

NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association



View looking towards Red Buttes and Casper Mountain from the valley of Poison Spider Creek. Natrona County, Wyoming.

Summer 2022

Volume XXXVII, No. 3

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Your Association is in good health as you will see as you read this Newsletter. There are, though, always opportunities to build a better organization by joining one of our working groups, some of which I write about in this article. Please do let me know if you have an

area of interest that you would like to grow.

At the fiscal half year, end of March, OCTA's financial position remains healthy as you can read in the Treasurer's conclusive comments in this newsletter. Our Cash Position is good although it declined a little. The half year results will show a loss but that is due primarily to timing issues. Another complication is the trend to unbudgeted projects and activities covered by unbudgeted grants and restricted donations. The budget/financial committee led by Jerry Mogg, is working to bring more clarity to our financial statements and to bring into line the NFP, Board and IRS reports. The Endowment Fund surpassed \$2m for the first time at the end of March, thanks to the excellent work of the Investment Advisory Committee chaired by David Welch, though it will have fallen back since then given current market conditions. The Chapters reported \$155,000 in their own accounts.

We have a new 5-year master agreement with NPS

and are now collaborating with them on the budget for next year

John Winner leads the Preservation activity. The growth of construction of the Energy infrastructure, including transmission lines, Solar arrays, wind farms and gas pipelines, together with continued mining activity has made life difficult. There is too much to do on a purely volunteer basis. Staff help was budgeted for this year and utilized on the B2H project. More will be needed next year.

The Fundraising Committee in 'JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME' continues to be busy in the early phase of the project. Pledges and commitments are already being received as the Committee under Lee Black's leadership contacts potential donors. The aim, ultimately, is to improve the capability of the organization and to secure the future. You can read more in the report by the Fundraising Committee in this newsletter.

The Library and Collections Committee led by Mike Smith is well under way through its four sub-committees...

- Identifying what collections we have or are involved in.
- Creating an appropriate data base for those collections including their digitization.
- Developing a guide on how to preserve and provide access to those collections.
- Updating OCTA's policies.

It has been said (tongue in cheek), that the Association may well run out of members before it

runs out of money! We do need a Membership leader but a major element of the difficulties we face are our own problem. We are told that the way we present OCTA, the image we have is old fashioned. Greater presence in the various forms of Social Media has helped, but we need to refresh the way we reach out. Gina Sifers is the new Chair of the Marketing and PR Committee and is starting a project to look at this issue. We do not present well to younger generations. A different approach is needed if we are to attract them, and our presentation also needs to be tailored more specifically for the diverse ways in which we communicate. In general communication video beats pictures. Pictures beat words.

The Membership committee is not the only one looking for a leader. Bill Martin will be stepping down from the position of liaison with the Partnership for National Trails Society though, fortunately for us, he will continue his work in other Committees. Marlene Smith-Baranzini is also stepping down from the Awards Committee. Thanks to both for all the work they have done over many years.

It was nice, at last, to be able to get out and meet in person. The California Nevada Chapter of OCTA held its symposium in Anderson (near Redding) California in early May and I was able to drive down from Boise to attend. There were several highlights. Among them, Ken Johnston, Chapter President, talked about Nobles Trail and led a 'reverse' tour from the town of Shasta to Shingletown taking in the Shasta State Historical Park.

The group ended the tour at the Shingletown Totem Pole where we were greeted with a brief snow shower!

Jon Jefferson covered the busy life of Pierson B Reading who came west with Joseph Chiles through Fort Boise in 1843. It was Reading's Rancho Buena Ventura, Mexican Land Grant on which the modern city of Redding, (named after Benjamin B Redding) was built.

A play by the Voices of Golden Ghosts telling the forgotten stories of African Americans involved in the Gold Rush was another highlight.

In May I was able as well to enjoy an Idaho Chapter outing to the Trails (California, Oregon, and Lander) between American Falls and Massacre Rocks.



The Shingletown Totem Pole



Idaho Chapter metal detecting on the trails

Southern Trails had a successful symposium in Temecula, CA and you can read about it and other Chapter activities in the Chapter sections of this newsletter.

We hope you will be able to attend this year's Convention in Casper from August 28th to September 2nd. Registration is now open! Next year will be in Gering/Scottsbluff from July 25th to 29th. The 2023 Symposium is likely to be in St Jo.

*John Briggs, President
Oregon-California Trails Association*

FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



When COVID shut the country down, OCTA looked inward at what it could do to keep things rolling. Fortunately, OCTA's Marketing/PR committee had come together in October 2019 and spent two days creating a five-year plan to guide our actions into the mid-2020s. In hindsight, that two-day meeting turned out to be

exceedingly important. And we have an exciting new announcement this summer for yet another goal reached by the committee.

One of the things identified by the Marketing/PR committee was the need to add an intern with experience in this area. We hired Sam Sullivan from William Jewell College in Liberty and set to work right after COVID restrictions kicked in. Sam and I spent the spring and summer building a YouTube Channel for OCTA and populating it with short five- to fifteen-minute-long videos about historic sites along a myriad of trails. Our next intern, Charlie Dodge (who just graduated from New York University in mid-May), continued populating our YouTube Channel with speakers at our Elko Convention and San Diego Symposium. You can view all these things by visiting www.youtube.com and entering "Oregon-California Trails Association" into the search bar. Please do like our channel and share it with friends and family. Once we get to 1,000 subscribers, the channel will become monetized, and OCTA will earn advertising revenue for each click. We're almost halfway there, so enjoy the free content while helping OCTA's bottom line as well!

And now for our **exciting new announcement**: our former intern Charlie (who landed a full-time position with the Center for Public Integrity at the end of May) also just completed a second project for us by launching a **new podcast**. We will send the link to the podcast out with each E-News, but the first episode can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uc5jZEiDjU&t=5s>.

Each episode is about a half-hour in length and focuses on lesser-known trail stories, such as those related to children, women, African-Americans, American Indians, or the Chinese presence during the California Gold Rush. Charlie herself is a Chinese-American and has a deep interest in the trail era of West Coast history, and the podcast reflects those interests. The very first episode features Overland Journal editor Bob Clark talking about the lesser-known stories that he's published during his long and distinguished career. Future episodes will feature, among others, interviews with Dr. Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, professor emerita at Sacramento State University and the Barbara Sudler Award winning author of *Sweet Freedom's Plains: African-Americans on the Overland Trails, 1841-1869* (which you can buy through the OCTA bookstore at <https://octa-trails.org/product/sweet-freedoms-plains/>), and Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, professor emerita at the University of Nevada – Las Vegas and the 2013 Bancroft Honor Award winner for her book *In Pursuit of Gold: Chinese American Miners and Merchants in the American West*. We believe these entertaining new podcasts will help us reach younger and more diverse audiences.

Our interns also helped us launch Instagram and Twitter accounts (both found @octa_1836) and greatly expand our Facebook offerings (found @OCTA1982). A YouTube Channel, a podcast, and greatly expanded social media offerings were all strategies adopted by our Marketing/PR committee in October 2019. As it turns out, COVID limited our activities to the point where most of our focus honed in on the plans laid out by this committee because of lack of other activities. But this increased focus on the plan certainly paid dividends over the two years of COVID restrictions, both in terms of increased sales and memberships.

In addition to using these tools to attract newer, younger, and more diverse audiences, we also view these additions as enhancements to YOUR membership. We truly hope you agree, and will follow, share, and comment on these things as they're published. That's how we'll continue to grow!

Travis Boley, Association Manager

2021-2022 OCTA Officers

John Briggs, President

Boise, ID • johnxbriggs@msn.com

Steve Allison, Vice President

South Jordan, UT • sallison9999@gmail.com

Lee Black, Past President

Albuquerque, NM • leeblack1@hotmail.com

Jo Johnston, Secretary

Klamath Falls, OR • jojstn@gmail.com

Jerry Mogg, Treasurer

St. Joseph, MO • Jerry.mogg@gmail.com

John Winner, Preservation Officer

Placerville, CA • swinner@dataentree.com

Fundraising Committee Report

This summer marks the 186th anniversary of the historic crossing of South Pass by the first two white women, missionaries Eliza Spalding and Narcissa Whitman, and their husbands. Eliza, her body in pain, is said to have proclaimed, "Is it reality or a dream that after four months of hard and painful journeyings I am alive, and actually standing on the summit of the Rocky Mountains, where yet the foot of a white woman has never trod?" This event would lead to the opening of the Northwest to settlement in what is now Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

This year also marks the 174th anniversary of the 1848 gold discoveries in northern California. The rush to the gold fields sparked this nation's largest mass continent crossings by miners and families seeking a new and brighter future in the land of milk and honey.

