

Historic Reno PRESERVATION SOCIETY

FootPrints

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

vol. 19 no. 1 ❖ Winter 2016

The Endangered University Neighborhood

Article and Photographs by Debbie Hinman

Editor's Note: A fundamental responsibility we have in HRPS is to preserve history. In this article, Debbie Hinman relates the history of the homes and of those who formed the University Neighborhood that the 2014 UNR Master Plan intends to remove. The 2014 Master Plan envisions the Campus Gateway Precinct this way: "This vibrant retail- and academic-oriented neighborhood center will be developed primarily by the University and will extend campus life to the south of the current campus, in the area between campus and I-80. Center Street will become a pedestrian alley closed to public vehicular traffic. Shaded outdoor seating areas and space for student and community events will dominate the brick-lined space bounded by a new business school, an innovation center, and residence halls."

Upon reading the Master Plan, I thought of the row of tidy Queen Anne homes on N. Center Street, and the larger, sprawling early 20th-century homes on Lake Street facing Evans Park and bleakly wondered what would become of them.

Strolling up N. Center Street is a nostalgic experience for me. I attended UNR in the early 1970s and would often walk to the campus to avoid parking woes (yes, we even had them in the 70s!). Little did I know that some forty

years later I would still be walking this neighborhood and be researching these houses, coming to know the stories of those who have lived here and how they contributed to their neighborhood, their University and their city.



821 N. Center Street, the Armstrong house, then the Joanne de Longchamps home, and now the Northern Nevada International Center.

Recently the Board of Regents announced that they own 15 properties in the Gateway District. They have received approval for a business school and new prospective sketches of North Center Street show towering buildings and a bus station, in addition to the business school. What follows are descriptions of some of the historic

homes threatened by the University's vision for a modern gateway.

In Reno's early days, many Easterners were coming west to seek their fortunes and a life of adventure. Land was plentiful and cheap and many ranches were established in this still-wild country. Among these new residents were the Evans brothers from Defiance, Ohio. The Evans family produced thirteen children, at least six of whom came west and eventually made their home in the Reno area. They drove 800 head of cattle across the plains in 1859, settling first in Long Valley, California. Coming to the Truckee Meadows, they found ranch land inexpensive and began buying acreage. Some of the land was used for grazing animals and some for raising crops such as alfalfa. Alvaro and John Newton "Newt" Evans owned land from 5th Street north to what is today McCarran Boulevard. Newt sold to the state the land for the University of Nevada when the University was moved from Elko to Reno in 1885.

In 1889, Alvaro sold a plot of land at the foot of the University bounded by Virginia and N. Center streets between 8th and 9th streets to financier A. G. Fletcher who subdivided the land into 14 lots. Fletcher had arrived in the Truckee Meadows in 1875, coming from Maine. He was engaged in building

Continued on page 2

The Endangered University Neighborhood (continued)

Continued from page 1

flumes to carry wood to the railroad for the Comstock mines. Fletcher next tried his hand at raising sheep, then became a Reno banker.

Fletcher began selling his lots in the last decade of the 19th century and shortly thereafter, homes along the west side of N. Center St. began springing up. The name of the builder or architect is lost in history, but as all are in the Queen Anne style, a relatively new style in those days, it is possible that they were all the work of one builder. The styles vary slightly from Free-Classic Queen Anne (847 N. Center), to Spindled Queen Anne which features more ornate styling with gingerbread, spindle work, turrets and other decorative elements often referred to as Eastlake (821, 829 and 895 N. Center).

821 N. Center Street

A beautiful example of the Spindled Queen Anne, this home became the residence of the Armstrong family circa 1914. Edna Armstrong was born in Virginia City and married Elmer in 1913. The couple raised three children there, Raymond, John and Ruth. Ray became an accountant and with Sam Kafoury, started the firm of Kafoury, Armstrong & Co., which became the premier accountancy firm in Nevada,



895 N. Center Street, the Fulton house



847 N. Center Street, the Sherman house

with four locations throughout the state. Ray Armstrong continued to occupy his childhood home until the early 1960s. The home was then rented out until it was sold in the 1970s to a family with UNR students. That family sold the property to Galen and Joanne de Longchamps. Joanne was a poet, publishing seven books of poetry. She taught at the University of Nevada, Reno and in addition to her poetry, was an accomplished pianist and collage artist. Her husband Galen was the adopted son of renowned local architect, Frederic DeLongchamps. Upon Joanne's death, she willed the house on N. Center to the University, to be used as a guest house for visiting professors and dignitaries. Today the former residence functions as the Northern Nevada International Center, the purpose of which is to foster better understanding between people through its public diplomacy programs, language and culture projects, and foreign policy forums.

847 N. Center Street

In March of 1896, Fletcher sold the lot at 847 N. Center

to Mrs. Mary Sherman, for \$450. Her home was a Free-Classic Queen Anne home, a style distinguished by sturdy columns and a more austere appearance, without the usual gingerbread of a Queen Anne. Mary was a widow with a daughter, Aimee, who was a teacher. The Shermans occupied the home for a very short time, then moved to S. Center Street and rented the house to a succession of residents, most of whom had ties to the University. Mary sold the home around 1923 and it was then bought and sold several more times until it began a new life in 1946 as the Reno Unity Center under Pastors Robert and Fay Caswell. It was probably within the next few years that changes were made to the home in keeping with its new use. The lower floor was converted to a chapel; the bay window to the left front of the home was removed and double doors installed. A cut-stone facing was added to the wood exterior and a stone cross was now visible in the triangular pediment over the front door. A new pastor took over the leadership of the Center in 1955—her name was Margery Baring. Her brother Walter was well known in Nevada politics and had been a U. S. Congressman from 1932 to 1946. Baring Boulevard was named for Walter Baring in 1973. Margery Baring remained at the Center until 1975. That year her brother Walter died and his services were held at the Unity Center. Margery retired and moved to Santa Barbara, passing away two years later. The Unity Center continued at the N. Center location until 1998 when the building was sold to Lorraine and Richard Casalta, to be used as a daycare center and preschool. At that time, the building was placed on the Nevada State Register of Historic Places; in 1999 it received a second honor, being placed on the Reno Register of Historic Places. The Casaltas sold to the University in 2012.

