

Historic Reno PRESERVATION SOCIETY

FootPrints

Dedicated to Preserving and Promoting Historic Resources in the Truckee Meadows through Education, Advocacy and Leadership.

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A Fight for 'Freedom'

by Debbie Hinman

History is filled with stories of pioneering firebrands, some with beliefs so extreme that they fought to form their own enclaves of civilization within the established state or country in order to live life their own way and to repudiate laws and ordinances they felt did not apply to them. But who would have guessed that such a movement took place in the southwest portion of 1940s Reno?

The leaders of this movement, known as the Freedomites, could hardly be called firebrands and extremists. They were, in fact, well-respected attorneys, doctors and other local professionals. And they were not fighting for some half-baked or subversive purpose; they were fighting to preserve what was near and dear to them—their established and beloved way of life.

Those who today live in the thriving, residential southwest portion of the city, with its well-paved streets, plentiful sidewalks and streetlights probably have no idea that their neighborhoods were once contained within the sleepy, rural, rambling area that property owners were fighting to incorporate under the name of 'Freedom.'

Originally, the large area of 'Freedom' was roughly defined as South Virginia Road on the east, Mt. Rose Street on the north, Hunter Lake Road on the west, and Mountain View Road on the south. Over a ten-year period it became the smaller 150-acre area shown in the map on this page.

The movement needs to be placed in context in order to be properly understood. The time was shortly after the end of World War II. Reno's mayor was Harry Stewart and he and the city council were working toward expansion of the Reno city limits in all directions. Reno's population at that time was about

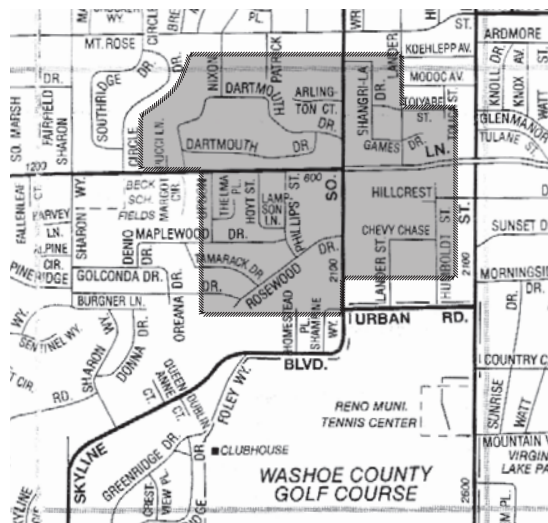
25,000 but growing rapidly as war-time controls on building materials were lifted and new additions (think subdivisions) were opened. At that time, the city administration was armed with a charter provision that gave it the power to annex whatever it wanted; the administration went ahead and did so, in spite of protests. But when they attempted to do the same with the rural area of the southwest, they encountered a stone-wall defense.

In 1945, residents of the area southwest of Mt. Rose Street organized and put up the most vigorous opposition to annexation of any area outside of Reno's city limits. Led by attorney George Springmeyer, the residents informed the city that if they pushed for annexation, they would petition to form an unincorporated town southwest of Reno to be known as 'Freedom.' Springmeyer was backed by another attorney, Clyde Souter, and Dr. John Bibb.

Springmeyer was a Reno attorney who had grown up on a ranch in the Carson Valley, received his law degree from Stanford and attended Harvard for post-graduate work. He returned to Nevada where he joined the rush during the Goldfield mining boom, served as an Army captain in World War I, and became U.S. Attorney during the Prohibition era in the

twenties. By 1930, he was practicing law in Reno when he met a beautiful young client at the train station, Sallie Ruperti. The two were married the following year and moved into their new home, which they named SAGE, SA for Sallie and GE for George.

Their home was located on the northwest corner of Urban and Arlington with pasture land behind it. In her article *Remembering SAGE* (FootPrints Vol. 5, No. 3), the



The 150-acre area called 'Freedom' in 1952.

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A Fight for 'Freedom' (continued)

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Springmeyer's only child, Sally Zanjani, recalls an idyllic life with a rose garden, chicken coop, duck pond, rabbit hutches and an apple orchard. Obviously Springmeyer feared that all of this would be jeopardized were the land to become a part of the city of Reno.

Clyde Souter had come to Reno from New Jersey, where he had been the youngest District Court Judge. His and wife Evelyn's property was a little farther north. Known as Drowsy Pines, it was part of the Interlaken tract, in the general area of what is now Dartmouth Drive.

In response to the opposition presented by the Freedomites, in June of 1945, Mayor Stewart, City Attorney Emerson Wilson and the county commissioners agreed, with reservations, to a "hands off" policy for the southwest tract of land. They stated in a *Nevada State Journal (NSJ)* article that "(the city) will refrain from any southwest expansion except in cases where property owners petition the city council for annexation."