Both historic events occurred over 100 years ago and people are still fascinated by and interested in the grit, determination and adventurous spirit of our forefathers. I write this to call attention to a truism, "Neglect the future and no one will ever thank you for the present. You will not be thanked for today." What we, OCTA members, do today matters now and in the future.

It was once said, "One hundred years from now it will not matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much money I had in the bank account, nor what my cloths looked like. But one hundred years from now the world will be a little better because I was important in the life of a child." What we invest today, to preserve our trails, the documented trials and victories of our forefathers, our legacy will afford future generations a clearer understanding of the sacrifices that made our country a great nation from sea to shining sea.

For the past 40 years you, the reader, and many others chose to remember the legacy of our forefathers. You chose not to neglect the future. You helped bring OCTA to the place it is today. The history of the emigrant experience has been preserved through diligent efforts to safe guard what remains of our trails. Emigrant history has been shared through story-

telling and books. OCTA members have been generous. Well, what lies ahead?

Looking forward we have an opportunity to join the **JOURNEY of a LIFETIME** making the following possible:

- Utilizing digitization to preserve the written history found in diaries, letters and maps.
- Sharing rich trail history visually through videos and movies via public presentations.
- Membership growth using social media platforms.
- Expanding our website capability will accommodate adding years of archeology research.
- Securing a solid financial base with the help of trained staff.

The Fundraising Committee, under the leadership of a committee of Past Presidents and OCTA Leaders, is finalizing the development plan for OCTA's first significant effort to fund Strategic Plan initiatives.



Your committee includes John Briggs, OCTA President, Steve Allison, OCTA Vice President, Bob Clark, Helen Hankins, Bill Martin, Pat Traffas, Dave Welch, and Lee Black Committee Chair. Travis Boley and Kathy Conway serve as ex-officio members of the Committee. As the committee finalizes plans, we ask that you consider taking a part in this exciting journey. Look for

additional information in the months to come. In the meantime, please consider supporting OCTA through Legacy gifting opportunities:

- Include OCTA as a beneficiary in your life insurance policy, your 401K or other retirement plan,
- Remember the great work of OCTA by preparing a Codicil to your Will for a stipulated dollar amount or percentage of the estate
- Include a Legacy gift to OCTA in your family trust

For help with these options contact your legal and accounting advisors. You may also contact the OCTA office or Lee Black (505-379-3737) for helpful information. *Lee Black*

Treasurer Mid Year Finance Update

Mid Year & Starting on 2022/2023, Next Years National Budget'

As we begin to start getting back at National headquarters and start operating more like we did before the pandemic we are losing money, about \$28,000 for first six months. Our cash resources have only decreased by about \$8,000 for first six months which is better. \$20,000 of our loss was an expenditure which was funded by a transfer from our investment account last year. I believe it is going to be difficult to be able to operate as usual without having a loss for the year which decreases our limited cash reserves.

According to our Quick reports for the month of 4/30/22 we had increase in our Net Ordinary Income and OCTA cash on hand of about \$1,200 for month of April, 2022. You need to know that Turner, our Assistant Treasurer, does less analysis of our internal Quick book statements monthly than he does at end of quarter.

We have enough financial information now for this current year that we can start working on next years 9/30/23 National budget. We will do our best to get everyone involved in the budget process and encourage input from all who might want to make suggestions or have thoughts concerning next year's financial budget. Of course we will continue to get budget requests from those responsible for different areas of our National budget in as much detail as

may be available at the time that we are working on the request. I will be working very closely with John Briggs, who was responsible for our current budget and Lee Black, our current Fundraising Chair, to make sure all of our 'Journey of Lifetime' goals and strategies are considered in the new budget.

Right now we are trying to find a time that all the Budget Development Committee members can meet in the next few weeks. Just as soon as we are able to have our first committee meeting, Kathy will be sending Budget Request Form to Chairs of various committees to complete with instruction as to deadline on returning the request and to whom to return it. I am suggesting we shorten up the process of developing the new budget so we have more current year financial information available to help us in developing a realistic budget.

In my opinion OCTA is in good financial condition without this year receiving any support from the federal government like the past two years which was called PPP of around \$11,000 each year. We have cash resources available to pay our expenses on a timely basis with out needing to borrow or transfer funds from our investment accounts at the present time (last year transferred \$20,000 to pay for a consultants bill).

Jerry Mogg, Treasurer

Welcome New Members

Sandra Arrow
Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Stephany Coffman-Wolph
Ada, Ohio

Valerie Dahl
Salol, Minnesota

David C. Gibbs
Boise, Idaho

Linda Graves
Shadow Hills, California

Kristi Haman
Boise, Idaho

Eugene Hart
Merced, California

Kenneth Jessen
Loveland, Colorado

Claire Kellogg
Beavercreek, Oregon

Martha Lawrence
Lake Oswego, Oregon

Karen Munsen
The Dalles, Oregon

David Nicandri
Tumwater, Washington

John Poe
Lee's Summit, Missouri

Kent Schaufelberger
Meridian, Idaho

Teresa Ward
Colorado Springs, Colorado

William Yates
Columbia, South Carolina

PRESERVATION



By John Winner

National Preservation Officer

OCTA's Mission is to protect the historic emigrant trails legacy by promoting public awareness of trails through research, education and **preservation activities**; by achieving organizational sustainability;

and partnering with others. **Goal 1**, Preserve the historic emigrant trails.

Wildfires and Historic Trails: Wildfires have both negative and positive effects on historic trails.

During suppression, trails can be lost and/or damaged during the firefighting effort. The objective is to put the fire out by whatever means available, including but not limited, to dozer created fire breaks, hand crews, aerial attacks, backfires and so on.

In a few instances where trails are well defined and marked, efforts have been taken to avoid suppression damage. In fact, In the recent California Dixie fire, Cal Fire requested from OCTA, trail mapped "shapefiles" to identify known cultural sites and emigrant trails to attempt avoidance.

After the fire, begins the process to assess and restore what was damaged. Utility repair and logging can damage and/or destroy trails. Again, the importance of knowing trail location is critical to assist agencies and landowners.

Wildfires can also have a positive benefit to trail



location, exposing trail segments heretofore unknown or perhaps covered with brush.

In 2014 the 97,000 acre King fire on the Eldorado National Forest exposed pristine Class 1 trail segments on the Johnson Cutoff. Prior to the fire this area was waist deep in heavy brush. This provided a short window of

opportunity to locate, map and Class a segment of the trail that was previously unknown.

It seems as though catastrophic fires are occurring more frequently throughout the nation, but mostly in the Western States impacting more and more historic trails. This past year, in California, 2 major fires impacted several historic trails.

The Dixie Fire: was an enormous wildfire in Butte, Plumas, Lassen, Shasta and Tehama Counties. The fire began in the Feather River Canyon near Cresta Dam on July 13, 2021 and burned 963,309 acres before being 100% contained on October 25, 2021. The fire impacted the Lassen, Nobles and Beckworth historic trails.

The Caldor Fire: was a large wildfire that burned 221,835 acres in the Eldorado National Forest and other areas of the Sierra Nevada in El Dorado, Amador and Alpine counties. The fire was first reported on Saturday, August 14, 2021 and was fully contained on Thursday October 21 2021. The fire impacted the Carson Route, the Johnson Cutoff, the Grizzly Flat, Luther and Georgetown trails.

All of this is a reminder of the importance to have trails located and mapped. And, how important it is to be able to visually look at the burned segments. There is a short window of opportunity before growth resumes.

Here is an update on a few of the preservation projects that we are working on:

R-Project: The 225 mile 345 kV transmission line proposed by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) in Nebraska that crosses the Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trails. A lawsuit was filed (OCTA a Plaintiff) when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued an Incidental Take Permit authorizing the project to move forward. On June 17, 2020 the court vacated the ITP and remanded the matter back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for further review. The attorney for the plaintiffs filed a Freedom of Information Act request.



We are currently reviewing hundreds of documents and communications between the U.S.F&W and NPPD.

