



Northwest Trails

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

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OUR DEPARTED FRIEND – CAROL ANN BUSS

By Chuck Hornbuckle

Rut Nuts form a close family, sharing modern experiences relating to those who settled the West. The West we have today is the result of hard work and dedication exhibited by those pioneers, and yes, even today's pioneers. Many in OCTA and especially the Northwest Chapter, have spent hours, if not days, discovering, mapping, marking and "living" the old days. Time together "on the trail" is what brings it to life for us. And we enjoy each other's company.

Carol Ann Buss was such a person. As a longtime NWOCTA member, she had a hand in many areas of preserving the "experience." She worked tirelessly on several National conventions, both in the planning stage and during the convention itself. She was an active member of the NW Chapter Board of Directors. When she passed away we were all diminished, but we remember her as one with a winning smile, twinkling eyes, and always ready and willing to lend a hand.

Several of her OCTA friends attended her Memorial Service at Portland in April. At Carol Ann's request, Dave Welch recalled Carol Ann's many accomplishments with OCTA. His words must be shared:

While deeply saddened, we were relieved that Carol's terrible journey was over. But Carol wants me to tell you about another journey, the journey of our ancestors across 2,000 miles of the west. This is the story she loved and celebrated. The event itself was the movement of perhaps 300,000 people to settle "Oregon" and California. Individuals and families left Missouri for a five month walk to the "promised land." Maybe 25,000 died along the way, but the emigrants persevered. Their stories remain in journals and diaries and their tracks are still apparent in the ruts and swales in undisturbed areas of the west.

OCTA was founded in 1982 for the purpose of "preservation, appreciation and enjoyment" of the emigrant trails. As part of our preservation work we mark the trails with white posts called "Carsonites." These posts are driven into an almost always uncooperative ground with a "pounder." Some men shy away from this task, but not Carol. She let everyone know the joy she found in placing these markers.

At a location on bench west of Biggs and overlooking the Columbia River, Carol Ann placed a marker. Near here the Oregon Trail descends from the rolling plateau south of the river at Biggs and traverses a high bench above the Columbia. About midway along that stretch, on near pristine trail, is a marker that Carol placed and proudly claimed as her own. Below thousands of vehicles pass noisily each day, and barges pass somewhat quieter, each little knowing the history that rests above.

Those of us who are trail enthusiasts can hear something different, especially if we are at a quiet, secluded location like up in the Blue Mountains. We can hear and feel the passing emigrants. Sitting along the old trail, you first hear only the wind in the trees and maybe the call of a mountain jay. Then, in the distance, there is the rattle of the running gear on the wagon and team. Chains jingling, wheels creaking. As they draw closer, there are voices and the lowing of the oxen as they protest their burden and challenge. They pass with a cloud of dust, but little talk. They had been traveling for 150 days and all

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chatter has long since ceased, except for an occasional call to the children to stay close. They are nearing their goal, the great Willamette Valley and their new lives. On these occasions we sense the spirit of the emigrants, not ghosts. Carol left us a spirit too.

At this point the emigrants had faced their challenge and succeeded. They had changed history and set America on the course as a continent-spanning world power. They had irreversibly changed the lives of thousands who settled the land more than 10,000 years before. That is the story that fascinated Carol Ann, one that she wanted me to share with her friends.

At the conclusion of the service those attending gathered to write their name on a Carsonite Oregon Trail post that would be placed adjacent to "Her Post," at a location that commands respect. On June 3, on our return from the Pendleton "National Trails Day" outing, Suzanne and I climbed to the bench as Carol Ann had several years before. There we, with much thought, "planted" the "Memory Post" next to the one she had installed. Carol Ann Buss would have enjoyed the break in rain showers as much as we did.

Thank you Carol Ann, you are a "pioneer." And thank you for choosing a location with deep soil, a location that readily accepted your "Memory Post."



*Carol Ann Buss
at her Carsonite post,
June 2003*



*Carol's Memory Post,
June 2007*

President's Message

As I write this, July is well underway and the annual convention is less than one month away. It has already been a busy summer field season. There were trail activities nearly every weekend in June. First was the weekend symposium here in Pendleton. Attendance was a slight disappointment, but the program was not. Particularly well received was Sam Pambrun's presentation and the Sunday visit to Sam's historic family home. Sam is a descendant of Pierre and Andrew Pambrun, who each served as Chief Factor at Fort Walla Walla. John Chess's presentation on the cultural conflicts of emigrant trail usage with native tribes and Susan Badger Doyle's presentation on the location and use of Oregon Trail variants in the Pendleton area were also excellent.

