

# NEWS FROM THE PLAINS

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Platte River sunrise departure of Sandhill Cranes  
near Kearny, Nebraska. Photo: WolfmanSF

Winter 2023

Volume XXXVIII, No. 1

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



It seems to have been a relatively short time since I wrote about the Casper Convention at the beginning of September. That is probably because it has been a busy time both on and off the Oregon and California Trails, also on the single track (usually elephant) trails of South Africa. Our

African photography adventure was a hangover from trips not taken during the worst days of Covid. That said, it was sandwiched between a visit with Jon Nowlin on the Fernley Swales of the California Trail and one with the Idaho National Lab archaeologists on the Jeffreys/Goodale Cutoff. Those that know me well understand that it is the Jeffreys/Goodale Cutoff, that first captured my imagination. Attempting to understand how Tim Goodale marshalled the estimated 338 wagons, 1100 people and 1400 head of stock round the lava flows of the Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho is an inspirational story. It is a pity that, as an 1862 migration, it falls outside the definition that Congress imposed timewise on the Oregon Trail. Congress determined the Oregon Trails historic significance ends in 1848, two years after the signing of the Treaty of Oregon in 1846. The Cutoff was first used in 1852 and its importance in history, and that of many other pioneers who traveled after 1848 is not fully recognized...

The United States and Great Britain ended the War of 1812 with the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, and four years

later agreed to a 10-year period of joint occupancy of the Northwest. The joint-occupancy agreement was renewed twice, but by 1846 it was clear that the Northwest was rapidly becoming American, primarily as the result of westward migration on the Oregon Trail, and neither country wanted to fight another war over the border issue. The two countries signed the Treaty of Oregon on June 15, 1846, ending 28 years of joint occupancy of the Pacific Northwest. The treaty established the 49th parallel as the border between the two countries. Destiny was realized.

The Fernley Swales are a different reality. Jon Nowlin, John Winner and I, with the support from Dick Waugh, visited with the Nevada BLM State Director Jon Raby and his team about their responsibility for protecting and preserving the swales in the desert north of Fernley, Nevada. The swales are endangered by ATVs heading into the desert to the north and by dumping of household waste. It was a very constructive meeting with agreement on how we should move forward. The following day Jon gave me a full tour of the swales. Good to be out on the Trail! BLM has appointed staff to the project and we hope in time to be able to restrict the ATVs to just one trail across the Historic easement. This is just one of many Preservation Projects that our Preservation Officer, John Winner, is managing. You can read about the other major projects in his article, remembering there are many more that he and a small number of hard working Chapter preservation members are working on. We need more members to work on Preservation. (We also need leaders for the Membership and Awards Committees!)

The Idaho National Laboratory (INL) is one

of the national laboratories of the United States Department of Energy. While the laboratory does other research, historically it has been involved with nuclear research. Much of current knowledge about how nuclear reactors behave and misbehave was discovered there. It is on an 890-square-mile complex in the high desert of Eastern Idaho near Arco. Jeffreys/Goodale's Cutoff passes through this property.

There are two variants, and they diverge just to the north of the Big Southern Butte, one of the largest volcanic domes in the world and an important landmark on the Cutoff. The northern path goes directly to the canyon of the Big Lost River, an important water source when there is water in it. The southern route, the Teakettle Butte variant, was a short cut to Champagne Creek – the next water source after Big Lost River. We weren't able to see much of the southern trail because it had rained the previous day and turned parts of the desert to mud!

We did see a section of the trail prior to divergence and a section of the trail at the (waterless despite the rain) Big Lost River Canyon. We were accompanied by the INL archaeological and research staff.

The following day we made our way from Ferry Butte, near Fort Hall on the Shoshone Bannock Reservation to Danilson Spring – the jumping off point for Big Southern Butte. We crossed the desert to the Butte repairing and replacing Carsonite markers as we progressed.

Back in Independence Kathy and Travis are having to work through very difficult conditions as the repairs to the office building and museum drag on. Thanks to all who have helped, including the Collections team for the work done to protect the Merrill Mattes Library.

The financial year, ending September 30th, finished strongly. There was still a loss on operations, but it was less than had been forecast. In fact, we were able to complete the year without taking a distribution from the endowment fund, but that is not likely to be the case for this coming year. Our assets far exceed our liabilities and so our overall position remains strong despite the loss.

The current value of the Endowment Fund did shrink marginally but is still very healthy.

Membership is down a little (just 1%) from last year at this time, but has been ticking steadily upwards since March. We need more data before we can conclude why that might be.



Kristi Garman of IOCTA who pounded a Carsonite for the first time. Big Southern Butte is 30 miles away on the horizon

Richard Hunt and the Marketing team led by Gina Sifers have continued to place new videos on our YouTube channel every Friday. Viewership is climbing but to repeat a message from Travis Boley "Did you know that 90% of the viewers who watch OCTA YouTube are not subscribers?" Subscribing is free, it does not sign you up for any other services, and it promotes OCTA awareness. Please subscribe and share the channel with your friends and family to help support the growth of the Oregon California Trails Association.

Knowledge Tree Films completed the field work

for the virtual tour of Gravelly Ford in Nevada. This is the same company that produced the excellent "Wagon Master: Hansen's Hand-Crafted History" which, as of writing this article, has successfully reached the semi-finals of the Venice Shorts Film Festival. Read more about Gravelly Ford preservation in John Winner's report.

The Fundraising Committee is working on the silent phase of 'Journey of a Lifetime' (Joal) and has recently contracted with Network for Good to provide software capability that will enable us to manage the process efficiently.

I am planning to attend the Southern Trails Chapter 'Trails Gathering in Tombstone', January 24 – 26 as well as the Gateway Chapter's "Journey to the West" Historic Trails Symposium, March 30 - April 2, 2023, in St. Joseph, Missouri. Make plans! Details can be found in Bill Hill's article on page nine in this Newsletter.

I hope to see you at one or both gatherings!

*John Briggs, President*

*Oregon-California Trails Association*



# FROM THE ASSOCIATION MANAGER



As I reflect back over the past three years, I think about the incredible changes we've undergone, both as a nation and an organization. In February 2020, we'd just left a very successful Yuma symposium with a fresh new five-year-plan in place. The board had agreed to a new and novel partnership with

Knowledge Tree Films out of North Hollywood, and our marketing and public relations committee had adopted an aggressive plan to get the OCTA name and brand more widely known.

Two weeks later, the entire nation shut down. And stayed shut down. For weeks. And then months. OCTA staff were locked out of their offices. Same for our National Park Service partners. All the gains we'd made and all the plans we made started to seem for naught.

So, we focused on things we could still control. Our marketing and PR plan called for OCTA to create a YouTube channel. So, we created a YouTube channel. We could still work outdoors, so we focused on historic sites and created dozens of short videos about them, posting them to our new YouTube Channel and finding new audiences as we racked up thousands of views.

We dedicated ourselves to daily "This Day in History" posts on our Facebook page. We launched an Instagram page. We won a \$10,000 per month grant from Google to create ads for our products, services, and eventually, events. We utilized a \$10,000 grant from the Partnership for the National Trails System to hire an intern to assist with all of this. We continued to tell new diverse and inclusive stories, reaching more and more audiences.

The results were amazing. After several years of running deficit budgets, we finished 2020 well into the black. Then we did it again in 2021. A lot of these new tools described above opened new avenues for revenue for us. We found new members. We sold more products and services. We received more donations. And we didn't have event expenses. We also benefited from an amazing return of donations from our members who answered our pleas to ensure we didn't become yet another victim of Covid.

We enter 2023 with lots of new platforms in place. We have dedicated ourselves to a weekly E-News to

keep you up-to-date. We are creating a weekly video for our YouTube Channel. Please go to [www.youtube.com/@octatrails](http://www.youtube.com/@octatrails) to subscribe if you haven't already done so. Back on Labor Day, we had fewer than 500 followers. As of this writing, we are at 655 followers. Once we get to 1,000 followers, we can monetize the channel. That's when those pesky and ubiquitous ads that pop up before and during your YouTube views will start to pay off. OCTA will begin to receive some of the ad revenue being generated on our channel once we reach that magic 1,000 follower mark and 4,000 hours watched mark. Both are within reach in relatively short order.

In the background, we continue to make progress on digitizing and indexing more online research content for you. We will soon launch an additional 600 diaries from the collection of the late Don Buck on our Journals website. We are in the process of launching a new fundraising platform via a new contract with Network for Good. We are beefing up our Google Ads to reach more audiences, create more revenue, drive more people to our events, and secure donations from new sources.

And perhaps biggest of all, OCTA's partnership with Knowledge Tree Films has completed two PBS-style documentaries, nearly completed two others, and partnered on a fifth. Wagon Master: Hansen's Hand-Crafted History was selected for the Venice Shorts Festival and, as of this writing, just reached the semifinal round of the Los Angeles Film Festival. Hundreds of entries were whittled down to a quarter-final list of 100 films, and now a semi-final list of the 60 best films. The top 15 movies will reach the finals, a spot we hope to reach. We've also entered the movie into the Big Sky Film Festival in Missoula, Montana. We learn on January 6 about whether we were selected or not, but it is one of the larger film festivals to feature movies that focus on Western themes. As an added bonus, the winner of the documentary category at the Big Sky Festival automatically receives an Academy Award nomination.

This speaks to the quality of work we're putting out there. We recently finished filming along the Gravelly Ford section of the California Trail west of Elko with funding provided by Nevada Gold Mines. We will soon have a final edit for our documentary about Wilson's Creek, the Wire Road, and the Butterfield Overland Trail in Missouri. Our partnership with the Amargosa

Conservancy paid dividends with our PBS documentary about History and Change on the Old Spanish Trail through Death Valley, with focus on restoration and preservation efforts, the development of the Mormon Wagon Road and later use by 49ers, and the darker history as it related to treatment of the native Paiutes. We will continue working to make these videos available on PBS and our own Vimeo Channel (just go to [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com) and enter "Oregon-California Trails Association" into the search bar to download Wagon Master or Old Spanish Trail).

Please continue to engage with us on our online platforms. It will keep you immediately informed as to what OCTA is doing and will connect you with an increasingly global network of trail aficionados. It will help us increase our following and revenue opportunities, meaning we can do more and more of the preservation and educational work for which we are renowned. Thank you for being a member of OCTA. It certainly is an exciting time to be involved with the largest historic trails organization in America!

*Travis Boley, Association Manager*

## Publications

Winter is being felt by many of our members. Time to slow down, sit by a fire and take out a good book or magazine, catch up on what other chapters have been doing. Now you have plenty of time to start thinking about what new adventures might be coming your way. If you haven't joined a chapter, remember you don't have to live in the area of the chapter to join it. Open yourself to new experiences. Our publications have all that you need. The OJ has great and very informative articles. If you haven't read all the articles in past editions, now you can. If you're looking for a book, don't forget to check the OJ's book review section. The News from the Plains is chock full of information about the different chapters. One might even find a new type of activity or project to incorporate into your own chapter. For those beginning to think about a trip along the trail, be sure to see what the local chapter is doing that may fit right in with your own plans. And of course, if you've found something you enjoyed reading about, or what you'd like to read about in the future, be sure to drop our editors Bob and Jay a note saying as much. These publications are for you! And if perchance you are unhappy about something let me or the editors know. We all have big shoulders.

Our activity book raffle's deadline is fast approaching. February 1 is the deadline for the drawing. Any school or teachers needs only to send

a card to OCTA with their name and address and the title of the activity book they'd like and the number of students there are in their class. The lucky school or teacher will receive a class set of the book they wrote on the card. Only one entry per card, but one can enter as often as they wish. Ask your kid or grandkids to tell their social studies teacher about the drawing.