B2H: A 300 mile Idaho Power Co. 500 kV transmission line crossing the Oregon National Historic Trail seven times. The matter went before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) where parties presented their cases including the cross examination of witnesses. OCTA member Gail Carbiener submitted a written brief to the ALJ with both rebuttal and comments emphasizing the accuracy of the testimonies at the hearing. According to Gail *"The ALJ is scheduled to Issue her Proposed Contested Case Order around the end of May. This order will determine our next steps in this long process. I have requested that Idaho Power either bury the power line, for 1.7 miles at a cost of approximately \$100 million or provide \$3.5 million to the Interpretive Center at Baker City. Both options will offset impact to the Center. Of course the ALJ may just deny our request!"*

Greenlink West Transmission Line Project: A 470 mile new electric transmission line and associated facilities from Las Vegas, Nevada to Reno, Nevada. 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, the Walker River-Sonora 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 NHT and segments of the Walker River-Sonora NHT.

I have submitted detailed maps showing the transmission line and where the proposed lines will cross the trails. On May 19, 2022, I attended an "in person" scoping meeting in Reno, Nevada.

Greenlink North Transmission Line Project: This project spans approximately 235 mile from Ely, Nevada

to Yerington, Nevada. This route will parallel U.S. Highway 50 which would impact the Central Overland Trail and the Pony Express NHT. The BLM will begin preparing an Environmental Impact Statement for the right-of-way application submitted by Nevada Energy. Detailed maps for the proposed transmission lines have been requested from BLM.

TransWest Express Transmission Project: This project is a 500 kV transmission line system that will extend across four states from south-central Wyoming, southeast of Rawlins, to southern Nevada. The project will include approximately 735 miles of transmission line, two terminals located in Wyoming and Utah and, two substations located in Nevada.

The draft Historic Properties Treatment Plan for the Nevada and Utah portions have been distributed to consulting parties for review and comments.

Gerlach Geothermal Development Project: Impact to the Nobles Trail. This project proposed by Ormat Technologies Inc. includes leased and unleased BLM lands and privately leased land. The project includes building two new power plants that would each produce 2.4 megawatts of electricity, an electrical substation, up to 23 total geothermal production and injection wells, approximately 4.6 miles of above ground pipelines, access roads, an approximately 26-mile long 120 kilovolt overhead power line. OCTA has requested Consulting Party Status to review the environmental effect, including direct and indirect effects to the Nobles Trail. Currently working with NPS on issues of correct location of Nobles Trail in project area.

Gravelly Ford Conservation Easement: The proposed conservation easement resulting from mitigation on the Long Canyon open pit mine project is still in progress. 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 to complete a draft agreement. This past week we sent a series of responses to questions that NLT will include in the conservation easement.

Epilogue: Again, due to limited space, this is just a brief overview of some of the issues being monitored. Hardly a week goes by without receiving some notification of issues pertaining to our historic trail system. A shout out to the Chapter Preservation Officers for their vigilance in monitoring trails in their region. And, as always, your keen awareness of the trails is greatly appreciated. *More to come...*

Partnership for the National Trails System

Butterfield Legislation Making Progress

The Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail Designation is making slow but measurable progress through Congress. The bill, S.3519, would create a trail extending nearly 2,300 miles from St. Louis and Missouri through Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California to the western end point of San Francisco.

The bill was introduced by Senator John Boozman of Arkansas, with initial co-sponsors Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, Roy Blunt of Missouri, John Cornyn of Texas, and Tom Cotton of Arizona.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on the legislation on May 11 and heard support for the bill from the National Park Service, which has endorsed the legislation.

The next action is expected in late June or July, a “mark up” session in which any amendments will be considered. It is not expected that any changes will be proposed. After the legislation is passed out of the subcommittee, it will be considered by the full committee and then sent to the floor of the Senate for final passage. The legislation will also need approved by the House of Representatives before it becomes law.

“This has been a frustratingly slow process, not unusual in today’s dysfunctional political environment,” said OCTA Legislative Chair Bill Martin. “We are grateful to Senator Boozman for his continued commitment to creating a Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail, an important step toward OCTA’s eventual goal of a Southern Trails historic trail.”

National Trails Workshop Scheduled for Albuquerque

Save the Date for the 2022 National Trails Workshop in Albuquerque, New Mexico on November 2nd – 5th, 2022, sponsored by the Partnership for the National Trails System.

The workshop will be hosted by the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, which has committed to a program of interest to both Historic and Scenic national trails. It will be the first significant in-person workshop for the Partnership since COVID.

Information about the program and lodging will be posted on the Partnership website at PNTS.org as it becomes available.

Important Volunteer Opportunities

OCTA is seeking an individual or individuals to serve as the Board-designated Liaison to the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) and chair of Legislative Affairs. The twin positions have been held for several years by Bill Martin, who will step down December 31.

The positions offer an opportunity to have a significant impact on OCTA’s important relationships with federal agency partners, federal legislators, and our relationships with other national trails.

The PNTS liaison serves as OCTA’s delegate to the PNTS Trail Leaders Council, which meets quarterly and includes representatives from the 19 National Historic Trails and 11 National Historic Trails. The PNTS Liaison or a designee also has an opportunity to serve on PNTS committees, such as the Advocacy & Policy committee, which tracks federal agency activities and legislation, and the Programs & Workshops committee, which helps plan PNTS meetings.

The Legislative chair is responsible for helping secure congressional support for legislation such as the pending Butterfield Overland National Historic Trails designation act. Legislation to designate additional routes and segments for the Oregon, California and Mormon trails is expected to be a priority in the near future, while developing support for a long-planned Southern Trails NHT is also on the table.

Both the PNTS and Legislative roles come together during the annual “Hike the Hill” event in Washington, D.C.

While traditionally one person has held both positions, there is nothing to prevent them from being divided between two individuals. Both are unpaid, volunteer positions, although some travel and other expenses are budgeted. Together, the time commitment can be less than 15 hours a month, although more or less time can be devoted to the work. Martin has indicated a willingness to assist during a transition period.

If you are interested in being considered for these important assignments, please contact OCTA President John Briggs at johnxbriggs@msn.com. If you have questions about the positions, feel free to contact Bill Martin at bmartinocata@gmail.com.

Bill Martin, PNTS Liaison

Publication News



While much higher gas prices and other events outside our control may make it harder for all of us to get out to drive, visit or bike and hike along the trails, our editors are working feverishly to bring the trails to you. Hopefully, everyone will be able to overcome the

unfortunate events and they will not negatively impact us from seeing our longtime friends or meeting our newest members at the Casper Convention later this summer.

Some of our members have been working on the Merrill Mattes Award, reviewing all the Volume 39 Overland Journal articles. It is presented to the author whose article best reflects the excellence exemplified by Merrill Mattes' research and writing. By the time you read this, the selection will have been made, and the award will be presented later to the recipient in Casper during the awards program.

The discussions on possible future publications are continuing.

We attended the Western Writers of America in June in Great Falls, Montana. Information about OCTA membership and samples of our publications were made available for examination.

The art selections for our student calendar "Mountain Men, Indians, and Emigrants - Trade and Trade Goods" has now been completed. The student artists were

notified in May through their schools. Printing of the calendar should also be completed by now, and they may be purchased through headquarters. They will be available during the Casper Convention. Once again, the cost is still only \$10.00.

The new theme or topic will be announced later this summer with information and instructions posted on OCTA's website. It is important that the artwork reflect the specific theme or topic and that all other instructions be followed.

The student artists and their schools represent grades 1-5. They are Kate Massoth, John Paul II; Zac Hawkins, Canyon Rim Academy; Mae Alder, Canyon Rim Academy;

Evelyn Rotondi, Canyon Rim Academy; Henry Churchill, John Paul II; Jack Palmer, Canyon Rim Academy; Clara Evans, Canyon Rim Academy; Ramona Slowik, John Paul II; Louise Morgan, John Paul II; George Macan, John Paul II; Mary Holland, John Paul II; Ruth Lusk, John Paul II; Nian San John Paul II; and Henry Griffin, Canyon Rim Academy. They will receive their copy of the calendar and prize by September.



This year there will be a recipient for the Museum category of the Outstanding Educator Award. The recipient is Grand Encampment Museum, Encampment, Wyoming, for its various student programs and highlighting its Staddle Camp program for Chicago, Illinois, inner city students. The award will be presented during the awards program in Casper. Further detailed information will be the next edition of *News from the Plains*. Bill Hill

Welcome New Ezra Meeker Life Members

Frank Gifford
Mortimer Paulus

Casper Convention Donations

Our Casper convention is but a few months away. We are planning on making this year's convention entertaining and memorable.

We need items for our raffle, silent auction and live auction. Please consider donating something for these fun events - be it handmade, useful, or educational. Anything you can bring will be most appreciated.

