



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

"A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound"



THE ARROW IS BACK!

A note from the Ridges: After a three-year hiatus, the Yellowstone Trail Association is ready for members again and is ready to produce the *Arrow*! We never really went away. The non-profit 501(c)3 status has been retained and we and many YTA members have been *very* busy, so busy that we stopped soliciting memberships and sending Arrows for a simple lack of time. The purpose of the organization is still to promote, educate, research, and preserve the Yellowstone Trail. But since the first of the year we have Mark Mowbray, volunteer Executive Director, to direct membership matters and the operational aspects of the YTA. That allows us to continue our research and writing about the Trail.

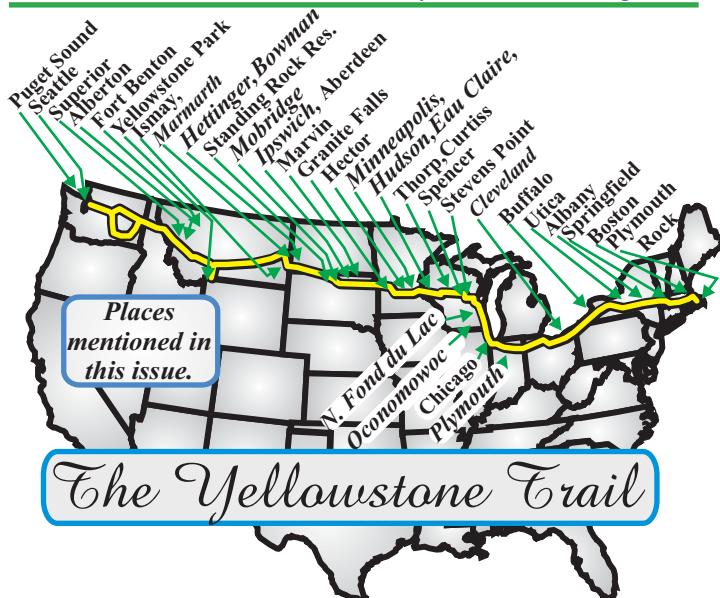
That is the good news for all of us. The bad news (well not so very bad) is that the newsletter, the *Arrow*, can no longer come at you in printed form via the postal system. The printing, mailing costs, and time requirements are prohibitive. So, if you join the YTA you will receive an "e"-*Arrow* (like this one) through the miracle of cyberspace. However, if you know of someone without a computer who would like to be a member let us know and we'll find a way for them to receive an *Arrow*. We do not want to lose anyone.

John and Alice Ridge

EXPLORE WWW.YELLOWSTONETRAIL.ORG

FOR NEWCOMERS

If you are receiving this and were not a member in the past, that is because you have shown interest in the Yellowstone Trail or you are in a position to benefit from membership in some way. You are encouraged to join the "revived" Yellowstone Trail Association to receive the *Arrow* (the Trail news from "Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound"), to enjoy the historic highway, and help spread the work about this historic treasure. Visit www.yellowstonetrail.org.



TRAIL-O-GRAMS

■ Jim Marx of Michigan is planning to bicycle the Trail from Seattle to Plymouth Rock this summer! See his blog. Visit <http://jimmarx.tumblr.com/>



Better than a Model T?

Also, we will follow him on our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/YellowstoneTrail

Read his blog and learn how to contact him when he comes through your town.

Arrange to meet him and get some publicity for the YT in your town!

■ Hudson, Wisconsin's Yellowstone Trail weekend, May 14-16, featured three car shows, a Trail signs dedication, a "sociability run," a 1919 rootbeer float treat, an architectural treasure hunt, and a "retro and a buck" menu at the Hammond Hotel. Geocaching, anyone?

■ Member Dan Mettner, "the Wandering Waver," walked the



Trail from Hudson, Wisconsin, to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, with no trailer car following him. Gregarious Dan (with his tent) walked 84 miles last summer, stopping along the way to promote the Trail. He plans to continue the walk May 17-23 from Eau Claire to near Spencer.

Dan Mettner (2009) leaving Hudson to begin his walk along the Trail to Eau Claire.

■ Members of the Rock River Chapter-Harley Owners Group (HOG) of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, will be traveling the Trail through Wisconsin between May 1 and November 1 competing for the "TOP HOG" trophy.

