

Trail Talk

The Newsletter of the California-Nevada Chapter

Number 79

June 2008

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

CA-NV SPRING SYMPOSIUM AND MID-YEAR NATIONAL BOARD MEETINGS JOIN IN SACRAMENTO

Mary Ann Tortorich

To those who missed these meetings March 7-9, you missed a great time. The weather in Sacramento was “show-off California” at its best, and all of the meetings and events went very well.

The National Mid-Year Board meetings reported on many projects completed, with some in progress and others still in the planning stages. One particular item of interest is the planning of the 2009 Spring Symposium, to be held in Yuma, Arizona. It has grown from the Southwest Chapter hosting with the CA-NV Chapter supporting, and OCTA working together with several partnering historical organizations. January 16-18, 2009 is the proposed date. There is talk of National holding their mid-year board meetings in Yuma just prior to the symposium.

The CA-NV chapter announced a new schedule of deadlines and production dates for issues of the newsletter *Trail Talk*. The *Trail Talk* staff and the new Editorial Board have agreed to run three issues of sixteen pages each instead of four issues a year. The new deadlines for submitting articles are May 15 for the June issue, October 15 for the November issue, and February 15 for the March (2009) issue. This allows the staff and editors more time to compile articles throughout the spring for the June issue, to feature chapter members’ perspectives of the August convention in the October issue, and to include more complete information on upcoming events of the year in the March issue.

Also, remember to check this year’s envelopes for mailing your chapter election ballots – we hope to

include a fun opinion survey of potential new names for our chapter! Board member Frank Tortorich thinks we need a more inclusive chapter name. Several possibilities are being bandied about. More discussion and perhaps even a vote on the new name will ensue at the CA-NV Chapter General Meeting at the convention in August, so be sure to get your opinions in before then.

(♦ See SACRAMENTO, p. 4)

OCTA RECEIVES AWARD FOR WORK AT FERNLEY SAND SWALES

Leslie R. Fryman

As part of May’s Archaeological Awareness and Historic Preservation Month sponsored by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, the CA-NV chapter of OCTA was recognized for ongoing preservation efforts at the Fernley Sand Swales, a landmark stretch of the Truckee River Route of the California Trail northwest of Fernley, Nevada. Tom Fee, “trail boss” for Fernley Sand Swales projects, accepted the award on behalf of OCTA during the Silver Tea Ceremony at Virginia City’s 4th Ward School, held on May 18, 2008. The certificate of recognition was presented by State Historic Preservation Officer Ron James, who extended thanks from the State of Nevada for OCTA’s stewardship of the swales, described by him as a “model for historic preservation.”

In 2001, CA-NV OCTA became a partner with Nevada BLM for the Fernley Swales Historic Preservation Easement, the result of a land exchange between BLM and a private developer with long-range plans for both commercial and residential development of the land surrounding the swales.

(♦ See FERNLEY SAND SWALES, p. 14)

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E-News: The CA-NV Chapter offers a service of sending history-related memos and announcements via E-News, a Googlegroups email service. Googlegroups offers the chapter more versatility and more privacy than before. If you would like to be included in this group, email Mary Ann Tortorich, wagonwheel@volcano.net with your address. If you choose to receive "*Trail Talk*" via this news group, your name can be taken off the "*Trail Talk*" mailing list.



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PRESIDENT'S TRAIL DUST

Summer is upon us. I look forward each year to the exciting trails tours being planned. Memorial weekend the Black Rock Rendezvous, organized by the Friends of Black Rock, included tours by members Geno Oliver, Dave Valentine and Chuck Dodd. If you didn't attend, you missed a great adventure.

Be sure you look at the activities calendar so you don't miss hitting the trail. More and more our organization is being recognized as the authority on trail mapping and history. Our preservation officer, Leslie Fryman, seems to be everywhere at once, dealing with many California building projects that may impact identified trails.

Almost monthly, I receive an announcement of another project that I forward to Leslie. This leads me to again plead for more volunteers and new members, as our ranks are getting thin. Patty, our membership chair, notes that the younger generation does not seem to be joiners. History and interest in our ancestors grow as one gets older, but we need to cultivate the interest now before any more is lost or destroyed.

As a high school principal, I find the only way to get kids interested is to take them on the trail. Every year, for eight years, we took 30 kids to Donner Park and gold mining for a week. Unfortunately, the teacher left my school,

but he still does the annual trip in Angels Camp, California. I wish I could find more teachers with that dedication and passion to preserve the past.

In August, we get together in Nampa, Idaho for the National Convention. The trails outside of Boise are very interesting.

I drove by the new interpretive center in Elko a few weeks ago and it looks close to being finished. I hope we can put a convention together there once it is finished, to share our trails with national members.

In January, we again will assemble in Yuma for a midwinter symposium that should be fun and informative. Look for more information on the symposium at the national convention.

Patty and I are putting together our usual fall membership/board meeting. As always, I want the membership/board meetings to be interesting for all and to encourage members to attend we have other activities and speakers.

Please find Patty's article elsewhere in *Trail Talk* about our plans. I want to see you all on the trail this summer and bring the kids, grandkids and some friends to share our discoveries and fun.

Steve Knight 🐾



VISIT THE CHAPTER WEBSITE
WWW.CANVOCTA.ORG

*Please send all articles, photos, and announcements to
web editor Leslie Fryman
archaeo@yahoo.com
and design suggestions and technical questions to
web master Tom Flasch
admin@canvocta.org*

TWELVE YEARS IS ENOUGH

Norine Kimmy

Twelve years ago, I joined the *Trail Talk* staff. During that time, I have not only done the Desktop Publishing (page layout) for 46-issues of *Trail Talk*, I have prepared booklets for Milt Otto (*Deaths and Graves of the Applegate-Lassen Trail*), the *Chico Convention Booklet*, various tour guides, as well as, *The Commemorative Photo Album: A Pictorial Review of Conventions 1983-2002* for the Reno convention. There have been a miscellaneous assortment of other booklets as well.

