

Trail Talk

The Newsletter of the California-Nevada Chapter

Number 78

Winter 2008

OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN IN VIRGINIA CITY

Carol March

The CA-NV Chapter of OCTA met in Virginia City on October 28, 2007 at the historic Fourth Ward School on the southern edge of town. Thanks to Steve and Patty Knight, we were able to enjoy the “great hall” for the Board Meeting, luncheon, and interesting presentations about the Virginia City area. The four-story, Victorian style school was built in 1876, and at its height accommodated 1,000 students. When the mining era was over, the school closed in 1936. Happily, it was saved, renovated, and reopened in 1986 as a museum and cultural center for special events.

As OCTA members and friends arrived, Patty had hot coffee and a continental breakfast awaiting us. Across the hallway, we could visit a furnished nineteenth century schoolroom, complete with inkwells and a tall dunce stool in the corner!

Chapter President, Steve Knight, called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. All Board Members were present. Minutes of the April meeting were approved, the Treasurer’s report read and approved, and a report given of the August OCTA Convention in Scottsbluff, NE. The convention was actually in Gering, but Scottsbluff is better known. Patty Knight reported that Chapter membership is slowly growing although revenue is down due to lowering our dues and fewer sustaining memberships being received. Tom Fee and Leslie Fryman reported on the results of the Fernley Sand Swale clean up project, and Leslie also told of preservation projects being monitored. Jerry Dwyer reminded the Board that he will be stepping down as Webmaster next year and a replacement will be needed. Mary Ann Tortorich spoke about the OCTA E-News she sends to members who have given her their email addresses.



*Board members prepare for business in Fourth Ward School.
(L-R) Dave Hollecker, Jim Allison, Vince Correll,
Leslie Fryman, and Bob Evanhoe Photo: Carol March*

Under Old Business, Hugh March reported that the Audit Committee needs a third member. Tom Hunt volunteered to be on that committee. An Activities Coordinator is also needed to replace Tom Fee. Mary Ann Tortorich volunteered to fill that position. Fran Taplin reported that the Awards Committee is open for nominations for awards and that non-members can be nominated to receive Certificates of Appreciation. Kathy Buob gave the *Trail Talk* report. She noted that Virginia Hammerness resigned as Editor and that Norine Kimmy has been working in that capacity as well as continuing as Desktop Publisher. Kathy, as Mailing Manager, has upgraded the quality of paper and type of printing being used and is mailing *Trail Talk* in envelopes to prevent the newsletter from being destroyed in the mail. She urged folks submitting articles to observe the deadlines.

(♦ See VIRGINIA CITY, p. 10)

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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

It is New Year's Eve in Indianapolis where Patty and I are spending the holidays with our daughter's family. It has been a busy year. I have received lots of very positive feedback regarding our board meeting last October in Virginia City.

While president I will continue to combine our board business/membership meetings, interspersed with interesting speakers or tours, places to see and do. I sincerely believe that it makes an otherwise boring meeting into an interesting activity that both old and new members will participate in. Additionally, I hope it will attract new members who can continue to carry on our mission and projects.

I believe a lot of important issues were resolved, including clarifying the boards and members' wishes regarding *Trail Talk*. I cannot thank all the staff of *Trail Talk* enough for listening to us and continuing to make a great newsletter even better. Saturday evening with Mark Twain and Sunday's train ride completed a super weekend. Thank you, Patty, for your tireless help.

Our preservation activities continue to be a major behind-the-scenes activity orchestrated by Leslie Fryman and many others. Don Buck's leadership and the friendships he has cultivated ensuring access to our trails on Lassen Forest Service lands will have far reaching ramifications.

As I have written before, it is important that OCTA, and its individual experts, are recognized and consulted by the major government entities while writing new regulations and recognizing historic trail locations.

I hope that Elko's Trail Interpretive Center's financial issue is resolved this upcoming year. I am sure all of our members look forward to another annual conference hosted in that important region.

Joyce Everett is working hard to make this year's national meeting in Sacramento blend into a joint symposium with our chapter. Be sure you make plans to attend this March. Our chapter is growing as we continue to work closely with National and the other chapters to preserve and research the trails. I would be remiss if I did not mention the hard work of Don Buck, Frank Tortorich, Dick Brock, Richard Silva, Dave Valentine and other primary trail historians.

