

## Calendar

### Northern Nevada Schedule

**MAY 9** – Authors' Fundraising Luncheon Planning Committee meeting – NWHP office, 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300, Reno. 1:30 p.m.

**MAY 12** – Northern Region Steering Committee meeting. 5:30 p.m. at the home of Mary Anne Convis, 2185 Courtside, Carson City.

**MAY 15** – Newsletter Committee Meeting – 10:30 a.m., NWHP office, 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300, Reno.

**MAY 15** – EOR (Education, Outreach, and Review) Committee meeting – NWHP office, 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300, Reno. 1:30 p.m.

**JUNE 4** – Authors' Fundraising Luncheon Planning Committee meeting – NWHP office, 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300, Reno. 1:30 p.m.

**JUNE 7** – Pink Tea at Governor's Mansion, 606 Mountain Street, Carson City. 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Cost: \$30.00. Period dress welcomed. Invitations will be mailed in early May.

**JUNE 7** – Annual North Region Meeting – 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. To be held immediately after the Pink Tea in the Governor's Mansion Annex. All members are welcome to attend.

**JUNE 10** – Nevada Women's Fund Women of Achievement Luncheon. Grand Sierra Resort, Reno. 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tickets: \$100.00 each. Available at the Nevada Women's Fund office, 770 Smithridge Dr., Suite 300 or by calling 775-786-2335.

**AUG. 1 AND 2** – North Region Steering Committee Retreat at Mary Anne Convis' Mountain House. Friday p.m. to Saturday afternoon. Mary Anne Convis will contact members closer to the date.

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## Meet Our New State President Judge Dianne Steel



Judge Dianne Steel

Dianne Steel is the Nevada Women's History Project's newly elected State President. She is a resident of Las Vegas and is a very active member of the judiciary as well as our organization. We welcome her as our new state leader and look forward to working with her on our many state projects.

Judge Steel received her Jurist Doctorate Degree in 1990 and was the sole practitioner/owner of Pro Per Support Services. Pro Per Support

Services helped people representing themselves who needed legal assistance/guidance.

In 1995 she served as Assemblywomen for the Nevada State Legislature. After a short tenure in the State Legislature she worked as Chief of Staff for the Lieutenant Governor's Office under Dr. Lonnie Hammargren.

In 1996, Judge Steel was elected District Judge to serve in the Family Division, Department G.

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## Pink Tea Scheduled for Saturday, June 7

Please note that the date for the Pink Tea has been changed from May 24th to June 7th at the Governor's Mansion in Carson City from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

We will have our Annual Meeting in the large room that is next door to the Mansion starting at 3:30 p.m. If you cannot come to the Tea, please try to make the Annual Meeting.

"The Pink Tea is a really special event for our group as we are one of the few organizations to have a function in the Mansion. The cost is \$30.00 per person. Period dress is welcome. Invitations will be mailed early in May.

We hope to see you June 7th.

*Mary Anne Convis, Northern Region Chair*



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## NWHP State Membership Report

Thank you to all who have sent your 2008 membership dues. If you have forgotten and not yet renewed, please do so as we need your support. I know all of us belong to multiple organizations and forget when and to whom we paid dues. It is always exciting to have new members join our organization. There are nine new members in the South and eleven in the North. Maybe you have a friend that you think might be interested in joining. There are 187 paid members statewide for 2008.

*Betty Miller, Membership Chair*

## Meet Our New State President Judge Dianne Steel

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Her case loads have included, Adoptions, Name Changes, Paternity, Child Support, Divorces, Annulments, Child Custody, Alimony, Juvenile Delinquency and, Drug Court.

Currently Judge Steel presides over approximately 46% of the Abuse and Neglect cases which includes Foster Care Review Cases and Termination of Parental Rights plus a full case load of Minor Guardianships.

Accomplishments include serving as Presiding Judge, Family Division from 2000 to 2002. Since the inception of the Eighth Judicial District Court Pro Bono Foundation in 1998 she served as its President until 2002. As a member of the Nevada District Judges Association she served as President 2001-2002.

Judge Steel is married and has one daughter, age 13. Dora is a student member of NWHP.

