

# The River Road Review

Oregon-California Trail Association—Nebraska chapter

Fall 2006

## Meeker's Re-enactment Party Travels from Oregon to Kansas

by Barb Netherland

The Ezra Meeker reenactment was remarkable. The group put a tremendous amount of effort into the project which certainly helped to guarantee success—but they looked as though they were having a good time too. Ezra (Ray Egan) and the historian (Dennis) presented an evening program at the Scotts Bluff National Monument. It drew the largest, most appreciative audience of the summer, including Meeker descendants who traveled from Minnesota to attend the event. An added bonus was the gift of a couple photos from the granddaughter of the photographer, O.W. Simmons, who originally took the famous pictures of Ezra at Chimney Rock. On the return trip from the convention in St. Joseph, the Meeker group gathered at the base of Chimney Rock to recreate the Simmons photo.



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OCTA celebrated the 100th anniversary of Ezra Meeker's Old Oregon Trail Monument Expedition of 1906-08 by re-tracing Meeker's journey. The re-enactment party stops for a quick snapshot at the base of Chimney Rock.



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Parts of this wagon are the original Meeker wagon that Ezra used in the 1906 trip back up the Oregon Trail.

In 1906 Meeker traveled the trail with his ox-team and covered wagon as part of his effort to save the Oregon Trail. Meeker re-enactor, Ray Egan, is a frequent summer performer for the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City.



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Zeus and Thor, are the official oxen of the 2006 Meeker re-enactment.

# Editor's Corner

## OCTA-NE Fall Frolic

We will meet Saturday, October 21 at Happy Jack's C Store in Brule at 8:30 A.M. The first activity will be to repair the fence at the entrance to California Hill and explore the great swales on the hill. Then we will proceed up the trail to Ash Hollow. Loren says that there is a lot to see and do around there as the convention committee explored and learned quite a bit about this area last summer. Bring a sack lunch and a curiosity. You will need a Nebraska State Park Permit priced at \$3.00, but this will be the only cost. This outing will help the convention committee in setting up activities for the 2007 convention.

The past couple of months have been hectic: problems with computers, health and new software. By now you should have received a letter asking for nominations for chapter officers. More information was provided in the last issue of the RRR. Dig it out and re-read it for descriptions of each office and get your reply in the mail to Betty today.

Loren summarized OCTA's new Strategic Plan in his article located elsewhere in this issue. We cruised the OCTA website and learned that Loren and Travis Boley were actually members of the working committee that refined it. Loren's report is more readable, but it is only a summary. There is a lot of fund raising mentioned, but we missed any provision within the plan for finding out what our general membership thinks or wants. We suggest that you get a copy for yourself and read it carefully. Comments are due to OCTA by November 10.

~Carole Meyer

### The Oregon-California Trails Association—Nebraska chapter

*Event Coordinator:* Loren Pospisil  
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# Letters to the Editor

## Children's Day Camp at Convention

I recently returned from the St. Joseph OCTA Convention after a very enjoyable time. I enjoyed all of the lectures and field trips as usual, as I have attended many OCTA conventions through the years. But I want to let you know what was special about this last one, and that was the Day Camp that was offered for children at the Pony Express Museum.

Because it was made available, I brought two grandchildren (ages 10 and 11) along who thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the Day Camp, as well as learning something about the Oregon and California Trail. Because they were the only California kids attending, they also had their horizons broadened by another part of the country, at the other end of the trail! They enjoyed meeting kids from other states also. Hopefully they will turn into future trail historians.

Hopefully another Day Camp will be available at future conventions. I urge all parents and grandparents to consider bringing some young ones along if OCTA does hold future Day Camps. I am enclosing a letter from my 11-year-old grand-daughter Katie.

~Priscilla Van der Pas

I had a really fun time in St. Joe. I loved going to the Pony Express Museum and learning about Missouri and Kansas. I liked exploring different parts of the Oregon and California Trail. I also liked making dioramas. The thing I most liked was that on the last day we got to make biscuits and butter. They turned out to be really good. I also liked learning about Ezra Meeker and the oxen! The last thing I would like to tell you about is that I really liked the BBQ on Saturday night. I went to St. Joe with my grandma for the convention and I hope OCTA will have the day camp in Nebraska next year.