Please don't forget all the others who do the grunt work of marking the trails and spending hours doing research. Tom Fee is especially recognized for the many hours he has dedicated to the Fernley Swales. If I have not mentioned you specifically, I thank you collectively for helping me and our chapter have another successful trail year.

See you in Sacramento. Have a great and successful 2008.

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

TO OUR TRAIL TALK READERS:

With this first issue of the New Year, you will be notice a change in our newsletter’s appearance. Changes will continue. It will be in booklet form and printed on white paper for the winter 2008 issue. Over the past year, Virginia retired from being editor and Norine Kimmy filled in as Acting Editor and publisher with assistance from Kathy Buob as Mailing Manager. At our board meeting in Virginia City in late October 2007, the chapter board decided to create an editorial board to help choose from the many articles and photos that are submitted.

At the same time, the board decided, due to paper/printing costs and size limitations of digital files, that 12 pages would be the ideal size for this newsletter – this is about the size the other chapters publish. This number conforms to the ‘booklet style’ which uses 11 x 17 inch paper which equals four pages. This precludes expanding or decreasing an issue by one or two pages. The issue’s next larger size would be 16 pages – in other words, multiples of four for

each increase or decrease in page numbers.

The editorial board was given the task to prioritize newsletter articles that deal directly with CA-NV chapter activities. As space is available, other articles would be considered for inclusion. Alternatively, they may appear in a subsequent issue or be posted to the chapter website, with the authors’ permission.

Publishing a newsletter is very time consuming for those who must edit and layout the many pages that make up *Trail Talk*. Obviously, publishing 12 pages as opposed to doing 20 or 24 pages, as it has been in the past, reduces the time to put out our newsletter by our ‘unpaid’ staff. The chapter board has every confidence in Norine and Kathy to continue the good works of our chapter newsletter.

Thanks – the Editorial Board
 Dave Hollecker, Leslie Fryman, Bob Evanhoe ❖

RECORD YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS & EXPENSES

Bill Watson

Annual reports of volunteer Hours, Miles and Expenses help OCTA obtain Congressional dollars to support the Federal Agencies that manage and administer our trails, plus, the Challenge – Cost-Share dollars and Land & Water Conservation grants to support chapter and national trail preservation projects.

We were asked to create a simple work sheet for recording year 2007 activities. The explanations and form are:

HOURS: Record activities hours, including planning, travel and activity time for attending conventions, symposiums, trail treks, trail marking, chapter meetings, etc. Record actual or estimated hours spent on these activities which may exceed 8-hours a day.

VOTING: You are entitled to 1 hour for every time you voted (November & June) – local, state, or national elections.

MILES: Record vehicle miles driven planning and participating in trail activities similar to those reported to the IRS as OCTA contributions.

EXPENSES: Record planning, travel and activity expenses not reimbursed, including lodging, air fare, materials & supplies, etc. Congress also gives us credit for trail related food and meal expenses.

Complete report from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007, then send your report to Bill Watson. ❖

TRAILS VOLUNTEER TIME & EXPENSE REPORT - YEAR 2007

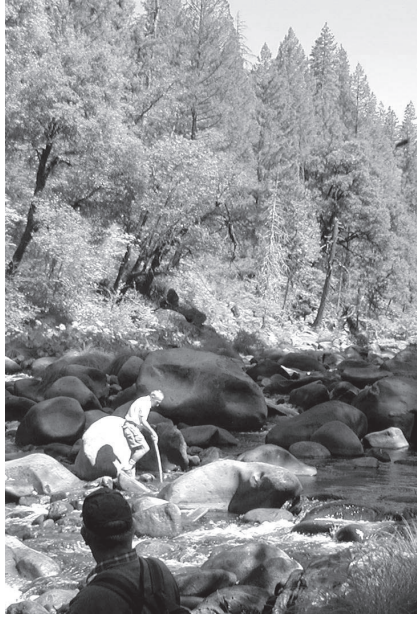
DATE	TRAILS ACTIVITY	VOLUNTEER HRS	RELATED EXPENSES	MILES DRIVEN
_____	_____	_____	\$ _____	_____