However, in September, the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) weighed in on the petition to form an unincorporated town known as 'Freedom.' They stated that they could see the Freedomites' point of view with regard to city taxes they would be charged, without full enjoyment of all city services but they had concerns about unrestricted development and non-uniformity in buildings and set-back distances. They also noted that the area falls within two school districts, 60% in the Reno District and 40% in Anderson District. The current state law said that one city or town may have only one school district. The Board was concerned about what impact on these districts would occur if students were withdrawn to be included in the new Freedom District.

On January 15, 1946, the RPC formally stated its opposition to the establishment of the town of 'Freedom,' arguing for annexation. The City of Reno adopted the resolution. But the Freedomites

were not going to take this action lying down. Led by Springmeyer, they began taking steps to form an incorporated city known as 'Freedom.' This would supersede their former action to create an unincorporated town. The legal representatives of the coalition realized that forming an unincorporated town would not necessarily protect them from annexation. But creation of an incorporated city would guarantee home rule or self-government, according to Nevada Statutes. To establish this city, the group would need a petition from the majority of the qualified voters who were taxpayers (but no less than 250), to be filed



The home of George Springmeyer, called SAGE, in southwest Reno near Urban and Arlington. Photo courtesy Sally Zanjani.

in the district court accompanied by an accurate map and an attestation that the signatures on the petition were current.

In February, the city moved to annex the area. On February 12, 250 people attended a public meeting at Moana Hall on the issue. 150 signatures approving the creation of the city of 'Freedom' were collected. This petition would be forwarded to the city, and when the additional 100 required signatures were obtained, the petition would be filed in District Court. The lawyers in the group were also working to get the law revised so such annexation would be illegal. A few of the attendees favored annexation but the majority favored the creation of 'Freedom.'

The Freedomites continued to meet regularly to discuss the incorporation steps and to define boundaries. They also met with City Attorney Wilson to try and reach a compromise but both sides refused to bend. Wilson reminded the committee that the southwest area was becoming less rural and more urban and in need of services the city could provide.

An REG editorial later that month echoed Wilson's sentiments, pointing out that the taxes the new community might have to charge to start up their own services might well exceed those the city would levy. To appease the group's concerns about the disruption of their rural life, the city countered that there would be no problem with raising cattle and poultry, as long as they were not a nuisance. Apparently this did nothing to dissuade the Freedomites; the signatures on the petition to incorporate 'Freedom' rose to 266.

Some of the group became even more outspoken as the fight continued. One resident of the Plumb Lane area stated that during World War II, he had sold more than 75,000 chickens to Reno people. His virulent opinion was that Reno amounted to "little more than a collection of gambling houses and saloons, that it maintained itself through the weaknesses of other men, that it maintained disgraceful collections of shanties, has been and probably will be in favor of prostitution, and that it shouldn't ask honest men to be a part of it."

The city was not dissuaded. They created six resolutions for annexation; six were required because the large area needed to be divided into parcels. Springmeyer went into action and an *NSJ* article in December read, "The power of the City of Reno to annex approx 50 acres described as 'farming land' consisting of several adjacent plots along Arlington Road will be tested in the state supreme court."

At the end of January 1947, the state supreme court heard the 'Freedom'

A Fight for 'Freedom' (continued)

Case. Springmeyer and Bruce Thompson argued that the land was un-subdivided and used for agricultural purposes and that the city's move was designed to hamper them with city ordinances. No decision was made immediately.

In March, the court ruled in favor of the Freedomites. Said Justice Edgar Eather, "The annexation move was arbitrary, unjust, unreasonable, and a taking of property without due process of law." He went on to say that because the land was largely agricultural, annexation would impose a heavy tax burden without benefit to the property owners. He also claimed it would "destroy the charm of the country and suburban area."

Because of this victory, the group slowed their push for incorporation, perhaps recalling the roadblocks outlined by the city, settling back to enjoy their rural lifestyle. The next mayor, Francis Smith, had a different view of annexation and was content to only proceed when property owners requested such an action.

This didn't mean, however, that the city failed to expand. In 1947, it proposed taking the Washoe Golf Course from county control. Reported the *NSJ*, "If this takes place, the prospective site of the independent town of 'Freedom' would then be surrounded by Reno." Further action in surrounding 'Freedom' occurred in 1950 when the city annexed land in the Arlington/Skyline area, in order to lay a sewer line to serve city properties to the west.