895 N. Center Street

This home is another of the Spindled Queen Annes, located on the corner of N. Center and Ninth streets. Very

The Endangered University Neighborhood (continued)

similar in appearance to 821, its exterior is quite original. The property was the home of John M. Fulton from 1906 to the mid-1920s. John and his brother Robert were born in Ohio and both came west around 1875. Both brothers worked for the railroad, Robert for the land department of the Union Pacific and John as district passenger and freight agent for the Southern Pacific. Robert lived first in Virginia City, then moved his mansion down to a lot on W. Front (First) Street, along the Truckee River. Robert was owner of the *Reno Evening Gazette* for eight years, and in 1904 was named the first President of the newly created Nevada Historical Society. John married Theodora Stubbs, daughter of Joseph Stubbs, University of Nevada President. Prior to moving to the N. Center Street house, the Fultons lived in the President's residence on campus. Both John and Robert were active in the community, as were their wives, contributing much to the early development of the city. The University acquired this property in 2004. Somewhat ironically, it is today used for the University's Real Estate office.

820 N. Center Street

Today, only one home remains of those properties that used to occupy the east side of the 800 block of N. Center. Gone is the first Nevada Historical Society, a small brick building that owed its existence to Jeanne Wier, who ran the organization for 46 years without pay. Wier also lived on this side of N. Center Street, as did well-known advertising man, Thomas "Spike" Wilson, who lived there as young boy. A later concrete apartment building at 830 N. Center provides student housing. But the large Dutch Colonial house at 820 N. Center, near the end of the block, still stands, now a student rental property. The Robert C. Riegg family first owned the home, which was built around 1907; a smaller house circa 1906 occupied the rear of the lot which Riegg used as a foundry, once the larger home was built. Riegg had emigrated from Germany and was a railway postal clerk. Inspired by his profession, Riegg invented and received a patent for a



820 N. Center Street, the Riegg house

combination mailing cabinet for letters and papers. Following Riegg, James Green of Green Painting Company occupied the home with his family. The Colonial Revival style of architecture enjoyed a nostalgic rebirth in the 20th century. The Dutch Colonial style is a subtype of the Colonial Revival, characterized by a broad gambrel roof, resembling a barn. This home is a lovely example of this style, of which there are few in Reno. It is an interesting contrast to the row of Queen Annes across the street and it makes one wonder what other architectural styles were represented on that side of the street that have been lost.

127 E. Eighth Street

This unique home, circa 1917, is one of the most beautiful examples of Asian-influenced Craftsman styling in Reno. Craftsman was the dominant style for smaller houses built throughout the country during the period from about 1905 until the early 1930s. The style originated in Southern California and spread rapidly throughout the

country, aided by popular magazines and pattern books. Often the Asian influence is visible only in the slightly upturned eaves, but in the case of this house there are Asian design elements on the porch posts, and the front of the house features porthole windows on either side of the front door. The result is an elegant interpretation of the Craftsman style that must have been the envy of many Reno residents. This was the home of the Humphrey family for nearly 90 years. Frank G. Humphrey was a native Nevadan, born on a Nye County ranch in 1872 and educated in the public school at the mining camp of Belmont. Humphrey himself engaged in mining, then operated a stage line between Sodaville and Tonopah. Coming to northern Nevada, he married and he and wife Marguerite welcomed daughters Adelaide in 1899 and Frances in 1904. Adelaide died in her 20s. Frances became an educator and spent her entire career in Reno public schools, first as a teacher and then counselor, winning many accolades for her service. Frances never married and even after her parents' death, remained in her childhood home, which in her latter years overlooked the I-80 freeway. It must have been a very sad thing for Frances to witness the destruction of her quiet, historic neighborhood. She passed

Continued on page 4



127 E. Eighth Street, the Humphrey house

The Endangered University Neighborhood (continued)

Continued from page 3

away in 2001. The University acquired the property in 2008. Today it stands unoccupied, alone on that stretch of E. Eighth, surrounded by a tall iron fence.

829 Lake Street

This lovely spacious home was built circa 1910 and though alterations have been made over the years to accommodate its use as student housing, the downstairs rooms of the home retain their original character. The architectural style is a bit difficult to assess, but it is likely a Craftsman, considering its wide roof overhanging the generous porch with its solid columns. This was the longtime home of Olla Mack. Olla's husband Winfred, a well-known bacteriologist, veterinarian and professor at Cornell University in New York, accepted a position at the University of Nevada and the Macks moved to Reno at the end of 1906. Mack suffered from tuberculosis and believed the dry climate would be better for his health. The Macks lived on 6th Street, then moved to the Lake Street house. Dr. Mack continued to distinguish himself and became the Nevada State Veterinarian. Olla participated in many women's groups and hosted numerous local social events in her beautiful home at the base of the campus. In 1918, Winfred passed away, still in his forties. While recovering from the death of her husband, Olla was diagnosed with


multiple sclerosis. For the next few years she continued with her activities until the disease progressed to the point that she could no longer easily get around. In order to support herself and remain in her home, Olla became the community's main contact for magazine subscriptions. Bedridden for the last 20 years of her life, Olla worked the phone, calling all of her Reno contacts who were more than happy to help Olla by ordering magazines. For several years,



829 Lake Street, the Mack house

Reader's Digest awarded Olla a prize for being a top saleswoman of their publication. Olla died in 1958. She left an estate of over \$50,000, much of which went to medical charities. The University purchased the home in 2005 and for the past ten years, has been renting it out to students.

What we stand to lose is more than just a neighborhood of old houses. In the coming years, if the University's vision for a Gateway District comes to fruition, future students will never know that this was truly a University residential area. They won't know that professors and other denizens of the educational community strolled from their homes to the campus, and back home in the evenings to sit on their porches, enjoy the evening breeze, converse with neighbors or review the next day's lesson plans. They won't remember the six Queen Anne homes in a picturesque row, the sturdy Dutch Colonial or the two very different Craftsman structures that were home to Nevada pioneers, educators and a determined businesswoman. This rich history will be gone and these people forgotten.

We all recognize the University's need for expansion, but with judicious planning and insight—as was used when allowing the modern Knowledge Center and the historic Morrill Hall to coexist on the same campus—perhaps these endangered properties could be integrated into the Gateway Plan to provide a historic context, adding interest and resonance to the new neighborhood. 

“Architecture” as defined in People's Cyclopedia of Universal Knowledge (published 1879)

Architecture, the art of building or constructing, is coeval with the earliest dawn of civilization, and may be said to present largely the history of the human family written in stone, brick, or other durable material. In process of its growth it came to be classed under five different heads of orders—the Tuscan, the Doric, the Ionic, the Corinthian and the Composite... There are, besides these, various styles of architecture, such as the Gothic, the Moorish, etc., but these are not classed as orders, being styles merely.