As the Desktop Publisher, I have enjoyed the challenges and creativity putting together the various elements of the text, clip art, and photos to create an aesthetically pleasing page. Over the twelve years, I have appreciated the “new” developments that have taken place in the professional programs I have used – Adobe InDesign and Photoshop.

It is time for me to resign from my position; I will be leaving the *Trail Talk* staff after the publication and mailing of this issue. I wish the Editorial

Board, who are now in charge of the production of *Trail Talk*, the very best in their future endeavors.

You will be seeing various changes to *Trail Talk*. As you have heard, or will read in this issue, *Trail Talk* will be produced three times a year instead of four. Other changes are occurring as well.

The phrase, “Twelve Years is Enough,” continues to ring in my ears. There are many things I have put off doing because of my responsibilities to *Trail Talk*. Now, I will have time to do them.

Let’s continue to have a top-notch newsletter to mail to our readers and to download from the internet.

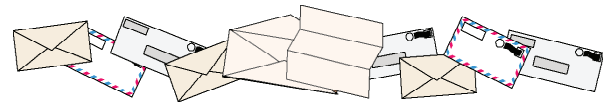
Best Wishes to you all,
Norine Kimmy, Assoc. Editor
& Desktop Publisher 🐾

MOVING ON...

I have been the *Trail Talk* Publishing Manager for the past two years. I have accomplished my goals and have met the requirements of the position with the able assistance of my mailing committee members. I wish to thank all who have assisted me accomplishing my goals as Mailing Manager.

My focus has been to assist in improving the printing quality while simultaneously reducing printing cost. Efficiency in the mailing process has been achieved as well.

However, there were recent changes to the printing and mailing for *Trail Talk*. Changes in my schedule conflict with the new printing and mailing dates.



This makes it difficult for me to perform the duties of this volunteer position.

Therefore, I believe it would be best for all if I resigned my position and involvement with the newsletter. This will be effective the day that the Spring issue is in the mail.

I wish you all luck in getting the chapter newsletter out to the membership.

Best regards,
Kathy Buob, *Trail Talk*
Publishing Manager 🐾

◆ SACRAMENTO (from p.1)

Tom Flasch, the new chapter webmaster from Illinois, and website editor Leslie Fryman announced a new look for the CA-NV website. Leslie promises me it will be different so it may take a little more time to find items you are looking for, but will be easier in the long run. In the future the website staff is hoping to offer downloadable versions of the OCTA mapping manuals, marking and monitoring guidelines, and membership forms as well as keeping up with the chapter Activities Calendar, expanding committee information and providing a little background on the chapter officers and board members.

Did we shoot Jerry Dwyer, our past webmaster? No, he just wants more time to spend with family and work on his own projects. That sounds a little like a politician leaving office when he knows he can't win! I tell you from personal experience in working with Jerry on website entries and Googlegroups, Tom Flasch has his hands full as he steps in behind the wonderful work Jerry did all these years and through so many changes. Thank you, Jerry, best of luck, and hope we see you at our chapter events.

After lunch on Saturday as Emcee John Winner kept us on schedule, he introduced Gary Kurutz, who spoke about our capitol city, and Gary Noy who spoke on Alonzo Delano (pronounced as in Franklin Delano Roosevelt – yes, a relative). They did an excellent job of keeping our attention after lunch.



Gary Kurutz

Frank Tortorich spoke after dinner about Sutters Fort folks' dream come true – with the delivery of a complete replicated 1846 emigrant wagon, seven years after the beginning of the project to build it. It is now on display at Sutter's Fort. Our outstanding Symposium Chair Joyce Everett's wish to honor the wagon committee was done in grand



Frank Tortorich explains 1846 wagon.

style. Patty Knight typed lovely certificates with a background of a muted photo of the wagon for each member. Also honored with certificates were the people who will care for the wagon at the fort – wagon builder Doug Hansen, and of course, Dick and Ginny Davis who supplied the necessary research to build such a wagon.



Nancy Sicotte and Bill Rupp



Lunch!

Patty and Steve Knight are starting to plan a fall Chapter General/Board meeting some place fun, similar to what they hosted in Virginia City.

The date and place will be announced soon. There is an exciting (there's that word again!) year ahead, so watch your issues of *Trail Talk*, chapter website, and E-News, our electronic notice board.

Susan Doyle of the Northwest Chapter accepted my offer to work with her editing the registration brochure for this year's convention. The Idaho and Northwest Chapters will be co-hosting our annual event in Nampa, Idaho, August 5-9. With pre-convention tours beginning August 1-3, you will want to get an early start so as not to miss any of the interesting activities in store for us. Along with a wide variety of great tours, speakers and educational workshops, there will be the annual book room, raffle/drawing, and different types of music and presentations for entertainment.

One other thing about the convention – do you remember that last year you could download the registration brochure from the national website? Well, this year, they are hoping to go one step further and provide on-line registration as well, which will make registration a simple matter for the many computer-savvy members. 🐾

LIBRARY COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE CHAPTER'S Western Overland Trails Collection at the California State Library — A Call For Action

Don Buck

For the benefit of newer members who may not be aware of one of the CA-NV Chapter's major programs, and a refresher for those who may have lost track of it, I'll provide a brief explanation and then move on to what the library collection needs to sustain itself in the coming years.

It was chapter member Dick Davis' vision to establish an OCTA repository for emigrant trail literature at the western end of the trail that would complement OCTA's Merrill Mattes Library in Independence at the eastern beginning of the trail. Dick realized there would be a growing need for an emigrant trails repository more accessible to members in the far west and, importantly, closer to members in California and Nevada who some day would be more inclined to donate their collections closer to home.

