

Portage Chronicle



Reporting the events of the Portage Route Chapter, Great Falls, Montana

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Portage Route Chapter Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Portage Route Chapter was held on September 19. After a substantial ham dinner former director of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, Jane Weber, gave a presentation on her view of the future for Lewis and Clark.

She stated that the dramatic increase in interest during the bicentennial years was evidenced by increased visitorship to visitor centers and increased membership in Lewis and Clark organizations. The increases were most prominent in the early years—2003 and 2004. Everyone wanted to beat the rush. After that numbers declined to a low point in 2008, but now visitor numbers are increasing.

Her departing thought was that interest will continue to grow moderately for those offerings that provide substance and creativity beyond the traditional history of the adventure story.

The business meeting that followed was highlighted by the election of three directors. Dave Pidcock, Harry Mitchell and Walt Walker were elected to three year terms on the Board.

John Toenyas New Chapter President

The Board of Directors met on September 20 to select the Chapter Officers for the year. Elected to President was John Toenyas with Walt Walker being selected to be Vice President and Harry Mitchell as Secretary. Dave Pidcock was retained as Treasurer.



We Did Something No Member of the Expedition Did

Darian Kath

There it stands; the proud sentinel on the prairie—Square Butte, or as Lewis and Clark deemed it, Fort Mountain. The Corps of Discovery noted this fascinating landmark in mid-July of 1805 calling it “a level plain that is to all appearance inaccessible.”

However, on August 28, nineteen of us were able to access it. This small party made up of Center volunteers, Portage Route Chapter members and Honor Guard was commanded by our Captains Frank Smith and Ida Johnson.

As we climbed to the top on an established trail up from the south end of the butte, we couldn't help but marvel over the sheer cliffs on either side. We climbed just over 1,000 feet vertical from our base camp to the level plain on top.

Frank gave the group the background of the geological processes that formed this structure and the rock material, shonkinite, pointing out many examples of the processes he discussed.

Fort Mountain is used somewhat today for cattle pasture since it has about 1,100 acres on the top, but its history is well colored by various people trying to carve a life from it.

President's Report

Stephen N. Kubick

The past year has been very successful. It was a successful period even though it is only nine months. This was due to a bylaw change to align the Annual Meeting with the fiscal year and it is usually a better time of year weather wise. Our success was due to the completion of many projects that will bring credit to the Portage Route Chapter and its official family for carrying the spirit on even in these times of loss of interest/enthusiasm. We have worked hard to carry on the Lewis and Clark spirit.

At the Annual Sherman Breakfast we honored Bob Doerk and Ella Mae Howard with the Sherman Award for their years of hard work and dedication to preserving the Lewis & Clark story.

We dedicated the Sacajawea statue, "Arduous Journey by Carol Grende" at the new Federal Court house on the banks of the Missouri river. We were able to do this because of the untiring efforts of Mary Willmarth and Dave Pitcock in raising the funds to buy the statue and accomplish the excellent dedication of it. It will be there for generations to admire and remember Sacajawea's contribution to the Lewis & Clark expedition.

The brochure "Lewis and Clark Central Montana Interpreted Sites" was published and is an excellent document resulting from many years of unrelenting work of Phil Scriver and other Chapter members to showcase the "Crown Jewel" of the Journey.

John Toenyas and Phil Scriver have published a cooking, not cook, book about the food on the journey, titled "Edge of Survival." Phil Scriver also published a small book to explain the sites in the brochure which is titled "Lewis & Clark at the Great Falls of the Missouri."

John Toenyas, Dave Pidcock and Sue Buchel have been working on converting our accounting system to the QuickBooks system for non-profits for October 1st. This will make it easier for compliance with our IRS 501 (c) (3) status.

Sue Buchel and Jane Weber were responsible for bringing us the excellent "Humanities and Science—Inseparable by Nature" program. It featured a great panel of Gary Moulton, Lewis & Clark historian and author; Dr. Marty Leppet, American Philosophical Society and Dr. George Carlson, McLaughlin Research Center.

All in all it was a busy period that propagated the Lewis & Clark legacy which is our charge. Many good things happened. I would like to personally thank all of our people who participated to make them a success.

One of the main things that concern me is the condition and survival of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. A complete turnover of paid personnel, the resignations of outstanding and

dedicated Board of Director members, Margaret Gorski and Clay Smith, are of concern. We are the largest Chapter in the Foundation and have a vested interest in its success. Its library contains many historical documents that were donations to the Portage Route Chapter. If you are interested in helping at the L&CTHF office please contact Stephen Forrest or myself. I think it is imperative that we insure that the L&CTHF survive and provide the services that it has in the past. We do not want to have a fragmented and disjoint movement that goes into hibernation or demise until the Tri-Centennial resurrects it. Please be vigilant and concerned about its survival.

The other thing that worries me is the aging and decline of our membership and the absence of younger people. It is very important that we attract new and younger members to keep a dynamic chapter with hopes of continuity and survival in the future. If you have children or grandchildren encourage them to join the movement and keep their heritage alive in the future. Ask friends to join the P. The challenge is not easy in this time of many demands on people but it is probably relatively the same as in past generations.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your outstanding support during my tenure in carry the torch of Lewis & Clark forward. It has not been easy but we have persevered and for that I am forever grateful. To the Board of Director a special thank you for putting up with me and my antics over the past two years.

Voices in the Shadows

From the LCIC volunteer newsletter

Every fall the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center offers a new version of Voices in the Shadows. This year's programs are scheduled for Friday and Saturday nights, October 22, 23, 29, 30.