The name Trail-O-Grams comes from the original *Arrow* published during the days of the first YT Association

■ The Mullan Military Road Society will have this year's convention in Fort Benton, Montana May 20-22 including presentations about natural resources along the Mullan Rd, Native American perspectives, antique surveying techniques, and a wowsler of a ride/hike along the Mullan Rd. The Mullan Road crossed the Idaho/Montana border in the Bitterroots and became the route followed by the Yellowstone Trail, which, in turn, was followed by I-90.

■ Barry Prichard wrote *We Blazed the Trail* about his grandfather, Michael Dowling, a quadruple amputee and president of Yellowstone Trail Association in 1917. This is the story of his blazing of the Yellowstone Trail in Montana and the East. See: www.yellowstonetrail.org/id20.htm

A WORD FROM MARK

Hello, I'm Mark Mowbray, the "new guy" at the Yellowstone Trail Association (YTA).

I'm not really new to the Trail though, as I grew up on the Trail in North Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and my dad owned the Yellowstone Garage there from 1949 to 1966. I worked there during my school years. I have also lived in three other towns on the Trail since then.

I have been interested in the history of the Trail since I was a kid and I am a charter member of the YTA and a Trailman. I retired recently and joined the YTA as the Executive Director this past January.

Interest in the YTA has been growing rapidly and our efforts extend to all of the states on the Trail. Please visit our website at www.yellowstonetrail.org and explore history of this historic auto route. Individual state information and maps are included.

The YTA is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation and we are all volunteers.

It is through your membership dues and donations that we are able to research the route, promote heritage travel across the United States, and share that information.

The YTA has applied for and received modest grant money from various tourism agencies in the past, but those funds are no longer available in these frugal economic times.

Therefore, we are asking you to join our organization and support us with your dues and donations. We also welcome various sponsorship arrangements and will help you to promote your town, business, museum or tourist attraction. Visit our website and click on "Become a member." You can join online or mail in your membership application.

GREAT NEWS! We recently received an anonymous donation of \$1,000 from a long-time supporter that will be used to further our research and promotions. Please consider a donation yourself of any amount. It will all help.

I am very interested in your comments and suggestions and invite you to e-mail me at mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org.

Happy Trails,

Mark

Alice, John,
Mark, Tom, &
Sheila



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Secretary: Alice Ridge ridgeaa@yellowstonetrail.org

Treasurer: Tom Barrett - tom@yellowstonetrail.com

Executive Director: Mark Mowbray -

mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org 608-436-3978

If you have news or upcoming events you'd like to share, contact John or Alice Ridge. For membership questions, contact Mark Mowbray.

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING?

Because **Wisconsin** is the home state of the writers, it has gotten the most attention since the last *Arrow*.

■ Yellowstone Trail Wisconsin, an informal group with the participation of the YTA, was formed by several convention and visitors bureaus, and economic development corporations. The *Trail Blazer* came out of that group. It is a one-page e-newsletter of interest to Wisconsinites along the Trail. Perhaps this model could be followed by other Trail states.

■ A driving guide entitled *Driving the Yellowstone Trail: A Guide to Traveling Wisconsin's Historic Auto Trail* is a mile-by-mile free guide published with the cooperation of the American Road magazine. 7,000 copies with plans for an update. It is also online at http://www.yellowstonetrail.org/ytw_guide.htm. This is similar in purpose to the South Dakota Yellowstone Trail Guide by the Mobridge Tribune which publishes it yearly.

■ Continued work with Wisconsin Hwy 29 Partnership, a group of seven communities on the Trail who have joined together for economic development and are using the Yellowstone Trail as their theme for activities such as yard sales and sustainable energy projects.

■ As of this writing, 278 large YT signs are up to mark the Trail in Wisconsin, with others coming in the near future.

Elsewhere along the Trail

■ In 2008 the Mullan Military Road Society held its annual convention in Missoula, MT. The Yellowstone Trail Association was invited to speak (in the persons of Alice and John Ridge) because the old military road and the newer YT were coincident and contiguous in places. That is a jumping group, headquartered at Mineral County Museum, Superior, MT. Geologists, military historians, and Captain Mullan biographers spoke, and a day in the mountains to see remnants of both roads was exhilarating. They do stuff like that every year!

■ Bill Dirnberger of Minneapolis and friends in the American Antique Car Association and the Horseless Carriage Club had a humdinger of a two-day "sociability run" near Granite Falls, Minnesota, along the YT in 2008. A 1904 Cadillac, a 1908 Ford Roadster, and a 1909 Maxwell were the oldest. As a reward for speaking at the event, the Ridges rode in a 1915 Pierce Arrow, driven by YTA member Lance Sorenson of Hector, Minnesota (*Pictured*).



