



Official Publication of The Yellowstone Trail Association  
"A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound"



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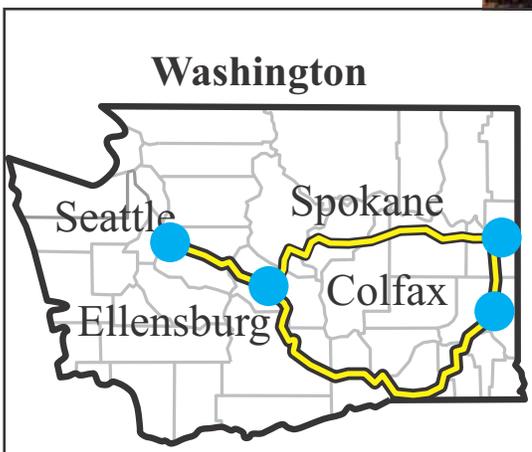
## TWO GAS STATIONS ALONG THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL

by Dave Habura, Washington Correspondent

Often times when my wife and I are on a trip and in the neighborhood of the Yellowstone Trail, we will leave the modern highway to travel a part of the original route. The pace slows, and the road becomes the story instead of just a strip of asphalt and blur.

We had been on a trip to Idaho to drive in the ruts of the first transcontinental auto trip and later the first transcontinental auto race. Both went through The Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho. We were now headed home via Spokane because I wanted to photograph the Mystery Garage from the May 2012 (#22) issue of the Arrow.

We spent a night in Colfax, Washington and before we left town we followed the old Trail through the golden wheat fields of the Palouse. *Photo right.*



North of Colfax we pulled off the main road into the village of Rosalia to photograph the Milwaukee Railroad bridge with its Yellowstone Trail marker, and to visit the town's vintage service station. Rosalia was a town of about 750 people in the days of the Yellowstone Trail and is a little smaller today. That is fortunate for an old road buff because it means there has been less reason to replace the beautiful vintage buildings. The Yellowstone Trail through town retains much of its Main Street charm.

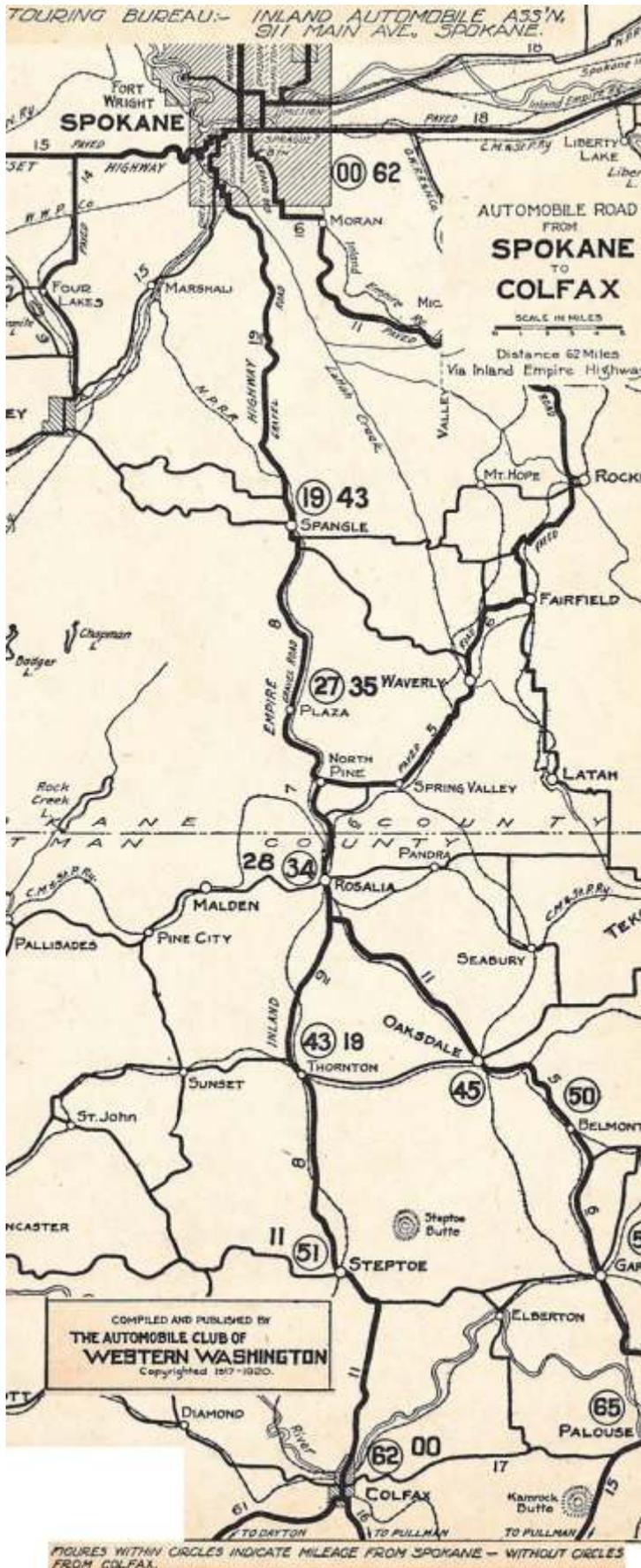
In 1915 The Chicago, Milwaukee, and St Paul completed a concrete rail viaduct just south of town that, among other things, crosses over a "state highway" which we know as the Yellowstone Trail. The bridge itself is not

