

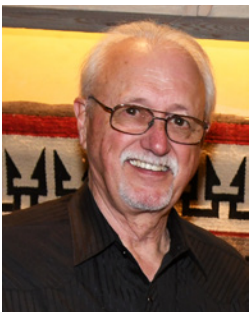
# NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Fall 2020

Volume XXXV, No. 4

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



Friends, 2020 will long be remembered as the year life changed dramatically. The term “New Normal” applies to just about every facet of our lives. Thinking back to the emigrants making the five- or six-month journey to a new and unfamiliar land, they must have thought they

were facing a “New Normal.” So, what does our OCTA future look like? In a word, Challenging – but bright.

Our annual convention, planned for Elko, NV in September, was rescheduled to September 2021 and the Casper, WY convention is now slated for 2022. However, some business must be conducted in order to comply with OCTA requirements. Thus, we have had the annual Board of Directors meeting September 18 and the Annual Membership meeting September 19 utilizing the new communication tool, Zoom. OCTA members at the National and Chapter level have gone to the Zoom platform with success. Efforts are underway to attempt a secure and expeditious Membership meeting sign-in process. Thanks to the Idaho Chapter for providing a professional level Zoom plan for OCTA’s use this year.

While missing the comradery, during the meeting, we will enjoy several special presentations. OCTA was extremely fortunate to receive a Partnership for the National Trails System \$10,000 grant to bring a videographer on board. Sam Sullivan, a recent graduate from William Jewell College, has done a masterful job bringing to life stories from the trail. Sam is creating videos for YouTube viewers. This media will provide an opportunity to reach and teach a global audience about the rich history of our forefathers. As of this writing,

Association Manager Travis Boley has reported over 75 new members as a result of stories aired on Facebook and YouTube. Without the opportunity to provide symposia and trail activities, utilization of social media delivers OCTA’s message out to the public. Is there a better way to bring new members to OCTA? Everyone is urged to share their OCTA stories with friends using various social platforms. Ask friends to read “This Day in History” on our Facebook site. Have your friends join you in sharing the OCTA Facebook site with everyone. Of special importance is requesting friends subscribe to the OCTA YouTube channel. The more subscribers we have the more likely we will attract new members. Once we have 1,000 subscribers, YouTube provides technical support to further enhance our video presentations.

Another significant change occurred in March as a result of the pandemic shutdown. The National Frontier Trails Museum in Independence, MO informed OCTA of the decision to close until January 2021. It may not reopen until April of 2021. That decision meant closure of the history library, housing OCTA research books and collections, and curtailing visitor bookstore sales. The result is reduced revenue and new membership. OCTA was approached by the City of Independence to take over operation of both the Museum and Library. Leadership determined that it was not possible to accept the offer. In the meantime, Committee C: Preservation, Collections, Public Relations, and Property Management, chaired by Cecilia Bell, was asked to provide the Board with an assessment of the security, accessibility and recovery of the OCTA Collection. The committee is to determine options in the event the Museum were not to reopen; i.e. what arrangements would be made to relocate OCTA owned material.

Looking forward: Vice President Dick Waugh and his Strategic Planning committee (Ginny Dissette, Pat Traffas, John Briggs and your President) have prepared a workable set of objectives for the next five years – 2020-2025. Dick Waugh, committee members and Western Region Representative Sharon Brown are to be commended for their excellent work. The six goals will focus on membership and leadership development, financial sustainability, being an effective historic trails organization presenting a complete picture of all emigrants and most importantly preserving the trails. The Strategic Plan was initially developed pre-Covid. Like all organizations, OCTA will seek to achieve objectives in a new environment. I am optimistic about the future of OCTA and I trust you are as well.

Past President, Pat Traffas appointed Mary Conrad (Kanza Chapter) in 2018 to Chair the, then inactive, Archaeology Committee. The committee is one of 29 Standing Committees. Mary has spent the past two years gathering information by reviewing all Overland Journals and other resources. She has two Archaeologists who have volunteered to serve on the committee. OCTA adopted committee policies at the Cedar City, Utah mid-year Board meeting in March 2011. Mary and her committee are eager to assist the National Preservation Officer, John Winner meet OCTA objectives including trail resource preservation, adhering to use of metal detectors and as a resource concerning antiquities laws. Please let Mary Conrad know if you wish to assist her and the committee (maryec1968@gmail.com).

Past President Bill Martin and current Marketing Committee chairman will introduce new opportunities to advance the OCTA message to a wider audience. In the process, it is anticipated that new Corporate memberships will be realized. A request was sent out this past year to all members hoping to encourage anyone with Marketing and Public Relations experience to contact Bill Martin bmartinocta@gmail.com). We seek the expertise and wisdom of our members.

Without a convention in 2020 and Symposium

cancellations, budgeted revenue was not possible. A fund drive appeal to our membership produced the greatest response ever. The fund drive is proof positive that you, our membership, come through in difficult times. Thank you to OCTA leadership for their total commitment example. As of this writing total receipts exceed expectation. We anticipate that we will finish the year with a positive carry forward balance for the first time in memory. The extraordinary fact is that the year started with a \$9,500 deficit carry forward. Thank you to everyone for your fantastic support of the OCTA Mission and Purpose. Thank you is also extended to our National Park Service partners for providing a requested increase in 2020-2021 funding. OCTA is fortunate to have a strong working relationship with the excellent National Park Service staff in Santa Fe.

Lastly, there are two ladies that deserve our expression of appreciation for their service to OCTA. After three and a half years Western Region Representative Sharon Brown has decided to pursue other interests effective September 30, 2020. We especially thank Sharon for the contribution she made to furthering the mission of OCTA.

Eight years after the incorporation of OCTA the volunteer leadership recognized the need for an additional staff member to assist the Headquarters Manager. November 15, 1990 Kathy Conway began serving the organization as bookkeeper with additional responsibilities. January 1, 1998, she became the new HQ Manager. Her thirty years of service have benefited every Chapter and National leadership. Kathy is an indispensable employee, a reliable resource and an asset to all. She will be receiving a well-deserved recognition gift thanks to several OCTA members. You may want to join others in expressing appreciation for her dedication and 30 years of committed service, (kconway@indepmo.org) or contact Lee Black, (leeblack1@hotmail.com).