This year's program is "Perspective from Fort Mandan." It will be presented by staff of the Center and members of the Lewis and Clark Honor Guard.

The story of the Expedition's first winter on the trail is well documented, not only among the Expedition members, but from other outside sources. This year will offer a variety of perspectives from a diverse cast of characters, all bound together by the common experience at Fort Mandan. We will hear the deserter Moses Reed cursing his fate and the world; Sgt Ordway relating the difficulties working between the officers and the enlisted men; Pvt Weiser talking about the hardships and the harsh winter and the compensations; fur traders Charbonneau and MacKenzie will offer their opinions of the Corps of Discovery; Captain Lewis will reflect on the winter experience; and Mandan chief Sheheke will voice the opinion too often forgotten in the official histories.

Upcoming Events

- Voices in the Shadows; LCIC, Oct 22, 23, 29, 30
- Continuing Education, LCIC, at 2 pm & 7 pm, 11/9, 12/14, 1/11, 2/8, 3/8, 4/12
- Sherman Breakfast; March 19, 2011

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Phil Scriver, editor

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Family Military Tradition Continues

Darlene Fassler

When Mayor Michael Winters heard about my project of "Helmet Liners for Afghanistan" he asked me to write a description of it to be read at the Great Falls City Commission Meeting. It was read on the 6th of July.

This project was started when our son was deployed to Afghanistan last year. When we asked him what he needed or wanted he said nothing. Then I heard about knitting hats for our boys that were serving there. I checked with his unit via Fort Snelling and found out that they needed wool Helmet Liners for the front lines and Acrylic ones at the Hospital in Landstuhl, Germany for head injuries. They treat 10 to 12 head injuries there a week. I mentioned this to the volunteers at the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and the Black Eagle/Assiniboine Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. They both stepped up and donated money for postage, yarn and 4 ladies knitted about 12 hats. So far I've mailed 12 boxes. This includes 199 wool and acrylic Helmet Liners, 54 used Dental Tools (used to clean weapons) and 280 Helmet and Neck Coolers. I am still knitting even though our son is home safe and sound. He is in the Army Reserves and served in a medical unit at Bagram Air Force Base Hospital. Our son, 1Sgt Brian C. Fassler, is the 4 great grandson of Sgt. Patrick Gass of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

Continuing Your Education

From the LCIC volunteer newsletter

Join us in the Center's theater for a 6 part lecture series. This is a great opportunity for you to gain insight in the history that shaped our land and its people. Each lecture will be presented by a Center staff member at 2 pm and again at 7 pm.

Topics are: 11/9: The life and career of Isaac Stevens. 12/14: The Louisiana Purchase; the rest of the story. 1/11: The US Army of 1803. 2/8: A history of the US Forest Service. 3/8: In search of Lewis' plants. 4/12: Mountain Chief of the Blackfeet.

PRC Sherman Fellow Award - 2011

Nominations are open for the 2011 Sherman Fellow Award. The criteria for our chapter's highest recognition is broad and simple; a history of devoted service supporting the Lewis and Clark legacy – and an example of Bill's favorite saying "you can get things done if you don't care who gets the credit".

The recipient or recipients of this prestigious award will be recognized at our annual Sherman Breakfast, March 19, 2011. All nominations and supporting documents, letters etc. should be sent to: John England, Chairman Sherman Fellow Award, PRC Box 2424, Great Falls, MT. 59403

Strategic Planning: how are we doing?

Phil Scriver

Three years ago at the annual meeting of the Portage Route Chapter the membership was involved in a brainstorming session to help set the direction for our chapter's future. Five long-range goals resulted.

I thought we needed to re-visit those directions so we could see how we were doing. Are we at least looking at all the goals we set forth, or are we ignoring something we really shouldn't be?

Here are the five statements the chapter membership agreed to in January of 2007:

1. *Expand our thematic interest to later historical periods and other related historical events without losing the Lewis and Clark story as the link.*
2. *Focus our resources (money, members, expertise) to connect Montana school children to the Lewis and Clark story.*
3. *Focus internally to enhance benefits in membership to the chapter, develop meaningful member activities, increase newsletter output, and take oral histories of long-term members.*
4. *Network with other organizations, chapters and agencies to produce quality programs, ensure Lewis and Clark in accurately presented in expanded stories, increase efficiency, secure sponsorships and share information.*
5. *Continue stewardship of the trail, historic sites and important Lewis and Clark resources such as the Sherman Library and the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center.*

I will leave it up to each member to decide what progress has been made. A review of the chapter's projects will help in the decisions. Any and all comments are welcome; just email me or any other member of the Board of Directors.

Be Prepared to Share/work/help

Phil Scriver

The Board of Directors is furiously working to develop some specific projects the Chapter needs to do to ensure not only our continued success, but the national foundations as well. We are working to put into motion the ideas that were discussed during our chapter annual meeting.

We are also trying to develop activities that will help us address our long range goals developed three years ago (see strategic planning above)

For our efforts to succeed we need all the help we can get from chapter members. We need ideas and we need people ready to get involved. Email or call any board member with your ideas or how you can help.



Patit Creek Camp located west of Lewiston, Idaho was used by the Corps of Discovery 5/2/06. This camp has been re-created by placing cut out silhouette statues in the area. This campsite was one of the stops on a tour during the National Foundation's annual meeting at Lewiston, Idaho August 1-4.

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