

Historic Reno PRESERVATION SOCIETY

FootPrints

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

SPRING 2003

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 6, NO. 2

A Fleischmann Planetarium Update

In mid-December, 2002, the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) announced that due to burgeoning student population, it was deemed necessary to move forward on the master plan and raze the Fleischmann Planetarium by the summer of 2003 in order to utilize the land for a parking garage and comply with settlement terms of a lawsuit.

The ensuing public outcry resulted in university officials announcing a change of plans. On January 26, 2003, The Reno Gazette-Journal noted in an editorial, "In the end, officials at the University of Nevada, Reno, did the right thing when they gave the Fleischmann Planetarium time to find a new home and promised to protect the building, even after the projectors and astronomical displays have gone elsewhere."

On January 29, 2003, HRPS sponsored a meeting to discuss options and alternative uses for the Planetarium building should the programs relocate to another location. The meeting included representation from HRPS, the State Historic Preservation Office, City of Reno Historic Resources Commission, RSCVA, the statewide organization "Preserve Nevada", distinguished scholars, and representatives of the Planetarium. This was a gathering of people knowledgeable in the processes involved in adaptive re-use of historic buildings as well as in ways to secure necessary funding. Subsequent to this meeting, in an email

to Provost Frederick, HRPS President Kathy Wishart offered university officials the expertise available from this committee.

In declining to accept President Wishart's offer, Provost Frederick replied: "(1) The university has NO plans at this time to demolish the planetarium building. We are working

we cannot anticipate what our most pressing space needs will be at the time the structure is vacated. Any planning for the future use of the structure must take those needs into account."


On February 24, 2003, the university announced: "Two local groups and the University of Nevada, Reno have joined forces to help UNR's Fleischmann

Planetarium become the foundation for a new science and technology museum in Northern Nevada. University officials and representatives of the Friends of the Fleischmann Planetarium and Science Center (FPSC) Advisory Board and the Great Basin Exploration Center (GBEC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to work together toward a common set of goals. The MOU requires the group to develop a transition plan by June 30 and have it approved by both parties by August 31. The implementation of that plan would require approval by the Nevada Board of Regents."



*Fleischmann Planetarium on UNR Campus.
Photo courtesy of www.nevadamax.com*

with architects right now to meet our enrollment growth and central campus access needs in ways that do not threaten the structure or its surrounding gardens. (2) It will continue to function as a planetarium for at least two years and possibly longer as we work to create a better home for the planetarium operations. Because this time frame is indefinite, we are reluctant to commit to a specific future use of the structure right now because

We are sure that HRPS members and the community are delighted to learn of the plans for the Great Basin Exploration Center, and we thank those involved for their efforts. But let's not forget the goal of the committee assembled by HRPS, which is the adaptive re-use of this landmark structure. HRPS intends to publicize developments regarding the Fleischmann Planetarium building as they progress. 

The Old Riverside District • North Side of the Truckee

The Neighborhood on the North Side of the Truckee

Walk the bike path along the north side of the Truckee River from McKinley Arts & Culture Center to St. Thomas Aquinas. You are walking the old Riverside District, part of Powning's Addition whose history dates back to 1890. Christopher Columbus Powning filed a subdivision map creating residential parcels on about twenty-five urban blocks in 1887 and revised it in 1890. The Powning Addition ran between the north bank of the Truckee and the railroad, and between Keystone and Chestnut (now Arlington).

Unlike earlier subdivisions, the Powning Addition was marketed widely and sales of the lots were brisk. Powning, an ex-state senator from Washoe County and the owner/editor of the Nevada State Journal, promoted land sales by bringing in prospective buyers on excursion trains from Virginia City and other locations.

One of the great town boosters of Reno, Powning donated land for McKinley Park School and for Powning Park located across from the courthouse. Powning also led the fight for public construction of sidewalks, street lighting, enhanced fire protection and other civic improvements and was responsible for construction of several important



McKinley Arts & Culture Center

commercial structures such as the Odd Fellows Building (later the Washoe County Bank Building), the Powning Building on Virginia Street and the Bank of Nevada Building.

Some parcels near the river were sold before 1900, but development of the Riverside Drive area into a residential neighborhood followed the sale of lots between Vine and Winters between 1904 and 1906, reconstruction of Riverside Drive in 1908, and establishment of McKinley Park School in 1909. These factors were key to the development of what became known as the Riverside District.



Riverside Drive, the Bike Path.
Photo Courtesy of www.nevadamax.com

The area particularly developed during the early 20th century as Reno experienced the influx of new wealth from the Northern Nevada mining booms and with the development of a newly created irrigated agricultural district (Newlands Project) near the city. Reno benefited from being the region's transportation and commercial hub. In addition to being associated with the early 20th century residential development in Reno, some residences in the general area of Riverside Drive west of downtown also housed individuals seeing quick divorces during the 1930s when the city was nationally recognized for its divorce trade.



St. Thomas Aquinas
Photo Courtesy of www.nevadamax.com

Examples of houses from the early period of Powning's Addition include the pair of houses at the end of Jones Street adjacent to Riverside Drive. These one to two story houses at 629 and 641 (see story on page 3) Jones Street reflect the type of residential development that occurred in many of Reno's subdivisions. The area continued to be dominated by working class and moderately sized residential development into the 1920s and 1930s. A few larger more stylistically prominent houses were built along Riverside Drive in the late 1920s. Examples are the Colonial Revival houses at 1029 and 615 Riverside Drive (see page 4), built in 1926 and 1929 respectively.