Beginning in the late 1990s, Dick brought together a small group of chapter trail bibliophiles to initiate a search for a library that would be willing to house a chapter-sponsored emigrant trails collection. This group evolved into the CA-NV Chapter Library Committee, chaired by Dick Davis, with Dick Brock, Don Buck, Tom Hunt, and Charlie Little. Over several years, spear-headed by Dick Davis, the Library Committee met with five northern California library staffs to see if there was an interest in establishing a specialized emigrant trails collection (the main Public Library in Sacramento, California Historical Society in San Francisco, Society of California Pioneers in San Francisco, University of Pacific library in Stockton, and finally, the California State Library in Sacramento).

By far, the best proposal we received came from the Special Collections Branch of the California State Library in Sacramento, headed by Principal Librarian Dr. Gary Kurutz, a very personable and highly regarded archivist and scholar. After a number of meetings with Dr. Kurutz, along with numerous follow-up letters and phone calls, we worked out procedures for establishing what became known as the Oregon-California Trails Association "*Western Overland Trails Collection*"

(WOTC). These negotiations culminated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Special Collections Branch of the California State Library that was subsequently approved by the chapter Board of Directors and the national Board of Directors at the Casper Convention in August 2001.

The agreement created within the California State Library, Special Collections Branch (located in the "California History Room"), a place for materials donated by OCTA members relating to western explorations and expansion, overland emigrant migrations and trails (including the southern trails), and the gold rush. These sources would include published, and copies of unpublished, diaries/journals/letters/recollections/newspaper accounts, published books and periodicals, copies of historic and modern trail maps, and reference works, all relating to the 19th century westward migrations. Provisions were made for original manuscripts and artistic works, such as pictures, drawings, and paintings, being donated to this collection.

The Library Committee recognized the *Western Overland Trails Collection* would be dependent on donations and would take years to become a complete research collection. The hope was that chapter members and heirs would be interested in donating their library holdings rather than having their estate break up the collection through book sellers. After we got the word out, especially through *Trail Talk*, there were three large private library donations made to the collection, along with several smaller ones. Even some non-members, who had a western Americana library, heard of the collection and made book donations. Most recently, a former OCTA member donated an original overland trail diary that had been passed on for generations within the family.

At the Chapter Symposium on March 7th in Sacramento, the Library Committee made arrangements with Dr. Kurutz for several guided tours of the Special Collections Branch in the California History Room. Everyone was very impressed and realized the impor-

tance of having an OCTA collection at the California end of the trail. The Library Committee envisioned that one of the by-products of creating such a collection would be to encourage the development of other regional overland trails collections. And it just happened. The OCTA national board announced it had entered into an agreement to establish a branch library at the American Heritage Center/University of Wyoming Library in Laramie.

While the chapter-sponsored *Western Overland Trails Collection* at the California State Library got off to a good start, there is much to be done to keep up the momentum. At the Symposium in March, the Library Committee met with Dr. Kurutz to work on plans for the future of WOTC. At that time, Don Buck became the chair of the committee, and we agreed upon six goals:

- (1) Encourage more book donations to WOTC by widening our publicity efforts. This can include more website exposure and developing a brochure on the significance and advantages of WOTC and how donations and contributions can be made.
- (2) Establish a fund within the California State Library Foundation for purchasing needed items for WOTC and launching a campaign within the chapter to solicit contributions for this fund.
- (3) Find a way, perhaps as part of this WOTC fund or by seeking a grant, to help financially support an internship to transfer to a computer database the “California Information File” currently existing as a card file index at the California History Room. (It can’t be scanned but has trail-related references.)
- (4) Create a chapter network to monitor the availability of new publications that local historical societies produce—so these publications can be acquired for the Special Collections Branch and WOTC.
- (5) Identify a chapter person who could provide prospective donors with income tax deduction information.
- (6) Search for an additional chapter Library Committee member, from within the greater Sacramento area, who

has some library or archive experience. This committee member would become a liaison person to assist in facilitating donations to, and providing maintenance support for, the WOTC.

These are ambitious goals that will require more effort than the existing Library Committee can provide. We need support from the Chapter board and members. That means WOTC needs you. I’ll offer a course of action.

First—Be on the lookout for anyone you might know who may be interested in donating books from their library on western Americana (anything relating to western U.S. history). If you have any questions about, or contacts with, prospective donors, contact Don Buck.

Second—Let chapter officers and board members know of your interest in the chapter’s promoting and financially supporting a special WOTC fund within the non-profit California State Library Foundation for purposes of acquiring relevant publications and documents that the Special Collections Branch would otherwise not have funds to purchase. The Library Committee intends submitting a proposal to the chapter board, but it will need your grassroots support.

Third—Step forward if you would like to become involved in some way with carrying out goals of WOTC, especially in the following three areas.

We need someone with library or archive experience who ideally resides within the greater Sacramento area and would be willing to facilitate the donation process between the donor and the California State Library.

We need volunteers who would become a liaison between their local historical society and WOTC, looking for those often obscure but important publications available only locally.

We need someone with knowledge of the arcane art of income tax deductions to provide relevant information to prospective donors.

Let Don Buck know at 408-739-8521 or trailbuck@gmail.com. 🐾

TRAILS SYMPOSIUM IN YUMA

– JANUARY 2009 –

John Krizek

Plans are progressing for the "Roads to Yuma" historic trails symposium in Yuma, Arizona next January, according to chairman John Krizek.

An array of speakers are being lined up, covering the Spanish era in the 1700s to the Mexican War/Gold Rush era when thousands of California-bound pioneers, along with military detachments, chose the southern route that crossed the Colorado River at Yuma. Tours are being planned to trail sites along the Gila River, and historic sites along the Colorado. The keynote speaker lined up for a Saturday night banquet is renowned historian and author, Paul Hutton. Hutton, a professor at the University of New Mexico, is a participant in the OCTA documentary project now in production.

Further details and registration information will be available by the time of the OCTA convention in Idaho in August. Inquiries can be directed to Travis Boley at OCTA headquarters. 🌸

PLANS FOR OCTOBER 2008

BOARD MEETING

Patty Knight

Planning ahead, especially this far, is a necessity to get on everyone's busy schedule. The Chapter Board is scheduling a Membership/Board meeting. We had hoped to go to Jackson Sat. Oct. 11, 2008, but that date is not working out. It's back to the drawing board to determine an acceptable date and location. We will let you know the new time and place.

