

FootPrints

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

Historic Reno
PRESERVATION
SOCIETY

WINTER 2002 NEWSLETTER VOL. 5, NO. 1

A NIGHT TO REMINISCE

By Joan Collins

The 1953 book, *The Case of the Well-Dressed Corpse*, by Reno author Greer Gay tells of romantic evenings of dinner at the Riverside and walks along the Truckee River. The Historic Reno Preservation Society's annual fundraising dinner drew 124 fun lovers down that same path to memory land; cocktails at the Siena, dinner at the Riverside, a stroll along the river in between.

That evening it was delightful; cool, but clear. I parked at the National Automobile Museum and walked

with others streaming to the Siena for the HRPS affair, enjoying the curious glances the tourists cast our way. Clearly, they noticed we were "dressed to kill."

We laughed as we compared notes on how we found these styles to match the date the Riverside opened in 1927. What fun it is to play back the years of Zoot suits, feathers, layers of overlapping skirts, genuine fox pieces, felt hats, red lipsticks, Evening in Paris perfume. The men looked so handsome in hats. We strutted cavalierly through the new casino, enjoying the attention we attracted.

Still gin and rum drinks were once again popular that night at the bar overlooking the river, recalling the era of illicit gambling and prohibition. Some of us remembered prom nights when this room, at what was originally the Holiday, was the place to spend a romantic evening.

All too soon it was time to leave cocktails at the Siena for dinner. The gentlemen escorted us along the river past the post office to the Riverside. How chichi this felt!

Let myself imagine what it was like coming into Reno in the late '20's, a raw, sinful city that advertised legalized small stakes gaming and bets on horse racing. Heavens to Betsy, even the divorce residency had been reduced to three months.

But that was "then" and this is now.

(cont. on page 2)



Cocktails – Straight up, thank you! (L to R): Trudy Brussard, Paula Hobson, and Peter Brussard.

"A Night To Reminisce" (cont. from page 1)


Now the Riverside Lofts are filled with enthusiastic artists. The Sierra Arts office is open. Adaptive reuse, the utilization of an old structure in new ways, assures us the Riverside is here to stay. Although the ground floor is yet to be finished, it looked festive with decorations and bright tablecloths. Nothing mattered. It

was so good to be in this grand old building again.

The delicious dinner was catered by Elegant Herb. Actors from the Bruka Theater entertained us with a ghostly reading and historical skit. A loud and lively atmosphere continued throughout the evening. HRPS has such good parties.

We all extend a special thank you to

Joan Dyer and her committee and to those who contributed raffle prizes.

Next year's plan is already in the works. We promise the place and setting will be unique, but can anything in Reno be quite as unique as the Riverside? 

Joan Collins is a reporter for Footprints and a great flapper.

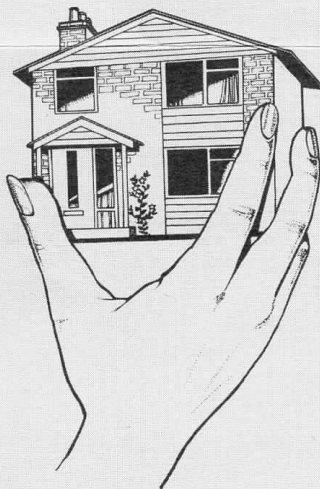
WHO CONTROLS YOUR PROPERTY?

By Patty Cafferata

This is my land. I can do what I want with it. Sounds like an American concept, doesn't it? A landowner, however, is not guaranteed that the government will not seize the land, if it is determined that the land is needed for the greater good, such as, for a road or airport. The Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution requires that the government pay just compensation for any property it seizes. The payment of just compensation affords the citizens some protection from government actions.

In general, land owners may use their property as they wish as long as it does not interfere with another owner's rights. Activities that create nuisances, such as loud noises, offensive smells, and bawdy houses are usually prohibited in residential areas by local zoning ordinances. Municipalities also adopt zoning laws which restrict the erection of certain structures in different locations in a community. For example, the local government zoning may prohibit the building of a pool hall in a residential neighborhood or the construction of a 20-story


building in certain locations. Local governments justify their zoning ordinances and regulations as necessary for the health, safety and welfare of their citizens. A problem occurs when government imposes regulations that deprive the



owner of any meaningful use of the land. When the regulations go this far, then, a "taking" of property occurs and just compensation must be paid. An example of such a taking is the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) "regulations" that prohibited property owners from building on their lots at Lake Tahoe. The owners

wanted to build houses, while TRPA did not want any structures built, nor did TRPA pay for the land because it argued that it hadn't seized the land.

