

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association



Independence Rock

Fall 2022

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2022 OCTA Convention - Casper, Wyoming

The stories of the pioneers came alive again at this conference when outstanding speakers and guides coupled with a wealth of historic destinations for trips and exploration. The 2022 Casper conference had it all, including the fine company of around 200 OCTA members and a great location for our base of operations for the week.

Pre-convention treks Saturday to Red Desert indigenous sites guided by educator Yufna Soldier Wolf and Jason Baldes of the Wind River Nation, then Sunday Fort Laramie led by Wyoming OCTA Preservation officer and author Randy Brown were highly praised.

OCTA business was handled at the Sunday Board of Directors meeting chaired by president John Briggs. The agenda included officer, director, committee and chapter reports as well as membership, and finance items. National Park Service representatives introduced their newest staff members and detailed our progress working together. The status of current OCTA projects, future goals and their fulfillment were discussed in detail, with particular focus on our five-year Journey of a Lifetime program covered by Lee Black.

Sunday evening officially kicked off the festivities with a reception up the hill from the convention site at the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, a truly outstanding venue with a terrific view of Casper and exhibits on western history and the Oregon, California, Mormon and Pony Express Trails. It was a chance to visit with old friends again in a beautiful setting.

After a Monday morning opening session and general membership meeting, keynote speaker Todd Guenther gave a rousing talk on South Pass, its pivotal place in history underlined by his personal observations from the many trail rides he has led there, his life and work in the area.

Tuesday and Thursday bus tours visited Independence Rock, Devil's Gate, parts of the Bozeman Trail, Fort Phil Kearny, the Red Buttes battle site and more. The movies *The Battle of Red Buttes* and *Wagon Master: Hansen's Hand Crafted History* were presented at the Frontier Brewing company and theater downtown. Monday and



Wednesday speakers delved into the Bozeman Trail, locating soldiers remains at the Battle of Red Buttes, The Lander Road, overland mail routes and early trail preservation efforts. Camille Bradford shared stories and photos of the 1930 Centennial gathering at Independence Rock. A panel discussion by LDS and BLM trail management at Martin's Cove and Rocky Ridge wrapped up the talks. Our Wednesday afternoon barbecue at Fort Caspar featured demonstrations by wheelwright Doug Hansen and riders from the National Pony Express Association and entertainment by Dr. Dumass (Bruce Berst) and champion fiddler Erica From.

Activities were capped off Thursday night at the awards banquet, emceed by Dr. Phil de Graves (Roger Blair), the period clothing pageant and a rousing auction featuring veteran auctioneer John Winner. A huge thanks to Tom Rea and his convention crew for an excellent week.

Photos by Roger Blair, Jay Lawrence and Stan Sholik





2022 OCTA Awards

Presented at the Casper Convention • September 1, 2022



President John Briggs with Bill Martin's Certificate of Appreciation for service as PNTS Representative. Bill was unable to attend the convention.



Harlan Seyfer received the Merrill Mattes Award for Excellence in Writing



Tom Rea received a Certificate of Appreciation for his work leading the organization and planning of the 2022 Casper Convention.



Gail Carbiener received the David J. Welch Preservation Award for his incredible work and dedication to saving the trails. Gail was unable to attend the convention.



President John Briggs and Bill Hill present Outstanding Educator Awards to Tim Niklas and Catherine Lynch from the Grand Encampment Museum.



Dick Nelson received the Gregory M. Franzwa Meritorious Achievement Award for his years of service as the Awards Committee Chairman.



Dave Welch accepts the Elaine McNabney Distinguished Volunteer Award on behalf of Robin Baker for his research and mapping work of Laurel Hill Descents and Emigrant Spring route of the Oregon Trail

FROM THE PRESIDENT



The 40th Annual Convention was held in Casper Wyoming August 28th to September 2nd. It was a very successful Convention with outstanding speakers and excellent tours. Events were held at the National Historic Trails Center, at Fort Caspar and at Frontier Brewing (the old

Fox Theater) where two films were shown (The Battle of Red Buttes and Wagon Master; Hansen's Handcrafted History). Congratulations and thanks to Tom Rea and the team that put this Convention together.

I include one picture, and it is of the Tour Group at Avenue of Rocks on Tuesday 30th September. This tour had followed the Trail closely from Bessemer Bend through

Avenue of Rocks, up Prospect Hill and on to Independence Rock. What I thought remarkable was the fact that the gravel road had spared the Trail for much of our journey. Long stretches of the Trail were visible and available for us to 'visit.' This point was strongly made on the Thursday tour 'Crossing the North Platte.' At Edness

Kimball Wilkins State Park there is a deep set of swales with US 26 and a railroad on one side and an irrigation ditch and the river on the other side. The Trail has been preserved!

The Board Meeting was held on Sunday September 28th. The Board papers will be uploaded soon to the web site for the membership to see. There was comprehensive coverage of the work done by all the Committees and the activities organized by the Chapters.

Jerry Mogg, Treasurer, presented a detailed description of our current finances and of the proposed budget for FYE September 30th, 2023. Our Balance Sheet is strong, though it has fluctuated as the Markets

have seesawed. The Funds have been well managed by the Investment Advisory Committee through this difficult period. A problem though is that our operational expenses are running ahead of operational income by some \$3,000 each month. By operational activities I mean excluding Chapter finances, Endowments, and the projects of 'Journey of a Lifetime.' So, that includes regular Committee activities, the Independence office and staff, accounting costs, web site management costs and Publications. There is not a lot of room to cut costs and so we continue to need your help with the mid-year and year end fundraising programs as well as 'Journey of a Lifetime.' The budget for 2023 presented was not balanced and shows a deficit of \$40,000. A disbursement of \$22,000 could be made available from the Heritage Fund but has not been budgeted. After much discussion, the Board agreed to accept the budget as proposed.

One of the areas where we could see increased income is if we were to grow membership. As of August

31st, we have 1230 memberships which is a decline of just under 1.5% per annum over 5 years. The Marketing team are working to develop the way we present ourselves on Social Media to attract younger people. The brand refresh is still in process, but we did take the opportunity in Casper to record several videos featuring speakers,

tour experts and tour highlights. These will now be edited and placed on our YouTube channel. If you have not already subscribed – please do!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5CyC-R68Izhwv1f57V-yQ>

The 'Journey of a Lifetime' fundraising project is another area where we aim to increase the Association's capability to attract more members. This project, too, is still in the development phase but has already garnered some substantial pledges. The Libraries and Collections Committee project already has donor support and its work to better understand the assets we have in Independence and in the Chapters is under way.



John Winner, Preservation Officer, presented a paper summarizing sixty ongoing Preservation projects, many associated with transmission lines, wind farms and solar panels. The National thrust to alleviate climate concerns by expanding investment in 'green' energy is, in general, not going to be stopped. Mitigation is our best opportunity wherever we encounter such conflict with the Trails.

In my report I noted Ezra Meeker's comments at the start of his own program to memorialize the Oregon Trail. He recognized he would need contributions from volunteers. If you have not yet made your contribution to the mid-year fundraising program now would be a good time to do so!

*John Briggs, President
Oregon-California Trails Association*

FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



With the Casper convention in the rearview mirror, it's time to reflect on what was accomplished in this fiscal year, and it's also time to think about what we want to accomplish in the next. From most accounts (with a couple of bus breakdowns serving as exceptions), the Casper convention was a

highly successful event. During the opening membership meeting, first-time attendees were asked to stand. Something close to one-third of the audience stood, which bodes well for the future of such events. There's really no point in putting them on if people aren't going to come, and what we learned coming out of Casper was that people thoroughly enjoy the speakers, tours, events, and camaraderie of like-minded people coming together to learn about this fascinating history.

A second thing we learned is that our marketing efforts to reach younger and more diverse audiences are starting to bear fruit. For years, we have ensured that our speakers and tours at our events feature the diversity of both our nation at large as well as the diversity that was found along the trails during that historic period. To that end, we've featured speakers and tours led by American Indians, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latin Americans, younger adults, and even teenagers. And now, we're seeing that reflected back to us in our audiences. This year, there were many more young adults (and even a few teenagers) in attendance. There were people from different racial and religious backgrounds in attendance. One gent even flew all the way from Exeter, England to attend!

So where do we go from here? The first thing I'd like to ask for is your assistance in helping us to reach more people who might have an interest in our historic trails. Share our posts on social media. Share our YouTube videos. Engage with our podcast. Host events and

speakers within your own chapters and be sure to invite people from other historical societies, service clubs, universities, federal and state agencies, and anyone else who might want to visit hard-to-find sites and have them interpreted by people who intimately know the history of these places in minute detail.

The second thing I'd like you to consider is inviting friends, family, and colleagues to join us for these activities as well. More importantly, ask them to consider joining as a member. It's long been said that if each of us just brought one new member into the fold, we'd double in size overnight. Perhaps consider giving a membership as a birthday or Christmas gift. Bring your kids, grandkids, neighbors, neighbor's kids, or a colleague with you to our outings. Tell them about our need for more bodies to participate, to volunteer, to create, and to enhance our historic trail corridors. We have so many opportunities these days that most people can easily find a niche inside of OCTA to help move us forward. From mapping and marking to genealogy, from marketing and public relations to libraries and archives, from working and partnering with federal and state agencies to helping to stage conventions and symposia, there is plenty of work to be shared amongst our membership. Imagine how much more we could accomplish if we added to our base membership?

