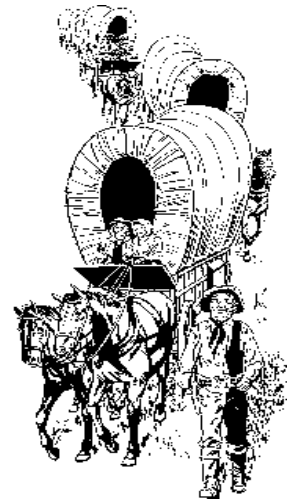


Trail Dust

Newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Idaho Chapter



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2023 Upcoming Activities

March 30th – Apr 2nd

April 15th

May 18th – 19th

May 20th

July 25th – 29th

OCTA Spring Symposium in St Joseph, MO

Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway Tour

Chapter visit to City of Rocks (details inside)

Chapter Spring Meeting

OCTA 41st Annual Convention in Gering, NE

May Activities

By Jerry Eichhorst

City of Rocks - Thursday, May 18 – Friday, May 19

We will have a special outing at the City of Rocks this year. The park manager/archaeologist is arranging with an archaeologist from ISU to excavate one of the graves we found and verified with cadaver dogs in the last couple of years. It should be a fascinating event that does not happen often. We will start at 9:00 am on Thursday at the COR Visitor Center.

PLEASE RSVP to Jerry at jeichhotrails@gmail.com if you plan to attend the archaeological excavation at the City of Rocks. Space and facilities are limited and we do not want to overload the area. I have asked the park manager to provide a porta-potty for the site. Additional activities will be available to fill in time including guided hikes to area California trail sites, the Kelton Road station, and possibly metal-detecting California Trail campsites or a trip over Granite Pass if the road is open.

Spring Chapter Meeting - Saturday, May 20

The spring chapter meeting will be held at the Perkins Restaurant in Burley on Saturday, May 20, at 10:00 am. We will have an update on preservation activities across the state as well as a summary of national OCTA activities including the recent Southern Trails conference, the St. Joseph symposium, and the upcoming Gering convention. Activities for the year will also be discussed.

Fairfield Inn Group Rate

I have obtained a group rate at the Fairfield Inn in Burley for our activities in May. The cost will be \$109-\$115 per night. This rate is about 10% less than the senior rate. Regular rates are expected to go up soon. You will need to make your reservations soon as the number of rooms at this rate is limited. You may consider heading to Burley on Wednesday to get an early start on Thursday, May 18.

Use the link below in the information from the hotel to make your reservation.

Event Summary:

Idaho Oregon-California Trails Association-Burley

Start Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2023

End Date: Saturday, May 20, 2023

Last Day to Book: Monday, May 1, 2023

Hotel(s) offering your special group rate:

- Fairfield Inn & Suites Burley for 109 USD - 115 USD per night

[Book your group rate for Idaho Oregon-California Trails Association-Burley](#)

Message from the President

By Jerry Eichhorst

The first thing I want to do in this edition is to thank those of you who are members of the Idaho chapter. As I was processing membership updates recently, I was struck by how many of you have been members for many years. I appreciate your continuing support. We are steadily growing our membership. If you have not been on an outing, please consider coming out and learning about the trail in the field. We have a great group of people and try to do several interesting activities each year. If transportation is an issue, please let me know as I am sure we can find someone to provide a ride.

I retired from the JR Simplot Company at the end of 2022 and am looking forward to spending more time doing trails research and writing. The first thing on my to-do list was to clean my office as it had become very cluttered with stacks of stuff everywhere. It was starting to remind me of Will Bagley's office in Salt Lake City when I visited with him a few years ago. Will was a longtime friend and one of the premier Western Americana historians before he passed away in 2021. His office was a cluttered mess. Will's Overland West series is a comprehensive history of "The Story of the Oregon and California Trails," although he only finished volumes 1 and 2 of what was supposed to be a four-volume series. We had many good conversations as we dreamed about storing emigrant diaries in online databases and discussed Indian attacks on the emigrant trails. I introduced Will at the Fort Hall convention by saying "He has written more books than I have read." I am blessed to have known him.

The OCTA video program is moving along very well. Many new videos are being developed and dropped onto YouTube on a weekly basis. I encourage you to view the videos and subscribe to the OCTA channel. The organization will receive financial support once the number of subscribers surpasses 1,000 and viewing hours exceed 4,000. The link to the OCTA YouTube channel is <https://www.youtube.com/@octatrails>. Plans are being developed for me to do a series of videos across Idaho starting this summer.