Our student western calendar contest is underway. The subject for the 2024 Calendar is "Emigrant and Indian – Tools, Utensils and Equipment" used in their daily lives. This is open to all elementary students. On the back of their illustration, they must identify the item(s) and explain what or how it was used. Because of the early date for the convention, the deadline for submissions is April 1, two weeks earlier than usual. The student artists of the fourteen selected illustrations will each receive a check for \$50.00 and a copy of the calendar. Students may also enter on their own with their parent's permission. Complete information about these programs is on OCTA's website.

The deadline for our Outstanding Educator Award is April 15. Through this program OCTA recognizes teachers and museums for their excellent educational programs. There is a financial prize of \$250.00 for the recipient(s). Information and forms are also available on OCTA's website. Let's honor our educators. *Bill Hill*

## Report from your Fundraising Committee

Since our last visit, the committee undertook examination of several software programs which are designed to improve OCTA's capability to communicate with you. Connecting with our membership is vitally important. Your committee selected a program which will save administration expenses while enhancing direct communication. Network for Good was selected as our new membership relations program. You

will receive immediate gift acknowledgement, a tax receipt and specific OCTA greetings. For those with email capability we will be able to present Chapter and National specific information relating to projects seeking volunteers and additional resources.

Network for Good incorporates features that will replace several stand-alone programs at a cost savings. The acquisition of the new system was



made possible from Journey of a Lifetime (JoaL) contributions. JoaL has not formally launched, yet donations are being received. In part, the JoaL feasibility study identified the need for the enhancements just described. Improved membership communication and education were key factors brought out in the study. To that end, we have begun to address the desired needs of OCTA.

These are exciting times in the life of OCTA. You have made possible the success of the organization these past 40 years. Looking ahead to the next 40 years and the marvels of communication capabilities, one can only wonder how large an audience we may reach. Our digitization work and historic trail preservation is critical for educating future generations.

You can help OCTA achieve the overall Mission by making a current gift. Then again, you may want to include OCTA as one of your Life Insurance beneficiaries. Simply contact your insurance agent, or the company directly, requesting an update to your policy. It costs you nothing but a little time to make a very important and worthy preservation contribution. When you include OCTA as a beneficiary in your Life Insurance and send the policy information to OCTA headquarters manager, Kathy Conway, you will join others in the Legacy Society. You will be remembered in perpetuity and future generations will be grateful for caring about them. Please contact Lee Black, 505-379-3737 or [nobletr1857@gmail.com](mailto:nobletr1857@gmail.com), if you seek assistance with joining the Legacy Society. *Lee Black*

## Giving back to the next generation

As a child, my grandparents meant the world to me. They were old when I met them, and having been born in 1888, my Grandpa Shaw had personally gone from horses to watching us land on the moon. He homesteaded in Brothers, Oregon on 320 acres only to be so lonely, that he enlisted in what was known as World War One. The war to end all wars. Our family held onto that homestead for more than 100 years, and finally donated it to the Oregon Desert Land Trust. Now we can share this land with others. <https://www.oregondesertlandtrust.org/brothers-shaw/>

Conserving this parcel of wild and working land in Brothers ensures this area will remain intact for wildlife while supporting sustainable seasonal livestock grazing. It has enabled researchers to

experiment with habitat improvements to boost the long-term survival of sage-grouse in the region. It wasn't right on the Oregon Trail, but it's close enough to let others see and feel the high desert region and experience nature and the many animals and birds that enjoy it.

When we work collectively as OCTA, we have a greater ability to educate people and leave a real impact on present day generations. What was it like in the old days? How did you feed a family? How did you get around? It's the real-life stories that make it personal. Together, we're making a difference. Hopefully you shared your passion for history with your own family and we can keep the story going.

*Melissa Shaw, CFP®*



Leon Shaw at his table in the homestead cabin on his property in Brothers, Oregon about 1916.

# PRESERVATION



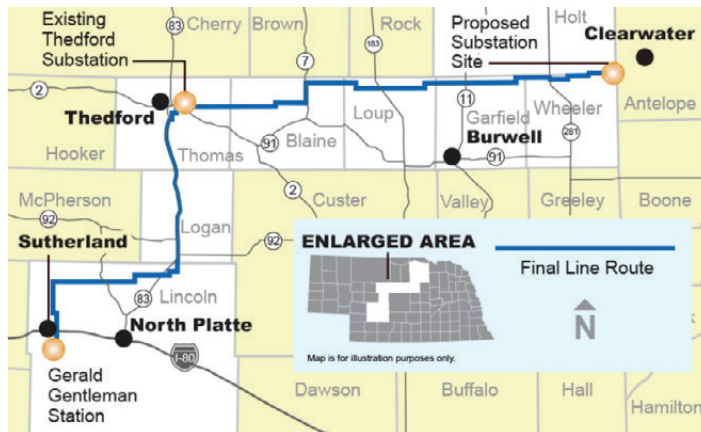
*By John Winner*

*National Preservation Officer*

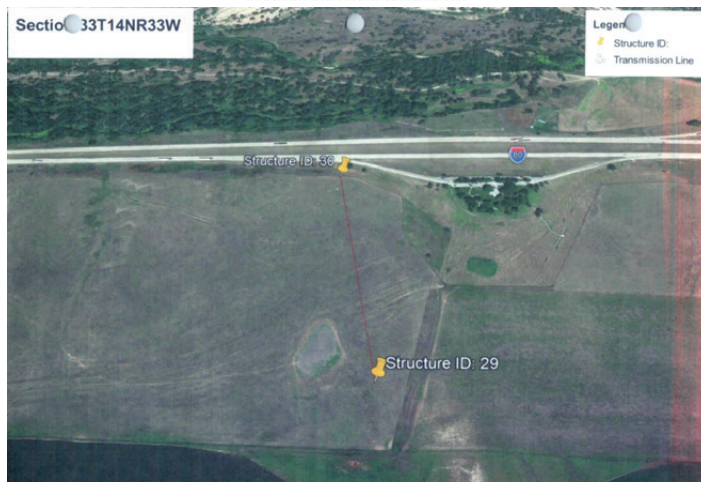
OCTA's Mission is to protect the historic emigrant trails legacy by promoting public awareness of trails through research, education and **preservation activities**; by achieving organizational

sustainability; and partnering with others.

**R-Project** The Nebraska R-Project is back on the front burner. To refresh your memory, this is a 225-mile Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), 345kV line crossing the Oregon-California and Mormon National Historic Trails. The proposed project starts at NPPD's Gerald Gentleman Substation near Sutherland, Nebraska; goes north to a 345kV substation located in Thomas County near Thedford; and then extends eastward to another 345kV substation sited in Holt County, which is to interconnect with Western Area Power Administration's existing 345kV line. The Google Earth photo illustrates where two transmission line towers (Structures) are proposed. Beneath the proposed



Final Transmission Line Route



transmission line are parallel swales of the Oregon and California National Historic Trail. To the right is the Sutherland Rest Area on eastbound Interstate 80 where swales and interpretive panels are located.

OCTA was the lead plaintiff along with three others in a lawsuit filed when U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) 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 Court Judge vacated the ITP issued to NPPD and remanded the matter back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife for further review, stating, FWS inadequately considered the effects of the R-Project on the O'Fallon's Bluff segment of the Oregon and California Trail; unlawfully excluded potential wind turbine development and a portion of the 'Programmatic Agreement' entered into to address the 'National Historic Preservation Act' was arbitrary and capricious. **This was a first step victory for the plaintiffs.**

In an effort to be apprised of any action between the FWS and NPPD, the plaintiffs attorney filed a Freedom of Information Act request.

Early in September 2022 we received notification from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that they would be preparing a SEIS (Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement). In the November 18, 2022 issue of the Federal Register the FWS filed the notice of intent to prepare a SEIS for the R-Project Transmission Line Revised Habit Conservation Plan. In essence, FWS is 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. The FWS will hold two virtual public scoping meetings on December 8, 2022. We are asked to submit comments by December 19, 2022.

**B2H Transmission Line** (This B2H update provided by Dave Welch)

Dave Price (Western Idaho preservation officer) and Dave Welch (Northwest interim preservation officer) are working on the next phase of the review of the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line (TL) Project with the Bureau of Land Management and Idaho Power. Previously, the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council issued the project permit with a designated route.

Price and Welch initiated a review of the final



routing to determine if there were any new impacts or impacts missed in previous assessments. The revised routing has no direct impact on the trail, but there are some issues concerning a couple of locations that are still being analyzed. The setting is impacted in several locations. This will be the subject of upcoming mitigation discussions.

While we should not expect any major revisions to the TL routing at this point, minor revisions to reflect local topography and geology can be expected. Possible impacts to the trail are examined each time a change is made.

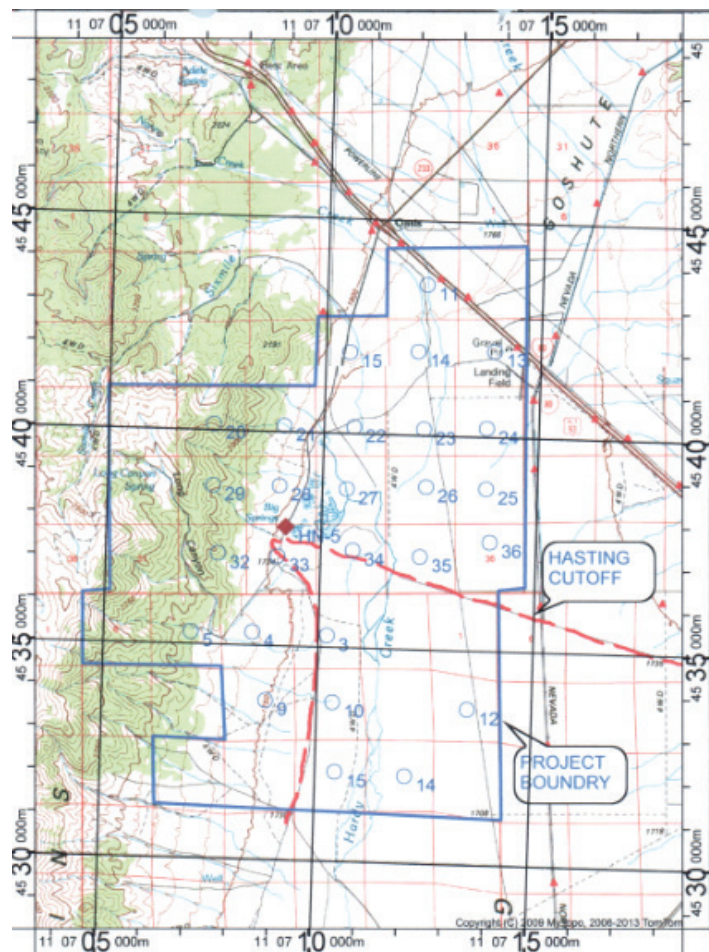
We are currently reviewing the Historic Properties Manage Plan (HPMP). This document lays out how historic properties (including the trail) are treated during construction and future maintenance activities. This is an umbrella document; specific locations will be addressed later.

There is some encouraging news concerning the Interpretive Center in Baker City. While the TL route will still pass below the Interpretive Center along the route of the current TL, its visual impact will be reduced from that indicated by the original plans. The tower design of the new line will mimic the existing line and will be lower than that originally proposed. The existing TL may be incorporated into the new towers. The major impact will be to the setting from the Panorama Point viewpoint near the western edge of the property. No Class 1 or 2 trail will be impacted in the area.