Consider also our business membership program. For a mere \$50, a local business could join OCTA and get advertised on our websites and in our publications. OCTA members would then know to support the businesses that support the trails. Even better, look for corporate members. Though it costs a bit more, there are large companies giving away money to non-profits as part of their regular business plan. Perhaps you work for such a company. Consider asking them if they'd like to become a corporate partner with OCTA.

Third and finally, I'd ask that you consider reaching out to other like-minded groups and encouraging them to partner with us. We've had our most success of late in this exact arena. Our now five-year-old partnership with

the LDS Church and its members, for example, has paid huge dividends for us. By partnering with the Mormon Battalion Association, we staged an incredible weekend-long symposium in San Diego last January. This summer, we staged a mapping and marking workshop at Devil's Gate/Sun Ranch in central Wyoming, training nearly 20 people in the basics of mapping emigrant trails. The end result was 15 new members from the LDS or Farmland Reserve (a for-profit arm of the church that has financially supported our events over the past five years) who are engaged with GIS, genealogy, archaeology, and historic research. These are the types of people I think we can keep engaged long-term.

We also participated in the "Mormon Trail Across Nebraska" symposium in Omaha earlier this summer. We will soon have a Zoom meeting with many of the attendees to see about the feasibility of getting those people involved with our Nebraska Chapter in helping to develop more trail projects in Nebraska and to

participate in hosting next year's convention in Gering. This could serve as yet another boon for membership (in fact, several attendees have already joined after that symposium).

It's a really exciting time to be involved with OCTA right now. We have so much going on, and we have so many dedicated members and volunteers helping us to develop even more projects. Many of our newer members are relatively younger, mostly in the 30-55 age range. To keep this organization going forward, we need to keep coming up with fresh ideas to entice these next generations to build upon the work of the Ezra Meekers and Howard Driggs and Gregory Franzwas of the world. Who knows, maybe the next person you invite to one of our events is going to be set aflame with the necessary passion for our trails and become that next iconic trail preservationist we so desperately need.

Travis Boley, Association Manager

Fundraising Committee Report

Committee members: Lee Black, Chairman, Steve Allison, John Briggs, Helen Hankins, Bill Martin, Pat Traffas and Dave Welch

Leadership expresses sincere appreciation for your continued support of the OCTA mission. As preservationists, OCTA remains the pre-eminent guardian and promoter of the inspirational story of the 19th century westward migration. Your response to our semi-annual appeals produced the following results: 2019 gifts \$36,600, 2020 gifts \$90,000 vs \$66,550 in 2021. OCTA experienced a 145% year over year growth of fundraising income in 2020. The overwhelming donor support in 2020 was due to postponing the Elko Convention. You helped to make up the lost convention revenue in an unprecedented manner. Thank you for responding in our hour of need!

Journey of a Lifetime continues in the development stage. Your Fundraising Committee is appreciative of the Feasibility Study feedback received from OCTA members and businesses. Utilizing the information, we are taking

the necessary steps to construct a solid foundation for a successful campaign. Every wagon train headed west had to plan their route, set timing of departure, have sufficient financial and material resources, and manpower to accomplish a successful journey.

Twenty-two recommendations were developed from your input. All required proper consideration prior to launching a successful campaign. The Committee continues researching and implementing fundraising "Best Practices," securing operational tools and staffing necessary for success.

In closing, we were disappointed that a number of you whom offered to participate in the study were not contacted. Our desire is to reach out to all who desire to offer input. In the days and weeks ahead, we will be calling to gain your input. You may also call Lee Black, Committee Chair, at 505-379-3737 to provide input. Let's continue to protect our trail heritage, written word, swales and ruts. It was and remains a Journey of a Lifetime! *Lee Black*

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PRESERVATION



By John Winner

National Preservation Officer

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

established a series of goals to archive its mission. **Goal**

1. Preserve the historic emigrant trails.

I recently returned from the OCTA National Convention held in Casper, Wyoming. The opening of the convention at the general membership meeting provides an opportunity for officers to share with the general membership in attendance activities during the course of the previous year. I presented a power point highlighting several of the preservation activities that are being monitored and other activities related to preservation. One such activity was conducting a basic mapping workshop. Mapping emigrant trails and preserving emigrant trails are closely related, as the saying goes..."You can't preserve it if you don't know where it is". For some time the LDS Church has been requesting instructions on how to map the emigrant trails that many of the Mormons followed in their overland trek. Prior to the convention on Thursday and Friday we met at Martin's Cove about 60 miles west of Casper and just a few miles from Independence Rock. The LDS Church has a visitor center and conference room that was suitable for the 20 participants of the mapping workshop. The first day was classroom instruction using OCTA's MET Manual [Mapping Emigrant Trails] as a guide. The second day was field training. The Church owns a large tract of land near Independence Rock where the Pony Express NHT, the Oregon and California NHT and the original General Land Office map indicate trail location. We were granted permission by the church to use this land for field training and to use metal detection as a trail validation tool. Participants found swales, ruts and artifacts to validate trail segments. Representatives from the Church followed OCTA's policy for metal detecting. Any artifact found was identified, recorded, a GPS reading taken, photographed then returned to where it was found (in situ). A good time was had by all, there is no substitute for "on the job training"

Continuing on with comments made at the OCTA convention general membership meeting, I highlighted

several of the electrical development projects that have impacts to emigrant trails. Probably one of the more difficult preservation threats to work through is energy development. The need for more energy, more electricity for the ever increasing development and population growth. For years it was fossil fuels and hydroelectric; however times are changing. Today it's wind and solar. Thousands of acres of land are now devoted to "wind and solar farms" but wait, producing power is just the beginning. It needs to be transported to where power is needed. This requires thousands of miles of transmission lines. In most instances there is no debate that the need for more energy is valid. The challenge is: How do we try and salvage some of our part of history, to continue to tell the story and see first hand remnants of mid-nineteenth century overland travel.

Whenever we receive notification of a threat, OCTA files for "consulting party status" or now the new designation "cooperating agency" which provides us the opportunity to participate in permitting process. Here is an update on several of the electrical generation projects:

B2H: 300 mile Idaho Power project from Boardman, Oregon to Hemingway, Idaho, 500kV Transmission Line crosses the Oregon National Historic trail 7 times.

The Administrative Law Judge has issued her decision in the Contested Case issues and not a good one for OCTA. Each of the issues in the contested case presented by Gail Carbiener were in essence rejected. One of the most important, the Indirect Effects to the viewshed at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (NHOTIC) in Baker City. Here is the Judges conclusion

"Contrary to Mr. Carbiener's contention, Ms. Lingenfelter's video simulations do not invalidate or outweigh the other evidence in the record demonstrating that, with the proposed mitigation, the proposed project will have a less than significant adverse impact on the scenic value of the NHOTIC and surrounding area."

Another issue that was raised dealt with putting the transmission line underground. The ALJ response:

"Because Idaho Power did not propose undergrounding the transmission line, the question of whether undergrounding is a better mitigation option is outside the Council's jurisdiction and, accordingly, outside the scope of this contested case."

OCTA is not pursuing any further issues raised in the contested case. OCTA will not appeal the decision. A special thanks to Gail for all the tireless effort over

many years.

However, OCTA is not done with B2H. The BLM's fifth year signing of the B2H Programmatic Agreement (PA) is due for review. Dave Welch has agreed to participate in the PA review discussions and has asked Dave Price, Idaho Chapters Preservation Officer (West) to assist.

R-Project: 225-mile Nebraska Public Power District, 345kV line crosses the Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trails.

A lawsuit was filed when U.S. Fish and Wildlife issued an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) authorizing the project to move forward. A petition for review of agency action was filed in the United States District court by arguing that U.S. Fish and Wildlife violated portions of the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. On June 17th., 2020, the US District Judge vacated the ITP issued to NPPD and remanded the matter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife for further review. This is a first step victory for the plaintiffs.

Early in September we received notification from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that they are now in the process of preparing a SEIS (Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement). In essence, they are now attempting to respond to the issues that the Judge cited when he vacated the original ITP permit. OCTA is once again involved in the process.

Lava Ridge-Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP North): Magic Valley Energy has submitted a proposal for a massive wind farm Northeast of Twin Falls, Idaho. The project would have up to 400 wind turbines on mostly public lands administered by BLM. Although the proposed project area is not in direct contact with the trail, indirect effects could be visible as the wind turbines generally reach Heights of 750 feet or more. An integral part of Lava Ridge is SWIP (North).

SWIP (North) is a 275-mile 500 kV transmission line in Idaho and Nevada. The line would run from the Midpoint substation, north of Twin Falls, Idaho to Robinson Summit substation west of Ely, Nevada. This is the third phase of the SWIP project that continues on to southern Nevada. The SWIP (North) project will cross the Oregon NHT, Central Overland Trail, The Pony Express NHT, The Hastings Cutoff and the California NHT.