■ The Marshall County Museum in Plymouth, Indiana, has added a transportation room to the museum and now is beginning the displays of the Yellowstone Trail, Lincoln Highway, and two other historic highways that passed through Plymouth. They have been at this for a couple of years and utilized the aid of many, many volunteers. Three cheers for Marshall County Museum. If you're in northern Indiana, stop in.



HISTORY CORNER MARKING THE TRAIL

The Yellowstone Trail Association members understood that making a trail into a successful tourist road required marking it clearly. And mark it they did. We do not know exactly when the first rock or pole was daubed with yellow paint, but by the summer of 1914, the simple symbol of a band of yellow had been used from Minneapolis to the Montana border. Water towers, visible for miles, displayed the bright yellow band as did smoke stacks and some silos. In Montana, a black arrow had been added to the yellow band.

The Yellowstone Trail Association voted that summer of 1914 to adopt the "official" marker of a 12-inch



The US Forest Service keeps this original sign painted in Denny Park, Washington.

yellow circle with a 6-inch black arrow in the middle pointing to Yellowstone National Park. They also accepted the yellow band. J.W. Parmley, founder of the YT, admonished the group to buy "medium chrome yellow dry, thirteen to sixteen cents a pound, and mix it with linseed oil."

By 1917, *Highway Magazine* described the marker thus: "a metal marker 11 by 14 inches with a 10-inch black circle on a yellow background with the lettering 'Yellowstone Trail' in black and in the center a black arrow always pointing to the Yellowstone Park."

A useful addition to the stamped metal marker was the "L" or "R" indicating the trail turned left or right at the next juncture. That sign changed into a simple yellow "L" or "R" that appeared with or without the circular pattern.

Whether a yellow metal circle or bands of yellow paint or black arrows, they marked everything along the route: sides of buildings, rocks, concrete train abutments, telegraph poles.

TROUBLES WITH MARKING

Most of the marking was done by local trailmen, but, apparently, college men were hired to spread yellow paint during the



An original sign near Marvin, South Dakota. To find it you probably will need to cut back the tall grass!.

summers. The lads were expected to collect their pay from the communities along the trail and to work outside, rain or shine. Housing was iffy. One association financial report revealed a titillating entry: an expenditure of \$35 for "court costs for pinching marking man." One employee named W. Warwick met with ill luck. He passed through Ismay, Montana, painting his way from Chicago to Seattle. But Yvonne Prater, in her

book, *Snoqualmie Pass*, reports that Warwick "got to about 15 miles outside of Seattle when no more funds were available and the project stopped."

Western Magazine described two painting crews laden with metal markers and paint, one crew to work west of Minneapolis and one east. The magazine assured readers that expenses incurred would be cheerfully met by towns along the way. It's obvious that that reporter had not traveled with young Warwick or the guy who got "pinched."

A continuing annoyance was the fact that posts holding signs kept disappearing along the trail on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Suspicion was that the posts were taken for firewood, there being so few trees in that area.

MARKING THE EAST

Marking the trail east of Chicago was always a conundrum. East of Ohio, there were more roads from which travelers could choose. In that part of the country, the Yellowstone Trail did not possess the aura of a frontier project as it did in the West. There was not the collegiality of friends working for a common life-changing goal. And there were many other shorter trails with their colors already posted.

The favored route hugged Lake Erie to Buffalo, then to Utica and Albany, New York, and then to Springfield, Massachusetts. When trailman M.J. Dowling blazed the route in 1914, he was told by highway commissioners that they "had all the markers they wanted" and the Yellowstone Trail markers were rejected. Thus, to 1918 the trail went through the southern tier of New York, then through Connecticut and Rhode Island to Plymouth Rock. By 1919, the trail followed the favored, more northern route.

There are recurring statements in trail literature about the East not being "organized as expected." The Yellowstone Trail Association's financial report for 1919 declared that \$541.36 had been spent on marking to Cleveland, Ohio. Thirteen hundred dollars had been budgeted for 1920, with "the whole trail to be

Note: This article is adapted from an American Road Magazine article, Volume 2 Number 1, 2003, by Alice Ridge.



This guy just painted a Yellowstone Trail sign near Cadott, Wisconsin. But why is he so high up the pole?