## Calendar

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**AUG. 26** – Jean Ford Memorial Hike in remembrance of the 10th anniversary of Jean's death. Tahoe Rim Trail, north trailhead at Spooner's Summit, highway 50 between Carson City and Lake Tahoe. Details in August 2008 NWHP newsletter.

**SEPT. 13** – Alley Tour of Reno led by NWHP member Tamara Buzick. Details in August 2008 NWHP newsletter.

### Southern Nevada Schedule

**MAY 3** – Southern Region's luncheon meeting. 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Location: Marie Calendar's Restaurant, 4800 S. Eastern Ave. Speaker: Dr. Su Fawn Chung on Contributions of Asian-American Women in Nevada. Also to be honored are Roll of Honor awardees, Dr. Joanne Goodwin and Dr. Caryl Dziedziak. Call Mary Gafford at 648-9415 for reservations.

**MAY 17** - Heldorado Parade entry for Heldorado Day, Las Vegas.

**JUNE 14** – Flag Day celebration at Lorenzi Park at Twin Lakes Drive and West Washington Blvd., 9:00 a.m.

**JULY 11** – 2008 Super Summer Theatre Board member and So. Region Board member Mary Gafford is hosting the NWHP-South Region to PICNIC AT THE PARK and the "1776" musical honoring July 4th - 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at Spring Mountain Ranch State Park. Please call Mary Gafford at 648-9415 for directions.

**JULY 19** – Support League of Women Voters of Las Vegas in their participation of Women's Suffrage Day festivities.

**AUG. 9** – Southern Region Board meeting. 1:00 p.m. at the home of Mary Gafford, 5713 West Balzar Ave., Las Vegas. Please call Mary for directions at 648-9415.

**SEPT. 6** – Southern Region fall meeting. 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Location: Marie Calendar's Restaurant, 4800 S. Eastern Ave. Program TBA.



# *NWHP Outgoing State Committee President's Message*



As I start this message I realize that it is the last time that I will write it because your new State Committee President, Dianne Steel, will author this column for the next two years. My term of offices has come and gone very quickly—it seems only recently that Joan LeMere handed the reins over to me at the conference luncheon in Las Vegas after the dedication of the Sarah Winnemucca statue there.

Although this administration's committee didn't have such a grandiose project as the Washington DC Sarah statue, we did manage to accomplish at least two things that should make the organization easier to manage in the future.

First, we revised the NWHP Operations Guide, with an eye to making job descriptions simpler, and to minimizing the amount of paperwork involved for each officer. We hope that the guidelines will be a vital document, easier to understand and follow, and easier to change with the times as future committees see fit.

Second, our archivist, Carrie Porter, devised a workable retention schedule for all of the paperwork that is necessarily generated in the day-to-day workings of any organization. The schedule tells us which papers need to be saved, how long they need to be kept, when and where to send them and what to do with them when they are no longer needed. Anything that eliminates paperwork is welcome indeed.

The State Executive Committee meets officially only twice a year, alternating locations north and south. Occasionally something will come up between meetings which needs to be dealt with promptly, so in years past business had sometimes been conducted by telephone. Now, these situations are more easily handled by e-mail. I realized that in these cases, there wasn't any way of recording important decisions made outside of the actual meetings, so I added another heading to the agenda format. Along with "ongoing business" and "new business", I inserted "interim business conducted by e-mail since last meeting". That way the minutes record anything that happened since the last minutes, and hopefully nothing will "slip through the cracks".

As this is my "presidential swan song" I want to thank the other officers on the committee who have served the past two years. They are: Betty Miller, second vice president; Holly Van Valkenburgh, third vice-president; Patti Bernard, secretary; and Su Kim, treasurer. Thanks also to Jane Olive who started out as first vice-president but resigned due to pressing responsibilities and to Linda Miller who graciously stepped up and finished Jane's term of office.

According to the NWHP Guidelines the State Presidency is to alternate between the Northern and Southern regions, so I am happy to welcome Dianne Steel, from Las Vegas, as the incoming State Executive Committee President. She introduces herself to us in another article in this newsletter. Also new to this committee as an elected officer is Lisa Marie Lightfoot, from Carson City, as first vice-president. She has been an appointed member of the committee as webmaster. We appreciate Betty, Holly, Patti and Su Kim, who were elected to serve another term in their respective offices.