~Katie P. (age 11), Livermore, CA

[ed. note: The two letters above were forwarded to the editor by Travis Boley.]

## Promotion Ideas for OCTA-NE

One of the best ways [to promote the trails in Nebraska] would be to have an anniversary of some event such as the anniversary of Wild Bill

Hickok shooting David McClanes at Rock Creek Station. When something like this comes up, it would be wise to work with the Nebraska State Historical Society. It has Hickok's gun.

...as a reminder of the deaths of a wagon train near Lexington or the kidnapping of a girl along the Little Blue River...have a gathering on the exact date, and then you can ask the papers to cover it. Also, Fort Kearny and an explanation of why it is spelled "Kearny" and the town is spelled "Kearney"...why it is pronounced "Karney" but in Colorado, at Bent's Fort, it is called "Keerney".

...in connection with Scottsbluff... have some Oregon Trail researcher look up and try to determine if Hiram Scott is buried at the National Monument.

Finally, the chapter should publish what it is doing to recognize great trail ruts...some of the best are at Rock Creek...some at Ash Hollow.

When the convention comes to Scottsbluff...recognize the achievements of William Henry Jackson, the pioneer photographer. He gave a lot of his paintings and equipment to the late Merrill Mattes. Some of his best Nebraska scenes are in the Scottsbluff National Monument safe to help preserve the water colors—another possibility for a story before the convention comes to Scottsbluff....

...to make the convention publicity...find a farmer, make up a wagon of some OCTA people dressed like pioneers and have the wagon start a run at Steele City where the trail enters the state. The wagon crosses the state (with Nebraska Department of Roads approved route)...reaches Scottsbluff just in time for the convention. While the wagon is crossing the state, newspapers, TV stations and radio, all will be using the story...at a slow news time of the year.

I can see the wagon at Rock Creek Station (where there are excellent ruts), Fort Kearny, Fort McPherson, Ash Hollow, etc. This would generate a lot of publicity...Nebraska is a friendly state, and towns would be willing to feed them along the way.

~Jim Denney

# 340 Participants Register for the 2006 OCTA Convention

by Loren Pospisil

The 2006 OCTA Convention in St Joseph was a great deal of fun. I had my fears, everyone told me how hot and humid it was going to be, but great kudos go to the convention organizers for keeping it relatively cool. Nebraska had a fair turnout: Ann Hoff, Bill and Nancy Peterson, Joe and Lois Fairfield, Art and Billie Johnson, Barb Netherland and myself. I found out that Jere Krakow grew up in Nebraska and has joined our chapter, so we are quite proud to claim him as well.

Tuesday was the Board meeting. Board meetings are now fun. Is that an oxymoron? The tone of the meetings is now relaxed and positive. There still is good and spirited debate on issues where people disagree, as well there should be, but the spirit of the debate is positive and respectful. I cannot say enough good things about Vern Gorzitze. I think that if your last name is something like Gorzitze or Pospisil, you just have to have a sense of humor. Some issues and news came up. OCTA now has a cracker-jack Treasurer in the form of Turner Rivenbark. More than just reporting numbers, he understands money. Travis Boley had accomplished many good things. He has worked hard to get OCTA set up as a leader in the history business. We have coordinated with Elderhostel and other groups to advance interest in the trails and our organization. There were other reports, but it was getting close to lunch, and I do not have much of an attention span anyhow, so some of it blurred together. In the afternoon, it was reported that Elko will not be able to do the 2008 convention. I immediately offered to have Nebraska do 2008 instead of 2007. That flew like the proverbial lead brick. Anywho, the board is now scrambling. Other ideas were discussed, including changing the format and time of conventions. Any thoughts and ideas will be welcome. I gave a report on our preparations for the 2007 convention, more on that later.

