It’s Not the Destination — It’s the Journey

As you know, a motion to dissolve the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation was voted on by members at the meeting in Tucson on January 29, 2011. After considerable discussion, the proposal to disband did pass with the majority of members voting (in person and by absentee ballot) in favor of the motion.

The decision to dissolve the chapter was difficult. The chapter has a proud history, and we have enjoyed many years of sharing the inspiring story of the Corps of Discovery. Founded in January of 1997 as one of the very first “off the trail chapters,” we were blessed with a small but dedicated group of Lewis and Clark enthusiasts and have succeeded because of their commitment and support.

Needless to say, the chapter had a geographical challenge to find meaningful examples of promoting the Expedition’s story. In schools emphasis is on Southwest History, and rightfully so. To supplement their studies, several LCTHF Curriculum Guides were purchased and placed in libraries of local school districts. As “Keepers of the Story,” our members have given numerous presentations to schools, civic organizations and senior groups. And, we are the only non-trail chapter chosen to host the excellent National Park Service Corps II exhibit during the bicentennial.

While hosting the Southwest Regional Meeting of the LCTHF in 2009 a chapter sponsored panel was dedicated on the National Historic Trail at Gila Bend to honor Jean Baptiste “Pomp” Charbonneau’s role in guiding the Mormon Battalion from Santa Fe to San Diego. Professionally designed, it will tell the story of the youngest member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to visitors for years to come.

For the past fourteen years the chapter officers and members have been good stewards with the funds acquired through membership dues and personal donations. When the Foundation appealed to members gathered at the 32nd Annual Meeting in Dillon, MT for money to purchase an “internet ready” computer for its new library, our chapter stepped up and promptly donated the $3,300. needed for its purchase.

Generous donations from members have also provided for completion of two “Pomp” panels; supportive funds to the L&C Interpretive Centers at Great Falls, MT and Washburn, ND; to the Pomp’s Pillar National Monument in Montana and the Meriwether Lewis Monument at Charlottesville, Virginia.

Wonderful memories come to mind of many interesting and informative presentations at meetings, scrumptious pot-luck feasts, field trips to points of historical interest, tasty luncheons at Club 21 and memorable events at the Zelma Basha Salmeri Gallery of Western American and Native American Art.

Reminisce on the following pages with photos and brief commentary of people, places, and things we have met along the way. It’s been a wonderful journey.
When a few interested individuals considered establishing a local chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation in 1996 it became a reality primarily through the expertise and guidance of a man who few members know today. It was our good fortune to have **Wilbur Werner**, a respected attorney and community leader of Cut Bank, Montana, spending his later years in Mesa, Arizona. At that time the Foundation was administered by volunteers spread across the country—and fortunately he knew them all.

Wilbur lived Western history with a passion. As one of the first presidents of the *Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation*, he had become a legend across the country for his diligent work toward protecting the Trail. Authors, story-tellers, and film makers continually sought his expert advice while undertaking their Lewis and Clark related projects.

[Image of Wilbur Werner]

Long time Foundation members **Dr. Gerald and Susan Holcomb** with Barb Hinds of Sioux City. It was Jerry’s suggestion at the 28th Annual Meeting in Sioux City, Iowa which sparked the interest in forming a chapter in Arizona.

Following a first meeting in **January 1997**, the chapter is officially chartered on **April 13** with 17 Charter Members.

[Image of members at the 29th LCTHF Annual Meeting]

Members attending the 29th LCTHF Annual Meeting at Stevenson, WA. as representatives of the new **Grand Canyon Chapter**. 

Back: Bill Jenkins, Sue Jenkins, Jan Nichols, Jerry Holcomb, Wilbur Warner, Dave Aungst.

Front: Audrey Aungst, Michele Hacherl, Susie Holcomb.

Some early meetings were small with readings from the Journals, book reviews and presentations of interest by chapter members.
Field trips in Arizona took chapter members to many historic places such as the Tumacacori National Monument and Tubac State Historic Park. Here members learned more about the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail which originates at Old Tubac.

Wilbur Werner checks out native foods at Tubac

Charter bus trip to Kartchner Caverns in Southern Arizona

FOOD, FOOD, FOOD. Chapter members loved to eat. Every meeting held throughout the years featured scrumptious meals in one form or another.

Checking the menu at Tucson’s Club 21

Chapter picnic at Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Arizona’s oldest and largest botanical garden of desert plants and trees.
Jim Vowels, then President of the Minnesota Chapter (who also volunteered in winter as a park guide at Tonto National Monument in AZ) gives us a personal tour and glimpse of what life was like along the banks of the Salt River in the 14th Century.