If you need any information, please contact Fern Linton: flinton@wyoming.com

California-Nevada OCTA Symposium

By Steve Knight

May 6-8 we had a great time learning about the Nobles Trail at our long Covid delayed California Nevada OCTA Symposium. Close to 60 gathered at the Gaia Hotel in Anderson California located next to the Sacramento River and located right on the Nobles Trail. The Nobles trail was a much easier route then the more northern Applegate and Lassen Trails, it had more frequent water, easier grades and was significantly shorter. President Ken and Jo Johnson put together a great program leading off with brief updates by National President John Biggs and OCTA Manager Travis Boley. This was followed by Ken Johnson's presentation of the Nobles trail passing by the location of our hotel and the ferry crossing of the Sacramento river on the way to Shasta City. Our second speaker was Jon Jefferson with the Shasta Historical Society on the legacy of pioneer Pierson B. Reading that received a Mexican Land Grant in the area and discovered gold in 1848 leading to a local gold rush. A very interesting presentation about the little known history of Mary Brown the widow of abolitionist John Brown who came

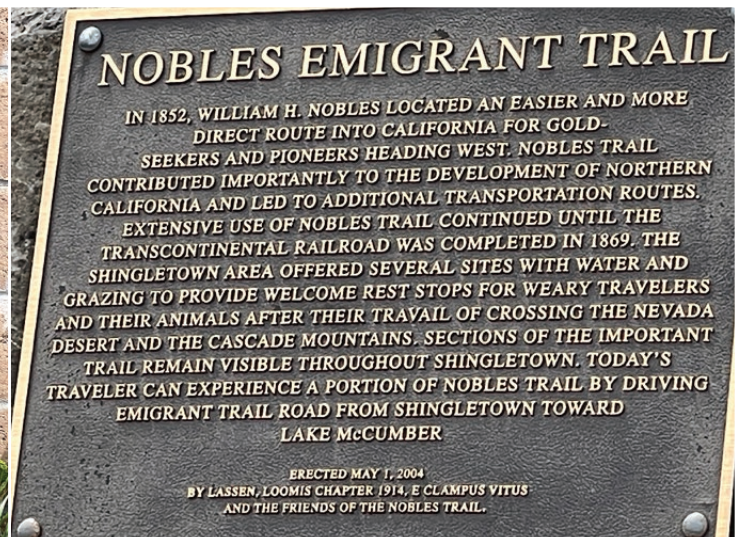
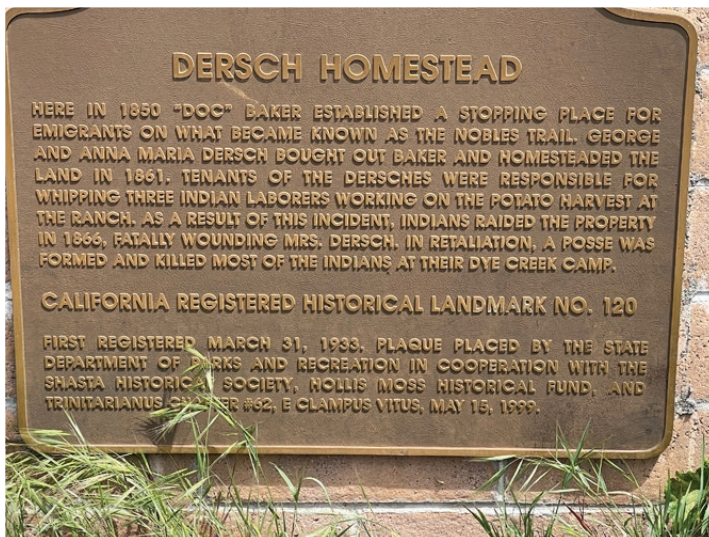
to California on the Nobles trail and settled in nearby Red Bluff in 1864 was given by Josie Reifchneider-Smith with the Tehama County Genealogical and

Historical Society. The Voices of the Golden Ghosts brought to life the history and influence of the African Americans who participated in the 1849 gold rush.

On Sunday we met at nearby emigrant and California gold rush town Shasta City. Many 1840 era brick buildings with the iron fire shutters still stand and visited the historic cemetery where past National President Lee Black located his great-grandfather's cousin's grave stone and narrated his family's local history arriving over the Nobles trail and starting the Elmore colony and a successful cattle, sheep and hay

ranch. We then continued our auto tour following the trail east to the Dersch Ranch and massacre site of the Indian attack that killed Mrs Dersch in 1866, then on to Mountain Station and ending at Shingle Town known for manufacturing shingles for the gold rush building in and around Shasta City.





Meet Our Members

This issue we are happy to introduce three of our recent members from the mid-west of the US. Our first person is Benjamin (BJ) Hollars from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. His introduction to OCTA came in the pre-covid period when he was just beginning to work on his book project. BJ teaches writing at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. His plan was to write a book about retracing the Oregon Trail with his then six-year-old son, Henry.

He noted that like many young kids he played the Oregon Trail computer game and over the years his love for history grew. Soon

he “became enamored with the rich, textured stories of the westward trails.” He said his “love for the trails is simply an extension of my love for American history.”

As he began his early research for his book, he



kept coming across the references to the Oregon-California Trails Association. He also noted the existence of our many chapters along the trails and learned of some of our knowledgeable trail members. He soon realized that OCTA was worth investigating as a source of information both for “its historical records as well as current stories from scholars and trail

lovers today.” He hoped to tap into the 19th century stories to guide himself and his son on a road trip over the trail and gain advice on different places to visit. He hoped to learn from America’s past to help them understand America in the present as well as providing an experience his son would remember forever.

In addition to teaching, he writes nonfiction books, articles for local papers, coaches his son’s soccer team, and cheers his daughter’s sports. “But wherever I am, or whatever I’m doing, I ‘m always dreaming of a future opportunity to head west, deepen my understanding of our country, and do my very small part to try to preserve the past in the service of our future.” I know some of our members have already met BJ. Now it is time for the rest of us to help him along in his quest.

Our next member is Brian Gomen.

He presently lives in Overland Park, Kansas with his wife Teresa. They have two sons-young men of 21 and 24.

For a number of years they lived in Colorado. The whole family “loves the outdoors.” He was a golf professional and also managed a ski school there. After almost two decades they moved to the Kansas City area, but their love of anything outdoors continues. [Photo – Brian & Teresa]



He can’t pinpoint exactly how he first heard of OCTA, but it could have been something he found online when researching or just surfing. He had been working on genealogy, trying to trace back his family. Some had come to Kansas, and some were in Missouri in the mid-1800s. He also knew that today some of his relatives live in California and some in Oregon. He now has a problem to solve, “How did they get all the way there and how long ago?”

He hasn’t really studied the trails or traveled along them, but he knows he has crossed them many times. He said, “I also hardly miss road signs, scenic byways, trails, historical markers, etc., they always catch my interest and I stop if I can. I see many of them around Kansas City and the surrounding areas. He has a great interest in the westward expansion and the trails that do go together. I would really like to learn more. When I see trail signs and historical markers. I try to imagine what that very spot might have looked like

back when the wagon trains road through.

Brian enjoys reading non-fiction accounts by the emigrants, Indians, and others. He notes,” Anything historical from that time period really intrigues me. I’m still learning about the OCTA and reading a few newsletters. I am looking forward to learning more and meeting other members.” Let’s be sure to welcome Brian, I’m sure he’d be a perfect fit for the local chapter.

Our third recent member is Joyce Jefferson shown here with her husband Al Wait. They reside in Rapid City, South Dakota. Joyce is a first-person interpreter. She portrays and tells the stories of the pioneer women of South Dakota and the Dakota Territory.



She heard about OCTA when she was researching Lucretia Marchbanks one of the pioneer women she presents. She learned of an article that had been submitted to OCTA for publication about Lucretia, and one thing led to another. She joined OCTA in order to read the article and to find out what else OCTA had to offer. Although she has not studied the emigrant trails, nor specifically traveled over or along them, she noted that OCTA has “piqued my interest” and now wants to become familiar with them and more of the history of the surrounding area. In the photo above she portrays Sarah Campbell, the first documented non- native women to come into the Black Hills with the Custer Expedition in 1874. Her husband represents Anthony Herr, Sarah’s adopted son who was a big help to her during the time spent on the plains and in the Black Hills.

Joyce has traveled widely and performed in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, parts of Wyoming, and other nearby areas. When we get to know Joyce, she will also help us become acquainted with some of the early pioneer women.

Be sure to welcome all our new members with a warm and hearty “Howdy Pilgrim & Happy Trails!” Don’t forget to look for other new members in our next edition.