Send completed report to: Bill & Jeanne Watson
 28 Warford Terrace, Orinda, CA 94563 ❖

JOHNSON CUT-OFF RESEARCH GROUP FIELD DIARY, PART II

Ellen Osborn

September 27, 2007, five of us: Bob Graham, Jim Allison, Ken Allen and Ford & Ellen Osborn attempted a crossing of the South Fork of the American River at the spot where tradition says Bartlett's Bridge once stood. The thought was the river would be at its tamest this time of the year. However, it still presented a challenging appearance, with water rushing over and around boulders and deceptively quiet dark water in the deepest parts. This late in the season algae had ample time to grow in the shallower spots. In the end, only Bob Graham braved the river and crossed it to examine the north bank.



*Bob Graham braving the South Fork of the American River, Jim Allison looking on.
Photo by Ford Osborn*

He walked it both east and west. Earlier our group had spotted a thick, rusted, double cable lying in the rocks on the south bank, and a rusted turnbuckle anchored on the opposite side of the river. Bob checked it out and found tumbled remains of some old concrete, with trees growing tightly around it; proof it had been in that position for a long time. Evidence of an old bridge, but one that post dates Bartlett's Bridge by many years. Later, when we returned to the Pacific Ranger Station to debrief with Archeologist Krista Deal, she confirmed the existence of this early 20th century bridge.

We were disappointed in not finding the old road leaving the river to climb the ridge on the north side. We will have to try again coming down the ridge, but left that for another day. Jim Allison took waypoints with his GPS that will help guide us.

Some other items were found: a rusted-through square shovel of very old vintage mixed in with the debris of what appeared to be some old cars and possibly the remains of an early 20th century cabin. Wherever we looked was evidence of the power of the river when it is carrying the snow runoff, with a flood line well above our heads along the bank. Anything found along the river there could have come from a long distance upriver. Jim spotted a surveyor's brass marker on a section line, very close to where the bridge is thought to have been. It dates from 1934. This may prove to be the best find of the day, if we can locate

surveyor's notes that offer a description of the area.

What a climb! We managed to do part of the trail twice, because we stopped to walk parts of a faint old road that parallels the current hiking trail. While we still haven't found evidence of Bartlett's Bridge, we ruled out several other possible sites. We will return to the north side of the river to check out a faint track leading east and up a gradual ascent.

November 11, 2007, we took to the field to make another attempt to locate the site of Silver Creek Ranch. There were eight of us, including Kathie Lewin and Joan & Dick Young, all congenial additions to the crew. We drove to the Forest Service

parking lot at Lyons Creek where we broke into two groups. The Osborns went upstream with the Youngs to check out the possibility that the property belonging to Charles Lyons in the 1870s might have included the remains of Silver Creek Ranch; our conclusion was it did not. We did spot a rock formation that we consider a candidate for Bottle Rock, a landmark noted to have been just east of Silver Creek Ranch. The other group: John Winner, Kathie Lewin, Jim Allison, Joyce Everett and trail dog Sophie, went up on a rise a little to the west where John wanted to check out a waypoint from the Government Land Office (GLO) maps. After a lunch break, we all went together to check out another waypoint, which gratifyingly was right on a trail fragment noted in earlier outings. A little metal detecting yielded the usual evidence of hunting in the form of spent ammunition. About this time Old Man Winter began to give us some not so subtle hints that it was time to call it a day. Snow fell at that elevation by nightfall. I don't know about everybody else, but it took two hours to warm my feet when I got home.

We closed our season in the field with a well-attended potluck dinner at the home of John and Susie Winner. We discussed what we had accomplished, and agreed to get together in the early spring to plan the 2008 season. ❖

OCTA and CA-NV SPRING SYMPOSIUM

March 7-9, 2008 in Sacramento

“WELCOME THE WAGON!” - Tentative Schedule

FRIDAY – March 7

8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. National Board meeting (There will be a lunch break)
4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Chapter Board meeting (Follows National Board Meeting)