In 1952, five years after the court's decision to allow the 150-acre core of 'Freedom' to remain outside the city, a small enclave of the former Freedomites began petitioning the city for annexation. Due in part to the severe winter of 1951 which left their streets impassible mud bogs and their sewage systems compromised, residents of Country Club Heights, along Plumb Lane and three short streets (Hoyt, Phillips and Lampson) were ready to give up their "freedom."

In November of 1952, George Springmeyer renewed his fight with the city, claiming annexation would injure him "aesthetically and financially" and that he wanted to keep his chickens and cows, which city laws might deem nuisances. Others of the old 'Freedom' Guard joined in the protest. Springmeyer offered to donate a right of way along his property's northern border for a sewer line. But by December, the number of stalwart Freedomites had dwindled; of the 61 property owners involved, 31 signed a petition for annexation.

TOWN OF 'FREEDOM' MAY BE ORGANIZED

February 6, 1946

'FREEDOM' SPONSORS OPPOSE ANNEXATION

February 20, 1946

GROWING TIRED OF 'FREEDOM'

April 11, 1952

RENO'S STRANGE BATTLE OF 'FREEDOM' MAY BE APPROACHING ITS FINAL STAGE

May 10, 1953

The same arguments continued into 1953 but the 'Freedom' contingency continued to thin with more and more coming to believe in the advantages of being a part of the city. Several spoke out to concede that as they enjoyed the activities provided by the city and earned their livings in Reno, it was right that they contribute to its welfare. In May, the proposal for annexation went forward once again, but a concession was made to the property owned by Springmeyer and Mrs. John Mongolo, as their lands were judged agricultural. Clyde Souter took up the fight, claiming his land with its 206 fruit trees and other agriculture was equally rural and his land and that of his neighbors should also be excluded from annexation. When the city disagreed, he followed

neighbor Springmeyer's steps from seven years earlier and took his case to the state supreme court on behalf of the Interlaken Park Corporation, himself and 15 of his neighbors. This time the court decided against these remaining Freedomites, claiming the land was platted and subdivided and therefore not agricultural land. The city annexed the land in early 1954.

Souter and the other Freedomites did not give up their fight and appealed the decision. By mid-1955 a final decision was made by the state supreme court. Making the statement that the march of time and change were inexorable, it ruled that the ideal of "beautiful suburban living" would not be affected by annexation.

Today the Springmeyer property is just a memory. Sold in the 1970s, it was overtaken by development and no vestiges remain of the animal sounds or the lovely meadows where a young Sally flew her kite. The saga of the Interlaken area has a somewhat happier ending. Although the area has grown and flourished in the intervening fifty years, in strolling Dartmouth Drive, there is still a peaceful, rural feeling to the surroundings. It is easy to gaze at the small lakes and abundant greenery and feel that you are miles from the city. Hopefully today's residents have an appreciation for this "freedom" and will have an easier time preserving this way of life than did their predecessors. 

Information for this article came from *Reno Evening Gazette* and *Nevada State Journal* articles during the years 1945 through 1955; "Women's Biographies - Sallie Maria Rupert Springmeyer" from the Nevada Women's History Project website, www.unr.edu/nwhp/bios

Debbie Hinman is a HRPS Tour Guide and a member of the HRPS Editorial Staff.

Building the McCarran Loop

by Joyce Cox

Driving McCarran Boulevard today, I thought it would be of interest to research the history of this unique Truckee Meadows ring road.

I have been traveling on McCarran Boulevard recently, going from my home near Manzanita Lane and McCarran Boulevard to the Nevada Historical Society near North Virginia and McCarran, then to a pet food store on Prater Way and McCarran, and then back to my home on Manzanita and McCarran. So I have travelled the 22.4 miles of the Reno Sparks Ring Road, also known as the Outer Belt Highway, McCarran Loop, or McCarran Boulevard.

If I were going to these same places before McCarran Boulevard was completed in 1990, I would have started near the Washoe County Golf Course at Skyline Boulevard and Moana Lane. I would drive from Moana to South Virginia Street then north through downtown Reno past the University of Nevada, Reno. To get to Sparks from UNR, I turn around to go south on Virginia to Fourth Street (Reno) then east to the Y Intersection of "B" Street and Prater Way in Sparks. I would take Prater Way to Fourth Street (Sparks) to get to the pet store. To get back to the starting point of Moana and Skyline, I would drive west on Prater to Sullivan Lane, then south to "B" Street and west to Kietzke Lane. Finally, I would go south on Kietzke to Plumb Lane then west to Arlington Avenue then south to where I began my trip.

