



# Northwest Trails

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

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Fall 2007

## Petition Supporting Protection of South Pass

At the present time, South Pass is a National Historic Landmark without a boundary and with little protection beyond that provided by Section 106 of the implementing regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Lander Office of the Wyoming Bureau of Land Management has undertaken a revision of their Resource Management Plan (RMP). As part of that effort they will assess various options for improving the protection of South Pass. At this point it is very uncertain as to what area will be protected and what the specifics of protection will be.

OCTA has a petition for the protection of South Pass that members can circulate. OCTA's desire, expressed through the petition, is that some form of protection be implemented along the trails from Independence Rock to the Little Sandy and from the Oregon Buttes to the Wind River Range. Any scheme should take into account existing property rights and the traditional ranching economy while increasing protection for the trails and their setting.

The development of the revised RMP is a multi-year process that has just begun. While we will have opportunities to comment on alternatives developed by the BLM, this petition will provide a timely input to the process. The petition will be available on OCTA's website or may be obtained from Dave Welch.

If you have questions, please contact Dave Welch at [welchdj@comcast.net](mailto:welchdj@comcast.net) or 360-923-0438. Time is of the essence, so please return the petitions to Dave as soon as possible.



*Ezra Meeker monument at South Pass*



*Grace Hebard and H. G. Nickerson on the Oregon Trail near South Pass, 1915*

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## President's Message

In our enthusiasm for studying the trails, we often focus on the trail and the experiences of the sojourners while on the overland trek. We end our studies when they arrive at the end of the trail. However, there are interesting stories about their lives while establishing a new home and settling there. The chapter meeting on Whidbey Island in September allowed us a glimpse of the Ebey family's settlement on the island. Winfield Scott Ebey's journal was published by OCTA in the Emigrant Historic Trails Study Series, which many of us have read. Jack and Pat Fletcher put together an outstanding weekend program of talks and a tour in which participants were able to appreciate "the rest of the story." Even the weather could not have been more perfect. Thanks, Jack and Pat.

At the fall meeting, Vic Bolon accepted the Dick and Trudy Ackerman Meritorious Achievement Award. He had been selected earlier, but could not attend the annual meeting last March in The Dalles when he was officially recognized. Vic was recognized for his long service to the chapter as Mapping and Marking Chair. Since Vic resigned from that responsibility, I have received several confirmations of the accuracy and quality of his work. He especially provided a good working relationship between OCTA and landowners. Beyond simply recognizing him with the award, we owe Vic our gratitude for an exhaustive job well done.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see an announcement concerning a drive to increase OCTA's membership. For the last several years, national membership has been on a steady decline. Perhaps not coincidentally, OCTA's financial situation has deteriorated as well. The national board has had to dip into endowment monies to meet its financial obligations. This past year that decline reversed, but only by less than a dozen members. Nonetheless, it is a turn in the right direction. Let's build on that change in direction and make OCTA a stronger, more viable organization by playing our part in recruiting new members.

I encourage each of you to think about what you can do to support this effort. Volunteer to speak to schools, groups, or anyone you know has an interest in trail history. Carry a few membership applications with you to hand out when you engage in a conversation about OCTA. I personally plan to pay the first year's dues for a few acquaintances who have an interest in trails, but just have not made the commitment. Can you afford to sponsor someone you know would enjoy a membership? Even if many of us only paid for one new member each, we could substantially increase the total membership and improve our financial picture.

*Continued on next page*

On a final note, the Oregon legislature did not pass the recent legislation introduced to protect the trails in Oregon. Ostensibly, the legislators wanted to know exactly what they were protecting with the proposed legislation. They specifically wanted to know exactly where the trail is and what condition it is. In the end, the legislature did direct the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to conduct a study of the most definable locations of the Oregon Trail throughout the state. This directive originally included funding to conduct ground verification and a current conditions assessment, but this funding was withdrawn by the close of the legislature. As a result OPRD had to come up with a plan to compile all of the existing information in its GIS system and work with partners to conduct some field work. That is where NW Chapter comes into play. We know the trail better than OPRD, and OPRD recognizes that fact. The intent of the study meshes well with our objectives of identifying, mapping, and protecting the trail. If you want to become involved in working with OPRD and/or would like a copy of the OPRD work plan, please let me know.