OCTA has been granted "Consulting Party" status as the process moves through its various stages. Idaho chapter Preservation Officers, Don Wind and Dave Price along with Kevin Lee from California-Nevada Chapter are monitoring this project.

Greenlink West: Due to the demand for more power for the rapidly growing manufacturing and industrial

development in the Reno/Sparks/Fernley, Nevada region, Nevada Power Company and Sierra Pacific Power Company both doing business as Nevada Energy have submitted applications to construct, operate and maintain a 470 mile new electric transmission line(s) and associated facilities from Las Vegas, Nevada to Reno, Nevada. The name of the project is Greenlink West Transmission Project. The project includes 525-kV, 345-kV, 230-kV, and 120-kV transmission facilities plus a series of substations. Most of the transmission line runs parallel to Nevada Hwy. 95 until it reaches an area north of Yerington, Nevada where the line branches to Alt 95 with multiple smaller transmission lines. The lines will terminate at the Mira Loma Substation, southeast of Reno and Comstock Meadow Substation, on Hwy 439, the new parkway connecting I-80 and Hwy. 50.

A new Fort Church Substation will be built. Three new 345kV transmission lines from Fort Churchill Substation: Line 1, 36 miles to Comstock Meadows Substation; Line 2, 33 miles to Comstock Meadows Substation and Line 3, 44 miles to Mira Loma Substation.

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) will include crossing the Pony Express NHT and the California NHT, Carson Route, both the Desert and River branches. The proposed Direct APE includes two segments of the California Trail and one segment of the Pony Express Trail, and the Indirect (visual) APE contains one segment of the Pony Express and three segments of the California.

OCTA is a consulting party to this project. A 90 minute "zoom" public input workshop was held on November 17, 2021 and an in-person workshop in Reno in May, 2022

Greenlink North: 225 mile, Nevada Energy project from Ely, Nevada (Robinson Substation) to Yerington, Nevada (Fort Churchill Substation). A 525kV transmission line that follows US Highway 50 in part and the Pony Express NHT and Central Overland Trail, crossing in several locations. I have participated in a scoping sessions with BLM. In addition to the direct effects of trails, at issue is the effect to the "Loneliest Highway" designation.

Gateway South: The Gateway South Transmission Project is 416 miles of 500kV transmission line. This is a PacifiCorp project part of the Energy Gateway Transmission Expansion. From Medicine Bow, Wyoming to Mona, Utah. Notice to proceed was issued by the current administration in May 2022.

Fire Damage Assessment: Following two catastrophic fires in California in 2021, the 963,309 acre Dixie fire and the 221,835 acre Caldor fire,

limited crews have been in the field attempting to do trail damage assessment. Although wildfires can have a positive benefit to trail location, exposing trail segments heretofore unknown or perhaps covered with brush, extensive damage to trails is generally caused during fire suppression and subsequent rehabilitation, logging, road repair, utility repair etc. OCTA's biggest problem is gathering volunteers to monitor the extensive amount of trail segments within the footprint of these fires.

Fernley Swales: OCTA continues to try to find a solution to keep the Class 1 trail segments and original Central Pacific Railroad roadbed within the Fernley, Nevada Historic Preservation Easement from being degraded by OHV use. BLM, the easement holder, has done little to enforce the preservation of this historic site due to a host of reasons. Once again we will be meeting with BLM on September 14th, 2022 attempting to find common ground to save this site from further destruction.

Gravelly Ford Conservation Easement and Virtual Tour: The first draft of the conservation easement resulting from mitigation on the Long Canyon open pit mine project is in the hands of the Nevada Gold Mine attorneys. Once the lawyers do their thing we will have our chance to review the draft. The proposed easement would protect the California Trail south of Interstate 80 to the Gravelly Ford site. Property owner, Nevada Gold Mine has agreed to enter into the easement with Nevada Land Trust. Nevada Land Trust prepared the draft agreement.

Also, part of the mitigation is a video virtual tour telling the story of the emigrant travel and the preservation of the trail.

Epilogue: Again, a thank you to the chapter Preservation Officers for their continual efforts to assist in the preservation of the trails and to all of you, your vigilance of trail activity is greatly appreciated. *More to come...*

Partnership for the National Trails System

Partnership Schedules Workshop for Trails in Albuquerque

The Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) will hold a National Trails Workshop November 2-4 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with a focus on working with diverse groups within the National Trails System.

The workshop – the first in-person meeting hosted by PNTS in three years – will emphasize learning, collaboration, and networking for trails and tourism professionals, emerging leaders and people who are interested in getting involved with trails in their communities and across the nation.

“With a particular emphasis on learning from and with Indigenous communities, the workshop will provide opportunities to grow your trails skillset, collaboratively confront issues facing trails, and co-create solutions for specific and system-wide problems,” organizers said.

The first day of the workshop will offer trainings that explore tribal sovereignty, engagement with Indigenous communities and co-led stewardship. Day 2 will focus on advocacy campaigns, gateway communities, diversifying trail visitors and creating equitable workplaces. Day 3 trainings will explore inventory & monitoring tools, working with non-traditional partners, environmental justice and outdoor careers.

In addition, on Thursday there will be a presentation on “Stewardship of National Historic Trails,” as well as a roundtable on issues specific to historic trails.

For a more detailed schedule, a list of speakers, and registration information, visit <http://www.pnts.org> and click on the National Trails Workshop link. *Bill Martin, PNTS Liaison*



Notes from our Treasurer

At our Casper Annual meeting someone asked me if OCTA was eligible/able to receive a contribution from their IRA which would be a Qualified Charitable Distribution from their IRA and the distribution could qualify as their current year Required Minimum Distribution, RMD. Yes, OCTA has received a few of these donations to us, as a nonprofit, from IRA accounts according to Kathy Conway. Thank you for making this type of gift to OCTA. We should not give you tax advice on doing this but the steps you need to do are fairly straight forward. If you are 70½ years or older, have an taxable IRA account, needing to take a Required Minimum Distribution, RMD from your IRA, your IRA custodian needs to send to OCTA your donation up to \$100,000 per IRA account owner/per year. We treat the receipt of your Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA account like any other donation we get from members but OCTA only acknowledges that we did receive your donation and OCTA does not give you an official receipt for making a donation to us (this is to avoid your trying to deduct this contribution on your income tax return, as the distribution is not part of your taxable income - double dipping).

I believe you will find the rules stated above to become fairly routine for making additional contributions from your IRA in subsequent years for

everyone involved in making and reporting on this Qualified Charitable Distribution. I am familiar with the tax rules and have given money directly from my IRA to a number of nonprofits. I am trying to avoid providing you with tax advice as I am no longer allowed to do this. I hope this is helpful information for you to get proper advice from your professionals. You can work with Kathy Conway at OCTA about how to make a Qualified contribution from your IRA to us and if she needs help she is able to ask Turner Rivenbark or me for additional assistance. As you are aware, OCTA needs donations from our members to be able to accomplish our current missions/directives, as we can not do all our directives with only each of our members paying only their membership dues.

I would recommend considering OCTA, a non profit, as a beneficiary for your IRA account. After your spouse, a non-profit can be an excellent choice as a beneficiary for your traditional/taxable IRA. A nonprofit does not have to pay income taxes on what they inherit/receive from your traditional/taxable IRA. So if you are wanting to avoid paying income taxes on your withdrawal from taxable/traditional IRA then name a nonprofit like OCTA as a beneficiary of all or part of your IRA account makes sense.

Jerry Mogg, Treasurer

It's Never Too Early

By Bill Hill, Gering Convention Committee

From one convention to the next. We recently returned from the Casper Convention and what a terrific convention it was! The pre and post-trips were fun with very informative narratives, the speakers were great, the bus trips had enlightening narrations, and the food was more than enough. It was especially nice to see and talk with our OCTA friends and meet new ones. So, what is next? We want even MORE of the same next year.

In just over nine months the Gering Convention, "We Do Old in a New Way" will welcome you to Western Nebraska, from July 25-July 29, 2023, with possible one or two days of pre-convention tours and activities. Note that this convention will be in JULY, not September or late August. This will enable an "old but new" group of attendees to come - families with kids and teachers who were not able to attend many of the more recent conventions because of school conflicts which required that they be back at

"work" or in class. Mark the dates on your calendar in ink, not pencil, you'll want to be there! You may have been to Gering/Scottsbluff area before, but three of the major visitor centers have been renovated and expanded. There



Photo: Paul Hermans

is more to see and do at the "new" visitor centers at Chimney Rock and Scotts Bluffs National Monument, and the Legacy of the Plains Museum has greatly expanded since the last convention. In the next issue of News from the Plains

you'll learn more details about some of the specific trips and speakers. We plan to have something for everyone!

Just be sure to mark your calendar for next year NOW, and plan to bring your kids or grand kids! If you would like to present a paper/talk during the July Gering convention we are compiling a list of possible programs. Please include the topic of your talk and a short description. Send it to:

Subject: Gering talks-OCTA To: Hillhousew@aol.com

Meet Our Members

Once again it is time to meet some of our new members. In this issue we are going to meet four members from across the country. They are Sandy Arrow from Nebraska, Teresa Ward from Colorado, Bill Yates from South Carolina, and Kristi Haman from Idaho. All have the makings of becoming true "Rut Nuts!"

