

Northwest Trails

Newsletter of the Northwest Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association

Volume 22, No. 2

Spring 2007

Upcoming Northwest Chapter Outings

Pendleton, OR June 1–3

Friday, June 1

7:00–9:00 pm: meet for dinner at a local restaurant

Saturday, June 2

8:30 am–Noon: Symposium

"Indian Perspectives," speaker to be announced

"Hudson's Bay Company and Early French Settlers," Sam Pambrun

"Oregon Trail: Routes and Encounters," Susan Badger Doyle

Noon–2:00 pm: picnic in a city park 2:00–5:00 pm: auto tour of the Oregon Trail Tour Leaders: Keith May and Roger Blair 6:30–9:00 pm: meet for dinner at a local

restaurant

Sunday, June 3

9:30–11:30 am: Tamástslikt Museum tour Noon–2:00 pm: picnic at Pambrun historic home

Registration flyers will be sent out in May.

Reservations for motels in Pendleton can be made on the OCTA website www.octa-trails.org (click on Online Hotels on the left column).

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE
NATIONAL TRAILS DAY ON JUNE 2

Whidbey Island September 7–9

Friday, September 7

Evening: group dinner and a raffle

Saturday, September 8

8:30 am–Noon: Symposium

"Ebey Family's Overland Journey to Whidbey Island in 1854," Susan Badger Doyle

"Terry Family History: Oregon Trail pioneers and Early Settlers on Whidbey Island," Joanne Engle Brown

"Kellogg Family History: Oregon Trail and Settlement on Whidbey Island," Avis Rector

"The Creation of Ebey's Landing Reserve: Why and How," Reed Jarvis

2:00–4:30 pm: auto tour of Ebey's Landing Reserve and Sunnyside Cemetery Evening: dinner on your own

Sunday, September 9

Visits to the Historical Museum in Coupeville or tours of town

Due to limited accommodations in Coupeville, if you plan to attend, please make your reservations as soon as possible. Motels in Coupeville (more are in Oak Harbor, 10 miles away):

Coupeville Inn 360-678-6668 (AAA) Countryside Inn 360-678-5610 Captain Whidbey Inn 360-678-4097 Anchorage Inn B&B 360-678-5581 (AAA)

NW Chapter Directory

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President's Message

I attended the midyear meeting of the Board of Directors in Independence in early March. It was a very successful meeting of the Board, which passed eleven motions. The meeting was well attended, including representation by nearly every chapter.

On the following weekend the Northwest Chapter held its annual meeting at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center in The Dalles. Approximately 50 members attended the meeting, with the highlight being a talk on the archaeology of the Lewis and Clark Rock Fort site in The Dalles by Ken Karsmizki, director of the Discovery Center. The 2007 Ackerman Meritorious Achievement Award went to Vic Bolon for his long service as Mapping and Marking Chair and his tireless efforts in marking the trail. His work was both exhaustive and accurate and his close contacts with landowners have elevated the chapter's integrity on the ground. As with all the Ackerman Award winners, Vic certainly deserves the honor. The chapter also recognized the Ezra Meeker Society with our first Distinguished Service Award. The award was accepted by Andy Anderson for the Society's co-sponsorship of the anniversary tour celebrating Meeker's retracing the trail to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the Oregon Trail.

The upcoming summer issue of *Overland Journal* will be a special expanded issue celebrating OCTA's 25th year. I encourage you to offer your congratulations to OCTA by adding your name to a list of members for only \$25 per name. Or, you can take out a larger space and use it to offer your individualized congratulations or to memorialize a loved one. The chapter board voted to take out a full page ad to recognize Northwest Chapter members who have made OCTA the success it is today through service on the Board of Directors or as officers. See a sidebar in this issue for prices.

Upcoming events to look forward this field season include a symposium in Pendleton, June 1–3. The following weekend Paul Massee will lead a trail marking weekend from La Grande to Hilgard Junction. Dedications for new signs in the Cecil area and for Tub and Alkali Springs are scheduled. The Cecil Campsite sign was spearheaded by John Edmundson, a local resident and assisted by OCTA members. Billy Symms took on the Tub and Alkali Springs endeavor. The fall outing September 7–9 will also be a special weekend. Be sure to save the date and make your Whidbey Island room reservations early.