—Roger Blair

## Join the OCTA Membership Gold Rush

**Gold Dust Award** - Get a \$5.00 credit at the OCTA store for each new paid membership or non-renewing member brought back.

**Gold Strike Award** - Be eligible for a drawing after five recruits:

- First prize - one free registration for the 2008 convention
- Second prize - one free tour at the 2008 convention
- Third prize - one free tour at the 2008 convention

**Bonanza Award** - Be the top recruiter with at least five recruits:

- First prize - \$100.00
- Second prize - \$50.00
- Third prize - \$25.00

### Contest Rules:

1. Non-renewals must have been gone for more than twelve (12) months.
2. New memberships must be paid.
3. Name of recruiter on membership blank or provide documentation.
4. To be eligible for the Bonanza Award, must have at least five (5) recruits.
5. Questions of rules or eligibility will be resolved by a committee made up of the OCTA president, vice-president, membership chairman, Travis and Kathy.
6. Contest officially begins September 1, 2007.
7. Drawing for the Gold Strike Award will be held at the March Board of Directors meeting.
8. Gold Dust and Bonanza Awards will officially end at the 2008 convention general business meeting.
9. Awards will be presented at the awards banquet.
10. Membership of multiple years will be rewarded with equivalent numbers of Gold Dust certificates.

For more information see [www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)

## Northwest OCTA Equipment and Supplies

Lots of pieces of equipment and some unique supplies have been purchased over the years for the chapter. Most of these items are being held in the homes of the various people who purchased them, but there is not a full listing of them anywhere.

An effort is now underway to record those pieces of equipment, how much they cost, who has them, and a report detailing how to obtain and use them. The list of such items includes:

- Slide scanner
- Digital camera
- GPS
- Personal computer
- Carsonite marker pounders
- Carsonite markers
- Maps
- Portable microphone

In order to let our chapter members know what is available to them for projects, please let Roger Blair know what items you have at [rblair@oregontrail.net](mailto:rblair@oregontrail.net) 541-966-8854.

After the record of all the equipment and supplies is completed, a list of those items will be included in the Chapter Handbook. The chapter board will also review what to do with items that are no longer of any value to the chapter and decide if there is a central location where some or all of the items should be stored.

### A Query

Jim Hamilton, who lives in Federal Way, Washington, is interested in getting touch with anyone in the Seattle-Portland area who is searching out, photographing, and mapping old wagon roads of the northwest. Please respond to Jim at [jimhamilton46@aol.com](mailto:jimhamilton46@aol.com).

## Naches Trail Marker Dedication

By Winona Jacobsen

The city of Bonney Lake and the Greater Bonney Lake Historical Society dedicated a historical sign to commemorate the Naches Trail at the Kelley Farm on June 23. Kelley Farm is located at 20119 Old Sumner Buckley Highway in Bonney Lake, Washington.



Dave King

Jim Rackley

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## A Trail Observation

By Gary Shurtleff

It is common in Oregon Trail diaries to come across complaints about the Burnt River Canyon. Often the total number of river crossings was recorded. This summer while riding through the canyon, I noticed the large number of times the railroad crossed the river. Curious, I later used Google Earth and, from Huntington to where the canyon ends and the river enters the Durkee Valley, counted the number of times the Union Pacific crossed the river. By my count it was 17 times.

Some things haven't changed as much as we might have thought. At least the railroad didn't have to contend with Sisley Creek and Swayze Creek!

## Jim Renner Appointed to National Committee

By Glenn Harrison

Jim Renner, Sign Operations Officer at Oregon Travel Information Council, was recently named to the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD) as a Technical Member. Renner will serve on the Guide and Motorist Information Signs Technical Committee of the NCUTCD.