A different point of view on land use is supported by some historic preservationists interested in saving old buildings which are usually owned by private parties. Recently, the City of Reno adopted an ordinance that permits the city to demolish a privately owned building if the city determines that the building is a nuisance. (RMC 8.22.110) Essentially, the law says a land owner must keep his or her property in good repair or the city can demolish the building/s. This law is enforcing the opposite of the TRPA argument.

At some point, private property rights to use the land may clash with this new government regulation requiring maintenance of old buildings. How do you feel about this conflict? 

Patty Cafferata serves on the HRPS board as Chair of the By-laws and Nominations Committee.

DEMOLITION THROUGH NEGLECT

By Sharon Adler Walbridge


The Reno City Council recently approved the Abandoned Nuisance Abatement Ordinance. An abandoned nuisance is a structure that is no longer occupied or maintained and that may be considered a blight upon its surroundings.

The ordinance provides for a three step notification process. Ultimately, if a property owner fails to respond to the third Notice of Violation the city may seek to have the building razed.

Of special interest to preservationists is the new provision for notification of the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) upon issuance of the second Notice of Violation. At that time the HRC has the opportunity to review the building for potential historical significance, inventory and documentation purposes, and/or possible historic preservation assistance.

Of course there are those who feel this ordinance is a step forward and those who do not. In cities all over the country, people are trying to find the balance between the rights of private property owners and their responsibilities to the larger community.

In attempting to preserve our sense of place, and the environment that gives Reno a sense of place, it is incumbent upon us to ask three questions. What exactly is being preserved? For what purpose? And by whom?

Conversely, we should certainly ask what is being demolished - whether through neglect or intent - why, and by whom? 


Sharon Walbridge serves on the HRPS board as Publications Chair and is editor of Footprints.

WALKING TOURS UPDATE

By Leanne Stone


WALKING TOUR TRAINING WORKSHOP

Saturday, March 2nd 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Come and learn how you can share your favorite area of Reno with others and help HRPS build support for preservation in our historic neighborhoods. You too can talk about quoin, dentils, gambrels and more as you learn what it takes to be a walking tour guide or partner. If you prefer to work behind the scenes, we need people who can spend some time doing research. If you have the interest, we can find a project for you. Call Leanne Stone at 322-1638 or e-mail leanne@unr.nevada.edu to make your reservation. The location is yet to be determined. 

2001 MOST SUCCESSFUL YEAR YET FOR HRPS WALKS

Walking tours during Historic Preservation Week in May attracted 200 people. July Artown added 430. A new venture in September - two special walks on one day enjoyed a total of 75 participants. During Spirit of Artown, mid-November to mid-December, 91 souls ventured forth to brave the elements. This brings our grand total to 796 people who left their footprints on our sidewalks for the year.

As we plan for 2002 we will again be offering walks during Historic Preservation Week, May 12-18 and July Artown. Since the Spirit of Artown was so successful, we are quite sure it will occur again and we will be there. HRPS is also looking forward to offering walks that will originate from the Riverside Hotel on a regular basis each week. The details of this ambitious plan remain to be completed-keep your walking shoes handy. 

Leanne Stone serves HRPS as Walking Tour Chair.



November 2001 Party at the Riverside Artist's Lofts. (L to R): Joan Collins, Pat Klos, and Patty Cafferatta, and smiling cowboy Mike Klos.

ANOTHER LANDMARK GONE

By Joan Collins

I hear sirens outside as I turn on the eleven o'clock news. There is a fire on Court Street! I grab my keys, my mind mentally tracing the street that I love so intimately, seeing each home. This is the street that personified Reno in the "City of Trembling Leaves". I shudder, intuitively knowing where I will find the fire. I drive east toward Virginia Street to avoid the snaking, bulging water hoses and the barriers hastily erected by police to keep away the growing crowds of curious onlookers.

I drive to First Street and park in front of Java Jungle. My legs feel rubbery as I walk toward the river. I watch in disbelief as towering flames shoot into the onyx sky. Through the haze, I search for the three-corbelled chimneys that confirm my fears. It is 220 Court Street, the Wingfield Mansion. Smoke chokes the river as emotions choke my words. Tears fill my eyes, my voice cracks, "Oh no, no!"

People comfort me and ask if I live there? All I can reply is that we all lived there because of what this mansion has represented in this city and in this state.