Option: Afternoon – Tours

- A) Treasures from a Trunk: California Pioneers’ Quilts and Textiles
At California Museum for History, Women & the Arts
- B) CSL California Room & OCTA Western Emigrant Trails Collection (Limited to a small group)
- C) Other Tours: State Capitol Museum, RR Museum, Leland Stafford Mansion, Governor’s Mansion

SATURDAY – March 8 Option: Morning Tour

8:30 a.m. - 12 Noon National Board meeting (Executive Session 9:30 a.m – 10:55 a.m)
Noon - 1:20 Buffet Lunch
1:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Welcome. Announcements. Presentations

DINNER and AWARDS

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Gold Rush Era Music
5:30 p.m. No-host social hour
6:30 p.m. Buffet dinner Keynote Speaker – Frank Tortorich
Recognition of The 1846 Wagon Committee

SUNDAY – March 9th

7:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. Buffet Breakfast
10:00 a.m. - 12 noon Sutter’s Fort tour (Probably 2 or 3 start times at the Fort)

With the exception of tours, all events will be in the Capitol Room,
Hawthorn Suites, 321 Bercut Drive, Sacramento 95811
(916) 441-1200 www.sacramento-hawthorn.com.

Glimpse of Events

Gary F. Kurutz, Executive Director and Curator of Special Collections of the California State Library (which includes the California History Section and the OCTA Western Emigrant Trails Collection.) He has written extensively on the California Gold Rush as well as other historical topics.

Gary Noy, Founder and Director of the Sierra College Center for Sierra Nevada Studies, Coordinator of the Sierra Nevada Virtual Museum, Professor of History at Sierra College, and recipient of an OCTA “Outstanding Educator of the Year” award in 2006. He shares his extensive knowledge of 19th Century explorations in the American West and Sierra Nevada history in many formats.

Many participants from the National Board meeting will join CA-NV in recognizing and thanking **The Wagon Committee Members** for making their shared dream of having an 1846 – the year is important as you’ll hear – Wagon at Sutter’s Fort a reality for thousands to enjoy for years to come.

On Sunday, visiting will continue over breakfast before many head over to Sutter’s Fort to see The 1846 Wagon. The Symposium will formally close at high noon at Sutter’s Fort as we, like the emigrants, head off in many directions.

Why wait 5 months to visit with fellow trail buffs in Idaho when you can double your pleasure?!

See you in March! ❖

PLACER COUNTY EMIGRANT ROAD/ PLACER COUNTY ROAD TO AUBURN

Tom Birch

Both the Placer County Emigrant Road (PCER) and the Henness Pass road opened in 1852; the PCER is also called the “Placer County Road to Auburn”. *There is a reference to this route in George Stewart’s “The California Trail” on p. 305.*

The western end of the PCER started at the Forks House, now a site on the Foresthill Divide. At the time, Forks House had roads linking it to Yankee Jims, Iowa Hill and Michigan Bluff. Depending on the source, this road starts in Auburn, Foresthill or Yankee Jims. The eastern end of the road is at Washoe Valley, about eight miles from Carson Valley. The PCER was built at a cost of \$13,000 with an ending debt of \$7,000, funded by the people of Placer County.

The PCER followed the Foresthill ridge/divide, between the middle and north forks of the American River, from Forks House to Secret Spring House (site) passing through the site of Westville (eight miles). It then went seven miles from Secret Springs to Robinson Flat and further on to the west summit of the Sierras (17 miles). This “West Summit” is the actual summit of the Sierras, just west of Squaw Valley. The distance from the west summit to Squaw Valley at the Truckee River is five miles. The road then followed the east bank of the Truckee River five miles to its mouth at Lake Bigler (present day Lake Tahoe). Next, it headed east, across the north end of Lake Bigler (12 miles) and further on to the east summit of the Sierras three miles. I’m guessing this is in the Mount Rose/Tahoe Meadows/Ophir Creek area. Another 5 miles brought the road down into Washoe Valley.

The PCER was said to follow “Scott’s Route”; “this route was established as early as 1849 as a shortcut between Sacramento and Carson Valley via Squaw Valley. This might have been the route taken by six riders from the Stevens-Murphy-Townsend Party.”