Finally, I hope each of you attend the August Convention in Gering/Scottsbluff. This is the 25th anniversary meeting. Come be a part of OCTA history.

—Roger Blair

Letter of Thanks to the Chapter

On behalf of the Ezra Meeker Historical Society, I would like to thank the officers and membership of the Northwest Chapter of OCTA for the honor they paid us by conferring the Distinguished Service Award on us last weekend [at the NW OCTA Annual Meeting].

As we will tell anyone who will listen, we travelers had a great time, and we thought we were doing good work; but the paucity of press coverage made us wonder if the message got out. Your award validated our belief and cancelled our doubts.

I will share this award with our membership next week at our annual meeting, for without the support and encouragement of our entire membership, the dozen of us would never have gotten outside Puyallup's city limits.

Finally, this was the first of what we hope will turn into a series of joint projects with OCTA. OCTA gave us points of contact on the ground and access to federal funds which made our project viable. Your support all along the way was very important.

Again, on behalf of the traveling team and the whole of the Meeker Society, thank you.

—Andy Anderson, Historian

Legislation

OCTA Legislative Liaisons Bill and Jeanne Watson are monitoring Senate Bill 54, which would authorize the National Park Service to undertake the study of additional routes and cutoffs that might be added to the National Historic Trails System.

S.54 passed the U.S. Senate in late July and was then sent to the House of Representatives. OCTA is expected to be invited to testify when the subcommittee holds a public hearing on S.54 later this year.

You can read the legislation at: http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-

bin/query/C?c109:./temp/~c109NvmcfK

Oregon Trail Preservation Quiz Answers

At the NW Chapter Annual Meeting in March, Stafford Hazelett provided the answers to his preservation quiz that was in the last issue of *Northwest Trails*.

1. a. 1906 or c. 1925

2. c. 1978

3. e. none of the above

4. a., j., q., r., s., u.

5. d. 27

6. b. 6

7. c., d., or e. (actual correct number is 1,740)

8. b.:

9. e. none of the above, until recently. Now OHTAC is reviewing applications.

10. The Oregon Trail passes through the following counties in Oregon:

Malheur

Baker

Union

Umatilla

Morrow

Gilliam

Sherman

Wasco

Multnomah

Clackamas

11. c. 61

12. b. Hilgard Junction

13. a. within 0.1 meter

14. e. Class 5

15. a. Class 1

16. d. Class 4

17. c. Class 3

18. c. Martin Handcart Company

19.–21. your personal favorite, or all

Food for Thought

Only when the last tree has withered and the last fish caught, and the last river been poisoned, will we realize we cannot eat money.

—Cree Indian Proverb

La Grande Hiking, Mapping, and Marking Project

An outing is planned for the weekend of June 9 and 10 in La Grande, Oregon, for the purpose of adding another verified link to the Oregon Trail. Last year as part of a PIT project we searched for artifacts on the trail out of Hilgard and found plenty. We GPS'd them and were able to then plot them on a map which verified absolutely where the trail was. We now have the opportunity to take a 3 or 4 mile segment, starting on the edge of the city of La Grande, and do another verification, all of which will be on private land.

We will also be checking our previously placed Carsonite markers for condition. If there is a need to replace some of these posts, we hope to have a group of La Grande Boy Scouts with us who will assist in removing and replacing them as needed. We also expect a small group of local citizens to join us. We welcome their involvement.

On Saturday June 9, we will all meet at Birnie Park in the southwest corner of La Grande on B Street at 9:00 am. One group will climb the hill toward Table Mountain, while others will caravan by car to the top of the hill and either walk down or walk further west another 2 or 3 miles toward Hilgard. In other words, there are three segments for us to enjoy, so expect to be meeting each other coming and going.

We encourage those who have metal detectors to bring them. We could also use people to assist Stafford Hazelett in taking map notes as he will be gathering information to be used in the initial phase of putting a map together according to the MET standard. There will be something there for everybody, including the fact that it will be an enjoyable hike. Expect to see a few faces from the Idaho chapter joining us, also.

Dave Welch spoke of walking on this part of the trail with his son a few years back and said, "It is great country. It is easy to see why the emigrants climbed the hill to get to 6 or 8 miles of relatively flat ground. Also, in the midst of our lunch a herd of elk thundered by." We know there is a herd of elk up on the plateau, so we may see some of them. At least we will no doubt see where they had been! They tell me in La Grande that the elk and cattle like to use the Carsonite markers for scratching posts, so expect to find some of them broken or badly bent.