Our first highlighted member is **Sandy Arrow**. Sandy heard about OCTA as a result of her summer position at Chimney Rock this past year where her boss, Loren Pospisil, talked her into joining OCTA. Her interest in the west was sparked back in 1992. She was living and attending college in Reno, Nevada. She and her sister decided to drive along the Oregon Trail. She remembers that while in Nebraska they stopped at Chimney Rock where the center was then only a trailer. She was told that there were plans to build a larger visitor center and museum there. Never did she think that one day she would be working there as an interpreter.

Sandy's claims that her degree is in "Cowboys and Indians." She received her master's degree with a focus on Native American history. For the past ten years she has been an adjunct instructor at Western Nebraska Community College teaching United States history and History of the American West. The Oregon Trail is a small part of the course, but she wanted to expand her knowledge and understanding of the trail and westward migration. Her recent summer position at Chimney Rock has helped her do so. Her favorite section of the trails is the Nebraska portion which is rich in its many sites and descriptions in the many emigrant journals. She has traveled along and over parts of the trails in Wyoming and Utah and some in Nevada.

She is looking forward to meeting and working with other history "nuts." Little does she know that OCTA is full of them, and that they are more than willing to help her along. Her colleagues almost always remark about her passion with the warning, "Don't get Sandy started!" (I think Sandy is exactly what OCTA needs!) She is interested in expanding her knowledge of the different interactions between the natives and emigrants and the historical impact of the westward migrations on the various tribes into the present.

Sandy is looking forward to assisting OCTA with its goals. In her non-trail life for the past 18 years another passion comes through. She has been the band director for the Banner County Schools and enjoys playing along with her students' school pep band. Her earlier master's thesis focused on Fort Robinson's Army Bands, 1887-1945 – truly a union of her two passions –

American western history and music.

Our second new member is **Teresa Ward**. Some of you may have already had the pleasure of meeting her and her son, Ryan, during the Casper Convention.



For those of you who weren't at the convention and missed the opportunity, here it is now.

Teresa first learned of OCTA during a computer web "search" for the Oregon Trail.

Her passion for contributing to the preservation of trail history led her to Join OCTA. In 2011 she wanted to learn more about the two states she would be driving across – Kansas and Missouri. She decided to read about the history of them and one topic that "jumped out" was the trails. She realized her knowledge of the trails was lacking, and soon one thing led to another, and she became hooked on them as members of OCTA have too. She began writing, and *Crossing*, a series covering about 1830-1910, was born. The trails play a significant part in the two books that have been published and two more are planned. She says that she just can't get enough of the trails, and that was one reason why she and her son attended the convention in Casper. She has visited and traveled over much of the trails from western Missouri through Kansas and across Nebraska and Wyoming. She is eagerly looking forward to "tackling" the trails in Idaho and Oregon. While she notes that the forts, including Leavenworth and Laramie, are special, standing at the "Parting of the Ways" is very moving. I think many OCTA members have had the same feelings.

Teresa looks to OCTA for community, connections, preservation, support, and education while she plans to offer financial support when she can, her time, and active promotion to others. She hopes that her books will help others to understand and to preserve their history.

Teresa is retired from the Air Force and has a deep respect and appreciation for the armed services. She is also the proud mother of four who are actively working to make the world a better place. She is active in Special Olympics. She has lived in Colorado Springs for 27 years. She also recently joined the Cherokee Trail chapter. She is an academic program director

at Pikes Peak State College, overseeing its BAS in Emergency Service Administration, working closely with first responders and emergency managers. She loves American History and believes the American experience is among the most interesting pieces of world history. She thanks OCTA for all it is doing and looks forward to partnering with it as it works to accomplish its goals.

Moving on to number three, we have **Bill Yates**.

Bill's interest in OCTA stems from reading Rinker Buck's book, *The Oregon Trail*, but his interest in the westward emigration goes back to his high school senior year. His history teacher, Miss Shirley, taught an elective course on genealogy. He noted that at the time the work was done the old-fashioned way- family interviews, actual visits to courthouses, cemeteries, and libraries with lots of microfilm. It was then that he "discovered" that his Great-great-great-grandfather Patrick Henry McLeod was a 49'er who had gone to California during the gold rush. After learning about OCTA through Rinker's book, joining it was a natural outgrowth of his desire to learn more about the trails his ancestor used.

Born in 1814, Patrick, an Irishman, had been educated in Glasgow University, Scotland, before coming to the United States. He moved to Washington, DC and then to Montgomery County, Maryland, where he and his wife had four children. Bill learned that Patrick kept a diary of his journey from Maryland across the continent to California and his later return journey across the Isthmus of Panama. Patrick returned to his wife and family in Maryland with gold, purchased a new house and farm in Indian Creek, Monroe County, and had four more children and prospered. Bill learned that Princeton University had the original diary. Princeton agreed to a very limited one-time printing of Patrick's diary with the copies going to a few family members.

While Bill's family is from Maryland, he now claims South Carolina as his home. He moved there to attend graduate school at the University of South Carolina. He met his husband there and put down roots there. He is now retired, loves to travel, and cook.

Bill has recently been able to obtain a full copy of the printed diary. His future plans now include traveling over and along the route taken by his ancestor. This would allow him to see the sights and experience some of what it might have been like. OCTA and our membership should be able to help him with this. He hopes to expand on the diary and make it something more like a historical novel with an expanded story

before the journey, not just the incidents of his travels. It would reflect Patrick's philosophy, his observations about the people he met, the journey with all its hardships, his successful return, its impact on his descendants with more information about his descendants and larger family.

Bill's task and goals are large, but OCTA is well equipped to help.

Now let me introduce you to our fourth highlighted member, **Kristi Haman**. It seems that the love of history is an integral part of her life, and her own words best reflect that. She writes, "I have long held



a deep fascination with the 'old west'. My father was a huge influence on me in that regard. When I was a child, my father was a park ranger at Bent's Old Fort in Colorado. I grew up in Montana and my family participated in mountain man rendezvous as

reenactors. My father believed in the preservation of the past and historical accuracy; he taught me the importance of discovering history in everyday life.

As an adult, I was fortunate to work for the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC, during the first three years of its inception. However, much like the pioneers, the western fever beckoned me across the Great American Desert. I settled near the Oregon Trail in Boise, Idaho, and started a career as a librarian.

While exploring the area, I couldn't help but notice the significant number of OCTA signs and markers rising from the sage-covered hills. Curious, I resolved to learn more about the pioneer migration along the Oregon Trail starting with every article and book I could find on the subject.

In March 2022, I took a few Oregon Trail enrichment classes through the Boise School District's Community Education program. The classes were presented by Jerry Eichhorst, President of the Idaho Chapter of OCTA. From there, I became a proud, card-carrying member of OCTA and its Idaho Chapter."

It seems she was not bashful and has jumped right in with both feet!

As an intrepid "Rut Nut", she has put on her hiking boots and spends time exploring the trails

as often as time allows. So far, she has visited parts of the Main Oregon Trail Backcountry Byway, Massacre Rocks State Park, Ft. Hall Replica and Commemorative Trading Post, and the Boise Oregon Trail Reserve. In Oregon, she spent several weekends hiking the trails near Huntington, Baker City, and La Grande. The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is also a favorite stop and offers stunning views of the valley (the Center is currently closed for a major renovation). She writes, "This fall I am attending Idaho's Heritage Conference in Pocatello. Jerry will be speaking at a session on cultural resource management and leading a field trip to Coldwater Hill, Lander Road, and Raft River. In October, I plan to join OCTA's field trip to Jeffreys-Goodale Cutoff at the Idaho National Laboratory."

As a librarian, having an attachment to books would be natural. And as a nut rut she combines both interests. She is fascinated by the details of the journey in the 1850s and '60s. She typically reads two books on the subject weekly and is most drawn to memoirs, diaries, and other first-hand accounts. Her recent Oregon Trail favorites are: *A Pioneer's Search for an Ideal Home* by Phoebe Goodell Judson (1925), *Wake of the Prairie Schooner* by Irene D. Paden (1944), and *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* by John Mack Faragher (2001). Her Old West Favorites include *The Look of the Old West: A Fully Illustrated Guide* by William Foster Harris (2007) and *Bleed, Blister, and Purge: A History of Medicine on the American Frontier* by Volney Steele, M.D. (2015). A favorite author is Fred Lockley. But her history interests go further to include the Civil War, World War I & II, the Victorians, and old

Europe, with a few classics thrown in. She would love to hear your book recommendations. Send them to hamanbooks@gmail.com.

Kristi is looking forward to learning as much as she can from other long-standing OCTA members and continue participating in meetings and field trips. She would also like to be more involved with preservation efforts. She already plans to attend the 2023 annual convention in Gering, Nebraska and wants to eventually offer presentations so that others may learn about daily life on the westward trails.

As a writer, she would like to contribute articles to *Overland Journal* and *News from the Plains*. One of her greatest desires is to document a trip across the entirety of the Oregon Trail and then use the experience to write a novel about an emigrant family.