Information for this article came from various newspaper articles, Census reports, biographies from Genealogy.com and Nevada Genealogy Trails, A History of the State of Nevada by Thomas Wren, and information on the Armstrong family provided by Christine Fuetsch.

Debbie Hinman is a HRPS Tour Guide who created the University Neighborhood Walk in 2006, hoping to raise awareness of this endangered area. She is a member of the HRPS Editorial Board and a regular contributor to *FootPrints*.

Sunshine Lights Up Another Successful 2015 Reno Harvest of Homes Tour

Article and Photos by Sharon Honig-Bear, Tour Chair

The wonderful weather of summer lingered, helping create a perfect day for over 700 people at the 6th Reno Harvest of Homes Tour. The event netted over \$18,000 that will be used for the Neighborhood Preservation Fund to improve properties and strengthen our older neighborhoods.

There were six houses on the Tour this year, and as always attendees were asked to name their favorite house. Many expressed it was hard to name their favorite. The top two houses were ranked as The Wonder Cottage at 201 Wonder St. and El Mirasol at 25 Bret Harte — but all houses had appreciative fans. Our survey showed that 100% of the guests would attend the Tour again and about half of the respondents were HRPS members. The HRPS website and *FootPrints* were important in promoting the Tour but “friends” were an even bigger influence on attendance. Ticket sales were strongest through online sales, then retailers Sundance Books followed by Moana Nursery

and St. Ives Florist. All of the ten retail outlets experienced some sales volume and we thank them all.

We would like to thank, again, the owners of the six homes featured: Rob Madry, Zeina Barkawi and Dom Sinnott, Mary and Tam Conklin, James Barcellos and Paul Devereux, Mimi Ellis-Hogan and Margo and Kenneth Bender.

Thanks are also owed to the over 100 volunteers, who safeguarded the homes and acted as docents. Vintage cars enhanced the Tour experience and were supplied by Clay Carlson and Ilye and Lee Johnson. Other thanks are due to Renown Health, Raley's, LSN Studios, Sharon Walbridge and Jean Green. Greg Newman and House Detective, *Reno Magazine*, *The Good Life*, Guy Clifton and Susan Skorupa at *Reno Gazette Journal*, Erin Breen at KTVN and Ryan Kern on Fox11 and KRVN helped promote the event.

It is always gratifying to hear unsolicited praise about the Tour, after the volunteer team puts in six months of dedicated effort. No comment summed it up better than this one: “I so enjoy the Harvest of Homes each year. You all do a wonderful job of organizing this each year; you all put your hearts and souls into these home tours. WHAT TALENT! I want to say thank you for all the effort made each year and to the people that open up their homes for the tours.” With comments like this, it is obvious that the Tour will be back in 2016! 🚗



Pat Klos, a Tour host at 275 Urban, indicates a point of interest at the Bret Harte house, while on the early tour for hosts to learn about the homes on the Tour.



Ed Wishart admires the gorgeous 1929 Studebaker President Sedan shown by owners Ilye and Lee Johnson as part of the Tour.



Charlotte Voitoff, host at 25 Bret Harte, talks to Debbie Hinman, host at 576 Ridge, as they learn about the Bret Harte house prior to the Tour.

HRPS Home Tour Needs a Volunteer Chair

Do you have some time and are familiar with using Excel? We are looking for someone who can coordinate Home Tour Volunteers for 2016. The work is concentrated during a few months and can be conducted from home or office. Please let Sharon Honig-Bear know (at sharonbear@sbcglobal.net) if you are able to help.

The History of Stewart Park

by Kimberly J. Roberts

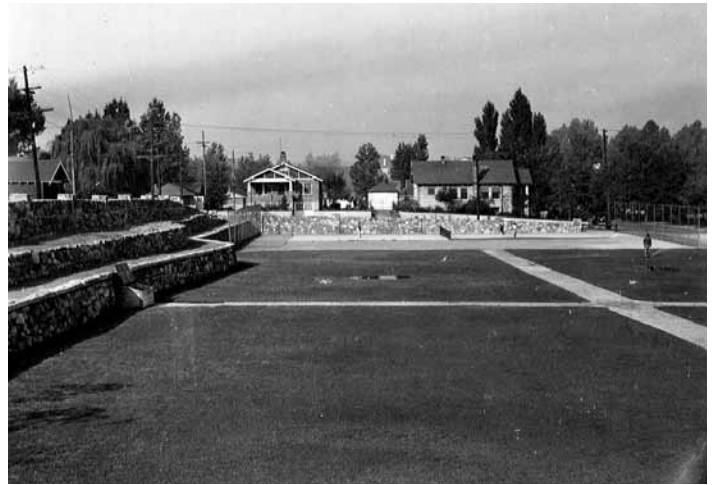
Places tell stories. They speak volumes about the daily lives of people and their social interactions. The story of Stewart Park, located in the Wells Addition, also tells the story of the people and the city of Reno, revealing changing patterns of public engagement and community activity.

Stewart Park began as a rock and gravel pit dug out of the hillside that still surrounds the park along Wells and Moran Street, providing raw material for a growing Reno. It became a refuse dump as Reno expanded south of the Truckee River. As the Wells Addition matured into a thriving neighborhood, a restroom was constructed in 1927, indicating the transformation from dump to park.

When the stock market crashed in 1929, Nevada's economy also collapsed and federal aid poured into the state through the WPA. By 1938, the WPA had paid out approximately \$1,600,000 for projects created in conjunction with the city of Reno. The Wells Addition featured prominently in this work. Many streets in the neighborhood were widened, graded and graveled, including Wells Avenue.

Prominent among these projects was the creation of Stewart Park, "transformed from a rubbish heap into an attractive city asset," according to Reno mayor John Cooper. The grounds were filled and leveled, tiered restraining walls were constructed and filled with plants, sprinklers were installed and a brick restroom built. The tennis courts, constructed in 1936 as part of a city-wide civic improvement project, were the star attraction of the park.

During the 1940s and 50s, Stewart Park was among the city's most popular playgrounds. In 1945, the Reno Recreation Commission started a playground program and designated Stewart Park as a destination for small children, with nearby Pickett Park becoming the playground for larger boys and girls. During this time, the park was supervised from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm and activities abounded. A boys' baseball team, the Stewart



*1930s photo of Stewart Park following work by the WPA. Stewart Park is bounded by South Wells Avenue on the east, Stewart Street on the north, and Wheeler Avenue on the west.
Courtesy UNR Special Collections.*

Sagebrush Sluggers played there, as well as a girls' softball team. Carnivals were popular events attended by as many as 200 people a day, with booths for games, flowers and food. The park featured wheelbarrow rides, hosted 4th of July game nights, and put on doll and pet shows.