**Long Canyon Open Pit Mine / Gravelly Ford Conservation Easement** As the old saying goes *"There may be light at the end of the tunnel"*. For the past nine years I've been involved with this project. It started as an application submitted by Newmont Mining Corporation, now Nevada Gold Mines (NGM), to BLM for an open pit mine in northeast Nevada on what is mostly public land administered by BLM. What has evolved, we are close to a signed Conservation Easement between NGM and Nevada Land Trust, to preserve some of the pristine trail segments on the California National Historic Trail at Gravelly Ford, on Land owned by NGM. Gravelly Ford is roughly 100 mile west of the Long Canyon Project.

In 2013, OCTA received notification of the mine project and its proximity to a cultural resource, in this case the Hastings Cutoff, an emigrant trail, a branch of the California National Historic Trail. From the material provided I plotted the boundaries of the project and the general location of the Hastings Cutoff. (see map).The Hastings Cutoff alignment was within

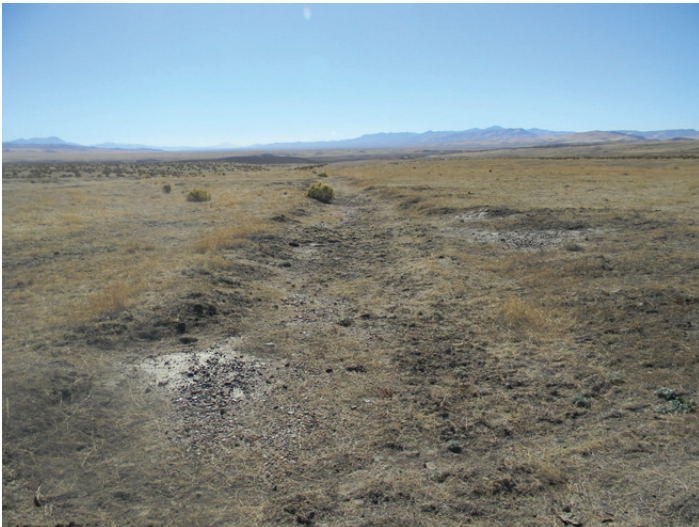
the project boundary, which meant that OCTA would have consulting party status as to the impact to the trail. There are typically two types of impacts, simply put, (1) Direct Effects, physical damage or alteration to the trail or site and (2) Indirect Effects, a change to the viewshed or visual effect. [It should be noted, that while we had a general idea of the location of the Hastings Cutoff, it had not been mapped to OCTA's MET standards, i.e., confirmed location, trail classification and documentation.]



Since The Hastings Cutoff had not been officially mapped, the BLM did a field survey and could find no surface evidence to determine the actual location of the Hastings Cutoff, therefore concluded there would be no Direct Effects, only Indirect Effects. In the course of discussions, the BLM sought mitigation items that would be considered to offset or mitigate the impact from the indirect effects of the open pit mine. On December 12, 2016 I submitted on, behalf of OCTA, a list of mitigation items including the following **Create Conservation Easements or similar protective provisions for emigrant trails on Newmont properties and subsidiary properties; Allow controlled access to emigrant trails and historic sites.**

Newmont had been acquiring property in Nevada for

some time, including the Horseshoe Ranch, now the Elko Land and Livestock Company (ELLCo). Gravelly Ford, an emigrant camping area and crossing of the Humboldt River is on the ranch and some very pristine trail segments on the California Trail are located on ranch property including the 'Unknown Emigrant Graves' site at Gravelly Ford. In 1989 members of OCTA fenced and placed an interpretive sign at the 'Unknown Emigrant Graves' site. Trails West has a Rail Marker at the site.



In a letter dated April 30, 2018, Newmont responded to the proposed Indirect Effects Mitigation for the Long Canyon Mine, Gravelly Ford Conservation Easement.

*ELLCo, the owner and manager of the land at the Gravelly Ford site, part of the Horseshoe Ranch, will establish the Gravelly Ford Conservation Area An area 100 meters in radius around the Gravelly Ford 'Unknown Emigrants Graves' site; An area approximately 100 meters in width, 50 meters on either side of trail centerline. In some areas there are multiple 'trail swales' and in these cases the boundary of the conservation area will be measured from the*

*'outermost trail-related swale.*

*ELLCo will establish a land encumbrance, conservation easement, or similar legal instrument to protect the Gravelly Ford Conservation Area from direct adverse impact.*

**What happened next...** In July 2019, Newmont Mining Corporation and Barrick Gold Corporation entered into a Joint Venture forming a new company, Nevada Gold Mine (NGM). October 28th, 2019 in a meeting with BLM, the consulting parties, including OCTA and The California Trail Heritage Alliance (CTHA) were informed that BLM no longer intends to seek any mitigation for indirect effects resulting from the Long Canyon Mine project. Furthermore, the Department of Interior, issued Instruction Memorandum IM 2019-018, stating in part, *while the BLM will consider voluntary proposals for compensatory mitigation, the BLM is prohibited from requiring offsite compensatory mitigation.* It's quite obvious that Gravelly Ford is offsite, a 100 miles west and not within the project boundary nor the Area of Potential Effect of the Long Canyon Mine Project.

**Next step...** With the BLM stepping back, OCTA along with the CTHA entered into direct discussions with NGM regarding a conservation easement at Gravelly Ford. NGM was familiar with Newmont's proposal and were favorable to continue the process.

**Enter Nevada Land Trust (NLT).** When creating a conservation easement, the land owner conveys a portion of their ownership rights, typically to a nonprofit organization. In this case development rights to the property. NLT is a nonprofit conservation land trust, working to protect key land, water, wildlife, recreation, historic, scenic and agricultural resources in Nevada.

**The Conservation Easement** Grantor, NGM the land owner will grant and convey to the Grantee, NLT, its successors and assigns a perpetual easement for conservation, for the purpose of conserving and forever maintaining the natural, scenic, historical and open-space character of the Property as well as preserving the availability of the Property for agricultural use. The emigrant trail and sites will be preserved and the cattle ranch will continue.

**Virtual Tour** Another feature stemming from the mitigation at the Long Canyon Mine Project was to create a virtual tour of Gravelly Ford from Interstate 80 to the Humboldt River. This amounts to roughly 7 miles of emigrant trails on both public and private land from I-80 to the Humboldt River. The virtual tour will provide information about the trail and will allow



the public to virtually access the trail at any point in time, enabling them to fully experience the trail and its history. In addition to public viewing the video will be available at BLM's California Trail Interpretive Center in Elko, Nevada for perpetual use and archival storage.

NGM contracted with Knowledge Tree Films to produce the virtual tour video. The staff and crew from Knowledge Tree Films were on site October 18-22, 2022 doing the filming and interviews. The project is scheduled for completion in February 2023.

**Epilogue** Although as I prepare this report, the

Gravelly Ford Conservation Easement document resulting from mitigation from the Long Canyon Mine Project has not been signed, but there's optimism. A draft conservation easement document has been prepared. Both NGM and NLT have completed their review and OCTA's comments have been included.

The Long Canyon Mine Project is just one of the many preservation issues that OCTA is dealing with. B2H and the R-Project have long histories as well, as do others. If OCTA is to continue its mission to "*To save the trails*" perseverance is probably the optimum word. *More to come...*

## Getting our act together

By Bill Hill, Gering Convention Committee

Plans for the 2023 July Gering Convention are moving ahead. Each of the three News from the Plains issues before the convention will have an article on one of the three museums or visitor centers that have undergone renovation and added new features since our last convention in the Gering/Scottsbluff area. In this issue the article is on the Scotts Bluff Monument, with Legacy of the Plains Museum in the spring edition and Chimney Rock in the issue prior to the Convention.

The daily activities and time schedules for the convention are now generally set. The committee has settled on the general activities and is now focused on the specific details of the activities and speakers. The topic areas for our speakers have been developed and we are now involved in lining up and contacting possible speakers that fit our topics. More about the specific speakers and other special programs will be announced in the next issue.

Keeping with our theme of "We Do Old in a New Way," the type of daily activities and evening programs are like those in past conventions, but we have changed the order of some of them. Monday will be the meeting day for the Board, and we will still have our two pre-convention auto tours. However, tentative plans have one coming from the west led by Randy Brown. He will bring the brave 4 wheelers from the Guernsey/Fort Laramie area to Gering. This will be on Monday. The other led by Mike Smith, retired head of the Nebraska Historical Society and OCTA Board member, will be on Sunday so he can attend the Monday Board meeting. He will lead an auto tour from the East from the South Platte crossing areas and Ash Hollow to Gering. Both

tours will have a limited number of participants which may also impact the specific sights to be seen. Once registration is opened later in the Spring be sure to sign up quickly.

Monday evening will be our kick-off with our welcome reception at the Scotts Bluff Monument and a special program on William Henry Jackson. Usually, our two speaker program days and two bus tours are held on alternate days. However, as part of our plan to keep costs lower during these times of high and rising prices, Tuesday and Friday will be speaker program days, and Wednesday and Thursday will be two days of back-to-back bus tours. We will thus be able to save some money which would have been entailed if we had the buses on an off day between speaker days. Some alternative activities will be available for those who do not avail themselves of the bus tours. Saturday, our last convention day, we will have a trip west to Hartville to visit the Sunrise Mine and have our "Farewell Barbecue."

Our evening scheduled programs are also a little different. As already noted, Monday we will have our welcome reception, Tuesday we will have a welcome dinner and authors event, Wednesday will be dinner on your own and a "Night at the Movies" featuring new films from both OCTA and Western Writers of America," Thursday we will have a dinner with the silent and live auction. Friday we will have the Awards Banquet. Our Farewell Barbecue will be held late Saturday afternoon at the mine.

Plan ahead! Mark your calendar, OCTA Convention - July 25-29, for next year NOW!

# Meet Our Members

Today we will meet three new OCTA members. They are **Robert Sevacko**, **Terry Brennan**, and **Ron Hill**. Each represents a different area of the country.

**Robert Sevacko** resides in Amherst, Ohio. He considers himself to be a “history buff”, but not an “expert” historian. He enjoys reading about the west. He had recently gone to the local library and came across a copy of the *Overland Journal*. He recalled picking it up and started to page through and began reading. He noted that, “I was fascinated by it.” One thing led to another, he contacted OCTA, and his membership began. His main interest lies in the first half of the 19th century from the Lewis and Clark expedition, the fur trade and Mountain Man era to the early emigrants through the gold rush.

Although he was born and raised and worked in Ohio, he has taken several road trips for business and pleasure out west through the Rocky Mountains. Those trips helped to spur his interests. Now that he is semi-retired he plans to spend more time seeing and exploring more of the trails. He hopes that OCTA can provide him with more of the detailed information about the trails and also opportunities to explore the trails with others. I know that we should be able to help him in these two endeavors. He would like to make contact with other OCTA members, especially those who live “nearby” in western Pennsylvania, Ohio, or Michigan. As he learns more about OCTA and all the things it offers, he plans to spread the word to his personal and business friends who share his interest in the west.

Robert loves woodworking and spent his life involved with millworking. Now that he is semi-retired, he has started his own home-based woodworking business.