My husband, Fred, and I are moving from Nevada in May. Although I won't be here in person, my heart will always be in Nevada and I will keep in close touch with the Nevada Women's History Project via the newsletter and website. Thank you all for your support and your friendship during our time in this special state.

*Cherry Jones, State Committee President*

## *"Herstory Affair" Well Attended*

"Return to Elegance" was the theme of our spring luncheon. The Nevada Women's History Project held the 3rd Annual "Herstory Affair" on April 19, 2008. The purpose of the luncheon was to honor our members and invite new members to attend. The party was held at the "Holly House", a beautiful colonial home in Reno on a majestic Skyline hill.

The home is owned by Donna Sweger, who graciously let us have our luncheon there. Donna is the daughter of Joyce Ellen Sweger, now deceased. Joyce bought the famous home in 1983 and extensively remodeled and enlarged it. The house throughout its history, and especially during the years Joyce Sweger owned it, was a site of many fancy parties and fund raisers.

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## News From the South

Our last general meeting March 1, "Celebrating the Life and Times of Helen J. Stewart" with Helen Mortenson presenting, was a huge success. We had an all time high of over forty people. One item brought up was a monument to Helen J. Stewart that the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort had been contemplating for several years. They had previously contacted our state organization about this for help. With such an inspiring presentation, many participants were moved to proceed and help the Fort with their plans. Mary Gafford has been doing an outstanding job of coordinating the efforts of other organizations such as the Mesquite Club (where Helen was a founding member) and Classic Las Vegas.

Unfortunately, I was the only one attending the State Conference in Carson City, entitled "Women In Transportation". I was impressed with all the presentations especially those done in costume. The following day was the State Executive Board meeting. It was decided that the award for the Teacher of the Year would be increased to \$500. It was hoped that people would make donations to help pay for the increased award.

Our slate of officers for next year has been set. They include: President Mary Gafford, 1st Vice President Bette Ault (programs); 2nd Vice President Joan Le Mere (membership), Corresponding Secretary Yvonne Kelly, Recording Secretary Bev O'Connor and Treasurer Mary Margaret Rhea. I appreciate these talented people stepping up and carrying this organization forward. A final executive board meeting was held at my house April 12 with both the incoming and outgoing members invited.

Our final general meeting of my presidential tenure will be May 3 at Marie Callendar's. Professor Sue Fawn Chung of UNLV will talk about Asian American women in celebration of Asian history month. Su Kim Chung nominated Dr. Joanne Goodwin of the Women's Research Institute of Nevada at UNLV and Caryll Batt Dziedziak for the Roll of Honor. They will also be recognized at the meeting. Installation of officers will follow.

*Linda Karen Miller, Outgoing President, NWHP So. Region*

## News From the North

I am thrilled to be working with such an energetic group of people, all of whom are interested in women's history. We had a wonderful conference; "the best-ever" was a comment heard often. Our group will have dedicated the stanchion at the National Women's History Museum in Washington, D.C. by the time you read this.

"We have long recognized our need for raising funds for our on-going expenses. Our online biographies are a continuing project that we add to regularly. Because of this need we have scheduled an Authors' Brunch in November. We hope to have a world-famous mystery writer as our featured guest. We will be asking all of you to help with this project.

We received the income from the Jean Ford Memorial in April. For those of you who are new, a memorial fund was established when Jean died with contributions from all over the state. We get the income from that trust, which is under the guidance of the Nevada Women's Fund.

We are thrilled to announce that Isabel Espinoza is our Woman of Achievement this year. Her latest great accomplishment was the conference - more about Isabel after the event.

The date for the Pink Tea has been changed to June 7th from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. We will have the annual meeting on that date after the Pink Tea. One look at the calendar will explain why we chose to combine those two events.