See you down the trail,

*Lee Black, President*

*Oregon-California Trails Association*

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# 2020 Board of Directors and Membership Meetings

Times being what they are, the 2020 OCTA Board of Directors annual meeting was held online this year on Friday, September 18th, followed by the 38th Annual Membership Meeting online on Saturday, September 19th. Similar topics were covered in both meetings, with more the granular details and discussion handled in the Board meeting. Topics covered included:

- Announcement of two new chairpersons  
**Mary Conrad** - Archeology Chair  
**Dick Waugh** - Western Chapters Oversight Chair  
We are looking for an Eastern Chapters Oversight Chair as well.
- Our **fund drive** to cover our lack of convention income this year exceeded our \$37,500 goal by a sizable margin. Over \$60,000 was donated, giving us a balanced checkbook and helping us put an unusually tough year into the black. Thank you all!
- **OCTA vision restated:** Ongoing need to expand our global audience to help grow our membership and finances.
- **Special thanks to Travis Boley and Kathy Conway** for their outstanding work at headquarters, particularly in light of this year's current trying circumstances.
- This year marks **Kathy Conway's 30th anniversary** working at OCTA headquarters, an amazing commitment to keeping OCTA business on track and running smoothly.
- **Sharon Brown** and **Dick Waugh** and the Board members were applauded for their work driving, editing and finalizing the **OCTA Strategic Plan** which will help guide us for the next five years. The finished document covers best practices and guidelines for future Leadership, Membership and Financial Stability to be reviewed at least every six months. It will be available to all members online at our website.
- Travis reported significant OCTA gains in all **online media**, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, particularly in the 18-35 year old audience. He presented two videos now online including a talk on the Bidwell/Bartleson party by Ross Marshall and another featuring enactors telling the story of Hiram and Matilda Young, "From Slave to Wagonmaker."
- Lee Black and Travis spoke about using the **OCTA Paper Trails** website for research and how it can support research by genealogical organizations and help OCTA growth. There is currently a project to

digitize 4-500 trail diaries to include in the library. The potential for future workshops on using these new technologies and monetizing the use of them by other organizations is being explored.

- **OCTA finances** were reviewed by Treasurer Marvin Burke and pronounced to be on track, ending the year with a positive balance sheet. The Board approved a \$322,515 budget for the next fiscal year.
- Carole Wendler from the **National Trails** section of National Park Service spoke on behalf of Superintendent Aaron Mahr. She encouraged contacting their office for help with any issues or projects with which they might lend a hand. Their digital newsletter is linked on the OCTA website. The Oregon Auto Tour Guide is in review at this time and the California Guide has been postponed due to COVID this year. Trail signage has been updated in California and a new Trail Inventory smartphone app has been developed to help interested volunteers add to the Trail Inventory. GIS account information is available through their office. Carole thanked OCTA for our excellent ongoing relationship and noted that NPS added additional funding of \$10,000 to OCTA this year. Their office has completed renovation on their headquarters building in Santa Fe, NM, the largest single adobe building in the state. They have been unable to move back in due to the health restrictions this year.
- **Preservation** Officer John Winner reported on current projects including B2H, the R Project and Long Canyon. Details are in his report in this issue.
- **PNTS** Liaison Bill Martin reported on activities with the Partnership for National Trails System, and introduced new PNTS Executive Director Valerie Rupp. Additional details are in this issue.
- **Sharon Brown** is stepping down from her post as Western States Representative after three and one half years. She was thanked by all for her outstanding service at this post and for development of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. She plans to remain active within OCTA.
- Helen Hankins reported that all the activities, speakers and accommodations for the **Elko Convention** have been moved forward to September 13-16, 2021. There will be additional tours and bigger discounts on lodging.



- Camille Bradford called for more member input suggesting candidates for **Hall of Fame**.
- Bill Hill reported on **Publications**, noting that we will be producing a new calendar again this year, and contacting more libraries regarding OCTA access opportunities. The *Overland Journal* and *News from the Plains* are both thriving and enjoying a surprising increase in articles submitted.
- Steve Knight highlighted the ongoing need for **weekend convention events** to allow students and working adults easier travel and access.
- The Nominating Committee reported that **Pat Fletcher** has been elected to the Board of Directors. **Chuck Milliken** was re-elected to a second three-year term. **John Briggs** will be taking over the office of Vice President. All other officers and Board members will continue on in their posts.
- **Meeting links** Both online meetings were recorded and will be linked for viewing on our website along with an updated organization chart.

## Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail

A bill to officially designate the Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail has been introduced in the United States Senate by Senator John Boozman of Arkansas.

The bill would create a 3,292-mile officially recognized trail from St. Louis, MO, and Memphis, TN, to San Francisco, passing through Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

Senate Bill S.4404 was initially co-sponsored by Senators Cornyn of Texas, Cotton of Arkansas, and McSally and Sinema of Arizona. Other co-sponsors are being sought. The bill was initially referred to the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee.

“Passage of this legislation would be an important accomplishment for OCTA and the National Trails System,” noted OCTA legislative chair Bill Martin. “It would be the first substantial east-west trail in the southern U.S. and will lay the groundwork for a future Southern National Historic Trail.”

OCTA members are encouraged to contact their Senators and Congressmen to seek their support for the legislation.

Meanwhile, OCTA is preparing separate legislation to add 26 new routes and segments to the Oregon, California and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails,

as recommended in the National Park Four-Trails feasibility study that was made public last February. It is hoped the legislation can be introduced in early 2021.

The legislation will provide NHT status for 7,589 miles of additional trails, adding 55 percent to the existing Oregon, California and Mormon Pioneer Trails. Included are the Cherokee Trail, the Applegate Trail, the St. Joe Road, the Sublette Cutoff, the Whitman Mission Route, the Council Bluffs Road, and several other routes.

In addition, the legislation will change existing law to expand the “period of significance” for the Oregon Trail, currently 1841 to 1848 and the Mormon Pioneer Trail, currently 1846 to 1847. Several historic trails were not eligible for consideration in the feasibility study because their use fell outside of those dates. At the same time, OCTA will ask for a new feasibility study of routes that were ruled not eligible because of the arbitrary cutoff dates.

During the last quarter of 2020, OCTA will be contacting federal legislators in trails states to secure sponsors for the proposed legislation.

For information about how you can help with either of these project, contact Martin at [bmartinocta@gmail.com](mailto:bmartinocta@gmail.com).

*Bill Martin, PNTS Liaison*

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# PRESERVATION



*By John Winner*

*National Preservation Officer*

OCTA's Mission is to protect the historic emigrant trails legacy by promoting research, education, preservation activities and public awareness of the trails and to work with others to promote these causes.

**Baltazor Geothermal Development:** I included this project in this report to give you a sense of the process that OCTA follows when informed of a proposed project that may become a preservation issue.

In July, 2020, we received notification from The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Winnemucca, Nevada District Office of a proposed geothermal development including 11 geothermal wells, 1.7 miles of new access roads, 1.8 miles of geothermal fluid pipelines, electrical substation, aggregate pit, and ancillary facilities near the Baltazor Hot Springs in Northwest Humboldt County, Nevada approximately 7 miles southwest of Denio, Nevada on the Oregon-Nevada border. The entire project will be on Federal Land.

When a proposal such as this is received the BLM will begin preparing an Environmental Assessment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act to assess the potential environmental effects.

Typically, OCTA will be notified of such projects which begins the process of determining whether there are direct or indirect effects to the emigrant trail system. Maps are reviewed for location, trail locations are identified, site visits normally follow, and additional research material may be reviewed. The agency will then be notified of OCTA's findings. If there are impacts to the trails, OCTA will request consulting party status and the game is on. If there appears to be no impacts to the trails, we notify the initiating party, BLM, and move on to the next one.