The history of this pre WWI Classic Revival style home belongs to all of us. This was the residence of the once

powerful George Wingfield, uncle of my childhood friend. It was a house she visited often, when she stayed at the Hardy House on California Avenue. This unique house has graced the river since 1907. In 1915 Wingfield chose Nevada's premier architect, Frederick DeLongchamps, to remodel it.

I cannot believe I am again standing by the river, witnessing another landmark disappear from Reno's historic district! This three-story structure with rock faced, stone foundation could have withstood the ages. I know it could!

Water builds into waves and surges over Rainbow Street into the Truckee River like unrelenting tears. I traverse the obstacles to Court Street. I feel so helpless. I watch as the fire hoses are hoisted high on the ladder towers spraying water on the dry shingled-hipped rooftops. Long fingers of flames grab, pinch and tear at dried, unkempt timbers. Red and yellow embers fall like rain at my feet.


Firemen tromp over the once picturesque wrap-around-porch using axes and chainsaws to relieve her of the smoke trapped inside. They cut into her wide eyes, trying to save her, piercing her

sides. Flames shoot through the sky from building to building, so hot, my face flushes. So hot, it melts the tires of the Mercedes parked in the driveway. So hot, but I cannot turn away.

Crowds stand in awe of this horrific spectacle. People ask questions and I start to share the history I've learned from leading the Riverwalk tours last summer. It seems eerie now, standing where I once talked so enthusiastically. I feel an urgency as I tell them what we are losing here tonight. These onlookers must not go away without knowing the man author C. Elizabeth Raymond called the "Owner and Operator of Nevada."

George Wingfield's legacy encompasses Nevada's growth in mining, banking and real estate. He was instrumental in expanding tourism as he paved the way for highway improvements, shorter residence divorce laws and legalized gaming and horse racing legislation. He was the consummate businessman; there were no rivals to his luxurious Golden and Riverside hotels built especially to accommodate the tourists he wished to attract. He was powerful, controversial, inimitable, and a true reflection of the pioneer spirit that gave root to the western spirit that is uniquely Nevadan.

In his obituary on December 26, 1959, the Reno Evening Gazette stated, "Probably no Nevadan in the 95 years in which the state has been a member of the commonwealth has anyone been so prominent for so long a period of time."

I listen to the crackling of the burning wood. The air is acrid. My eyes burn. It is two o'clock. I turn to go. The roof is fully consumed; there is no chance of saving this icon of Reno's history. Onlookers shake their heads; they didn't know this curious place of disrepair had been so colorful, so intriguing, and so important. They didn't know. 



219 & 220 Court Street: The Wingfield Mansion (at right) and adjacent property.

HRPS PRESERVATION AWARDS 2002

Enclosed in this issue you will find the nomination form for HRPS annual preservation award which is presented to one nominee each year. Last year Susan and Scott Armstrong were the recipients for their adaptive reuse of two charming old, Reno homes. With ingenuity, vision and no doubt a lot of elbow grease, they turned these former single family residences into a comfortable and inviting learning environment for children two to five year olds.


Please take a few minutes to see if your nomination of a special property might be the one that would let the recipient know that people in the community say "thank you" for preserving, rather than destroying what is special about Reno. 



Photo courtesy of Neil Cobb

"The Riverside" Documentary To Air On KNPB in February

KNPB Channel 5 will air a locally-produced documentary on Thursday, February 7th at 8:00pm entitled "The Riverside". This documentary will explore the complex venture to remake the historic hotel into working and living spaces for Reno artists. Viewers will witness the building's transformation from derelict to beautiful adaptive reuse through interviews with the Reno Redevelopment Agency, the Sierra Arts Foundation, ArtSpace Projects, and a pair of artists and their families. Don't miss it! This program will also air again on Tuesday, February 19th at 9:00 pm.

HRPS TEAMS WITH RSCVA TO PROMOTE HERITAGE TOURISM

By Cindy Ainsworth


Good News! HRPS has been invited to be a part of the new Arts and Culture Steering Committee for the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority (RSCVA). RSCVA recognizes cultural and heritage tourism is a very important component in attracting visitors.

Statistics prove visitors interested in history and the arts stay longer and spend more money than Reno's traditional tourists do.

HRPS is proud to be a part of this positive committee and has taken an active role in the name of history. In November and December our Arch to Arch downtown walking tour was a part of the Winter Artown festival.

In the near future we are planning to continue this tour and, along with the RSCVA, develop other downtown tours for visitors and locals. You can also find updated info on HRPS walks and programs on their website; www.renolaketahoe.com.