The weekend after the Pendleton seminar, Paul Masee led a trail marking trek from La Grande to Hilgard Junction. Paul organized the hike and obtained all landowner permissions. The next weekend, at another outing in far eastern Oregon, there were sign installations at Tub Spring and Alkali Spring. The installations were spearheaded by Gail Carbinier and Billy Symms. Billy, in particular, wrote the text and coordinated the editing, funding, and manufacture of the signs. He also worked with BLM in obtaining the appropriate permits and agreements. Thank you to all participants, but especially to Susan, Paul, and Billy for undertaking these efforts on behalf of the chapter.

Other outings still ahead include the upcoming convention in Gering/Scottsbluff, Nebraska. The convention is always fun, whereby we get to see trail resources in other parts of the country, but I especially enjoy the papers and visiting all the trail friends I have made over the years. The weekend after Labor Day in September will be another outstanding weekend. This meeting is, of course, our annual fall picnic meeting. Jack and Pat Fletcher have put together an excellent program on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound, exploring the Ebey family settlement there. Winfield Scott Ebey's overland diary was the subject of one of OCTA's published trail diaries in its historic trails series. Come see Ebey's "End of the Trail" and get a better grasp of why the emigrants came west.

The final planned activity of the season is the dedication of the Cecil Campground highway interpretive sign at Cecil, Oregon. John Edmundson, a local resident, worked with Randy Brown and me in creating and installing the sign. It will be dedicated September 27 at 1:30 p.m. John is arranging a dedicatory program to include the Ione, Oregon, fourth grade class singing the Oregon state song, "Land of the Empire Builders," during the dedication.

Let me conclude with a big public "Thank You" to Stafford Hazelett, the chapter Mapping and Marking Chair. Stafford undertook the task of writing a legislative bill to protect the Oregon Trail in Oregon, found state senate sponsorship, and testified at a senate hearing on behalf of trail protection. As originally submitted, the bill would have provided strong protection for the Oregon Trail in unincorporated areas, within a 100 foot buffer on each side of the trail centerline.

The background for this effort is long and complicated, but in essence, the trail has little legal protection in Oregon. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has been loathe to take any action to advocate trail preservation in the face of proposed developments without strong state protective measures. The bill passed the senate with support from the League of Oregon Cities and Association of Oregon Counties. When the bill reached the house, however, several representatives raised questions about exactly where the trail is and what condition the trail is in. The legislature does not want to "protect" a trail corridor where the trail no longer exists or already is disturbed. The bill effectively died in the house. However, Stafford does not consider this a defeat since the house did direct the SHPO to document the trail in answer to their questions about location and condition. Stafford has already provided maps, photographs, and other materials to the SHPO in support of this effort. Hopefully, the SHPO eventually will be able to address the legislature's concerns when the bill is re-submitted in the future. So, thank you, Stafford.

—Roger Blair

National Trails Day in Pendleton

By Susan Doyle

The National Trails Day Outing in Pendleton June 1–3 was enjoyable, informative, and most of all, the kind of trail “experience” so well described by Chuck Hornbuckle in his tribute to Carol Buss. Participants gathered for pizza dinner on Friday. The symposium Saturday morning was followed by a picnic and an auto tour of trail sites from Cayuse to Echo. Saturday evening we met again for dinner and afterward at a gathering at Roger Blair and Susan Doyle’s home. Sunday morning the group met at Tamastlikt Cultural Institute Museum, where we had a catered lunch. Then we carpooled to Sam Pambrun’s home near Adams. Sam delighted the group with his family history and a tour of his restored home.

Although attendance was lower than hoped for, partly because of three major outings scheduled for June, we had a good turnout. We were pleased that Andy and Joanne Hammond traveled from Chico, California, to join us. A special attendee was Stan Simons, a NW Chapter member who lives in Pendleton. Stan owns property west of town that has the site of Corral Spring, a noted emigrant camping place. Two newcomers to the group were Jim and Eula Pritchard from Ephrata, Washington. They became OCTA members as a result of their Elderhostel tour, and Eula shared her family connection to the Oregon Trail with us at the symposium.