only impressive, it is a bit unusual for a railroad bridge to be of concrete. But for Yellowstone trail fans, the black arrow in yellow background on one arch is the *pièce de résistance*.



Rosalia RR bridge with YT arrow.

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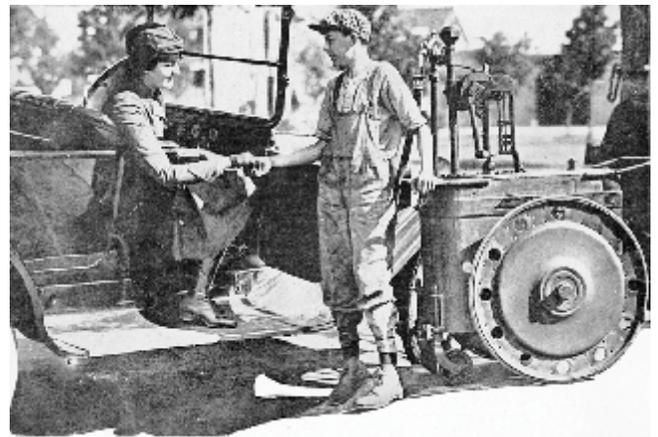


From 1915 to 1925, the Yellowstone Trail followed Washington's Inland Empire Highway.

In Rosalia you can't miss the Central Service Station, opened in 1923 to serve travelers on the Yellowstone Trail. The site was formerly the location of a blacksmith shop and a stagecoach stop. By 1923 the horse was clearly on the way out, and blacksmith Charles J. Hall realized that his future was with the automobile. He tore down the blacksmith shop and built the gas station. The general design was of a standard type promoted by Texaco. *Photo below.*



By 1923 the "filling station" was evolving into the "service station." The term "filling station" developed to describe a curbside gas pump, often a tank and pump on wheels, placed outside a business such as a livery stable, blacksmith, or hardware dealer. Automobilists pulled up and filled their tank. *Photo below.*



By the time Hall opened the Central Service Station, gasoline dealers were selling automobile accessories and often providing repair services, and "service" station grew in usage. Old photos of the Hall blacksmith shop don't show a filling station, but odds are good he had one he wheeled out on demand.

The modern state highway we left to follow the Trail was opened in 1975 and by the early 1980's the service station business had severely declined, and the station closed. The building and land was later donated to the city by the Hall family and now serves as the Visitor Resource and Interpretive Center for Rosalia. Charles would be proud.

We left Rosalia and headed to Spokane where we picked up the Trail just south of town. Coming from the south on

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US195 we turned east (right) at Thorpe Road and shortly turned left (north) on Chestnut Street, the old Yellowstone Trail. We crossed the 1911 Chestnut Street Bridge over Latah Creek, and at 13th street turned left (west). Right there on the corner of 13th and Chestnut as big as life was the Mystery Garage from the *Arrow*.