**Terry Brennan** and his family live in Maryville, Tennessee. It appears that they have really caught the traveling bug. I think they would have fit right in with the pioneers of years ago. Before his contact with OCTA, Terry and his family have been members of the Airstream Club International. But more than that they have served as leaders for some of the club's travel caravans. Years ago, my own parents had an airstream, and they spent many summers traveling through the US. It takes special people to take on the responsibility of leading a caravan. They have to have the right stuff – knowledge, planning and patience, and OCTA is fortunate to now have them as members. This past summer they co-led a caravan





of 15 airstreams on a five-week journey along the Oregon Trail, from St. Joseph, MO to Oregon City, OR. It was during the planning stage that they came to know OCTA. They wanted to “to learn as much as we could about the history of the Oregon Trail, what life was like for the pioneers on the trail, and what they might experience during our trip.” Members of OCTA got right to work and provided them with lots of materials and advice on what to see including the various landmarks and the noteworthy museums and visitor centers along the trail.

To sum it up Terry wrote, “The caravan was a complete success, everyone on the caravan had an incredible time, and we plan on running the caravan in future years. Throughout the caravan, OCTA has been an indispensable part of our experience, and we are happy to be part of the Association.”

We look forward to years of association and perhaps the introduction of other new members because of this family’s experience of caravanning along the Oregon Trail.

Our third new member is **Ron Hill** of Lincoln, Nebraska. He has been interested in history for many years. This past summer he was attending the Mormon Trail Symposium in Omaha, Nebraska when he came



in contact with OCTA. A number of OCTA members were speaking there about the different aspects of the Mormon Trail experience and also OCTA’s role in helping to preserve all the historic emigrant trails. The attendees were invited to join OCTA. Rob thought it seemed like a good idea, and that it could help him to learn more about some of his ancestors and his family’s experiences when they had crossed the plains. He especially wanted to learn more about the trails in Texas, Nebraska, and Utah. It seemed that some of his ancestors may have been involved in the shipping or freighting business and others as emigrants. He is particularly interested in learning more about the Mormon Trail and also the Donner-Reed story and their trail west. Previously he and his family had followed the entire Mormon Trail from Winter Quarters to Salt Lake City. He hopes that future such trips will be even more interesting and meaningful with the help of OCTA and its resources. He looks forward to learning more now that he is retired. He had been an anesthesiologist, but also enjoys music as a vocalist, and plays the organ, clarinet, and the saxophone. As “empty nesters” he and his wife can enjoy each other’s company as they travel even more. I think they should consider joining a nearby chapter which would provide more fun experiences, more information, and an opportunity to enjoy the California Trail.

Welcome aboard to our Prairie Schooners, and we will see you on the trails.

See you all again in three months so we can all meet more of our members. Happy Trails! *Bill Hill*

## From the Webmaster

By Gina Sifers, Webmaster, Bella Media Services

### Why Create An Account at Octa-trails.org?

By creating a new secure account at octa-trails.org you can purchase products, books, videos, and new memberships. You can also renew your memberships and view your recent store or membership orders, manage your shipping and billing addresses, and edit your password and account details as needed.

All Members need an account to purchase products or renew their OCTA membership subscriptions online and to have the option to activate or deactivate the auto-renewal process. Keep in mind that new memberships will be automatically registered with auto-renewal active upon purchase. All members will have the option to activate or de-activate the auto-renewal option in their account on My Account

> Subscriptions > <View Subscription> page. Auto-renewal makes it easy to renew your membership without entering your account to renew manually.

One thing to remember, check your account periodically to be certain your payment information is up to date to prevent a lapse in your auto-renewal process. Happy shopping and exploring at octa-trails.org this holiday season!

Lastly, if you update your address or email information online it does not automatically update your information in OCTA’s membership program. We plan to update our programs in the future. Please call the office or send an email if you have a change of address or email so that we can update it in our in-house membership program.

# Scotts Bluff National Monument, A Stop Not to Miss

By Dan Morford, Superintendent, Scotts Bluff National Monument

It's hard to imagine visiting Scotts Bluff National Monument today and not being able to drive the Summit Road or learn about its namesake bluff, a landmark on the Emigrant Trails, without checking out the exhibits in the visitor center. However, for the first 16 years of the monument's existence (from 1919 until 1936) that was the case for visitors to Scotts Bluff.

In the early years of Scotts Bluff National Monument, visitors had few recreational options. There were crude foot trails leading to the summit of the bluff and, in 1921, picnic tables were placed at the base of the east side of the bluff. That was it. Citizens in local communities like Scottsbluff and Gering knew that improvements would be needed to boost tourism to the monument and to better explain the importance of the resources contained within it. They lobbied the federal government to make improvements, and by the 1930's their efforts began to pay off.

With the Great Depression putting a hamper on economic activity in the United States, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt promised the American people a "New Deal." Among the various New

Deal projects were jobs programs to offer employment to young men at a time when the unemployment rate

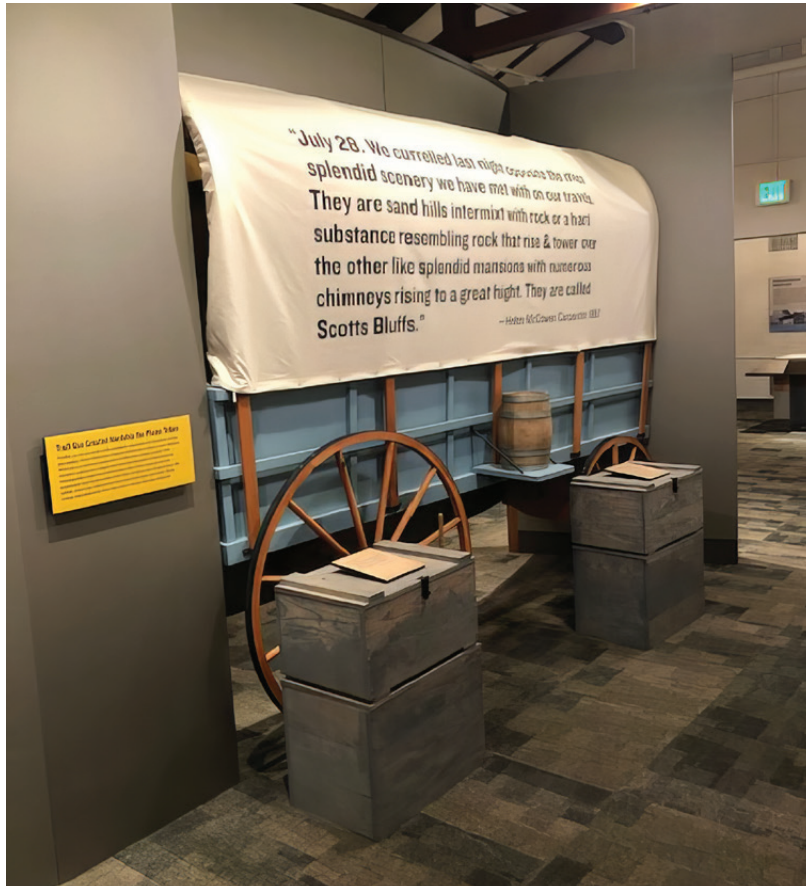
hovered around 25%.

One of these jobs programs, the Civil Works Administration (CWA), started work on the Scotts Bluff Summit Road in 1933 and 1934. Unfortunately, When the CWA reached its funding ceiling work on the Summit Road came to screeching halt.

In May of 1935, another New Deal jobs program picked up where the CWA had left off. The Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC as it is commonly known, resumed work on the Summit Road that year. The enrollees of the CCC also built new monument trails, improved a road leading through the monument (what we today call Old Oregon Trail), and built the first section of the Scotts Bluff Visitor Center.

The first section of the Visitor Center, then called the Oregon Trail Museum, was designed by National Park Service architect Howard Baker. It was built of brick for a cost of approximately

\$9,507. That cost, adjusted for inflation, would be about \$189,000 in today's dollars. A pretty good deal! It was dedicated on July 16, 1936 by pioneer artist William



A Time of Change



Call of the River



Henry Jackson. When it first opened it contained eleven display cases and two dioramas. While the first section of the museum was much appreciated by visitors and the local community, it was evident that more space would be needed to better tell the story of Scotts Bluff. An adobe brick factory was established near the monument's north boundary for construction of an addition to the museum and other needed infrastructure.

Construction of the second room of the visitor center commenced in 1937. The decision to use adobe as a building material, instead of brick, was a function of cost savings. The new section of the visitor center came to be known as the "Paleontology Room" and contained exhibits about the unique paleontological finds that took place in the monument. Besides the Paleontology Room, the distinctive tower on the west side of the visitor center was constructed that year, along with a ranger residence on the other side of the Summit Road.

The visitor center was expanded again in 1949. The American Pioneer Trails Association furnished funds to build the "William Henry Jackson Memorial Wing". Besides donating funds to build the addition, the American Pioneer Trails Association also donated numerous sketches and paintings created by Jackson, and a bronze plaque of Jackson to the monument. Even today, visitors to Scotts Bluff National Monument can admire a portion of the Jackson collection on display in the visitor center.

No more major changes took place at the visitor

center until 1960. That year remodeling work was done on the visitor center to update exhibits as part of the National Park Service's "Mission 66" initiative. Mission 66 was a program to expand visitor services and "modernize"

park facilities in preparation for the National Park Service's 50th anniversary in 1966. Eleven new display cases were built and installed, along with vivid color and light displays.

Many of those same exhibits that were installed as part of the Mission 66 initiative remained in the visitor center through 2018.

Over 50 years of stories emerged about pioneer trail emigration and other topics that were interpreted in these exhibits. They were woefully out of date, and it was clear that new "view" was needed. In addition, the space just didn't suit the needs of a modern visitor center operation. Sales space and the space used for

showing the monument's interpretive film were both shared with exhibit spaces, making for an awkward and cramped-feeling layout.

The idea of taking the old and making it work in our new era was a daunting. But like the emigrants before and the CCC workers of the past, giving up was not an option. Today we enjoy a space that is close to twice as big, the entrance is more appealing and new exhibits tell a variety of stories. As we prepare for 2023, we continue to look for opportunities to tell the old stories in a new way. We invite you to trek our way and learn a part of American history along the Oregon Trail.



Park Ranger at front desk



Scotts Bluff National Monument Visitor Center (new addition, right side)

# News from the Chapters

## COLORADO-CHEROKEE

### Upcoming events:

The next event in the chapter's series of Zoom programs is scheduled for January 14: "Roberts Ranch South Cherokee/Overland Trail: Uncovering the Mystery of the Dutch George Cabin." Ethan Gannett will discuss Cherokee/Overland mapping results at the ranch and the historical/scientific analysis used to determine the cabin's original location and inhabitant. David May will give an update on the Northern Colorado Cherokee Trail Team's project results and goals for 2023.

On February 4 we will meet at History Colorado for a tour of its new exhibit, *The Sand Creek Massacre: The Betrayal that Changed Cheyenne and Arapaho People Forever*. Our tour of the exhibit will be preceded by lunch at a nearby restaurant with Jeff Broome, an Indian war historian and author who is a member of OCTA and the Colorado chapter. His most recent book, *Indian Raids and Massacres: Essays on the Central Plains Indian War*, was published in 2020.

**Mapping Committee update –**  
Ethan Gannett, Chair

**Larimer County/Northern Colorado Cherokee Trail Project** Cherokee Trail mapping in northern Colorado has made good progress in the southern part of Roberts Ranch. The team, having grown to six active members, has now completed a topographical map section and a half of multiple Cherokee/Overland trail spurs crossing the ranch. Most exciting in this endeavor was to identify the original location of a historic cabin on the ranch that was instrumental in the trail spurs' convergence. Through on-the-ground metal detecting sleuthing, dendrochronology analysis and historical document research, the team was able to determine both the original inhabitant of the cabin and the cabin's relevance to the trail history. The field team leaders, Ethan Gannett and David May, will shortly file their

report with the National Park Service after wrapping up some Colorado Department of Transportation historical analysis. The team is now focused on the northern part of Robert's Ranch, mapping Cherokee/Overland trail passage and convergence at the Cherokee Station along with many notable trail artifacts like "Double Team Hill," "The Devil's Washboard" and several period foundation remains.