News from the Chapters

WYOMING

Treks and Tours on Wyoming's Trails

The area around what's now Casper, Wyo., where the trail left the North Platte to head southwest toward Independence Rock and South Pass, was a crossroads from earliest times. This year's OCTA convention will offer excellent chances for us to trace these early routes. For much more detail on all of these tours, visit the registration info on OCTA's website.

Pre-conference, private-vehicle treks start Saturday, Aug. 27, with a tour of Indigenous sites in Wyoming's vast Red Desert, south and east from South Pass. Yufna Soldier Wolf, Northern Arapaho, and Jason Baldes, Eastern Shoshone, will lead the tour.

A second pre-conference trek on Sunday, Aug. 28, will be led by longtime OCTAn Randy Brown, author of two books on trails inscriptions. The tour will head west from Fort Laramie and visit graves, swales, the amazing Mexican Hill ruts and Warm Springs south of the river, and graves and sites on the Child's Cutoff north of the river.

Tuesday Aug. 30 and Thursday, Sept. 1 will see all-day bus tours to sites east, north and west of Casper, plus a tour that will visit sites closer to town. We'll also offer a half-day field trip to a local Indian Wars battle site on Tuesday afternoon only.

One bus tour will visit the 1843 grave of Joel Hembree—oldest known emigrant grave on the trails—Natural Bridge, and the Kelly, Martin Ringo (father of the gunslinger Johnny Ringo), J. P. Parker, Ada Magill and Quintina Snodderly graves east of Casper. This tour also will be led by Randy Brown.

A second tour will head west from Casper on a county road that follows the Oregon Trail precisely for dozens of miles to Independence Rock, Rattlesnake Pass and the Fulkerson Grave, Devil's Gate and Martin's Cove—some of the best-known trail landmarks in the entire West. The tour will be led by Jason Vlcan of the National



Independence Rock. Photos by Tom Rea



Van Vleet signature



Mormon Ferry monument



Platte Bridge monument

Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper and longtime OCTAn Levida Hileman, author of a book on the inscriptions at Independence Rock.

A third tour will head north, up the route of the Bozeman Trail to Fort Phil Kearny and related Indian Wars sites near Story, Wyo. In the 1860s, the Bozeman ran through prime buffalo country, violating treaties, on its way to newly opened

gold fields in Montana. The tribes resisted; the result was Red Cloud's War. Leading the tour will be longtime OCTAn and Bozeman Trail historian Susan Badger

Doyle, Dave McKee, president of the Bozeman Trail Association and Miniconjou Lakota historian Donovan Sprague of the faculty of Sheridan College.

A fourth bus tour will stay near Casper, focusing on stories and sites connected a question nearly all the emigrants faced: How to cross the North Platte River safely. The tour will be led by historians Tom Rea, author of a history of the Sweetwater Valley, and Jefferson Glass, author of a book on the French-speaking trader John Richard and his bridge across the Platte.

On Tuesday only, we will offer a half-day field trip to the so-called Red Buttes battle site west of Casper where in 1865 thousands of warriors attacked a small

wagon train led by Sgt. Amos Custard. The site also includes some high-grade swales; the tour will be led by BLM archeologist Patrick Walker.

Post-convention, private-vehicle treks on Friday, Sept. 2, include a tour led by Randy Brown west from Douglas past the La Bonte stage station and various grave sites to the Hembree and Kelly graves. Also that day, retired BLM archeologist Craig Bromley, current BLM archeologist Adam Calkins and conference keynoter Todd Guenther will lead a trek up the upper Sweetwater past Rocky Ridge and Rock Creek Hollow to Burnt Ranch near South Pass.

See you on the trails! *Tom Rea*

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA

The California-Nevada Chapter is finally experiencing a post-Covid rebound, after a couple years of reduced activity. We just held our annual Spring Symposium at the plush Gaia Hotel and Spa on the banks of The Sacramento River in Anderson, California. After having to postpone it from 2020 to the present due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were thankful to have a good turnout of 65 people registering in spite of Covid variants and the high price of gasoline.

At the board meeting, it was reported that our chapter is in good standing and healthy with 282 memberships for a total of 400 current members including 13 new members since January 1. And out financial standing remains secure.

John Winner, our preservation officer reported that OCTA is dealing with continued threats to the trails and an assessment of the 2021 fires: the Dixie Fire impacted the Lassen, Nobles, and Beckwourth Trails. The Caldor Fire impacted the Carson, Johnson, Grizzly, Luther, and Georgetown Trails. Wildfires have both negative and positive effects on historic trails. During suppression, trails can be lost and/or damaged through firefighting. After the fire, logging, road, and utility repair can damage and/or destroy trails. Wildfires can also have a positive benefit to trail location, exposing trail segments heretofore covered with brush etc.

John Briggs, President of National OCTA, and Travis Boley, Business Manager of National OCTA, both updated our chapter on national events and activities.

Jon Jefferson from Shasta County Historical Association presented a PowerPoint report on Pierson B. Reading, who came to California with the Chiles-Walker Party in 1843, received a Mexican Land Grant,

Rancho Buena Ventura in 1844, discovered gold in the Shasta Area in 1848, and was instrumental in the development of the area.

Ken Johnston did a presentation on William Nobles and the Nobles Emigrant Trail that became a major route into Northern California in 1852. The trail went past the Gaia Hotel & Spa and ended at the Gold-Rush town of Shasta City west of Redding.

Josie Smith from the Red Bluff Historical Society and Genealogical Association told how Mary Brown came to Northern California over the Nobles Trail to escape political abuses in the East because she was wife of the Abolitionist John Brown, who was executed by hanging for his part in seizing the Federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry and forcing U.S. citizens to reconsider the immorality of the institution of slavery and the injustices enforced by the government. Mary Brown's house in Red Bluff is still there, and one of her daughters became a teacher at a school for African American children in the area.

Then the highlight of the symposium was the Voices of the Golden Ghosts who, using skits and telling stories, are reviving the history of African Americans who came over the emigrant trails and were active in the Gold-Rush and instrumental in the development of early California. Eddie McAllister gave a brief background of their work and mission. Victor Martin played his saxophone as told the story of how he, as a Free African American came to the Gold-Rush and experienced racism while mining for gold. He ended his talk by saying, *"You probably wonder why I'm playing my saxophone when there weren't saxophones in California during the Gold-Rush, but then according to history, I wasn't either,"* as he walked off the stage. It was so poignant and powerful

that it nearly brought tears to our eyes.

Actors also portrayed the lives of other Prominent African-Americans in the Shasta Area: Phoebe Colburn, who owned a waystation on the Nobles Trail, became wealthy, and was buried in the cemetery in Shasta City. And Alvin Coffee, who came to California as a slave over the Lassen Trail in 1849 with the promise that his owner would free him, but the owner lied and took him back east and sold him to another owner who brought him back to the Shasta over the Nobles Trail in 1854. This time Coffee earned enough money in the gold fields to buy his freedom and also purchase the freedom of his wife and family.

As a post-symposium

field trip, we visited the California State Historic Park at Old Shasta, where ranger-interpreter June Morris showed us the courthouse and the gallows behind. She also took us to the old cemetery where Phoebe Colburn was buried. After the Shasta visit, we car caravanned back up the Nobles Trail visiting Fort Reading, the Dersch Ranch, where Mrs. Dersch was killed by Indians. We also visited the area of Mountain House way-station that had been owned by Phoebe Colburn, and Charlie's Ranch, where bull and bull fights attracted fans from as far as Sacramento and San Francisco until the fights were outlawed in 1859.

Follow our web site for future planned outings and activities. *Ken Johnston*



GATEWAY

Fifty-five people attended the Buffalo Soldiers program which was jointly sponsored by Gateway Chapter and the Black Archives Museum of St. Joseph. The program was available through the Missouri Humanities Council. Three members of the Alexander/Madison Chapter KC Area Buffalo Soldiers spoke to a packed room about the history of the Buffalo Soldiers from 1866. They helped settle the frontier, and served in the Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II as Tuskegee Airmen. They also were among the first National Park Rangers. The speakers, certified storytellers, portrayed Buffalo Soldiers of the past. Special thanks to Gateway Board Member Bill Leppert for coordinating this program.



Donna Madison portrayed Cathay Williams, the only woman to serve with the Buffalo Soldiers



Gary Wilkinson, President of the Black Archives Museum, presented certificates of appreciation to the speakers.

On June 4, Gateway Chapter will partner with the Remington Nature Center with a walk along the Missouri River hike/bike trail. At designated points Gateway volunteer speakers will give a brief vignette of St. Joseph's role in the westward movement.