To my delight and great pleasure the current occupant (Rob) who owns and operates Blacks Paint from the building was working on a Saturday morning and displayed genuine enthusiasm when I showed him the picture of his business site 84 years ago. He had operated the business here for twenty years but had not been aware of its history.



“Then” is to the left, as the Garage appeared in 1928. Above is “Now” as it appears in 2012. Photo by the author.

There is a lot of history associated with the Garage, not the sort you will ever find in a “history” book, but the real thing. The area was known as Vinegar Flats because from the late 1800’s to 1959 it was the site of a vinegar plant that operated a few blocks away at 12th and Spruce. The acrid smell of the vinegar drove all but the acclimated factory workers out of the area, so it became an enclave unto itself, for workers and their families. To heap indignity upon misfortune city officials located a dump not far away (Coeur D A’lene and 7th), and according to the Spokesman Review newspaper, blandly declared that the resulting smells and vermin were figments of the residents’ imaginations!



Apparently there were a few local businesses that served the area. In the 1928 mystery photo there is a Curlew Ice Cream sign on the sidewalk across the street from the Garage, suggesting perhaps a small grocery store was located there. And just before you cross the Chestnut Street Bridge, on the north side there is a brick building built in 1904 that was once a feed store. On the south side of the building is a “ghost sign,” advertising Big Loaf Patent Flour, The Flower of Flours! Photo left.

On the south side of the building is a “ghost sign,” advertising Big Loaf Patent Flour, The Flower of Flours! Photo left.

We followed the Trail to 7th and Cannon, where some old brick paving from the Trail days showed through the asphalt overlay, and we spotted what appeared to be former tourist cabins. We couldn’t date the cabins without further research, leaving another small mystery to be solved.

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# ON THE TRAIL WITH MARK

by Mark Mowbray, Executive Director,  
YT Association. Visit my trip blog at this site:  
[www.yellowstonetrail.tumblr.com](http://www.yellowstonetrail.tumblr.com)

## 2011 road trip, Part 5.

I left you in the last *Arrow* on Day 29 in Mobridge, South Dakota. From there I wandered on eastbound towards the "Birthplace of the Yellowstone Trail".

But first, I had to get there. That turned out to be a bit of a problem ...the YT route, now US 12, the main east/west road through the area, had recently washed completely out from heavy rains! Construction crews were feverishly trying to make the road passable, and so far had built up one lane enough to let fairly heavy car and truck traffic through in batches, with about a half hour wait in each direction. Up until yesterday, traffic had been detoured over nearby narrow gravel roads. After about twenty minutes, I made it across. *Photo right.*



It seems that not all has changed since the early days of motoring. The year was 1912, and in the small South Dakota town of Ipswich Joseph Parmley met with a few friends to discuss the problems they had traveling east to Aberdeen, 27 miles away and the largest town in the area. The only road was prone to flooding and washouts in a marshy area and was a terrible mess almost the entire way. The city's businesses and their future growth depended on finding a way to get local and state governments to improve the road. They formed a group that would come to be known as the Yellowstone Trail Association. Within only a few years they had succeeded in not only getting better roads in South Dakota, but had created a route from "Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound", the first transcontinental route across the Northern states, supported through donations from towns along the way.



The spirit of Parmley and his friends lives on today in Ipswich and in many other small towns across the country. I had the pleasure of visiting with Ray at the Parmley Land Agency Museum and with Irene at the Parmley Home Museum. The museums are both operated by the J. W. Parmley Historical Home Society, a group that also takes care of a couple parks and the Pioneer Village site. The arch that previously spanned the Yellowstone Trail and later US Route 12 has been moved to one of the parks (quite a feat, considering its weight and size). Take the time to explore this wonderful small town.



Upper left - The author's car at the Ipswich arch.

Middle left - The J. W. Parmley House Museum.

Lower left - Highway US 12 signs that let you know just where you are.

Lower right - Directions to the YT Cafe-Tavern in Ipswich.



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On to Aberdeen, the largest town I've seen since leaving Billings, Montana a week ago. It's a nice evening so I explored a bit. I was surprised and pleased to see two businesses that are well known in my home area: Menards and Culver's. It has been five weeks and well over 5,000 miles since seeing either. A chicken dinner at Culver's really hit the spot.

