

NORTHWEST OCTA UPDATE AND JOURNAL NEWSLETTER of the NORTHWEST CHAPTER

April 2001

Chapter Website: <http://www.nwocta.com/>
<http://www.nwocta.com/octastore>

Lethene Parks: President **Don Popejoy**: Editor



General Membership Meeting March 10, 2001 The Dallas, Oregon

This day was the same as most days in the Columbia River Gorge in early March: windy, overcast with a smattering of sunshine, chilly but promising Spring would soon be here. However, today there was a big difference at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center; some 60 plus Northwest chapter members attended the first meeting of the year.

Chapter President **Lethene Parks** called the meeting to order and the minutes for last years meeting were accepted. The Treasurer's report was given by **Joyce Bolerjack** followed by the Membership totals. A Bylaws change was made which increased chapter dues to a more healthy \$10 per membership, effect June 1, 2001. **Rich Herman** was elected to the board of directors, filling the position left vacant by **Jack Holmes**. Next came the highlight of the morning meeting: **Joyce Bolerjack** was presented with the Dick and Trudy Ackerman Meritorious Achievement Award for her outstanding work and devotion to the Northwest chapter. (See photo below)



Chair reports were then given: 2001 Outings and Activities, Preservation, Trail marking, Update and

Website, National President and National Preservation. **Lethene** then made a Call for members to help with chapter projects. **Joyce Bolerjack** and **Gail Carbiener** stepped forward to develop a new chapter budget. **Glenn Harrison** took on the added responsibility of updating the chapter Bylaws. **Marley Shurtleff** volunteered to write a chapter handbook as a guideline for new officers and board members. The Raffle, held just before the lunch break, brought into the chapter



Rich Herman accepts a Board of Directors position

coffers \$192. Lunch was enjoyed at the Discovery Center Cafe and almost everyone hurried off to the gift shop before returning to the afternoon meeting. The speaker was **Susan Badger Doyle** and she spoke to us about the diaries of the Bozeman Trail pioneers from her book "*Journeys to the Land of Gold.*"



Suzanne presents Lowell Tiller his Blue Bucket Mine trophy

Northwest OCTA Update

The *NW OCTA Update* is the newsletter published by the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association. It is published on the 15th day of January, April, July, and October of each year. Also, a special Convention issue is done after each convention in August. Submission deadline for each *Update* is the 15th of the month previous to publication.

Chapter Officers and Board of Directors:

President -

Lethene Parks: lethene@theofficenet.com

Past President -

Dave Welch: djwelch@csi.com

Vice President -

Glenn Harrison: harrison@cmug.com

Secretary -

Marley Shurtleff: shurt@oz.net

Treasurer -

Joyce Bolerjack: jpbolerjack@worldnet.att.net

Membership Chair -

Joyce Bolerjack: jpbolerjack@worldnet.att.net

Board of Directors -

Susan Badger Doyle: sdoyle@oregontrail.net

Richard Herman

Carol Buss

Historian -

Juanita Haun

Archaeologist -

Connie Johnson

Publications Director -

Jim Tompkins: tompkins@teleport.com

Webmaster -

Tom Laidlaw: tomactor@aol.com

Update Editor -

Don Popejoy: dpocalc2@aol.com

Trail Marking & Mapping -

Victor Bolon: atlas74@excite.com

Outings -

Glenn Harrison: harrison@cmug.com

COED -

Ella Mae Young

Conventions -

Jack & Pat Fletcher: jpletcher@olympus.net

Chapter Preservation Officer & Trail Monitors -

Chuck Hornbuckle: hornbucklecs@juno.com

State Liaisons -

Oregon: Jim Renner

Washington: Dave Welch

From the Parks Bench Lethene Parks

As chapter president I receive newsletters from all the chapters. From reading these I know that much good work is being done all over the country and I know that our NW chapter is one of the best, with many, many hours of volunteer work contributed each year. I hope that those of you able to get out on the trails are gearing up for another summer of productive activity, learning and fun. For those not able to get out there and pound markers, we will be making an effort to involve more of you in helping in other ways: research in diaries, libraries and courthouses, organizing a program, etc. It helps the total effort that all of you are interested and aware. And I hope that at whatever level you are able to participate you are learning, teaching and having fun.