Plans are also underway for a bus field trip to the Truman Presidential Library and other trail-related sites in the area. More information to follow. Truman was particularly interested in and traveled the Santa Fe Trail.

Also in Gateway's future is the possible

hosting of the 2022 mid-year board meeting and symposium. Discussions with national are proceeding on this possibility. *Jackie Lewin*

CROSSROADS

Greetings from Crossroads! Due to various health issues of some of our members we had a slow start at Crossroads. However, we have a couple of events to report on. One is the Lake Point project. On March 29, 2022, a National Park Service team surveyed the situation. Cory Donnelly, design and development lead of the NPS, met with Lake Point leaders to create a park. Large development in the area has threatened a series of pristine 1846 trail ruts; however, team work between Lake Point officials, OCTA Crossroads, property owners, and the NPS have assured us that a public park will be developed around these sites in Lake Point. Matt Ivory, Crossroads president, was present during the teamwork meeting. That's good news! Others in attendance were Ryan Zumwalt (parks developer at Lake Point) and Chris Robinson (a land owner).

In other matters--In late April we had a work detail. We set a T-post at the Boise Ford Crossing on the Bear River in Box Elder County. This is part of the Salt Lake Cut-Off where the trail joined the California road at City of Rocks in Idaho. The crossing is marked on the west side with a stone and a T-post; however, it was felt that it should also be marked on the east side. Four

of us went up in late April and met with the property owner, Stuart Petersen, who joined us to complete the project. This completes the marking of the trail in northern Utah. Jesse Petersen remarked that this could be one of our last T-posts. In the last 20 years, we have

set more than 140 posts in the state marking pioneer trails. This was a somber moment for the team which, at this time, is headed up by Jesse Petersen with Bryce Billings, Victor Heath, and myself. However, there is still a desire to mark the southern road from Salt Lake to the Los Angeles road, particularly in Iron and Washington Counties in Utah. E. Leo Lyman, resident of Southern Utah and noted author, has agreed to help with the research on this matter. Hopefully, we can see the completion of this in the future. The southern road joins with the Spanish trail in that part of the state.

We are saddened by the passing of Marie Wanosik, mother of Drew Wanosik, both ardent supporters

of Crossroads. We will miss her and extend our sympathies to her family.

We are hoping for a spring field trip to complete the trail in Utah of the Hastings Cut-off to Donner Springs. We haven't been to Donner Springs in a long time. It will be good to go out and see what conditions are like there. *A. Oscar Olson*



Oscar Olson, Bryce Billings, Jesse Petersen and Victor Heath



KANZA

Hi friends, work has begun on the museum/library. It is a big job and we still have to raise funds. The park

is really looking great with a lot of visitors. Have a good summer. *Duane Iles*

SOUTHERN TRAILS

Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA held a symposium in Temecula, CA April 25, 26 and 27, 2022 that was attended by about 25 people. We had a variety of events that started with the Museum in Old Town and then a guided walking tour. We ended up at the historic Hotel Temecula that had been used during the 1880's railroad era, with a little wine tasting in their dining room! We heard old stories shared by the proprietor as he read stories from old newspapers and shared perspectives from the days gone by.

Day two we started at the Little Temecula History Center in their red barn, for a short talk on where our historic Road Rally would lead us. We headed out Highway 79 and saw a couple of old Butterfield Stagecoach stops before a tour of the Warner Carillo Ranch House. We enjoyed a presentation by Stephen Van Wormer as he shared his views and knowledge as an archaeologist and showed us where the "fork in the road" was. We continued south with a stop at Box Canyon, and further to Vallecito, a State Park that holds the old adobe and served as a home and station on the trail as emigrants or wagons came in from the Yuma

crossing.

We headed up to Julian for a tour of their Pioneer Museum before stopping for famous apple pie! We covered about 160 miles by the time we returned to Temecula, but we saw some amazing geography and felt an appreciation for those that had walked the trails so long ago.

Day three we enjoyed a variety of speakers at the Little Temecula History Center as we learned about the trails in the area and the history of the Rancho's. Rebecca Farnbach, Steven Lech, Doug Hocking and Melissa Shaw all shed light on the historical events in the area and gave us a new appreciation for the history in the area. Vail Headquarters was preserved as 4 acres from the old Vail Ranch that holds the adobe Wolfe Store and more old buildings that have been preserved and repurposed for use by the present-day community. It is a great example of people who believe in preservation and put in the effort to save the past for those of us in the present! It is really well done, and worth a visit when you're in the area! <https://southerntrails.thetaleofthetrail.org/> *Melissa Shaw*



COLORADO-CHEROKEE

Work is progressing on mapping the Cherokee Trail in Northern Colorado with the recent completion of an entire township/range section of land owned by the State Land Board of Colorado. The field leaders, Ethan Gannett and David May, have filed their report with the National Park Service. This section of the trail proceeds from the last mapped point by field mapper Richard Deisch, allowing for a continuous interconnected mapped trail from the south.

Next up for the team is to move more north on the trail as they have obtained permission to work on Roberts Ranch Preservation Trust land which covers multiple miles of both the Cherokee and Overland trails. Work will progress shortly on this new parcel and is expected to take most of the summer and into the fall to complete the extensive mapping on this land as it incorporates multiple alternative Cherokee Trail routes.

An article by Ethan, *Virginia Dale Station: Joseph Alfred 'Jack' Slade's Living Legacy*, appears in the current issue of *Overland Journal*.

The next event in the chapter's series of Zoom

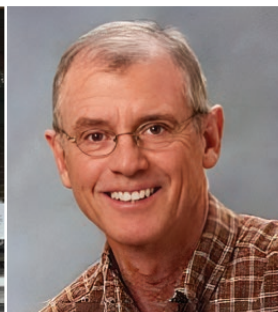
programs is scheduled for July 9, with Jeff Broome's presentation based on Chapter 4 of his book, *Indian Raids and Massacres: Essays on the Central Plains Indian War*. Jeff will discuss the 1865 capture of the Fletcher sisters by Eagle Head's band of warriors, north of present-day Laramie, Wyoming, a direct retaliation for the Sand Creek Massacre.

Sharon Danhauer, a board member of our chapter and of the board of the Loveland Historical Society, conducted a public tour of the LHS Mariano Medina Family Cemetery on May 22 as part of History Preservation Month. Preservation of this cemetery has been of interest to our chapter since 2009, when OCTA's national convention was held in Loveland. After the convention the chapter created and donated a plaque to LHS describing the history of the cemetery, and maps showing its proximity to the Cherokee/Overland Trail. the convention the chapter created and donated a plaque to LHS describing the history of the cemetery, and maps showing its proximity to the Cherokee/Overland Trail.

Camille Bradford



David May and Ethan Gannett



Jeff Broome



Ken Jessen and Sharon Danhauer

NORTHWEST

Robin Baker is planning two hikes this coming June on the Barlow Road over Mt. Hood. He is tracing the remnants of the Road and adding to his maps of the area. He is inviting Chapter members to join him.

On the 20th of May ten members of the Chapter took a day hiking across the Umatilla Depot land. The weapons Depot was constructed in 1931 to store the armaments needed to fight the Second World War. The Depot covers 17,000 acres in Umatilla County and is near the Columbia River. The two Oregon Trail segments are clearly seen from the air, but difficult to walk on due to sections of sage brush and the storage bunkers built upon them.

An archaeological study was done of the area in 2016 and the routes are now known. The Depot land is

being returned to the public for use. Chapter members have been marking the trails over the last several years, and hope that some of the route will be saved and labeled. The weather was good for the hike and the birds and other wildlife make the area a pleasant place. We know from diaries that the wagons had difficulty in navigating through the huge sagebrush.

The other mapping trips planned for this summer will be in the area around Immigrant Springs. June 6 we will have a Zoom meeting with family history presentations from some of our members.

With luck we may have a face-to-face Chapter meeting in September after the Casper Convention.

Sallie K. Riehl, President

IDAHO

We're back! :-)

The three Boise Schools Community Education classes on the Oregon Trail in Idaho which I taught in March were great. It was wonderful to be back sharing the stories of the Oregon Trail with so many new people. We gained several new members from the attendees.

Many of the participants joined me on a resumption of the annual byway tour on Saturday, April 23. This was also great as we had a very large group of 45 people and 24 vehicles winding across the desert kicking up dust much like a wagon train. The Mountain Home DAR group joined us and hosted a pot-luck lunch at a small winery north of Mountain Home. It was a lot of fun and will become a staple of the annual tour. We will probably have the fall chapter meeting at the winery in October.