I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

*Mary Anne Convis, North Region Chair*

## Women's History Month Celebrated on the UNR Campus

Nevada Women's History Project North members attended and participated in a memorable evening to celebrate Women's History Month sponsored by Northern Nevada Women Lawyers Association and Pack Paws, a booster group dedicated to the promoting and advancing of women's athletic programs at UNR. One of our goals this year is to share in activities presented by our organizational members and to team with them for events. Katjana Vadeboncoeur of Living Voices performed a multimedia presentation on the women's suffrage movement. Members of the legal profession were honored as were women in Nevada athletics. Those honored were Senior Nevada Supreme Court Justice Miriam Sheering, Frankie Sue Del Papa, Justice of the Peace Patricia Lynch, University of Nevada Athletics Director Cary Groth and Dr. Angela Taylor, a former Wolfpack athlete who also served as Assistant Vice President for Alumni Relations at University of Nevada. NNWLA was also honored for promoting women's athletics and fostering Title IX compliance. Local women artists presented an exhibit of their work.

*Kathleen F. Noneman*



## *Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales Receives Award in Maryland*



Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales  
Photo Credit: Jeanie Hendryx  
(Maryland portrait artist)

NWHP member and former newsletter editor (1996) Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales recently was awarded the honor of being named as one of the 2008 Maryland's Top 100 Women. A recognition ceremony and celebration will be held on May 12th in Baltimore.

In October 2007 she was appointed by Maryland Governor O'Malley to the Maryland Health Care Commission. She is a licensed attorney in Maryland and serves as an Associate at the Baltimore City offices of Ober, Kaler, Grimes & Shriver..

Sylvia earned two degrees in journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno prior to moving to Maryland where she obtained her Juris Doctor degree from the George Washington University National Law Center. Her journalistic career encompassed both the print and broadcast media and included work as freelance feature writer, book and newsletter editor, literary translator, television producer, documentary producer/director, and media consultant.

In Nevada, her most outstanding work was the one-hour PBS special "Making a Difference: A Celebration of Women in Politics," which first aired in February 1995.

Congratulations, Sylvia from all members of NWHP. We're so proud of you!

*Kay Sanders, Editor*

## *Program on Helen J. Stewart Offered at NWHP Southern Region's meeting*



Linda Miller as Helen J. Stewart and  
Helen Mortenson

Location of NWHP-So. Region's Saturday, March 2nd luncheon meeting was Marie Callender's Restaurant, 4800 South Eastern in the Garden Room. President Dr. Linda Miller called the meeting to order at noon. So. Region Board member Doris Drummond led the Pledge; the inspirational thought was presented by President Miller.

Guests, acknowledged by Vice President Mary Gafford, included Carol Cohen's daughters Florence and Leslie, as well as Valerie Guillory, Nancy Jangl, Karen Lampus, and Acanora Mashkan.

Members who have recently joined So. Region were introduced. They include Kay Miller Browne, Margie Conway, Norma Price, Marge Rea, and Barbara Senninger..BettyMiller, board member in charge of membership, noted dues now are due. So. Region Treasurer Su Kim Chung stated that 41 persons were attending the luncheon.

After a delightful lunch and PIE, Helen Mortenson from Friends of Old Mormon Fort gave an informative program on the life of Helen J. Stewart. Among attentive attendees was former NWHP State President Joan LeMere. Also attending were Marlene Adrian, Bette Ault, Dorothy Bokelmann, Carol Cohen, Gwen Den Dooven, Alice Eubank, Bernice Fisher, Sandy Frank, Dr. Patricia Geuder, Mary Ann Hantout, Susan Houston, Patricia McNutt, Mollie Murphy, Beverly O'Connor, past So. Region President Jane Olive, Mimi Rodden, Nancy Sansone, Stina Schloss, Jean Spiller, Sally Wathen, and Blanche Zucker. After the very informative program, all attendees had a revived respect for one of the pioneer women of Nevada: Helen J. Stewart.

*Mary Gafford, Vice President, NWHP-Southern Region*



# Highlights of the 2008 NWHP State Conference



Nell Fozard and Marcia Cuccaro  
performing in the skit

The March 7-8, 2008, NWHP State Conference started off with a bang in highlighting the theme – On the Move – Women in Transportation. Susan Martinovich, Director for the Nevada Department of Transportation, opened the evening with an informative talk on women highway engineers after Rev. Jane Foraker-Thompson gave the invocation. An entertaining and humorous skit closed the evening with NWHP members Karen Benna, Marcia Cuccaro, Nell Fozard, Cherry Jones, Susan Paslov, Heidi Wood, and Holly Van Valkenburgh presenting the history of Nevada suffrage as related to modes of transportation. Eileen Cohen announced the scenes.