In this instance this project proposed no threats.

**Gateway South:** As part of PacifiCorp's energy gateway transmission expansion, the company is planning to build a 500 kV high voltage transmission line known as Gateway South extending approximately 400 miles from Medicine Bow, Wyoming in southeastern Wyoming into Clover substation near Mona, Utah.

BLM recently reported concurrence from the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer on their submittal of direct and indirect effects and the same for the land within the Ute Reservation in Utah.

Additional inventory is being done this summer in Utah for a reroute and other lands that have granted access. At this time, Historic Properties Treatment Plans are being developed for the historic properties that will be adversely affected either by construction or from visual effects in Utah and Wyoming.

**Fivemile Pass:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Salt Lake Field Office is considering the designation of 17,927 acres of public lands in Fivemile Pass and the surrounding area located along Hwy 73 in Utah and Tooele Counties as a special area with a fee based daily use permit system. This is a popular off-highway vehicle and dispersed camping area that receives an estimated 65,000 visitors annually.

A portion of the area includes several Sections in Township 7 South, Range 3 West where the Central Overland Trail is located.

Jess Petersen, OCTA member of the Utah Crossroads Chapter has mapped and walked this area several times. Due to the heavy motorized vehicle usage and dispersed camping, very few identifiable trail traces remain.

**Boardman to Hemingway (B2H):** The saga of (B2H) continues..... The Project, a 300-mile, 500 kV transmission line in Eastern Oregon crossing the Oregon National Historic Trail seven times.

Lawsuit still pending. On November 12th., 2019, concerned citizens including the "Stop B2H Coalition" which OCTA is a member filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court opposing the construction of the transmission line. The suit charged the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service with failure to adequately review the impact of the route Idaho Power has proposed for the B2H transmission line across five Eastern Oregon counties.

In the meantime, a public notice was issued by the Oregon Department of Energy advising individuals or organizations that commented on the Draft Proposed Order (DPO) their right to participate in the contested case proceedings. As of this writing the filing deadline was set for August 28, 2020 for a petition for contested case at the Energy Facilities Siting Council (EFSC). A strict set of compliance rules were included in the petition to file. The EFSC hearing is scheduled for October 30, 2020.

Gail Carbiener, OCTA's Northwest Chapter Preservation Officer and OCTA's principal stop B2H guru has filed a 7-page petition for party status in the contested case proceedings.

Notwithstanding the above, Gail also reports that,

The Oregon Public Utility Commission continues to provide Idaho Power time to delay filing their Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). The key element has always been B2H and the three participants – Bonneville Power and PacifiCorp plus Idaho Power. Bonneville Power is now backing out and Idaho Power is taking over their 23%. This is making B2H much more difficult to include in the IRP as the “Least Cost, Lowest Risk” resource for the next 2-5 years. PUC now requires the IRP by October 2, 2020. In addition, the three partners have extended within their Permit Funding Agreement, the construction agreement negotiation window to October 13th. with another opportunity moved out to January 11, 2021.

The B2H saga continues.....

**The R-Project:** The R Project, is a 225 mile transmission line proposed by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) that crosses the Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trail. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) authorizing this project to move forward, a Petition for Review of Agency Action was filed in the United States District Court by the law firm of Eubanks and Associates. The Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) was one of the plaintiffs. The case argues that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s choice to issue the ITP violates portions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

**On Wednesday June 17th, 2020, US District Court Judge William J Martinez vacated the ITP issued to NPPD and remanded the matter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for further review.**

Although a substantial portion of the lawsuit centered on the ESA and the NEPA, namely the American Burying Beetle and the Whooping Crane, the Judge specifically cited the National Historic Preservation Act and its impact on National Historic Trails. In the decision the Judge cited three reasons, the first that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service inadequately considered the effects of the R-Project on the O’Fallon’s Bluff segment of the Oregon and California Trail. The Judge also indicated the agency failed to analyze “potential wind-turbine development” and found fault with the language of an April 2019 “programmatic agreement” covering that matter and other issues.

Preparing for the next phase of the remand to the Fish and Wildlife Service, OCTA is preparing a detailed analysis of the adverse impacts, including visual, auditory, and atmospheric that will inevitably result to ruts, swales, and other historic resources along the

Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trails should the R-Project be constructed along in NPPD’s preferred route.

Status as of August 25, 2020:

1. Appeal deadline has passed, and neither DOJ nor NPPD filed a notice of appeal of the Judge’s decision. Good News.
2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is presumably preparing its new analyses required by the Court. Plaintiff Attorney seeking information on the timing of the FWS remand process.
3. Plaintiff Attorney preparing case for FWS public comment period on the new analyses.

**Long Canyon Mine Project:** An open pit mine project in Northeast Nevada mostly on public land administered by BLM. The project impacts the Hastings Cutoff of the California National Historic Trail. Mitigation discussions began in 2013 with Newmont Mining Corporation, BLM and the consulting parties, including: OCTA, The NPS and The California Trail Heritage Alliance (CTHA). Part of what was thought to be agreed upon mitigation included, mapping of the Hastings Cutoff, protection Of the Settlers Cabin at Big Springs and the establishment of the Gravelly Ford Conservation Area to include protection of the California National Historic Trail leading to and including the Gravelly Ford Site. The protection would be through a conservation easement or similar legal instrument. **What changed!!** In July 2019 Newmont Mining Corporation, 38.5% and Barrick Gold Corporation, 61.5% entered into a Joint Venture forming a new company, Nevada Gold Mine (NGM). On October 28th, 2019 in a meeting with BLM we were informed that BLM no longer intends to seek any mitigation for indirect effects resulting from the Long Canyon Project. BLM said they would have to wait and see if NGM would voluntarily agree to the proposed mitigation along with other issues including BLM now reviewing their Instruction Memorandum policy on Compensatory Mitigation.

OCTA along with the CTHA have been in direct discussions with NGM. At this point NGM seems favorable to most of the previously discussed mitigation.

**Again,** these are only a few of the issues that are being monitored as a result of potential threats to our emigrant trails. While it may be impossible to preserve and protect all known trail segments, we need to be proactive. Your keen awareness of activities in your region is greatly appreciated.

*More to come...*



# Publication News



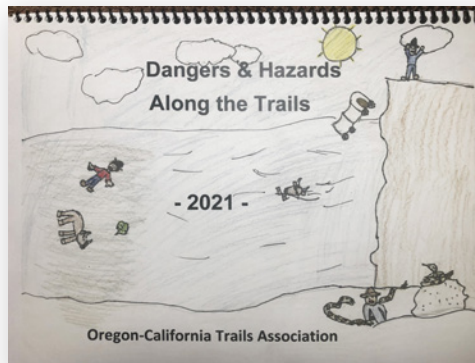
## There's A Lot Goin' On *Bill Hill - Publications, Chair*

In some ways this may seem to have been the summer that never was – no dining out, no weddings, no birthday parties, no meetings, no library visits, no museums, and no conventions – especially, no OCTA at Elko. However, to our editors their work entailed more than usual, and they have persevered. Thanks to our members who have dutifully kept their articles and reports coming in, our editors have been able to keep to their publication schedules.