Speaking of which, On April 8 and 9, **Don Popejoy, Tom Laidlaw, Dick Parks** and I began to get our muscles in gear with a trip to view the remains of the 1826 Hudson's Bay Company Fort Colville near Kettle falls, WA. The site has long been under the waters of Lake Roosevelt (the reservoir behind Grand Coulee Dam) but in this year of exceptionally low water the site is exposed. So, two days in a row we hiked the two plus miles out and back, examined the clear outlines of the fort and its buildings, took pictures and measurements, got cold and muddy, and had a thoroughly good time.

If you have a trail-related site where you believe there should be an interpretive sign or marker, please come first to the chapter president and chapter preservation officer. Any group may of course put up an historical sign with their name on it, but if such signs are to have NW OCTA's name on them or have NW OCTA's sanction, the location and wording must have the chapter board's approval. We may also need to coordinate with national OCTA on such signs.

All Aboard the Montana Rockies Rail Tours: Celebrate the coming Lewis & Clark bicentennial as you join Tour Director **Don Popejoy** for this most remarkable journey. Follow "*In the Path of Lewis & Clark*" Portland to Great Falls, 8 days, 7 nights. Departs July 30 and August 20. This is a classic tour aboard a restored streamliner on original 1880s rail routes. For details go to www.montanarailtours.com or contact **Don** at dpocalc2@aol.com or 509-483-3174. A generous discount will be given to OCTA & LCTHF members by contacting **Don** first.

Year 2001 Outings

Baker City - Oregon Trail Interpretive Center Flagstaff Hill: April 28, 29 and 30

Joint activities with the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council, BLM, Trail Tenders, NW OCTA, Idaho/Montana OCTA, and Travel Information Council Historical Markers Committee.

Saturday April 28 - OCTA members can visit the Interpretive Center on their own beginning at 9 AM. At 1 PM there will be a shuttle service to take us to the dedication site of the new historical marker "Lure of Gold" on Highway 86. At 2 PM the Dick & Trudy Ackerman Meritorious Service Award will be installed with the Ackerman's and Joyce Bolerjack being honored. In the theater, Dick and Trudy will give a talk as will Mary Oman on the recently discovered Irrigon ruts, along with Jack Evans and Ezra Meeker. At 6 PM there will be a catered buffalo stew dinner at the American Legion Hall for \$10.

Sunday April 29 - There will be two hikes along the Oregon Trail on Virtue Flat: you can choose either the 3 mile or 6 mile hike. Be sure to dress appropriately and bring food and **water**. Time of the hikes will be given at the Saturday meeting. Possible group dinner for those who stay over night. Contact **Jim Renner** for more information at jimr@cnc.com

Agency Valley Cemetery Cleanup: May 11 - 13

This outing will be lead by **Gail and Muriel Carbiener** and they will take us about 75 miles west and north of Vale, which is north of the Beulah Reservoir. Travel day is on the 11th and meet the Carb's on the morning of the 12th which is the "cleanup day" and then drive home (or whatever) on may 13th. This 1/4 acre cemetery started in 1883 and contains the graves of Levi Scott of Applegate Trail fame and his sons. Visit the nearby Sarah Chamber's grave site. 4x4's are not necessary. For more information contact **Gail and Muriel** at cypmcgc@oregontrail.net

Cherokee Trail: May 19

This is a joint meeting with the Olympia Genealogical Society and the Tumwater Historical Society in Olympia, Washington. **Jack and Pat Fletcher** will talk about the Cherokee Trail and

Year 2001 Outings

(Continued)

Jim Tompkins will give diary readings. This program will begin at 9 AM at the Tumwater Middle School: Directions: on I - 5 Exit #101 (Not highway 101) on south end of Tumwater. Turn west 1/2 mile to Littlerock Road. Turn north about 1/2 mile, Tumwater Middle School is on the west side of Littlerock Road. Follow signs to the small group instruction room.