At promptly 9:00 a.m., after registration on Saturday morning, conference participants gathered to hear the first of 13 fabulous presentations. Dr. Holly Walton-Buchanan's talk on pioneer women in aviation featured Florence Murphy of Southern Nevada. Florence's Bonanza Airlines flew routes between Nevada and Arizona for several decades. It was one of her landing strips that evolved into the present McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas.

Dr. Dene Chabot, a recognized long distance airplane racer in her own right, spoke about W.W. II women aviators. Her enthusiastic presentation painted a vivid picture of unsung women heroes ferrying huge airplanes solo from the U.S. to overseas airfields for male pilots and their crews to take into the war zones.



Sue Paslov, the Anti-Suffragette

Bannock War. She is credited with saving at least seventy-five of her people, including her father, Chief Winnemucca, with that momentous ride.

The group broke to enjoy a delicious catered lunch from Molly's while harpist Brenda Locke-Knight provided entertainment. The conference then reconvened with introduction of the 2008 Roll of Honor recipients by State President Cherry Jones. Patty Cafferata was introduced and presented with a certificate. Barbara Hodges followed with a program describing the histories of some early Nevada women drivers, as shown by application dates on their driver's licenses.

Carrie Porter took us on a Mormon hand cart journey as she portrayed Mary Anne Haffen who traveled from Iowa to Utah in 1860. This arduous type of travel required a strong desire to travel west as well as a stalwart constitution.

The sage of "Rusty" Dow's Alcan Highway then followed with Cherry Jones recounting Rusty's journey of the entire Alaskan Alcan Highway in 1944.

Betty Ifhe's wonderful presentation described a slice of little known American



Karen Benna

Tammy Buzick carried on the women in transportation theme by discussing the history of Eilley Orrum Bowers from the perspective of the variety of transcontinental sea and land methods she might have experienced in her lifetime. Washoe County Transportation employee Allison Graber's presentation emphasized the scarcity of information to be found on women in bus and trucking vocations. This is an area of women's history that definitely needs to be addressed by historians.

Dr. Sally Zanjani ended the morning by recounting the strenuous three day, 220 mile horseback ride that Sarah Winnemucca made in her attempt to save her people during the 1878



Holly Van Valkenburgh as Anne  
Martin

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History. "Harvey Girls", possibly the forerunner of the airline stewardesses, were a group of pioneer waitresses stationed in restaurants along the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad from the late 1800's through the early 1950's.

Heidi Wood recounted the hazardous races of four-times Iditarod Sled Dog Racer Susan Butcher. In describing this 1,131 mile race through Arctic blizzards across the Alaskan wilderness, conference participants gained a greater appreciation of sled dog racing. Holly Van Valkenburgh followed up with a talk about courageous women teamsters who handled freight wagons and stagecoaches on the western frontier. Sparks Heritage Museum volunteers, Beverly Railey and Louise White closed the afternoon session with their presentation concerning the family life of a railroad engineer in early Sparks.

Dinner was held at the Silver Oaks Golf Club. Cherry Jones introduced the new state officers. Culminating the conference was a wonderful Chautauqua presentation by Kathy Noneman. She portrayed Alice Huyler Ramsey, the first woman to drive across the United States in 1910.

Co-chairs Isabel Espinoza and Lisa-Marie Lightfoot are to be congratulated for planning such an outstanding event! Thanks also to Gwen Clancy who videotaped the conference.

*Patti Bernard*

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### *"Herstory Affair" Well Attended*

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The party guests experienced a by-gone era of elegance and classic beauty, as well as tasty food by our members. The distinguished performers and talent were: Betty Rich, a concert pianist who has played in Europe, played with the Reno Philharmonic, and with many local venues. We had two Chautauqua performers from our organization, Eileen Cohen, as Hannah Clapp, and Holly Van Valkenburgh, as Dr. Jeanne Weir. Also, our NWHP Northern Nevada Chair, Mary Anne Convis, discussed upcoming events and answered questions about our organization.