In the morning, Day 31, I stopped and met the folks at the Chamber of Commerce, who were not familiar with the YT...but they are now. I then went to the CVB (Convention & Visitors Bureau), located in the very large, impressive, and work-in-progress, former railroad depot. There I had a long and interesting visit with Casey, the Director. Casey also was not too familiar with the YT, but he was interested in it and how the Trail history could help him promote Aberdeen. After we talked for quite a while, he said "we have some YT signs upstairs, lets go look at them". I asked if they were old, and he told me that someone brought them in five or six years ago and he was not sure where they came from. He had seven of them, "brand new", and I had never seen this type of Yellowstone Trail sign. He thought that someone had them made for marking US Route 12 through the area but there was some reason why they couldn't put them up due to restrictions. *[Editor's note: Actually, it was the Aberdeen CVB that caused these signs to grace the YT in South Dakota, but they were removed because of the lack of contrast between the white lettering and the yellow background, making them impossible to read, especially at night.]* Casey then took a photo of me holding one sign...and gave the sign to me with his compliments. When I finally got to a hotel, I had an e-mail from Casey with the photo! *Photo upper right.* Nice guy and a great visit.



I then drove east through Groton and took a look at Andover, where I did not check in at the Waldorf Hotel, as I would have to buy the whole place and renovate it if I wanted to stay there *Photo left.* *[Editor's note: The Waldorf was an Arrow's mystery picture.]* So I drove on through Webster, Waubay, Summit, Marvin, and past Twin Brooks to Milbank, where I spent a quiet night.

Leaving South Dakota the next morning on Day 32, I passed through Big Stone City and entered Minnesota at Ortonville, where I went to see the 1920 Marsh Co. "Rainbow Bridge" on the old YT route. *Photo below.* It's concrete is in tough shape, but somewhat preserved and fenced for a bike trail, so at least it was not demolished as

was suggested a few years ago by some local anti-history folks. From there, I missed the turn onto MN 7 and went a half mile or so to turn around, where I came across the Big Stone County Museum, where I met Larry, a local farm owner who works there. I was the only visitor so he gave me a tour of the main building which included a display of very cool hand made automated toy circus rides, built by a retired local car dealer, along with lots of local artifacts shown in very nice displays.

Then Larry suggested the "Wildlife Building," and man, was I impressed! It's very recently built, all climate-controlled, and contains a lifetime collection of mostly waterfowl, all mounted by a local taxidermist and formerly housed at his home. The centerpiece of the entire building's display is a quite large and fantastic diorama of two pair of Prairie Chickens "booming"...that is what their mating dance is called. It was one of the most impressive displays I've seen on this trip. It was very much like looking through a large picture window at the real thing. Thanks for talking me into it, Larry.

Next was the Renville Museum, in a one-room schoolhouse, and their Michael Dowling display. Michael was an amazing guy who lost both feet and one hand after falling off a wagon in a blizzard and suffering terrible frostbite as a youngster. He overcame this setback and went on to be a teacher, principal, newspaper editor, lawyer, business owner, and congressman. He was one of the early YT leaders and was a key person in promoting the "good road from Plymouth Rock to Puget



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Sound". You should really read *WE BLAZED THE TRAIL* By Dorothy Prichard (his daughter), as told to Barry Prichard. Richards Publishing, 2008.

My last town today is Olivia. Those of you who followed Jim Marx's bike ride last summer will remember him fighting wind and a tight schedule and almost crawling into town. His comment then: "I am so happy to get here that if I ever have a daughter, I'll name her Olivia". I drove around looking for Mike Dowling's former law office and car dealership buildings, *photo upper right.*, and with a bit of local help found not only them and a nice little park area dedicated to him, but I found his former Victorian-styled home also. Then I found a nice, and surprisingly inexpensive "business class" room with a desk and office chair at the "Sheep Shedde" hotel, topped off with a walleye sandwich and beer in their Max's Grill.