Recently, the website featured HRPS' Top 11 Significant Downtown Reno Architectural and Historical Sites. While you're browsing, be sure to check out their Arts and Culture main page. This is great exposure for HRPS, preservation, history and the community.

Stay tuned for more exciting things to come from RSCVA and HRPS! 

Cindy Ainsworth serves HRPS as Chair of Community & Public Relations.



HRPS QUALITY DENIM SHIRTS

HRPS now has quality denim shirts for sale with our logo sewn over the pocket in black. If you're not familiar with our logo look on the front page of this newsletter.

\$25.00 for walking tour guides.
\$35.00 for the general public.

Shirts are available at meetings or from Felvia Belaustegui at 329-0149.

HRC REPORTS


By Mella Rothwell Harmon,
Chairman

2001 was a busy and successful year for Reno's Historical Resources Commission (HRC). In addition to the annual awards program in May, the HRC co-sponsored, with the Historic Reno Preservation Society (HRPS), the well-attended preservation conference held during Historic Preservation Week. The HRC also initiated the process of updating Reno's ten-year-old inventory of historic buildings and conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of Reno's preservation ordinance (*see related stories*).

City Council actions went well for the HRC in 2001, as well. Upon HRC's recommendation, the City Council set aside \$35,000 to move the DeLongchamps family home onto a city lot should the house be threatened with demolition. The Council also followed HRC direction by offering a city parcel at Court and Arlington Streets for the relocation of the Lake Mansion. (*Editors Note: both the DeLongchamps and Lake structures are integral to Reno's history.*)

Thanks to the efforts of Councilwoman Toni Harsh and assistant city manager Ralph Jaeck, the Washoe County Library has agreed to accept HRC's library collection. The collection, which includes books, brochures, and periodicals (and the updated inventory, when it is completed), will be listed in the library's general catalog and available to the public on a non-circulating basis through the Special Collections Department.

Serendipitously, HRC participation has been included in the procedures for the City's nuisance law, which addresses the issue of demolition by neglect.

The HRC is looking forward to a successful 2002. We wish the same for all HRPS members. 

HRC EXAMINES ITS ORDINANCE

By Mella Rothwell Harmon, Chairman

Last spring, the Reno City Council directed the HRC to review its historic preservation ordinance (#4313) and return with recommendations for changes or modifications. The assignment seemed daunting at first, but it turned out to be an important learning experience for the commissioners. Since HRPS members are history and preservation buffs, we thought you would be interested in our process.

HRC approached its assigned task by establishing a three-phase process: research, analysis, and evaluation/recommendation.

Research

The process began with the collection of historic preservation ordinances from 27 communities across the country. During a six-hour-long work session in July, the HRC reviewed model ordinance guidelines from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Reno's own preservation ordinance, and summaries of the 27 ordinances from other jurisdictions. Sixteen of the 27 were identified as containing elements the HRC wanted to evaluate further. From this review process, the HRC concluded that:

- Reno's preservation ordinance generally meets the standards set forth in the National Trust's model ordinance guidelines;
- The main weakness in Reno's ordinance is the limited number of properties listed in the City Register of Historic Places;
- A majority of the jurisdictions reviewed employ a historic preservation officer/planner;
- There is little appetite by property owners for more stringent historic preservation regulations;

- HRC should look at incentives as a possible means of strengthening our ordinance.

The HRC also identified specific topics for further evaluation and discussion:

1. Definitions and standards;
2. Demolition by neglect;
3. Certificates of Appropriateness;
4. Participation in the Planning Commission review process;
5. Incentives for historic preservation;
6. Staff (historic preservation officer/planner);
7. Implementation policies;
8. Public outreach programs, including literature.

Analysis

In order to better understand its role in city government, HRC invited Planning Manager, Laura Tuttle, to its September meeting. Ms. Tuttle explained Ordinance #4313's relationship with the zoning code, and its role in the planning process. The discussion resulted in an agreement to include HRC in neighborhood planning activities.

Relative to the eight topics identified for further evaluation, HRC has determined the following:

1. Definitions and standards:
HRC has prepared definitions to be added to ordinance #4313. These are currently being reviewed by counsel. Once finalized, they will be submitted to City Council for approval as a text amendment to the ordinance.