We wish to thank Donna Sweger for opening up her home to our organization. We are happy to report that an elegant time was had by all!

*Karen Benna*

## *Newspaper Series Celebrates Nevada Women's History Month*

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In March, 2008, the Reno Gazette Journal published 25 mini-biographies highlighting the historic achievements of Nevada's women, in honor of Women's History Month this year. Their stories were condensed to 250-word articles from the much longer documents found on the Nevada Women's History Project website at [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org). Every day except Sunday, a Nevada woman was prominently featured in the "Neighbors and Voices" section of the Reno newspaper. The multicultural series started with Lubertha Johnson, southern Nevada's first African American nurse and civil rights activist, and ended with pioneer midwife and healer, Mary Oxborrow.

On Sundays, UNR journalism student Nonie Wainwright provided a series of feature articles for the "Living" section of the Gazette Journal on contemporary international women currently teaching at UNR: diving coach Jian Li You from China, social work professor Alice Boateng from Ghana and author and director of the UNR Latino Research Center, Emma Sepulveda from Chile. In addition, Gazette Journal reporters filed stories on International Women's Day festivities and several prominent Reno women: Carolyn Carlon, one of Nevada's first women law enforcement officers and Roz Parry the area's first female television anchor.

Many thanks go to the following volunteer mini-bio writers from the Nevada Women's History Project and the Reno American Association of University Women: Donna Clontz, Nancy Cummings, Betty Glass, Claudia Hoffer, Cherry Jones, Kathy Noneman, Nancy Oakley, Kay Sanders, Liz Sheppard, Bobbie Talso, Holly Van Valkenburgh and Nonie Wainwright.

As the organizer and chief editor of this project this year, I really looked forward to reading the newspaper every morning even though I had condensed and edited many of the pieces that appeared. There's just something special about seeing a piece you've worked on in print and knowing that thousands of others are reading it for the very first time and learning about a fantastic Nevada woman. So, how many of you out there would like to join in the fun next year and help condense and edit some biographies for Women's History Month 2009? Please contact Kay Sanders at 775-747-1740 or [ksanders@unr.nevada.edu](mailto:ksanders@unr.nevada.edu).

*Donna Clontz*



# *Featured Historic Nevada Woman:*

## *Lilly Hing Fong*

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**Born:** June 17, 1925

**Died:** March 20, 2002

**Maiden Name:** Hing

**Married:** Wing Fong

**Children:** One son, one daughter

**Race/nationality/ethnic background:** Chinese

**Primary city and county of residence and work:** Las Vegas (Clark County)

**Major field of work:** Education (teacher), University Regent, UNLV and Community College of Southern Nevada benefactor

**Other role identities:** Wife, mother, public service

### **Biography:**

Lilly Fong was eldest of ten children born to Helen and Ong Chun Hing. Lilly's father immigrated to the United States in 1912 and with family members opened restaurants in the Phoenix area. In 1921 he established a branch of the American Kitchen Restaurant in Superior, Arizona that was half restaurant and half grocery store. Lilly's mother Helen was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, but returned to China in 1903 where she lived until she became a 'picture bride'. Before they had met in person the couple was married in a traditional Buddhist ceremony in 1921. Ong left his new bride in China for two years while he completed the first home built by an Asian American in Arizona. It was located adjacent to the business. In 1925 Lilly was born in Superior, Arizona. In 1930 Helen took her five-year old daughter and three younger siblings to China to care for her ailing mother.

Lilly spent the next seven years in China where she began her education. She reported that children played marbles, checkers and hopscotch for fun, while in the classroom they memorized the last will and testament of Sun Yat-Sen. They also explored the history of the dynasties and the birth of the Chinese Republic while the ethical and moral teachings of Confucius also were a part of the

curriculum. In addition, manipulating the abacus, executing lines and strokes of calligraphy and painting dragons on bamboo with a brush were learned. Lilly felt that her Chinese instruction was 'firmly grounded'.

In 1937 when the war with Japan began, Lilly's father brought the family back to Arizona. He was a firm believer in education and she often recalled his quote, "Confucius said education is the equalizer of all. It knows no distinction in class. If I give you money you would spend it, so I am going to give you an education that is going to last for life." Their parents worked and sacrificed so this would become possible and eventually all ten children in the Hing family earned degrees in various fields.