It will be on the same format as the San Juan Bautista and Virginia City meetings. If you missed those meetings, you surely DON'T want to miss this one. We will try to get hotel information and dinner prices very soon. Please put OCTA on your calendar and look for more information in the next *Trail Talk*, on the chapter website, or via email. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at knightpa@att.net or 775-882-1488. See you then, if not before! 🌸

TRAIL EDUCATION FOR 5TH GRADERS

Fran Taplin

Fran Taplin, representing the California-Nevada Chapter of OCTA, presents Joan Crandell, fifth grade teacher at Lafayette School in Eureka, with 60 copies of "Reading, Writing, And Riding Along The Oregon-California Trail" to be utilized by her two US history classes this spring.

This educational activity book provides just the right information about the greatest migration in American history to Oregon and California.



It includes topics such as motivation and objectives for the trek; historical development; supplies and equipment; methods of travel; routes traveled; landmarks; significant individuals; hazards; journal selections and daily life; and accomplishments. *Photo: Lafayette School Library Tech, Carol Skaggs* 🌸

TO VIRGULE OR NOT TO VIRGULE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

David Hollecker

What the heck is a “virgule” you ask? A virgule is a form of punctuation that has gained some popularity. Before the advent of the Internet, it was seldom used in English text. Today, it has taken on a new life and meaning. The virgule is the much used forward slash (‘/’) that is often found in internet addresses to separate the various components of that address.

A popular use of the virgule, prior to the internet, was in writing dates, like separating the day, month and year or successive divisions, as in month or years (i.e., 2006/2007). Other uses of the virgule were in showing separate, unconnected or opposite uses such as ‘and/or’ and ‘hot/cold’ as examples.

The last few years have seen the virgule used as a replacement for the hyphen and comma. This usage is inappropriate. How many times have you seen the chapter name spelled ‘California/Nevada’ or ‘CA/

NV’? This is the wrong usage of the virgule. Our chapter spelling is ‘California-Nevada’ or ‘CA-NV’ (check our logo). Hyphens connect names and similar items, while virgules show a disconnect.

According to Webster, the dictionary folks, virgules are not used between nouns, only ‘hyphens’ are to be used. Examples are OCTA’s name, Oregon-California Trails Association; no virgules there. Also, women who marry but want to keep their maiden name as part of their married name, as in Mary Smith-Jones, not Mary Smith/Jones.

Trail Talk editors will be looking for the proper usage of hyphens and virgules in upcoming issues. By the way, if you put a space in front and after a hyphen, it becomes a ‘dash’.

Source: Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary and Webster’s Handbook of Style. 🐾

FRIENDS OF BLACK ROCK NEED HELP

Press Release—Edited for space and content

Hello from Gerlach and the Friends of Black Rock!

As some of you may already know, the Friends of Black Rock have a contract with the BLM to staff the mobile Visitor Center, located next to the information kiosk (across from Bruno’s) in beautiful downtown Gerlach. Knowledgeable and helpful volunteers are needed every weekend from April through October. If you are familiar with the Black Rock Desert and/or National Conservation Area, we really need your help in staffing the Center. The Visitor Center serves as a valuable resource to folks unfamiliar with the area, and your participation in this role may ultimately save lives, while helping to preserve the unique character of the desert we all know and love.

You do not need to be an expert navigator, or even know most of the nooks and crannies of this big desert in order to help people out in the Visitor Center. There are big maps posted in the Visitor Center, and everyone is learning about this amazing desert together. Even our experienced guides and old-timers are learning from each other. If you have been out on the playa more than a few times, if you have been to the hot springs, if you are familiar with the three-mile and twelve-mile

entrances and/or the East and West tracks, we need YOU! If you have driven out Jungo Road to Trego or Sulfur, or out Soldier Meadows Road past Mud Lake, so much the better! If you have been to Double Hot, Hardin City, or High Rock Canyon, we would like to tap your experience and expertise in this region.

Maybe this opportunity will actually prompt a few of you to do some more exploring in the NCA and surrounding Wilderness areas, as you realize just how big this desert is, and how much there is to see out there. If you have some time to give, please sign up for some shifts in the Visitor Center and help the Friends of Black Rock to fulfill our commitment to the public and the BLM; visit: <http://blackrockdesert.org/vct/signup.php>.

All your mileage, travel time, and hours spent in the Visitor Center is tax-deductible, and will be tracked as an “in-kind donation” to the Friends of Black Rock, allowing us to claim matching funds from our sponsors. This is very important for the continued survival of FBR. Your mileage will also be reimbursed if you so desire; here is that link: http://blackrockdesert.org/friends/files/travel_reimb_form.pdf. 🐾

A FUN DAY OF WORK WITH THE WEDGE WARRIORS

Joan Young

There we were, again responding to Frank Tortorich's summons. He needed the Wedge Warriors to clear the wagon trail and mark trees in the Carson Pass area. With our failure during a previous work party to maintain the configuration of a wedge* while climbing up a boulder-infested hill around inconveniently placed trees and manzanita, Frank figured we just weren't easily trained. We figured if we couldn't do it, no one else would catch on, either. His well-planned and envisioned wedge maneuver had fallen apart amid laughter and jeering.

Not wanting to create further anxiety for himself, in October 2007, he called upon this motley crew for a different kind of outing, which gathered at Frank's favorite pit stop in Hope Valley. After patient explanation of the day's drill—he still

wasn't sure about us—we drove into W. Carson River Canyon, below Sorensens, and parked our cars in the highway turn out, marked by a Trails West rail sign. Frank backed his truck up to the steep hill. From



Crews rolling newly sawn logs out of the trail.

there people hauled a posthole digger, a wheelbarrow of bagged concrete aggregate mix, two large jugs of water, a huge interpretive sign requiring two men to carry it, and other tools of torture up a grade only the pioneers would have tolerated. Indeed they had, over 150 years ago, evidenced by the tell-tale rust marks of wagon wheels smoothing those innocent boulders.