A newspaper article in December 1955 reported that the Reno Chamber of Commerce Highway Committee proposed to the Board of County Commissioners that right-of-ways should be purchased for a ring road that would go around the Truckee Meadows. A *Nevada State Journal* article on May 7, 1958 describes the ring road as "... a major 'ring road' all the way around Reno and Sparks. It would be a street like Boynton Lane or Holcomb Lane and

would circle the valley with feeders into the heart of the populated areas." A study by Wilbur Smith and Associates, and Richardson, Gordon and Associates in 1958 recommended an outer limit highway in its master plan on the design of the major streets and highways in the Truckee Meadows.

Truckee Meadows residents were surveyed and interviewed to find what their traffic patterns were in 1955. The study looked at the number of accidents on city streets and county roads, the average number of people traveling per car, the number of trips made per day, and

Street near the downtown business district during peak hours of the day was estimated to be from 1,600 to 2,000 cars per hour. The most hazardous intersection in 1959 was Fourth Street and Virginia Street where Fourth Street was the major east-west route (Highway 40) and Virginia Street was the major north-south route (Highway 395 Business today). The intersections of Second Street and Wells Avenue and Fourth Street and Keystone Avenue tied for the second most dangerous. There were 459 intersection accidents in all of Reno in 1959 with 189 of them occurring on Virginia Street intersections.



1993 roadmap of the just-completed McCarran Ring Road.
Courtesy Nevada Department of Transportation.

causes of traffic congestion. The population of the Truckee Meadows study area was estimated to be 54,933. Residents in this area owned 22,652 automobiles that made approximately 136,131 trips per day. Sixteen percent of the trips were to the downtown Reno business district with the major routes between Reno and Sparks in 1958 being Fourth Street, Second Street, and Oddie Boulevard (completed in 1958) with 32,400 automobiles per day traveling on these streets. Other busy streets were Virginia Street, Mayberry Drive, Wells Avenue, Mill Street, and Kietzke Lane (Sparks extension completed in 1957) in Reno and "B" Street, Prater Way, and Oddie Boulevard in Sparks. Traffic on Fourth

The study then forecast what traffic would be like in the Truckee Meadows in 1980. Traffic was projected to more than triple. Traffic congestion was bad in 1958 and the study predicted that it would get worse in 1980 if major streets and highways were not expanded or upgraded. Population in the Truckee Meadows study area was expected to increase to 146,000 with residents expected to own about 70,000 cars that would make approximately 430,000 trips per day. The population growth of Washoe County, according to the Census Bureau, was 193,623. Washoe County residents owned 119,943 passenger cars that were registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles.

To ease the projected traffic congestion, the 1958 study recommended an east-west freeway, a north-south freeway, an upgrade to the 55-mile network of arterial streets that would connect to these freeways, and a 21-mile outer belt highway or ring road.

Construction of the east-west freeway (Interstate 80), going along Third Street in Reno and "A" Street in Sparks, had already been planned at the time of the study and was scheduled to begin sometime between 1963 and 1965. Interstate 80 through the Truckee Meadows was completed in May 1974. The north-south freeway (Interstate 395), planned to be built near Kietzke Lane was in the

Building the McCarran Loop (continued)

design stage at the time of the study with the first part from Panther Valley to Glendale Avenue completed in 1973. The freeways were projected to handle about 45 to 50 percent of the Truckee Meadows traffic. An article in the *Reno Evening Gazette (REG)* on March 10, 1960 reported that the outer belt highway was “to link primary highways and radial arterials near the outer limits of the 1980 urban development.”

The recommended route of the outer belt highway was for the north section to start at the intersection of Gault Way and North Truckee Road in Sparks. The west section would go from North Virginia Street to Lakeview Drive, the south section from Lakeview Drive to Boynton Lane and the east section from Boynton Lane back to Gault Way. The estimated cost in 1958 for the north section was \$953,000, the west section \$3,027,000, the south section \$463,000 and the east section \$856,000 or a total of \$5,299,000 not including right-of-way purchases.

Work began on the ring road in 1967 when the Robert L. Helms Construction Co. won the contract for the north section in May 1967. Helms’ bid of \$882,217 was for the section that would run from Kleppe Lane and Boynton Lane north through the planned Interstate 80 interchange to Prater Way. The next section from west of Sutro Street to the planned north-south freeway began in August 1971 and finished in May 1972. Another section near the Hug High School parking lot was finished in 1973. The section from Boynton Lane to Kleppe Lane was also being worked on in 1973. Construction of the ring road continued off and on until September 1990 when the Cashill Boulevard to Plumb Lane section, the last piece, was completed. The route of the completed ring road followed most of the recommended route from the 1958 study with residents taking part in design hearings and some protesting the building of some sections of the ring road.