Although apartments, commercial buildings, and other modern intrusions have changed the character of the Riverside district, older houses are still scattered throughout the neighborhood. Riverside Drive reflects the wide variety of residential structures erected by individual lot owners during the first four decades of the 20th century.

Thanks to the State Historic Preservation Office for providing FootPrints information about the Old Riverside District.

The Old Riverside District (continued)



641 Jones

Built circa 1910, the Queen Anne house at 641 Jones is located at the northeast corner of Washington and Jones Street and faces the park with a view of the Truckee River. This is one of the homes in the area that has retained its historical integrity, as there has been minimum remodeling to change its original appearance. It retains its historic appearance and Queen Anne Style. This Queen Anne is similar to many in the Powning's Addition that were built between 1905 and 1910, such as the residences at 3 and 47 Washington Street and 629 Jones next door. A common Queen Anne pattern, there are many examples of this style of home throughout Reno. Only popular for a short time from 1890 to the 1910s, Queen Anne designs popularity spread through pattern books and early architectural magazines. The railroad also helped to increase the popularity of this style by making pre-cut architectural details easily available throughout the country.


3 Washington Street

The two story Queen Anne at 3 Washington Street was built about 1908, joining many other moderately-sized middle class houses that had been built in the area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The house sits on a large corner lot at Riverside and Washington, and faces Washington Street with an unobstructed view of the Truckee River. The house was built, owned, and lived in by the Bragg family in some combination until the 1960s. Several of the residences in the Riverside Drive area housed individuals seeking quick divorces in the 1920s and 1930s. 3 Washington Street appears to have been a residence for such individuals. It accommodated other tenants as well, having been converted into a family home with rooms for rent as early as 1910 and served as apartments or a boarding house until 1932. At that time the Bragg daughter moved back in and the home returned to a single-family residence. The property currently is an office building.



629 Jones

This Queen Anne style home at 629 Jones Street, built in 1904, is representative of the types of middle-class homes that were erected during the early build-out of the Powning Addition along Riverside Drive. William Cann, a pioneer druggist and photographer of western Nevada, built this house and it has remained in the Cann family since its construction. Today his grandson Elliot Cann, Jr. still owns the house.

These houses are relatively modest in scale and style compared with the mansions built on the bluffs on the south side of the river on Court Street and California Avenue. This neighborhood was characterized by a mixture of working and middle class residences. There is some clustering of larger and more impressive architectural elements located along Riverside Drive where the tree-lined Riverside Drive and Truckee River vistas create a pleasing residential environment. 



One Sound State

by Mella Rothwell Harmon

Taxes are a hot topic at the state legislative session this year. No one likes the idea of higher taxes. Don't we wish we could go back to the mid-1930s (yes folks, the Great Depression), when Governor Kirman reported: "The State of Nevada has a treasury surplus of more than \$3,000,000, has no bonded debt outside the state, has never defaulted on a bond issue, and the state tax rate has declined over a period of years"? At the time, the state could boast no income tax, no inheritance tax, no tax on intangibles, no sales tax, and – no need to levy such taxes!

How did we do it, especially during the Depression? For one thing, Nevada was willing to embrace industries that other states rejected, such as legalized prostitution, gambling, and quick-and-easy marriages and divorces. During the 1930s, the divorce trade contributed around \$5,000,000 to the state's economy. Then, someone, possibly Norman Biltz, had the brilliant idea to promote Nevada's beneficial tax situation to the wealthy (some of whom were already here awaiting a divorce), who in their home states paid exorbitant taxes of various types. Nevada could be a haven for the tax-burdened. They would come here and spend all the money they would save in taxes. Come and spend they did, and behind they left mansions.

The governor, the state legislature, and Nevada businessmen embraced the plan. In 1936, First National


Bank in Reno and the Nevada State Journal published an informational booklet entitled: One Sound State, which presented all of the benefits of moving one's domicile to Nevada. In the words of Christian Arthur Wellesley, Fourth Lord Cowley, "Why do I like Nevada, and why did I choose Washoe valley for my permanent home? For years I had been seeking a place to live, where the climate is reasonable, the taxes reasonable and the people reasonable. I found all three in Nevada." In glowing terms, Lord

Nevada as the wealthiest state per capita in the nation – with "twice the buying power" of other states. In support of this glowing assessment are statistics like: "44% of Reno housewives have electricity in their homes." Imagine!

The majority of the wealthy who took advantage of One Sound State settled in northern Nevada, including Douglas County, Reno, and Lake Tahoe. The names – and lavish homes – of these people are familiar to most of us. Here are a few you

will recognize: Max Fleischmann, Billy Burke (stage and screen star), Dr. Raphael Norman (who engaged Paul Revere Williams to design his ranch house at Rancho San Rafael), Lora J. Knight (of Vikingsholm fame), Mrs. Luella Garvey (another one of Paul Williams's clients), Arthur Bourne (of the Singer Sewing Machine Company), the aforementioned Lord Cowley, and undoubtedly the most colorful of all, George Whittell.

From exquisite architecture to

philanthropy, the participants in the One Sound State Program left their mark on our historic landscape – a legacy far greater than the dollars they saved in taxes. 



Lora J. Knight House, 615 Riverside Dr.