Three weeks later we shared some great days on the California and Oregon Trails in southern Idaho. On Thursday, May 12, we worked with the archaeologist from City of Rocks to do metal detecting on a California Trail site on private property. Treasures found included small pieces of metal, a button, and a broken needle or pin. The next day we had hoped to be able to go over Granite Pass again, but the recent snows and wet April made the route impassable at that time. Hopefully we will be able to go later. Instead, we followed the Oregon Trail from American Falls to Massacre Rocks and did more metal detecting at Massacre Rocks State Park under the guidance of the COR archaeologist again. Group dinners on Thursday and Friday nights were excellent and a lot of fun. This

multiple-day outing has become a tradition of fun. I encourage you to join us next year.

Saturday, May 14, the spring chapter meeting was held at the Perkins Restaurant in Burley, Idaho.

Preservation was a big topic for the meeting as Idaho is being inundated with wind turbine and powerline projects. Don Wind and Dave Price, the chapter preservation officers, are doing a great job of monitoring the projects and coordinating with multiple resources.

Finally, a small group of chapter members and cadaver dog handlers met Michael McKenzie near Durkee, Oregon, to verify a small, fenced gravesite on a knoll a short distance from the Oregon Trail. All four of the dogs confirmed the presence of human remains. The day was to continue near Huntington to work the dogs on the Van Orman burial site, but severe thunderstorms, heavy rain, and a close lightning strike put an end to the day. Paul Dinwiddie and I continued to Weiser, Idaho, to view several historical sites in the area including the Jeffreys school and family cemetery. John Thomas Jeffreys opened the Jeffreys-Goodale route across central Idaho. After Jeffreys passed away, his family moved to the Weiser area and became leaders of the community.

It was great to be back out on the Trails. I hope you will join us on future activities.

Watch the chapter website

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

See you soon.

Jerry Eichhorst



TRAILS HEAD

Our membership of 85 includes 21 members who have been with us for 25 years!

The peer review committee headed by **Pat Traffas** is winding up its work on preparing a signage plan for NPS of California/Oregon trail signs to be placed in Douglas County, KS from the eastern edge of the county, through Lawrence, and to the western edge of the county. We are now excited to be making arrangements for a bus tour through this area on July 30. **Ross Marshall** and **Pat Traffas** will narrate the history of the trail and area; **Camille Bradford** plans to join us in Lawrence to talk about the boulder on the

KU Campus marking the trail crossing and featuring a Medallion, designed by Laura and James Fraser, given to her stepfather, **Howard Driggs**, who then donated it for the marker.

Our Trails Head chapter is a member of a Johnson County coalition of historical groups, JCKHF, that is creating a grant fund from which its members will be able to apply for projects. Toward this end, JCKHF held a gala event to advance community awareness of the County's rich heritage and to raise funds in support of grants for its members. More than a dozen of our members attended this event. *Lila Aamodt*

OCTA Chapter Presidents

CA-NV - Ken Johnston

5707 Casa Way, Klamath Falls, OR 97603
kljstn@msn.com

Colorado-Cherokee - Camille Bradford

11515 Quivas Way, Denver CO 80234
bradford@usa.net

Gateway - Dave Berger

3003 A Hirter Dr., St. Joseph MO 64506
3003hirter@gmail.com

Idaho - Jerry Eichhorst

2013 S. Trapper Cove Ave.
Boise, ID 83709
jeichhotrails@gmail.com

KANZA - Duane Iles

PO Box 310, Holton, KS 66436
96cruisin@embarqmail.com

Nebraska - Vacant

Northwest - Sallie Riehl

3455 Countryman Cir NW
Albany, OR 97321
salliek@comcast.net

Southern Trails - Mark Howe

P.O. Box 12521, El Paso, TX 79913
Mlhowe1@hotmail.com

Trails Head - Lila Aamodt

5938 Reeds Rd #202
Mission, KS 66202

lilaamodt@gmail.com

Utah Crossroads - Matt Ivory

242 Starboard Lane
Stansbury Park, UT 84074
flyfisherman5261@gmail.com

Wyoming - Tom Rea

1756 S. Chestnut
Casper, WY 82601
tomrea72@gmail.com

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:

Dennis Amaral

Jim and Carol Barr

Cecilia and John Bell

Todd and Betty Berens

Carolyn Bowser

William B Colvin

Dr. and Mrs. Robert Corder, Jr.

Shirley Coupal & Jean Coupal-Smith

Buford Crites

Douglas V Duncan

Duane and Beth Fager

James and Carolyn Fitzgerald

Craig Fuller

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Wayne Sundberg

Sara Van Wig

Julie Videon

Richard Wagner

David and Wendy Welch

Hank and Lynne Woodward

2022 40th Annual OCTA Convention

August 28 - September 2, 2022 • Casper, Wyoming



Leaving the Platte

The Oregon-California Trails Association and the Wyoming Chapter of OCTA will hold OCTA's 40th annual convention, "Leaving the Platte," in Casper, Wyoming, August 28-September 2, 2022.

The convention will include two full days of talks and presentations, and two full days of bus tours to trail sites east and west of Casper on the Oregon/California/Mormon trails – and north of Casper on the Bozeman Trail.

We also plan a private-vehicle trek pre-conference from grave sites near Fort Laramie to Register Cliff and the Guernsey ruts and a tour of indigenous sites in the Red Desert, and a pair of post-conference, private-vehicle treks – over Rocky Ridge and one to numerous graves on private property east of Casper.

Speakers will include keynoter and historian Todd Guenther on the history and meaning of South Pass; Camille Bradford on the huge Oregon Trail centennial gathering at Independence Rock in 1930 organized by her stepfather, Howard Driggs; Clint Gilchrist of the Mountain Man Museum in Pinedale, Wyoming, on the fur trade and its connections to the historic trails; a panel on collaborations between the Bureau of Land Management and the LDS Church on management and interpretation of the trails along the Martin's Cove-South Pass corridor; sessions on the turbulent history and current-day preservation of the Bozeman Trail, which ran north from the North Platte to the gold fields of Montana—and much more.

Activities will include demonstrations by famed South Dakota wheelwright and wagon maker

Doug Hansen and a mochila exchange by Pony Express riders. Other events will include a banquet, a barbecue, an auction, raffle, book room and an authors' night. The Ramkota Hotel at 800 N. Poplar Street is convention HQ, with additional events occurring at the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center and Fort Caspar.

Ask for the special Oregon-California Trails Association room rate of \$89 at the Ramkota Inn when placing your reservation. You can reach them at 307-266-6000. There is a cutoff on the rooms held for this event – August 14, 2021. However as long as we have rooms available, the rate will be honored. All information can be found on the convention registration website.

If you go on the tours, bring hats and windbreakers. Though we fully expect sunny skies and 75-degree temperatures, Casper weather can change suddenly in August and September. Remember, it is an arid high-altitude region, so hydrate and let yourself acclimate! Most likely, it will be sunny and pleasant, so protect yourself from UV while out on tours. It is more intense at increased elevations.

Visit <https://www.wyohistory.org/travel/oregon-trail> online for much more information on Wyoming's trails. We will visit many of these sites during the convention.

If you're interested in being a book vendor or participating in Author's Night, please contact Kathy Conway at OCTA HQ at kconway@indepmo.org or 816-252-2276.

