

# Historic Reno PRESERVATION SOCIETY

# Newsletter

*Dedicated to Preserving Reno's Rich Past with  
Education, Advocacy, and Leadership.*

JANUARY 1999

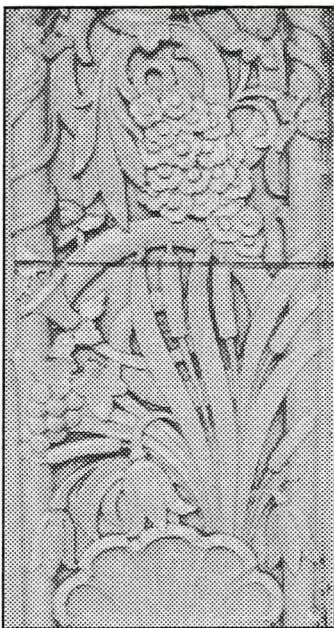
VOL. 2, NO. 1

## ARCHES & COLUMNS

BY PAT FERRARO KLOS - PRESIDENT

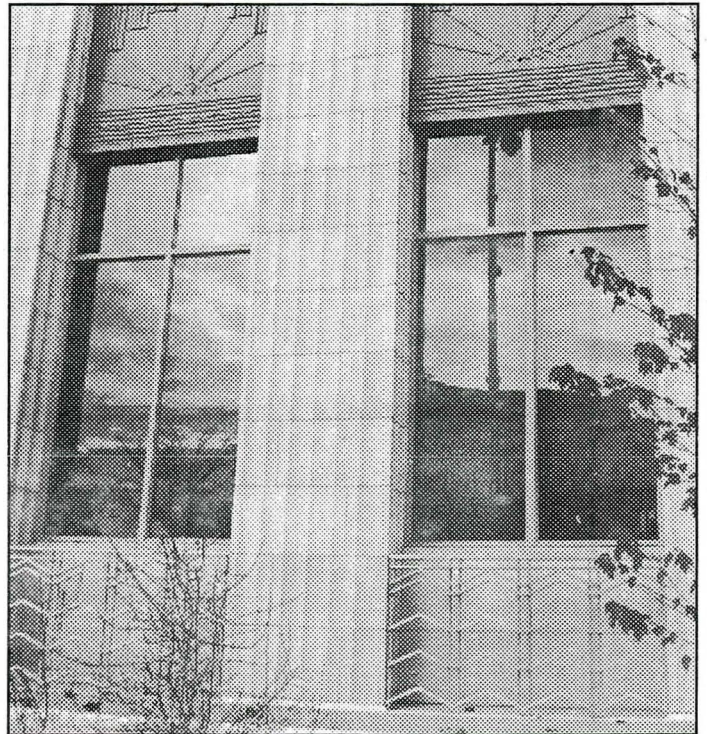
### Reno's Art Deco

By saving the Mapes Hotel, Reno has preserved its largest Art Deco structure. However, the Mapes is by no means our only example of Art Deco. The term Art Deco came into common usage in the 1960's when the style had a resurgence of popularity. The term's origins are from L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes, an exhibition held in Paris in 1925 and the style was popular from 1910 to 1940 with a concentration from 1920 to 1930.



Art Deco is characterized by highly stylized natural and geometric forms (see the terra-cotta detail on the El Cortez Hotel) and strongly symmetrical verticality (see the Veterans' Hospital on Locust Street). Seldom did Art Deco or its companion Streamline Moderne occur in private residences. These were new trends in public buildings such as hotels, hospitals, courthouses, schools, and public works facilities like Hoover Dam in Clark County. Art Deco has been called flapper design: vertical, angular, severe, stylized.

Surfaces were smooth (the existing original front wall of Saint Mary's Hospital) and often had rounded corners (the Mapes). Sometimes Art Deco has been called zigzag design and incorporated Native American motifs which were easily produced with the new metal, aluminum, (downtown Reno post office). Reno can boast many buildings or elements of



buildings (entrance to old Southside School on Liberty Street) which are reminiscent of the style even if they don't adhere to all of the design elements (Harker and Harker Construction on West Fourth Street).

Reno's Art Deco holding may not compare to the Chrysler Building or San Francisco's Coit Tower or the Miami Beach Art Deco Historic District, but they do connect with the movement and exemplify the rich architectural heritage of our city.