While some libraries, museums and visitor centers are beginning to open, many still have not. Many of those that are open have reduced hours and their shops or stores are not open. Many visitor centers are seasonal, and some will again be closing in a couple of months. They have also been hesitant to take on new products/publications because of reduced budgets and low attendance.

The recipient of the Merrill Mattes Award for excellence in writing and research based on an article in the *Overland Journal* has been selected. The article and author are: *Trail Deaths, Trail Graves, and Cenotaphs. Here? There? Where?* by Richard Riech. The article appeared in Vol. 37, Spring, No. 1 2019. We hope you

read it when it was first published. While we will have no awards ceremony this year, there will be more information about the article and author in an upcoming *Overland Journal*.



There are a very limited number of the 2021 student calendar *Dangers & Hazards Along the Trails* available through headquarters. The price is still only ten dollars. Unfortunately, we omitted two student artists in

the previous edition's article and apologize for their omission. Here are all fourteen: Oliver Graczyk and Brennan Leary, 3rd graders from John Paul II School, Overland Park, KS; Jenny Danielson and Whitney Metcalf, 3rd graders from Bennion Elementary, Taylorsville, UT; Mackenzie Bartlett, Madison Paganetti-Dick and Dhruv Prabhu, 4th graders from Golden View Elementary, San Ramon, CA; and Beckham Allred, Camille Bird, Brooklyn Evans, Jane Hunter, Grace Leavitt, Scarlett Ransom, and Sophie Winterton, 5th graders from Canyon Rim Academy, Salt Lake City, UT. The topic for the 2022 calendar is "Emigrant and Indian Foods." We look forward to another successful project and wider participation this coming year.

*Bill Hill*

## PNTS Virtual Workshop October 21-29

The Partnership for the National Trails System has scheduled a "virtual" Fall National Trails Training Workshop for October 21-29.

The themes of the workshop will be Advancing Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion; Expanding Partnerships Within and Beyond Trail Corridors; and Increasing Capacity Through Organizational Development.

Registration for the workshop is \$75 and covers all sessions except for those with limited access. For more information, including the tentative program, visit <http://pnts.org/new/virtual-workshop-october-2020/>. All sessions will be held on Zoom.

*Bill Martin, PNTS Liaison*

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# FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



In the Winter 2020 issue of *News From the Plains*, I reported about OCTA's Board of Directors updating its five-year strategic plan in 2015 and setting numerous goals and objectives with specific action plans to ensure that the organization had a clear vision on how to set itself up for the 2020s. Our

Marketing and PR Committee had set some clear goals related to our online environment, so I reported that over the next several issues of *News From the Plains*, I planned to report on our online offerings. This will be my final column discussing the contents of our websites.

My Winter 2020 column told you how to use [www.octa-journals.org](http://www.octa-journals.org), so please refer back to that issue if you missed the update. On the Journals website you will find hundreds of digitized diaries, back issue of the Overland Journal and *News From the Plains*, past convention books and tour guides, and even an interactive trail map.

In the Spring 2020 issue, I focused on our main website at [www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org). I touched on how you can report your volunteer hours via our website, how you can find our online publications, how to donate online, OCTA's Hall of Fame, our regional chapters and their websites, educational resources (including *In Pursuit of a Dream*), interactive maps, trail facts, people and stories, our speakers bureau, and the section on awards.

The Summer 2020 issue featured the launch of our YouTube Channel (please go subscribe!) as well as our new Instagram and Twitter feeds (please subscribe to both of those as well @octa\_1836). For those of you who follow our Facebook page, you have likely noticed a huge uptick in offerings, especially a "This Day in History" post. These posts have gained us new members, donors, and store customers, so we know they are working. In fact, we have grown from 2,200 followers to 2,900 followers since the Yuma Symposium. It took eleven years to get to 2,200 followers and only six months to add 700 more. We believe our increased presence has made our page a popular destination with people wanting to see pictures and learn stories from the trails in bite-sized doses. We hope that you, our longtime members, appreciate all of this increased awareness we are drawing to trails as well. As a reminder, all back issues of *News From the Plains* are archived at [www.octa-journals.org](http://www.octa-journals.org), so if you missed these earlier stories, go back and get caught up now.

I want to also discuss our other website found at [www.paper-trail.org](http://www.paper-trail.org). Paper Trail is an index to trail diaries. As a member, you get free access to this website as long as your membership remains current (a \$75 annual value!). OCTA established a committee to create a computer database from information found in original emigrant writings. That committee began work in 1986 and was called the Census of Overland Emigrant Documents Committee, or simply COED. The COED committee members were trained to find and survey original emigrant documents, extracting from each one information on names, locations, Indian encounters, modes of travel, routes, and other interesting details. The information from over 3,500 document surveys form the COED database. A PDF scan of each survey is included in the database and is searchable for subscribers.

The 19th Century migration is illuminated by the writings of thousands of the people who went to Oregon, California, or Utah seeking land or gold or religious freedom, and they wrote of their experiences in diaries, letters, remembrances, and newspaper articles. These pioneers recorded their travels in documents that have survived in libraries and private collections. Whether you are interested in family genealogy, original research, or just an entertaining read, this database can help guide you in the right direction. And remember, we have spent years digitizing actual diaries, hundreds of which can now be searched for free at [www.octa-journals.org](http://www.octa-journals.org) or at [www.gateway-octa.org](http://www.gateway-octa.org) (our Gateway Chapter website in St. Joseph features diaries of people who jumped off from Northwest Missouri). The Paper Trail website works hand-in-hand with the Journals and Gateway websites.

So how do you set up your free Paper Trail subscription? First, go to [www.paper-trail.org](http://www.paper-trail.org) and click on "subscription." Fill out the forms and then pick a password to meet the criteria of eight characters long with at least one number. Next, copy "form above" respecting upper case letters and click on "register." This will advance you to a payments page which has a space for the code for members. Fill in the code **OCTA720183** to activate your free account. To use the account after your initial visit, you will need to remember your username and password to log in.

And that is it! If you have any further questions, contact us at OCTA HQ at 816-252-2276. We will be happy to walk you through it, and we truly hope you take the time to dive deep into all we have to offer online. And as always, thank you for being a member of the Oregon-California Trails Association!

Travis Boley



# New Executive Director Named for PNTS

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) has appointed Valerie C. Rupp of Baltimore, Maryland, to serve as the new Executive Director for the organization, which represents 30 National Scenic and Historic Trails, including OCTA.

Ms. Rupp, who assumed the job on August 17, previously was Corporate & Foundation Stewardship Director for Baltimore's People & Parks Foundation, where she had worked for nine years.

She succeeded Gary Werner, who retired in February after 25 years in the role, and Interim Executive Director Karen Crossley, who has served since Werner's departure. Ms. Rupp will work out of the Partnership's new offices in Washington, D.C.

She was the unanimous choice of a Partnership search committee. OCTA PNTS Liaison Bill Martin served on the committee.