His expert knowledge of the Salado archeology and plant life of the southwest desert was the highlight of our field trip.

Jack Nottingham, Jean Bagley, Sue Jenkins & Carol Harris examine photos from renovation of Thomas Jefferson’s summer retreat at Poplar Forest, VA.

Another gourmet pot-luck luncheon!!

Living history presenter, educational tour guide and chapter member Todd Weber presented several enlightening programs about the tools, arms and accouterments used by the Corps of Discovery; and also the fascinating experiences of those who have been drawn to the wonders and adventures of the Colorado River.
Many thanks to the Basha Family for making their magnificent Zelma Basha Salmeri Gallery of Western American and Native American Art available for our meetings and private receptions.

Among their incredible collection are the ten original paintings depicting the *Lewis and Clark Expedition* created by noted western artist John Clymer. Eddie Basha graciously allowed those prized theme paintings, which are normally not on public display, to be brought from his home for our viewing.

When a special series of seven lithographic posters were produced from the original paintings to commemorate the Expedition’s bicentennial, our chapter received several complimentary sets, courtesy of Eddie and Nadine Basha.

Food played a crucial role in the Corps of Discovery’s epic journey to the Pacific and back. What they ate and how they prepared it was the theme of Chuck Holland’s captivating programs which were based upon research by his late wife, Food Historian, Leandra Zim Holland.

Chuck’s presentations at several chapter meetings; then to the public in the “Tent of Many Voices” during the Corps II exhibit in Arizona; and at the LCTHF South-western Regional Meeting were tasty treats.
At the Tucson artist studio home of chapter members Francis and Kaye Gurerin Yourstarshining, Francis, who is also a Sioux Tribal Elder, talked about events in his early life growing up in South Dakota, and about the importance of the buffalo in the daily life of the Plains Indians. Painter and sculptress, Kaye, created the unique statue of Captain Clark and Sacagawea whose negative image is shown on each issue of The Desert Dispatch.

In Tucson, thirty nine members and guests were invited to climb into the cockpit of “Cloud Chaser” as author/pilot Mary Walker took us on a colorful aerial journey along the Lewis and Clark Historic Trail.
In January, 2005, our modest chapter made a little history of its own by being selected by the National Park Service as the only off-the-trail chapter to host their **Corps of Discovery II: 200 Years into the Future** exhibit. Ramping-up for the opening in a mere 15 days and co-hosting the exhibit at two locations in Arizona we accomplished the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation’s mission; “to stimulate appreciation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition’s contribution to American Heritage.”
A Southwest Regional Meeting hosted by our chapter in Scottsdale April 17 - 19, 2009 was well attended by Foundation members from six states.

Chapter Members Presented Notable Programs

Historian Todd Weber, displayed and demonstrated the tools, arms and accouterments used by the Corps of Discovery in their journey to the Pacific.

Chuck Holland, described how food played a crucial role in the Lewis and Clark Expeditions epic journey to the Pacific and back.

Wayne McKinley, described the life and times of Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, and how the baby on the coin went on to play an important role in opening the American West.

Stephanie Ambrose Tubbs, Wayne McKinley & Cheryl Blanchard (BLM) with chapter sponsored panel dedicated on the National Historic Trail at Gila Bend.

L – R: Betty Nottingham, Jack Nottingham, Audrey Aungst, Lorna Hainesworth, Larry Martin, Jean Myers, John Bagley, Doris Martin, Wayne McKinley, Donnis Deever, Jean Bagley, Kathy Holland, Dave Aungst, Chuck Holland.
At the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, *journals* written by Lewis, Clark, and Ordway were carefully brought to each person attending the 35th Annual Meeting to view individually.

At the 37th Annual Meeting in Portland, day long field trips took us to **Fort Clatsop**, Cape Disappointment, the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, Crown Point and a sternwheeler cruise. Fort Clatsop was destroyed by fire a month later.
Chapter members Ed Wang, Dave Aungst, Astrid Wang, Bill & Sue Jenkins at Missouri River while attending 30th Annual Meeting in Great Falls, MT.

Clint Brown, storyteller, from the Gros Venture Tribe at Fort Belknap, MT.

Lodge at the Knife River Hidatsa village where Sacagawea lived with Charbonneau before leaving with Expedition.

Amy Mossett, a Mandan/Hidatsa who portrays Sakakawea, is Tourism Director for the Three Affiliated Tribes in ND and Co Chair of the National Council’s Circle of Tribal Advisors.

They went that-a-way! Following the Trail through the Bitterroot Mountains in Idaho.

“Gates of the Mountains” on the Missouri.
The Discovery Expedition’s keelboat arriving in Pittsburg to commemorate Lewis’s departure from there in August 1803.