### PHOTOS

Above: Downtown Post Office zig zag design in aluminum  
Left: El Cortez Hotel terra-cotta detail

*Photos courtesy of Pat Klos*



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

*Regular meetings of HRPS are the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 at Mt. Rose Elementary School, 915 Lander St., Reno. Other dates and locations as noted.*

### **January 27, 1999**

Vicki Ford, representing the Oral History Program at the University of Nevada-Reno, will talk about this highly successful program and how she got involved in it. Ms. Ford has completed over 40 oral history interviews, including 22 oral histories on mining at Silver Peak. She recently completed the oral history of Jean Ford, former state legislator and co-founder of the Nevada Women's History Project. Want to start on your own oral history? Here's your chance to get some good pointers from a pro.

### **Saturday, February 20**

#### **WALKING TOUR LEADER TRAINING WORKSHOP**

Learn how to share your favorite area of Reno with others and help HRPS continue to build community interest and support for preservation in our historic neighborhoods. Join us at the National Auto Museum from 9:30 am to 12 noon to hear about quoins, dentils, gambrels and more. Learn more about the history of architecture in America and in Reno. Please call Leanne Stone: days 784-6837 or evenings 322-1638.

### **February 24**

Mella Rothwell Harmon, Historic Preservation Specialist for the State of Nevada, will explain the differences between city, state and national registries of historic places and the process of nomination for each. She will also update us on the most recent listings.

### **March 24**

Kelly Dixon, Saloon Architecture and Archeology of the Comstock. Ms. Dixon, who wears many hats, is the Inspector/Clerk, Comstock Historic District Commission and Administrator/Archaeologist, Comstock Archaeology Center. For the past two years, she has been working on the archaeological dig at Piper's Corner Bar in Virginia City. This is sure to be fun!

### **April 28**

JoAnne Skelly, Nevada Cooperative Extension, UNR, is back by popular demand. This time Ms. Skelly will tell us how to wake up our gardens for the spring and summer season.

### **May**

Start of our evening walking tours. Stay tuned for details.

## NEWS AND VIEWS YOU CAN USE

### **70th Anniversary of Reno/Tahoe International Airport**

Make sure you take a look at the new Look to the Skies Exhibit next time you are at the airport. More than 100 photos and artifacts are used to trace 70 years of the airport's history from Blanchfield Airpor, the present location of the Washoe County Golf Course, to Hubbard Field to today's modern facilities. The exhibit is located upstairs in the concourse. Details: call Cindy Ainsworth at 747-0340.

### **Reno Metallica**

Who of us has not noticed the light fixtures on the Virginia Street Bridge or the Pioneer Statue in front of the theater of the same name? Have you ever driven down Nixon Avenue and wondered about the Newlands Manor metal signage? Reno is loaded with "Art in Public Places" formed from metal. HRPS and McQueen High School photography classes are currently collaborating on a project to capture these "metallicas." To date, 25 sites have been identified, but many more are out there, some in public places and some in residential places. If there is something you feel should be photographed, drop a line to Carol Quinn, McQueen Art Department, 6055 Lancer Street, Reno 89520. Ultimately, these photographs will be available either in an article or a public display, so please help us capture the treasures of Reno.

### **Exempt Firemans' Cemetery Tour**

Saturday, September 26, turned out to be a cold blustery day on the Comstock. Nevertheless, our hardy bunch grew from 8 to 13 when a group of Illinois tourists decided to join our HRPS tour. They were in for a treat. Steve Frady, Nevada Division of Forestry Fire Suppression Enforcement Specialist, is a great story teller who has done extensive research on the firemen buried at the Virginia City cemetery. Not all the stories are sad or tragic as Steve always includes a few humorous tales about the cemetery's "occupants."

The Firemens' Cemetery was established in 1863 and is part of Virginia City's large Silver Terrace Cemetery. Some 150 Comstock firefighters are buried here. Former Virginia City volunteer firefighters formed the Virginia Exempt Firemens' Association in the late 1870's after the paid fire department was established in 1877. The Exempts organized the first firemen's museum and provided services and a plot in the Firemens' Cemetery for volunteers.

Mr. Frady has offered to do another tour of the cemetery along with the Nevada State Fire and Comstock Firemens' Museum. Perhaps we can make a day of it and add a tour of the Fourth Ward School. Interested? Call Cindy at 747-0340.



# The 52nd National Preservation Conference

BY SCOTT GIBSON

The 52nd National Preservation Conference was held October 20th-25th in Savannah, Georgia. The National Trust for Historic Preservation titled this conference: "The Art and Economics of Preservation."

One of our country's most historic and beautiful cities, Savannah was the perfect setting for a Preservation Conference. It offered the opportunity to focus on the interplay of historic preservation and the arts in revitalizing older communities, neighborhoods and landmarks.