"We believe that Valerie is an ideal fit for the PNTS

at this time in its existence," Martin said. "She has significant fundraising and administrative experience and brings promising skills and enthusiasm for increased community involvement and diversity within the trails community."



Rupp holds Bachelors degrees in History and Communications from Shippensburg University and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Baltimore. She also earned a Certificate in Volunteer Management from Carroll County Community College.

Prior to joining the Parks & People Foundation, she served as Development Director for the Women's Law Center of Maryland, as Development Associate for the Baltimore Museum of Industry, and Volunteer Coordinator for Volunteer Maryland, an AmeriCorps program.

*Bill Martin, PNTS Liaison*

## Emigrant Trails Hall of Fame

The Emigrant Trails Hall of Fame Committee welcomes nominations for new members to be inducted in 2020. The criteria for selection and the nomination form are on OCTA's website:

<https://www.octa-trails.org/emigrant-trails-hall-of-fame/>

The Committee particularly welcomes nominations of individuals whose achievements are less well-known to OCTA members. Please submit nominations by October 31 to: [ETHoF1846@gmail.com](mailto:ETHoF1846@gmail.com)

## Thanks to Our Business Sponsors

For \$50 a year, OCTA Business Sponsors receive a listing on the OCTA website and in *News From the Plains*, a window decal, a framed wall certificate and an OCTA trail map. To learn more, contact OCTA headquarters at (816) 252-2276. Current business sponsors include:

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# News from the Chapters

## GATEWAY

The Gateway Board held its planning board meeting in March, just a couple of days before shelter-in-place. Of course, bus trips and outings were canceled. In June, the Gateway board met via Zoom to look at our scheduled activities and see what could be salvaged.

In July Gateway held an outdoor program at the Wyeth Hill Overlook of the Missouri River in St. Joseph. Mary Conrad gave a talk on "1838 Potawatomi Trail of Death." Not knowing what the attendance might be during the pandemic, we were pleased to have 19 attendees.



Mary Conrad's program was one which the group wished there could have had more time for. She provided a wealth of information on the removal of the Potawatomi Indians from Indiana to Kansas in 1838.



Cindy Weaver speaks about the wagon exhibit planned for the Robidoux Row Museum in 2021.



Gateway members met at the Pavilion on the Wyeth Hill Overlook of the Missouri River. All wore masks and sat in a socially distant manner

On August 27, Gateway co-sponsored with the St. Joseph Museums a Zoom program, "Lessons in Sustainability and Resiliency from the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska." Lance Foster of the Iowa Tribe and Greg Olson of the Missouri State Archives spoke in panel style. It is hoped that this program will be available via Gateway and OCTA Facebook pages for viewing by those who may have missed it.

In planning is a project on trail education through an exhibit at Robidoux Row Museum. The goal is to work on the exhibit to completion next April. Cindy Weaver is coordinating this project.

*Jackie Lewin*

## TRAILS HEAD

One event we were looking forward to this summer did occur because it was an outdoor gathering. We had a **chapter picnic** at Sapling Grove Park that is featured in a recent OCTA YouTube video as the place the Bidwell-Bartleson party gathered in May 1841 to begin its journey west. The event we weren't able to have was a joint meeting with Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association which is digitizing over 250 quadrilateral maps on which KCAHTA's founder Lee Kroh marked the Santa Fe Trail from Old Franklin, MO, to Santa Fe, NM. They are the most detailed maps of the SFT available anywhere. For additional trails in the Kansas City area, Lee also used General Land Office (GLO) maps from the 1850s. In preparation for that planned joint meeting, I took it upon myself to **learn about GLO and quadrilateral maps** and then to write almost

weekly Notes from your President to explain some mapping terminology and history to our members. This was a gift of time from pandemic sheltering-in-place. Therefore, at the picnic, I brought a GLO map of Sapling Grove Park and an area quadrilateral map to add visuals to what I had been writing about.

Some of our members went on a **field trip with Craig Voorhees** to see several trail swale and rut sites he has identified along the Oregon-California trail close to Highway 40 in the Lawrence, KS, area. It would be a good project to further explore these observations with MET standards.

Progress continues on developing our Trails Head website. We are aiming to meet a mid-September deadline of having everything delivered to the web developer.

*Lila Aamodt*



# COLORADO-CHEROKEE

We are planning a series of Zoom events, beginning in September:

- September 26: Frontier Colorado Gunfights. Presentation by historian and author, Ken Jessen, based on his book of the same title.
- October 17: History and Mapping of the Cherokee Trail. Presentation by Jack and Pat Fletcher, and Bruce Watson.
- November 14: Indian Raids and Massacres. Presentation by historian and author Jeff Broome, based on his new book, *Indian Raids and Massacres: Essays on the Central Plains Indian War*. Following the presentation, a discussion of the book will be moderated by David Welch.

Although we miss having in-person events, many of our members live in other states and Zoom will enable everyone to participate. To register for these events, please contact Camille Bradford, [bradford@usa.net](mailto:bradford@usa.net).

Mapping Committee report – Bruce Watson

The Colorado Chapter's mapping committee has been active in two different areas of the state.

Recently El Paso County mapping members Bill Burr and Jeannie Mitchell were contacted by a Black Forest resident, requesting their advice on apparent swales on his property. On July 21 they spent the day taking GPS coordinates and photographs of the traces at his location. When comparing the property owner's path with the known path of the Cherokee Trail, it appeared this new path might be a feeder route to the main trail.

In the display above, the main Cherokee Trail is

depicted by a solid yellow line, while the property owner's path is represented by a series of yellow circles to the east. We were pleased by the property owner's interest in history of the trail, and his efforts to preserve its presence on his property. Bill and Jeannie gave him a copy of Lee Whiteley's book, *The Cherokee*

Trail, to expand his knowledge of the trail.

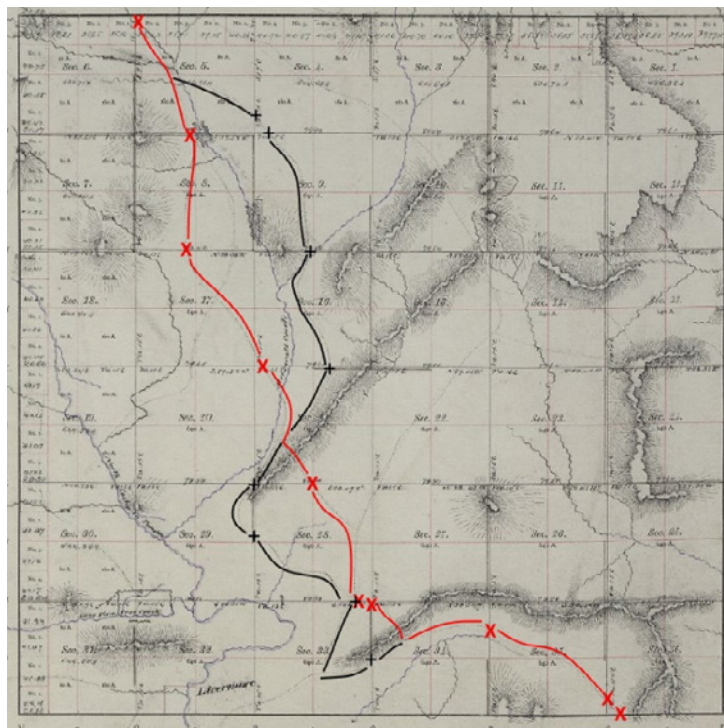
David May and Ethan Gannett have been busy researching the Cherokee Trail's path north of Fort Collins to the Wyoming state line. They discovered a series of 29 hand-traced quad maps residing in the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery. These maps were created by Martin Schloo, who walked and mapped large portions of both the Cherokee Trail and the various stage routes in the area.