We have some helpful information as to the many places to stay and to eat in La Grande, and we will send it on to you shortly. Please email Paul Massee pcmassee@comcast.net for more information and let him know you are attending.

Alkali & Tub Springs Outing

The dates are from June 17 until finished—probably two to two-and-a-half days at most. We will all meet at the BLM office parking lot in Vale at 9:00 am on June 17. It is located across the railroad tracks, on the left, on the John Day Hwy.

The work will consist of placing two Nova Color markers, one at Alkali Springs and one at Tub Springs. We will need to build an enclosure at Tub Springs as there is not one there now. It will consist of digging four corner post holes and filling with cement to set the posts and then completing the enclosure. We will probably have to remove the current sign at Alkali Springs since it is not in good shape.

There may or may not be a couple of other signs to put up, since the BLM has indicated they would like us to place some directional signs to direct traffic back to I-84. I have not heard back from their representative yet on that, so we will have to see.

Contact Bill Symms <u>wsymms@teleport.com</u> or call 541-547-4489 to confirm you will attend. If you need more information, let Bill know.



The Meeker Centennial: Unfinished Business

By Dennis Larsen

As the Ezra Meeker 2006 centennial celebration year was drawing to a close, there was one last piece of unfinished business that nagged at me. I needed to flesh out and put to rest the story of William Bruce Mardon, Ezra's driver and companion from 1906–1912.

We knew nothing about Mardon before he stuck his head in the door of Ezra's tent in March 1906 at The Dalles, Oregon, and said "I hear you are looking for help." Ezra hired him on the spot. At that time he told Ezra his last name was Murry, and it wasn't until later on down the trail that he disclosed his

real name. Why the charade? He drove the oxen, handled cooking and camp chores, helped Ezra sell his books and postcards, and personally chiseled the inscription on the marker that stands today where Ezra placed it in 1906 at the summit of South Pass. In all respects he was an invaluable member of the 1906 Old Oregon Trail Monument Expedition.

Mardon was prone to temper tantrums, and Ezra had much difficulty in warming up to him. Ezra actually fired him in Ohio in early 1907 after one such outburst, and then hired him back almost immediately. He often complained of the forced relationship in letters to his daughter; however his attitude mellowed some-what over the years as the two continued to work side by side.

When the expedition reached New York, Mardon met, courted, and married a woman in the space of just a week or two. Mrs. Mardon then joined the expedition for the rest of the trip and served as chief cook, saleswoman, and (we



William H. Mardon

assume) a calming influence on Mardon. To quote Ezra, she was "a good saleswoman and makes a good impression, and I believe is an honest good woman." Several of Mardon's letters have survived in the Meeker collection, and from them it is obvious that spelling, grammar, and punctuation are skills that eluded him, but they give a colorful portrait of the man himself. No letters from Mrs. Mardon have been found among the Meeker papers. Both Ezra and Mardon always refer to her in their letters as Mrs. M., or Mrs. Mardon, never using a first name.

The Mardons joined Ezra in 1909 as he wandered around California with his ox team and wagon selling books and postcards. There are hints that the couple was also working at Meeker's pioneer exhibit at the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in Seattle that year. In early March 1910 Ezra returned to Seattle to prepare for his second expedition. The Mardons brought the team and wagon by rail from California to The Dalles, Oregon, and awaited Ezra's arrival. On April 14 at Walla Walla, Mrs. M. was sent home (to Johnstown, New York) due to Ezra's precarious financial situation. He was broke again.

Near La Grande, Oregon, Mardon took ill, had an emergency operation, and was lost to Ezra for over a month as he convalesced. He rejoined the outfit in Idaho, but was so weak he was of little use. When they reached Cheyenne, Wyoming, on July 9 Mardon left the expedition to join his wife in New York. In October Mardon wrote Ezra that his finances were at rock bottom, he had recovered, and would like his old job back. Ezra sent him train fare, and Mardon rejoined the second expedition in Kansas City, Missouri, that month. He stayed with Ezra through 1911 and disappears from the record after 1912. We knew nothing of what happened to him after his partnership with Ezra ended.