GOING EAST
YOU ARE ENTERING
STATE OF N. DAKOTA

OVER THE

Americas oldest and best Transcontinental Highway

Organized 1912
Active in travel
Ever since.

A Good road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound

DISTANCE IN MILES TO —

MARMARTH, N.D. 6	ABERDEEN, S.D. 325
BOWMAN " 38	MINNEAPOLIS, MINN 646
HETTINGER " 87	CHICAGO 1119
MOBRIDGE, S.D. 223	BOSTON 2188

YOU HAVE BEFORE YOU —
STANDARD STATE GRADED ROAD TO MOBRIDGE, S.D.
THEN ALL MAINTAINED GRAVEL, OR PAVING.
SEE NEXT SIGN AT S. DAKOTA LINE - 103 MILES

**ROUTE FOLDER AND ROAD BULLETIN AT
MARMARTH**

**WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU
THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL
ASSOCIATION
403 EVANSTON BLDG
MINNEAPOLIS**

**GOOD
LUCK**

From a sign on the Yellowstone Trail near the Montana/North Dakota border.

Picture by Harvey J. Ridge in the late 1920s.

HISTORY CORNER *continued from page 3*

re-marked, and marked and organized east to Albany, New York." Optimism still reigned in the newspapers, with guestimates of completion of marking "to the Atlantic" by 1921. As late as 1922, a writer said, "intense organization and marking of the east has been more or less a vision."

AFTER 1926

With the arrival of state and federally numbered routes, the need for colored signs disappeared. Wisconsin had swept all colors from its highways in 1918 in favor of state numbers. However, it allowed the yellow signs to continue to mark the Yellowstone Trail because the Trail had been such a tourist draw and would soon be the only entirely paved route across the state. By the late 1920s, the Association had become a service much like today's AAA until route numbering and the Depression closed its doors in 1930.



An original sign preserved in an attic near Watauga, South Dakota. But we are sworn to secrecy about its ownership!

The Yellowstone Trail Association is reviving interest in the 1912-1930 automobile route "from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound." The Yellowstone Trail was the first transcontinental named auto highway through the northern tier of states. You can still travel its route, over three thousand miles of life in the slow lane – off the Interstates.

Enjoy the Yellowstone Trail!



FRIENDS WHO HAVE RECENTLY REACHED THE END OF THE TRAIL

Arnoldine Gulczynski of Wisconsin started the Ridges on this quest in Wisconsin. She marked the Trail in Thorp, WI. and put together a great parade on the YT featuring antique cars. She lived long enough to see 40 miles of the Trail marked in her area.

Les Bowen of Curtiss, Wisconsin, in his 90s when he died, remembered walking the Trail to school every day. He put up a large sign on Wis. hwy 29 announcing that Curtiss was on the YT. He sponsored other YT signage.

Chuck Mead of Alberton, Montana, was active in preservation and promotion efforts of the Mullan Road Society, the YT, and other Montana historic sites near his ranch in western Montana



LEARN ABOUT AND ENJOY
A GOOD ROAD FROM
PLYMOUTH ROCK TO
PUGET SOUND



JOIN THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL ASSOCIATION!

Use this form and mail with a check OR Apply at www.yellowstonetrail.org and use either the online form with PayPal or the mail-in form with a check.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: ___ Zip: _____
 An e-mail address is required because the *Arrow* newsletter is sent via email. If you need yours printed we'll make special arrangements.
 e-mail address : _____
 Phone: _____ (Required if you do not use email.)
 If this membership is for a business or organization:
 Organization: _____
 Your Position: _____

Cut off and mail this form with your payment. OR apply online at www.yellowstonetrail.org Send to: Tom Barrett, Treasurer
 Yellowstone Trail Association
 340 Division Street North
 Stevens Point, WI 54481

Membership category and annual dues:

Check one: Regular (Individual or small business) ----- \$15
 Not for profit (museum, car club, historical) ----- \$25
 Tourism Promotion Agency ----- \$50
 (C of C, CVB, Econ Development, similar)
 Corporate (Contact the Exec. Director for sponsorship details. mmowbray@yellowstonetrail.org) \$100

Enter Amounts:

Dues for 1 year from above –	\$
Gifts are tax deductible.	
Dues for 2nd year – Same rate. Optional.	\$
Additional contribution – We are a nonprofit 501c3 corporation.	\$
Total =	\$