In 1951, councilmen Marshall Guisti and Edwin Semenza called for a public meeting to upgrade the park, saying it "resembled a miniature golf course with abundant hillcock hazards." The grounds had settled since the initial excavation of rock and gravel, leaving the lawn bumpy and uneven. Advertised as a facial and a beauty treatment, the park was completely upgraded. During the summer new sidewalks were laid and the walls resurfaced and strengthened, new sprinklers were planned and new roofs were put on the service buildings. A protective fence was planned along Stewart Street. Since the lawn was ripped out in November, the park was converted into a shallow skating rink until new sod was laid the next spring. Lights were erected for nighttime playground use and a future of winter ice skating. Stewart Park was well lit and vibrant, full of activity long after sunset, with people out playing late at night even in the cold of winter.

Activities such as relay races continued on into the early 1960s. By 1968, the park had fallen into decline. There was no baseball diamond or backstop, leaving the children playing in the park to deal with balls going into the heavy traffic of Wells Avenue. There was only one picnic table and no benches. There were no hoops on the basketball court. Parks Superintendent Ivan Sack explained that constant vandalism was a problem and the hoops had to be constantly replaced. He stated that the park was too small for baseball, which was ruining the buildings along the south end of the park, so it was now prohibited. In one final public event, Stewart Park was flooded in 1971 during a heat wave so children could play in the sprinklers.



In July 2011, volunteers worked to repair the 1930s vintage rock wall at Stewart Park. Photo courtesy Susan Mantle.

The History of Stewart Park (continued)



Barrie Schuster, one of the organizers of West of Wells, worked in July 2011 to remove old mortar in preparation for repairing the old rock wall at Stewart Park. Photo courtesy Susan Mantle.


By the 1980s, public programs fell out of vogue and increased curfew laws changed the social environment of public space. Many urban parks were viewed as unsafe and people began to avoid them.

Today the West of Wells neighborhood prospers with a rebirth of interest in urban lifestyles and the park attracts a new generation of Renoites. In 2011, volunteers from the West of Wells Neighborhood Group gathered at Stewart Park to work on the restoration of the terraced rock wall. The Historic Reno Preservation Society provided funding and Sartorial Masonry of Reno sponsored the repairs, donating both labor and masonry to the project. The rock wall was repaired in the manner it was built: by hand, using local rock and mortar. About thirty volunteers worked five hours, completing about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the lower terrace and a quarter of the upper wall.

In 2013, the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation began recruiting volunteers to periodically rephotograph city parks in the Reno-Sparks area. Rephotography is a technique used to document change over time, of consciously tracking history as it occurs. The information in the Stewart Park rephotogra-

phy series will provide valuable information to historians of daily life, to urban foresters and ecologists, to architectural historians, and to people interested in the continuing changes in the neighborhood.

In the summer of 2015, the rock wall was painted in an attempt to discourage graffiti, which was ruining the historic nature of the terracing. After objections, the city of Reno has since indicated that the wall will again be restored to its original look. We are still waiting.

Today, Stewart Park remains a vibrant place for family and neighborhood activities. "On any given day you can see soccer games, family picnics and dog walkers fill up the park. It is rare to see that park empty," said Ray Duffy, Executive Director of the Family Promise organization, whose day center is directly across from the park. 

Kimberly Roberts is a HRPS Board member and is an Archivist in Special Collections at the University of Nevada, Reno.



Stewart Park as photographed June 6, 2015 as part of the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation Rephotography program. To view the photographs, go to: <http://www.tnmparksfoundation.org/#!tnmrp-r-stewart-park/c22bz>. Photo courtesy Eric Swanson.

HRPS 2016 NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION FUND (NPF) GRANTS

March 31, 2016 is the deadline to submit applications for the HRPS 6th round of grants to help Reno property owners rehabilitate historical structures and landmarks. The structures should be at least fifty years old. The goal is to improve the curb appeal of older neighborhoods. Proposed work is limited to exterior improvements of buildings and must be designed in a manner authentic with the original architectural style of the structure. Applications will be accepted starting

January 1, 2016. Grant Guidelines and Application are available at the HRPS website historicreno.org or by calling (775) 747-4478.

The Neighborhood Preservation Fund grants are generated primarily from the proceeds of HRPS' Reno Harvest of Homes Tours. Additional donations for the fund can be made to HRPS and sent to P.O. Box 14003, Reno, NV 89507.

The New Virginia Street Bridge

Photos by Linda Burke, A



This arched iron bridge spanned the Truckee River from 1877 to 1905, when the concrete bridge was built. The arched design of the newest bridge was drawn from this historic bridge sitting beside the Riverside Hotel, originally named the Lake House.

Courtesy Nevada Historical Society.



*Virginia Street Bridge circa 1906.
Courtesy Nevada Historical Society.*



October 12, 2015 morning

Our historic Virginia Street Bridge, built in 1905, has been removed, and lives on in our hearts and in photographs. The old bridge was removed in sections in June 2015. A new bridge is rising, one that resembles an earlier bridge, the arched iron bridge built across the Truckee in this exact same location in 1877.

The bridge arches have been built. On South Virginia Street, just south of the Truckee River, the arches were first constructed of wood and rebar, then concrete was poured to complete the forms. Walking in to the Pioneer Theater and seeing the size of these approximately 185-foot-long by 40-foot-high arches in the street opposite the Riverside Lofts was an interesting experience!

Q&D Construction has the contract for the new Virginia Street Bridge. They keep up-to-date with entries and photos in the website <http://vsbreno.com/> so please check it out for progress on the bridge.

Q&D installed temporary falsework across the river channel to support the arches. The plan was to move the arches north on the 185-foot trip across the Truckee River. The arches weigh 400 tons apiece and would be moved using four 100-ton hydraulic rams that could push the arches at



October 13, 2015


Bridge Moves Across the River

Article by Carol Coleman

a rate of about four inches per minute, but due to friction and other variables, the rate was often less. Liquid dish soap was used in order to reduce the effects of friction during the move.

The launch would begin on October 12, 2015. Fortunately, my friend Linda Burke, has a wonderful vantage point from her abode in Arlington Towers, and took daily (and some nighttime) pictures of the move.