Savannah's National Historic District includes the 2.2 square mile area developed from 1733 to 1856, according to the plan of General James Edward Oglethorpe, founder of England's 13th colony in America. A highly developed urban center with European flavor, it includes mixed uses ranging from commercial, cultural and educational to governmental, religious and residential. It is a laboratory for city planning. Savannah's City Plan, Public Spaces and Monuments was one of two nominations by the U.S. Department of Interior in 1994 to UNESCO's World Heritage List.

A comment about American cities has always been that one can tell at a glance when a city does not contain an architecture school. Savannah has a young, but substantial architecture school called The Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). Since its founding in 1979, SCAD has been a

major factor in the revitalization of the National Historic District. The college is responsible for restoring 46 buildings. The interweaving of the college campus within residential and business districts has updated city founder Oglethorpe's original plan of wards or neighborhoods centered around common green spaces. The city's lush squares serve as outdoor living rooms for residents, meeting spaces for business people, and inspiration for artists.

More than 70 educational sessions as well as 30 field sessions gave effective strategies on how to make older neighborhoods more viable, including market rate and affordable housing; revitalizing older downtown areas and commercial districts; heritage tourism; preserving countrysides' and farm buildings; achieving favorable public policies; managing historic districts and landmarks; exploring the benefits of new technologies; and developing effective community and statewide preservation organizations. While the conference highlighted the value of design and preservation for residents and visitors alike, it also emphasized the necessity of equity for people of all incomes and races within the process.

The 53rd Nations Preservation Conference for 1999 is scheduled for October 19th - 24th in Washington D.C. For information about this conference you can contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation at (202) 673-4296, or write, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington D.C., 20036.



## Membership Application

- ☐ **Yes**, I want to become a member of the Historic Reno Preservation Society. Annual membership includes:

- HRPS newsletter
- Walking Tour brochure
- Free participation in walking tours

- ☐ Student .....\$8.00  
☐ Individual .....\$10.00  
☐ Family (children 18 and under) ...\$15.00  
☐ Supporting .....\$100.00  
☐ Additional Donation.....\$\_\_\_\_\_

Please detach and return to: **Historic Reno Preservation Society, P.O. Box 33444, Reno NV 89533**

*Please make checks payable to:*  
**Historic Reno Preservation Society**

- ☐ New Member  
☐ Renewal

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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Best time to call \_\_\_\_\_



## Meet Gaye Canepa— President of the Reno/Sparks Business Corridor Association (Fourth Street)

BY SHARON WALBRIDGE - EDITOR

Gaye Canepa is originally from Ely, Nevada and has lived in Reno for 32 years. She is both a licensed auto mechanic and a paralegal. She and her husband Fred, a third generation Renoite, own and operate Fred's Auto Repair located within the corridor at 6th Street and Valley Road.

Anyone who has driven east on Fourth Street knows that over the years this once vital business, industrial and residential district, has seriously deteriorated. Sadly, it appears to have been abandoned by land owners and government alike. So our community is fortunate to have people like Gaye and Fred who have been in the same location for 24 years and remember the better times.

The crime rate was low and the street bustled with activity as neighbors visited one another or frequented the small businesses in the area. In 1997, in remembrance of that brighter era, Gaye rallied other business owners to fight deterioration and re-establish the neighborhood and community spirit.

One of the first hurdles the group encountered was zoning that has not changed since 1930. Variances have been granted through Special Use Permits, an expensive and time-consuming process, but the area as a whole is in a '30's time warp. Gaye feels this has led to three consequences for the area: 1. There are eleven host services for the homeless with-

in the corridor. 2. Non-profit service centers cause the property to come off of the tax rolls and, consequently, reduces the tax base. 3. Reduction in the tax base increased the difficulty in obtaining financing, either through investment capital or improvement grants. Without financing, change will be difficult.

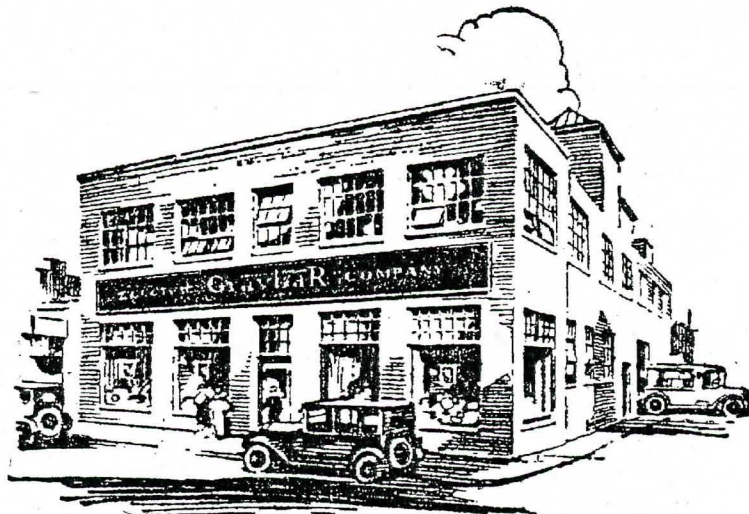
On the positive side, the Reno/Sparks Business Corridor Association has been able to attract allies and a \$200,000 block grant from the city for street trees and lighting. Once Fourth Street is resurfaced next spring and summer the community will begin to see the tangible results of many, many hours of planning.