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*Big swales, about one-half mile long, are clearly visible along the St. Joe Road.*

## **Election Report**

The big thing from the board meeting was the election mess. Mess is the right word, and I do not use it to be critical; it was a mess. I think it would even have confused a Florida Election Official. I might be oversimplifying, and maybe I might miss a few details, but here goes. There were four positions open. The process for running has a wrinkle. You need to put in your application and then get three endorsements from existing board members. Three candidates had their application in, and endorsements then followed within the stated deadline. This next part is vague. Three others were in the process of applying, and one or all had their application in, but for some unspecified reason, there was a paperwork snafu with either with the application or the endorsements. Immediately there was concern about the fairness of an election where all candidates are swept into office with no real test by the membership. There was also a technical problem. Since you had three candidates, the fourth could (or should) be selected by write in. Unfortunately, the ballots did not have a write-in line. One faction claimed that that was patently

unfair as this election would by default have the fourth candidate chosen by write-in. With no line, many people would not have taken the opportunity. This became the key point of the debate.

The debate basically fell into two camps. One group maintained that the three candidates got all their paperwork in on time and should not be penalized with "double-jeopardy". They felt that the election should stand and that the board fill the fourth position as stated in the bylaws.

The other camp maintained that it was not legal for the board to fill a vacancy because even if there were only one write-in vote, that vote would constitute a legal vote. They then went on to argue that since no line was available, the entire election was invalid. The bylaws were consulted and no reference was found. It was argued that if the bylaws do not specify a procedure, that we are to fall back on Roberts Rules of Order. Mr. Roberts suggested the use of a write-in line.

For my part, I do not know who was right. Both sides represented their views very well. The debate lasted an hour and a half. It was a

*(cont. on page 4)*

## Convention in St. Joe (cont. from page 3)

good debate to listen to because everyone was using good logic and was respectful of the other view. I really believe that everyone was working hard to find a compromise that was fair, technically legal, and good for the organization.

Luckily, there was a legal “out” that trumped both camps. The bylaws state that if less than 50% of the membership has voted, the election must be ratified by the membership attending the membership meeting at the convention. It was decided that one member of each camp should present to the membership why they felt the election should be certified or should not be certified. The problem was presented to the membership. The membership voted not to certify the election. A motion from the floor then called for a new election with all six candidates. This passed.

### Activities Report

On Wednesday, I missed the speakers because I had meetings with various people. I was able to take the nice half-day tour of the city of St. Joseph in the afternoon. This was really interesting to me. It might sound odd to say, but St. Joseph is the oldest city I’ve ever visited. I grew up in the west, and my experience had been with cities with very few buildings older than 1880s, so I was amazed at the number of much older buildings and material culture. Also, it was interesting for me to see a different part of the Missouri River.

I grew up in Fort Pierre, SD and have visited much of it from Fort Randall to Fort Union. While it may be the same river, it actually rains in Missouri! While the river bluffs in the Dakotas are stark and lucky to have grass, these hills were lush and loaded with vegetation. We visited the Pony Express museum. Barb Netherland tried to join up. We also visited Robidoux Row.

Thursday, I went on the St. Joe Road bus tour. This was a good tour. My only criticism is that we were over an hour late getting back. I am not going to be too heavy-handed here because this is the exact same thing I am often guilty of. When you have so much cool stuff to see, you want to cram as much in as possible. So I totally understand. One thing that was surprising to me was that at the first set of swales we stopped, there was a bunch of wild pot growing. Locals said it was hemp and that it was for making rope. This may be true, but I did not see a lot of rope lying around. Our guides dutifully pointed out that it was illegal to take any on the bus. We all complied, but I noticed that many of my busmates were making detailed notes on their maps. Why can’t I ever find a patch of single-malt scotch?

The Nemaha crossing was especially fun because the local landowners had their kids in pioneer costume. There was also a stop at a big swale that was a good half-mile long or so. Sometimes we forget that there



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*Some local landowners near the Nemaha River crossing had their kids dressed in pioneer costumes.*

are still quite a few trail resources in the east, if you know where to look. The tour finished at Hollenberg Ranch. Now I can say I have done the trail from St. Joe, Missouri, to Split Rock, Wyoming.