Lilly felt that, although she was a girl, she was treated as well as the first-born son who arrived several years later. She reported that she encountered outward discrimination and social ostracism experienced by the Chinese-Americans in California and Nevada only after she left Superior. Lilly was the first child in this family to earn a college degree and graduated from Arizona State University in Tempe. She met her future husband, Wing Fong, while he was a student at Woodbury College in California and they were married in 1950. They made their home in Las Vegas where he became a manager for the Las Vegas Bottling Co. and later opened Fong's Gardens Restaurant that became a favorite

eating establishment of local residents. Meanwhile, he also became active in banking and real estate.

Lilly was the first Asian American to be hired by the Clark County School District and taught for five years at the Fifth Street Elementary and West Charleston schools. In 1952 she was recognized as an outstanding teacher in Clark County. In 1955 a son, Kenneth was born, followed by a daughter, Susan who joined the family in 1957. Because of her active involvement at her children's elementary school she was given a lifetime membership in



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## *Featured Historic Nevada Woman: Lilly Hing Fong*

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the West Charleston PTA and was honored as Clark County's Mother of the Year.

In 1957, she and her husband, Wing, donated two days' business proceeds to the library at UNLV. In the 1960's, while raising money for the Performing Arts Center, she convinced major donors, such as Judy Bayley and Artemus Ham Jr., to financially support the endeavor. Consequently, when these facilities were opened in 1970 they were named for the exceptionally generous donors.

During the 1970's she began making annual donations for academic and athletic scholarships. In 1974 Lilly was elected and served as a Regent for the University of Nevada System where she remained for ten years. One of her many accomplishments during this time was to establish an endowment fund for the first Chinese Language Program at UNLV, made possible in part because she donated her per diem stipend as a Regent to the program. During this period of time she initiated the first Excellence in Student Teaching Awards in the College of Education. The Outstanding Professor of the Year also can be attributed to her suggestion. In addition, through her efforts, Tonopah Dorm was saved and consequently was turned into offices and classrooms for the Colleges of Business and Hotel Administration.

In 1980, at age 55, she earned her Master's Degree in Education and in 1982 was chosen UNLV Alumnus of the Year. From 1982-1984 with her insight and vision for the future of the institution, she was instrumental in raising three million dollars for Beam Hall, as well as for the Engineering and Computer Science Schools. In recognition of this the Nevada Society of Professional Engineers later honored her as a Partner for Progress. Subsequently the geo-science building was renamed in her honor. Because of her appreciation for art and through her further financial endeavors, it became possible, with private contributions, to fund the Oldenburg Flashlight and the Rita Abbey original murals in the Performing Arts Centers. By means of her fund raising abilities Alta Ham Hall was funded by three quarters of a million dollars. In 1984, she and her husband, Wing, donated a quarter of a million dollars to UNLV and the Clark County Community College.

Lilly Fong was active in many community affairs. She was Past State President of the American Association of University Women and served on the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women as Education Vice Chairman. She was a member of the U.S. Small Business Advisory Council, a member of Opportunity Village's advisory board, and a member of the Las Vegas Symphony Board of Directors as well.

In recognition of *their* many years of service to the Las Vegas community a Clark County school is named Wing and Lilly Fong. Lilly died on March 20, 2002 at age 76 after many years of devotion to the importance of and belief in the value of education as preached to her by her father while she was growing up.

*Biographical sketch written by Dorothy Bokelmann and researched by Jean Spiller, March 2008.*

### **Sources of Information:**

1. Fong, Lilly. "My Roots: The Story of a 20th Century Chinese-American Family". *Gold Hill News*.
2. Patton, Natalie. "Fong, former member of Board of Regents, dies". *Las Vegas Review Journal*, March 31, 2002.
3. Clark County School District Naming of School Facilities file. Letters from Ken Fong, Jim Miller, and Vernon Burk, and the School Dedication & Reception Program.

## *An Invite to NWHP Members*

Sometimes it bears repeating that all members are most welcome to our NWHP North Steering Committee meetings that are held throughout the year.