The PCER was a free road and not properly maintained, and there were reports that some sections “soon became impassable to heavily laden wagons.” A partial survey was made in August, 1856, and it found that the “road could be improved with less expense than any other route, will be shorter, and is the most cen-

tral road extending from Carson Valley into the state.” The survey also mentioned that the Carson Valley was “entirely occupied by Mormons that expressed interest in the road and were willing to improve that portion of the road lying within their territory.”

In 1857, Congress appropriated money for the construction of two roads to cross the Sierras, and the Placer County citizens hoped that the PCER would be included in that grant. But, a meeting of the Placer County Road Committee, held at Yankee Jims on July 8, 1857, found that there was not enough support from the citizens of Placer County for the road. They disbanded the committee and returned the funds advanced to the committee by friends. Apparently, Eldorado and Nevada counties were better able to improve their routes: the Mormon Emigrant Road and the Henness Pass road.

Today, much of the road is hidden under newer roads like the Foresthill Road going to Robinson Flat and part of Soda Springs, a dirt road that connects Robinson Flat to Soda Springs. I’m guessing that present day Highway 89 covers the section from Squaw Valley to Lake Tahoe; Hwy. 28 covers the section across the north end of Lake Tahoe; and one of my maps shows an old trail down Ophir Creek to Washoe Valley. The Western States 100 mile endurance run and Teves Cup 100 mile equestrian ride use the portion of the PCER from Squaw Valley to Red Star Ridge.

Dee and I walked a half-mile section of the PCER that cuts a corner close to Robinson Flat. This section is away from the paved road, and we found a few stones with rust stains from the metal wagon tires and a section with a slight swale. It also had several switchbacks climbing the grade and giving evidence to the early road improvement.

References:

The California Trail, George R. Stewart
Roads and Trails in the Tahoe National Forest: A Contextual History, David S. Bird
The Saga of Lake Tahoe, Edward B. Scott
Thompson and West, Placer County ❖

NEW ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

Mary Ann Tortorich



Hi, I am Mary Ann Tortorich, the new CA-NV Activities Coordinator. I am a charter member of CA-NV Chapter and of OCTA.

Shann Rupp, Mary Mueller, and Tom Fee were among those coordinators in the past who have organized some great activities. I would like to try to fill their hiking boots and do a great job, too. However, to do a good job, I will need the great support you gave them all those years of doing a super job, and I really need your help with some ideas for outings.

Want to see a special trail or trail segment; do some trail clearing, or perhaps mapping; even be asked to do some library research for the chapter?

Would you be interested in leading a tour; heading a mapping party; or need some research done? I will do all the paper work for you as leader. You just have to show up with your project ready for participants.

You can limit the number of participants and ask for fees to cover your printing, postage, etc., expenses. Please, let me know your interests, and I will try to put it together.

New this year – to help outings leaders, I offered to be the registrar and initial contact person for the outings, instead of the leaders, who would prefer I take over that task.

You are most welcome to contact me at 209.296.7242 or wagonwheel@volcano.net

To keep up with changing activities calendar between *Trail Talk* mailings, check the chapter website, www.canvocta.org, or sign up with me for E-News, for chapter's email updates and other messages.

A note of support for OCTA: keep track of travel time, expenses, and hours donated to OCTA. (See article p. 3.) Jeanne and Bill Watson gather this information for reports needed to qualify OCTA for project funding from the NPS and other government sources. ❖

CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

Fran Taplin & Virginia Hammerness

– **Deadline April 1** –

Your Awards Committee is calling on members of the CA-NV Chapter to nominate deserving people for two categories of awards. The first category is the Lifetime Achievement Award (plaque) for outstanding service in the area of trails preservation and/or outstanding service to the CA-NV Chapter. (Only members are eligible for this prestigious award.) The second category consists of Certificates of Appreciation and can be awarded to several people. (Chapter members as well as non-members are eligible.) These Certificates of Appreciation honor individuals who have contributed to the Chapter and/or Emigrant Trail Protection and Preservation. All awards are presented at the Chapter Symposium.

EACH NOMINATION SHOULD INCLUDE A THOROUGH DESCRIPTION OF WHY THE NOMINEE DESERVES TO BE HONORED. Please send your nominations to Virginia Hammerness, 1765 Hicks Ave, San Jose, CA 95125-3924. In order for the Awards Committee to complete the selection process and to have time to prepare the plaque and certificates for the next regular Symposium, we must receive your nominations by April 1, 2008. ❖

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2008

Happy New Year - Let's make 2008 a great year for outings!