The bridge arches were moved simultaneously; temporary bracing supported them and kept them upright and aligned. The arches were moved slowly north over the river, a process that took over four days. Linda's photos show the daily progress that Q&D achieved.

Once the arches were moved across the river, they were lowered approximately two feet into their final position. The focus then moved to securing the structure of the north and south abutments. Crews connected the rebar and placed concrete to permanently attach the structure to the foundations. Once the bridge is fully secured to the abutments, the river falsework will be removed and the river channel restored. The next element in building the bridge is the installation of the steel floor beams that will support the roadway and the sidewalks. 

Note the bridge concept picture below, with the pedestrian walkways on the outside of the arches. In accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the Federal Highway Administration, Nevada Division; and the State Historic Preservation Office regarding the Virginia Street Bridge, the historic railing and the light fixtures have been carefully removed from the old bridge and will be reused on the new bridge! How wonderful that the arch design, the railing and lights are beautiful historic memories or memorabilia of our older bridges!
Courtesy Jacobs Engineering Group on behalf of the city of Reno.



October 14, 2015



October 15, 2015
 Arches are in place across the Truckee River.



Message from Your HRPS President Byllie D'Amato Andrews

Looking back on 2015, our reach continues to grow. In July 2015, our walking tours were so popular I think we may have broken our own record! Mansions on the Bluff kicked off the month with 125 participants on the 4th of July. Some thought the 8 a.m. start time on a holiday would lower attendance, but they were wrong after guides led two groups on what is HRPS's most popular walk. A member let us know how much she loved the Church Tour, her first visit to any of the three churches. She reported: "since I joined [HRPS], I've been on walking tours all around Northern Italy, and my girlfriend who joined [HRPS] with me, went on one in New York City. So, not only have we enjoyed learning about Reno, we have learned a whole new way to get to know cities we visit. Thanks for doing such a great job putting the activities together."

Looking forward to 2016, our grassroots efforts will play the single most important role in assuring that our historically important buildings and places are preserved. That was the biggest takeaway from our first speaker program of the 2015-16 season featuring Jim Bertolini, National and State Register Coordinator for the Nevada State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO). His information was extremely timely for HRPS and for the Advocacy Advisory Council (AAC) as we determine how we can better contribute to historic preservation efforts in the Truckee Meadows. Individually and as an organization, we must be agents of change and stewards of our local history.

As Reno's improving economic outlook brings more development and re-development, the HRPS Advocacy Advisory Council is tracking and bringing attention to an increasing number of properties and neighborhoods. We fully support the efforts of the University of Nevada, Reno and the city of Reno to bridge the gap between the university and Downtown Reno, but some of the plans we have seen raise concerns about the fate of several classic Queen Anne homes as well as other historic structures older than 100 years in the Gateway District.


Of additional concern are the iconic mid-century motels in Reno's core. They reflect Reno's history as a transportation hub along the Lincoln Highway as the rise of the automobile saw more and more families traveling across the country after World War II. We applaud the city's planned efforts to remove blight from the downtown core, but we caution them not to destroy, and encourage them to honor such a large piece of Reno's and our nation's heritage.

Growth in northern Nevada, with the increasing numbers of veterans, has led to the need for the Veterans Administration to expand its local health care system. We are pleased that the VA and the neighborhood surrounding the Veterans Health Care Center were able to reach a compromise resulting in a one-lane section of Kirman Avenue remaining intact, instead of being closed altogether and splitting the neighborhood. The fate of the neighborhood could still

be in jeopardy as the VA is proposing to acquire fourteen properties which are part of the Burke's, Belli and Mountain View Additions that would be demolished and replaced with parking. These neighborhoods have high integrity and are examples of postwar mid-century neighborhoods.

It had been several years since HRPS evaluated membership levels, so earlier this year our membership committee convened to look at membership options in similar nonprofit organizations. Although many of these organizations have discontinued lifetime membership options, the HRPS membership committee recommended retaining the level, but raising the price. Going forward, half the money raised by lifetime memberships will continue to support the Neighborhood Preservation Fund and the other half will support transportation for the fourth-grade education program, *FootPrints* publishing and distribution, and rent for the Laxalt Auditorium. Please see the new form on page 15 in this issue of *FootPrints*.

In closing, we welcome Carol Haydis, Lee & Ilye Johnson, Mike & Pat Klos, and Laurence & Linda Kutten, our newest Lifetime members who join 35 other couples and individuals who have made this commitment to HRPS.

(Special thanks to Barrie Schuster and ZoAnn Campana for supplying information, respectively, on the VA expansion and mid-century motels.) 

HRPS Endangered Building Watch List

- Freight House on Evans St.
- Nevada Brewing Works on 4th St.
- Regina Apartments on Island Ave.
- First Masonic Building (Reno Mercantile) at Sierra and Commercial
- Historic Homes in The University Gateway District
- Buildings in the University Neighborhood
- The Hotel El Cortez at 2nd and Arlington
- Hill/Redfield Mansion on Mt. Rose St.
- Lear Theater
- Mid-century car dealership building, south west corner of S. Virginia & Cadillac
- 1889 NCO Engine House at 401 East 4th St.
- Flick Ranch House
- Two El Reno Apartments at 1463 Lander St.
- Hillside Cemetery
- WPA Projects at Plumas, Stewart and Virginia Lake Parks
- Mid-century Motels
- Burke's, Belli and Mountain View Additions

Winter/Spring 2016 Programs

Steve Davis – Program Chair: srdavis1941@gmail.com

Historic Reno Preservation Society's free programs offer an assortment of Reno historic topics. **HRPS Wednesday Program events are at 7:00 pm at The Laxalt Theater in the Nelson Building at 401 W. Second Street, Reno and the following Sunday at 1:00 pm at the Washoe County Library (WCL), 301 S. Center St., Reno.** For more program information contact Steve Davis at srdavis1941@gmail.com or call 747-4478 and leave a message. More organization information can be found at www.historicreno.org or on Facebook.

HRPS: January 27, 2016

WCL: January 31, 2016

Frank X. Mullen, Snapshots in Time: The Last 10,000 Years in the Truckee Meadows: What is now Nevada rose from an ancient sea hundreds of millions of years ago, but its human history is relatively recent. Frank X. Mullen traces the Silver State's people — from the mammoth hunters, marsh dwellers and desert nomads — to the mountain men, pioneers and developers who left their marks on northern Nevada. It is a timeline that stretches back hundreds of generations, when what is now a sagebrush ocean was a land of lakes and mega fauna roamed the landscape. Where we walk today, 360 generations have trod before.