On Friday, I missed the speakers so that I could work the Nebraska table. The Petersons, Johnsons, and Fairfields had been promoting the cause the other days.

I had to come back on the Saturday, so I missed out on the other bus tours. They looked good but I could only pick one.

### 2007 Convention Report

I gave a speech at the membership meeting promoting next year’s convention at Gering-Scottsbluff. It must have been a good speech because everyone was all excited about coming to Nebraska next year. Now I wish I would have listened to it to find out what I said.

Our committee accomplished quite a bit this summer. We laid out three bus tours. We also got a lot of good ideas, food for thought, and caveats from this convention. One thing sort of fell in our lap and we are still working out the details, but Ben Kern from Wyoming has made several wagon trips across Nebraska, and we are working out the details of doing that as a lead-up to the convention. A number of other people from other states have stepped forward to provide some help in critical areas.

Activities will include (but not limited to) two Randy Brown tours, a bus trip to Ash Hollow area, a bus



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*Loren thinks Kansas is real groovy. The locals assured him, however, that the wild pot was really for making rope, even though he didn’t see a lot of rope lying around.*

trip to the Fort Laramie area, a bus trip to Morrill and Scotts Bluff County sites, a cook out at Oregon Trail Wagon Train, a grand evening at Scotts Bluff, a reception at Chimney Rock, and a musical to boot.

We will still need as much help as we can get. We have two requirements in prospective volunteers. One would be the ability to talk about stuff you love. (I think that is the entire membership of OCTA), and the other is to have fun. Word on the street is that we should expect 500 people. It has been 20 years since the convention was here last, and people are excited. I am not kidding; we are going to need helpers to just “be around” and greet and talk and help people out.



Barb, the XP rider.

### Officers' Report and Strategic Plan

One thing that came out the board meeting was the new Strategic Plan. At the mid-year board meeting, we had a session where we identified issues important to the organization. A committee then put them into a format that the organization can act upon. More on this will be in the OCTA newsletter. What I would like to talk about are those things chapters can do. Now, there is no way a chapter president or anyone person can do all these things, nor should a chapter president just arbitrarily appoint people. These objectives and actions represent opportunities for

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people to look at their own skills and interests and find a project that is self-satisfying and good for the organization. Some of these things we are already doing. Some of these things are being done by some and could be done by more.

Establish preservation organizations in each chapter. Undertake at least one preservation project per year, especially with new, diverse partners. This is incredibly important. We should have more than one person do this. We should have eyes and ears all along the trail.

Develop and expand OCTA's activities to raise public awareness of the importance of trail preservation and protection. You know your community. What activities can we do in your community that would attract new people? Many things are happening in your community that would be of interest to OCTA. Help get the word out.

Search out, recognize, partner with, and obtain assistance from private landowners, private not-for-profit agencies and governmental agencies from the local to the federal level that have a stake in assisting OCTA to maintain its preservation emphasis. This goes with the previous item. We have some members who know the landowners. This type of relationship is lasting preservation occurs.

Communicate regularly with public land management staff and private landowners to identify, develop, and promote projects.

Widen scope of tours, speaker programs, and volunteer activities. Everyone in our organization has knowledge and skills of interest to the public. Some of us are good at talking to school groups others are good at talking to the local “Friends of the Library”.

Organize activities along length of trails. We are doing this twice per year. Should we do more? Can we do more?

Another project the education committee wants to do is to distribute educational activity books to schools free of charge. They can get them at cost (\$1.50 per copy). They want chapters to kick in the money. This is a good idea, but could quickly exhaust our resources. I suggested that we target a business in a community to donate the books. I know that businesses are hit up all the



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This is what Lois was seen doing during the convention.

time for stuff like this. This has a twist—we make a production of it. We get the local paper to do a story with one of us, the business person and the class receiving the books. If a class has 30 fourth-graders, the business person gets his name in the paper for \$45 (cheap advertising), the kids get free books, and we get OCTA's name in the paper for free. If anyone knows of schools or businesses that you think would be interested, contact Bill Hill. This is a new idea, and the details are still being kicked about.