The Boise Schools Community Education classes will be on March 1, 8, and 15. All classes are filled within a week and there are over 20 people on a waiting list. Each year I try to share my passion for the trails with the class participants and get them hooked by taking them on the Oregon Trail with the annual byway tour. Ultimately, I hope they will join OCTA and the Idaho chapter and become active members going forward.

The annual Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway tour will be Saturday, April 15. I plan to have a potluck lunch on the tour at the Sweetbriar Winery north of Mountain Home. We did this last year and it was a lot of fun. Everyone is welcome to attend the tour.

We are planning some special activities for the annual City of Rocks outings for May 18-19. The chapter meeting will be in Burley on Saturday, May 20. I have obtained a discounted group rate with the Fairfield Inn in Burley which is about \$10 less than the senior rate.

I am looking forward to several interesting chapter outings this year and look forward to sharing the trails again with you soon.

Cadaver Dogs for the Idaho Chapter

By Jerry Eichhorst

With proper and extensive training, dogs can be trained to detect and indicate the scent of human remains. These dogs are called “cadaver dogs”.

A dog’s sense of smell is far better than a human’s, with estimates ranging between 100 and 100,000 times greater than a human’s, depending on the breed. Consequently, dogs can detect scents that humans cannot. They can also distinguish where a smell is coming from as their left and right nostrils are independent.

A cadaver dog can detect human remains at all stages of decomposition, no matter if it is buried, covered, or masked by other scents. They can distinguish between decomposing wildlife and human remains. With proper training, they will ignore all scents except that of human remains. While their work often involves finding a dead body, the dogs are simply searching for the scent of human decay which begins immediately after death and continues for hundreds of years after death.

When a body begins to decay, it releases volatile organic compounds (VOC) produced by the organism. The accumulation of VOC inside and outside of the body reflects the unique metabolic state of an organism. VOC leaches into the ground surrounding the body where it is absorbed by plants in the area. VOC may also be wicked up by other structures such as fence posts or grave markers in the area. It will tend to drift downhill through the soil and collect in level or depressed areas.

Human VOC can be detected by cadaver dogs in the ground around a body, in the plants and trees near a body, or in structures such as wooden fence posts in the immediate area. The dogs need only a fraction of a bone or a drop of blood to identify a source. Cadaver dogs can

identify the residue scent of human death in the area in cases where a body or body part was initially placed in a location and later moved.

The scent of human remains rises in the soil and drifts away from the source in a cone pattern, getting broader the further the scent is from the source. Wind will blow the scent particles further away, thus widening the cone. A cadaver dog will detect the scent cone and follow the scent to the source, homing in on the highest concentration. The dogs will work out problems of the scent being trapped in vegetation, water, or dispersed by wind until they have found the source of the scent. Each dog will have its own technique to work the scent to the source just as each dog has its own personality.



Paula McCollum-Cudd with Zeva at the John Henderson grave near Vale, Oregon.

A trained cadaver dog can pick up the scent of human remains buried deeper than 10 feet underground or up to 100 feet underwater. The dogs can detect the scent of human remains which are hundreds of years old. Consequently, they are used by law enforcement personnel to find missing people in collapsed buildings, thick

snow, lakes and reservoirs, forests, fields, and other places where searches are required. They are efficient in their work and can cover ground much faster than human searchers.

Cadaver dogs require about 1000 hours of training to be ready for work. The most important part of the training is to expose the dogs to as many human remains as possible. Human bones can be ordered off the internet. One of the most common training aids is the placenta, donated by new mothers. The dogs are often trained to specialize in specific uses such as snow detection or burials. There are organizations that provide certification and ongoing refresher training much like teachers and medical professionals must go through.

The dogs are trained to perform a certain action when they have identified the source of the scent. Each dog will have a unique behavior used to indicate the source. Some will sit or lie down by the location, some will paw at the location, and some will bark to indicate the source has been found.

Once the source is determined, the handler praises the dog and a period of play with the dog follows. To the dog, the search is a game they enjoy doing with a reward of play when the source is found. You will often hear the excited barking of other dogs while one dog is working. Several studies have been done on the accuracy of cadaver dogs detecting human remains. These studies show that cadaver dogs are up to 95% accurate in detecting human remains.

The Idaho chapter uses cadaver dogs to verify human burials along the emigrant trails across the state. We are blessed to have worked with several excellent handlers and dogs through the last ten years. Our long-time handler partner and her two dogs were used for training with the FBI and on numerous police cases around the

state. They enjoyed working with the chapter so much that they joined OCTA and the Idaho chapter.