HRPS: February 24, 2016

WCL: February 28, 2016

Barrie Lyn Schuster, A Wells Ave Home Restoration: Barrie Schuster received a HRPS Neighborhood Preservation Fund Grant to remove an enclosed sun porch and restore the facade of her 1925 Bungalow to its original appearance. She will take you on a pictorial journey of this process and explain how her sense of connection to the history of her home contributed to her remodeling decisions. She will share the colorful story of the original owner of her home, locally famous musician and dance hall owner, Tony Pecetti, and how she came to know the former inhabitants who provided her with a wealth of information.

HRPS: March 23, 2016

WCL: March 27, 2016

Dr. Michael Fischer, Reno's Fabulous Town House and its Cousin, The Country Club: Many Renoites remember the unusual stone wall off Plumas by the Washoe County Golf Course. What some do not know is its connection to downtown Reno's Town House. The history behind both is intriguing and has elements of crime, sophistication and early corporate marketing. Follow the development of the two clubs from the 1920s as the Deauville downtown to the Town House's final fire in the 1950s which looked suspiciously like arson.

HRPS: April 27, 2016

WCL: May 1, 2016

Dr. Stephen Davis, The Truckee Meadows' Open Lands Project; A Visual Survey of our Past: Between 1985 and 1995, Steve Davis documented the open lands remaining in the Truckee Meadows. These included the vast meadow in the southeast quadrant of the Valley including Double Diamond Ranch. Davis also photographed agricultural remnants scattered throughout the Valley, as well as parks, ruins and abandoned places. Inevitably, his photographs include many building projects in the Truckee Meadows. He will discuss his *Childhood Memory and Sense of Place* project, which collected childhood memories about place from local residents.



Inge W. Jahn
(1936-2015)

It is with a heavy heart that we report the passing of long-time HRPS member Inge Jahn. Joining in 1997, Inge was one of our first members and through the years attended most of our programs, parties, bus and home tours. Inge's son, Lauren Jahn, designed our wonderful HRPS Virginia Street Bridge logo. HRPS will miss Inge's cheerful smiles at our events.



Inge Jahn and Mark Taxer are dressed to the nines for HRPS 2001 party, "On the Atchison, Topeka to the 'Santa Fe'" (a play on the 1945 song). We first had cocktails at the downtown Antrak Depot and then walked to the Santa Fe for dinner.

A Salute to Reno's Mid-Century Police Headquarters Building

Reprinted by permission of Kim Henrick

On Monday, January 2, 1950, after four days of open house events and tours for the public, the employees of Reno's police department and municipal court moved into their new offices at 455 E. 2nd Street. The huge, modern building stood in stark contrast to the quaint, 43-year-old Reno City Hall building on the northwest corner of First and Center streets. [Note: That crowded and dilapidated 1907 building would continue to serve the other city departments until the next permanent Reno City Hall building would open in 1964 at South Center and Stewart streets, where the Nevada's Discovery Museum resides today.]

The proud, 65-year-old, concrete behemoth on 2nd Street has put in a lot of overtime. Love it or hate it, this concrete puzzle of a building was here to stay. But even formidable buildings such as this one don't last forever. In addition to inadequate space and the technological challenges it presents, there are the age-old problems of leaky ceilings and windows, and the dangers from lead paints and asbestos that still linger. Plus, it's just darn cold in the winter. But before we study this used-up building with the thought of kicking her to the curb, let's put things into perspective and look back at the first two police headquarters buildings. Could things have been any worse than they are today?

107 N. Center Street

The city of Reno has always been chasing adequate facilities to keep up with its constant growth. Sadly, the first city hall structure was too small even before the town of Reno became the city of Reno on May 11, 1903. According to the *Daily Nevada State Journal* on May 2, 1903: "Between sundown and eight o'clock last evening the officers bagged nine birds. The cells in the new city jail were well filled before the night was over. Nearly all the pris-

oners arrested were drunks." Not off to a great start, the city began its life with a too-small city hall and jail building and a deficit of around \$10,000 (*Reno Evening Gazette (REG)*, May 12, 1903). According to the 1904 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, the first "City Hall and Jail" was a small, one-story brick building at 107 N. Center Street that appears to have been about 17 feet wide by 24 feet deep. The jail section took up the back half of the building, leaving a space of about 17 feet wide by 12 feet deep for city business. Imagine cram-



Reno City Hall building, Front (First) and N. Center streets, opened in 1907. City staff and police headquarters were both housed in this building until 1950. Photo courtesy Jerry Fenwick.

ming into a living-room-size space, a mayor, a clerk, an attorney, five councilmen, a judge and courtroom space, a fire chief and a police chief and their men (along with evidence and equipment), plus some other city employees. (Reno's first police chief Charles Leeper made \$1,500 per year and the first mayor George Turriffin made \$300 per year. Who do you suppose got to sit at the big desk during meetings? Policemen made \$960 per year, but probably chose to spend most of their time out on their beats.) By the summer of 1904, a local paper put Reno's population at 10,000 and its police force "on the average of five or six policemen." It was no surprise, when in December of 1905, the city awarded a \$50,000 bond contract to the Farmers

and Merchants Bank in Reno in order to finance the building of a worthy city center. In March of 1906, the little city hall building was appraised at \$125 and scheduled to be sold at auction.

Front (First) and N. Center streets

M. J. Curtis designed the new municipal headquarters planned for the northwest corner of Front (First) and N. Center streets (directly south of the first city hall building lot). His design showed a two-story brick and stone building with a basement, large individual offices for many of the city employees, a functional city council chamber, a two-room emergency hospital, and a large jail area about 30 by 30 feet in the northwest corner of the building. This magnificent building, sporting a tall center clock tower, was accepted by the Reno City Council on May 3, 1907. It must have seemed like moving into a palace. How proud the city employees must have been as they climbed the front steps and admired the huge, native-granite block above them with the words "CITY HALL." [Note:

In 2009, part of this granite sign was unearthed near the Truckee River just east of U.S. 395, and is now in storage at the Nevada State Railroad Museum.] After three decades in this building, the police force had grown to about 35 and our second city hall building could no longer meet the demands put upon it (*REG*, June 4, 1938). Rumblings of change began again.

In September of 1941, the city of Reno purchased the old Troy Laundry Company building from Jack Miramon for \$13,000. It was located at North (now Kuenzli) and High streets just east of the river. The large, one-story, L-shaped brick building had stood at that location since the laundry business was started in 1902. The city planned to use it as a garage and paint shop.