### Pueblo County Members of OCTA's Colorado

Chapter have spent a considerable amount of time in 2022 analyzing a new first-hand account of the Colorado Gold Rush that was recently discovered. It may hold the answers to some long-standing questions, and aid us in pinpointing a few historic sites in Southern Colorado that have almost been lost to time.

Following the clues Argonaut Daniel Jenks left us in his gold rush journal, we've been trying to map out the mysterious route Jenks took through southern Wyoming in 1859. Daniel told us he traveled on a new road government surveyors had worked on the previous year, and that some of the bridges

they constructed over the streams had been washed out. This information led us to a topographical engineer named Lt. Francis T. Bryan. Bryan was tasked with plotting a new trail from Ft. Riley, Kansas to Bridger's Pass in Wyoming. In 1856/57 Lt. Bryan surveyed the route. In 1858 Bryan's Engineers improved the road and constructed bridges over the most difficult streams. While Jenks' depiction of the route leaves a great deal to interpretation, when combined with Bryan's more detailed description, our ability to calculate Jenks' route more specifically was greatly enhanced. The new road Jenks was describing in 1859 was The Overland Trail. Since The Overland Trail didn't officially open until 1862, Jenks' account could be one of the first ever recorded.

On July 4, 1858 Julia Holmes was traveling with the



Ginny Dissette, Chapter Secretary, presented the chapter's Distinguished Service Award to Bruce Watson, in recognition of his years of service and leadership of the Mapping Committee.



Lawrence Party through Southern Colorado. 15 miles north of Pueblo they came across a “beautiful grove of cottonwoods.” To commemorate the Independence Day holiday they named the place Independence Camp, took the afternoon off and drank the rest of their whiskey. Shortly afterwards Julia Holmes would make history, becoming the first American woman to reach Pikes Peak’s summit.

Almost everyone who came to Colorado on the Santa Fe Trail during the Gold Rush era visited Independence Camp. Like Jimmy Camp, Independence Camp was an important way station for weary

travelers. But unlike Jimmy Camp, the site has never been memorialized. In 2023 OCTA’s Colorado Chapter will be working to identify the exact location of Independence Camp — the first step in the process of getting that long-lost Cherokee Trail campground recognized as an historic landmark.

**OCTA Video project** A committee of the chapter is working with Richard Hunt to identify Colorado trail sites and stories for OCTA’s new video project. Members of the committee are Ethan Gannett, Bruce Watson, Sharon Danhauer, Ken Jessen and Camille Bradford.

*Camille Bradford*

## NORTHWEST

We held a Zoom meeting in October for our Board of Directors and for our members and interested friends. We’ve made plans to hold an in-person meeting for the Chapter in March of 2023. The meeting will be held at the END OF THE TRAIL MUSEUM in Oregon City. We have really missed seeing our members in person, and we hope to have some of our new members attending as well.

Dave Welch prepared a special ZOOM meeting in November to honor the work of Chuck Hornbuckle for the Chapter. The meeting was well attended, and many were amazed at all that Chuck accomplished in the years he spent with OCTA. Chuck’s main interest was in Mapping and Marking the trails in Washington, Oregon and Northern California. He produced a guide to the Cowlitz Trail in Washington and was able to

establish signage along the route as well. We all miss him and his wife Suzanne.

Zoom meetings are planned for November through February of this fiscal year. The February meeting will be “Family Stories of the Oregon Trail’.

Robin Baker has shared his mapping work on the Emigrant Trail through the Blue Mountains. Some new swales have been located and present an interesting picture of the area around Emigrant Springs. It seems that we still have a lot to learn about the Oregon Trail in Oregon itself.

Nine of our members attended the Casper Convention and enjoyed the speakers and tours. We hope to have more attending the Gering, Nebraska Convention in July 2023.

*Sallie Riehl*

## SOUTHERN TRAILS

Over the fall and winter STC has been busy setting up for our Southern Trails Chapter Annual Conference. This will be Tuesday-Thursday January 24-26, 2023, in Tombstone, AZ. It is titled, “2023 Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association Trail Gathering in Tombstone, AZ” sponsored by the Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association (OCTA).

From 8am-5pm Tuesday – Thursday speakers and tours (Opening reception in the historic Schieffelin Hall, 402 East Fremont St, Tombstone); 8-5 Tuesday – Thursday. Onsite registration \$75 (two for \$125). Reservations highly encouraged, and information and signup can be found at, <https://tombstonearizona.thetaleofthetrail.org/>.

This is the yearly meeting of the Southern Trails

Chapter (STC) of OCTA and features presentations and tours that examines the original trails that connected the United States at a time when communication and distance travel were not so easy. Learn about the early inhabitants of the area, and how those trails turned into wagon roads before railroads came through and before highways and Interstates. With speakers, books, maps and adventures, you’ll want to be a part of this educational experience! We invite the general public to join us as we bring together the experts and the novice to learn more about local history.

At the end of the Trail Gathering we will have our annual business meeting and elections and hope many of you will be present and step up to be on the board or help in other roles.

*Mark Howe*

# KANZA

## Alcove Spring Restoration

Work has continued since the tornado to repair the damage and restore the park to its former glory despite the loss of many trees. We are grateful for all the groups and individuals too numerous to list but includes school groups, the Marysville Rotary Club, youth groups and many others.

We have been consulting with Department of Agriculture experts and the District Forester of the Kansas Forest Service. We want to clean up downed and damaged trees in a manner that will leave the park's forest in a much healthier condition. We are applying for grants through these departments to help pay for the clean-up. Much of the work will require specialized equipment and expertise that is expensive.

The latest repair has been to rebuild portions of the small wooden footbridge at the spring. The bridge was built about twenty-five years ago by Darrell Claycamp as one of the first projects. The repair work was done by Robbie Stryker.

## Oregon Trail Trek

Once again, on October 9 the road warriors hit the

trails of Alcove Spring. Everyone was able to enjoy a beautiful day on the recently cleared trails. People were astounded to see the damage of the tornado on the trees of Alcove Spring. Walkers, runners, and bicyclists covered either the 5K or 10 K course experienced the natural beauty of the trails at the park. A one-mile walk was offered that connects the historical parts of the park. Discussions of the sites and history of the park and trails was included. After the event, great snacks and camaraderie was enjoyed by all. It was a great time to get together again with old and new friends. Everyone received a unique, commemorative finisher award. This year it was a slice of a storm damaged cedar tree with the event named wood burned into it to be a token of the great Alcove Spring Tornado.

Special thanks go to race director Pam Schroller, her husband Jeff, and family. They do it all, from registration to marking the trail. They put on a truly unique and special event. We are grateful for our photographer, Tom Parker, who always provides the great photos of the participants.

*Duane Iles*



Photos by Tom Parker and Duane Iles



# GATEWAY

The Gateway Chapter held its Annual Meeting on November 15th. Steve Hofferber was added as a new director. Board members reviewed the year's events and programs. In this year Gateway partnered with the Black Archives Museum to bring the Buffalo Soldiers reenactors from the Missouri Humanities Council to St. Joseph. We partnered with Remington Nature Center for a well-attended historic walk along the River. We partnered with the Doniphan County Historical Society in October for a Fun Day on the Eastern Kansas part of the Trail. (Photos of this outing are included with this article.) We joined in celebrating the Pony Express Anniversary by serving as volunteer interpreters for their exhibit on the Trail. The chapter also sponsored a video on packing a wagon for the Pony Express Museum wagon exhibit. And, we are now prepared to film our first OCTA YouTube video on

Joseph Robidoux.

Also at the Annual Meeting the chapter modified our by laws so as to reflect how our Program Committee functions, and empowers the chapter to add producing videos as part of our functions. Our guest speaker was Jennifer Sanders Tutt, Local History Librarian at the St. Joseph Public Library. Jennifer brought forth characters and settings of St. Joseph at the time of the emigration west.

Looking back, the Chapter has spent most of the year on planning and preparing for the mid-Term Symposium Journey West that will be held in St. Joseph from March 30 to April 2, 2023. We invite all to come and become immersed in the history of the Trail that took place here on the Missouri River town of St. Joseph.

*Dave Berger, submitted by Jackie Lewin*



Wendell Ganstrom spoke of the historic background for the swales that run through his property.

The group hiked along the swale on the Ganstrom property in eastern Kansas.



Gateway also visited the Iowa, Sac and Fox Presbyterian Mission which is now operated by the Iowa Tribe. It will be one of the sites to be visited at the symposium during the Mid-Year Board meeting in St. Joseph.





# IDAHO



IOCTA members on the Jeffreys-Goodale Route traveling across the eastern Idaho desert to Big Butte in the background

The Idaho chapter had a good year overall although it seemed rather disjointed as we had several activities in the spring, and then none for a couple of months through the heat of summer. The OCTA convention in Casper led to more activities with an informal tour across Wyoming, many interesting activities and sites during the convention, and more sites in Wyoming on the way home.

September and October became very busy. I led a caravan tour for the Idaho Heritage Trust Board of Directors which was very interesting, then attended the Idaho's Heritage Conference in Pocatello the next week and led a bus tour of the Oregon Trail west of Fort Hall. Jim Hardee, friend, Idaho chapter member, and noted fur trapper authority, offered to help me on the tour which I quickly accepted. The tour participants were treated to five hours of information and stories as Jim and I talked about the fur trappers and trail travelers in eastern Idaho. Thank you, Jim, for helping make such a memorable tour! The next day I participated in a panel discussion on preserving history on the trails while Jim gave a presentation on early trappers and explorers in Idaho the following day.

A few days later, John Briggs and I went to Pocatello for two days of Jeffreys-Goodale outings. Those outings were very interesting. Thanks again to John and the INL staff for arranging the tour and leading us through the INL.

Finally, our fall chapter meeting was held a few days ago. It proved to be very enjoyable as the potluck lunch led to much more socialization which is an important part of the chapter. A new member and several members who joined this year attended so it was good to get to know them better. After lunch we explored a hillside along Rattlesnake Creek and discovered several possible graves. We will need to bring out the cadaver dogs this next year to check them out.

The Boise Community Education classes will be held again in early March. The annual spring byway tour is tentatively planned for April 15 with the annual trip to City of Rocks tentatively planned for May 11-13.

I hope all of you have a wonderful fall and winter. Please join me on the trails again in the spring.

*Jerry Eichhorst*



# CROSSROADS

Another year is about over. It has been a good year for Crossroads with two successful field trips. As of this writing, however, membership meetings have not resumed. Hopefully, 2023. Our new president, Matt Ivory, was finally able to join us on a recent field trip after a year or two of health problems.

The first of the two field trips was in July to visit the Hastings Route to Donner Springs in Tooele County. This was led by Steve Allison. We had about 18 people join us on a very hot day to visit our site at Donner Springs. It had been years since we'd been out there because the ranch on which it is located has been

closed. But we were able to get permission and a key to the gate. The spring is still running. The kiosks and the rail fence are still intact but show signs of neglect. It was good to be out there and see the site. We also visited Hall Spring that day and were able to take a trip around Silver Island.

This fall we had a second field trip to explore the Central Overland Trail and the Pony Express Trail. This was led by Jesse Petersen and Steve Allison.