In her "spare" time Kristi has worked in public libraries for more than 15 years and is currently the manager of a library in Meridian, Idaho. She also collects antiques, historical photographs, researches genealogy, and enjoys traveling and learning about other cultures (Earlier she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Bulgaria.) In her "spare time" she now likes to bring her family to cultural events in Idaho and Oregon: *Outpost Days* in Murphy; *Wagon Days* in Ketchum; *Idaho City Days*; *Pendleton Round-Up*; and *Idaho State Museum* events.

When the frost descends across the bare Ash tree in her backyard, she loves to curl up next to the fireplace with a glass of red wine, three fuzzy dogs, and a pile of well-loved books.

Now we are familiar with four more of members with more to come in the next edition. *Bill Hill*

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Last Wagons on the Eastern Branch of the Lassen Trail

By Ken Johnson

In the summer of 1848, Peter Lassen led the first train of ten to twelve wagons over a new route to California that would become known as the Lassen Trail, and it would avoid the rocky steeps of the Truckee and the Carson/Mormon Routes. Although longer than the other routes, it would ironically save the lives of the last third of the Gold Rush emigrants. Approximately eight to nine thousand argonauts, following a year later, would linger along the trail and were late entering the state. So, 1849 became known as the “*Year of the Greenhorn*” and “*The year of Madness*,” as the emigrants this year were inexperienced doctors, lawyers, family men, and others who generally lacked the skills needed for driving ox teams and trail traveling.

Becoming the tail end of the migration of approximately 30,000-35,000 gold seekers, they began to experience the fact that previous trains had depleted the grass and resources needed to proceed, and therefore by necessity they had to follow the route Lassen had pioneered, which still had grass for the livestock.

Lassen had left the main route along the Humboldt River in Nevada at Lassen Meadows, now called Rye Patch Reservoir about 30 miles west of Winnemucca. He followed the Applegate Trail to Goose Lake, crossing the Black Rock Desert and going through the spectacular High Rock Canyon, and then crossing Fandango Pass to Lassen Creek and the campground where our group met this summer for the combined CA/NV OCTA and Trails West fun trip just east of Goose Lake. There, the Lassen Trail branched south off the Applegate Trail turning south and following the Pit River to Big Valley, where he crossed the river going west, then crossed the river again on the west side of Muck Valley. There he turned south toward Little Valley. He then led the wagons south around the 10,000 foot volcano that would be later be named in his honor as he continued to lead the first wagons on into the Sacramento Valley and to his ranch.

Arriving in Big Valley, many of the gold seekers, wishing to get to California as fast as possible, turned directly south, rather than crossing the river and Muck Valley as Lassen had done, and they went directly south to Little Valley over a steeper, shorter, but more rocky route. This spot is now located a few miles southwest of where the town of Bieber is located. A railroad bridge

now crosses the river where the Lassen Trail crossed to the west in 1848 and where the 1849 trail forked directly south.

At this point, Trails West had placed one of their steel markers, and it is located on property owned by the William Thompson family, who homesteaded the land in 1872. They have blocked the trail leading south with a rock berm to prevent strangers from coming onto their property from the wilderness to the south. Mr. Thompson generously opened the berm with his Caterpillar tractor for us to be able to follow the trail, and he will soon close the route again. That is why we will have been the last wagons over the eastern trail.

On Oct, 21, 1849, Orson Pratt wrote in his journal: “*We nooned at the foot of a mountain; here are two roads; the one to the left we took, as we saw a Gov’t train with provisions come that way.*” Peter Lassen, by the way, was with that train (the Captain Warner Party) acting as guide. Contrary to legend, he in no way knew or had knowledge of the hordes of gold seekers who would be coming over his trail and arriving at his ranch in the Sacramento Valley.

J. Goldsborough Bruff described the route in his journal on Oct. 10, 1849, “*...very elevated. —A magnificent prospect from the top. The Snow Butte [Mt. Lassen] about 50 ms. Below Tschastes, being S. about 40 ms. Distant, clothed with snow, and truncated with clouds... What a scene, from here! The Snow Butte, and his neighbors, deep vales. Silver-thread like streams, near mountains, dense forests, bright deep valleys, andc, in every tint of one of natures most extensive landscapes! Pshaw! —enraptur’d with a landscape! —how ridiculous! I have seen many. And some nearly as grand, besides I must look out for the train, or there will be some accidental capsizements, maybe a broken neck or leg! —No time now for the Fine arts, we must patronize the rough ones.*”

We stopped for lunch at the Trails West marker and the fork of the trails then drove up the steep, rocky route to Little Valley, and we camped for the night at a gravel pit near Willow Spring. Here Lassen had camped with his train in 1848, and where he had previously camped with John C. Fremont in 1846 after he had guided Lieutenant Gillespie to meet with Fremont near Klamath Lake and returned to California.

The following day, we traveled past where the

two forks of the trail met and on past Poison Lake to Feather Lake, where the Nobles Trail of 1852 crossed the Lassen Trail on its shorter route to Shasta City in the Sacramento Valley. We continued on through the forested area to the east of Mt. Lassen and on to Lake Almanor, which now covers the Big Meadows that were important resting and recruiting areas for the emigrants and their livestock traveling the trail.

We camped at Soldier Meadows Campground on Soldier Creek then went on to Deer Creek and followed the ridge between Deer Creek and Mill Creek Canyons, where Lassen insisted that they follow the ridge all the way to his ranch in the valley. We stopped at Bruff's Camp

on the ridge, where he spent the winter of 1849 guarding his wagons, as his party had gone on ahead to get a rescue party and never returned. We visited the graves of the four Alford men and boys who had been killed by a large oak tree falling on their tent during the night and being reported by Bruff in his journal.

Some of our party hiked down the trail through the Ishi Wilderness to Steep Hollow before camping at the end of the drivable road. Then the next day, the final trip to Lassen's ranch, required back tracking and then taking a highway into the Chico area and ending at Vina, California and the end of the Lassen Trail and the end of another OCTA and Trails West emigrant trail fun trip.

Welcome New Members

Bob Barber Weiser, ID	Mark Hutchins Alcova, WY	Larry Obermesik Colorado Springs, CO
Terry Brennan Maryville, TN	Gayle Hutchins Alcova, WY	Jacob Olmstead Salt Lake City, UT
Martha Brogan New Haven, CT	Claire Kellogg Beavercreek, OR	Rodney Paul Kensington, CA
Jerry Bynum Wells, NV	Carol Kimball Alcova, WY	Patrick Pelster North Platte, NE
Thomas Clark Williamsburg, VA	Jay Kimball Alcova, WY	Benjamin Pykles Salt Lake City, UT
Ryan Combs Salt Lake City, UT	Ralph Loomis Baldwinsville, NY	Kenneth Rendell Natick, MA
Kirk Dana Alcova, WY	Diane Love Dayton, OH	Robert Sevacko Amherst, OH
Chad Ennis Salt Lake City, UT	Kylie McCormick Casper, WY	Robert Shields Everett, WA
Tom Farella Napa, CA	Bob McIntyre Belmont, CA	Nicole Sparks South Waltham, MA
Wendy Franklin Mountain Home, ID	Linda A McNamara Sacramento, CA	David Spiceland Boone, NC
John Hellwig Penn Valley, CA	Colleen Moon Evanston, WY	Donovin Sprague Sheridan, WY
Ronald Hill Lincoln, NE	Kevin Moore Fernley, NV	Megan Stanfill Laramie, WY
Kai Hintze Centerville, UT	Elgin Moore Brigham City, UT	Keely Taylor Idyllwild, CA
David Hobbs Walnut Creek, CA	Jocelyn Moore Pinedale, WY	Lori Vanagunas Fort Collins, CO
Jonathan Holder Osage City, KS	Tamsen Munger Fresno, CA	Beatriz Wing Napa, CA
Steven Hrdlicka Elko, NV	Andrew Neubauer San Juan Bautista, CA	

News from the Chapters

WYOMING

In late August, about 200 OCTAns gathered in Casper for the 40th annual convention to celebrate the historic trails with talks, tours, treks and plenty of conversation. We greeted old friends, made new ones, suffered

sunburn, survived a couple of bus breakdowns—and had a great time. The real stars of the convention were the trails themselves. We hope these photos give some sense of the trails—and the fellowship. *Tom Rea*



Trekkers at the notorious Three-mile Hog Ranch west of Fort Laramie on Sunday, August 28. The trek was led by Randy Brown, in blue cap in front of the right-hand window, and Jason Vlcan of the National Historic Trails Center, far right.



Trekkers August 28 at recently excavated ruts on private land on the Cold Springs Route, west of Fort Laramie. Jason Vlcan photo.



Buffalo at White Mountain Petroglyphs on the trek to Indigenous sites in the Red Desert, August 27. Tom Rea photo.



Tour bus and tourers at the BLM overlook near Devil's Gate and the Martin's Cove visitor center. Rattlesnake Pass is on the right; the notch of Devil's Gate is just visible in the middle horizon. Martin Gonzales photo.



Bus tourers at the Martin's Cove monument, erected in 1933 by the Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks Association. The cove is the ground leading up into the rocks directly behind the monument. Tour leader Yufna Soldier Wolf, center; tour leader Jason Vlcan of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center took the picture.