(cont. on page 7)

HRC EXamines (cont. from page 6)


2. **Demolition by neglect:** *This was accomplished through the revision of the nuisance ordinance, which was recently rewritten to allow for legal remedies in the event of gross neglect of properties. The procedures for this ordinance allow for HRC to review all second notices of violation. This will provide HRC the opportunity to identify historic properties, to offer assistance to owners of historic properties that are threatened with demolition due to violation of the nuisance ordinance, or, as a last resort, the opportunity to document historic buildings before demolition occurs.*
3. **Certificates of Appropriateness:** *HRC's current problem with certificates of appropriateness is that there are so few opportunities to require them, due to the limited number of properties listed in the City Register of Historic Places. Rather than change the ordinance, HRC should make a greater effort to add properties to the register.*
4. **Participation in the Planning Commission review process:** *Through our discussion with Laura Tuttle it was agreed that HRC could work more closely with planners in the neighborhood planning process. Ms. Tuttle also agreed that it would be useful for HRC to develop a historic preservation plan, which would result in the identification of historic districts and properties eligible for the City Register. Work on a preservation plan should begin following the completion of our inventory update, currently in progress.*

5. **Incentives for historic preservation:** *This is an area that requires further discussion and might include such things as publications, the development of grant-in-aid or revolving fund programs, technical assistance to property owners and city agencies, etc.*
6. **Staff (historic preservation officer/planner):** *A full-time preservation planner position would enhance the City's ability to promote and protect our valuable historic resources. This does not need to be written into the ordinance, but could be included in our budget request for 2002-2003.*
7. **Implementation policies:** *Ordinance #4313 includes sufficient latitude and language to implement our policies. HRC should have as major goals the development of incentives, the development of a historic preservation plan, and the identification of historic districts and properties eligible for the City Register.*
8. **Public outreach programs, including literature:** *HRC received a boost in this area from Councilwoman Toni Harsh and Assistant City Manager Ralph Jaeck, who were responsible for the agreement with the Washoe County Library to house our library collection. Also, our ordinance provides mechanisms for HRC to offer technical assistance to property owners, and promote historic preservation and heritage tourism through publications, signage, and other mechanisms. Once the inventory update is complete (and made available to the public at the library), HRC should develop publications that would benefit historic preservation.*

Evaluation/Recommendations

HRC's recommendations to the City Council stated that Reno's existing ordinance provides tools to promote preservation in Reno; and that HRC needs to work on the mechanisms to implement them, including:

- Addition of definitions through a text amendment to the ordinance;
- Promotion of a full-time preservation staff person;
- Development of a historic preservation plan (in conjunction with the neighborhood planning process);
- Development of incentives, including a revolving preservation fund and technical assistance programs;
- Development of publications to assist property owners and City agencies;
- Continued funding to ensure success of HRC's program.

Finally, ten months later, on January 8, 2002, the Reno City Council accepted the HRC's recommendations and pledged its support of our goals. In addition to the welcome support of the City Council, the ordinance review process has allowed the HRC to develop specific objectives to strengthen the implementation of the existing historic preservation ordinance. 

In addition to chairing the HRC Mella Harmon is a HRPS member and a Preservation Specialist with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

HRC PROPERTY SURVEY GOES FROM CYBERSPACE TO PAPER

By Felvia Belaustegui


In 2001 the HRC received special funding from the City Manager to conduct a survey of all properties built from 1858 to 1961 – a period of 103 years – in the 895 zip code. Historic Resources Consultant, Barbara Mackey, was hired to develop the survey.

In July and August of 2001 HRC Commissioners, Felvia Belaustegui and Nan Spina, using the computerized MetroScan Data base at the City of Reno, documented – on paper – slightly over twenty thousand properties.

This documentation includes a complete description of each property including: address, date built, present owner, assessed land and structure value, a brief description of the structure such as resident/single family, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, garage, basement, exterior building material, roof type, water and sewer source, or if the structure is a business building.

Each property has a map and sub-division name if applicable.

The value of having this information copied from MetroScan to paper is accessibility. Upon completion the resource material will be available to the public, electronically as well as in print form, at the Washoe County Library (main branch). For those people wishing to conduct a property survey, and are uncomfortable working with computers, this re-opens the door to research without computers.

Ms. Mackey will offer a training workshop for volunteer surveyors to actually photograph and describe the properties in early spring of 2002; the public is encouraged to attend and participate in the survey. 