On Day 33, I cruised a short way from Olivia, MN to Hector, and went to Lance Sorenson's house, where he had a Model T Coupe and a '29 Chevy Sedan sitting in his front yard with Yellowstone Trail signs on them. No, he doesn't do this every day (I don't think so, anyway) but today is special. It's their annual festival day with a picnic in the park...but first the parade!

Lance is a long time YT fan and YTA member and we've been in touch by e-mail, but it's the first time we met. We chatted for a while and then drove out to a neat and modern garage owned by a local gentleman that Lance helps out. It shelters a number of very nice old autos, including a 1915 Pierce Arrow and a 1914 Model T Touring, and cool memorabilia and signs. I got the grand tour and then Lance attempted to start the T by cranking it, but the old girl didn't want to cooperate. After a number of cranks, I asked Lance if I could try and he told me to go ahead. Now understand, cranking these old timers was never easy and stories are still being told about the time grandpa broke his wrist while cranking his Model T. I have never attempted this, even though I've worked on many old cars. But I knew the drill...don't wrap your thumb over the crank...place the crank at the bottom of its stroke...and quickly lift up...hard.

OK, I did that six or seven times with no results, but one more and it started and purred like a kitten. I had started my first Model T, and can cross that one off my bucket list. Off we went, first to Lance's house for a quick visit and lunch (thanks!) and then to the parade staging area. I had never ridden in a Model T before today either, so it was all a big treat for me. A short while later the parade began and we took off behind all the area fire trucks and were followed by the band, floats, antique tractors and whatnot. And, we had a really big duffel bag of candy provided by Lance's wife and we threw hands full of candy to all, from toddlers to 80-somethings. Hector is not very big so the parade went for maybe a dozen blocks and we were done. I loved every minute of it. We ended up back at Lance's house to catch the end of the parade still going by and we visited for a while before I headed east and the formidable maze of Minneapolis / St. Paul.

About an hour out of Hector, I stopped for a coffee and realized that I'm only about one more day away from home...and I'm burned out and tired of wandering along the YT for now. I guess I found my "fun limit", and that limit is 33 days.

On Day 34, after by-passing the YT's route through the Twin Cities, I stopped in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, for a brief R & R, then went home. The convenience of owning a condo made it painless, as the lawn is mowed and everything is in order. It is now time to kick back and relax.

In the morning it rained, and after leaving the Kia outside overnight, it dawned on me that the rain had a chance to soften some of the authentic, original, 1915 Yellowstone Trail mud, so I went to the fancy car wash where Kia got a well-deserved bath. My total trip covered 5,943 miles at 21.3 miles per gallon. I stayed under my self-imposed budget, and the trip was priceless. Thanks for "riding along"...I hope you enjoyed it.



*1915 Pierce Arrow*



*Small Town America on the YT -Hector*



*Lance Sorenson and His Model T*

# TRAIL-O-GRAMS

by Alice A. Ridge

The name Trail-O-Grams comes from the original Arrow newsletter published during the days of the original Yellowstone Trail Association. That was when THE method of sending quick short messages was the telegram!

## More 2012 Yellowstone Trail 100th Anniversary Events

1. Long time Yellowstone Trail member/cheerleader is **Lance Sorenson of Hector, Minnesota**. He invited the American Heritage Girl Assn. to a 100th birthday party. They brought the cake; he brought his 1923 Ford TT and showed them camping and travel before Hummers and hybrids. *Photos right.*



2. In the last Arrow we reported **Cudahy, Wisconsin's** version of the National Night Out (against crime) sponsored by local police departments.

The Yellowstone Trail made its appearance, noting the 100th. We did not have a picture then. This grinning trio of YT supporters manned the YT booth. *Photo left. Nels Monson, Joe Mikolajczak, and Mayer Tony Day*

3. **Benton City, Washington**, honored the YT at its annual Benton City Daze festival September 8-9. "Visitors will see a lot of yellow and black along Main Street and be able to view a unique aspect of American history," said YT friend Heather Duncan of the Chamber of Commerce. Along with the more ordinary events of parade, street dance and food, a featured extraordinary event was a dancing horse performance.

4. The **Chaska, Minnesota**, Herald carried a fine article about the YT's 100th birthday written by Wendy Petersen-Biorn, executive director of the Carver County Historical Society.