But we had a few clues. Bert Webber's book, *Ezra Meeker; Champion of the Oregon Trail*, lists two 1928 Bridgeport, Connecticut, newspaper articles about Mrs. Mardon in its bibliography. Webber

included a brief segment at the end of his text about the Mardons. He reported that her name was Clara Miner, and that the two met in a hotel in Gloversville, New York, where she was a cook. Webber went on to say that the Mardons divorced in 1921, and that Clara married Edward Hoover in 1925 and settled in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The source of this information is unclear; but I assumed it came from the two newspaper articles Webber cited. Letters from Mardon to Ezra in the Meeker papers (July 18 and August 1, 1910) indicate that Mrs. M. called Johnstown, New York home, and a September 27, 1910, letter indicates that the couple was staying in Stamford, Connecticut, with her brother. So in October 2006, my wife Pat and I made our way to the Bridgeport Public Library to look up the two newspaper articles. The first reference was a dead end. There was no Sunday edition of the newspaper on the date that Webber listed, and looking a week before and after the date turned up nothing.

The second reference turned up a gem of an article, an interview of "Cora Hoover" as she reminisced about the 1906 Old Oregon Trail Monument Expedition in the aftermath of Ezra Meeker's recent death.



Cora Mardon Hoover

So, first of all, we find Mrs. M's name is Cora, not Clara. And she goes on to tell several tall tales: how she was with Ezra for the entire 1906–08 trip, how she and Ezra would give lectures together, and how she and Ezra had an audience with President Theodore Roosevelt. The article also has a wonderful picture of Cora leading the wagon (probably taken in 1910 on the way to Walla Walla), and a picture of her as she looked in 1928 when the story was written. She said Ezra liked her cooking immensely and that his favorite dish was lettuce with a little sugar sprinkled on it. She quotes Ezra as follows, "He used to say, Lettuce gives you brains Cora, and then he'd sit down and eat a great big panful of it."

Then we turned to the search for the elusive Mardon. With the help of a very able research assistant, we pulled up his 1917–18 World War I draft registration card with his signature at the bottom. It gave his birth date as March 24, 1874, his spouse's name as Mrs. Cora Ethel Mardon of 41 St. John's Place Stamford, Connecticut, and his occupation as Motorman and

Conductor for the Connecticut Railway Company. At last, we were off and running. With a birth date we were finally able to track down William B. Mardon in the U.S. Census. Various records had his middle initial wrong and his last name spelled Marden. But we had our man.

Next stop was the State Library in Hartford and the Office of Vital Statistics, where we were able to secure certified copies of the death certificates for both Mardon and Cora Hoover. After more phone calls, time on the census records and city directories, and finally a trip to Fairfield Cemetery in Stamford and an hour spent looking the grave, our search ended with me hollering across the cemetery, "I found him!!! I found him!!! I found him!!!" The two of us cleaned off the grave marker, placed flowers, and, I confess, had a little conversation with the man.

Here's what we learned. The beginnings are still quite sketchy. William Bruce Mardon was born March 24, 1874, in Missouri to William Mardon and Mary Vare Mardon, both immigrants from England. The next 26 years are a blank. Then in 1900 Mardon, now 26 years old, is found working as a laborer on a farm near Monterey, California. Six years later Mardon was in The Dalles, Oregon, knocking on Ezra's door. As mentioned earlier, the years 1906 through 1912 were spent primarily with Ezra as ox team driver and hired camp hand. In 1913 Mardon moved to Stamford, Connecticut, with Cora, and for the next 35 years this was his home. He got a job as a motorman and conductor on the Connecticut trolley system that connected the Connecticut cities along Long Island Sound. It would be a lifelong career. In 1920 he and Cora were living in an apartment at 178 Atlantic Street. There appear to have been no children. Then in 1921, according to Webber, the couple divorced.

Mardon is listed in the Stamford city directories from 1915 through 1948, always as a conductor or operator for the Connecticut Railway system, but in 1928 a new wife shows up in the city directories:

Louisa Miller Mardon. For Louisa this was her third try at marriage, and it lasted until her death on January 2, 1948. Louisa was born on November 11, 1883, in Connecticut to James and Anna Miller. She seems to have grown up in Stamford. In 1904 she had a son, James F. Hall (marriage #1). In 1910 the mother, now 28 years old, and son were living with her parents in Stamford. No husband is mentioned. Ten years later, in 1920, Louisa M. Conant (marriage #2), age 38, was living with her father in Stamford.