Swales are hard to photograph. Here, stalwarts on Randy Brown's post-convention trek Sept. 2 stand across a huge swale near Split Rock and the Sweetwater. Jason Vlcan photo.

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

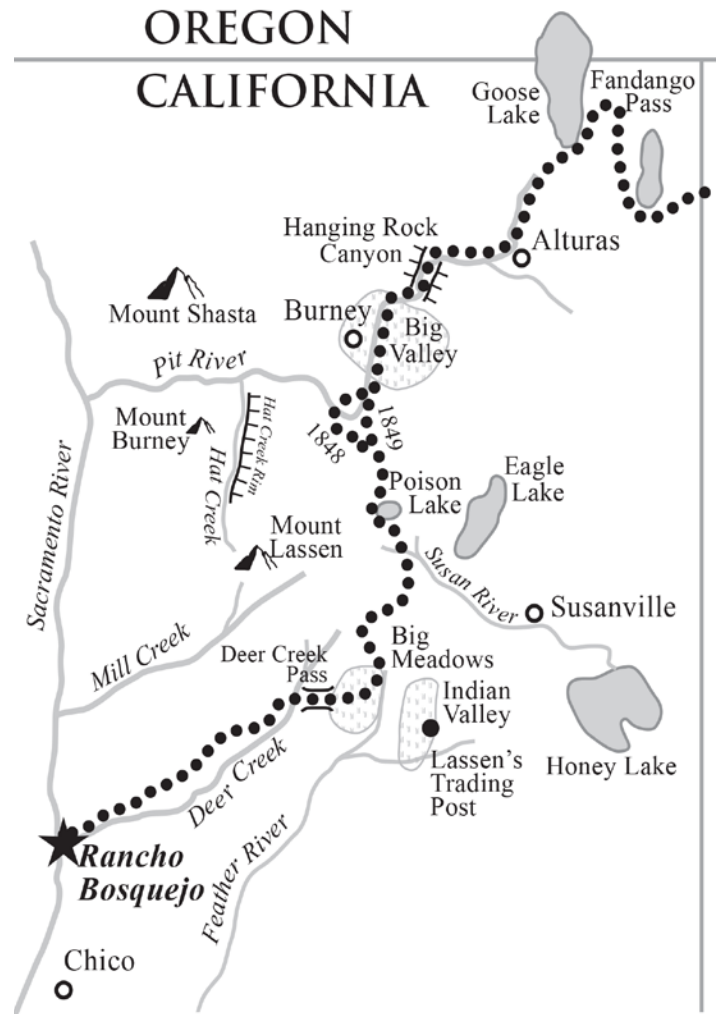
The California/Nevada Chapter of OCTA has seen a resurgence of activities in 2022 after the Covid lockdown and the devastating fires in the West last year. Our membership has reached 399 members and is growing, and we are financially secure.

In May, we held our annual Spring Symposium at the Gaia Hotel and Spa in Anderson California, which is located on the Nobles Emigrant Trail and close to where ferry crossed the Sacramento River. The theme of the symposium was The Nobles Trail, and there was a PowerPoint presentation on William Nobles and his trail, one on Pierson B. Redding, and one on Mary Brown, wife of abolitionist John Brown who was hanged for his abolitionist actions. His wife later came to the Sacramento Valley over the Nobles Trail. We ended the symposium with a visit and tour of Shasta City—a Calif. Historical State Park that was the terminus of the trail. Then we did a post symposium tour of the trail to several interesting sites including Charlie's ranch where Bear & Bull Fights were held in the 1850s and to Shingletown, where shingles were made for mining camps near and around Shasta City.

One of the highlights of the symposium was the featuring of the Voices of The Golden Ghosts, a group of African Americans who are reviving the history and legacy of their predecessors—a history that has been virtually forgotten. But with skits, living history impersonations, and stories of their contributions to the early history of California, they made a captivating impression of everyone present.

The devastating fires last year have opened areas that were previously covered with brush making some segments of trails visible that were previously difficult or impossible to access. Dee Owens has been organizing work outings on the Grizzly Flat Road, and the Carson Route in the Eldorado National Forest. On all outings, we follow strict protocol including, recording and photographing all artifacts and reburial exactly where found. These are usually one day projects.

In August, Ken and Jo Johnston led a tour of nine vehicles on the Lassen Trail from where it branched off the Applegate Trail at Goose Lake to the Sacramento Valley—an adventurous trip, because we took the 1849 east branch of the trail from the Thompson Ranch—homesteaded by the Thompsons in 1872 in Big Valley—to where the trail met Lassen's 1848 west branch south of Little Valley. The



Thompsons opened a rock berm on the trail with their Caterpillar to allow us access; whereas, they keep the trail blocked to keep people from entering their ranch from the wilderness.

Dick Waugh did some work on the James Beckwourth Trail near Quincy, California, and Bill Holmes is continuing to work on getting a visitation and interpretive site established at the Johnson Ranch and the End of the California Trail.

As a final word, I would like to say it has been an honor to have been president of the California/Nevada Chapter of OCTA, as I will be terming out this summer, and a new president will take over after the Casper Convention. I would like to thank all of the board members and chapter members, whom I have worked with, as it has been a pleasure, and I look forward to serving for a term as the Immediate Past President of the chapter.

Peace and Happy Trails,
Ken Johnston, President CA/NV OCTA

GATEWAY

Gateway Chapter and the Remington Nature Center celebrated National Trails Day with a “River Walk through History.” Members took advantage of their most important trail asset – the Missouri River and the river walkway that the city constructed several years ago. A great group of 38 people attended. Members volunteered to share their particular trail interest with vignettes of happenings along the river in our area as we meandered along the walk. Speakers were:

- Karen McClellan shared experiences of emigrant women and children in St. Joseph and crossing the River.
- Shelly Cox spoke about plants and animals of the area.
- Corky Smith told about the Civil War in St. Joseph

and suggested historical resources on the history of St. Joseph.

- Jackie Lewin spoke about Lewis and Clark and the Mormon Battalion as they passed through our area.
- Dave Berger gave a thoughtful presentation on the barriers faced by Black upon traveling the trail and reaching Oregon.
- Sarah Elder spoke about Roy’s Branch, Blacksnake Creek and Joseph Robidoux.
- Fred Sawin told about the life and financial concerns of fur traders.

Gateway Chapter is looking forward to serving as hosts for the mid-year OCTA board meeting. Plans are underway to make your visit enjoyable!

Jackie Lewin



The group paused from hearing about how fur traders moved goods up and down the river to watch a modern day barge.



Fred Sawin operates the microphone as Gateway President Dave Berger spoke.



38 members and guests took part in the “River Walk thru History.”



Sarah Elder paused with the group on the Roy’s Branch Bridge to discuss the significance of the location.

COLORADO-CHEROKEE

Ethan Gannett, a member of the chapter’s Mapping Committee, has become the new Chair of the committee, succeeding Bruce Watson. The chapter expresses great appreciation to Bruce and to Richard Deisch, who previously served as co-chair, for their years of leadership and research.

On November 12, the chapter will be co-sponsoring a Zoom event with the Northwest Chapter honoring Chuck and



Suzanne Hornbuckle. Chuck, who died earlier this year, and Suzanne, who died in 2015, were the first members of OCTA to become life members of the Colorado chapter. The program will honor them for their trail preservation activities through OCTA, Daughters of the American Revolution and other historical groups.

Camille Bradford

IDAHO

The Idaho chapter was well-represented at the OCTA convention in Casper, Wyoming, at the end of August, with over 15 members attending. I led a tour of a small group across central Wyoming with stops at the Green River crossing, Parting of the Ways, False Parting of the Ways, South Pass, and Devil's Gate. It took all day but was very enjoyable to see several sites on our bucket lists. My thanks to Randy Brown for helping me work out the route.

The convention was very good in my opinion. The speakers were excellent, the hotel was fine, the food was

good. Some of the bus tours had logistical issues, but you cannot control a bus breaking down. I followed one of the tours on Thursday and enjoyed hearing the BLM guide talk about Avenue of Rocks and Prospect Hill.

On Friday I participated in the post-convention tour from Sixth Crossing of the Sweetwater to Burnt Ranch at the Ninth Crossing. The tour involved a lot of gravel roads and rough Oregon-California Trail driving. I then led several vehicles another 13 miles west on the Trail to South Pass and Pacific Springs. It was very interesting to see so many historic sites.

If you are ever in the Sixth Crossing area, be sure to arrange to visit the Mad Dog and the Pilgrim Booksellers. The store is run by two women who moved their bookstore from Denver to be out in the country. The store is stuffed with old books of all subjects. The shelves are crammed, there are piles of books on the floors and stools, all making it difficult to walk around. I was able to explore only a small portion of the store and escaped spending only \$145. Bring cash for a discount. Their phone number is 307-330-4127.

I will be leading a tour of the Oregon Trail for the Directors of the Idaho Heritage Trust on Saturday, September 17. The next week, Jim Hardee and I will be presenting at the Idaho's Heritage Conference in Pocatello. Jim has graciously offered to assist me on a

conference bus tour along 50 miles of the Snake River from Fort Hall to Raft River which should make a great tour covering everything from early explorers and trappers to the Oregon-California travelers and Indian attacks. My thanks to Jim for being willing to help.