Today’s Cape Disappointment on the Pacific at Washington

Display of materials Lewis procured from the Armory at Harpers Ferry, WV

Monument at burial site of William Clark visited at 38th Annual Meeting in St. Louis.

Beacon Rock on the Columbia River. Named by Lewis & Clark, October 31, 1805

A Bicentennial Signature Event held at Monticello, January 18, 2003 Marked 200th Anniversary of Jefferson’s message to Congress requesting $2,500 to fund the Corps of Discovery Expedition.

Grave of Meriwether Lewis on Natchez Trace Pkwy near Hohenwald, TN. Lewis died here October 11, 1809.
Chapter exhibit at 40th LCTHF Annual meeting in Great Falls, Montana — 2008.


Camping by the White Cliffs along The upper Missouri River. The Corps camped here on May 31, 1805.

Chapter Member Larry Epstein, speaking to foundation members at the remote “Fight Site” which he helped to pinpoint as an Eagle Scout with the Troop from Cut Bank, MT.

On June 24, 2006, chapter members were privileged to attend the launch of the USNS Sacagawea in San Diego as representatives of the LCTHF. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness an historic event.

With reserved seating, we were very close to this moving, patriotic event. As the new 41,000 ton re-supply ship rose above us the Grand Pacific Band played military marches while Naval personnel in dress whites and members of Mandan-Hidatsa and Shoshone tribes gave the event a colorful sense of ceremony and legacy.
**Final Chapter Meeting**

Meeting on January 29th at the Club Twenty One restaurant in Tucson, chapter members enjoyed a well presented power point slide show by **Brooke Myers** about the adventures of the Grand Canyon Chapter members attending the 42nd Annual Meeting at Lewiston, Idaho.

Her presentation of personal photographs and videos included a Hell's Canyon jet boat trip, the Lolo trail hike and excursions to some of the actual camp sites used by the Corps of Discovery.

Following Brook’s presentation, Vice President Jack Nottingham called the meeting to order. The minutes of our prior meeting were approved as published. **Under Old Business:** a motion was made by Audrey Aungst, seconded by John Bagley, to donate $50.00 to the Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association for the presentation made by Albert Eddins at our chapter meeting on November 13, 2010. Motion passed.

Jack then opened the floor for discussion concerning the open motion to disband the chapter.

Much deliberation centered upon reasons for the chapter’s declining membership and struggle to fill vacant officer positions, and a frustration with increased reporting obligations to the foundation.

Following the discussion the motion to disband did pass with the majority of members voting (in person and by absentee ballot) in favor of the motion. The final count was 22 to disband; 4 to **not** disband, and 1 abstain.

A motion was then made by Chuck Holland, seconded by Dawn Myers, to gift the remaining funds in the treasury to the **Third Century Fund of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.** Motion passed.

A final request from many members is that they do hope to have some sort of annual get-together in the future, either for some historical moment, maybe a good program, or just for fun.
MANY THANKS

To the Chapter Presidents (above) and Officers who have supported and served the chapter through the years. Through them, wonderful speakers across a variety of topics were arranged for meetings.

To Dawn Myers, who has consistently arranged for Tucson speakers, meeting sites, and the Corps II Exhibit site, and for representing the chapter (with daughter Brooke) at virtually every LCTHF Annual Meeting since 1997.

To Ray Gentry for diligently serving nine years as the Chapter Treasurer.

To Wayne McKinley who has generously devoted a great deal of time and energy into overseeing completion of the Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau commemorative panel placed on the National Historic Trail at Gila Bend. It brings the story of The Lewis and Clark Expedition to the American Southwest.

To Norma Schaefer for arranging and hosting many chapter meetings at her associations fine club facilities.

To Joyce White for faithfully maintaining her charter chapter membership while living in London, England, York, PA, and currently Englewood, CO.

To Audrey Aungst, who has dutifully served as a chapter officer for 14 years, and maintained an ongoing history of chapter events through mementos and hundreds photographs.

I will keep in touch with our current members with updates from the foundation, etc., and the possibility of a fun gathering later. If anyone has ideas, please let me know and I will try coordinating it.

It has been a wonderful journey — thanks for coming along. Dave Aungst

Whatever the future holds for us, everyone is encouraged to continue their membership in the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc. It is our main source for information about Lewis and Clark events which take place all across the U.S.

The Foundation, which has also been faced with declining membership, is currently undergoing a much needed transformation. With these changes, and our continued support, the Foundation will remain as the nation’s premier non-profit organization for the preservation of the Lewis and Clark Trail and the sharing of its stories.

Happy Trails To You

The Desert Dispatch

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