Sometime around 1928 she and Mardon married and moved to 570 Atlantic Street, their home for

the next twenty years. Or perhaps it was her father's home, as the 1930 Census shows Louisa's father, James, living with the Mardons. Louisa died one month before William, and the two of them are buried in Fairfield Memorial Park in Stamford. Living with Mardon at the time of his death on March 24, 1948, was



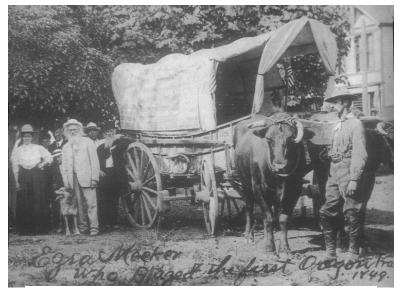
Louisa's son, James J. Hall. He is listed as the informant for the information on the death certificate, and



we assume he arranged for Mardon's headstone. The stone incorrectly lists Mardon's birth date as March 16, 1874, but it is hard to believe the fault was James's, as he supplied the correct birth date for Mardon's death certificate.

As to Cora, we learned she was born January 13, 1878, in Johnstown, New York, to Timothy and Ella

Miner. Timothy was a farmer in nearby Gloversville, and Ella worked as a glove maker. Cora was working as a cook in the Gloversville hotel in 1907, according to Webber, when Ezra and Mardon dropped in to get a hot meal. In 1910 her older brother, James W. Miner, age 37, was living in Stamford, Connecticut, and this is the brother-in-law that Mardon mentions in his September 27, 1910, letter to Ezra. Somewhere along the line, maybe when she married Edward Hoover, Cora shaved three years off her age. The information supplied by Edward on her death certificate lists her birth date as 1881, while the 1880 Census lists her as a two-year-old living with her parents. Only Cora can explain this three-year discrepancy! Unfortunately, she died on November 22, 1933. Her funeral was held in Bridgeport, but she is buried in Prospect Cemetery in Gloversville, New York.



Cora Mardon, Ezra Meeker, William Mardon

Yreka Symposium Update

By Bob and Cherie Evanhoe

We currently have 120 people signed in for the day-and-a-half event. Richard Silva's Siskiyou Trail tour (A) is filled. The Scott Valley Mining Geology and History tour (B) and the Shasta Valley History and Quilt Show tour (C) still have a few openings. We can currently accommodate an additional 30 registrations (although not for Tour A or the Sunday morning Museum event).

The CA/NV Chapter will have a board meeting at 7:30 p.m. Friday evening, April 20. It will be held in the same facility as the Saturday activities: the Miner's Inn Convention Center immediately west of I-5 Exit 775, Central Yreka. Registration packages may also be picked up there beginning at 4:00 p.m. Our local Siskiyou Performing Arts Center will present a musical comedy entitled The State of Jefferson also on Friday evening. We have reserved a limited number of tickets at \$12 each. If you wish to attend, please forward a check in the proper amount, made out to J. Robert Evanhoe. Mail toOCTA-CA/NV Symposium, PO Box 394, Yreka, CA 96097. We will hold your tickets with your registration package. The musical will complement the Symposium presentation by author and historian James Rock who has written a booklet on the subject. It is available for sale at the museum and a local bookstore.

Since we are a trails organization, it is understandable that Mr. Silva's Siskiyou Trail tour would be the most popular. Richard is also compiling, with the museum staff, a booklet of the tour which will be available for sale. So if you miss the tour, you will be able to purchase a copy of the booklet. For the Scott Valley Mining Geology and History tour, we originally indicated we would be traveling down the Scott River and back to Yreka along the Klamath River. This would have made the entire tour 138 miles in length, a bit too much for a bus ride, with appropriate stops along the way, time to refresh before cocktails, and dinner that evening. So we will concentrate on the Scott

Valley mines, geology and history, and provide a route description of the extended river trip for those who may wish to drive it on their own.