In the last 10 years or so, the Idaho chapter has used cadaver dogs in many outings which include the following. One of our most interesting outings was checking the Henderson grave near Vale, Oregon, with 4 dogs in 2014. Each dog behaved individually but all verified the gravesite.

- Main Oregon Trail
 - Sheep Rock near Soda Springs (multiple dogs)
 - Glens Ferry
 - East of Canyon Creek (multiple dogs)
 - Ditto Creek (multiple times, multiple dogs)
 - Soles Rest Creek (multiple dogs)
 - Henderson grave, Vale, Oregon (multiple dogs)
 - Van Orman burial site, Farewell Bend, Oregon (multiple dogs)
 - Durfee, Oregon (multiple dogs)
- North Alternate
 - Mass grave site (multiple times, multiple dogs)
 - Suspected massacre site (multiple times, multiple dogs)
 - Base of King Hill
- California Trail
 - City of Rocks (multiple dogs)
- Hudspeth Cutoff
 - Lava Hot Springs Cemetery (multiple dogs)

The handlers like to work with the Idaho chapter because they get to work the dogs when there is no urgency in the work, no crime to be solved,

and no family anxiously awaiting the results. The dogs like to work with us because they get to perform a search and play with their handler. The Idaho chapter likes to work with cadaver dogs because it is one of the most interesting activities we can do and is something unique that people do not have the opportunity to witness elsewhere.



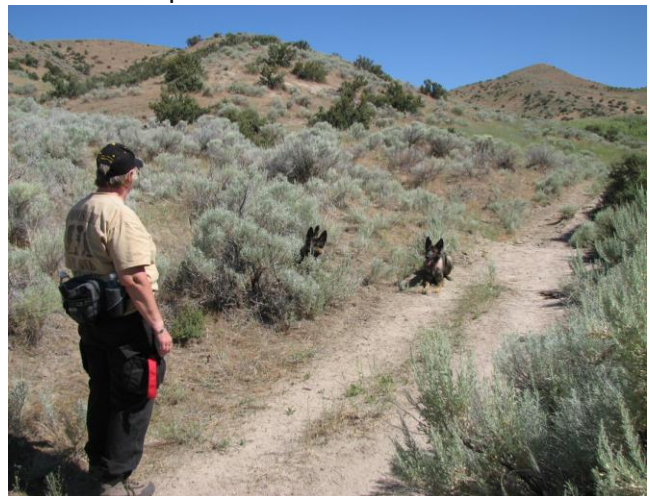
Ashley with Bee doing a perfect mark on the John Henderson grave.

Cadaver dogs have been used to assist in criminal investigations since 1888 when bloodhounds were used in the infamous case of Jack the Ripper in Britain. Now they are a common tool for police and other agencies. Emigrant graves provide an excellent opportunity to work the dogs, assist historians and archaeologists with verifying a human burial, and provide an interesting experience for those watching the activity. We hope to

continue working with our excellent handlers and their dogs for many years to come.

I am developing plans to arrange chapter outings using dogs on Rattlesnake Creek north of Mountain Home where I found six suspected graves last fall, at City of Rocks to recheck suspected graves found two years ago, and in western Wyoming where the Kemmerer BLM has asked to have the dogs come over to check several suspected graves. Using the dogs is a fascinating experience that you should be sure to come out for. Watch the chapter website calendar for these events.

In addition, I am supposed to do a Zoom presentation for the Colorado chapter in March or April on our use of cadaver dogs. Watch the OCTA calendar and E-News for details when they are firmed up.



Ann Christiansen with Rocko and Kessa on a branch of the Jeffreys Route. The suspected burial is up the hill a few feet and the scent has drifted down the hill to where the ground levels out.

Nimblewill Nomad

By Jerry Eichhorst

Way back in 2014, I had the pleasure to meet Nimblewill, aka Sunny, as he was on a long-distance trek to hike the Oregon Trail. I talked with him on the phone several times to assist with planning his trek across southwest Idaho. I had planned a chapter outing to explore the Oregon Trail from Vale north to Farewell Bend and during that outing, we caught up with Sunny and had the pleasure to chat with him for some time in the desert heat. We provided liquids and a place for him to sit in what shade we could find. Those of you on the outing that day will remember what a memorable experience it was to meet such a fine and interesting man in the middle of the desert, hiking the Oregon Trail.



Sunny

Sunny is a long-distance hiker who has hiked all over the country on virtually every trail available. He is on his final trail hike this year as he plans to hike the Chisholm Trail. He has a website (<https://nimblewillnomad.com/>) with a lot of information about his treks including blogs and diaries of the hikes.