The house was built in 1929 for Lora J. Knight, a wealthy philanthropist, who owned several residential properties and resided seasonally in this house until her death in 1945. She is best known for building Vikingsholm, a Scandinavian mansion in Emerald Bay.

Cowley extols the merits of living in Nevada. The booklet shows a photograph of Lord Cowley's manorial home "at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, near Reno."

Listed among the Nevada virtues, besides tax advantages, were the university, the great outdoors, corporate advantages, Boulder Dam, sunshine and clean air, laws favoring mining, a state free of radicals ("Nevada has no reds, and no reason for them"), with transportation, uniform laws, and homes and culture. One Sound State identified

Mella Harmon is a historic preservation specialist with the State Historic Preservation Office, the current chairman of the Reno Historical Resources Commission, and a HRPS Member. Ms. Harmon holds a Master's Degree in land use planning and historic preservation from the University of Nevada, Reno.

The Story Behind The Lear Theatre

by Sharon Adler Walbridge

As Mella Harmon has pointed out in her article, "One Sound State," the divorce laws of the 1930s brought many to our state. Not only were dollars contributed to the state's economy, the contribution of "human capital" turned out to be worth far more than material gain.

Evidence of this can be seen in many structures throughout our community. Of particular interest for this article are the Luella Garvey home at 589 California Avenue and the former First Church of Christ, Scientist, now The Lear Theater, at 501 Riverside Drive. Most of us have walked or driven past the Lear Theater. But do we know the story of how that "lovely lady" on the river, the former First Church of Christ, Scientist became the Lear Theater? It's a bit of a tale, and we need a little background to understand it.

The new divorce laws went into effect May 1, 1931, and drew Luella Garvey to Reno. She obtained her divorce, she stayed, and she put her imprint upon the city. Fortunately for her, and for Reno, Mrs. Garvey was not without funds. In 1933 she brought famous Los Angeles area architect Paul Revere Williams, one of America's first African-American architects, to Reno to design her duplex home on the northeast corner of California Avenue and Nixon Street. This elegant dwelling reflects French architectural influences, including balconies with ornamental railings and Regency-style windows with iron grills. While considerably smaller, it held its own with the mansions stretching along the bluff overlooking the Truckee River.

Perhaps it was her proximity to the wealth and power collected along the bluff, (the writer's speculation only, not historically verifiable) which led Mrs. Garvey to want to contribute to the

construction of a church in downtown Reno. Reputedly, one local denomination turned down her offer. Fortunately for the community, another congregation accepted, and that one was the First Church of Christ, Scientist.

Turn back the clock to the early part of the 20th Century to 1906, where four people gathered in a private home for worship. This was the start of Christian Science in Reno. By the 1930's the congregation had a church and reading room at 210 Granite Street (now Sierra Street), but the membership was growing and the group was ready for a larger church.



*The Lear Theater, 501 Riverside Dr.
Photo courtesy of www.nevadamax.com*

The congregation purchased the parcel at 501 Riverside Drive and prepared to build their new church.


Through Mrs. Garvey, Paul Williams was approached in 1938 for the job of designing the new church. Thus it was the renown architect, Paul Revere Williams, who created this distinctive Neoclassical Revival church on a triangular, one-half acre parcel that once housed the Odd Fellows Royal D. Harting Home for Orphans and Foundlings. The church was completed in 1939 and held services until 1998.

In 1998 the structure was purchased by The Theater Coalition for conversion to a mixed-use theater, conference and entertainment facility. The Theater Coalition is an umbrella cultural organization that provides information services and programs primarily for the theater arts and owns and operates the Lear Theater.

The Lear Theater is undergoing renovation. The Lear will house four performance arenas: a main auditorium, a children's theater/rehearsal and seminar area, a studio theater and an outdoor plaza. With money offered by Moya Lear and funds raised or donated

by the community, considerable improvements must be made in order to bring the building up to code to house large audiences. The renovation will preserve the outstanding aesthetic contributions made by architect Paul R. Williams.

This gracious building has been a gem in our community for sixty-four years. In 1999, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. What a great feeling it is to know that it will become another showcase example of adaptive re-use along our historic river corridor – joining the city's

McKinley Arts and Culture Center to the west and the Riverside Artist Lofts to the east. What a great feeling it is to know it will not be dumped in the landfill at Lockwood. 

Editor's Note: The Theater Coalition continues necessary fundraising efforts in order to make this important new asset available to the community. To help, with your time or your money or both, please contact them at 786-2278. Honor the past, Believe in the future.

The Streetwalkers Active Again in the City of Trembling Leaves

by Pat Ferraro Klos, HRPS Tours Chair

Twice in January HRPS was acknowledged for what it has done with walking tours for our city: first in the "City of Reno's Hidden Treasures" calendar for 2003 (see April) and then on the editorial page in the RGJ of January 26. These acknowledgements are well deserved, and now we have even more to offer.


A partnership with HRPS and the Washoe County Friends of the Library resulted in an Arts and Culture Project Grant for \$4,094.10 to fund "Literary Reno: Writers and Places," four Artown tours on July 12 and 13. Mark your calendars for this joint effort which begins at the Riverside Artist Lofts with Mella Harmon portraying Clare Booth Luce who stayed at the Riverside Hotel in 1929 while getting a divorce. Luce's stay resulted in the the play "The Women." From there the tour will head to Phil Zubillaga's Santa Fe Hotel and Restaurant where Marcelino Ugalde will read from the works of Robert Laxalt and Dick Belaustegui will talk about Basque Hotels. The tour groups will head up Lake and Center Streets to Joanne de Longchamps' house at 821 No. Center Street.