[*ed. note:* Assuming the number of fourth-grade students at about one percent of the total population, the cost of doing this works out to about \$450 per year in the Hastings/Adams County schools, or \$26,500 for Nebraska.]

## River Road Review News

Send scholarly articles, trail news, photos, and upcoming events to the editor:

Carole Meyer  
1118 N. Minnesota Avenue  
Hastings, NE 68901

In e-mail use **OCTA** as the subject:  
cmarist@inebraska.com

# What I Did This Summer

by Barb Netherland

It all started in April with the Nebraska chapter rut nut gathering in Kearney. It is always fun to see everyone and we had a good time scouting out the Kearney sites.

The Nebraska panhandle bunch set three dates throughout the summer as scouting expeditions for the 2007 convention bus tours. We have many, many more interesting sites than we have time, so discussions and arm wrestling have centered on what we need to leave out. We went east to Ash Hollow, west to Ft. Laramie/Guernsey and spent a day around the Morrill and Scotts Bluff county sites. It has been so much fun to get out and explore the trails again.

The annual Ash Hollow Pageant this year featured the "Lighter Side of the Oregon Trail" and mixed an amusing array of diary quotes with clever musical arrangements. One of the main organizers of the pageant, Jean Jensen, will attempt to use her powers of persuasion to convince the other performers to travel to Gering and present their gig at the convention. Jean is also the go-to-gal for much of the history surrounding Ash Hollow and along with Jeff Uhrich, Ash Hollow historic site manager, took our small group on a most memorable mini-trek near the actual site of the Battle of Blue Water. What a treat!

I learned of a volunteer opportunity to work on a BLM sponsored project documenting the condition of the trails through South Pass. I signed up to work for four days and wished it would have possible to help the entire fifteen days. So much of the trail in that area is pure 1840s as far as the eye can see. Hope the power companies leave it alone because there is no way NOT to ruin the landscape. Keep your ears open—this is pristine trail worth fighting for. The brief four days was one of those memorable once in a lifetime experiences—perfect weather, great people, great work, and plentiful, tall sagebrush.

A small local group worked together to promote the Meeker event and while collecting research about Ezra Meeker, you couldn't help but admire his determination and spunk. Both

# OCTA Receives Grant

by Travis Boley

The Oregon-California Trails Association was awarded \$100,000 from the Malcolm E. Smith Jr. Foundation, Inc. of St. James, New York, for the purpose of developing a documentary film focusing on the 500,000 emigrants who utilized the Oregon and California Trails in the 19th century, with a special focus on the hardships these emigrants endured as they crossed the plains of Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska, and the mountains and deserts of Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, California, and Oregon.

A very preliminary schedule for the film includes scripting, which is expected to begin in the next few weeks, with the culling of images, site selection, and interviews to commence over the winter of 2006-07. Filming is set to begin in the late spring of 2007 and continue through the late summer of 2007. Editing and post-production will occur over the fall of 2007 and the winter of 2007-08, with the debut of the film set to occur in the late spring or summer of 2008. OCTA will seek out several media outlets for possible broadcast upon completion, and plans to seek other funds to augment the Foundation's gift. Such funds will be applied to the production of the film as well the possible creation of a related website, educational materials, and DVD with extras not available in the original version.

Previously, OCTA was awarded \$10,000 from the Malcolm E. Smith Jr. Foundation for the purchase of

the Scottsbluff and Gering newspapers covered Meeker's 1906 and 1926 visits to the area and did a great job of recording his wit and gracious sense of humor.

The Scotts Bluff County Tourism director used the Meeker event in a clip they are filming to promote area tourism. I got to walk along beside the oxen as the cameras were rolling and it is difficult to describe my feelings as we stepped from the mowed portion of the land into the tall prairie grasses. I don't know when the clip will be available, but hopefully we can all see it at the 2007 convention.