With much pain, agony and heavy breathing, we arrived at the site of the Snowshoe Thompson boulder cave. Frank declared, "Eureka, we have found it!" and John and Jim started digging post holes, fighting off intruders who wanted their names in this article. The holes were dug deep into the Earth. The legs of the Forest Service interpretive sign, which had been carefully unwrapped of its protective covering by Phyllis, Ed and Joan, were carefully placed upright into the holes. A cord-wrapped



The Crew: Back left: Larry Schmidt, Richard Muller, Rex Gardner, John Winner, Bert Gardner, Dick Young, Larry Lacey, and Dave Newberry. Front left: Phyllis Schmidt, Joan Young, Linda Lacey, Spencer Parker, Jim Allison, Donna Newberry. Not pictured Carol Carman and photographer, Frank Tortorich.

stone, provided by Ed, was used to plumb the sign. The concrete n' water crew mixed a batch to mud pie consistency, Dick and Larry fending off more intruders who wanted part of the action. Such battles have not been seen since the French Revolution.

Then everyone got into the act, tossing small stones into the filled holes for added strength (and for something to do, except for Frank who was dreaming up the next prank to pull on Walmart).

While the concrete set, our leader took us (to keep us from leaning on our finished work) on a short hike over the crest of the hill, showing where the trail connects beyond the highway with the historic road that now serves the campground near the Hope Val-

ley Cafe. We saw and admired more geologic wonders and appreciated Frank's amazing memory for details.

Walking back toward our work place, Joyce and others climbed into Snowshoe's cave and were surprised at how roomy it is. Two or three could stay there, if their suitcases



Joan Young and John Winner place a pregnant triangle trail marker on a tree in line-of-sight.

weren't too big, and Snowshoe, stopping there for overnight would have a room with a view if the snow wasn't too deep. The new sign, so recently set in rock and concrete, describes the Snowshoe site for future hikers wishing to follow the trail east or westward. It was still standing, its integrity proof that Frank is an amazing work leader. Photos were taken of the volunteers and two trail dogs (Sophie and Pearl) as a record of this feat having been proudly accomplished... and all of this was done before lunch!



Proud crew posing by "Naming of Carson Pass" interpretive sign with the pass in the background. Frank Tortorich displays sign.

We drove to the meadow on the Blue Lakes Road for lunch and shared stories and good cheer over coffee and sandwiches. Following lunch, another sign was installed, just a few yards from our picnic spot on flat ground. With time on our hands, Frank took us to see the beginning of the Big Tree trail. He proved that the pioneers had good leadership, and leadership is what keeps travelers and crew in good spirits. Potluck dinner was held at the Youngs' home in Christmas Valley

near Meyers, and we were ready for a second day of work next day. We all say, "Thanks, Frank, for your sense of humor and for putting up with the untrainable Wedge Warriors."

* Explained by Frank: "The Wedge" (a "V" shape) is used during Archaeology surveys. One person is at the point, then ten meters out to the left and ten meters behind is another person, duplicated on each side and behind the point man. With nine persons, one is at the point and four on each side with a span of 80 meters at the tips. As the "Wedge" moves forward, the person to the outside keeps the person to their inside in sight and slowly walks in a zigzag. By closely watching the ground, the "wedge" can cover a span of 80 meters, finding the evidence needed for the survey." In the case of the newly-named "Wedge Warriors," Frank was at the point, and everyone wanted to see what he was finding. The wedge fell apart. So much for science! ♣



Covered-wagons camp at river crossing. Courtesy of the Juniper collection.

This detailed description of women's attire is unusual, coming from a man.

"Women all wore very short brown or black dresses with ankle length buttoned bloomers, made of denim – a very heavy material, something like sateen today – which did not let the dust go through. The dress didn't come to the knees."

– J. W. Broadwell, 1864



The following letter appeared in the June 2008 issue of *Desert Tracks* and is reprinted here with permission and minor alterations.

Letter to the Editors:

The December 2007 issue of *Desert Tracks* arrived and I thoroughly enjoyed the interview with Rose Ann and Harland Tompkin.

The interview hit home with remarks about the relationship between the Southwest chapter and OCTA over the years and, at the end, there were some very insightful thoughts. Harland said that, "You only become interested in history when you yourself are history." I think that's accurate. Although I have been an historian all of my professional life, I think I am now even more tuned in to our past than ever before. And, Rose Ann's follow up statement, "From your 50's to your 70's is about as long as you can maintain this," is very telling. As the interviewers pointed out, "if you can't get young people interested, you have to get people who are about to retire and early retirees interested."

I think that OCTA has been in a dream world hoping to attract "young people." These days, with both spouses working to support the family lifestyle, younger people don't have the time or energy to get involved in OCTA-like organizations. Those people will only find OCTA appealing as they near retirement when they will be looking for something new to get involved in. I've noticed that within the last few years, Trails West has attracted a new generation of very active and eager members who are on the verge of retirement or have just retired. That has been a real shot in the arm. Rose Ann's comment that you have to keep these new retirees coming in "because the older ones are falling off the other end" is all too true. I have an image of myself in a humorous cartoon, hanging by my finger tips on the precipitous edge of a chasm, looking longingly at a sign above my head that reads "There are more trails ahead—just keep looking."

Don Buck



Hi All, – Just a note to let everyone know the Chapter website <http://www.canvocta.org> has now been moved to the new (Network Solutions) host computers and is 'live.'

Leslie and I are continuing to update the website so please let us know if you, or anyone, have any questions, comments, concerns, or new material for the website.

Thanks, Tom Flasch

[Reply from Steve Knight]

The look is new, refreshing and professional. Thank you all.

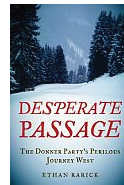
– Steve

A BIG THANK YOU!