Mail in Registration Form for the 40th annual OCTA Convention, Casper, Wyoming, August 28 – September 2, 2022

- Please contact us with food allergies/restrictions by emailing kconway@indepmo.org or calling 816-252-2276
- I would like to volunteer during the convention ☐ Yes ☐ No
- I am an author and would like to sell my book(s) in the convention store ☐ Yes ☐ No (contact info above for vendor application)

Name as you want it read on your name tag:

Person A:

Person B:

Credit card #:

Exp. Date:

3-digit code:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

General registration details about the tours/meals are online at www.octa-trails.org

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Individual (before July 29) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$95 | (All registrations aside from single day registrations) |
| Individual (July 30 – August 27) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$105 | all speakers and receptions) |
| Individual (after August 27) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$115 | |
| Family (before July 29) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$145 | |
| Family (July 30 – August 27) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$155 | |
| Family (after August 27) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$165 | |
| Monday only (Individual) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | |
| Monday only (Family) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80 | |
| Wednesday only (Individual) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | |
| Wednesday only (Family) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80 | |
| Educator | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 | (must provide proof of employment with a school/university) |
| Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | (must provide proof of enrollment at an accredited institution) |

Check two boxes if you are attending each event as a couple:

Sunday evening (6 – 8 PM)

- ☐ ☐ 6:00 PM: Opening Reception at the National Historic Trails Center

Monday lunch (Noon – 1 PM) - **\$19**

- ☐ ☐ Southwest Chicken Wrap

Monday Author's Night (4:30 – 6 PM)

- ☐ ☐ Cocktail hour - **\$0**

Monday Documentaries at Fox Theater (7PM – 9 PM)

- ☐ ☐ "Battle of Red Buttes" and "Wagon Master: Hansen's Hand-Crafted History" - **\$10**

Wednesday lunch (Noon – 1 PM) - **\$20**

- ☐ ☐ Baked Potato Bar

Wednesday dinner (5 – 7 PM) - **\$25**

- ☐ ☐ BBQ at Fort Casper

Thursday dinner/Awards Banquet (6 – 8 PM) - **\$30**

- ☐ ☐ Italian buffet

Page Total: _____

Previous Page Total: _____

Pre-Convention Tours:

Saturday, August 27, 9 AM – 5 PM

- ☐ ☐ Pre-Convention Tour: Red Desert Indigenous Sites Trek - **\$10/person** (10 vehicles limit) \$_____

Sunday, August 28: 7:30 AM – 5 PM

- ☐ ☐ Pre-Convention Tour: Fort Laramie/Elva Ingram Grave Trek - **\$10/person** (10 vehicles limit) \$_____

Convention Bus Tours (*all tours include a box lunch along with drinks and snacks*)

Tuesday, August 30

- ☐ ☐ 7:30 AM – 5 PM: Independence Rock, Devil's Gate, Avenue of Rocks, and Willow Springs **(\$65)** \$_____
- ☐ ☐ 7:30 AM – 5 PM: Boseman Trail **(\$65)** \$_____
- ☐ ☐ 7:30 AM – 5 PM: Grave Sites **(\$65)** \$_____
- ☐ ☐ 8:30 AM – 5 PM: Reshaw's Bridge, Red Buttes, and Emigrant Gap \$_____
- ☐ ☐ 1 – 5 PM: Half-Day Van Tour to Red Buttes Battle Site \$_____

Thursday, September 1

- ☐ ☐ 7:30 AM – 5 PM: Independence Rock, Devil's Gate, Avenue of Rocks, and Willow Springs (\$65) \$_____
- ☐ ☐ 7:30 AM – 5 PM: Boseman Trail **(\$65)** \$_____
- ☐ ☐ 7:30 AM – 5 PM: Grave Sites **(\$65)** \$_____
- ☐ ☐ 8:30 AM – 5 PM: Reshaw's Bridge, Red Buttes, and Emigrant Gap \$_____

Friday, September 2

- ☐ ☐ 9:30 AM – 5 PM: Rocky Ridge to Burnt Ranch **(\$10)** \$_____
- ☐ ☐ 7:30 AM – 5 PM: Douglas West to Mary Kelly Grave **(\$10)** \$_____

Registration Total: _____

Meetings, events, and sessions:

Sunday, August 28 (at the Ramkota Hotel)

- 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM: OCTA Board Meeting
- 6:00 – 8:00 PM: Opening Reception at the National Historic Trails Center

Monday, August 29 (at the Ramkota Hotel)

(For full speaker biographies and talk descriptions, visit the convention registration link by scrolling down on our home page at www.octa-trails.org)

- 8 – 10:45 AM: Opening Remarks, Board Meeting, and General Membership Meeting
- 11 – 11:45 AM: Keynote Speaker – Todd Guenther: "South Pass"
- Noon – 1 PM: Lunch

Concurrent Sessions:

- 1:00 – 2:00 PM – "Searching for the Soldiers' Bones, Part I" Danny Walker
- 1:00 – 2:30 PM – "Bozeman Trail Panel," Susan Badger Doyle, Dave McKee, and Donovan Sprague
- 2:00 – 3:00 PM – "Searching for the Soldiers' Bones Part II," Al Fraser and Steve Haack
- 3:00 – 4:00 PM – "1980s Excavation of Red Buttes Fight Soldier's Grave," Rick Weathermon
- 3:00 – 4:00 PM – "New Bozeman Trail Diary of James Mills and the Legend of Mni-Akuwin," Chuck Rankin
- 4:30 – 6:00 PM – Author's Night
- 7:00 – 9:00 PM – "The Battle of Red Buttes" and "Wagon Master: Hansen's Hand-Crafted History" at Fox Theater

Tuesday, August 30

7:30 AM – 5 PM: Bus tours (all bus tours depart from the Ramkota)

6:00 PM: Dinner on your own

Wednesday, August 31

8 – 8:30 AM – Opening Remarks

8:30 – 9:30 AM – The Lander Road and the New Fork Crossing, Clint Gilchrist

Concurrent Sessions:

9:30 – 10:30 AM – “Snowfall on the Trails,” Dick Rieck

9:30 – 10:30 AM – “Overland Mail Routes, 1858-69,” Pat and Jack Fletcher

10:30 – 11:30 AM – “Early 20th Century Trails Preservation: Ezra Meeker, Grace Hebard, & H.G. Nickerson,” Kylie McCormick

10:30 – 11:30 AM – “The Covered Wagon Centennial Celebration at Independence Rock: Howard Driggs and the 1930 Gathering at Independence Rock,” Camille Bradford

Afternoon sessions:

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM – Lunch at Ramkota

1:00 – 2:00 PM – “LDS and BLM Trails Management at Martin’s Cove and Rocky Ridge,” Chad Orton, Craig Bromley, and Jared Oakleaf

3:00 – 5:00 PM Activities at Fort Casper

5:00 – 7:00 PM – BBQ and entertainment at Ft. Casper

Thursday, September 1

7:30 AM – 5 PM: Bus tours (all tours depart from the Ramkota)

6:00 – 8:30 PM Period Clothing Parade, Auction, and Raffle – Awards Banquet

Friday, September 2

Post-convention tours

Our host hotel is the Ramkota Hotel, located at 800 N, Poplar St., and has a special convention rate of \$89/night. Ask for the Oregon-California trails Association room rate when placing your reservation. You can reach them at 307-266-6000.

Liability Waiver:

The undersigned agrees that neither the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA), its directors, officers, employees, and agents, nor, to the extent legally permissible, any private or public (state or federal instrumentality of either), landowner or tenant licensee in possession of any land on or over which any outing takes place, or through which it travels, in connection with our as part of any meeting of OCTA, shall have any responsibility or liability, in whole or in part for any loss, damage, injury to person or property, delayed departure or arrival, missed carrier connection or cancellations.

Changes in schedules, program, or itinerary, or mechanical defect or failures, or for any negligent act or omission of any nature whatsoever which results from, or arises out of, or occurs at or during any activities, programs, tours, or outing there at, or part thereof, or any accommodations, transportation, food, or other services or facilities furnished or supplies there at, or any addition expenses occasioned thereby, or any liability sustained or incurred because of any foregoing.

All persons registering at or attending any such meeting or convention shall be bound by the foregoing and deemed to have consented to the same by such registration of attendance.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Date: _____

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 (Deceased)	James King	Betty J. Pfaff
Dr Thomas R. Bales	Amanda Gibbs	Ormie Lamson (Deceased)	Mrs. E. W. Puckett
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Lisa Carle	Chuck Hornbuckle (Deceased)	John & Jacque McVey	Michael Strodman
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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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2021-2022 OCTA Board of Directors

Jean Coupal-Smith, Roeland Park, KS
jcs1fun1@kc.rr.com

Pat Fletcher, Sequim, WA
jpfletcher@wavecable.com

Helen Hankins, Spring Creek, NV
helenhankins@gmail.com

Mark Howe, Pueblo, CO
Mlhowe1@hotmail.com

Steve Knight, Carson City, NV
1knightsc@gmail.com

Bill Martin, Georgetown, TX
bmartinocata@gmail.com

Chuck Milliken, West Jordan, UT
c-milliken@att.net

Jerry Mogg, St. Joseph, MO
Jerry.mogg@gmail.com

Pat Traffas, Overland Park, KS
traffasp@gmail.com

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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P.O. Box 1019, Independence MO 64051
Phone: (816) 252-2276 • Fax: (816) 836-0989
Email: octa@indepmo.org

Jay Lawrence, Editor

530 Ohio Avenue, Long Beach CA 90814
Phone: (562) 760-1999

Fall 2022 Issue Deadline: August 25, 2021
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

P.O. Box 1019
Independence MO 64051

In this issue:

Journey of a Lifetime

Meet Our Members

2022 Casper Convention Registration

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