California Hill, which contains deep wagon ruts created by the tens of thousands of wagons that scaled the hill. Located just west of Brule, California Hill marks the spot where emigrants on the trails left the valley of the South Platte River and headed up the steep hill to cross a 23-mile-wide plateau before beginning their steep and dangerous descent down the half-mile-long grade into Ash Hollow in the North Platte River valley. Upon purchase of California Hill, OCTA donated the parcel to the Nebraska State Historical Society. The Society still manages California Hill today, and a sign on U.S. Highway 30 just west of Brule marks the turnoff for visitors to walk in the ruts of this national historic landmark.

## OCTA Donations Link

There is now a direct link from the OCTA web site to the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation for donations to OCTA endowment funds held at the GKCCF. The link is at the top of the OCTA homepage. This will allow donations to come in at any time (even from people who are not involved with OCTA), but more importantly, OCTA can modify the link to incorporate special fund raising measures desired. It will also cut down greatly on staff time, as funds that are direct deposited will not have to go through the added steps of endorsing or depositing checks, running credit card numbers, or communicating with the Foundation OCTA's intent to make a deposit. OCTA will be notified immediately anytime a donation is made so that a thank you and tax-credit letter can be generated.

## Chapter Dues

Send your chapter dues of \$10 directly to the treasurer:

Betty Scheinost  
2760 36th Avenue  
Columbus, NE 68601-2342

# Confessions of a Failed Trail Educator

[ed. note: The on-going saga of how my Husband, AKA Renaissance Dad, tried to teach our daughter {real name Erika, but variously known as ET (for obvious reasons), Eve (from Evil Twin) or just plain Kid} about The Trail. In this episode she's all grown up, with her own house and car and boyfriend and everything.]

Hi, Honey.

— Hey, Dad! (*flipping through the stack of papers on our dining room table*)

What do you think you're doing, going through my personal stuff like that?

— (*ignoring me*) Why don't file this junk in your study?

The floor was full.

— Oh, yeah. Makes sense. Ah ha! What's this "Draft Strategic Plan" thing?

Well, I've been studying it....OCTA has asked for comments...

— Oh. It's from that club you and Mom belong to. Hmhmhmhm. Visionary. Marketing experts. This is incredible!

What do you mean, Eve?

— Incredible. Remarkable. You know. Don't you remember when I was in third grade, and I said horse chips in front of that teacher and they made me write a list of alternative expressions? So I taught myself incredible, and remarkable and you don't say. Don't you remember?

Well, maybe vaguely...

— That was probably when you were on the road all the time, saving lives and stamping out disease and stuff.

Maybe.

— (*pointing at the first paragraph*) Hmhmhm. A facilitator?

Yup. Do you know what that is?

— Sure do. That was the ringer the principal brought in to help the student council develop plans to identify, nurture and utilize our student leaders for a better high school, a better community and a better future. Incredible, remarkable. Whatever. Nobody talks this way.

Huh?

— Basically, Dad, it's modern way to lead. You can't lead without a plan. So you make up problems to fix, and

then you take an adjective from this column and a verb from that column...

You've got to be kidding...

— And put 'em together so they sound like you know what you're doing. And pretty soon you've got a plan.

E.T.!

— Don't worry about it, Dad. It's the way people who don't know how to solve problems solve problems these days.

But...

— It's how leaders lead. Mom probably fills out things like that at the college all the time in those faculty committee meetings. Don't you know?

I guess not...

— It's just a plan. How dangerous can that be? Leaders have to come up with a clear cut thing to worry about otherwise they can't lead. And they can't come right out and ask the followers what needs fixing, because that would be a sign of weakness, and everybody says we need strong leaders. In school, clubs, Washington, everybody says we need strong leadership. Look, Dad, leaders are going to lead whether we want it or not; it doesn't make sense to judge them. They seem to have been born that way. Well, the way they fix things is to draw up plans, and worry, and have meetings for the leaders to meet other leaders and get committees started so they can have more meeting. Leadership just collapses without enough meetings, Dad. Don't worry about it.

