dave Welch and his team have done a great job of speedily processing more than 1,000 applications with none held up by OCTA

Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY) summed it up when he reported: "The Senate will not be the same. Craig was the core of our delegation. He was a fierce advocate for Wyoming. He was my senior Senator, a confident, mentor and friend. I will miss him." We found that Senator Thomas was a very challenging adversary who effectively used Congressional rules to achieve his objectives. Although we had our differences, we respected each other's positions. We too will miss this fine Wyoming gentleman who was a good friend of the National Trails System.

In mid-June the U.S. Senate approved legislation introduced by Senator Enzi that names the new Grand Teton National Park Visitor Information Center for Senator Thomas. The action was a part of a Senate proposal to expand the boundaries of Grand Teton National Park to include an additional 50 acres near Lost Creek.

Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal appointed Dr. John Barrasso, a Casper orthopedic surgeon, to fill Senator's Thomas's seat in late June.

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## CA/NV Chapter

### Chapter Recognizes Pat Loomis for Lifetime Achievement

The CA-NV Chapter presented a Lifetime Achievement Award to Patricia "Pat" Loomis at the April 21, Chapter Symposium in Yreka, CA. During the presentation Fran Taplin and Tom Hunt noted she has provided great service to the cause of historic overland trails preservation.

"We are here tonight to honor that person – not for any one contribution, or even for a group of contributions, but simply for representing the very best of what we are as a historic preservation organization," Taplin and Hunt said.

They added that Loomis is "Always willing to contribute energy, leadership, enthusiasm when needed. Always prepared to volunteer when asked. Always eager to enliven our outings and activities. Generous to a fault in support of preservation projects. Possessed of a historian's mind and a journalist's professional skills. Always supportive of the efforts of others. Never one to ask, 'What can we do?' Always one to say, 'Let's do it, and let's do it now!'"

Further Loomis is "Known



Pat Loomis, right, receives Lifetime Achievement Award from Fran Taplin. (Photo by Kathy Buob)

to all of us in this chapter as one of this country's most accomplished trout fishermen."

#### Certificates Of Appreciation

Following the presentation of the Life Time Achievement Award to Pat Loomis, the Awards Committee presented Certificates of Achievement to various chapter members.

Richard Silva was presented the 2007 Senior Trail Boss award "For superlative research and mapping on

the Yreka Trail, Applegate Trail in California, Nobles Trail, and parts of the Lassen Trail within the Lassen National Forest. For his efforts with the BLM and Forest Service in Northern California working for Trails Preservation."

Recipients present to receive Certificates of Appreciation were: Dave Stone for outstanding leadership in developing the Chapter Risk Management Program; Jay Stoval for service to the chapter as a board member and vice president; and Bob and Cherie Evanhoe for organizing and facilitating the Yreka Symposium, April 2007.

Honorees not in attendance were Terry Hardwicke for service to the chapter as a board member; Dave Johnson for work on the Sonora Trail and leading trail trips on the Big Trees route; Dana Supernowicz for work on the Johnson Cutoff and trail tour leader; and Bob Shellenberger for service and participation in chapter activities and for organizing and facilitating the Stockton Symposium in February 2000.

### Yreka Symposium Hosts 146 OCTA Members and Friends

By Cherie Evanhoe

Spirits were high at the Yreka Symposium April 20 – 22. In spite of cool and drizzly weather, the Symposium brought together 146 members of OCTA and other friends. Participants enjoyed lectures, tours, vendor displays, and many good meals. Participants came from all parts

of California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington and included members of CA-NV Chapter and Northwest Chapter. Many national officers attended, as well as Association Manager Travis Boley. Bus tours introduced attendees to three areas of Siskiyou County in northern California. Some 130 people participated in the three bus tours. Trail expert Richard

Silva led a group north from Yreka along old Hwy 99 and I-5 to Siskiyou Summit to travel the Siskiyou segment of the Oregon to California Trail. Geologist Bill Hirt took his crew south and west viewing changes in geology and old mining sites in Gazelle, Callahan, and other areas of Scott Valley.

Folks traveling east from

*Continued on Page 22*

## New Members

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*Continued on Page 22*

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**CA-NV Symposium**

*Continued from Page 20*

Yreka took the Shasta Valley tour and enjoyed a pioneer luncheon in the old Little Shasta School, listened to local historian Pat Martin tell of the early emigrants and the houses, ranches and farms of the early settlers, and attended a quilt show in the 1902 Montague Methodist Church, along with visiting the Montague Railroad Museum. The Shasta Valley tour was sponsored by Siskiyou Branch of American Association of University Women and proceeds from the day supported the Chapter scholarship fund.

Gamma Phi Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi Sorority provided the continental breakfasts and bus lunches, and Soroptimist International of Yreka provided the bartending. Funds from these endeavors will return to the Yreka community through various service projects and programs for children, elders, and students.

Dinner Saturday evening was highlighted by the awards presentation handled by Fran Taplin. Persons also assisting Bob and Cherie Evanhoe and Richard and Orsola Silva with arrangements included Zeke Sicotte, treasurer; Patty Knight, name tags; Ronda Voges, data gathering; Joyce Everett, silent auction; and Nancy Sicotte and Bernie Scoles, registration. Yreka friends helped as guides and assistants and particularly enjoyed the camaraderie and friendliness of the OCTA symposium participants.

The symposium came to an end on Sunday morning at the Siskiyou County Museum where attendees enjoyed the local museum exhibits, breakfast and the pioneer Celtic music. Folks left town with good farewells and enthusiasm for the next symposium.

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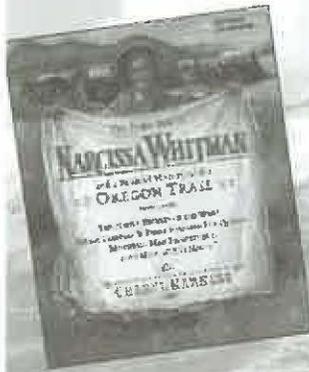
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