Speakers



John Chess



Susan Doyle



Sam Pambrun



Part of the group at Tamastlikt



A highlight of the auto tour was the rare sight of ruts in a wheat field west of Pendleton

More photos of the Pendleton Outing
are on the NW Chapter website
www.octa-trails.org/Chapters/Northwest

La Grande Hiking, Mapping, and Marking Project

By Paul Masee

On June 9 and 10, about 18 OCTA members from both the Northwest Chapter and Idaho Chapter met in La Grande, Oregon, to map and verify the Oregon Trail as it left the Grande Ronde Valley. After going up and down the hills, it was decided there was probably more than one route up the hill. The group discovered and mapped one route that was probably the primary one but discovered swales in another area, which now merits further research. The newly discovered route was marked, with permission from the land owners, using Carsonite markers.

Since the private land in question is currently for sale, it was agreed that another trip to La Grande should be made within the next year to verify these alternate routes. Researching diaries is now underway to determine, as nearly as possible, where we should locate these alternate routes. We were aided in our search by some local residents, which included 89-year-old Gerda Brownnton, a longtime friend of our cause. Our thanks go out to everyone involved for helping make this trip a success.



The La Grande hikers, left to right: Ron Anderson, Jeff Pardue, Chuck Fisk, Stafford Hazelett, a friend of Lanetta Paul, and Lanetta's dog Zeke

By Stafford Hazelett

Paul Masee organized and led the project to locate and document traces of the Oregon Trail as it departs from La Grande into the Blue Mountains. The people who participated in the project were: Jenny Miller, Ron Anderson, Rich Herman, Wayne Burck, Chuck and Suzanne Hornbuckle, Jim and Patti McGill, Jeff Pardue, Henry Pittock, Jim and Sally Riehl, and Chuck Fisk.

Masee began investigating the area while he was working on a Passport in Time project with the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in June 2006. He noticed that development was creeping up the hills on the west side of La Grande into the areas where the Oregon Trail is thought to have ascended. Masee contacted the county planning department and local land owners about plans and access.

After almost a year of contacting people, road trips, and planning, Masee gathered a crew of fourteen on June 9 at Birnie Park in La Grande to search and hike the Oregon Trail. On the first day, the crew led by Masee and Chuck Hornbuckle surveyed an area which is under development for remains of the Oregon Trail at the west edge of La Grande.

Also on June 9, local resident Lanetta Paul led four other project participants on a hike on the Oregon Trail route from the edge of La Grande to the descent into Hilgard Junction State Park. Ms Paul has been leading these hikes for many years and knows the local information, including the location of three graves along the way. On the second day, the crew worked around the development area some more and found the old traces that have been identified since at least the 1950s as the remains of the Oregon Trail climbing the hill.

Masee and Stafford Hazelett, chairman of mapping and marking, returned to the work area on Monday, June 11, with permission from the owner to place three fiberglass composite markers with "Oregon Trail" stickers along the traditional rut traces.



The Oregon Trail climbed the hill to a point just to the right of the clump of pines on the top.



Part of the group on top of the hill, overlooking La Grande and the Grande Ronde Valley.



Marker in Class 1 ruts



Paul Masee

The Road to Alkali and Tub Springs

By Bill Symms

Two years ago I was on a trail marking outing with NW OCTA on the segment between Keeney Pass and Farewell Bend. I innocently asked the question about the lack of interpretive panel at Tub Springs. There was one at Alkali Springs but not Tub Springs. The answer was simple, no one had done one, so I was given the task of writing an interpretive panel for Tub Springs. Two years later, after many hours of hard work and the involvement of the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, National OCTA, NW OCTA, and many others, the project is complete. The interpretive panels are in place and there is a protective fence around the panel at Tub Springs.

The guiding force behind this project really came from Gail Carbiener. Without his help and vast knowledge, this never would have happened. He may have put me in charge of getting it done, but he was the man behind it all.

I started the project needing to know how Tub Springs was named. That only took six months of research. I had Jim Riehl run the information thorough the COED data base and interestingly enough, there are very few references to Tub Springs in Malheur County, Oregon. I eventually found it on an internet search and it referred me to an article in the Lane County Historical Society publication in 1962. I was fortunate enough to find the publication in the Florence city library, so I went there and read the article. And sure enough, a young emigrant named William Stoops in 1853 mentions the tubs buried in the ground at the springs, and thus their name.

Once I found this bit of information I began reading the many diaries that refer to this section of the trail. Interestingly enough, they usually refer to The Sulphur Springs or a derivative thereof. Very few mention them by name, and if you look at the 1959 maps done for the Oregon Centennial, they show the trail coming from Willow Creek to both springs, depending on the draw they emigrants took. So that is how I refer to them in the signage as The

Sulphur Springs—one named Alkali Springs and the other Tub Springs.