Both Commissioners Belaustegui and Spina are members of HRPS. Belaustegui serves HRPS as Vice President for Programs/Workshops

SAVE THE DATE:

**National Automobile Museum's
Four-Day Symposium
The 1940s: Keep the Home Front
Rolling - March 13-16, 2002**

Learn about tourism, movies, and automobiles of the decade, plus a fashion revue, a walking tour and an optional tour of private car collections. Reception for companion exhibit featuring artifacts of the Truckee Meadows, which is included in the Symposium. Educational credit available. Please call 333-9300 for detailed brochure.

Nancy Holmes serves HRPS as liaison to the Arts Consortium and HTC.

HERITAGE TOURISM

By Nancy Holmes

The Heritage Tourism Coalition, (HTC) a distinctive group established by HRPS to promote Truckee Meadows' history to visitors and residents, will send you its Historic Site Map for just \$1.65 each or \$2.80 for two maps! Our new brochure explaining the Coalition will be included.

Send your check to:

HTC
PO Box 1507
Reno, NV 89505


RENO HOSTS NATIONAL TRUST MEETING

The National Trust for Historic Preservation Western Advisors' Annual Meeting will convene in Reno from April 4-7, 2002. Most of this annual meeting has been planned by the National Trust, but Thursday April 4 will showcase Preserve Nevada at several of the mansions overlooking the Truckee River.

Preserve Nevada is a new statewide historic preservation organization that has grown out of the need to look at issues developing throughout the state.

Retired US Senator Richard Bryan has brought together a team of preservationists from Reno and Las Vegas to form the board of Preserve Nevada which has an office and staff at UNLV. Northern Nevada board members are Bert Bedeau, Andrea Daley-Taylor, Pat Klos, and Carrie Bennis Young.

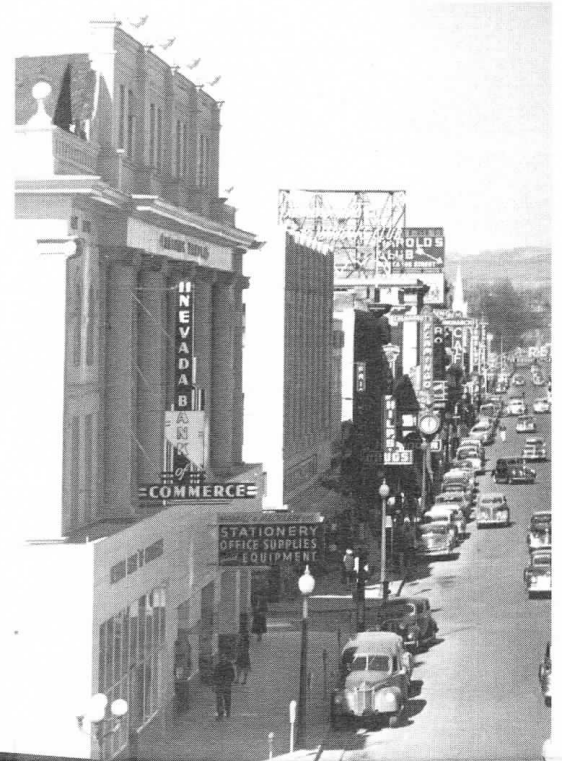
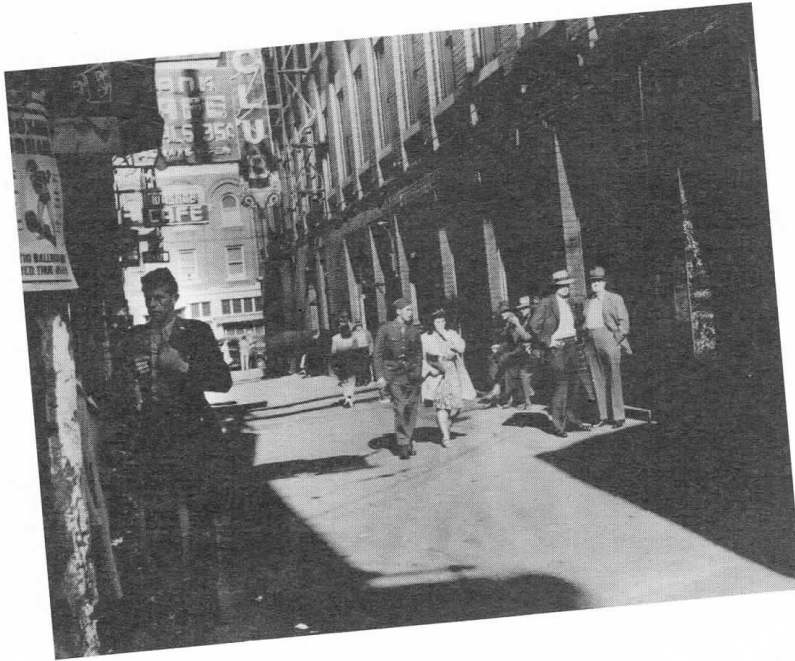
Preserve Nevada (PN) is asking HRPS members to volunteer as hosts and hostesses on Thursday evening April 4 from 4 to 7pm.