We left from Camp Floyd and continued west to Ibapah which is an isolated community in western Utah. Descriptions along the way were led by Jesse Petersen and a guest lecturer, Ronald Bateman, as well as Steve Allison. Ron Bateman is the author of a book on Wendover and the Deep Creek mountains

in western Utah. The trip ended at Ibapah, and most participants went home through Wendover. It was a long day for sure. The focus of the trip was the Central Overland Trail and the Pony Express Trail and the interesting history of Ibapah. There was one unfortunate incident where two vehicles collided due



July, 2022, OCTA trip, Silver Island, 105 degrees

to "flour" dust on the road. However, there were no injuries and both vehicles were able to leave on their own, thanks to Victor Heath.

Matt Ivory was able to join us on this trip. We are happy that he is able to be with us again.

We were saddened by the passing of our friend Gar Elision. We also regret to hear that Connie Bauer lost her husband Dave Bauer.

*Stay tuned until next time. Anton Oscar Olson.*

## OCTA Chapter Presidents

### **CA-NV - Dick Waugh**

31 La Crescenta Dr., Oroville CA 95965  
camalobo@comcast.net

### **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  
sallieriehl@comcast.net

### **Southern Trails – Mark Howe**

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

### **Trails Head - Jean Coupal-Smith**

5410 Ash Drive  
Roeland Park KS 66205  
jcs1fun1@kc.rr.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

# Welcome New Ezra Meeker Life Members

Robert Clark • Ken Jutzi

## Welcome New Members

Michele Ament  
Pittsburgh, PA

Coreen Arioto  
Fresno, PA

Mike Bardgett  
Casper, WY

Carol Bly  
Folsom, CA

Thomas Chapel  
Estes Park, CO

Todd Crickmer  
Austin, TX

Dave Drabek  
Star, ID

Lisa Frugoli  
Santa Rosa, CA

Carolyn Gilson  
Terre Haute, IN

Karen Johnson  
Chehalis, WA

Christopher Shaw Jones  
Lake Forest, CA

Ankur Kansal  
Pleasanton, CA

Jeff Kelso  
Hermiston, OR

Jane Kettler  
Sheboygan, WI

Karyl Kolb  
Joseph, OR

Brad Kosch  
Carson City, NV

Susan Meyer  
Okatie, SC

Mark Mulvihill  
Pendleton, OR

Patricia Packard  
Reno, NV

Steven Pede  
Tucson, AZ

Bridget Roberts  
Beaverton, OR

Skyler Rude  
Walla Walla, WA

Laura Smith  
Oroville, CA

Calvin Thompson  
Big Piney, WY

William M Traubert  
Wellsburg, WV

Kathleen Vinci  
Mountain Home, ID

Randy White  
North Hollywood, CA

Ray Wicks  
Los Angeles, CA

Keegan Wilcox  
Studio City, CA

## Board of Director Nominations are Open

Nominations are being accepted through **March 15, 2023** for election to OCTA's National Board of Directors. Directors serve for three-year terms and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Members of the Board are responsible for setting policies and priorities for the organization and electing officers. They also serve as important liaisons with OCTA chapters. The terms of Board members Pat Fletcher and Chuck Milliken will expire in 2023. This is Pat Fletcher's first term and she is eligible to run again. **Chuck Milliken has served two three-year terms is not eligible to run again.** Thus, there are two Board positions will open.

Directors are expected to attend two board meetings annually, one of which is held in conjunction with the OCTA Annual Convention. The second, Mid-

Year meeting, usually in late winter or early spring, is held in rotating locations.

In order to be a candidate for the Board of Directors all that is required is being an OCTA member in good standing, a short statement of qualifications and experience, a photograph and the endorsement of three members of OCTA. Candidacy papers should be sent to the Nominating and Leadership Committee Chair Lee Black at [nobletr1857@gmail.com](mailto:nobletr1857@gmail.com) or mailed to Lee Black, PO Box 92225, Albuquerque, NM 87199. For more information about the election process or responsibilities you may also contact other members of the Nomination and Leadership Committee. Pat Traffas at [traffasp@gmail.com](mailto:traffasp@gmail.com) or Roger Blair at [rblair@oregontrail.net](mailto:rblair@oregontrail.net). Additional information may also be found in the Members area of the OCTA website.



## **Treasurer's Report Year end financial statements and budget comparisons**

I believe our actual financial resources and results of operation are better than what we thought at our last time we were together at our Annual meeting in Casper at the end of August, 2022. First we need to acknowledge all the work a OCTA volunteer our Assistant Treasurer, Turner Rivenbark does especially at year end to make sure these statements are correct and accurate.

Our projection at 7/31/22 was based on Turner's \$20,000 estimated net profit from the Casper Annual meeting and our actual net profit was \$31,463. Our actual Net Loss Operations from 9/30/22 was \$12,153 when you eliminate a one time expense of \$20,834 for the Feasibility Report done in the first quarter of this year, 10/1 to 12/31/21, that was paid for from funds transferred from investments last year before year end, 9/30/21. I think these were excellent financial results when you consider that this year we were starting to be fully back from COVID, with being able to have both an in-person Symposium and Annual meeting, being able to travel more again and dealing with more in-person gatherings/committee meetings again.

Our national cash accounts during the year decreased by \$25,318 due to our operating loss during the year which was less than what I was projecting of \$3000/month that I was using in my illustrations at our Casper annual meeting when we were experiencing losses each month (12 months times \$3000/month decrease in cash which projects to a \$36,000 decrease in cash for entire year). We did not need to transfer any cash to National from our investment accounts during the year. In fact we transferred from National cash accounts to our OCTA investment accounts \$5,910 partially with some proceeds from Life Memberships and other contributions received by OCTA National for our investment accounts. In fact we may not have to request a distribution from our investment accounts if we can continue to keep our losses to not more than \$1,000 plus/month for this year as our cash balance in our National unrestricted operating

account had a balance at 9/30/22 of \$33,931. My hope is we will continue to receive at least the support from our members we budgeted for this year, 9/30/23 for each one of our fundraising appeals we do each year, which is \$30,000 right now for our annual fundraising appeal for operations and next summer \$19,000 for our mid year fundraising appeal.

We improved our financial reporting of chapters income and expenses for the year of 9/30/22. In addition Turner summarized this reporting rather than one of our outside accountants doing this for us, as has been done for a number of years.

We are in the discussion right now on how to improve our year end reports for OCTA to have a 'gold standard "annual report" for nonprofits' which could be an internal unaudited financial statement with notes about OCTA accounting policies and proper disclosures relating to our assets and liabilities in accordance with non profit standards. OCTA has not had this kind of financial statements reporting for decades because of the cost of having an outside accountant preparing this report for us. I am proposing I draft this type of report for free as a volunteer using Turner's financial statements and year end analysis with support from Jerry Mack and company as to making sure we are following the proper nonprofit standards and will also need some clerical help. This is our next step towards having better and improved financial information as OCTA moves towards our Journey of a Lifetime goal of having an in-house part time controller.

You need to read closely the additional comments from Dave Welch about our Investment Changes - Endowment Funds that OCTA has experienced in the last two fiscal years of 9/30/21 & 9/30/22. This is nothing alarming or different from what many others are experiencing but the dollar amounts are very significant for OCTA. (See below for Dave's comments)

*Report from your Treasurer Jerry Mogg on 12/10/22.*

### **Note from the Chair of the Investment Advisory Committee**

I hope you have had a chance to look at the financial reports included in this edition of News from the Plains. If so, you may have noticed a rather large gain on the investments in FY2021 followed by a substantial loss in 2022. These variations occurred with essentially the same investments; no major change in holdings or allocations were made. Our investment perspective is long-range which means we do not react to short-term changes. It is now evident that the FY2021 return was the result of a "bubble" which was corrected in FY2022.

A bubble is an economic cycle that is characterized by the rapid escalation of market value, particularly in the price of assets. This fast inflation is followed by a quick decrease in value, or a contraction.

After consideration of the unrealistic increase and the correction, we are on course for continued long term gains. As of December 2, the balance has increased to \$1,889,000 or a recovery of about two-thirds of the decline from the FY2021 valuation.

*Dave Welch*

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

SEPTEMBER 30, 2022 AND 2021

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
<b><u>Assets</u></b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents:		
National	\$ 90,313	\$ 115,631
Chapters	<u>141,967</u>	<u>155,551</u>
	232,280	271,182
Accounts Receivable	2,030	1,771
Prepaid Expense	-	350
Inventory (at cost)	20,819	23,642
Investments (Endowment Funds)	1,672,562	1,990,214
Property and Equipment - Net of Accumulated Depreciation	<u>1,185</u>	<u>1,185</u>
Total Assets	<u><u>\$ 1,928,876</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 2,288,344</u></u>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>		
Accounts Payable	\$ 19,005	\$ 29,864
Deferred Revenue	<u>41,387</u>	<u>27,963</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>60,392</u>	<u>57,827</u>
<b><u>Net Assets</u></b>		
National:		
Without Donor Restrictions	746,055	928,331
With Donor Restrictions	<u>980,462</u>	<u>1,146,635</u>
	1,726,517	2,074,966
Chapters	<u>141,967</u>	<u>155,551</u>
Total Net assets	<u>1,868,484</u>	<u>2,230,517</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u><u>\$ 1,928,876</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 2,288,344</u></u>



OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEARS ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2022 AND 2021

	<u>2022</u>		<u>2021</u>
<b>National Operating Revenues:</b>			
National Park Service	\$ 161,057		\$ 155,993
Membership Dues	69,595		70,217
Life Memberships	4,250	A	6,750
Convention and Symposium	74,517		81,703
Contributions and Grants	74,490		104,719
Endowment Fund Contributions	1,035	A	5,600
Memorial Contributions	625	A	75
Book and Mdse. Sales	15,478		13,271
Other	4,387		5,716
Less Income Designated for Endowments	<u>(5,910)</u>	B	<u>(12,425)</u>
Total National Operating Revenues	<u>399,524</u>		<u>431,619</u>
 <b>National Operating Expenses:</b>			
Expenses Paid from Specific Contributions and Grants	32,276		25,508
Board Meetings and Officers Expenses	5,532		1,112
Administration and Management	230,604		243,587
Publications	50,716		45,648
Convention and Symposium	40,478		68,775
Feasibility Study	20,834		-
Cost of Books and Mdse. Sold	7,794		4,665
Committees (Preservation, etc.) and Other Expenses	<u>44,277</u>		<u>24,499</u>
Total National Operating Expenses	<u>432,511</u>		<u>413,794</u>
 <b>Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets from Operations - National</b>	<u>(32,987)</u>		<u>17,825</u>
 <b>Other Income and Expenses:</b>			
Chapters Income	29,240		49,654
Chapters Expenses	<u>42,824</u>		<u>38,125</u>
Net	(13,584)		11,529
Investment changes - Endowment Funds	(321,372)		417,203
Income Designated for Endowment Funds	<u>5,910</u>	B	<u>12,425</u>
Total Other Income	<u>(329,046)</u>		<u>441,157</u>
 <b>Total Increase In Net Assets</b>	<u>(362,033)</u>		<u>458,982</u>

A: These three items make up the amounts designated for endowment funds. \$5,910 in 2022 and \$12,425 in 2021

B: These are offsetting amounts

# 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:

Della Bauer	Martin Griffith	Spencer Paul
Catherine Blair-Green	Bernadette Hammelman	Louis Ritten
and Jim Green	Glenn and Carol Harrison	Ross Rogers
John and Nancy Briggs	Ken Jutzi	Jay Skiles
Linda and Craig Corwin	Dr. and Mrs. Howard Lamar	Phyllis Smith
Duane and Beth Fager	Virginia Nelson	Michael Thoma
Tom Fee	Frank Norris	Dave and Wendy Welch

## Founding Members

When OCTA was founded in 1983, a group of men and women who believed in the mission and in the importance of trails preservation decided to join this brand new organization. Anyone who joined during that first year became a charter member, the rocks upon which OCTA was built. The last time we recognized them in these pages, the list had 136 names. Today's list is down to 55 names. If you see a charter member, thank them on behalf of OCTA.