The chapter has not done much this summer due to

busy schedules and record-setting heat in southern Idaho. Plans have been developed, however, for a chapter tour of the Jeffreys-Goodale Route across the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) in eastern Idaho on Saturday, October 1.



This tour is restricted to chapter members and pre-registration is required for INL security. The following day the eastern part of the Jeffreys-Goodale Route from Blackfoot to Danilson Springs to Big Southern Butte will be traveled with the intent of replacing and installing trail markers along the route. It is recommended that participants stay Friday and Saturday nights at local hotels in Pocatello, Fort Hall, or Blackfoot. High clearance vehicles will be required.

The fall chapter meeting will be held Saturday, October 15, at the Sweetbriar Vineyard and Winery. The winery is located 8 miles north of Mountain Home on Highway 20. The meeting will start at 10:30 am. The winery will provide hamburgers and brats for lunch. Please bring your own drinks and a side dish or dessert to share. Wine will be available for purchase. After lunch we will explore the area along Rattlesnake Creek in search of emigrant graves, then drive east a few miles to reset concrete Oregon Trail posts which have fallen over. Please let me know if you will attend the fall meeting to arrange for the correct number of hamburgers and brats to be prepared.

Watch the chapter website calendar page (idahoocta.org/calendar) for upcoming chapter activities.

Hope to see you on the trails this fall.

Jerry Eichhorst

CROSSROADS



Crossroads Summer Field Trip 2022

It's been a long, hot summer here in Crossroads Country. We had a chapter field trip in July led by Past President Steve Allison. On Saturday morning, July 16, we gathered at the rest area at Mile Post 53 on Interstate 80. There were nine vehicles and about 20 people who participated. We met at 9 a.m. for organization and orientation. Steve Allison directed. He lived up to his promise of five chapter field trips in two years with this first trip.

Our goal was to reach Donner Springs near Wendover, Utah. We started out going west on I-80 to MP-23 to where a rough dyke road went north around Floating Island and Silver Island which are near segments of the Hastings Road/California Trail. We found some rail T-posts marking the trail. We stopped at Donner-Reed Pass on the north tip of Silver Island and paused for a group picture and to observe trail ruts made in 1846. We continued around Silver Island to where the Hastings Road crossed the salt desert to Donner Springs. This area is the western portion of Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats where, under certain conditions including sunlight and moisture in the salt, the trace can sometimes be observed. We continued around Silver Island to Leppy Pass, then north into Nevada and back into Utah to our goal of Donner Springs. This is where the Donner Party arrived after two days and two nights of grueling travel to reach water and feed for their livestock.

We arrived about 4 p.m. and it was 105 degrees F. Although the ranch has been closed and the gates were locked, we had a key and could reach Donner Springs a short distance away. Back in 1994, Crossroads and the National Park Service were successful in creating a

nice little park with a pond, a shade tree, a split rail fence, interpretive panels, and kiosks to mark this historic site. It was, at that time, a working ranch; however, as time went on, ownership changed and promises were not kept. The place has become derelict but was not in as bad shape as I had expected. The future of Donner Springs, itself, is in question. It still flows good; however, the pond is filled with phragmite, an invasive, destructive pond weed. It was a great day field trip. I had looked forward to seeing Donner Spring again since the years when we were out there annually oiling the fence, cleaning up the weeds, and trying to control the pond weeds. It brought a lot of closure to me as I was active during the days of creation and maintenance of the historic site. The future of Donner Springs is uncertain due to the fact that it is on private property. As we left, we also stopped at Hall Spring, a site also on the Hastings Road going west before Nevada. Past president, Steve Allison, did his homework and did a marvelous job.

Activities at Crossroads have not reached pre-COVID levels. Chapter meetings are still up in the air as decisions have not been made as to when to resume. We hope for a new level of activity in the near future.

Stay tuned! *A. Oscar Olson*

Trail Notes from Steve Allison

Part Five of the Hastings Cutoff tour was held on July 16th. We entered the Salt Flats 25 miles east of Wendover, Utah and traveled on the Floating Island Dike Road for about 10 miles across the Salt Flats to Floating Island. From there we went to the north end of the Silver Island Mountains and Donner-Reed Pass. Then we went all the way to Donner Spring. We have various reports along the way. Jess Petersen gave a great presentation about the Bidwell-Bartleson group traveling by what

latter became known as Donner Spring in 1843. It was quite hot on the flats and Donner Spring with its shade trees and cool breeze was a welcome relief.

The Emigrant Trails Park in Lake Point, Utah is taking shape. Fences are going up to protect the swales and the E.T. Canal which was hand dug beginning in 1850. The

park will feature picnic tables, walkways, and historical markers. Ensign Properties donated the land and the NPS is heading up the historical marker creation.

We will repeat the Hastings Cutoff Tour on Sept. 17th for those who would like to come. Contact Steve Allison sallison9999@gmail.com *Steve Allison*



SOUTHERN TRAILS

Our chapter covers 5 regions across several states. The Southern Trail was the year-round trail that could bring people to California through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. We cover a lot of terrain and territory for the many trails that passed through our regions.

Our board meetings and chapter meetings consist mostly of Zoom meetings these days, with an opportunity to meet up at the National Convention or a local symposium. In April 2022 we held a symposium in Temecula, CA that included 3 days for learning and presentations as well as a Historic Road Rally out Highway 79 towards Warner Ranch where we stopped and toured the Warner-Carillo Ranch House for some amazing insights and stories with the Save Our Heritage Organization guide.

We proceeded through the San Felipe Valley on the Emigrant Trail and headed south with a stop at the famous Mormon Battalion "Box Canyon" site. This year was the 175th Anniversary of the famous 1846/1847 Army of the West and our chance to see it and experience it was special. We continued down to Vallecito Stage Station which is now a county park

where a Butterfield Stage Station was. The road to the park is called the Great Southern Overland Stage Route of 1849. Our group took a little issue with the exact year they chose, but we were pleased to know that name would help enlighten other modern-day travelers! We encourage you to visit the Temecula, CA area when you can! It is full of history even today and a delightful old town as well as the Vail Ranch Headquarters preserved area.

We passed about 6 Butterfield stage stops along our path. As a group we have worked to help a bill that was introduced in August 2022 into the US House by Congressman Raul Grijalva of Arizona, House Natural Resources Committee Chair: "The Great Bend of the Gila National Conservation Area." We thank our chapter member Gerald Ahnert for his important efforts as a research consultant on this project.

As a Chapter we are working on our nominating committee and hope to hold an election to appoint new board members from our membership. If you would like to grow with us, please email Melissa@JonesFinancial.com or visit our website at WWW.Southern-Trails.org

Submitted by *Melissa Shaw* for President *Mark Howe*

Emigrant Trails Hall of Fame

The Emigrant Trails Hall of Fame Committee welcomes nominations for new members to be inducted in 2023. 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

REMEMBRANCES



David Leroy Bauer

Orem, Utah. David LeRoy Bauer, age 79, passed away on July 22, 2022, at Utah Valley Hospital in Provo, Utah, from stroke-related complications. Dave was born June 10, 1943, in Oakland, California, to Charles LeRoy and Alice May Lloyd Bauer.

He graduated from San Leandro High School in 1961, then spent two years at Brigham Young University before serving a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Spanish-American Texas New Mexico mission. He returned to BYU, graduating with a BS in Sociology in 1968 and an MS in Sociology in 1974.

On December 21, 1968, he married Connie Kirkman in the Oakland Temple. The first years of their marriage coincided with Dave's enlistment in the Army and completion of Officer's Candidate School in Virginia. His fluency in Spanish from his mission led to his posting to the Canal Zone in Panama. After almost three years of active duty, two of them in Panama, he and Connie returned to Provo in 1971.

Dave worked as a social worker for the State of Utah for over 30 years. He also taught sociology classes as an adjunct professor at UVU for over 20 years. After years of teaching skiing at Sundance and Snowbird, he established the Utah Valley Ski Education Foundation in 1983.

Dave was a life-long member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and served in various callings. He is survived by his wife, Connie; his four daughters served in various callings. He is survived by his wife, Connie; his four daughters, Adrienne "Andi," Danielle Hardman (Chan), Nicole, and Alexis Mayo (Ben); his three grandchildren, Colben Mayo, Danika Mayo, and Tatum Hardman; and his brother, Jerry Lloyd (Mary) Bauer. Preceded in death by his mother and father.