However, this is not a story about Fourth Street, but a story about someone who characterized herself as "brassy," someone who has had enough, someone who took the challenge and sacrificed both time and money. It is a story of a leader reshaping the future of Reno.



**Gaye Canepa**

President of Reno/Sparks Business Corridor Association, speaking at a recent HRPS function at Louis' Basque Corner about efforts to save the business corridor.





Left to right:  
Board Members

Nancy Holmes  
Pat Klos-President  
Cindy Ainsworth



Left to right:

Terry & Fran Ferras  
Leann & Tom Stone

## HRPS

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Pat Ferraro Klos

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### Membership Director

Ginger Salcedo

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evenings & weekends  
at 324-6913.

## Welcome New Members

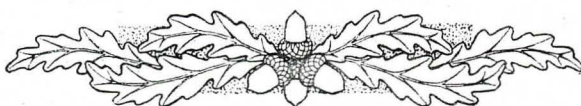
Carrol Crowder Baird  
Jane Bowden  
Sue Broderdorf  
Fred Canepa  
Gaye Canepa  
Suzette Dietel  
Don Fowler  
Kay Gadda Frankfurt  
Phyllis Gabb  
Dorothy H. Huffey  
Dr. Robert O. Johns  
Red Kittell  
Janice Oberding  
Mary G. Olds  
Robert Shoemaker  
Anne Simone  
Donand Simone  
Tracy Soliday  
Thomas E. Swart  
Robert Wexler  
Glee Willis

## GREAT FUN at LOUIS' BASQUE CORNER

On November 18th about 60 people gathered for palaver, libations and dinner at Louis' Basque Corner. It was a happy group that took over this historic spot within the Fourth Street Corridor, and I know we look forward to more such festive occasions.

Gaye Canepa, dynamic President of the Reno-Sparks Corridor Business Association, enlightened our group as to the efforts to save this interesting and important time capsule, the business district. Architects renderings gave us a glimpse of what could be. With Gaye at the helm most likely what could be will be.

Perhaps you have seen RSCVA's full page advertising and educational features in the Gazette-Journal. Take a drive down Fourth Street and keep an eye out for some venerable Reno spots. Better yet, give these people your business.





## Mapes Update

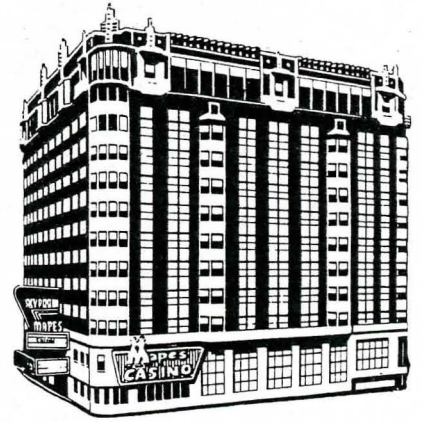
BY SCOTT GIBSON

The city has begun asbestos removal on the Mapes Hotel. This is a process which must take place for either rehabilitation or tear down, but it is a sign something is happening.

The City Council in late November gave QM Resorts permission to begin marketing the Mapes' time share apartments. This is a positive demonstration of the confidence the Council has in the success of the time share concept in saving the Mapes. QM reportedly has some very special deals that may make owning a piece of the Mapes appealing to locals as well as visitors. So, if you don't have a piece of Reno history, you just might want to get one.

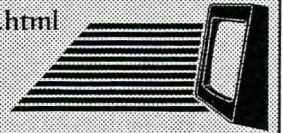
On a less optimistic note, the lawsuit brought against the City by Truckee River Restorations for not buying into their time share plan could potentially create delays and threaten the whole project. Let's hope this lawsuit is settled quickly. Time is critical for all the developers involved.

Truckee River Restoration are the same people who announced they were going to save the Holiday Hotel Casino and turn it into time shares and then failed to come up with the required earnest money.



### PRESERVATION INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

[www.adsw.org/resource/websites.html](http://www.adsw.org/resource/websites.html)  
[www.deco-echoes.com](http://www.deco-echoes.com)  
[www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org)  
[www.mapes.com](http://www.mapes.com)



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