Some Truckee Meadows residents did not want a ring road built through

their neighborhoods. A group known as HOME (Home Owners Opposed to McCarran Expressway) formed in the early 1980s to protest the building of the ring road from Plumas Street to West Fourth Street through southwest Reno. HOME members thought that the steep 6 percent grade was dangerous and that it would be cutting through a well-established neighborhood. HOME objected to the planned four to six lane road and wanted only a two-lane road to be designated as a scenic corridor. A study completed by the HOME members stated that the ring road “concept should

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be dropped.” Their study stated that McCarran Boulevard should no longer be considered an expressway because the many stop lights from the feeder streets slowed traffic.

However, others praised the ring road. Before the ring road was started in 1967, Mel Fodrin, a highway department engineer and road designer, said in an *REG* article on April 23, 1965, “the new road will open up hundreds of areas of new residential and commercial lands, it will increase the value of the land around Reno by millions of dollars . . . and it will save (local political subdivisions) many millions in road funds.” When the ring road was completed in 1990 an editorial in the *Reno Gazette Journal (RGJ)* on September 14, 1990 praised the ring road saying “McCarran Boulevard will

guide residents smoothly and quickly from one quadrant of the Truckee Meadows to the next. McCarran will reduce air pollution and drivers’ tempers in equal proportions.”

Did the construction of McCarran Boulevard shorten my trip around the Truckee Meadows?

Cory Farley writing as the Road Rat in the *RGJ* on July 23, 1990 asked “Could it be that you’ll save time by taking the short cut through town rather than trying to go around?” Today it takes about 46 minutes to travel the complete 22.4 miles of McCarran Boulevard at speed limits in Sparks of 45 miles per hour and in Reno of generally 50 miles per hour with a brief section of 35 miles per hour. The 49 stop lights on the feeder roads leading onto McCarran tend to slow down the trip.

The route in 1958 was about 16.84 miles with the average speed limit on the route of approximately 20 miles per hour. The 1958 route had 22 stop lights of the total 48 stop lights in the Truckee Meadows. Most of the stop lights were on Fourth Street, Virginia Street, Second Street, and Wells Avenue in Reno and “B” Street in Sparks. The 1958 route would have taken approximately 50 minutes plus 10 minutes for the 22 stop lights.

McCarran Boulevard, with 46 minutes, is faster in 2013, even with the greater traffic load, than the 60 minutes it took in 1958 without the ring road. 

Information for this article came from two Nevada Department of Highways studies: The Wilbur Smith and Associates study *Major Street and Highway Plan, Truckee Meadows Area and Truckee Meadows Urban Transportation Study: Data Projections for 1990*.

Joyce Cox is a member of HRPS and the author of the book *Images of America: Washoe County*. She is a retired reference librarian and a researcher of Nevada history.

HRPS Third Annual Harvest of Homes Tour Photos



Over 900 people turned out on a picture-perfect fall day for the Reno Harvest of Homes Tour. Six homes in Southwest Reno were opened and a guest summed up the experience by saying, "It's like stepping back in history to visit these wonderful homes." The event generated nearly \$20,000 for HRPS' Neighborhood Preservation Fund.

Dedication of the Jesse Reno Statue



The 150th anniversary of the death of our city's namesake, Major General Jesse Lee Reno, was marked by HRPS and the City of Reno on September 14, 2012 in Powning Park. The Park is the site of a life-sized statue of Major General Reno. The ceremony was organized by HRPS Board member Bill Isaeff, who delivered a keynote speech and Guy Rocha, retired Nevada State Archivist, who offered additional comments. The ceremony included a color guard and the laying of flowers at the statue by HRPS President Sharon Honig-Bear.

Reno was killed leading his troops in battle September 14, 1862, during the U.S. Civil War. In 1868, when the Central Pacific Railroad came through a growing town called Lake's Crossing on the Truckee River, a proper town site was laid out and the town was renamed "Reno" after the Civil War hero.



Message From Your HRPS President

Here today and... gone, simply gone. No more tomorrows...

When I first started doing walking tours about five years ago, I was happy to be mentored by a number of guides, especially Pat Klos and Debbie Hinman. They were generous in their time, their transfer of information and for being excellent models of how to tell a good story and communicate with an audience.

One of their precepts involved talking about what we can actually **show** on a walking tour. I was cautioned not to point to an empty lot or new building and talk about what was once there, about what you can no longer see.

My first tours were set in the downtown Reno area and as much as I've tried to stay true to that principle of focusing on what you can see, this is all but an impossibility downtown. When you're talking about Reno and its history, sadly, there are huge gaps with nothing tangible to show.

I have always used the *absence of artifacts* as a "teaching moment." I consider the empty lots or prosaic buildings a cautionary tale, one that I always share with tour attendees. It's a perfect moment to mention why historic preservation is important: with so much of Reno's interesting and glorious past gone, what will be the next to go? What do we see now—consider the Virginia Street Bridge, the Freight House and many other structures—that may be gone for our tour leaders in years to come?