Remember, you do not have to be a member of OCTA to join in these activities, so bring a friend!
New this year: To make the activities leaders' lives easier, I will be the registrar and initial contact person for all leader-led activities. That is the reason you will see my name as the contact.

DATE – PLACE	ACTIVITY	CONTACT
March 7 & 8 Sacramento, CA	<u>OCTA Mid-Year Board Meeting</u> This is your chance to observe the national board conduct the business of OCTA. The meeting will take place at the Hawthorn Suites Hotel, Sacramento. More details are found in this issue.	Joyce Everett OCTA Coordinator 916.652.3776 jimandjoyce@mac.com
March 8 & 9 Sacramento	<u>Mini Chapter Symposium</u> Complimenting OCTA's Mid-Year Board Meeting, symposium chair Joyce Everett has planned some wonderful speakers, meals, and a tour of Sutter's Fort and its replicated 1846 emigrant wagon. More details are found in this issue.	Joyce Everett Chapter Symposium Chair 916.652.3776 jimandjoyce@mac.com
July 28 & 29 Highway 88	<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
August 6 – 9 Note Dates 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

– OTHER THAN OCTA –

September Highway 88	<u>Passport-In-Time Project</u> Check PIT Project website for registration deadline and details. It is not yet posted as date has not been set.	www.passportintime.com Frank Tortorich USFS Coordinator
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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.



FLASH! – FERNLEY DEEP SAND SWALES

As you know, a canal breached and flood a part of Fernley, NV. The canal break was south of Highway 50, which is south of I-80. The Fernley Deep Sand Swales and the original Central Pacific Railroad Bed are north of I-80. They were not anywhere near the flooded area. – Tom Fee ❖

DIARY QUOTE ... *Jacob Prickett – Along the Humboldt (1853)* Shann Rupp

Jacob Prickett and Sam left the main party to go on ahead alone. To add to the dilemma of lack of water, Prickett had eaten salty meat the morning they started crossing the desert-like area near the Humboldt. He thought he was on a loop that was going to lead him back to the river and therefore did not fill his canteen. He tried chewing some dry bread, but it gave him no relief. By noon he was almost insane from lack of water.

“I did not think it was possible for any one to suffer so much as I had during the, to me, long hours of the day of torture, and live. I lost hope, lost all desire to live, and only wanted to lie down in the burning sand and rest.”

His companion, Sam, was not in such bad condition and constantly tried to inspire Jacob with hope – saying he could see trees just a few miles ahead. At one point Sam actually thought he did see trees, but it must have been the mirages of the desert.

Jacob wrote: *“Hope sprang up anew in my breast. This added renewed energy to my physical system, and we pushed on. There was water ahead – water and life! Hope had usurped the throne where black Despair had reigned.”* The first water he came to was in a slough. *“It was stagnant water and covered with a green scum, but it was water!”*

Sam tried to discourage him from drinking that water, but Jacob would not listen. *“..lying down upon the bank, I pushed the green scum aside, and took a long drink of what seemed to me to be the sweetest and purest of beverages.”*

However, they had passed no trains all day and thus had no opportunity to buy any provisions. They traveled for over



Humboldt Sink. Photo: Shann Rupp.

two days, covering seventy-five miles without a morsel of food. Finally, they determined to make a dash for the Sink.

“Weak from lack of food we were, but we knew that our only salvation was to reach the Sink of the Humboldt, and we resolved not again to sleep until food was found.”