We are writing to thank everyone who called their Congressperson in support of the National Landscape Conservation System Act (HR 2016) HR 2016. It did pass the House last week by a vote of 278-140 (12 present/not voting). To see how your Representative voted, you can go to <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-2016>

Thanks again for supporting the NLCS Act.

Travis Boley @ OCTA HQ on behalf of Pres. Glenn Harrison & Legislative Liaisons Bill & Jeanne Watson



Desperate Passage - a book review submitted by Virginia Hammerness as a "good read," has subsequently been reviewed in the OJ (v26,.#2, p.93).

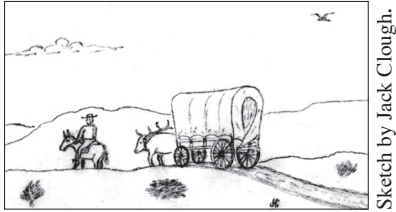
Desperate Passage: The Donner Party's Perilous Journey West - by Ethan Rarick. "This sober, unflinching look at one of the greatest tragedies of America's pioneering past tells us a great deal that is new about the Donner Party's trials. Rarick scythes away the myths of one of the nation's better-known sagas, and offers up this horrific but ennobling tale in all its freshly researched detail. Readers take heed: This is a tough book, but a gripping one."

– Simon Winchester, author of *Krakatoa*

New York: Oxford Press, Feb.2008. 288 pages. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. SBN13: 978-0-19-530502-9. \$28.00. Contact: Darren Shannon, Senior Publicist (212) 726-6278, darren.shannn@oup.com

[DAVID JOHNSON, AUTHOR OF *SONORA PASS PIONEERS* HAS CLEARED THIS MESSAGE TO GO OUT TO OCTA MEMBERS.]

A couple, Bonnie and Bill Brockschmidt, who are related to Sonora Pass emigrants of 1852, are making a trip to retrace the route of their ancestors to Sonora. They have started a blog to describe their experiences <http://bonnieandbillsblog.blogspot.com>.



[AN OPEN LETTER TO 2007 CHAPTER SYMPOSIUM CHAIR JOYCE EVERETT, CHAPTER PRESIDENT STEVE KNIGHT, AND THE CA-NV CHAPTER OF OCTA.]

On behalf of the Sutter's Fort Wagon Committee, we want to thank you and the chapter for the recognition bestowed on us during the combination chapter symposium and national mid-year board meeting in Sacramento, California.

When this committee first formed, some ten years ago, we were following a dream to acquire an 1846 wagon to enhance the interpretation at one of California's most historic sites, Sutter's Fort.

When I first went to work at Sutter's Fort as a seasonal park interpreter, my first question was, "Since John Sutter's daybook has 138 references of wagons coming and going on a daily basis, why is there no wagon here at the Fort?" That simple question led to a seven-year quest to have a wagon, built to fit the fort's 1846 specifications. "The Wagon" arrived at the fort on June 9, 2004. It was

a dream realized. Since its arrival, the wagon has taken center stage for park interpretation. It certainly catches the eye of visitors as they enter the fort. This wagon helps to tell an important story of the difficulties the pioneers and gold rushers experienced on the journey west with their dreams, in the mid-19th Century

Being recognized by OCTA for our work on the wagon committee is one of the highlights of our membership in OCTA. The other wagon committee members felt privileged to be recognized for their work. They are Charlotte Ames, Steve Beck, Dennis Berhm, Katrina and Howdy Hoover, Herbert "Pete" Hunn, Carol Jones, Gail Shoop-Lamy, Lisa Lay-Brown, and Ranger Karen Meltzer.

Also honored at this time for their help in this project were wagon researchers OCTA members Dick and Gini Davis.

For those not in attendance that evening of March 8, 2007, the recognition plaques read as follows:

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION
CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CHAPTER

Presents this Certificate of Commendation to (Each committee members' name)

For your seven years of work and support, while serving on Sutter's Fort Wagon Committee, that brought into fruition the dream for having an authentic replica of an 1846 emigrant wagon for display at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, Sacramento, delivered June 9, 2004.

With great appreciation,
Frank and Mary Ann Tortorich 🐾

"ONE-BUTTON" MASS EMAIL SERVICE

Travis Boley, OCTA HQ, Independence, Missouri

"Greetings from OCTA Headquarters! We have launched a national "one-button" mass email service to keep members up to speed on items of critical importance that typically cannot wait for the next publication of the *News From The Plains*.

If you have not already received a couple of messages regarding the National Landscape Conservation System Act that was just up for vote in the U.S. House of Representatives, then we do not have your email address in our database.

Keep in mind, these messages would have come directly from my email address at tboley@indepmo.org

and not from your CA-NV Chapter (E-News) Google-Group.

If you would like to receive future messages from OCTA, please forward your email address directly to me.

It will not be shared with anyone else, ever, under any circumstances, and you can prevent future messages from HQ by simply emailing me and asking us to remove your contact information from our mass emailing list. And, please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Note: E-News will try not to duplicate the information. - MAT 🐾

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2008-2009

Remember, you do not have to be an OCTA member to join in these activities, so bring a friend!
For details and updates of activities, check the chapter website, www.canvocta.org