Michelle Basta will read de Longchamps poetry and talk about her life. The last stop will be the Walter Van Tilburg Clark room in Morrill Hall where former Nevada Congressman Jim Santini, Clark's nephew, will share passages from The City of Trembling Leaves.

The "Literary Reno: Writers and Places" tours are in four parts: a 9:00 am walk on Saturday and Sunday followed each day by an 11:00am minibus tour for people who cannot walk that distance. The tours are free, but participation is limited to 40 persons per tour. Reservations will be necessary, and arrangements will be announced at a later date. No pets and no children under 12 years. This walk will also be offered later in the fall as a fundraiser, but arrangements have not been finalized.

At the request of the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority, HRPS has trained 11 members to do spousal tours for conventions. Training sessions took place at R&R Partners on Riverside Dr. in January and February. These new HRPS/RSCVA

tour guides are Cindy Ainsworth, Lynn Allen, Carolyn Bartlett, Patty Cafferata, Susie Carter, Joan Collins, Joan Dyer, Debbie Hinman, Marilyn King, Ed Wishart, and Kathy Wishart. The new "Arts and Culture Corridor Tour" was designed by tours chair Pat Ferraro Klos, who conducted the training. The tour includes "Little Italy," a visit inside St. Thomas Aquinas Cathedral, and the various art installations in the Arts and Culture Corridor.

Once again HRPS will offer a full menu of historic neighborhood walking and bicycling tours during both National Historic Preservation Week and Artown, complete with two new tours which are free to HRPS members and \$5.00 for non-members. This year Historic Preservation Week is from Sunday, May 11 through Sunday, May 18. All of these tours are listed in FootPrints and will be advertised in local newspapers. 

Pat Klos, HRPS Board member, is founder and Past President of HRPS and is retired from Washoe County School District.

Special HRPS Preservation Week Screening of the 1946 Movie "Margie"

by Cindy Ainsworth


Grab a bag of popcorn and join HRPS as we present the biggest little showing of the movie "Margie" (1946, Technicolor) on Monday, May 12, 2003. This event will kick off Preservation Week and is a joint venture with the Great Basin Film Society and HRPS.

Filmed in and around Reno and the University campus, the city looks wonderful in this charming Technicolor movie. Jeanne Crain stars as a 1920s schoolgirl with a crush on her handsome French teacher. This will be an exclusive

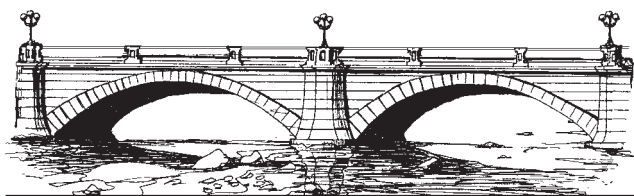
showing since the film is not available on home video. Introducing the film will be Gary DuVal, author of "Nevada Filmography: Nearly 600 Works Made in the State, 1897 Through 2000." And this will be a double feature! As a bonus we will be showing "Charlie Chan in Reno" (1939, B&W).

The fun begins at 7:00 p.m. at the Sands Regency Just for Laughs Comedy Club. Doors open at 6:30. A no-host bar will be open during the event. Cost is \$8.00. Seating is limited so please call Cindy at 747-0340 for reservations.

HRPS would like to thank the Great Basin Film Society and the Sands Regency for co-sponsoring this event.

And now for some movie trivia. Margie isn't set in Reno, but it was filmed here. "Charlie Chan in Reno" is set in Reno, but was filmed on the Fox studio lot. 

Cindy Ainsworth, HRPS Board member and Past President of HRPS.



Historic Reno PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Spring – Summer 2003 Walking & Biking Tours

Historic Preservation Week Tours June Tours Artown Tours

HRPS • P.O. Box 33444 • Reno, NV 89533

Once again HRPS will offer a full menu of historic neighborhood walking and bicycling tours during both National Historic Preservation Week and Artown, complete with two new tours which are free to HRPS members and \$5.00 for non-members. This year Historic Preservation Week is from Sunday, May 11 through Sunday, May 18. All of these tours are listed in FootPrints and will be advertised in local newspapers.

The “Literary Reno: Writers and Places” tours are in four parts: a 9:00 am walk on Saturday and Sunday followed each day by an 11:00 minibus tour for people who cannot walk that distance. The tours are free, but participation is limited to 40 persons per tour. Reservations will be necessary, and arrangements will be announced at a later date. No pets and no children under 12 years.