Very few nights were spent at these sites as the water was toxic to both human and animals and was not ordinarily consumed. There are several instances where they spent the night, but it was usually as a result of some natural phenomenon that forced them to do so.

Once I decided what I wanted the panels to say I sent the information to Susan Badger Doyle for editing and setting up in the accepted format. It was then approved by all parties, and the plates were ordered from Novacolor. Now I make it sound pretty simple, but let me tell you it was not. Trying to get everyone to agree on everything was a real challenge. The deeper we got into the layers of bureaucracy, the more challenging it became. This is where my working for the Forest Service paid off. I knew how to get things pushed through channels. All you have to do is set deadlines and things happen. The proof reading alone took five people to find all the mistakes and for Novacolor to correct them.

The beautiful panels were sent directly to me, and I had to set a date to get a group together and get them in the ground. I chose mid-June as the temperatures in the area would not be too hot, and it would be dry so we would not have to work in an area that was a mud bog. Once the date was set, then I had to get folks who were interested. We had a small but energetic group that did a marvelous job, but I am ahead of myself at this point.

So now the different agencies got involved and things get really interesting. The BLM had to have a document to approve the location of the panels and an agreement with OCTA about the placement and upkeep of the panels. NPS representative Chuck Milliken sent me all the required decals for the site markings. Of course, these require a metal back, which was supposed to be supplied by the local BLM crew along with the posts to mount the site signs. Roger Blair had already approved the expenditures for the materials to build the fence around the interpretive panel at Tub Springs, so that was done. I was pretty sure that the local BLM did

not have these sign backings lying around, so I had the welding program at Angell Job Corps where I worked make the backing for me, and I took them with me. It turned out to be a smart thing to do.

Sarah LeCompte at the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Flagstaff Hill got the necessary documents written up, and she and the appropriate representative for NW OCTA signed the agreements, and we were good to go.

So the next decision was where I wanted to place the sign at Tub Springs. I had only been out there that one trip, and I was not sure where I wanted it, so I asked for some suggestions. I arrived at Vale a day early and went out to the site and pretty well had decided where the sign was going to go, and everyone agreed the next day.

So on June 17, Father's Day, Gail and Muriel Carbiener, Bill Symms, Bruce and Wanda Rafferty, and Diane and Vern Pritchard of the Vale BLM office, all met in Vale at the BLM parking lot and took off for Tub Springs. We knew that we had to set the four corner posts for the fence enclosure so the cement could set up overnight and we could put the rails up the next day. On the way, we stopped at Alkali Springs and I looked at the old panel that we had to remove. I noticed that like all good BLM engineers, Vern had a winch on his pickup. My idea was to winch it out rather than spend the next five hours digging it out. This was another excellent decision on my part. It popped right out and saved a lot of work.

Then it was off to Tub Springs. We dug the holes, and I might add that Bruce Rafferty, Vern Pritchard, and Gail Carbiener are some of the best post hole diggers I have ever watched. I am here to tell you they are good and fast. It turned out we had only enough cement for the four corner posts. We dug the holes for the site marking post and the interpretive panel and did the same at Alkali Springs, and we were done for the day. It went very well. At this rate we would be done in no time.

On June 18, Gail and Muriel Carbiener, Bill Symms, Jim and Patti McGill from the Idaho Chapter of OCTA, and Tom Gray of the Malheur Historical Society all set off to try and

complete the project. Diane was able to find us some 4x4 posts for the site marking panels, so we were in business.

Jim and Patti McGill are really great people. I could tell that Patti was a retired nurse. First of all, she fixed me up when I started bleeding, and she always knew what tool was needed next and had it in hand waiting for you. Jim is excellent with a chisel, as we found out when we had to custom fit the rail corners to the posts. He is also very good at mixing cement with a garden hoe, even though the hoe didn't survive. Tom Gray was everywhere and did a great job of drilling the holes and working the wrenches.

I had brought my generator from home and it worked wonderfully for all of our drilling and sawing needs. I am sure the emigrants would have loved to have had one along but since gas had not been invented yet, it would not have done them any good. Gail had done this before at other sites so his experience was priceless. Sarah LeCompte had said that she would try and make it over that day, and we were just finishing up at Alkali Spring when Pam Petterson from the trail center appeared and took some pictures.