Don't worry about it???????

— Right! Why get upset with the leaders. If you do what they want, they won't have a problem to worry about, and then how will they look? The kids in high school didn't worry about the things that the student council worried about, and look what happened.

What?

— Nothing.

Oh.

— The leaders always had something for somebody else to do, but most people just ignored 'em, which gave

the leaders a reason to hold more meetings to become better leaders and learn how to manage people. No matter who you were, you could be proud. It really makes lot of sense if you stop to think about it.

Eve, why is it everytime I talk to you I wind up with a headache?

— Eyestrain, maybe, because of my radiant beauty? Com'on, Dad. Why worry. What are they gonna do? Throw you out? Reality, Dad. Think reality.

Hmhmhm.

— Just think about it, Dad. How do people become members of your club? Not why, but how. There is only one requirement for membership, right?

I don't quite follow you, honey...

— Oooh, boy. Think. What do all your members have in common?

Well, we like history and the outdoors and...

— Geez. Get real! How did you become a member of procto in the first place...

OCTA, honey.

— Whatever...didn't you have to fill out an application or something?

Well, yeah. Name and address and stuff like that.

— Did you have to take an oath or something? It's not like joining a church is it?

Of course not, we just give them a check, and they started sending us the magazine...

— Correcto mundo, Renaissance Dad! A check! Money. Dues! Twenty five bucks a year or...

It's sixty, actually, for a family...

— Well, whatever. But you see what I'm saying. No matter what anybody tries to tell you, it's not what you believe or don't believe. You pay your money. You belong. It's that simple, Dad. It's not like you took an oath of allegiance to agree with this. (*dropping the plan on the table*)

Hmhmhmhm.

— How many people in crocka now?

OCTA, Eve. I'm not sure...we've lost a lot. Maybe fifteen hundred.

(cont. on page 8)

## Trail Educator (cont. from page 7)

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—(whipping our her omnipresent pocket calculator) And how many people in the country?

You mean the U.S.? Three hundred million, more or so...

—That would be... (punching keys) about one paid up procto member for every...200-thousand normal people...

Normal?

—My point exactly! Look, Dad, it's just a little club. You can have a good time and do stuff with your friends and maybe find a few normies out there who want to see the ruts. But you're not really a threat to western civilization.

OCTA a threat????? What are you talking about?

—Look, Dad, you seem upset.

Reality, remember. You don't like being told what to do. Your leaders don't like being told to do. It's a perfect arrangement. You can't make them stop trying to lead, and they can't stop you from pass-aggressing...

What????

—Passive resistance. Like Gandhi, Dad, only you don't go to jail.

You mean????

—Yep. They keep leading, the rest of you keep doing what you're doing. Everybody's happy. You've resisted. They've led. It's just the way it is, Dad. Grow up! (sudden thought) YOU weren't thinking of running for office were you?

Well...

—(thumbing through the latest OCTA Board Candidate list) Ah ha! Just as I thought. Just like the council. Eight candidates. Vote for four. Right?

Essentially...

—It's just a beauty contest, Dad. They have four winners, it doesn't make any difference who. And then there's a four-way tie for Miss Congeniality.

Kid, you have a remarkable way of looking at things.

—(beaming) Thanks! (turns to go) I love you, Dad...

Love you, Honey

—But I don't think I'd run for office if I were you.

Really?

—Well, what would you say about yourself? (simpering) I only hope that if I am elected I can spread joy and...Com'on, Dad. Get real! You're the only sixty-something guy I know who has a full drum set in his living room...

So?

—Why don't you try out for the club band? "Luv, Love me Do" instead of "Sweet Betsy from Pike." Change their name to the ROCTA band and have a little fun...Dum-dee-dum-dum-dum. Dum-dee-dum-dum-dum. Dum-dee-dum-dum-dum. Yow!!!!!! Judeeeee in dis-guiiiiiise, that's what you aaaaaaaare...

(and she was gone.)

OCTA-NE  
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