Lacking the physical evidence of Reno's past, I persevere by showing snippets of Reno's history via photos, written passages and through the power of words. We have a tale worth telling, to reveal Reno's rather unique place in social history, and I am prepared to tell it, artifacts or not.

I remember hearing years ago that East First St. (Front St.) was once Chinatown. I had lived in Reno for over 20 years at that time and this was news to me. Eventually I found actual places to show—a Lake St. house that was once a Chinese herbal shop, a location on West St. where the National Chinese Government had its offices—and I had the foundation for our Ethnic Reno tour.

HRPS' tour season is over for another year but we will continue to tell Reno's story, each in our own way. Those of us who cover the turf of downtown will be forced to talk about days gone by and places long gone. We are the link to a past that brought international recognition to our town and some of us never want to lose

track of it. We'll continue our vigilance to identify and protect what is left of Reno for the future

On a related note, we concluded another successful year of walking tours and I would like to offer a special thanks to several people who managed the operation. Rosie Cevasco coordinated the entire effort and she was ably assisted by Sandi Bitler, Ursula Wellman, Bill Isaef and Cindy Ainsworth, What a team!

In other news, I would like to welcome our newest **Lifetime Members** to the HRPS family: Jon and Linda Madsen. They join the ten individuals and couples who have already stepped forward and demonstrated their commitment to and love of Reno. Income from Lifetime Membership is used for our Neighborhood Preservation Fund grants. *It's never too late to join this exclusive club!*

And lastly, HRPS is organizing a "farewell" at the Downtown Post Office, probably sometime in early 2013. If you are interested in helping plan this celebration, please call the office or email me at sharonbear@sbcglobal.net. If you have a memory to share, go to our website and send us your story on the "contact us" page.

Sharon Honig-Bear
President

Eric Holland's Exhibit Opens 2013

January 11—February 21, 2013
5:00 pm Reception January 11

Eric Holland's Exhibit
Art and Architecture of
Frederic DeLongchamps' Buildings

Nevada Historical Society
1650 N. Virginia Street, Reno

Nevada Westerners Corral

Reno's Oldest History Club

Dinner with history speakers and presentations, third Thursday of the month, 6:00 pm, Sands Regency Casino banquet room, 345 N. Arlington Avenue, Reno. For reservations, call the Sands 348-1392 no later than two weeks before.

www.nevadawesterners.org

2012 Neighborhood Preservation Fund Results

by Jack Hursh

The second annual season of the Neighborhood Preservation Fund (NPF) grant program was successfully completed. Monies raised by the very successful annual Harvest of Homes Tour support the NPF Fund. The NPF allows property owners the opportunity to apply for small grants for the rehabilitation of historical structures. Applications are reviewed by an awarding jury of Historic Reno Preservation Society members. Priority is given to projects that complement and enhance original historical neighborhood character and the original architectural style of the structure. Structures must be located within Reno city limits, be at least 50 years old, or of historical and/or architectural significance. Grants are given for exterior improvements only (e.g., front door, front windows, porch details, etc.) and must be visible from the street. Improvements must be authentic to the style of the structure. For example, a new door or window for a Craftsman Bungalow style, needs to be of Craftsman Bungalow style. Grant monies must be matched by funds from the property owner. Deadline for the next round of grant applications is April 30, 2013.

Four homes received funding by the NPF in 2012:

542 Lander Street, known as the Landon House, built in 1924, this Queen Anne style home, now converted to an office space, was listed on the Nevada State Registry of Historic Places in 1982. The brick and masonry cap on the front porch



542 Lander (left in 2003) before repairs; (right) repaired brick railing, seen behind the right tree in the picture.



and entrance had deteriorated due to weather.

The NPF grant helped pay for restoration of the brick and masonry cap and new paint. Owner Mary Mentaberry expresses her "deepest appreciation for the award for renovations on 542 Lander Street. The funds allowed us to repair the brickwork and mortar on the front porch and thanks to the NPF support, we were able to complete a quality work project instead of simply patching damaged areas."

803 Nixon Avenue, built in 1928, designed by the well know Reno architect Russell Mills, and also served as the Mills family residence until 1979. Many of us also remember this being the home for many years of long time HRPS member Ann McCarty.

This Newlands Neighborhood home still had its original stucco and was in need of repair. With the help of

the NPF, careful measures were taken to achieve a historic look. Since the material used over 80 years ago is a different composition of stucco (lime-cement) than used today (acrylic), Stucco was hand-troweled with unique hand movements, and then layered with two different stucco materials to achieve the look of the original texture. The first layer consisted of a courser stucco and the second layer was a finer material to give the proper depth and contrast. To complete the project, the border around the house was relandscaped to facilitate drainage to protect the new stucco.