Contact **Fletchers** or **Tompkins**:

jpletcher@olympus.net tompkins@teleport.com

William Cannon - Living History: May 20

This is a joint meeting with Linn Co. Historical Society and starts at 2 PM at the Lakeside Center, Mennonite Village in Albany, Oregon. William Cannon's (NW OCTA's **Tom Laidlaw**) life from 1755 to 1854, spans the period from the birth of the United States up to the 31st state. Hear the story of the early Northwest fur trade, the building of Fort Vancouver, establishment of the first government in Oregon at Champoege as told by a man who lived it as an Astorian hunter, Fort Vancouver blacksmith and miller, soldier and Oregon politician. Contact **Tom Laidlaw** at tomactor@aol.com

National Trails Day: June 2

This is an Oregon Trail hike to the McDonald Crossing of the John Day River and continue to the Deschutes River crossing and beyond. This is a combined hike/drive and centers at Biggs, Oregon. The NW chapters trail marking "Guru" **Vic Bolon**, will lead us along the route marked by the trail marking crew last year. For more information see **Vic's** article on page 5 or contact **Vic** at atlas74@excite.com

Applegate Trail Outing: June 11 and 12

Along with **Gail & Muriel Carbiener**, we will locate sites for interpretive markers between Alturas, CA and Klamath Falls, OR along the Applegate/Southern Route. A NPS grant has been applied for, and assuming grant approval, the trail marking "survey trip" will take place, beginning in Alturas at the BLM headquarters office at 9 PM. **Richard Silva** will provide background information about the Applegate/Southern Route to Oregon across Northern California. Travel approximately 85 miles on Forest Service graded gravel roads or county roads. There are two purposes for this adventure: first to enjoy the trail over an area that may be among the least traveled by Rut Nuts and secondly to identify

where holes will be dug and markers planted on subsequent work trips. A 4x4 is not required, but a high clearance vehicle is best. For more information contact the **Carb's** at cypmcgc@oregontrail.net

The Barlow Road: The Dalles to Oregon City June 23 and 24

This outing will be lead by **Jim Tompkins** and **Tom Laidlaw** and we will meet in Sorosist Park at 9 AM. As we leave The Dalles, we will follow the Barlow Road and listen to interpretation via CB radio. **Jim** and **Tom** will take us by the grave site on Tygh Ridge and to the Barlow Tollgate. We will drive segments of the Barlow Road along White River and Barlow Creek. We will camp overnight in the Forest Service campground near Government Camp the night of the 23rd. On Sunday we will walk the Barlow Road Grave Trail and Laurel Hill Chute #3. The outing will end in Oregon City after driving the Sandy River route and the Devils Backbone. For more information contact **Jim** at [tompkins@teleport](mailto:tompkins@teleport.com) or **Tomas** at tomactor@aol.com

Applegate Trail Outing: July 7 - 10

This is the second of the Applegate outings, this one a four day working party. Once again the **Carbiener's** will lead this group starting at Alturas and following the Applegate/Southern Route across the very top of California. Sixteen markers will be planted, four each day. The markers will be made from Railroad Rail, using the method used by Trails West on the eastern part of the Applegate. The CA/NV OCTA chapter is working with the NW OCTA chapter, which is providing all the necessary supplies and materials and obtaining landowner permission. A Cost Share Grant (see June 11 - 12 outing) will provide our members with some personal expense reimbursement for mileage, meals and motels. For more information contact **Gail** and **Muriel** at cypmcgc@oregontrail.net

More Outings: July 2001 Update will have more details or contact Outing Leader or Editor

**Naches Trail Flyover
July 28 & 29**

Dick Pingrey at: rjpingrey@msn.com

OCTA Convention: Casper, WY

August 12 -18

Ron Lund at <http://w3.trib.com/~rlund/chapter.html>
**The Columbia River Connection - Lewis & Clark
Sept. 8 & 9**

Don Popejoy at dpocalc2@aol.com (New Date)

NW OCTA Board Meeting & Convention Planning Session: October 20

For more information contact **Lethene Parks** at lethene@theofficenet.com

Marv Ross and the Trail Band

August 4th in Newport, Oregon

August 12th & 13th in Cannon Beach, Oregon

August 18th in Seaside, Oregon

August 24th at the EOTIC in Oregon City, Oregon

October 6th in Hillsboro, Oregon

For more information contact **Jim Tompkins** at Tompkins@teleport.com

Announcements:

The chapter board has asked me to find out from each one of you what your personal choice is for receiving the *Update*. Even though you have e-mail, you are not obligated to receive your *Update* electronically. I am requesting a response from whichever your choice you make, YES or NO.