Can the reader imagine our condition? *“In imagination let him travel on foot two days and sleep in the shadow of the willows two nights, without a morsel of food passing his lips, and in that time place about seventy-five miles between himself and the starting point and then let him imagine himself starting in for the third day’s journey, with no positive assurance of getting anything to eat until he had covered a distance of forty miles, at least, and possibly he can, in imagination, realize our condition as we started out on the third day of this almost hopeless journey.”*

They eventually came upon a generous man who gave them supplies and assured them they were not more than thirty miles from the Sink. ❖

◆ **VIRGINIA CITY** (from p.1)

In New Business, Stafford Hazelett, a member of NW chapter, spoke about the order to close roads to motor vehicles in the Lassen National Forest for safety reasons. The one major segment of the Lassen Trail, still accessible to 4-wheel drive vehicles, is partially closed and is proposed for full closure. Copies of maps showing affected areas were available. Joyce Everett announced that the OCTA National Board Meeting will be in Sacramento, March 7 and 8, 2008; the Chapter is planning our spring Symposium to coordinate with that meeting. Glenn Harrison, new OCTA President, spoke about a possible symposium or convention in the Southwest in 2009.

At 11:00 o'clock, we had a recess from the Board Meeting when Rachel Dolbier presented a very interesting talk about the Mackay Family Silver. She is Administrator at the Keck Earth, Engineering Museum, Mackay School of Mines, University of Nevada, in Reno where the extensive Mackay silver collection is housed.

Afterwards, we formed into interest groups to discuss pros and cons of what the Chapter has been doing and ideas for future directions the Chapter should go. The topics included: trail marking, activities, preservation, and publications.

Mini reports followed a half hour of lively discussion. The trail marking group suggested there should be an "official list" or inventory of projects the Chapter is currently doing. The activities group focused on how to publicize activities effectively and suggested that there should be a greater variety of different kinds of activities – walking, driving, bus tours and non-tour-



*Joyce Everett, Tom Hunt and Fran Taplin chat
Photo: Carol March.*

ing workshops. The preservation group noted that preservation could cover a huge area, so they focused on road closures, particularly the pending ones in the Lassen National Forest. They noted that trail groups had not been contacted about closing of the roads that affect access to the trails. Finally, the publications group noted it included all methods of communications not just a newsletter: E-News, Trail Talk, Web site. Getting new people to send in articles is a goal.

Returning to Board Meeting business, Frank Tortorich suggested we rename the CA-NV Chapter. He feels a different name might broaden our appeal and mentioned Far West as a possibility. A straw poll of members should be taken for suggestions. Fran Taplin commented the straw poll options should include not changing the name. Next, there was a motion that the Chapter sponsor two 5th grade classes in Eureka, CA, by providing Bill Hill's trail history books, a cost of about \$300. The Board approved the motion. In one further item of business, the Board passed the motion that an Editorial Board should be selected by Board members. The Editorial Board can include general Chapter members as well as Board members.

In mid-afternoon, Jerry Dwyer entertained us with a talk entitled, "My Family History in Virginia City." His great grandfather was born in Ireland but emigrated to Virginia City in the 1860s where he met and married Jerry's great grandmother. Some of the family remained in the area into the 20th century, including Jerry's mother who attended this Fourth Ward School. Jerry's research resulted in a family reunion in 2006 attended by 25 members.

The Chapter meeting was officially adjourned at 4:15 p.m.



Lunch!time: Velma and Don Buck

with a closed personnel session following between the Board and *Trail Talk* staff. Other members had time to visit the museum and gift shop downstairs and to fan out down the streets of Virginia City to explore.

The fun wasn't over yet. Saturday evening we gathered at the historic Gold Hill Hotel for a No Host cocktail hour and very good dinner. The rough-hewn, stone and brick hotel is the oldest hotel building still in existence in Nevada. By summer of 1860, the population in Gold Hill had grown to over 1,200 with hotels and boarding houses in demand, so in July 1861 the Riesen house, today's Gold Hill Hotel, was built.

After dinner, who should come into the dining room but Mark Twain himself, also known as McAvoy Layne! Dressed in period clothing and sporting side whiskers, he told about his escapades during the days of the Comstock. Among other witty comments he

said, "I have never let my schooling interfere with my education." During his dialog, he picked Don Buck and Frank Tortorich out of the audience to comment on their names and interests, and before retiring, he admonished us to "Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest!"

Sunday morning saw several Chapter members riding the train on a 35 minute round trip from Virginia City to Gold Hill and back. All who attended send their thanks to Patty and Steve Knight for making and carrying out all the arrangements for an outstanding Chapter gathering.