Ruth Anderson	Marshall A. Fey	Lute Family Foundation	Randolph W. Seed
Todd & Betty Berens	Michael D. Gibson	Michael Luther	Art Siverling
Jo Ann Berkenbush	Chris Hammond	Anne Mallinson	John E. Stadler
Roger P. Blair, M.D.	Joanne Hammond	Sharon & Hal Manhart	Leona Stovall
Joyce P. Bolerjack ( <i>Deceased</i> )	Norma Haner	Ross & Shirley Marshall	Fran Taplin
Randy Brown	Patrick A. Hearty	Mary Ellen Martin	Frank & Mary Ann Tortorich
Don ( <i>Deceased</i> ) & Vilma Buck	William & Jan Hill	Kendall McNabney ( <i>Deceased</i> )	Ann M. Van Hoff
James ( <i>Deceased</i> ) & Judy Budde	Jim & Alma Holcomb	Steve Moore	Ron Volk
Jude A. Carino	Thomas Hunt	Mary Mueller	Pennie Lynn Von Achen
Robert Clark	James & Margaret Jenks	Mary Olch	Theodore F. Votow
Laurie Davis	Larry & Pat Jones	Oregon Trail Museum Assoc	Edgar & Caroline Weber
Dr. & Mrs. Ronald O. Downs	Milton A. Jones	Betty J. Pfaff	Sandra & Allen ( <i>Deceased</i> )
Dorothy Duffin	Polly N. Kennison	Mrs. E. W. Puckett	Wiechert
	John & Terry Latschar	Raymond E. Schoch	Herman Zittel

## 2021-2022 OCTA Officers

<b>John Briggs, President</b> Boise, ID • johnxbriggs@msn.com	<b>Lee Black, Past President</b> Albuquerque, NM • leebblack1@hotmail.com	<b>Jerry Mogg, Treasurer</b> St. Joseph, MO • Jerry.mogg@gmail.com
<b>Steve Allison, Vice President</b> South Jordan, UT • sallison9999@gmail.com	<b>Jo Johnston, Secretary</b> Klamath Falls, OR • jojstn@gmail.com	<b>John Winner, Preservation Officer</b> Placerville, CA • swinner@dataentree.com

## 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](mailto:ETHoF1846@gmail.com)



# REMEMBRANCES

## Don Buck

OCTA HQ received word that Don Buck passed recently at age 95. He died peacefully at his home in Sunnyvale, California on September 13, 2022. His wife Vilma and three adult children were with him that day.

Don was a 1982 OCTA Charter member and Emigrant Trail researcher. He was known for his on-the-ground discoveries and mapping, his diary collection, and research on the western emigrant trails.

Born in San Diego, California, September 3, 1927, he graduated from the California Maritime Academy and served with the Merchant Marines. Don graduated from U.C. Berkley with a master's degree in European History. He was a professor of history at De Anza College and retired after 30 years.

He was an active member of OCTA, the California-Nevada Chapter, and Trail West Inc., leading many trail mapping outings. Over time he accumulated a large collection of trail research material, including maps, emigrant diaries, books, an extensive library.

Don and his wife Vilma recently celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary.

He was Chairman of the History Dept at De Anza College in Cupertino, California, mapped the California National Historic Trail for the National Park Service and worked with both the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service on historic trail preservation. He also served on the Board of Directors of both OCTA and Trails West, Inc.

In OCTA, he was active in organizing the long-range goal of computerizing overland emigrant documents. He was a leader of the Black Rock Expedition of 1986 and proposed the idea of the OCTA Rendezvous and led the first one to the Mojave Desert in 1988.

Awards:

- 1991: Meritorious Award; Certificate of Achievement; MJM OJ Article
- 2010: Dave Welch Preservation Award
- 2019: Merrill J Mattes Award (Publication Award)

Roles in the national organization:

- 1987-88 National Secretary
- 1988 Chair of Finance Committee; Director two terms 1985-1988 and 1988-1991
- Listed in the 1990-91 Policy and Procedures Manual as COED Advisory Board Member and Convention Chair Member

He was the second Publications Chair for OCTA, one of the Editors of the Howell Diary, and wrote articles

for the Overland Journal Development of Emigrant Trail Research in the Post-Weddell Era in the Truckee-Donner Pass Region of California as well as Looking West Trail Classifications by David J. Welch and Don Buck, annotated several articles in the Overland Journal and reviewed books.

Don Buck guided the MET Manual, as editor and principal contributor, through several revisions and expansions (1994, 1996, & 2002). At the chapter level he served as Trail Guide especially Southwest trails. He also authored guides for Trails West, Inc.

Memorials can be made through the OCTA website.

## Pinky Ellis

From OCTA Wyoming chapter President Tom Rea: We were saddened recently to learn of the death of Frank "Pinky" Ellis of Casper. Pinky, a longtime sheep rancher whose parents arrived from Ireland in Casper not long before he was born in 1929, Pinky served several terms on OCTA's national board and was recognized just last August as a founder of the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper at the center's 20th anniversary celebrations.

We remember with pleasure Pinky's wit, kindness and many stories told always with an Irish smile. Also his wide knowledge of the trails and the West—and his understanding of how to get things done. Pinky trailed sheep and, later, cattle 80 miles to the mountains and back every summer from the time he was 15 to the early 2000s. Besides running the Ellis Sheep Company with his mother, brother and, later, his son for four and a half decades, he served as a Natrona County commissioner and Casper city councilman, on the boards of the Natrona County airport, the public library and gave his time for 25 years to the Casper Mountain Ski Patrol.

Pinky died October 26. When we phoned Jackie, his wife of 67 years, the next day she said, "Oh, don't be sad or sorry, Pink led a great life." She added that, on the day he died, Hospice was there, the priest was there, all three of their children and lots of other family were on hand.

Always willing to share his voluminous knowledge of history, according to his obit in the Casper Star-Tribune, he became the go-to-guy when local history questions arose. Authors and experts called for stories and fact checking. Visitors from Ireland toured Wyoming homesteads guided by Pinky telling stories of their Wyoming relatives. "Tales of Old Tymers" was a favorite presentation with Pinky and two of his cohorts

regaling audiences with yarns—some true and some not-so --of old ranch and town characters.

Pinky, we'll see you on the trails.

## Burr Edwin 'Doc' Fancher



Burr Edwin Fancher, 95, of Albany, Oregon, passed away peacefully on October 29, 2022. He was born in Loy, Arkansas to parents Grover and Tilda Fancher and grew up on his family's farm on Kings River.

Burr was a life-long learner and fervent believer in both education and

life experience. His educational pursuits spanned graduating from a tiny high school in Kingston Arkansas in the class of six to a Ph.D. at Oregon State University. His life and work experience were just as varied ranging from all manner of labor on farms and ranches in at least a half dozen states to education expert with an international consulting practice. Along the way, he enlisted in the Army in the Spring of 1945 and served in both Pacific and European Theaters.

On November 3, 1949, Burr married Melva Jean Beckford and they had four children, Terrie, Mike, Connie and Scott (deceased). They spent their early years in Arkansas where they spent much of their time with two large extended families. Burr's family lived in a remote rural area in Madison County and Melva's family lived some 50 miles away in the unique Italian community of Tonitown. In 1958, Burr and his young family left Arkansas and moved to Willamette Valley.

Burr loved hunting, fishing, being outdoors with his family and pet donkeys, and gardening. He always had a very curious nature and loved traveling and seeing what was over the next hill. In addition to hiking and hunting every corner of Oregon's outback and wilderness areas, he was able to visit nearly every state, dozens of countries, and every continent but for Antarctica. Burr was an avid student of western history and was the organizer and leader of the Mountain Meadows Monument Foundation which obtained National Monument designation for the Southern Utah site of the 1857 massacre of the Fancher Wagon Train.

Burr had a great sense of irony and folksy humor

with a delivery style that fell somewhere between Will Rodgers and Mark Twain. He loved visiting with family and friends and telling, hearing, and writing about stories and folklore from his life experiences.

Besides being a very tall man physically, Burr was a larger-than-life spirit and a person of uncommon decency.

He was truly a gentle giant and only became gentler as he aged. Over the course of his long life, he left a lasting imprint on his large family and many, many friends, colleagues and students.

On April 29, 1978, Burr married Ada Packard Lofts, his professional and life partner. They settled into their Albany home for 45 years where they hosted countless gatherings of friends and family. Burr and Ada worked, lived and traveled extensively together and built a beautiful and bountiful garden from which they harvested, canned, froze and dried prolific amounts of fruits and vegetables. Burr also became an accomplished maker of fruit wines and lemon zest which he shared generously with family and friends. Ada's children Karen, Scott (deceased), David and Cynthia and their children spent a lot of time with Burr and were a big part of his life. Burr is predeceased by Ada, his youngest son, Scott, his first wife, Melva and Ada's son, Scott. Burr is survived by his children Terrie McQuistan, Mike Fancher and Connie Wahl; Ada's children Karen Jarboe, David Lofts and Cynthia Lofts; a host of grandchildren and great grandchildren, and his beloved donkeys, Fritz and Hans. The burial service for Burr will be held on Wednesday, November 9, at 12:30 p.m. at the Willamette National Cemetery in Portland. In lieu of sending flowers, the family requests that people make donations to their favorite charity in support of cancer research or treatment.



## Dick Silva

Richard Silva was born July 15, 1930 at the Orr Ranch in Yreka and passed away on September 8 at the age of 92. He attended school in Grenada and Yreka and graduated from Yreka High School.

Richard married Orsola Salanti in 1952 and they were married for 71 years. They have two children, Patricia Salles (Jerry) and David Silva and three grandsons: Eric Fields, Jon Fields (Jennifer), David Silva



(Samantha). They have many great grandchildren: Tyler (Angela), Jimmy, Cole (Janie), Archer, Jonas, Cohen, Wayden, Siobhan and Brynlee.

Richard was preceded in death by his mother, Bertille Mathews Silva, his sister Patricia, his father, George Henry Silva, and daughter-in-law, Beth Silva.

Richard and Orsola started and managed Silva General Contractors and Silva Building and Development Inc. They developed land, residential and commercial developments and left a mark in Yreka and Siskiyou County. Richard and Orsola were presented the Citizens of the Year in 2003 for their community involvement.

After retirement Richard joined his love of the outdoors with photography and started a new business, Wilderness Photography. His photos won several awards and his spotted owl photo was presented to President Bush and was displayed in the White House. Richard was the official photographer for an archaeological project in Peru. Richard's award-winning photographs were selected for the covers of the 1981 and 1982 California State Hunting Regulations.

Richard was a competitive marksman and successfully competed in national competitions. He loved his dogs and to hunt, fish, travel, water ski and guide hunting trips in Montana and served in the California National Guard.