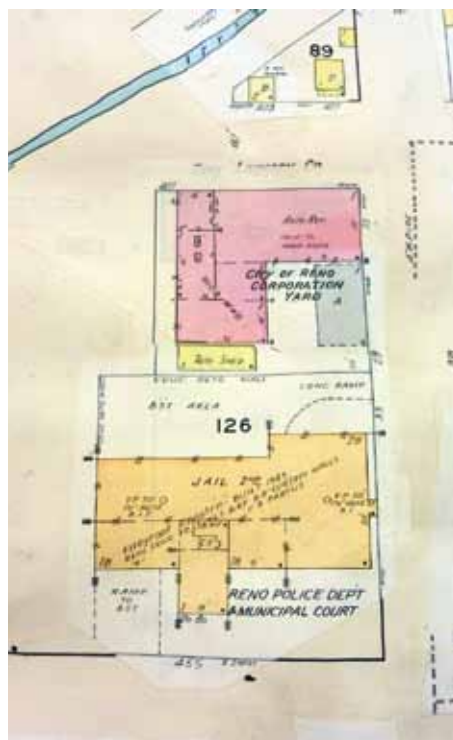
Reno's Mid-Century Police Headquarters Building (continued)

455 E. 2nd Street

Years passed and the escalating situation in the old building's deplorable jail (often simply referred to as "the tank") became dire. Finally, in January of 1946, Mayor Harry E. Stewart proposed building a "new city jail," for \$110,000. Stewart's timing was pretty good since a report by a grand jury committee, published in the *Nevada State Journal* on January 30, 1946, called the Reno city jail "...a 'cess pool' constructed in 1905 [sic] with capacity for 20 prisoners and now housing an average of 30 to 40 daily and as high as 85 at times." Among escalating reports of terrible jail conditions and police brutality, the city chose a prime piece of land for the city jail, directly south of their new garage and paint shop building at North and High streets. This block was made up of private properties, some with houses, but that didn't stop the city. In June of 1946 the city used its eminent domain powers to start condemnation proceedings against the several property owners who, in some cases, had owned the parcels for decades. That same month the city council hired the architectural firm Blanchard, Maher and Lockard (for 6 % of the building cost) to draw plans for the new jail and court building. The city engineer provided requirements: 50 double-decker cells to accommodate 100 prisoners: 75 males, 13 females, and 12 juveniles. In addition, it would not be necessary to "separate the colored from the whites," and those male prisoners "committing minor offenses can be kept separate from those who have committed felonies."

The architectural firm designed the building in a popular, post-war style utilizing massive amounts of concrete. The no-frills, uncompromising fashion contrasted dramatically with the highly-refined and ornamented buildings of previous styles. (Strip away the layers of paint and this building might be a fine example of the mid-century *brutalist* architectural style. The term has nothing to do with the word "brutal," but stems from the French expression

béton brut meaning "raw concrete.") In the spring of 1947, \$650,000 worth of Reno city bonds were sold to cover the cost of both the new city jail and court, and to compensate the property owners of the condemned parcels. Newspapers covered the council meeting on April 28 and reported that Dick Heap (superintendent of the police department's bureau of identification) and N. Arthur Sowle (head of police radio communications) gave a



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (revised 1953) showing old Troy Laundry building and the original 1949 police headquarters building. Author's photo, access to map courtesy Nevada Historical Society.

description of the planned headquarters and municipal court building as "...a two-story L-shaped structure with offices on the first floor, jail quarters on the second and a large exercise yard on the roof. Basement of the building will include facilities for servicing and washing automobiles, a laundry, radio repair shop, auxiliary light plant and a 25-yard pistol range." One article added, "Mayor Harry Stewart

remarked that Mr. Heap's description of the new jail made it 'so attractive' that it could almost be considered 'an encouragement to crime.' The rest of 1947 was filled with more articles about the deteriorating situation in the old jail, some changes to the new jail plans, and delays in the condemnation suits, but finally in January of 1948 the "Notice to Contractors" was published in the local papers.

In March of 1948 the city awarded the four contracts on the building. Here are the companies and the rounded-off winning bids: Walker Boudwin Co. of Reno was awarded the general construction contract at \$394,462 (\$95,000 of that was for labor and materials for the concrete and reinforced steel costs); Otis Elevator Co. won the contract for installing the elevator for the bid price of \$15,143; the heating and ventilation installation job was awarded to Savage and Son of Reno at the bid price of \$64,864; and Stewart Iron Works Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, for \$58,725, won the award to supply the jail equipment. The contracts for the new city jail totaled nearly \$533,194 and the final cost of the project was surprisingly close at approximately \$537,000. For the plans, the architectural firm was paid about \$32,000.

There were delays—there always are it seems—but finally the building was completed at the end of 1949. Both newspapers ran several articles with photographs showing scenes like Captain Joe Kirkley with the new evidence safe; Assistant Chief of Police T. R. Berrum proudly showing off his own office; and Captain Daryl Read of the traffic division moving from a "reconverted closet" into a full-sized room. Chief of Police L. R. Gleeson and new Reno City Mayor Francis R. Smith looked like proud fathers in the photos. Thousands of people toured the building over the closing days of 1949, then on January 2, 1950, the police and municipal court employees moved into their new home. A few different sources

Continued on page 14

Reno's Mid-Century Police Headquarters Building (continued)

Continued from page 13

put the police force at this time at between 85 and 100 members.


This dynamic building has seen many changes since its doors opened for business in 1950. A two-story addition on the south side (2nd St.), designed by the Lockard and Casazza architectural firm, was added in 1966. This expanded the jail section on the second floor, and the office space on the first floor. Another large addition was completed in 1975. Designed by Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall, a three-story addition was added on the north side of the building, expanding first floor space for the police department and the second and third floors for the municipal court offices. [Note: This same job included a new Public Safety Center located at the corner of Evans and 2nd streets, which became the new dispatch center for city agencies and home to a new fire station.] In late 1988, the city's jail facility on the 2nd floor was shut down (for the most part) and prisoners were handled from then on by the new Washoe County Sheriff's Office headquarters and jail complex at 911 Parr Blvd. That



Current Reno Police Headquarters building at 455 E. 2nd Street, built in 1949 and first occupied in January 1950. Photo courtesy Jerry Fenwick.

left a lot of unused floor space, but there are numerous reasons why an abandoned jail facility can't easily be re-purposed into useable, efficient office space. Today the 2nd floor hosts a few small offices and storage areas, along with a gymnasium, but most of the old, yellow jail cells stand cold and vacant, reminders of a more noble past. In 2006, the new Mills B. Lane Justice Center at South Sierra and Court streets was completed and the city's municipal court moved into that building, allowing the police department to expand into the vacated court area. Several smaller modifications to the building have been made over the last several decades as well.