DATE	ACTIVITY	CONTACT
Aug. 6-9 Nampa, ID	<u>2008 OCTA Convention</u> This year's convention will have many activities and tours August 3 - 10. Watch Idaho Chapter's progress on their website IdahoOCTA.org Let Jim know if you are interested in helping during the convention or if you have an item for the raffle.	James McGill I-OCTA 208.467.4853 jwmcgill@pobox.com website IdahoOCTA.org
Aug. 18-19 Highway 88 Note: Date Change	<u>Carson River Trail: Cleanup and Marking</u> This is Frank Tortorich's tenth year of leading this project. In the past the crew has put up interpretive signs, cleared and marked trail in the Toiyabe and Eldorado Forests along Highway 88. There is a limit of 20 people with preference given to past participants.	Mary Ann Tortorich Activities Coordinator 209.296.7242 wagonwheel@volcano.net
Oct. 4	<u>Fernley Swales Clean Up</u> Yearly clean up of the Fernley Swales (NV) is always in need of folks to help. Pickup trucks to haul trash to the dump are most welcome.	Tom Fee tomfee7@aol.com See chapter website.
- 2009 - Jan. 16-18	<u>OCTA Trails Symposium—Yuma, Arizona</u> OCTA Trails Symposium—hold the date. Information to follow.	
— OTHER THAN OCTA —		
- 2008 - July 12	<u>Trails West Activities</u> Board Meeting: 11:00 am - 4:00 pm—Cabela's, Reno	www.emigranttrailswest.org Joyce Everett, jimandjoyce@mac.com
Sept.12-14 Nov 1.	Work Party on the Yreka Trail Board Meeting, TBA	Bob Black, trailchaser@charter.net Joyce Everett, jimandjoyce@mac.com
Sept. Highway 88	<u>Passport-In-Time Project (PIT)</u> Check PIT Project website for registration deadline and details. It is not yet posted – date not set.	www.passportintime.com Frank Tortorich, Crew Chief USFS Coordinator

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- When signing up for a specific CA-NV Chapter activity, some leaders may ask participants to pay a minimum fee to cover expenses and to secure a reservation.
- Registrations for leader-led activities will be conducted through the chapter activities coordinator.
- All participants will be required to sign a liability release form prior to the activity.
- For more information or if you have questions, please contact me, CA-NV Chapter Activities Coordinator Mary Ann Tortorich, 209.296.7242 or wagonwheel@volcano.net ❖

For updates of activities, check the chapter website, www.canvocta.org, and sign up for E-News. 🐾

♦ FERNLEY SAND SWALES (from p.1)

Since that time, chapter members convene every October to remove debris from the easement and to record the changing conditions in the swales using an archaeological site photo-monitoring program established by the BLM. Within the fragile dune environment of the swales, natural and human-caused impacts cause erosion and other changes, both gradual and catastrophic, which the routine photo-monitoring program will clearly demonstrate over a long period of time.

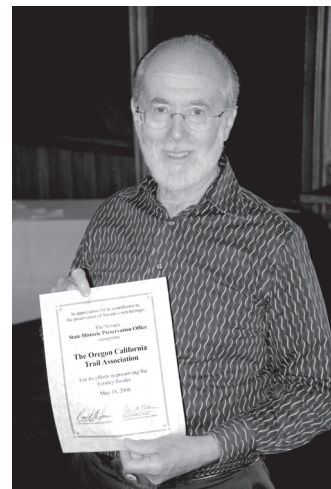
That OCTA simply “removes debris” from the sand swales is a rather misleading generalization. Several large flatbeds, trailers and even dump trucks are required for the October clean-up of the one-mile easement, and since 2001, the record of tonnage hauled away has steadily increased. A combination of factors contribute to continued public use of the swales as a dump for furniture, appliances, vehicles, and other large, hard-to-dispose-of items. One factor is apparent in the swales themselves – the high sand berms along the south side of the wide swales conceal illicit dumping activities from sight, and the swales are easily accessible by any high-clearance or 4WD vehicle from the adjacent grade of the historic Central Pacific Railroad, now a well-used dirt road. Rising area population, as well as rising fees at the local landfill, are also resulting in rising mounds of trash in the desert around Fernley.

Among the many threats that OCTA fights at the Fernley Sand Swales are low levels of local awareness, interest and concern for protecting and preserving this

type of historic site. Community organizations that are helping OCTA try to change this include the *Fernley Leader-Courier*, the Fernley Preservation Society, and more recently, the City of Fernley Parks and Recreation Department. Local businesses, such as the City’s waste management contractor, the adjacent Truck Inn, and Arnold’s Wrecking Yard, have chipped in on

the annual clean-up by waiving dumping fees and helping the OCTA crew tow abandoned vehicles from the swales. Fernley citizens and youth groups have also contributed their volunteer efforts.

A part of this certificate of recognition must be dedicated to Gary Bowyer, the BLM archaeologist (Carson City) who established the preservation easement at Fernley Sand Swales in 1998, pushed it through many roadblocks to fruition, and made certain that OCTA was on board as a permanent caretaker of the swales. Gary died of cancer in December 2005. The majority of recognition, however, is much deserved by Tom Fee for coordinating and leading OCTA’s annual activities at Fernley, and for being a “model trail boss” to the great sand swales. 🌿



Tom Fee with award.
Photo: Steve Knight



DIARY QUOTES ...

Submitted by Shann Rupp

"I have seen them [the Indians] eat those sage squirrels boiled up just as they shot them hair and all, and let on that they were good as the best. It depends a little how you were raised about your likes and dislikes, doesn't it?"

– Isaac Booth Dutton, 1849

July 4: *"Saluted the rising sun by a discharge of fire arms and the blowing up of a keg of powder buried in the ground."* (One of very few comments he entered in his diary.)

– Charles Sargent, 1849

July 4: *"I think it a very unspectacular way to celebrate the anniversary of the declaration of independence. We had a nice time walkin [sic] cattle from a shade made by a blanket stuck on some stakes. We sung some nice songs from the chair and read some from the testament and thinking how I would like to spend an hour or two at home."*

– Rogers, Joseph- 1863

Glover, traveling in Oregon, described the Indians’ head apparel this way: *"The men wear hats with fringed edges on the brim. The squaw[s] wear a cap of rushes, straw of [?] woven like a basket, and terminating in a rounded point at the top. They use the cap for many purposes – to gather berries in, to carry flour, or to pick 'chips' for fuel."*

– Eli Sheldon Glover, 1875

WE ARE INVITING YOU TO HELP OUR PRESERVATION EFFORTS!

Tom Fee

The Deep Sand Swales, immediately north of Fernley, Nevada (and a few yards south of the Central Pacific Railroad Bed), are the best example of Deep Sand Swales on the entire California Trail! No Deep Sand Swales exist on the Oregon Trail. These Swales and the Central Pacific Railroad Bed are wonderful historic resources of which we all can be very proud!