Richard's love of the outdoors, history and writing led him to become an expert in local history, mapping and trail research. He was a regular presenter at local, state and federal historical meetings. Richard wrote many books and articles researching and mapping immigrant trails throughout Utah, Nevada, Oregon and Northern California. Richard's and Orsola's research is sought after by governmental agencies and historians. Along with Orsola he set a standard for trail mapping that was adopted by OCTA and many State and Federal agencies striving for historic trails preservation and protection. They received many awards for their research and publications including the OCTA Lifetime Achievement Award and the State Of Jefferson Award For Outstanding Research. Richard enjoyed a wide network of friends met during historical projects.

Richard also worked with Native Americans to preserve their history. When traveling the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming with Orsola, they came across a monument for Sacagawea.

## Roy Souder

Roy Souder passed away of natural causes on October 5th at Logan Medical Hospital in Kalispell, Montana. He was born in Bridgeton, New Jersey in October of 1932. He was an active Boy Scout, taking frequent trips with his troop to hike and camp in the Appalachians.

Roy entered Rutgers University and joined the Kappa Sigma Fraternity. After graduating with a B.S. in Geology, Roy participated in a project that had a profound effect on the rest of his life. He accompanied a group of Princeton geology professors to a summer research camp in Yellowstone National Park. This trip was the beginning of Roy's life-long love of the Western landscape and history.

Roy then entered jet pilot training in the Air Force and was stationed on the Montana/Canada border. When he wasn't working or flying, he could be found camping and hiking in Glacier National Park. When his Air Force years ended, Roy went to Great Falls and joined the Montana National Guard where he met, and married second-grade teacher, Nancy Greely. They had two daughters, with whom he shared his love of nature, often camping, skiing, hiking, and rock hunting.

With their kids entering school, Roy and Nancy decided it was time to settle down, so after a short time in Great Falls, they moved to Salt Lake City.

By now Roy had formed a construction business with business partners and was working on a number of projects in the greater Salt Lake area and Park City. Roy was elected the President of the Utah State Homebuilders Association and served on the state and national Board of Directors. During his tenure he received a national award for his work to develop cooperation between local state and regional agencies involved in housing development regulation.

After a long career in the building industry, Roy joined CDC, Inc. and engineered ground-breaking technology aiding the government to safely destroy toxic substances in holding sites across the nation.

During this time, Roy found time to serve on the Board of the Salt Lake Art Center, including a stint as the Center's Board President. He was a Mason and a Shriner and an active member of the Utah Westerners—serving on the board and serving a term as President. He was an Honorary Colonel in the Utah National Guard.

In 2006, Roy and Nancy decided to retire to the Flathead Valley to relax and enjoy the beauty of Montana where their journey began. They were married for over 60 years. Roy is survived by his wife, Nancy, and his daughters, Kendra Souder (Veronica Sanchez) and Jamie Souder (Barbara Schelling).

# A note on IRA accounts 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 straightforward. If you are 70 1/2 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 I 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 nonprofit, 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*

## What Is Your Greatest Talent?

Each of us has at least one skill that we truly enjoy exercising. OCTA Leadership is seeking to identify those with skills that would benefit the furtherance of the OCTA mission.

We have 26 Standing Committees. If you are not currently serving on the national level this is your opportunity. There will be a place for you. Please consider where you could best help.

For a listing of Committees go to the OCTA website, [octa-trails.org](http://octa-trails.org). Under the Members tab select **OCTA Leadership**

**Manual, Strategic Plan & Organization Chart**, then select **Leadership Manual March 2018**. You will find Committee descriptions beginning on page 60. Special needs currently include Audit, Collections/Libraries, Education Outreach, Fundraising, History & Archives, Marketing and Membership Committees.

Please contact Lee Black at

**[leeblack1@hotmail.com](mailto:leeblack1@hotmail.com)**

with questions or to share your interest in helping OCTA further our mission. Thank you for sharing your talent. We need you!



# 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 ( <i>Deceased</i> )	Mrs. Kay Forsythe	Raymond Kanter	Mortimer Paulus
Ivan Baker	Kathy Colyer Franzwa	M. F. Kiber	Betty J. Pfaff
Dr Thomas R. Bales	( <i>Deceased</i> )	James King	Mrs. E. W. Puckett
Jacqueline Ball	Amanda Gibbs	Ormie Lamson ( <i>Deceased</i> )	Carlyle Jones Raine
Wayne G. Basler	Frank Gifford	Brian Larson	Donald & Dee Reinhold
Nick F. Behrens	Mrs. Billie Gray	Eric Lauha	Jack Root ( <i>Deceased</i> )
Lee & Sandi Black	Jay Greene	Ross M. Leibold	Bill Rupp
Andrea Blair	Randell & Mary Jane Guyer	William & Cynthia Leutzinger	Fred Sawin
Roger P. Blair, M.D.	Chris Hammond	Brenda Lozier	Ben S. Scherbel
Camille Q. Bradford	Helen Hankins	Al Lustig	Warren Schmidgall
John & Nancy Briggs	Koichiro Harada	Lute Family Foundation	David & Kay Scott
James ( <i>Deceased</i> ) & Judy	Glenn & Carol Harrison	Dr. Eugene I. Majerowicz	Randolph W. Seed
Budde	Mark Headley	Ross & Shirley Marshall	Donald L. Siebert
Marvin Burke ( <i>Deceased</i> )	Warren R. Higgins	Bill & Diana Martin	Calli Smith
Dr. & Mrs. B. R. Cahill	William & Jan Hill	Helen Martin	Judith Space
Cheryl Cardoza	Elaine & Eugene Hill	Carolyn & Gordon McGregor	Leslie Joan Steuben
Thomas Cardoza	Cheryl & Gilbert Hoffman	Kendall McNabney ( <i>Deceased</i> )	Michael Strodtman
Lisa Carle	Chuck Hornbuckle ( <i>Deceased</i> )	John & Jacque McVey	William (Billy) Symms
Robert Clark	Mark Howe	Dan Miller	( <i>Deceased</i> )
Kay, Milt & Rylene Coffman	Thomas Hunt	Phil Miller	Kathryn Tanner
Laura Luack Cole	Idaho State Archives	Margaret Morkowski	David & Sharon Taylor
Mary Conrad	Duane & Carolyn Iles	Candy & Steve Moulton	Kay Threlkeld
James & Kathy Conway	J. C. Isble	Mary Mueller	Frank & Mary Ann Tortorich
Dr. Vincent Correll	George H. Isted	Paul Murphy	Patricia & Levi Traffas
Laurie Davis	Robert A. Iverson	Joe Nardone ( <i>Deceased</i> )	William L. Trogon
Douglas Co. Libraries:	Jan & Sets Iwashita	Dick & Ruby Nelson	Dave & Karen Vixie
Shaun Boyd	Neal Johns ( <i>Deceased</i> )	Dave & Donna Newberry	Pennie Lynn Von Achen
Susan B Doyle	Rollie & Paula Johnson	James Nici	Wanosik Family
Brian L Dukleth	Ken Jutzi	Bob Noll	Sandra Wiechert
Keith Fessenden	Beatrice Kabler ( <i>Deceased</i> )	Stanley W. Paher	John & Susie Winner
Jack & Pat K. A. Fletcher	Janet Kanter	M. Lethene Parks	
Phillip L. Foremaster			

## 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:

### Blue Mountain Diagnostic Imaging

1100 Southgate, Suite 700, Pendleton, OR (541) 276-2431

### Jim Blau Insurance Agency

2661 Hub Drive, Independence, MO (816) 833-1595

### Bite Me Barbecue

1405 Center St., Marysville KS 66508 785-619-6110

### Surveyor Scherbel, Ltd.

PO Box 96, Big Piney, WY (307) 276-3347

### Lew Printing

227-B East College St. Independence, MO (816) 836-0219

### Mallinson Vineyard and Hall

3029 N River Blvd., Sugar Creek, MO (816) 896-5744

## 2022-2023 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

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

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

**Michael Smith**, Overland Park, KS  
Michaeljohnsmith4@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

Published quarterly by the  
**Oregon-California Trails Association**  
(A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit)  
P.O. Box 1019, Independence MO 64051  
Phone: (816) 252-2276 • Fax: (816) 836-0989  
Email: [octa@indepmo.org](mailto:octa@indepmo.org)

**Jay Lawrence, Editor**  
530 Ohio Avenue, Long Beach CA 90814  
Phone: (562) 760-1999  
**Spring 2023 Issue Deadline: February 25, 2023**  
Send materials to: [jaylawrenceocta@gmail.com](mailto:jaylawrenceocta@gmail.com)



# Visit OCTA on the Internet

[OCTA-trails.org](http://OCTA-trails.org)

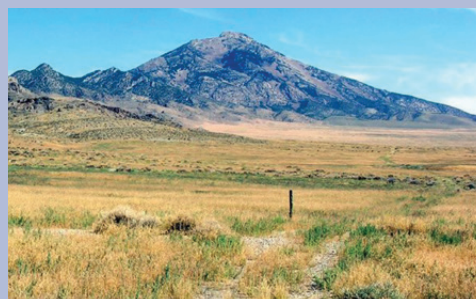
[OCTA-Journals.org](http://OCTA-Journals.org)

Report OCTA  
Volunteer Hours at  
[octa-journals.org/  
octa-volunteer](http://octa-journals.org/octa-volunteer)

## 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](http://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/](http://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

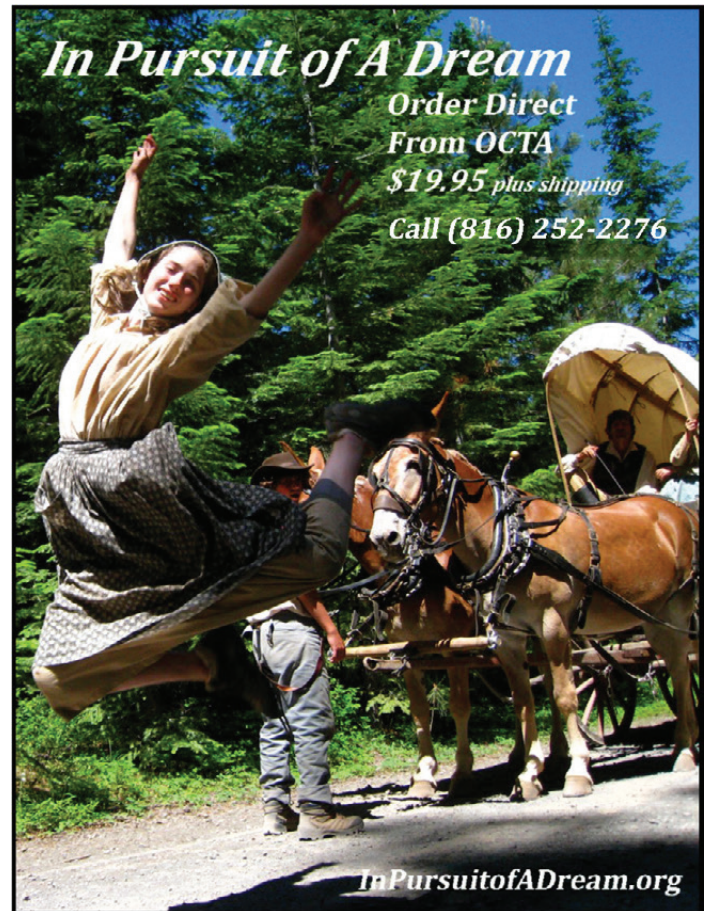
### In this issue:

Preservation Efforts Progress

OCTA Brand Growth • Journey of a Lifetime

Scotts Bluff Monument • 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
- Children's programs and activities
- A robust research library
- A gift store with the region's largest selection of trails books and merchandise

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

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