A portion of the trail in Larimer County describing potentially different paths is shown in the map at left. This is a marked up (by us) GLO survey plat map from the 1870s. The red line depicts the generally accepted path of the Cherokee Trail, while the black lines represent possible alternatives, including stage routes. Researching diaries and other source

materials becomes increasingly important as we dig deeper into precise locations.

David and Ethan have also met with a representative of the large ranches in the area, to describe our mapping efforts and seek access to the properties involved.

Our chapter is fortunate to have such dedicated and responsive people tasked with actively pursuing our historic trails.  
*Camille Bradford*





# CROSSROADS

It has been a long, hot summer here at Crossroads with not much going on. I guess we are not the only ones staying in.



We did enjoy a field trip in late June with President Steve Allison and Vice President Connie Bauer taking charge of the organizing and directing. It was a complete surprise and a success. There were about 30 participants who were so glad to get out. We met at Henefer, Utah, at 9 a.m. for a road trip through the Weber Valley Trail. We traveled on the old road up through Echo Canyon with its many marked trail history stops marked by retired Summit County historian, NaVee Vernon. This is the old highway US-30, and I am SO glad this is kept open for various purposes. We made several key point stops where lots of cars could park, and Steve and Connie did the narration. We had a late lunch at the rest area/welcome station on I-80. At this point some went into Coalville where we disbanded. It was good to see old members Dixon Ford, Joe Hatch, Pat Hearty, Drew and Marie Wanosik, Chuck Millikan and others. There were lots of new faces too.

There are two more planned field trips--one Saturday August 22 west from Henefer following the Donner/Mormon Pioneer Trail into the Salt Lake Valley and another being planned for the trails west into Tooele County later. Glad things are happening again.

Our late summer catered meal and membership meeting at Fort Douglas is on hold for a while. There may be other things going on with individual members that I am not aware of.

Victor Heath and I are still working on our "Crossroads Time Line," and we have photos up through 2013.

In the last newsletter I failed to mention the passing of a longtime OCTA/Crossroads member, Ilene Gorzitze (wife of Vern Gorzitze) who passed away earlier this year. Vern and Ilene have been big supporters for years. Vern served as Crossroads president and National president, and both he and Ilene worked tirelessly for the advancement of OCTA. Vern was chairman of the Salt Lake City OCTA convention in 2005. We don't see much of Vern these days, but we extend our belated condolences. They truly were, as a couple, legendary in their accomplishments.

Until next time – stay tuned!

*A. Oscar Olson*

## NORTHWEST

Our Chapter members have resorted to using ZOOM and the Internet to keep our members in touch. I'm sure the other Chapters are doing the same. Since we are still in Phase 2 of the State Lockdown due to Covid 19, we have little chance to be out on the trails. Some of our members are working alone on projects that we hoped could be part of this year's tours.

On July 15th we held a Leadership Committee meeting on Zoom and 11 members participated. We discussed the future possibilities for trail outings; the OCTA Strategic Plan; plans for the installation of T-Rail signs in Eastern Oregon; a report on B2H; and the general plans for more mapping of the Barlow Road. We also agreed to have another meeting later this year.

Our Preservation Officer, Gail Carbiener, coordinated the installation of 6 T-Rail signs along the Oregon Trail in the Blue mountains. Gail had brought the signs to the area early in the year and had help in leaving them near each site where they were to be installed. He then worked with Jenny Miller (our Secretary), and her Eagle Scouts to install the signs on Jul 31st and Aug 1st of this year. The local La Grande newspaper wrote a piece on the project. Several of the boys' parents also assisted.

Dave Welch our OCTA rep for Mapping and Marking Coordinated a Zoom meeting on Aug 6th to present Robin Baker's new work on the Eastern Oregon Section of the Barlow Road. Robin's presentation was well received, and his use of the old maps to find the old trail was interesting and he provided copies of the maps that could be accessed online. Robin spends hours walking on the land and making photos of the terrain along the trail traces.

The President attended a Zoom meeting in August about the Western Regional Representative position. The scope of the position is changing and there will be a discussion at the September OCTA Board meeting. Our Chapter has benefited from the work done by the present Representative.

The Chapter Membership Chairman, Chuck Hornbuckle has been doing a fine job in recruiting new members for the Chapter. He works closely with Headquarters and sends informational letters to new members of OCTA who may not have realized that they can belong to a Chapter. NWOCTA has 246 members at present.

*Sallie Riehl*

## KANZA

In the interests of the health of our membership, KANZA Chapter canceled all planned events. Many have continued to correspond online, by social media, or Zoom. Planning and thoughts of events to come has been ongoing. A survey of the trail, its condition and the carsonite markers we have placed is planned.

Partnership is a wonderful way to accomplish much more than our chapter could ever do alone. We have finished the NPS local tour route from Marysville, KS to the Hollenberg Pony Express Station. The project was part of the development of the Trail Junction Marker site. The NPS assisted in the sign plan while we worked with the highway departments of Washington and Marshall Counties and the township personnel to place them.

We work closely with our partner, Alcove Spring

whose leaders are all members of KANZA Chapter. Earlier plans to jointly sponsor programs at Alcove

Spring had to be canceled. However, Alcove Spring is partnering with Evergy energy company's green team. The green team made up of employees, retirees, and other volunteers do projects for non-profits, communities, and other like organizations. They are replacing a major bridge crossing a stream. The original, which they assembled about 24 years ago was washed away by rains two years ago. All materials used in the bridge are recycled from retired utility poles. This is a tremendous assist to the non-profit park that's



only revenue comes from donations and does not have the equipment that makes such a project possible. We are truly grateful to Evergy.

*Duane Iles*

## CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

The California/Nevada Chapter of OCTA continues to be actively involved in OCTA's mission to protect the Historic Emigrant Trails legacy by promoting research, education, preservation activities, and public awareness of the trails, and to work with others to promote these causes. But the year 2020 will be remembered by the CA/NV Chapter as the year of the Corona Crisis Cancellations rather than the year of Symposia and Conventions. One could literally say, "We've seen the Elephant," but with Covid-19 rather than Cholera that killed many emigrants on the trails.

After the annual national OCTA symposium, which many of our members attended in Yuma in February, the news of the virus outbreak resulted in the cancellation, or should I say the "postponement" of our spring symposium and also the National Convention scheduled for September in Elko. We've essentially circled the wagons in quarantine and social distancing.