HRPS members are free; \$5.00 for non-members, No pets; bring drinking water; restrooms limited

Historic Preservation Week Tours, Sunday, May 11 through Sunday, May 18

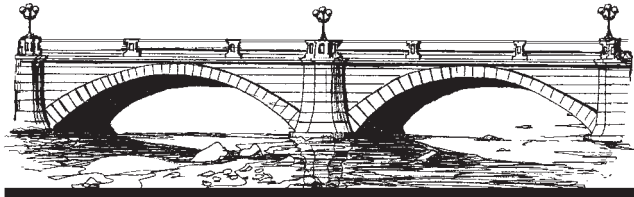
Tuesday, May 13 4:00 pm	The Wells Avenue Neighborhood Meets outside Southside School, Liberty & Sinclair Sts	Tour Guide: Mark Taxer, 826-7070
Thursday, May 15 4:00 pm	Newlands Heights: the Bungalows Meets outside 557 California Avenue	Tour Guide: Scott Gibson, 322-6406
Saturday, May 17 10:00 am	The Arts and Culture Corridor Tour Meets outside Dreamer's at Riverside Artist Lofts	Tour Guides: Susie Carter, 787-3170 Marilyn King, 324-1194
Sunday, May 18 10:00 am	The Bike Tour: Ride Through Old Reno Meets outside 557 California Avenue	Tour Guide: Glee Willis, 323-0696

June Tours

Saturday, June 14 10:00 am	Historic Truckee River Corridor Meets McKinley Arts and Culture Center, Riverside Drive	Tour Guide: Joan Collins, 329-0394
Saturday, June 21 10:00 am	Bricks and Stones Meets outside My Favorite Muffin, 340 California Ave.	Tour Guide: Tracy Soliday, 348-7937

Artown Tours, Tuesday, July 1 through Tuesday, July 29

Tuesday, July 1 6:30 pm	The Arts and Culture Corridor Tour Meets outside Dreamers, Riverside Artist Lofts	Tour Guide: Pat Klos, 348-8594
Saturday, July 5 9:00 am	Just for Kids, ages 5-9 Meets inside 557 California Ave. Each child must be accompanied by a parent; bring plenty of water and an apron; \$5.00 per child	Tour Guide: Mercedes de la Garza, 322-6406
Sunday, July 6 9:00 am	Newlands Heights: the Bungalows Meets outside 557 California Ave.	Tour Guide: Scott Gibson, 322-6406
Tuesday, July 8 6:30 pm	The Wells Avenue Neighborhood Meets old Southside School, corner Liberty and Sinclair Sts	Tour Guide: Mark Taxer, 826-7070
Saturday, July 12 9 am and 11:00 am	Literary Reno: Writers and Places Reservations open June 2, 2003 – arrangements to be announced	
Sunday, July 13 9 am and 11:00 am	Literary Reno: Writers and Places Reservations open June 2, 2003 – arrangements to be announced	
Tuesday, July 15 6:30 pm	Truckee River Corridor Meets McKinley Arts & Culture Center, Riverside Dr.	Tour Guide: Joan Collins, 329-0394
Saturday, July 19 9:00 am	The Arts and Culture Tour Meets outside Dreamers, Riverside Artist Lofts	Tour Guide: Debbie Hinman, 322-9400
Sunday, July 20 10:00 am	The Bike Tour: Ride Through Old Reno Meets outside 557 California Ave.	Tour Guide: Glee Willis, 323-0696
Tuesday, July 22 6:30 pm	The Mansions on the Bluff Meets McCarran-Lowden Mansion, corner Arlington & Court Sts.	Tour Guide: Ed Wishart, 747-4323
Tuesday, July 29 6:30 pm	Bricks and Stones Meets outside My Favorite Muffin, 340 California Ave.	Tour Guide: Tracy Soliday, 348-7937



Historic Reno
PRESERVATION
SOCIETY

Preservation Award Nomination Form

HRPS • P.O. Box 33444 • Reno, NV 89533

One of HRPS goals is to recognize those individuals and organizations in our community committed to preservation. HRPS presented its first award in 2000 to the Reno Quakers for their work in rehabilitating a 1920's brick home at 497 Highland Avenue for their meetinghouse.

We encourage community residents to join HRPS members in nominating individuals and/or organizations who have contributed, in one or more of the following ways, to preserving Reno's historic context by:

- restoring and entering into reuse at least one significant old building;
- enhancing neighborhood plans, guidelines, and or zoning to benefit preservation efforts;
- conducting and publishing research, conserving and cataloguing photographs, collecting and archiving oral histories;
- building a new structure in an older neighborhood that works harmoniously within the existing context.

1. Name of nominee: _____

2. Description of the property or project: _____

3. Please give physical site location of property or project: _____

4. Please explain why the HRPS Preservation Award should recognize this nominee: _____

5. Please give us your name, phone number, and address. Thanks for filling out this form!

SEND COMPLETED FORM TO:

President, Historic Reno Preservation Society, P. O. Box 33444, Reno, NV. 89533

Mail No Later Than the Last Friday in April.

Selection of recipients shall be made by the Historic Reno Preservation Society Board of Directors.

On the National Register of Historic Places

The 20th Century Club, 335 West First Street

The charming property at 335 West First Street, known as the 20th Century Club was designed by prominent local architect Fred M. Schadler and was constructed in 1925. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 because of the significance of Schadler's work. The structure employs distinct vernacular Period Revival and Prairie School. The design is greatly enlivened by the use of the large and prominent arched windows. The round forms of the windows and their verticality creates a design counterpoint to the horizontal character of the building form.

Architect Schadler was versatile in his design activity, utilizing Period Revival and Prairie School themes as well as executing a fine Mission Revival work, probably his most creative and inventive design. Schadler was born in Germany in 1866 and immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1881. Before arriving in Reno in the last decade of the 19th century he received his architectural training in San Francisco. Schadler designed many of the early commercial

buildings in Reno including the Mapes Building, Elk's Club, the Cheney Building, and the Herz Building.

The 20th Century Club was the first women's club in Reno, and an important longtime Reno institution. It was organized in 1894 as part of a National movement called the 20th Century Club.