We had lunch at Alkali Springs and finished setting the post in cement that we had bought the day before after running out. We actually finished up about 3 p.m., and the McGills headed back to Idaho. The rest of us headed for Vale and a shower. It was absolutely beautiful out at the springs those last two days and the weather was most cooperative. The quiet and solitude is most inspiring. It started to heat up the day after we finished, so we timed it just perfectly.

The project is complete, but we have some new things to do. The interpretive panel at the Henderson Grave Site needs to be replaced, as it is deteriorating. Diane Pritchard would like to get the YCC involved in fencing a segment of ruts just north of Tub Springs, and she needs to have an interpretive panel for that area as well. So I have a couple of things to work on in my new retirement, and I am sure that more will show up along the way. It has been fun, educational, and very spiritual for me to do this wonderful project. I thank all who were involved and worked so hard to make it happen.



Above left: *New sign at Alkali Springs*
Above right: *Tub Springs*
Left: *Tom Gray, Bill Symms, Gail and Muriel Carbiener, Patti and Jim McGill*

TERRITORIAL EXPRESS STAGECOACH RUN

Longview to Olympia, Washington

NINETY MILES OF STAGING IN THREE DAYS!

On September 21–23 the Tumwater Historical Association will recreate a stagecoach ride over the 90-mile route from Longview to Olympia, traveling over the original road as much as possible. On each ten-mile leg of the trip, paying passengers will enjoy the company of living history performers, who will portray characters from the past. At each stage stop, local non-profit groups will offer food, entertainment, souvenirs, and informative talks about stagecoach days.

Commemorative envelopes that will be carried on the stagecoach are available. You can include your message in the envelope, and at the end of the stage run it will be turned over to the U.S. Postal Service and will be delivered to the addressee through the regular mail. Contact OCTA member Suzanne Hornbuckle 360-352-2113, email hornbucklecs@juno.com.

For more information, visit www.territorialexpress.com, or call 360-943-6951.

Willow Creek Campground Marker Dedication

By John Edmundson

The Willow Creek Campground Oregon Trail Sign at Cecil is installed. Tom Shear and Sherron Woodside completed the installation April 22. I added some finishing touches consisting of smoothing the ground around the sign and placing vegetation control fabric in a rectangle around the sign. Dan Metz from ODOT added red cinders on top of the vegetation control fabric. Also, I transplanted a small sagebrush to a spot next to the sign, which balances another small sagebrush which was beside the sign.

At Ione High School I visited with Tom Shear, the industrial arts teacher, and Bryn Browning, the school superintendent and set the dedication for next fall. The date and time will be Thursday, September 27, at 1:30 p.m. Putting the dedication in September actually makes pretty good sense in that this is the time of the year when the pioneers were on the Oregon Trail in the Willow Creek Campground area.

I have talked with Mrs. Browning about having the Ione fourth graders be part of the dedication program. Fourth grade is when Oregon History is studied. We agreed it would be nice to have the students sing the Oregon state song, "Land of the Empire Builders," during the dedication.

In July I will send out invitations to the dedication, with a request to indicate intention to attend so that I can plan for snacks and beverages. I will welcome your suggestions for people who might like to speak at the dedication. Thank you for your continuing interest and support for this project. For more information, please contact John Edmundson at jpedmundson@centurytel.net

Treasure found on the Oregon Trail

*Read by Eula Pritchard at the Trails Day
Symposium in Pendleton*

As my husband and I traveled with the Oregon Trail Elderhostel program, I began to feel like I was getting acquainted for the first time with my forebears. I had heard vague tales about my great-grandparents and knew they had come to Oregon in 1853. But that was about it. I had read the memoirs of some of the children, but I had no appreciation of what they had really gone through.

I had not been aware that ten children came out to Oregon with their parents. After coming over the trail myself, I was really astounded that none of the family was lost, though a child from another family in the wagon train had died. The accounts I read did not make much of the problems they had, just hints here and there. Like the fact the family started out with 14 oxen, but only two oxen arrived in Oregon.

My own trip was a 15-day education that I will always treasure.



Steve Knight's photo story on the Yreka Symposium is now on the CA-NV Chapter website. Go to <http://canvocta.org>, scroll down to Photo Stories, click on Symposiums, and then click on Yreka, CA.

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

Upcoming Outing

**NW Chapter
Annual Fall Meeting**

**Whidbey Island
September 7–9**

Group Dinner
Symposium
Bus Tour
Museum Tour

**Registration Flyer
Will be sent in late July**

Northwest Trails

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