Gar Ellison

Our beloved Gar Thayne Ellison passed away on July 8, 2022, at his home in Caldwell, Idaho. He was born July 22, 1940, in the small southern Idaho community of Sublett, first child of Lois Pauline Zollinger and Lano Adams Ellison. During the first two years of

Gar's life, his father worked on a road construction crew, and the family lived in several towns throughout Utah, Nevada, and Idaho. They settled in Malta, Idaho. The

summer Gar turned 12 years old, he spent four months in bed with rheumatic fever. During that time, he read all four standard works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and gained a deep testimony of them. That was the beginning of his great interest in studying religious topics and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Gar attended Malta Elementary and Raft River High School, where he played basketball and football, learned multiple band instruments, and served as class president all four years, graduating in 1958. As a college freshman and sophomore, Gar attended Utah State University and was active in student government as well as ROTC. He accepted a call from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to serve in the South German Mission from October 1960 to May 1963. Upon his return, Gar transferred to Brigham Young University, studied public administration, and received his Bachelor of Science degree. He married Marilyn Durfee in the Logan Temple in 1964. In 1965, Gar attended the University of Oklahoma, where he earned a Master of Library Science degree. He was employed at Idaho State University, University of New Mexico, and Arthur Young & Co. before eventually working for the Utah Departments of Health of Social Services. Gar served one term as mayor of Kaysville, Utah from 1978-1981. He worked with the city council to handle growth and ensure adequate utilities for future residents. The family lived in Kaysville for over 20 years. In addition to his career, Gar served many years on health and insurance boards, in particular as the chairman for the National Center for Frontier Communities. He was the founding member of the Utah Local Governments Insurance Trust and chaired that Board for 13 years, serving as a board member for over 25 years. He helped create the Utah Medical Education Council before his retirement. After retirement Gar and Marilyn served a mission for the Church in Birmingham, England. Gar held many positions of leadership in the Church and community and was an emigrant trails enthusiast, an active leader in the Oregon California Trails Association. Gar loved to travel and never took the same road twice if he could help it. He visited all 50 states and at least 28 foreign countries. He enjoyed photographing Earth's natural features. Gar is survived by his wife of 58 years, Marilyn Durfee Ellison; children Lezlie (Neil) Thorne, Brook (Michelle) Ellison, Shawn (Janamarie) Ellison, Clint (Amy) Ellison, Megan (Peter) Vandre, and Holly (Michael) Stewart; siblings Clair (Jan) Ellison, Allie (Kent) Heber, Paula (Elvis) Dean, Doyle (Glenda) Ellison, Marla (Steve) Deakins, and Emily Engar; 19 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Charles Dale "Chuck" Hornbuckle

Pulaski, Tennessee Charles Dale "Chuck" Hornbuckle was born to Fred and Noreen Larson Hornbuckle January 30, 1939 at the family home at Donald, Yakima County, Washington. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on May 16, 2022 at Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. Chuck attended elementary schools at Omak, Washington until 1949 when the family moved to Potlatch, Idaho. During his senior year he met Suzanne Spencer at Palouse, Washington and they were married three years later on December 26, 1959. Chuck attended the University of Idaho and in 1962 graduated with an Associate Degree in Highway Technology from Oregon Technical Institute at Klamath Falls, Oregon. He later achieved his Professional Engineers License. While Chuck attended school Suzanne taught fifth grade at Twyla Ferguson Elementary School at Klamath Falls, Oregon. They moved to Yakima, Washington where their two sons were born, Nick in 1962 and Jon in 1963.

In 1967 the family moved to Thurston County and he resided there until 2021 when ill health caused him to move to Tennessee. As their two sons grew up Chuck served as the first Cubmaster for the new Olympic View Grade School Cub Scout Pack 211 until 1974 when the family moved to the Littlerock area.

Chuck and Suzanne encouraged Nick and Jon's interests. Everything from Bluegrass festivals to soccer games to black powder marksmanship and rifle building to rebuilding a vintage Austin Healey Sprite were a normal part of any given week. Chuck's love of the beauty of the Pacific Northwest led to many family hiking trips in the Olympic National Rain Forest, Mount Rainier National Park and the Mount Hood National Forest. Chuck worked for the Washington State Department of Transportation for nearly 34 years retiring in 1995 as the Olympic Region Traffic Engineer. His career with WSDOT was gratifying and he enjoyed working with local communities to resolve their concerns.

Thank You!

Thanks to the many donors who support OCTA's preservation work through gifts to our annual fund drive and memorial gifts to those who have passed. Recent gifts include:

Lila Aamodt
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Special Thanks to OCTA's Life Members

OCTA is grateful for the support of many Life Members whose contributions mean so much to the organization. Life memberships are available for \$1,000 and credit card payments can be made in installments. Life Members receive an Ezra Meeker Life Member pin, and a 15 percent discount in the OCTA Bookstore. Plus, all revenues from Life Memberships go directly to OCTA's Heritage Endowments, so your purchase will have a long-term impact on trails preservation. For more information about becoming a Life member, contact OCTA headquarters at (816) 252-2276. Current and recently deceased Life Members include:

Lila Aamodt	Mrs. Kay Forsythe	M. F. Kiber	Mortimer Paulus
Ivan Baker	Kathy Colyer Franzwa	James King	Betty J. Pfaff
Dr Thomas R. Bales	<i>(Deceased)</i>	Ormie Lamson <i>(Deceased)</i>	Mrs. E. W. Puckett
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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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Important Dates and Deadlines

Award Nominations – June 1

Budget Development – Budget Request – May 23 (Per OCTA Procedural Manual)

News from the Plains material – Spring issue: February 25, Summer issue: May 25,
Fall issue: August 25, Winter issue: November 25

Nominating and Leadership – Announcement of election and number of vacancies on the
Board of Directors: November 25 News from the Plains Deadline; Bio and ballot: April 1

Outstanding Educator Award Application – March 31

Calendar Art for Western Calendar – April 15

National Park Service Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) – October 1

Volunteer data (Hours, Expenses, Mileage) to Partnership – Report hours on the website
at <https://www.octa-journals.org/octa-volunteer>. They can be reported as they are
accumulated. If you track your hours on the paper form (available at <https://www.octa-trails.org/activity-forms/>), please report them to HQ by December 31.

Overland Journal – Spring issue to membership: approximately May 20,
Summer issue to membership: approximately August 20, Fall issue to membership:
approximately November 20, Winter issue to membership: approximately February 20

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

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Winter 2023 Issue Deadline: November 25, 2022
Send materials to: jaylawrenceocta@gmail.com

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Where Will Your Footprints Lead?

They don't have to disappear.

You can leave a legacy that will ensure that your footprints are never erased, while helping to protect emigrant trails from disappearing forever.



Consider joining

OCTA's Trails Legacy Society

Your gift to an OCTA Endowment fund through a bequest or estate gift will help guarantee our ability to preserve and protect the trails.

Visit octa-trails.org/trails-legacy-society

You can make sure that ours are not the last footprints left on the trail.

A Reminder for Ezra Meeker Life Members

If you are an Ezra Meeker Life Member of OCTA and a member of one or more regional chapters, your chapter dues renew on January 1 each year.

For your convenience, you can renew your chapter memberships online by visiting octa-trails.org/why-join-octa/ and following the appropriate links for regional chapters.

You can also call headquarters at (816) 252-2276 for more information. If you are not an Ezra Meeker Life Member, you can join at that level at any time.

The cost is \$1,000, which can be spread over several regular payments.

Remember, funds from Meeker Life memberships go directly to OCTA Endowments, helping create a legacy of support for trails preservation and education.

Call headquarters to learn more.



OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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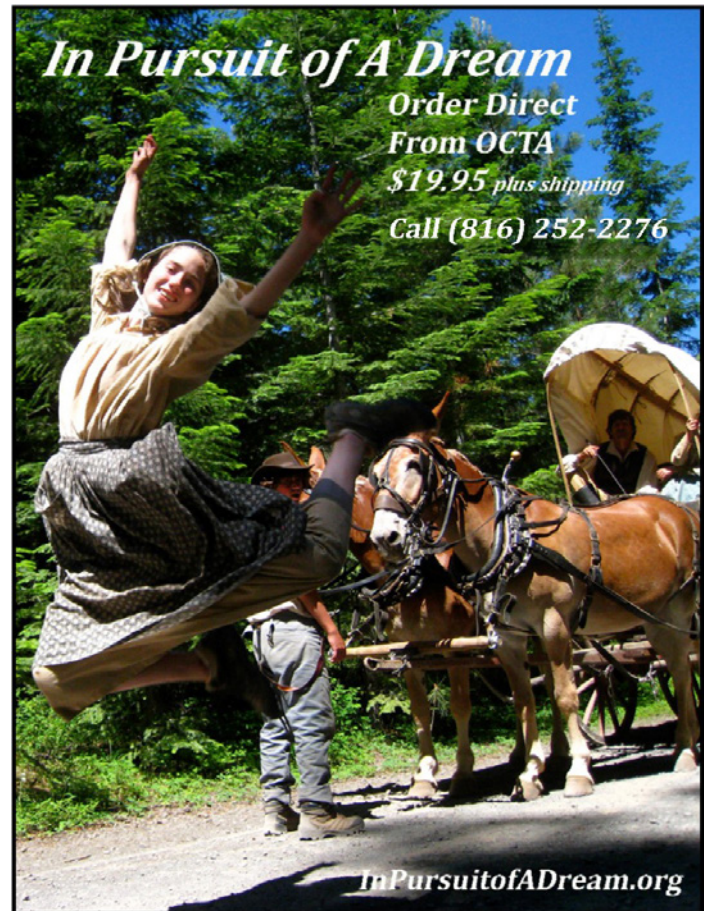
In this issue:

2022 Casper Convention Review

Journey of a Lifetime

Meet Our Members

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
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- A robust research library
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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.

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