If you **DO NOT** wish to receive future copies of the *Update* by e-mail, please reply by saying **NO**. If you **Do** wish to receive copies of the *Update* by e-mail, please reply by saying **YES**. You can reply to me at shurt@oz.net **Marley Shurtleff**, Secretary

There will be a USFS Pit (Passport In Time) project June 24 - 30 to conduct an archeological study to identify the Oregon Trail between Hilgard and the Blue Mountain Crossing Park. The project is timely and fits in nicely with the NPS project which is nearing completion. Contact **Guy Marden**, Forest Service Archaeologist in Baker City, at 541/523-1314 or PO Box 907, Baker City, OR, 97814 or via e-mail at gwarden@fs.fed.us

For Sale: In 11 binders all issues of the "Overland Journal, News From the Plains and Folio" \$500 or best of offers. Reply to Orson Goodrich, 579 NE Fleming, Gresham, Oregon 97030-5917

Editors Note: The “Emigrants on the Oregon Trail in Oregon 1845-1848” By John & Sandra Bristow and Jim Tompkins article on the new OCTA marker at the EOTIC in Oregon City will appear in the July 2001 Update.

National Trails Day Tour

By Vic Bolon

June 2nd and 3rd promises to be an interesting weekend for those who join together to observe and walk in the ruts of the Oregon Trail. The approaches to the John Day River must have been viewed and experienced as nothing short of formidable by the travelers on their way to the Willamette Valley. Two routes were available out of the valley. One is a canyon which appears would be a challenge if just on foot! The other is to climb up the west side of the canyon as though reversing the descent on the east side. The choice must have been exceedingly difficult, but choose they must.

Coming down off the plateau to the Columbia River presented some problems as well. Following the Columbia down to the Deschutes River wouldn't have been much of an obstacle to the people who had conquered the John Day River Canyon. Crossing the Deschutes River west and gaining the high rolling hills and then following the terrain to The Dalles and on to the Willamette wouldn't have been easy either. By this time, they and their animals must have been weary to the bone. Once you've observed the difficulties the immigrants faced and surmounted, it is guaranteed you will have a renewed appreciation of the courage and determination these people had.

It is intended that the day of June 2nd the tour group will spend going to the John Day River segment of the Trail. The day of the 3rd will be spent following the Trail where it comes down to Biggs, OR and goes on to the Deschutes River and on into The Dalles. It would be advisable to bring a lunch the 1st day, to be eaten on the banks of the John Day. Also, bring appropriate hiking gear, plenty of **water**, a hat, suntan lotion and foot wear, etc. On the 2nd day we'll leave Biggs and go to the Deschutes River, where some hiking will be done, and then on to The Dalles. A word about the hikes: They are not difficult nor extensive but they necessarily are more than a

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“One of These Days”

Article & Photo by Chuck Hornbuckle

Not only is this a popular country-western song but sometimes I think my life's motto. Our illustrious Editor asked me to write about “Preservation.” Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines preservation as 1. *The act or process of preserving* and 2. *The state of being preserved*. To this we should add “with personal interest” in order to assure the success of our goals. OCTA's preservation covers a wide array of activities from monitoring outside impacts to the trail to sharing with others our activities and goals. In this issue we will “explore” trail marking and participation in local non-OCTA events.

Trail Marking: Chapter members have been involved in trail marking since day one. Most of these have been one or two day outings within a confined area. Four years ago the NW Chapter entered into an agreement with the NPS to mark and map the main Oregon Trail between LaGrande and Cecil, OR. a distance of about 120 miles.



OCTA display at the Rotunda in the Washington State Capital

Last year 60 additional miles were added extending the project to The Dalles. The project goal was to develop accurate maps using GPS technology of the emigrants final leg on their journey to the Willamette Valley. The interim report for that project was recently completed and the final report is due in September this year.

My observations suggest it is a fair statement that each person involved looks back on the miles with great, but humbling satisfaction. We walked where pioneers walked: we lived through cold days in the Blue Mountains and the heat of the desert; we struggled to find our way up and down steep hills. We survived as did the emigrants. True, at the end of the day we found relief in an air-conditioned

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Feature Article: Fort Vancouver's Renaissance by Tom Laidlaw

I hope I am not assuming too much that the readers of this article know the basic story of Fort Vancouver, headquarters of the Columbia District of the British Hudson's Bay Fur Company. It is readily available else-where, but this time I want to talk about the modern Fort Vancouver which, like a Phoenix, has literally arisen from the ashes of an 1866 fire. In 1846 America had won the contest over who owned the Oregon Country. They had "shared the room" with Great Britain for 28 years and finally settled on a boundary of the 49th parallel where it is today.