The Twentieth Century Club, 335 West First Street

During the late 19th Century, a kind of phenomenon took place among the middle class better-educated women of this country. Perhaps as a result of more leisure time and the advent of the Victorian exploration of virtually everything, women began to organize themselves into groups and organizations with strong educational, social and cultural purposes with the aim of supporting the cause of women. The creation of the National American Association of University Women was one such group. The 20th Century Club was another. One major aspect of its function was to create study groups for its members to meet and discuss the issues of the day, the arts, or other issues of importance to its membership. One of the Reno club's first activities was to cause a law to be passed prohibiting spitting on the sidewalks. After 1930, the Club did not engage in political activity but simply met for social and educational purposes.


The Club was open to any woman of good repute, and counted among its

members, the most prominent women of the community including Mrs. Mapes, author Greer Gay, political activist Ann Martin, and HRPS Ann McCarty. The membership reached 1,000 in its heyday.

The Reno Chapter raised money to build its Clubhouse on First Street by holding high school dances at its first location, a

wooden building at the rear of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. The Clubhouse was utilized by the entire community, being rented out for parties, weddings, receptions, etc.. The Lions Club had lunches there and enough money was raised on a regular basis to have a housekeeper and caterer live on the premises. Renting to community groups was the main income, and a successful one since there were few or no hotels at the time. During WWII, it was rented to the USO.

The 20th Century Club building was sold to lawyer John White in 1987. The building is now a private club, where he maintains an extensive law library in the beautiful interior of the building.

As of 1982, the Reno 20th Century Club was one of the last remaining chapters of the National Association in the country. In 1994 the Reno Chapter produced a centennial cookbook celebrating 100 years of the 20th Century Club from 1894 to 1994. The Reno Club is active today, with a monthly meeting with speaker and lunch, and members enjoy the Garden Club, the Book Club and several bridge groups. The Club is involved in several philanthropic activities supporting women and children. 



Anne Martin, an organizer of the women's suffrage movement, UNR professor, the first woman to run for the Senate in the United States, was a member of The Twentieth Century Club.

Editor's Note: HRPS thanks the State Historic Preservation Office and 20th Century Club member Rita Hooper for information and the loan of her cookbook.

Shangri-La

By Virginia Shaw Henningsen

For years it was known simply as the large white house on the top of Arlington Avenue hill. It's true it eventually came to be known as Shangri-La. But before that, it was a small ranch out in the country far from downtown Reno. It was my home, my domain, my love.

My parents, Dr. and Mrs. W.A. Shaw, purchased the house from Caesar P. Ramelli, Charles Ramelli and Julious C. Ramelli in 1935 along with 10 acres of land. The property is on the east side of Arlington. The north boundary was Mt. Rose Street then the southern city limits of Reno, and the eastern boundary extended to an approximate line with Lander Street. The price was \$14,000 and included water rights from the Southside Irrigating Canal that we referred to as "the double ditches". The deed, dated June 1, 1935, mentions nearby lands owned by W. Peterson, D.W. Riley and the "Perazzo Lands".

The house, a large two story New England type building, faces Arlington on the front part of the land. This homestead, – far away from town – was an idyllic place to raise a family. Imagine, there was almost a clear unobstructed view from Arlington to where the Reno-Tahoe International Airport is today!

The house was very well built. Upon entering, a lovely staircase ushered one



The house in 1937 prior to its incarnation as Shangri-La. Today you may drive by this property at 1640 Arlington Avenue. Looking carefully at this picture, you will see no houses in the distance. Virginia and her friends often rode their horses from here to the Hidden Valley area.

up to four bedrooms. The large living room to the left of the staircase and the dining room to the right both had lovely hardwood floors. The spacious kitchen on the eastern side had a storage porch and outside door. In one corner was a breakfast nook. A large basement held

the laundry equipment and furnace. A special feature to me was a small laundry chute off the kitchen that dispensed all of the soiled linen and clothing directly to the basement.

The spacious land provided ample room for a huge vegetable garden cared for by my dad and two brothers. This garden was what today is the entire southern lawn. Fortunately, my family held a franchise with Rototiller Company in Troy, New York and introduced Troy Built to many gardeners. We also had a prolific grape arbor, a small 10 x 15 rock wading pool, and a garage, barn and small cottage toward the back of the property. Eventually we had sheep, chickens, several cows and two pigs.

In the late 1930s, my parents added several rooms to the north, which was to be space for my dad's pediatric practice. At the same time a parking lot and north entrance were added, making a convenient doctor's office. My father's



Dr. and Mrs. Shaw and their children. They each had their own horse. Virginia's horse is a Shetland Pony she called Pony. She also had a pig she called Piggy, a rabbit she called Bunny, a cat she called Kitty. Only the family dogs had given names.

continued on page 11

Shangri-La (continued)

continued from page 10

sudden death in 1939 changed everything. Faced with the reality of having to provide for her family, necessity became the mother of invention. My mother turned our small ranch into Shangri-La.

In the 1930s, Nevada was the divorce capital of the United States. A six weeks residence was required coupled with a final court appearance after which a divorce was granted. My mother talked to several of the prominent lawyers and found there was, indeed, a need for a homey, serene living environment for divorcees. Mother added several downstairs bedrooms and a sun porch. She changed the existing garage into a small cottage into which my mother, my brothers and I moved.