Current owner, Heidi Cooper wishes to express that, "I have been pleased with the work, albeit it took us over a week to finalize the texture. How fortunate we are that the NPF program is available to help homeowners preserve Reno's historic neighborhoods. I really think the house looks good. As you may know, this is a neighborhood with high foot-traffic, and I am stopped daily by neighbors expressing praise on the work done. I am very grateful to have had the NPF help me with this project, and I believe the whole neighborhood benefited."

1099 Monroe Street, built in 1934, designed by the well know Reno architect Frederic DeLongchamps. This cottage residence was in great need of new paint on the wood siding and wood framed windows. When preparing a house for new paint, the



803 Nixon, before on left, after the masonry repairs on the right.

2012 NPF Results (continued)

practice of powerwashing is highly discouraged by many, even though it is commonly practiced. Power washing forces water into the cracks and crevices of a home at unnatural angles and pressures, resulting in unanticipated damage or water where you don't want it. 1099 Monroe Street received the much preferred human labor of hand scraping, priming, and painting. Owner, Stephanie Bickerstaffe was ecstatic at the facelift that her house received and wishes to express "I could not have accomplished the paint job on my house without the help of the NPF gift."



Above: 1099 Monroe, before on the left, after hand-scraping, priming and painting the house, shown on the right.



575 W. Ninth Street, built in 1930, this brick bungalow had deteriorating front steps and porch area. Owner Robert Dickman expressed, "Thank you so much for your support with the restoration of our historic Reno property. The NPF grant awarded for the tile work on the front steps and porch really helped to add that final touch to the curb appeal. Thanks again to the NPF for helping to restore and preserve Reno." 🐶

Below: 575 W. 9th Street, before on the left, after tile work was completed on front steps and porch, on the right.



Jack Hursh is the HRPS Program Director and a HRPS Tour Guide.

The 2003 photo of 542 Lander taken by Carol Coleman and the 575 W. 9th St. photo taken by owner Robert Dickman. All other photos taken by Jack Hursh.

The Neon and Other Attractions Bus Tour, November 10



The sold out November 10th Neon and Other Roadside Attractions tour featured a dinner stop at Casale's Halfway Club, where attendees enjoyed the wonderful fare. (l to r) Restaurant owner Inez Casale Stenpeck and tour organizer Cindy Ainsworth; Charlotte Voitoff enjoys some yummy rigatoni; HRPS program director Jack Hursh and President Sharon Honig-Bear. Photos courtesy of Mark Taxer.

Reno's Sorority Row

by Ciara Garcia, UNR Student and HRPS Intern

Editor's Note: Ciara Garcia received the HRPS scholarship at UNR in 2011-12 and this article resulted from her research. To read the complete article with photos, check out our website historicro.org

The University of Nevada, Reno has a thriving Greek community with ten fraternities, five sororities and nine “multi-cultural” fraternities that are co-ed and do not own housing facilities. To most members, the title of “brother” or “sister” holds as much weight as to any biological sibling.

In 1914, at the dawn of WWI when death and loss were prevalent throughout the country, the University of Nevada saw new life with the establishment of the first Greek lettered organizations, the fraternity Sigma Nu and the sorority Delta Delta Delta (referred to as Tri Delta). Pi Beta Phi (referred to as Pi Phi) was founded in November of 1915, and in 1922 Kappa Alpha Theta (referred to as Theta) was founded. These three are the oldest of five sororities on campus. A new millennium would pass before the two other sororities Delta Gamma (2002) and Sigma Kappa (2004) would be established on campus.

When the sororities and fraternities began taking residents in permanent houses, they believed they were far enough away from the university to develop a “Greek Row” and have room for expansion. However, on the UNR campus, the Sorority Row is just a sorority segment located on North Sierra Street, where Tri Delta, Theta, and Pi Phi have had permanent residencies since the early 1930s.

The Tri Delta house, at 845 N. Sierra Street, was built around 1911 and owned by Christina and Christian Duborn. Christian was vice-president of F. J. Peck Real Estate and Insurance Company, a prominent Mason and was well-known throughout Reno. In 1901, he married

Christina Frandsen, brother of Professor Peter Frandsen for whom Frandsen Humanities was named. Christina also taught at the University. The Duborgs died in 1923, and Tri Delta was able to purchase the home in 1924. Today it is a three story house, with a finished basement and can house 40 women in 11 different bedrooms. The property houses one house mom who has her own bathroom and bedroom. The basement has been renovated into a six-man (meaning 6 beds) bedroom. The house has a patio on the second story. The house has been renovated two times: a wing built in 1955



Tri Delta, Kappa Alpha Theta, and Pi Beta Phi sorority houses on North Sierra Street, circa 1960. Courtesy University Special Collections.

and a new chapter room (main meeting room) built in 1970. The main building includes four bedrooms, the sitting room, the dining room, and the (now) modified kitchen and has a distinct sense of grandeur. The main entrance is a rotunda of sorts with art deco window panes and striking columns.