We have compiled email lists of all registrants, one for the entire group and one each for CA/NV and NW chapters. We intend to offer a travelogue of interesting points along, and near to, I-5 from each direction. From the south we will start at Red Bluff (and Susanville); from the north, we're not much good beyond Medford. So, everyone, feel free to provide input for these tour guides. Send to Bob Evanhoe at yreka98bob@sbcglobal.net

Yreka is not the easiest place to get to by bus or train. The Amtrak train stops in Dunsmuir, but that's usually in the middle of the night (should they be on time), and we don't know of any car rental. A best bet would be Klamath Falls, 90 miles northeast of Yreka, and the next nearest stop, where you could at least rent a car. Amtrak California operates a daily bus route between Sacramento and Medford which would work northbound. And you can board the southbound leg in Yreka also. You may not board northbound from Yreka. Apparently CalTrans, which provides significant funding, doesn't wish to subsidize travel into Oregon. Greyhound no longer stops in Yreka in either direction.

As mentioned above, there are still a few spots available for the Symposium, exclusive of Tour A and the Sunday morning museum event. If you need any of the original forms and narratives, please let us know at 530-842-5563 or yreka98bob@sbcglobal.net We hope to see you here in April.



View of Mt. Shasta from Yreka

Northwest Trails, Spring 2007

Mullan Military Days Conference May 5–7, 2007

Corbin Senior Center West 827 Cleveland Spokane, Washington 509-327-1584

SATURDAY, MAY 5

Morning Session – 9:00 am "Welcome," Kay Strombo Introductions, Don Popejoy Announcements, Dale Sciuchetti 9:45–10:45 am "Captain John Mullan and His Military Road," Don Popejoy Break: coffee and pastries 11:15 am-12:15 pm "Meet Captain John Mullan," Historical presentation, Tom Laidlaw Lunch - 12:30-2:00 pm Afternoon Session – 2:00 pm "Welcome back," Don Popejoy Announcements, Dale Sciuchetti 2:30-3:30 pm "The Colvile Military Road," Lethene Parks Break: coffee and pastries 4:00-5:00 pm "The Declining years of Mullan and Sohon,"

SUNDAY, MAY 6

Paul McDermott

Morning Session – 9:00 am

"Welcome"

Announcements, Dale Sciuchetti

9:30–10:30 am

Overview of today's field trip

"Following John Mullan's Military Road,"

Don Popejoy

Field Trip 11:00 am–6 pm (car caravan)

Field trip begins in the parking lot

Bring your own lunch and supplies

MONDAY, MAY 7

Morning Session –9:30 am

"Welcome"

Announcements – Dale Sciuchetti

10:00-11:00 am

(speaker not committed at this time)

11:15-11:45am

Overview of field trip

Noon-5:00pm

An optional field trip will be offered to those who are staying over (time approximate)

Hotels/Motels (these are just a few choices)

Best Western Trade Winds North

509-326-5500

Courtyard By Marriott

509-456-7600

Holiday Inn Express

509-328-8505

Howard Johnson

509-838-6630

Oxford Inn & Suites

509-353-9000

Quality Inn

509-838-6101

Travelodge

509-623-9727

REGISTRATION FORM

Use this form to register and mail to:

Don Popejoy Mullan Military Road Days PO Box 9021 Spokane, Washington 99209

Questions: call 509-328-9368 Call for directions to Corbin Senior Center (If no answer, please leave message) e-mail: dpoctalc@hotmail.com

Registration Fee: \$40.00 per person (check or MO)

Your Name: Address:

Phone number:

e-mail:

Northwest Trails

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Material may be submitted via email or on disk or as email attachment in Word or Text format. Pictures can be sent via email, on disk (JPG format), or originals for scanning. Please send pictures separately from text document.

MASTHEAD: Replica of *The Old Oregon Trail* bronze relief sculpture created in 1924 by Avard Fairbanks for Oregon Trail monuments.

Celebrate Your Heritage! Celebrate OCTA's 25 Years

The forthcoming issue of *Overland Journal* will be a special expanded issue containing messages of congratulation and celebration of OCTA and the overland emigrant trails.

Add your name to the Congratulations page for \$25. Compose a special message of 90 words for \$50. A quarter-page ad is \$85.

Deadline is May 10, 2007

For more information, call 888-811-6282 or email contact@octa-trails.org. Mail your check (made to OCTA) and wording of your ad to:

OCTA Headquarters PO Box 1019 Independence, MO 64051

Northwest Trails Joyce Bolerjack 10813 NE 20th St Bellevue, WA 98004