Volunteers are encouraged to wear vintage clothing from the 1890s through the 1930s. If interested call Pat Klos at 348-8594. 

Pat Klos is the founding President of HRPS and a prominent preservationist.

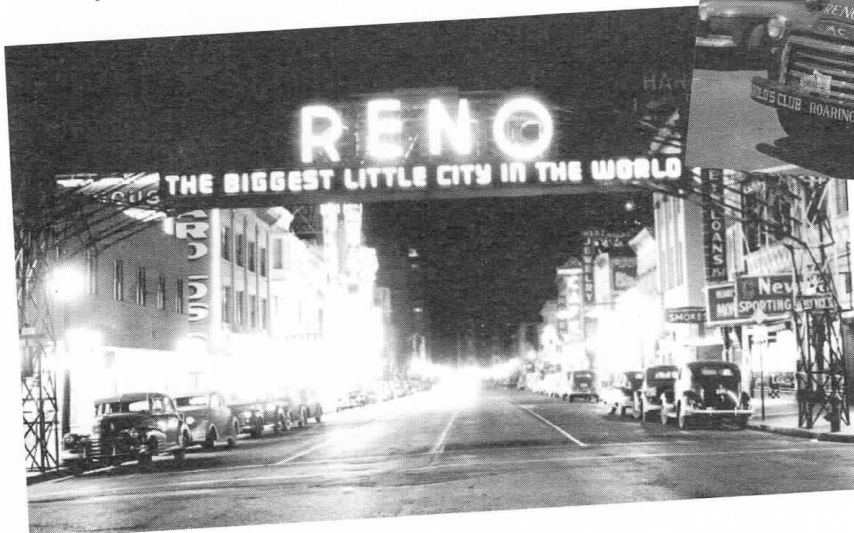
HRPS REMEMBERS WHEN...

Scenes from around Reno • Photos Courtesy of Neil Cobb



Clockwise, from Top:

1. 1944 – Douglas Alley looking east toward Center St. and the Overland Hotel
2. 1950 – The Nevada Bank of Commerce in the Masonic Building, Morrill and Macabee Stationery and Office Supply, looking north on Virginia Street toward the University.
3. Circa 1950 – Reno Rodeo Parade – Harold's Club Roaring Camp covered wagon. Majestic Theater on the corner of First and Center. Looking north.
4. Circa 1950 – The Reno Arch looking south to the Riverside. On the right going south, Claude Koepf's Nevada Sporting Goods, Heaney's Pawn Shop, Southworth's cigar store.



CREATING A WALKING TOUR

By Joan Collins

Although I was born in Reno and surrounded by family stories, I had never taken the time to put this information into a proper perspective.

Then, I was invited to a "Riverwalk" conducted by Pat Klos. Pat is the quintessential guide of all tour guides. Her stories of her youth in the Newland's Neighborhood are legendary. This day she looked at me, grinned and said, "Joan, I have been leading this walk since 1983, it is time to step down. You can do this. In the future, you will lead this walk! Take a few notes and listen."

But how? This was my very first walk! I quickly borrowed a pencil. The only paper I could find was a 3x10 inch guide map. For two hours and thirty minutes, I listened and took notes as if I was preparing for a final exam. I squeezed tiny print around and around the edges of this sparsely margined guide.

I tried not to miss a word. Pat was eloquent as she spewed forth names, dates, history, architectural details, family experiences, and juicy myths about this neighborhood on the hill. She chatted effortlessly while she briskly walked, chiding the laggards to step lively and keep up. She did not even break a sweat. By the end of tour, I was not only exhausted; I was frantic.

Furthermore, I was in awe of her talent. How on earth could I ever follow this incredible masterful tour? Then Pat introduced me to HRPS and its energetic, resourceful volunteers.

Leanne Stone, HRPS Walking Tour Chair, has created a proven program for beginning tour guides. Each new guide is presented with a packet full of information on architectural models, history, maps and references. Thankfully, guides are never expected to venture out alone. Leanne assigns helpers to take names and money, answer questions and keep dawdlers moving.