By that time the beaver were pretty well trapped out, silk hats were in, and the Willamette Valley was full of Americans: ex-mountain men, missionaries, and pioneers who had arrived on the Oregon Trail. Fort Vancouver's Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin, who had helped many bereft American settlers start farms in the Valley, found himself at loggerheads with the Honorable Company for his humanity and generosity. Put in an awkward position, he retired not only from the company, but from his nationality. He moved to Oregon City and became an American citizen, and even mayor of Oregon City.

The border treaty required the U.S. to pay Hudson's Bay for their property and the negotiations for that took 25 years. Meanwhile, in 1849, the U.S. Army had moved in and created Vancouver Barracks. They leased or usurped many of the old buildings and Hudson's Bay left Fort Vancouver totally in 1860. Sometime in 1866 someone lit a match and burned the already decrepit, decaying and broken down buildings. We are supposed to say no one knows who did it, but you do the math. The only question in my mind is whether it was an official act or a personal one. We will never know.

Today Fort Vancouver is being slowly and lovingly rebuilt on its original foundations, using still existing records, drawings and photographs from 1845, which the NPS uses as the target year for interpretation.

The first modern archeology was done in 1947 by Louis Caywood. Over the next 50 years more than a million artifacts were found: clay pipes, beads, glass, locks, trap parts, and iron works of all kinds. In one recent dig live hand grenades were found from the 1917 use of the land as a spruce cut-up plant for airplanes. Thousands of shards of Spode China have been pieced together into jugs, plates, cups, bowls, and saucers.

The first construction of the modern fort was in 1966 with the north palisade wall. This was followed on an irregular schedule by the bake house, Chief Factor's house, bastion, blacksmith shop, the Indian trade shop, and the fur warehouse. The most recent buildings are the Carpenter shop and the Jail. Work will begin on the Counting house later this year. I plan to expand this article and follow the progress of that new building in an article for the Overland Journal.



Laidlaw as Billy Cannon

Bolon - Continued from page 5

mere stretch of the legs, perhaps as much as a mile at the John Day. For those who take this tour, there is much to see and do without taking part in the hikes so don't let the hiking discourage you.

Finally, lodging may be found in Biggs, which will be our base of operations. The following list of four motels will meet our needs. The "intrepid trail marking group" has made extensive use of the Dinty Motor Inn and it is recommended because of its cost, rooms and service, including a pool. Call 541-739-2596. The other three motels and their phone numbers are as follows: the Riviera Motel at 541-739-2501, the New View at 541-739-2525, and the Biggs Motel at 541-739-2363. A Washington State RV Park is located across the Columbia River from Biggs for those who would like to make an RV weekend of it.

We will meet at Jack's Fine Foods in Biggs at 8 AM on the 2nd morning for breakfast and final instructions and be ready to depart at 9 AM. It would help me in my planning if I could be advised of your intent to go on the tour, so a call at the number listed below would be appreciated. Also, bring along your CB unit for on the go information and instructions. call 360-681-7309 or e-mail me at:

atlas74@excite.com

So Many Authors, So Many Books

Editor's Note: While at the recent general membership meeting in March at The Dalles, OR. I had the opportunity to meet chapter member Sandy Wilbur. He brought several copies of his book "**The McCully Train: Iowa to Oregon 1852**" with him and set up a table to sell and autograph them. It's a wonderful book and once again showcases the amazing amount of talent that this chapter has in it's members.

The Personal Search for an Overland Journal

By **Sandy Wilbur**

My wife's McCully ancestors were great travelers - Northern Ireland to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; New Brunswick to Ohio; Ohio to Iowa and to the California Gold Rush and back; not to mention three family trips over the Oregon Trail. Unfortunately they were terrible writers and preservers of artifacts. We knew of the McCully trips from some latter-day family reminiscences, but search as we might, we could not come up with anything that had been written at the time of any of the overland crossings. We had OCTA do a search through COED, and we checked the lists of overland trail manuscripts in such places as Mattes' *Platte River Road Narratives* and the Oregon Historical Society's *Overland Passages*. In a 1906 newspaper interview with one of the McCullys, we found the names of a number of people who had been on the 1852 wagon train, so we checked the above mentioned sources for their names. No luck.

It was a little bit of curiosity about one incident on the 1852 trip that finally put us onto the long hoped for journal. In 1852, David McCully's son Joseph had died as a result of an accident when he was taking a string of mules to water. The incident had been mentioned in several reminiscences recorded after 1900, but the memories of what happened were wildly different.