Sunny with a Gatorade in what shade was available



Sunny hiking in ruts of the Oregon Trail north of Vale, Oregon

His journal of the Oregon Trail hike of 2014 is especially interesting. You can find it at <https://nimblewillnomad.com/odyssey-2014-journals/>. Check out his website and read the diary of his Oregon Trail trek for a very interesting story.

The dates when he reached various Idaho locations are as follows:

- Wyoming/Idaho border
Sunday—July 6, 2014
- Twin Falls
Saturday—July 19, 2014
- Boise
Saturday—July 26, 2014
- Vale, Oregon
Thursday—July 31, 2014
- Meeting IOCTA group north of Vale
Saturday—August 2, 2014

OCTA Symposium in Tombstone

By John Briggs

The Southern Trails Chapter of OCTA held its Spring symposium in Tombstone, AZ. Several Idaho Chapter members were there though the majority lived in states other than Idaho! Presentations were held in historic Schieffelin Hall, built in 1881 and the largest standing adobe structure in the US southwest. Videos will be available on OCTA's YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/@octatrails>



Attendance was excellent with some one hundred members and non-members from states as far away as Illinois and Arkansas. Presentations were focused on the local Trails, especially the Mormon Battalion and the Butterfield Overland Trail, recently signed into law as a National Historic Trail and used as an emigrant trail to California.



Tours on Day one included the ghost town of Fairbank and a hike to Presidio Santa Cruz de Terranate on the banks of the San Pedro

River. Not much remains of this frontier Presidio but it has an interesting history.

On the second day, we drove to the San Bernadino Ranch, known now as the Slaughter Ranch. It was an important watering place on Cooke's Wagon Road, established by Cooke and the Mormon Battalion in 1846, and later to become part of the Southern Emigrant Trail. The road broadly followed the San Pedro and Gila Rivers to Yuma and the De Anza Trail from Yuma to San Diego. We then drove up Cottonwood Canyon to Mormon Battalion Marker no.7, though we now know the Battalion passed through nearby Guadalupe Canyon and not Cottonwood.



There were more events on Day 3 - a fitting end to an excellent symposium. Congratulations to Southern Trails and especially Doug Hocking and Melissa Shaw for their hard work. Not to forget, of course, that Tombstone is an interesting town itself!



Newspaper Nuggets

By Jerry Eichhorst

I am taking a break from Dairies Across Idaho for a while. In its place, I give you some interesting old newspaper nuggets I have come across in my research which made me smile. I hope you enjoy these

☞ "Waiter, I'll take my hat," said a gentleman at a party one evening, as he was about going home.

"What kind of a hat did you wear?"

"A bran new hat, that I paid ten dollars for this morning."

Well sir, said the waiter, "all the good hats have been gone more than two hours."

GIVE GOOD MEASURE—A farmer who made it an invariable rule in disposing of his products to give a little more than exact justice required of him, was asked why he did so. He replied, God has permitted me but one journey through this world, and when gone I cannot return to rectify mistakes.

☞ The wrath of an ape and the threat of a flatterer should be regarded alike.

☞ If you make love to a widow who has a daughter twenty years younger than herself, begin by declaring that you really thought they were sisters.

☞ An old soldier was court-martialed for drunkenness; the offence was clearly proved, and the culprit was called upon for defence. It was short, simple and successful. "Does the court think that Uncle Sam hires all the cardinal virtues for seven dollars a month?"

☞ A California widow publishes the following in a San Francisco paper:

Husband Wanted.—Whereas my husband has lately left my bed and board without provocation on my part, I hereby advertise for a suitable person to *fill the vacancy*. The gentleman applying must have blue eyes, light colored moustache, (my husband had black,) an attractive goatee, and a genteel figure. He must not be over twenty five years of age, well educated, of unexceptionable morals, and agreeable address. It is requisite that his personal incumbrances should be limited, and his prospective fortunes flattering.

No gamblers need apply.

Address JULIA,
At the desk of this office.

☞ Happiness results from the occupation of time usefully or agreeably.

☞ A philosopher observes that the two favorite poisons of America, are bad air and bad grog.

☞ Here is a laughable instance of 'A Man short of Bible.' A reverend gentleman, while visiting a parishoner, had occasion in the course of conversation to refer to the Bible, and on asking for the article, the master of the house ran to bring it, and came back with two leaves of the book in his hand. 'I declare,' says he, 'this is all we've got in the house; I'd no idea we were so near out!'

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