Wendy provided an in-depth history of the Trail and its effect upon transportation. Her understanding of the enormity of the Trail's contribution to culture was summed up in the sentence "It literally put Carver County on the map."

5. Some honored the 100th in a personal way. Charles Thorson of **Hortonville, Wisconsin** wrote that he lives on the Yellowstone Trail and he put a large yellow stone on the corner of state hwy 96 and Wiouwash Trail (Outagamie County recreational trail). State hwy 96 was the YT. Charles, send us a photo!

6. The llamas ran. Originally begun as a one-time customer appreciation event for the **Hammond, Wisconsin** Hotel in 1997, the Running of the Llamas soon became an annual event that took on a life of its own. In 2009 a Running of the Llamas Committee was formed, including representatives from the four restaurant/bars in town, community organizations and llama enthusiasts. Also in 2009, the event expanded from a Thursday evening happening to a weekend-long celebration held the second weekend in September.



The llamas run down four blocks of the main street in a number of contests including a costumed llama parade. Winners (llamas, that is) get a basket of salad and vegetables. Tip sheets are given out, but wagering is prohibited. It is a family affair, fun for young and old. This year the weather was great, as were the crowds, numbering about 4,000. (sources, website, Eau Claire Leader-Telegram Sept. 9, 2012, You Tube.)

We are mentioning this extraordinary event because Don Fowell's Hammond Hotel is right on the Yellowstone Trail and he has been a friend of the Trail Association. If anyone knows of an appealing or interesting place promoted by a YTA friend, let us know.

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# MYSTERY PHOTO CONTEST

In the last *Arrow* we placed a picture of an old hotel, the Waldorf, visible from the Yellowstone Trail. It had been abandoned for years. Restoration was started, but probably decay has overwhelmed it. We asked you if you knew where it was. No one responded correctly. It is at Andover, South Dakota, half way between Webster and Aberdeen. Sorry, but no one won the cornucopia of gifts. Send your idea for the next Mystery photo to [YTA@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:YTA@yellowstonetrail.org)



## BARRY PRICHARD FINDS A YNP AUTHENTIC "TOURIST COACH"

Remember Barry Prichard of Minnesota? He is a grandson of an original YT founder, Michael Dowling. Well, Barry was out and about recently at Glenwood City, Wisconsin, and he came upon Ned Hahn who owns a "Yellowstone Park Tourist Coach" circa 1912-1913. Those were the coaches that took tourists around the Yellowstone National Park before autos were admitted. These coach companies fought hard to keep autos out of the Park, and even when autos were admitted in 1915 strict regulations were placed upon autoists, such as keeping well away from the coaches and horses. Concessionaires replaced coaches with long yellow buses in the 1920s.

Hahn told Barry that there were two sizes of coaches used in the Park: a two-horse team for smaller parties and a four-horse team for larger groups. Michael Dowling had mapped a route from Minnesota to the Park in 1913 for the Yellowstone Trail Association. His daughter, Dorothy, (Barry's mother) kept a diary of that trip with pictures. It forms the basis for Barry's book called *We Blazed the Trail*. Dorothy's album shows the larger coaches which held, perhaps, 11 people. Barry says that Hahn's coach looks like the real thing. *Photo right.*



Mowbray A Ridge      Brish Nyberg      J Ridge

## REPORT FROM THE YT ASSOCIATION BOARD.

The Board met Nov. 1, 2012. In attendance were: John Ridge, President; Sheila Nyberg, Vice-President; Mark Mowbray, Executive Director; Sara Brish, Treasurer; Alice Ridge, Secretary. The group approved the application for the renewal of the non-profit status of the organization, 501 (c)3. Discussion of the expansion of the base of the Association ensued. Overhaul of the web site is at a standstill. Anyone with web-creation ability is invited to volunteer to help. Comments by readers are invited. Send to [YTA@yellowstonetrail.org](mailto:YTA@yellowstonetrail.org)

In the picture to the left, the Board is reviewing the *Driving the Yellowstone Trail Guide* created by Wisconsin members of the YTA.

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*Best Holiday Wishes*