Today nearly 400 city employees (sworn and civilian) work out of this cramped, inefficient building that was designed for 100+ employees who commu-

nicated with Western Electric's Model 500 black rotary telephones. Change is overdue. In the last few years the city has looked at proposals for better alternatives to the present situation, but for now a fresh paint job and minor remodeling will have to suffice. Someday, though, we will all have to say goodbye to this unusual and once-proud fortress of justice. 



Contemporary Google Earth Pro image of 455 E. 2nd St., edited to include construction dates. Courtesy Kim Henrick.

Information for this article came from: Nevada Historical Society Manuscript Collection NC515 (city of Reno); Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; Request for Proposal (city of Reno online); Reno Police Department "Building History" article, online city of Reno website; 2nd Judicial District Court condemnation records; numerous local newspaper articles; interview with Jerry Fenwick (Contract Supply Guy at 455 E. 2nd Street, from 1976-1981); tour of headquarters building led by Commanders Shannon Wiecking (retired) and Oliver Miller.

Kim Henrick is a member of the HRPS Editorial Board and is a regular contributor to HRPS *FootPrints*.

HRPS Lifetime Members

Darleen Azizisefat
 Jacqueline Black
 Lynn Bremer
 Florence Ann Burgess
 Phyllis & Tom Cates
 Jan Chik
 Becky Czarnik
 Joan Dyer
 Betty Easton
 Ted & Francine Gray
 Melinda & Dan Gustin
 John & Susan Hancock
 Carol Haydis
 Sharon Honig-Bear
 Lee & Ivey Johnson
 Mike & Pat Kloss
 Laurence & Linda Kутten
 Katherine Latham
 Jan & Jim Loverin
 Jon & Linda Madsen
 Dr. Francine Mannix
 Charlotte & Dick McConnell
 Marilyn Melton
 Patricia & Wayne Melton
 Prudence Gould Muran
 Al & Nancy Pagni
 Butch & Susan Peachy
 Marshall & Pat Postman
 Jonnie Pullman
 Hannah Satca
 Michael & Karren Smith
 Robert Stoldal
 Tom & Leanne Stone
 Terry & Fran Terras
 Mike & Karen Traynor
 Charlotte Voitoff
 Sharon Walbridge
 Betty Watts
 Kathy Williams

HRPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The **Historic Reno Preservation Society (HRPS)** is “dedicated to preserving and promoting historic resources in the Truckee Meadows through education, advocacy and leadership.” In 1997, a small group of people interested in Reno’s history created HRPS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We have been an all-volunteer group ever since! As a HRPS member, you can learn about Reno’s history and make a difference in its future.

All Membership levels include the HRPS quarterly historical publication *FootPrints*; HRPS walking tours during the summer months; and education programs in the fall and winter.

You may pay by check, cash or credit card. When paying by credit card, please visit our website, www.historicreno.org. We use PayPal™ to process your payment. Don’t worry if you don’t have a PayPal™ account. They will accept your credit card on our behalf; we will send you a confirmation email with the information you provide.

Membership Levels:

- ☐ \$15.00 Student
- ☐ \$25.00 Individual
- ☐ \$45.00 Family
- ☐ \$100.00 Supporting
- ☐ \$200.00 Business
- ☐ \$250.00 Preservation Patron
- ☐ \$500.00 Benefactor
- ☐ \$1,000.00 Lifetime Member

☐ New Member ☐ Renewing

My Additional Donation:

\$ _____ Pat Klos Annual Volunteer Award Fund
 \$ _____ Neighborhood Preservation Grant Fund
 \$ _____ Overall Program Support

HRPS Quarterly *FootPrints* Preference (Please check one):

☐ Hard Copy ☐ Email Only

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (H) _____

E-Mail: _____

HRPS respects your right to privacy. We will **NOT** share your email address.

Please make your check payable to
Historic Reno Preservation Society
 and send with this form to:

HRPS
 P.O. Box 14003
 Reno, NV 89507

☐ **YES, I want to get involved.**
 Please contact me by:

☐ Phone ☐ Email
 regarding volunteer opportunities.

RV 12.11.2015/FO-DDC



P.O. Box 14003
Reno, NV 89507

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RENO NV
PERMIT NO. 20

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Bulk Rate Mail

Bulk Rate mail is not forwarded. **FootPrints** is mailed using a Bulk Rate Mail permit. If your address changes, please notify us at HRPS, P. O. Box 14003, Reno NV 89507, with your address change, to keep **FootPrints** coming.



Scan me with your
smartphone and I'll
take you directly to
the HRPS website

Thanks to the following
HRPS Business Members
who are supporting the
works of HRPS

Robert H. Broili Law Office
Gilbert Properties
Harold & Alice Jacobsen
Bert Pincolini
Law Office of Tammy M. Riggs, PLLC

Winter/Spring Program information is on page 11

John Adams (1735-1826): "I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain." (from *Letter to Abigail Adams [May 12, 1780]*)

Opinions expressed in *FootPrints* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial staff, the Historic Reno Preservation Society executive board or the general membership. *FootPrints* is a quarterly publication printed in Reno, Nevada. Articles may be reprinted in print or electronic formats only with permission of the HRPS Editorial Board. All rights reserved. ©2016 Historic Reno Preservation Society (HRPS)

HRPS Officers

President: Byllie Andrews
Vice President: John Farrow
Secretary: Gene Williams
Treasurer: Roger Steining
Past President: Sharon Honig-Bear

Board of Directors

Garrett Barmore, Eric Broili, ZoAnn Campana,
Betty Dodson, Charlotte Eckmeyer,
Constance Hanson, Mylan Hawkins,
SherylN Hayes-Zorn, Laurie Leonard,
Kimberly Roberts

Administrator & Publicity

Cindy Ainsworth 747-0340

Program

Steve Davis, srdavis1941@gmail.com,
747-4478

Membership Director

JoAnn Newbury

Walking Tours

Betty Dodson

Webmaster

Rosie Cevalco

FootPrints Managing Editor

Carol Coleman

Editorial Staff

Joyce Cox, Kim Henrick
Debbie Hinman 322-9400

Editor Emeritus & FootPrints Founder

Sharon A. Walbridge

Graphic Design:

Double Click Design • dcdreno.com