Members of the CA-NV Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association are organizing a cleanup party to remove trash that has been dumped in and near the Swales. Sponsors supporting this important event are the Fernley Department of Parks & Recreation, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fernley Preservation Society, Waste Management, the Leader-Courier, the Truck Inn, the Fernley Chamber of Commerce and Arnold's Wrecking Yard.

Date: Sat., Oct. 4, 2008: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Directions: Travel east of Reno, NV on I-80. Take the Exit 48 off-ramp. Make a left turn and go under I-80. Continue straight north along the east side of the Truck Inn. We will meet along the dirt road behind and to the right of the Truck Inn, where the pavement ends.

What To Wear: Wear a hat and layered clothing. Temperature will be anywhere from cool to very hot. Boots are recommended. This is a work party, so don't wear your best clothes.

What To Bring: Heavy duty work gloves. A stout, small to midsize cardboard box for glass shards. A few heavy duty, tough plastic trash bags.

Food, Drink and Miscellaneous: Bring your lunch, snacks, drinks, and plenty of water. Soft drinks or a thermos with your favorite liquid. Also, consider sunglasses, lip balm and sunscreen.

Safety: Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated. Rattlesnakes and scorpions may be a potential problem. Always watch where you step and place your hands. Be very careful when you pick up boards, flat items, or just about anything. You might want to turn them over with a stick before you pick them up.

Benefits: You will feel good about returning these Historic Sand Swales closer to their original state, and will have made some good friends. You will experience a nice sense of accomplishment and community pride! Questions? Please contact Tom Fee at (775) 827-3724 or email TomFee7@aol.com 🐾

CONVENTION REGISTRATION/INFORMATION TABLE HELP

Mary Ann Tortorich (MAT)

I am Mary Ann Tortorich (MAT) and they are letting me help with registration at the Idaho convention. There is a need for help staffing the Registration/Information Room during the convention. I will be there 90% of the time. You will see me at the Registration/Information Table even when we are not officially open per the schedule, just in case someone needs information or help. Do not panic and think I need help.

The two-hour shift schedule will follow times stated in the Registration Brochure. You are asked to sign up for work in two-hour, 10-minute shifts. This allows overlap time to share information, etc. If this does not work, and you cannot commit that long amount of time, we will work with you.

The first three days are mostly handing out convention packets and nametags and answering questions. The rest of the week, it is just a matter of answering questions and guiding folks to the correct locations. During the speakers, meetings, meals, the plan is to stagger folks so you will be able to leave the table to attend. You just need to be in the room during the breaks.

I plan to hold two in-service training sessions, max one hour, for those who might want to come: Sun., Aug. 3 and Mon., Aug. 4, before the registration is set to open. Times and places to be announced later. If you cannot attend one of these sessions, on-the-job training is possible, and I will have an information folder for you.

In-service includes:

- Studying the map so you can find your way around the center and locate various meeting/activity rooms.
- Most of the "What If's."
- Where everything will be in the room, such as supplies, etc.
- Knowing how to answer the most asked question in the world, "Where is the bathroom?"
- How to say, "I will get Mary Ann for you!" without terror in your voice!
- You will learn what you can do and what you are not expected to do; such as handle money, sell tickets, etc.
- Understand how we are going to handle ticket snafus, missing tickets, etc.
- What to do if someone wants to trade or sell tickets for an event, meal, or tour.

You may leave early, if your replacement comes early. If no one shows up at the end of your shift, you are free to leave. I am an equal opportunity person and will accept men or women, boys or girls. You can sign up for more than one time slot a day, or for many days! Contact me for the time(s) you wish to work, or I can send you a copy of the hours available. Mary Ann Tortorich (MAT) wagonwheel@volcano.net or 209.296.7242. 🐾

DIARY QUOTES ... Submitted by Shann Rupp

"I remember, in walking, I was so anxious to save the soles of my shoes that I walked in the grass whenever possible so that the uppers wore out first." – Mary L. Morris, 1853

"we came to a town of prairie dogs. the Indians got out their Bows & Arrows. our folks were a little frightened at first but they soon showed us what they were going to do. they shot several of those little dogs (which looked much like squirrels) built a fire and roasted them. Mary and I were very inquisitive so we went over to see what they were doing. they took them out of the fire peeled off the hide and then distributed them among the rest pulled the legs and arms off and threw each a piece. they offered us some. but we declined."

- Emma Louise Sweney, 1853

"...the scenery certainly compensates anyone for any little inconvenience they may suffer, from want of a feather bed, a turkey carpet, a spring carriage, and occasionally a tent blown over, a wet mattress, wet blankets, wet clothes, thermometer near zero and no fire or fuel, no society for 4 months, such are the little inconveniences an emigrant has to put up with on the overland route to the Pacific." What a good sport Fothergill was.

- John Fothergill, in 1853



Courtesy of the Juniper collection.

Clothes Washing Instructions

*Years ago a grandmother gave the new bride the following recipe:
(This is an exact copy as written and found in an old scrapbook - with spelling errors and all.)*

WASHING CLOTHES

Build fire in backyard to heat kettle of rain water. Set tubs so smoke wont blow in eyes if wind is pert.

Shave one hole cake of lie soap in boilin water.

Sort things, make 3 piles: 1 pile white, 1 pile colored, 1 pile work britches and rags.



Courtesy of the Juniper collection.

To make starch, stir flour in cool water to smooth, then thin down with boiling water.

Take white things, rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard, and boil, then rub colored don't boil just wrench and starch.

Take things out of kettle with broom stick handle, then wrench, and starch.

Hang old rags on fence. Spread tea towels on grass.

Pore wrench water in flower bed. Scrub porch with hot soapy water.

Turn tubs upside down.

Go put on clean clothes, smooth hair with hair combs.

Brew a cup of tea, sit and rock a spell and count your blessings.