Note: The information about the Chapter Board meeting included in this article is NOT part of the official Minutes of that meeting. Minutes of the Board meetings will be mailed to Board Members separately and will be available at the meeting in Sacramento in March 2008. ❖



DIARY QUOTE ...

Submitted by Shann Rupp

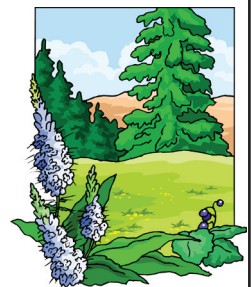
Interesting note from the pen of John Fothergill, in 1853

"One can hardly fancy any country big enough or rich enough or productive enough to receive and maintain such an apparently inexhaustible stream of human life. Surely this California must shortly be crammed." ❖

OBITUARIES: Dorothy Hendricks and Evelyn White

Dorothy Hendricks:

Wife of Scott Hendricks of Napa, died Thursday, November 29th, of cancer. She attended many conventions and symposiums and thoroughly enjoyed being a member of OCTA.



Evelyn White:

Sunday, January 6th, 2008. She was born November 15, 1913, to the late Lee and Carrie Smith, in Ponca City, Oklahoma. She had eight siblings, all of whom predeceased her. The family came to California when she was a young girl. She married George White in Carson City, Nevada, on May 26, 1934. They had celebrated 67 years of marriage at the time of his death in February 2002.

She was a member of the Gilroy and Argonauts Historical Societies. Among her many interests were history and travel with her husband, George, who spent the better part of his life researching and retracing the steps of his ancestor, Thomas Foster Rhoads, with Evelyn. Thomas died on the California Trail along the Humboldt River in Nevada; two of his sons, Daniel and John Rhoads, took part in the rescue of the Donner-Reed Party. ❖



WILL TRAIL SIGNS BE PROHIBITED?

Hi all,

On January 2, 2008, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued its Notice of Proposed Amendments to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) which is the federal Bible of highways (See <http://www.tfhr.gov/pubrds/jan00/mutcd.htm>). It includes a section of the manual with a proposed change that will prohibit the use of Trail Signs on freeways or expressways. For example, that would mean the National Historic Oregon Trail auto tour route signs on I-84 would no longer be allowed as well as Lewis & Clark signs. Many states would be affected along the California Trail, the Mormon Pioneer Trail, and the Pony Express Trail and several other historic trails. The following link gives central source for information http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/proposed_amend/index.htm

number 213. To see proposed changes to MUTCD text, click on Proposed Text – Showing Revisions from 2003 Edition. Go to pages 778-779, Section 2i.08 Trail Signs. See “Standard: Trail signs shall not be installed on freeways or expressways.”

There is a seven month period for comments that ends on July 31, 2008 so there is time to respond to FHWA. I will write a letter to the Federal Highway Administration opposing this change on behalf of OCTA. However, I recommend that you help contact others so that many letters in opposition from a variety of trails organizations will be sent. Thanks for your help.

Yours truly,
Glenn Harrison, President
Oregon-California Trails Association
glennharrison@cmug.com

On some computers to see the Federal Register info, click on Federal Register Notice Dated January 2, 2008. For the section on Trail Signs, read paragraph

[Note: Article edited for space.] ❖

SUBMITTING ARTICLES & LETTERS – to TRAIL TALK

Trail Talk Staff: Norine Kimmy, Assoc. Editor & Publisher
Kathy Buob, Publishing Manager

Submit by the following dates

January
April
July-August
October



1ST DAY OF MONTH or August promptly AFTER convention



Send all articles – both U.S. mail and email to Associate Editor & Publisher
mail to: Norine Kimmy Email to: Assoc. Editor and Publishing Manager
1437 Piedmont Rd. nkimmy@sbcglobal.net
San Jose, CA 95132 buobetc@yahoo.com
(408) 926-6952

1. Email, with or without an attachment, is the quickest and requires the least modification to transfer the information to the *Trail Talk* format. Sending email with an attachment retains the formatting (i.e., a document that has been formatted in MSWord can be opened and retains the formatting).
2. CDs are acceptable, but require use of the U.S. mail service.
3. Hard copies require scanning and proofing (from an original) before being transferred to *Trail Talk* format. When an email is sent, the hard copy is used to verify information. ❖