The lawyers must have been quite selective, because the women and the few men who stayed at Shangri-La were some of the finest people one would ever meet. They were mainly from the eastern states and were delighted to find a warm atmosphere so far from their homes. They were incredibly naïve about the




The Shaw's large vegetable garden looking south-east. Once again, you will note very few dwellings between Shangri-La and the Virginia Range.

wild, wooly West. One guest admitted "I hoped there would be at least a trading post in this far-off land".

As Reno grew, the pasture land was

subdivided. Mother continued to manage Shangri-La. It was a name she likened to the Tibetan land called Shangri-La from the 1933 book "Lost Horizon" where visitors found a form of paradise far inland in the Tibetan mountains. My mother, Ruth Shaw, was a delightful hostess. The lovely homey setting of this large house with its spacious and inviting grounds saw many special events over the years including several wedding receptions, garden parties, and the annual barbeque for the Lambda Chi fraternity in honor of my brother who was killed in WWII.

In 1963 Shangri-La was sold to Rev. Howard Cooper, superintendent of the Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission. It served as a shelter for needy women and children. It was then mother retired and built a home in Carson Valley close to her family. 



Virginia and a friend resting on a large rock in what used to be the pasture. High rock walls, long since vanished, encompassed the pasture. This view is looking toward Mt. Rose Street.

Virginia Shaw Henningsen is a longtime resident of Carson Valley. Like many "Old Reno People," she attended Mt. Rose, B.D. Billingshurst, Reno High and the University of Nevada.

HRPS News

HRPS President's Message

As we approach our annual membership meeting and the election of new Directors and officers, we realize how rapidly "time flies when you're having fun". It has been a very busy and productive year, and all indications point to busier and more productive months ahead.

As I write this (in February), HRPS has formed a committee to offer assistance to the university administration's task force regarding the utilization of the Fleischmann Planetarium building when and if it no longer houses the programs of the Planetarium. Some members of the committee have expertise regarding adaptive re-use of historic structures and funding sources to accomplish such preservation. We are, at this time, encouraged by the administration's acknowledgement of the value of the Planetarium as an historic building, and one which deserves to be preserved.

We continue to collaborate with several groups and agencies in the community. Two new walking tours have evolved as a result: a literary tour, developed with Friends of the Washoe County Library; and an arts and culture tour, to be

offered to convention-goers and advertised through a publication of the RSCVA. During Historic Preservation Week, we shall be cooperating with the Great Basin Film Society in presenting a fun-filled event (details are elsewhere in "FootPrints"). We receive requests to appear before various service groups, to inform them of what HRPS is all about, and the activities that are offered.

All of this activity requires time and commitment from members, and most especially, from your Board of Directors. I have asked the Board to spend a great deal of time and energy dealing with administrative tasks that are necessitated by the growth of HRPS. The Directors have responded willingly, and productively. An all-volunteer group, such as we, requires such dedication in order to achieve the success which we enjoy.

I want to extend a public, and sincere "thank you" for their support and guidance. And thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president during the past two years.


Kathy Wishart

Annual Meeting March 28, 7 p.m. at Mt. Rose Elementary

Join us for some serious and not so serious business. Part of the serious stuff will be the election of a new Board of Directors. Of course the Nominating Committee will submit a slate for your consideration, but remember, nominations are always accepted from the floor. If you have suggestions now for the Nominating Committee call Charlotte McConnell (828-5125), Patty Caffarata (825-2694) or Pat Klos (348-8594).

More serious stuff. HRPS will announce the winner of its Annual Preservation Award. Please see the enclosed nomination form so that you

may make your nomination in time for consideration. There is only one winner each year, but so many properties are deserving of recognition.

Now for the not-so-serious stuff. It's "Open Mike Night" at HRPS. Whether or not you're a member, come and share your favorite Reno story with people who love Reno stories. Your story can be historical, hysterical or in-between. It can be funny or serious. It can be about the famous, the not so famous, and yes, even the infamous. But please, no politics. 

Kathryn Wishart – a Legacy – Preparing for the Future in order to Preserve the Past

The end of HRPS Annual Meeting, May 28th signals the completion of Kathryn Wishart's second year - and she advises us - final year as president of HRPS.

How does a grateful organization say Thank You? Perhaps by publishing Kathy's date book for the last two years. Alas, we'd have to publish an entire edition to cover all the meetings Kathy has attended representing HRPS.

Perhaps we could catalogue all the elements of growth and progress experienced by HRPS under Kathy's leadership. Too much again. What then? Well, Kathy is a quiet woman who does quiet work, and that's where her legacy lies.

Again and again Kathy brought the Board to the Wishart's lovely home in Hidden Valley to hammer out annual strategic plan reviews followed by goals for implementation. Listen folks, when Kathy says "come" you show up. It's a lot of work, but Kathy even provided dinner for the Board. Equally as lovely, Kathy's husband, Ed, served his very own award winning wine. (Now that will be a tough act to follow.)

The result of two years of intense effort on the part of Kathy and the Board is a more "business like" HRPS. We have improved our fiscal management. The budget now reflects reality, because we have actual numbers. We have a formal financial tracking and reporting system. We have objectives for the implementation of uniform business procedures.

Recently Nan Howell Spina, HRPS member and member of the Historic Resources Commission, told your editor how pleased she is about HRPS. "Over the years many have tried to become the organization to help with preservation efforts in our area. For whatever reason, they all faded away. HRPS is not fading away. It's flourishing." Yes it is flourishing. It flourishes because of the largely unseen work of many. It flourishes because we have such things as revised by-laws, goals and strategic plan, job descriptions, and indicators to measure progress. It flourishes because of leadership.

