

# SOUTHERN UTAH CHAPTER OF THE OLD SPANISH TRAILS ASSOCIATION

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Chapter Website: [http://www.three-peaks.net/spanish\\_trail.htm](http://www.three-peaks.net/spanish_trail.htm)  
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## President's Message

By Rob Dotson

Greetings!!! Summer is marching in....finally. With good weather comes the desire to be outside and our area provides many opportunities for adventure. We invite all of you to join us on our fieldtrips. Not only in enjoying the activities, but also in the planning. We thank all of you who already make great efforts to support the organization.

Plans for a museum are still in the works. When the design work is completed, we will be working hard towards funding. Special thanks to New Horizons Engineering for their work in surveying and preparing a site map for the proposed location in Enoch.

Old Spanish Trail Days will be an exciting opportunity to inform others about the great heritage left to us in this area. We invite all to volunteer for the numerous activities that will take place. Much planning has to be done.

We ask that those who took assignments for the upcoming Old Spanish Trail Days come to the July chapter meeting prepared to report their plans.

Please feel free to join us and invite all your interested friends and family.

Your servant,  
Rob Dotson

## Meeting Schedule

Meetings are generally held at 7PM on the second Wednesday of each month in the Enoch City Office Building, 900 East Midvalley Road, Enoch, UT. Old Spanish Trail. The next

chapter meeting will be July 11, 2007 at 7:00 PM.

Those who took assignments for the upcoming Old Spanish Trail Days will report their plans at this month's chapter meeting.

In addition, the chapter plans regular fieldtrips to Old Spanish Trail sites. These field trips will be announced at the chapter meetings, local newspapers, and this website. See the chapter website for dates and times.

## Special Reprint Book Offer

by Lorraine Carpenter (Forwarded by Leon Matheson)

By now you have all received your issue of Spanish Traces and noted the insert advertising the reprinting of the Crampton/Madsen classic, *In Search of the Spanish Trail*. We [OSTA] have worked for about a month with Gibbs Smith Publishing to convince them to reprint this out-of-print book. It will be reprinted with only one addition, that being a "Preface to the Reprint" by Steve Madsen. Also, the cover now looks more like the Trail days.

On behalf of OSTA, we have agreed to be part of the process of obtaining "pre-orders" for copies of this reprint among our partners and contacts, other than bookstores. Gibbs Smith Publishing will handle the usual book store contacts and orders. In order to justify the cost of a reprint, Gibbs Smith wishes to get promises for approximately 6,000 orders in total before going to press. Our share of this number is half - 3,000.

What do we get out of this? A lot! If we can get enough promises for orders from our museums, libraries, visitors centers, members,

national parks and monuments, etc. to get the reprint to press, Gibbs Smith will handle this arrangement as a fund raiser for OSTA. We will receive 40% of the proceeds from the sale of our 3,000 copies. That could amount up to about \$34,000 to OSTA for our efforts on behalf of this OST classic!

We would like to enlist the help of all of you in reaching this goal. Step 1 is to identify the museums, libraries, visitor centers, etc. locations/partners for your state that should be contacted. In other words, make and email me a list. Don't worry about duplicating what someone else puts on their list; the database will eliminate duplicates. We know you will rise to the challenge. We thank you in advance.

Information on pre-ordering your copy is available at <http://www.oldspanishtrail.org/news.php>

## Barstow Mural Dedication

by AL Matheson

A slideshow of the Barstow mural dedication and choreographed to the Old Spanish Trail Suite is available for viewing at: [http://www.oldspanishtrail.org/trail\\_explore/slideshow.php](http://www.oldspanishtrail.org/trail_explore/slideshow.php). Double click on the mural thumbnail to activate the slideshow and turn on your speakers to enjoy the music.

## The Disappearing Old Spanish Trail

by AL Matheson

So, are you one of those persons who think that if you have seen one trail you have seen them all? Or maybe you have been to a trail site and the only thing you could factually say is that the Old Spanish Trail must have gone "from here to there," somewhere? Well, think again, as they say. Your timing could be everything, so pay attention.

I was recently asked by several Members of the Southern Utah Chapter of the OSTA to visit a lengthy portion of the trail where it crosses the Neck of the Desert and on to Mogotsu Creek in Southern Utah. Having been on much of the trail in past years, and knowing generally

where the trail "would" have been, because the geology/topography of the area naturally confines the trail to a specific route location, I was not prepared for an unexpected trail "treasure" to be revealed. This time the trail was perfectly visible, and astonishingly, for several miles! The reason for the change soon became evident.

For much of the year the dry soil conditions of the arid south western desert make it impossible to distinguish any one portion of the historic OST, or various other pioneer trails, from the surrounding area. But in the spring there is sufficient moisture in the ground to sprout latent seeds from a variety of desert grasses, seeds that may have been dormant for years. These include the invasive and much maligned cheat grass and a whole variety of short lived wheat grasses that emerge to greet an appreciative eye.

The spring grasses initially appear as a soft green mantle over the barren soil, lending hope and color to an otherwise arid desert landscape. Their appearance is understandable enough, but what was unexpected to us was that as the hot winds begin to wither new growth, the grasses in compacted areas lack sufficient moisture to keep up with their surrounding competition. The result is that the trail begins to "develop" right in front of your eyes, just as if it was a photographic plate emerging from a chemical solution!



Brown traces of the trail become more and more evident as the grasses die from lack of moisture, revealing an exact pathway through

the sparse green growth. Similarly, within only a short time the trail traces disappear with the drying of the surrounding grass.



We were absolutely astounded to find that for a period of several days the trail was perfectly visible, and not just for a few hundred feet, but for miles. The more we learned to look for the distinctive margins of the trail, the easier it was to find just the right angle to see them more clearly. Impressive, you bet! It was obviously time to take to the air.



With Dr. Lyman Platt in the back seat as “photographer extraordinaire” we proceeded to take to the sky in the early morning for a low level flight of some 40 miles of the OST, from Enoch, Utah southward to Mountain Meadow. Though the magical transformation was rapidly disappearing as the grasses merged into the brown of the desert we were still able to find ample opportunity for the shutter to record the event. Much like an eclipse or a solstice event, the “grass” show takes almost perfect timing and lasts for only one or two days...if not just hours, but it is a show that is well worth the effort it takes to be at the right time and the right place. It is the show of a lifetime for a trail junkie.