The Pi Beta Phi house at 869 N. Sierra Street has a grand exterior that gains notice of passersby. The sorority occupied several other properties before 1932, when this property was built specifically for them. This three-story house has six rooms but houses 28 women plus their house mom. Pi Phi is unique in having very large rooms. The third floor features an 8-man room as well as a 3-man and a 4-man. The second floor features two 6-man rooms and the main floor has the single room for the house mom. This house has many notable features, including the pediments over the

windows on the third floor, and a front entrance that includes ionic columns and a fan light over the door.

The Kappa Alpha Theta house, at 863 N. Sierra Street, was built in 1929 and originally owned by S. F. Lane. Theta occupied one other house before moving to 863 N. Sierra. The house is a three-story with twelve rooms and houses 29 women. One notable feature about Theta is it is the only house (on sorority row) that has a backyard. The property was not originally built for use as a sorority house, as the common spaces reflect the original

use of the house: a large sitting room, dining room, and several bedrooms for the original (smaller) family. This house has had an expansion, adding more rooms to the north side of the house.

Yet these are just descriptions of the houses – for countless women they have been a “home away from home.” These houses combine the experience of the dorm rooms (roommates and many housemates) while being cheaper and on a smaller

scale. The physical house is more than just a house with a chapter's letters on it; it is the life of the chapter. It becomes a central location that all members have access to; it is where meetings are held; it is where memories are made, and it is where rituals are held closest to the heart of all members. Members can say that any place with their sisters is special, but the chapter house is a safe haven and brings alive all that the organization represents. 

Information for this article was taken from the Polk Directories, Nevada Historical Society; accessioning information, Washoe County Assessor's Office; Duborg documents, Nevada Historical Society; Greek life from personal experience, talking with other chapter presidents, and *The Lost Boys of Zeta Psi* by Laurie A. Wilkie.

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The Completed Powning Pillar

Take a walk back in time in tiny Lundsford Park and admire the new monument that showcases the history of the Powning's Conservation District. The pillar, funded primarily by the City of Reno and HRPS, was designed by Loren Jahn and the project was spearheaded by former HRPS President Felvia Belaustegui. The pillar is constructed of recycled river rock in a 1920s Craftsman style. A bright light illuminates the Park at night, serving as a beacon to the neighborhood. Lundsford Park is located on Riverside Drive at Washington St.

Reno was a growing young railroad town in 1886, when C. C. Powning purchased 122 acres and began advertising "250 Beautiful Lots for Sale." Because of its large Italian population, Powning's was later known as "Little Italy." The Powning's Addition became Reno's first Conservation District in 2009. 

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WINTER 2013 PROGRAMS

Jack Hursh Jr. – Program Chair; Jack.Hursh@gmail.com

All program events are on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7 pm at Mt. Rose School (Lander Street between Taylor and LaRue, just off Arlington), unless otherwise noted.

January 23, 2013, Brian J. Whalen, Assistant Vice President Emeritus for Facilities at UNR presents “University of Nevada Facilities History.” He will deliver an entertaining history of UNR from its inception at Elko in 1874, through its move to Reno in 1885, and up to the present. He will draw on his decades of experience working at the University.

February 27, 2013, Debbie Hinman presents “History of Reno Schools.” However wild and uncouth Reno was in its early days, it nonetheless had a soul that prized education. This presentation will examine the evolution of schools and education from the country schoolhouses in the area’s earliest settlements through the Ferris-designed architectural gems of the early 1900s to today’s expansive structures.

March 27, 2013, HRPS and Dr. Michael E. Fischer present “An Evening of Fresh, Frisch Findings!” Follow Roy Frisch from boyhood to the night of March 22, 1934, almost 80 years ago in Reno, when he mysteriously disappeared. Take a trip through the many contemporary and later accounts along with the FBI website “Vault” to discover both the old and the new facts of the case.

April 24, 2013, Kimberly Roberts discusses “Family/childhood photographs of Reno residents.” Special Collections has personal photograph collections of many well-known Reno residents and many anonymous ones as well. Roberts will explain what the photos tell us about daily life and our history, beyond the newspaper headlines and political events. Roberts will show the historical importance of personal photographs in understanding history.

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