Jon Nowlin has continued do some planning and liaison work on the Fernley Swales; however, the Annual Spring Survey with Trails West, Inc, and the BLM archaeologists was postponed until next year. We had planned on metal detecting a newly discovered section of trail going from the swales to the Truckee River.

Bill Holmes is working with the owners of the Johnson Ranch and Camp Far West sites and with the Wheatland Historical Society in trying to preserve that history and make it available to people in the future. Work is continuing on establishing it as a National Historic Site to be available for visitation and interpretive facilities.

On June 17 & 18 we had a work party/campout at Bridge Creek on Nobles Emigrant Trail to repair fencing around the Nancy Allen gravesite. A small group met with Dick Waugh, Herman Zittel of CA/NV OCTA, Dan Murray, and Jake Martin, an archaeologist from

the USFS in Susanville, to do repair work on a fence surrounding the Nancy Allen Grave. Nancy Allen died in 1857 and was buried beside the trail. OCTA and Trails West markers are installed beside the grave, but cattle had damaged the fence we had to repair.

We will be holding a chapter board meeting in Fallon, Nevada, September 1 at the fairgrounds, where we can self-distance. Then after the meeting, we will adjourn to the 40 Mile Desert for an open-air campout by the ruts of the California Trail. That night, we'll experience the desert ambience under a full moon similar to what the emigrants of 1849 & 1850 must have encountered. Motels in Fallon will be available for those not camping. The next morning, September 2, we'll drive to Double Wells and do some repair work before the weather gets hot.

On October 20 – 22 we plan an open-air campout and metal detection survey at Peter Lassen's Rancho Bosquejo at the end of the Lassen Trail, which brought some 8,000-9,000 argonauts (about 1/3 of the total that year) into California for the Gold Rush. We will try to confirm trail routes, creek fords, and the campsite where Captain Lyon and 200 soldiers stayed in 1850 on their way to seek retribution for the massacre of Captain Warner the year before. Again, we will practice social distancing in the open air. Trip leaders are Dave Freeman and Ken Johnston.

Depending on future conditions, we will be hosting our chapter's annual spring symposium in April, 2021

at the Gaia Hotel and Spa just off I-5 in Anderson, California. The focus of the symposium will be the Nobles Emigrant Trail, which crossed the Sacramento River near the hotel on its way to Shasta. Another focus of the symposium will be a recall of the history of African Americans participating in the 1849 Gold Rush—history that has been overlooked and nearly lost by historians. Voices of the Golden Ghosts is a group whose mission is to resurrect that history through stories, presentations, and enactments.

Our chapter was well on its way to finishing up scheduling speakers and booking historic tours for the 2020 national OCTA convention in Elko, Nevada, in September, but it also had to be postponed until next year (dates to be announced). Helen Hankins is the convention chair, and the theme is Focusing on Preserving the Future Through the lens of the Past. Topics will be: Trail Impacts Today, Interactions Between Native Americans and Emigrants, Experiences of Europeans and Chinese on the Trail, From Early Explorers to Iron Horse.

Helen has reported that we have received a \$1,000 grant from Kinross Bald Mountain Mine to help fund Dave Vixie's students to attend the 2021 conference and present their experiences with him and his mules on the trail.

For future events and activities, check our website for dates and details at: [canvocta.org](http://canvocta.org).

*Ken Johnston*

## SOUTHERN TRAILS

The Southern Trails Chapter (STC) has been busy, even when not getting out in the field to explore, document and preserve. Many of our members have been active in one way or another. Many conferences have been canceled of which STC would have had an information and membership table at, but we are looking forward to next year to get information to all!

Here is a recap of what we have been doing in the STC. However, our Facebook page has been extremely active with daily announcements on Today in History posts. Many "Thanks" to Jan Iwashita for keeping this updated and posted. Please check out our Facebook link at "Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA." Our webpage is also a good source of information, which can be found on the OCTA main website. As in the last NFTP, the Yuma Conference was a great success with many new members joining.

The STC leadership has a monthly meeting the first week of each month and many emails in between to keep us abreast of activities and our sanity during the pandemic.

In March, our Vice-President, Cecilia Bell, was finishing up the last of the Silver City sign work and it was off to the printers. This was paid largely by donations and a generous gift from STC. Besides this important work, Cecilia was working on updating the STC membership contact directory. Also, the Roots book collection of books (donation) has now been shelved at Western New Mexico University in Silver City, New Mexico. This is a great collection of Trails and other western information.

By May, we closed our US Bank account and transferred to Wells Fargo for easier access. Bill Martin was working industriously on the Butterfield Overland Mail Stage Trail National designation. We have new brochures printed about the STC trails, but waiting to distribute them. If you would like some to help distribute, please contact Cecilia Bell.

June had many events going on internally, even if not out and about due to the Covid virus. STC picked up around 40 new members at the Yuma conference...



welcome to OCTA and STC. Another donation for the Silver City sign was received for \$193.00. This donation was for the 193 days of the Mormon Battalion on their march to California. Melissa Shaw wrote an article for NFTP. Mark Howe published in KIVA on Smeltertown in El Paso and the International Boundary Markers in Arizona and New Mexico. We also finalized by vote to pay out the Silver City sign costs. Our Desert Track editors hope to have our next issue ready by August.

By July the Silver City sign was complete for installation and a ceremony will be held in the future when it is safe to travel again. Our Secretary, Sue Loucks, has also been working on our membership roster with Cecilia. As we send out Desert Tracks and other STC information, it is important to have an accurate list so everyone gets their copy. This membership list is not shared, but is internal to STC. It was also brought up to have clusters of people in areas to work together for local projects. As we slowly get back to normalcy, it is hoped to have local get togethers as STC spans a huge area and membership. An important note was a change in our Treasurer. Dave Smythe needed to step down from this position. It was agreed upon that Melissa Shaw would take over and Dave would then take over her position on the board for California representative. This was voted on and approved. Congratulations to Melissa and Dave. As a note, our positions on the STC for officers expires next year and we are always looking for great help on the Board in one position or another. Our Western Liaison, Sharon Brown, brought up a call for NPS that they are looking for activities we hope to have this next year. This would tie in nicely for local events.

August showed the STC having a large donation from John and Cecilia Bell for the last of the Silver City Sign. Thank you very much!! We also finished, after the Silver City sign deductions, at over \$8,000 in our account. Melissa will be keeping an itemized treasurers report for all of our actions. Cecilia is handling the new members contacts and will be reimbursed for these costs on a 6-month basis. She has completed the Silver City installation with pictures and is now handling for National OCTA a collections inventory. OCTA President Lee Black was on the call to discuss the upcoming National virtual meeting in September. He stated we had 70 new members join OCTA since the Yuma meeting. Many new members have joined after seeing YouTube videos and Facebook postings. Bill Martin reported that the Butterfield Overland Trail was being sponsored in Congress and should be brought to the floor for approval as one of the newest National Overland Trails.