One of the goals of this committee is to give input to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in establishing nationwide standards for traffic control devices, such as signs. Jim's service on the committee will provide not only an Oregon perspective but also input from a tourism angle.

Jim has worked at the Oregon Travel Information Council since 1998 and oversees the agency's four highway signs programs: Interstate Logo Signs, Off-Interstate Logo Signs, Tourist Oriented Directional Signs, and Museum and Historic Signs.

TIC staff and Council members are proud of Jim and the recognition the nationwide industry has given him through this appointment.



## Jim Tompkins Named Outstanding Educator

The Clackamas Heritage Partners, operating under the trade name Historic Oregon City, had their first awards banquet September 13. At the banquet Jim Tompkins was recognized with the Outstanding Achievement in Education Award, a lifetime achievement award.

Northwest Trails, Fall 2007

## OCTA 2007 Convention Gering/ Scottsbluff

Photos by Roger Blair



Chimney Rock



Courthouse and Jail Rocks



Covered wagon at Scottsbluff National Monument

Photos continued on next page



*Secretary Bernie "Thomas Bullock" Rhoades*



*OCTA Trail Band at Author's Night*



*Book Room*



*Author's Night*



*A Bus Tour Stop*



*Reception at Scottsbluff National Monument*



*Dave Welch receiving NPS award from Aaron Mahr*



*Wendy Welch receiving award for Ezra Meeker Society*



*Patti and Jim McGill receiving Merrill Mattes Award*

## Willow Creek Campground Sign Dedication

About 60 people attended the dedication of the OCTA Willow Creek Campground Sign near Cecil, Oregon, on Thursday, September 27. The ceremony began with an invocation by Rev. Tim Van Cleave and the flag salute led by Kip Krebs, Ione High School Student Body President.

Representatives of OCTA included Glenn Harrison, National President, and Roger Blair, Northwest Chapter President. Representing the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Committee were John Chess from the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute and Keith May from Pendleton. Other organizations in attendance included Oregon Dept. of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service, Ione Community Agricultural and Business Organization, Heppner Chamber of Commerce, Morrow County Court, the Ione School District, and several NW Chapter members..

Project Director, John Edmundson expressed appreciation to the many organizations and people that helped with this project.

Ione fourth and fifth grade students from Mrs. Holland's class sang *Roll On, Columbia, Roll On* and *Oregon, My Oregon*, the state song of Oregon. Additional music was provided by Duane Neiffer, Alex Carlson, and Eric Jepsen.

The ceremony was closed with a benediction by Father Jerry Condon, *Taps* played by Eric Jepsen, and a 1950 Cecil Store Poem written and read by Dorothy Krebs. After the ceremony, the attendees went to the Cecil Store for refreshments provided by Maureen Krebs and Anne Morter.



John Edmundson

# The Fall Meeting on Whidbey Island was an Outstanding Success



*Master of Ceremonies Pat Fletcher*



*Raffle Table*



*Lunch in the Community Recreation Hall*



*Tom Laidlaw as Peter Skene Ogden*





*Jack Fletcher arranged a bus tour of the historic area for Saturday afternoon.*



*The Jacob Ebey house and blockhouse overlook a modern house on the edge of Ebey's Prairie.*



*The Ebey family plot at Sunnyside Cemetery.*



*Winfield Scott Ebey's headstone in front right.*



*The Davis blockhouse at Sunnyside Cemetery.*



*Mary Bywater Cross showed the group a historic quilt in the Island County Historical Museum's collections.*

*All photos of the Willow Creek sign dedication and the Whidbey Island outing by Roger Blair*

## *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 Avarð Fairbanks for Oregon Trail monuments.

## **It's Time to Report Volunteer Time and Expenses**

In order to provide an accurate accounting of OCTA members' volunteer time and expenses related to OCTA activities, each participant is asked to report hours and non-reimbursed expenses annually to the Chapter Volunteerism Coordinator by **December 15**.

NOTE: Time and personal expenses should be reported "home-to-home." A form is available.

### **Submit or mail to:**

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