Depending on which narrative you read, he died near Old Fort Kearny, near New Fort Kearny, near Fort Laramie, or near Fort Hall. What especially intrigued us is that the family papers said that his grave had been marked with a metal stake, and that the stake was still standing in the 1930's when some McCully family member had found it. Was it still there and could we find it? Twice every year, we would be driving across the plains on our way back and forth between Oregon and New Hampshire. Maybe there was some way to figure

out where the grave really was located.

It was at this point that we remembered our COED search. There had been one reference in the COED printout to a son of D. McCully. We hadn't completely ignored it at the time, but it was in the journal of someone we had never heard of before, and we had never gotten around to looking into it. We wrote to the COED folks to see if they could tell us anything more about what the journal said. We were given the name of a library where the manuscript was presumably located. They sold us a copy of the manuscript for \$40 and a week or so later we got it in the mail. Not only was our acquisition an actual journal of the McCully Train, but the writer - John S. McKiernan - had produced a document that is as eloquent, descriptive, and humorous as any overland journal we have ever read. We felt it was so good, in fact, that we targeted it for the next publication in our line of SYMBIOS books. It became the prize element in our comprehensive study of "*The McCully Train: Iowa to Oregon 1852*" which was published late last year. On its way from obscure microfilm to (we sincerely hope not to obscure) book form, McKiernan's journal led us along the Oregon Trail several times; to the start of the 1852 trip in Henry County, Iowa; and to stand beside McKiernan's tombstone in an overgrown cemetery in the hills of western Pennsylvania. It's been a very satisfying adventure for us.

What about Joseph's grave? No, we never found it, but with the help of John McKiernan's journal, we were able to narrow down its location from a thousand mile stretch to a five mile extent in Saunders County, Nebraska - about halfway between Old Fort Kearny on the Ox-bow Cutoff. A few years ago, we drove a graveled back road through the rolling hills of eastern Nebraska, and stopped the truck on a knoll that must have been not far from where Joseph breathed his last. Of course, it didn't look the same as it did in 1852, but with the only man-made features in sight being fences and an occasional farm building, we still felt as if we were capturing a little of the flavor of those McCully train days.

Sandy and Sally's book was reviewed in the Winter 2000 issue of the Overland journal. It is available for \$14.95 plus \$2.00 postage from: SYMBIOS, 4367 S.E. 16th, Gresham, Oregon 97080.

The SYMBIOS website can be found at <http://www.netcom.com/~symbios>

Hornbuckle - Continued from page 5

truck, but by golly we walked where they walked so long ago.

If you are looking for your “One of these days” it is not too late to sign on for this years endeavor. In the last *Update*, **Gail Carbiener** wrote about plans to mark and map Applegate’s Southern Road to Oregon as it was called in contemporary 1846 news articles. The first project will run from Goose Lake to the Oregon Border, a distance of nearly 85 miles. Future projects will extend the mapping and marking into the Willamette Valley. Much has been documented about the Southern Road but the trail is largely unmarked. At this point we are soliciting any and all who may have knowledge or opinions on this important corridor. What an opportunity for us to remedy “One of these days.”

Local events: There are many local opportunities to publicize OCTA. Suzanne and I have found history is of significant interest to many in our community of Thurston County, WA. When we first became members of the OCTA family we participated in several outings. That exposure spurred our interest in trail history for

several reasons foremost of which involved Suzanne’s 14 ancestors who crossed the plains between 1846 and 1854.

Another local event will put you shoulder to shoulder with local historic preservation folks often listed under county planning offices, and with historical societies. They welcome all offers regarding historic events leading to area settlement.

For the last six years Suzanne and I have participated in our county’s annual birthday party; this year Thurston County is 149 years old. Our display included maps and narratives of the Fort Vancouver to Olympia emigrant road. Officially this is the Cowlitz Trail but we refer to this as the “true end of the Oregon Trail.” Others in our chapter believe the “true end of the Oregon Trail” is the Naches Pass Route across the Washington Cascades. Along with information on the Cowlitz Trail we displayed OCTA brochures and magazines.

Participating in the many outings offered by our chapter has provided one remedy for our “One of these days.”

**NW OCTA UPDATE
10813 NE 20th Street
Bellevue, WA. 98004**