Dan Judkins and Dave Miller have taken over Desert

Tracks and are always looking for new stories, please contact them for articles and stories. The next issue is coming out in August and the following issue should be in January 2021.

We are looking at many different locations for the next Spring Symposium. If you have suggestions, please feel free to contact any board member. Some suggestions are Temecula, CA and Alpine, Texas.

In closing, many thanks to our leadership and members (YOU!) for donations to STC, OCTA and keeping the memory of the trails alive!

*Mark Howe*

*Additional notes from Cecilia Bell* Nearly three years ago, I suggested that there needed to be an interpretative sign for Silver City, New Mexico. It would be based on the passage of General Kearny through San Vicente and Colonel Cooke and the Mormon Battalion through southern New Mexico to the Pacific. In 1858–61, their wagon road was followed by the Butterfield - Overland Stage.



After intense research and consultation with Chihene Chiricahua Apaches, Spanish and military historians, and Butterfield-Overland Stage route and station experts through southern New Mexico, the sign took shape. Visual aids of Grant and Luna County's landscapes and

the creation of the stage route and stage stops from El Paso, Texas to Apache Springs, Arizona were added. Rudy Dominguez of Pro-Creative Design and Printing and I spent many hours designing the sign. Without the sponsorship of local businesses, individuals, and organizations this Southern Trails Chapter project would not have been finalized.

On October 18th, hopefully with the Covid-19 under diminishing numbers, with the use of masks and social distancing, a dedication will be held at the Silver City Visitor Center at 11 a.m.

### **Southern Trails Membership**

Following the Southern Trails Symposium in Yuma, I volunteered to be the Southern Trails Chapter Membership Coordinator. New members will be

welcomed and non-renewing members encouraged to renew. I thank Kathy Conway and her assistants at OCTA Headquarters, for their membership labors.

With 5 principal states and members in many other states, I have divided the membership of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas into regions of north-south or east-west. While having the opportunity to visualize the location of our members, I have learned a great deal about rural and urban areas in the west. Looking towards the future, with increased membership, this chapter of many, many miles can be divided.

Until that time, I hope to develop membership clusters under a volunteer coordinator.

## **NEBRASKA**

### **Incident Near O'Fallon's Bluff**

One of the Nebraska Chapter's initiatives is to preserve the ruts at O'Fallon's Bluff, which are threatened by a proposed routing of Nebraska Public Power District high-voltage power lines. This threat was described in the last issue of News from the Plains.

O'Fallon's Bluff, extended down to the South Platte River, forced travelers to "climb over" the bluff to continue their travel. Many ruts were left behind that are still visible today at the O'Fallon's Bluff Rest Stop on eastbound Interstate 80.

Such an historic feature has many tales to tell. Both wagons and, later, stage coaches used the trail.

Frank Root self-described himself as the "Messenger in Charge of the Express, and Agent of the Post-Office Department to Look after the Transportation of the Mails Over the Great Stage Line Across the Plains and Mountains to California." He recounts an incident occurring not far from O'Fallon's Bluff [Root, Frank A. and William E. Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, Kansas, 1901), p. i & pp. 182-183].

While coming east along the Platte, early one evening during the summer of 1863, not long after we had passed over O'Fallon's Bluffs, a rather singular accident befell us, while we were bowling along at the usual gait. Just after sunset the off front wheel of the stage—the one directly under the driver's seat—ran off the axle. Before any one on the coach had time to even think,

there was an exciting runaway. The team was full of life, and in its wild dash down the valley it seemed that it sped with almost the rapidity of a fast-mail train. I expected every minute to see the driver tumble headlong off the box; so held on to him as best I could with one hand, saving myself with the other. With my assistance he managed to keep his seat. For 200 or 300 yards or more the four horses fairly flew; they went so fast that the axle was kept from dragging on the ground.

Finally the driver, by application of the brake, succeeded in bringing the team to a halt.

Climbing down from the box, I ran back to find the wheel and the missing nut. I

knew when the wheel rolled off and where it should be found, but it was some time ere I succeeded in finding the nut, which was accomplished by the aid of one of the coach lamps and a careful search. Inside the stage were five or six frightened passengers, but they all had to alight and help lift to enable us to get the wheel in place, so as to proceed on our journey. It was an unusual accident—the first and only one of the kind I ever witnessed on the "Overland"—probably was due to the carelessness of the man who last adjusted the nut after greasing; but fortunately it only caused a little delay, and no one was hurt and nothing injured.

Such is one of the stories of time past and just one of the reasons for preserving historic trails.

*Harlan Seyfer*



AN ACCIDENT NEAR O'FALLON'S BLUFFS. Page 185.



# IDAHO

The Idaho chapter remains dormant in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. No chapter outings have been held this summer which seems so strange for

a chapter which is so active. I hope that we can return to normal next year.

The fall chapter meeting will be held via Zoom on Saturday, October 10, starting at 10 am. We will have a very short business meeting as there is little to report. Katherine Kirk, Director of the Idaho Heritage Trust, will then give a presentation on the preservation efforts of the IHT. They were one of our partners for the restoration of the Canyon Creek stage station and have worked on many projects to preserve historic buildings and sites across Idaho. It should be a very interesting presentation.

*Jerry Eichhorst*



Archibald Daniel in front of the original Canyon Creek stage station



Stage station in disrepair in 2007. Cleanup efforts started soon after.



Structural restoration completed and awaiting a roof. The BLM is hoping to have the roof installed this year.



Artifacts found in the wall of the station during the restoration process.

## NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Keith Fessenden  
Mark Headley  
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**2021 OCTA CONVENTION**

**ELKONV**  
SEPTEMBER 13-16



### BUS TOURS

Long Canyon

Fort Ruby (including site tour) and Ruby Valley

Wells/Osino area (including Gun Museum)

Gravelly Ford



### SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Trail Days at the

California Trail Interpretive Center

Basque Dancers and Cowboy Poetry



**FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS  
AND MORE INFORMATION**

[www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)



## OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 1019  
Independence MO 64051

In this issue:

2020 Board and Membership Meeting Notes  
Partnership for the National Trails System  
Preservation Project Updates  
News from the Chapters



## NATIONAL FRONTIER TRAILS MUSEUM

The **National Frontier Trails Museum** in Independence, Missouri brings the pioneer experience on the trails to life. The only museum in the nation certified to interpret the Lewis & Clark, Santa Fe, Oregon, California and Mormon Pioneer trails, the National Frontier Trails Museum offers:

- A unique collection of original artifacts and special exhibits
- Firsthand written accounts, travel diaries and journals
- Interactive displays, audio guides and gallery walks
- Children's programs and activities
- A robust research library
- A gift store with the region's largest selection of trails books and merchandise

Pack your provisions, circle the wagons and saddle up for a visit to the **National Frontier Trails Museum** where the West welcomes you, the journey begins and your adventure awaits.

318 W. Pacific • Independence, MO 64050 • [www.FrontierTrailsMuseum.org](http://www.FrontierTrailsMuseum.org)