The class encouraged me to find my own style and not to try to copy anyone else. I am reminded that the information will be

new, so whatever I say, however awkward, will work. Seasoned guides also share experiences and stories of their tours. They not only discuss the architecture, they emphasize preserving our heritage and our history. It wasn't long before I learn to embrace the neighborhoods; the trees, the streets, the open spaces as an essential reflection of the past.

As time allowed, I joined the Wells Avenue, University, Fourth Street, Bricks and Stones, Court House, Lear Theatre and Newland's Neighborhood tours to see other tour leaders in action. I remember what it is like to be the spectator. The tour participants are curious and enthusiastic as the guide leads walks through the historical areas. If there are mistakes, I do not notice. How would I know? I find each tour has its' own special uniqueness and personality replete with distinctive stories about that particular area.

Tours have been detoured because of fires, mercury spills, police arrests, pouring rain - it just all adds to the excitement. Each tour emphasizes the need to reflect on the urgency to save historical sites, contemplate solutions to correct neighborhood neglect.


Finally, I walk the streets alone on my tour as practice. I talk to the neighbors and ask what they remember about their homes, families, businesses and neighbors. Now, it's acceptable to gossip, because people like to talk about their neighborhoods. I walk and talk, timing myself, finding the interesting and logical places to stop. I seek offers for tours inside a home or a business along the way. People offer graciously - they are pleased to share their historic property, and pleased someone has an interest.

*Walking in the Rain.
(L to R): Lynn Allen, Ann
McCarty, Nan Spina,
and an unidentified
participant.*

I walk at different times of the day looking for ambiance. For the "Riverwalk" the setting sun is like a spotlight on the homes along the hill just about seven. The air cools and strolling along the river creates a memorable experience after a hot summer's day. The river reflects a magnificent Nevada sunset. The end of the tour takes on a magical quality as twilight gives way to lights glowing inside the residences highlighting grounds for a more subdued atmosphere. The beauty takes my breath away.

I have now given eight tours. In the beginning I would cling to my notes, like Dumbo to his feather, afraid I would forget something. As I become more confident, I look at notes less, take cues from the tour, relax and have more fun. I have made many new friends and have the satisfying experience of really making a difference in our city.

The tours are an oral history that continues to evolve as more people add their own stories. These tales define who we are as a city, as neighborhoods, as people. We always need more guides, because demand for our walks has increased tremendously. If I can do this, you can do this. It's as simple as Pat said, take a few notes. (Well, it's really not that simple, but it's not hard, it's fun.)

I know I make a difference. You can too. Join me as part of the HRPS TOUR TEAM. Call Leanne Stone at 322-1638 to sign up for a class in the spring. 



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Renewal Membership

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| George Gadda & Betty Jo Baker
Bill Barnard
Felvia & Richard Belaustegui
Joanne Botsford
Jane Bowden
Carol Buckman
Tosca Byars
Treat & Patty Cafferata
Tom & Phyllis Cates
Craig Chapman
Neal Cobb
Cheryl & Mitch Cohen
Patricia Coia
Joan Collins
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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

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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

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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY PAID: Check Cash Amount: _____ Membership # _____ Renewal Date: _____



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

WINTER PROGRAMS 2002

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.

January 23rd, 2002 — "Seen About Town," The Art of Lew Hymers. Jim McCormick, Visual artist and Professor of Art emeritus at the University of Nevada, Reno, will take a look at one of Reno's most popular commercial artist during the 1930s and 1940s.

February 27th, 2002 — "Flip Side of Preservation, Neons, Gas Stations, Diners, etc." Back by popular demand, Don Fowler, PhD, presents this fun look at our roadside culture and architecture.

March 27th, 2002 — "Frederick DeLongchamps, Architect." Ron James, Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, will present a slide presentation on the renown local architect who has been credited with shaping the architectural character of early 20th Century Nevada.

April 24, 2002 — The History of the Balardini Ranch from 1850 to the present time. Angie Balardini Persigehl and Felvia Belaustegui will present a slide show and commentary on the historic Balardini ranch. Documentation dates from the first land patents and water rights. This region, sometimes known as the Mt. Rose fan, served as a seasonal hunting ground for the Washoe tribe.

May 22, 200 — Annual Meeting and picnic. Will it rain, will it snow, will it be beautiful? (Of course it will be beautiful.) Will we be in the mountains, in the valley, on the golf course? Wait and see. Next newsletter!

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Vice President & Program: Felvia Belaustegui 329-0149
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324-5569



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