We Thank You Kathy!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE (As of March 8, 2003)

Renewal Membership

Mary Aker
George Gadda & Betty Jo Baker
Karen Barber
Bill Barnard
Felvia & Richard Belaustegui
Jane Bowden
Sue Broderdorf
Tom & Beverly Budd
Linda Burke
Tosca Byars
Craig Chapman
Patricia Coia
David Colborn
Joyce Cox
Al Delmue
Dave & Kathy Ebner
Tim & Joan Luchetti-Elam
Pam & David Ginsburg
Jeff Goldsmith
Nancy Hardy
Charles & Cheryl Hauntz
Debbie & Alex Hinman
Nancy Holmes

Dorothy Hufey
Sally Jeffers
Marilyn Johnson
Red & Connie Kittell
Janice & Gary Lubra
Jon & Linda Madsen
Loretta Terlizzi & Jim McCormick
Sue McDowell
Madeline Murray
Bruce Nemenoff
Deedee Carter Pace
Al & Nancy Pagni
Marilyn Paradis
Eileen & Chris Piekars
Mrs. D. Pittman
Louise Plewa
Darla Potter
Barbara Price
Millard & Irene Reed
Dick & Margaret Richardson
Drucilla Richardson
Tom & Paula Ringkob
Mahree Roberts

H. Sidney Robinson
Rich Rossi
William Salas
Ginger & Pete Salcedo
Russ Schooley
Fran & Paul Skrotzki
Louise Smith
Tracy Soliday
Helene Spinner
Mike Valentine
Fran Waligora
Shirrie Wallace
JoAnne Sbragia Waters
Diane Watterson
Ann Weiss
Karen Wells
Eleanor & David Wheeler
Joyce Williams
Glee Willis
Kathryn & Ed Wishart
Hilda Wunner
Mary Yeargin

New Members

Carolyn Bartlett
Gloria Castillo
Sherri Clark
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Corradetti
Elizabeth Fisher
Sonnica Gore
Marilyn King
Berta Kirchner
Lou Melton
Beth Miramon
Lucille Mitchell
Jan Pederson
Margaret Riley
Florence Signalness

HRPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please check your mailing label! Renew your membership and help HRPS preserve historic Reno!

Please make checks payable to **Historic Reno Preservation Society**, and mail along with this application to:
P.O. Box 33444, Reno, NV 89533

Name(s) _____ ☐ New Member
Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone (H) _____ (W) _____ Best time to call: _____
Fax _____ E-Mail: _____

☐ New Member
☐ Renewing Member

Annual membership includes: Footprints (HRPS Newsletter) • HRPS Calendar • Free participation in walking tours

☐ Student \$8.00 ☐ Individual \$15.00 ☐ Supporting \$100.00 ☐ Business/Corporate \$50.00
☐ Family (children 18 & under) \$20.00 Additional donation: _____

Interest Survey: There are many areas in our organization where your enthusiasm, skills, and dedication will be invaluable to historic Reno and future generations. The goal of the Historic Reno Preservation Society is to preserve the history and built environment of our community. Please indicate your interest in serving on the following committees by marking the appropriate category or categories:

☐ Education ☐ Exec. Committee ☐ Finance ☐ Fund-Raising ☐ Grant Writing ☐ Hospitality
☐ Membership ☐ Office Volunteer ☐ Newsletter ☐ Programming ☐ Publicity ☐ Walking Tours

**FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY**

PAID: ☐ Check ☐ Cash Amount: _____ Membership # _____ Renewal Date: _____

RV 01.27.02/FO

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

SPRING PROGRAMS 2003

FELVIA BELAUSTEGUI • Program Chair 329-0149

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

Wednesday, April 23: Former Treasurer of the State of Nevada, and HRPS member, Patty Cafferata will tell stories about former Treasurers for the State of Nevada who called Washoe County their home. Another way of looking at this is Bishop Manogue graduate makes good – speaks at HRPS meeting.

Wednesday, May 28: “Open Mike Night” at HRPS. Come and share a favorite Reno story or two with people who love Reno stories. Your story can be about the famous, the not so famous, and yes, even the infamous. But please, no politics. We will also have display tables for those who would like to share old photos and / or memorabilia with the group. Election of new Board members. *See page 12 for details.*

Reno Centennial Celebration Calendar

April 1 – May 15: Treasure Hunt, 45 days of clues to treasure.

April 19: 2 – 5 p.m. Riverwalk Merchants monthly wine walk.

May 10: 1 p.m.: Our City's History in Pictures, Neal Cobb photos, Auto Museum

May 30 – June 1: Annual Reno Days Festival at Wingfield Park

May 30, 5:30 p.m. The first concert of the season at Wingfield Park.

May 31: High Tea and Fashion show at Ross Manor.

May 31: Centennial Dance at West Street Plaza.

HRPS Phone: 337-1165

HRPS OFFICERS

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Vice President & Program:

Felvia Belaustegui 329-0149

Secretary: Mark Taxer

Treasurer: Bill Walbridge

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Cindy Ainsworth, Patty Cafferata, Joan Dyer, Nancy Holmes, Pat Klos, Ann McCarty, Charlotte McConnell

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Ginger Salcedo 324-6913

WALKING TOURS

Pat Ferraro Klos 348-8594

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