If you have a concern or just wish to watch your officers in action, please feel free to join us. As we often meet at a committee member's house because of the small office space, we would ask that you call one of the North Region Committee members whose names are listed on the back of the NEWSLETTER or call or email the State office to leave a message for someone to contact you as to the meeting location and time. That telephone number is 786-2335 and Email is NWHP@pyramid.net. Meeting intervals are approximately every two months.

*Patti Bernard, Secretary, North Region Steering Committee*



## *Joanne Peden Chosen for the NWHP Roll of Honor*

One of the most recent additions to the Nevada Woman's History Project Roll of Honor is Joanne Peden. She has made a tremendous impact within our state in the research and documentation of Nevada Indian culture. She has served in such capacities as videographer, editor, producer and director of numerous documentary films. Most notable was producing, co-directing, and writing the award winning documentary, "That Was Happy Life: A Paiute Woman Remembers". This University of Nevada Oral History Program sponsored film featured 97 year old Pyramid Lake Paiute Elder Katie Frazier who was born just three generations after Anglo-Americans began to enter her homeland of northwestern Nevada.

Other films that JoAnne has done reflecting Nevada Indian life were "Tah Gum: the Washoe Pine-Nut Harvest" which documented the tribe's annual tradition of pine nut harvesting and a film made to accompany the Nevada State Museum interactive exhibit, "Under One Sky". Her most recent UNR Oral History sponsored project, "People of the Marsh" documents the activities of the Northern Paiute "Cattail-Eaters" of the Carson Sink in Nevada. This award winning video was shown at the 2006 Smithsonian Film Festival. It has been aired on public television stations and continues to be viewed in classrooms, libraries and cultural gatherings.

JoAnne, a Spokane a Washington native, moved to Reno in 1973. In 1985 she began her participation in Nevada Indian communities as a VISTA worker at the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. "That experience is the source of my delight in Nevada's Indian people and the desire to understand their culture-historic to the present, a desire that continues to this day," she said in explaining her next association with the UNR Oral History program.

In addition to her videography, she is also employed by The Nevada Urban Indian Association as a Washoe Education Indian Education High School Advisor. In this capacity she oversees the educational progress of Washoe County urban high school Indian students.

JoAnne's two grandchildren who live in the Reno area also keep her busy. She is quite proud of Katie, a UNR freshman UNR Millennium Scholar and Jessie, a senior at Spanish Springs High School. One might also find her at an Indian gathering at the McDermitt Indian Reservation, the Paiute-Indian Reservation in Fallon or the former Stewart Indian School at Carson City. A film on that historical institution is in the planning stage. When JoAnne finds she has a moment or two of spare time, her love of reading or passion for gardening takes center state.

Most recently JoAnne has become a NWHP Oral History Committee volunteer and in the capacity of Videographer and Advisor, she helped produce video oral histories of Paiute Elder Francis Hooper, Shoshone Elder Leona Hicks and former University of Nevada Home Economics Dean and Nevada State Legislator, Pat Tripple. JoAnne's talents are indeed a welcome addition to our ongoing mission of collecting oral histories of Nevada women.

## *A Celebration of Women in Law, Athletics, and Art*

Nevada Women's History Project North members attended and participated in a memorable evening to celebrate Women's History Month sponsored by Northern Nevada Women Lawyers Association and Pack Paws, a booster group dedicated to the promoting and advancing of women's athletic programs at UNR. One of our goals this year is to share in activities presented by our organizational members and to team with them for events. Katjana Vadeboncoeur of Living Voices performed a multimedia presentation on the women's suffrage movement. Members of the legal profession were honored as were women in Nevada athletics. Those honored were Senior Nevada Supreme Court Justice Miriam Sheering, Frankie Sue Del Papa, Justice of the Peace Patricia Lynch, University of Nevada Athletics Director Cary Groth and Dr. Angela Taylor, a former Wolfpack athlete who also served as Assistant Vice President for Alumni Relations at University of Nevada. NNWLA was also honored for promoting women's athletics and fostering Title IX compliance. Local women artists presented an exhibit of their work.

*Kathleen F. Noneman*



## Thanks:

- A belated thanks to our wonderful donors. They are: Cyndee McMullen, Marlena Hellwinkel, Anita Eftimoff, Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales, Barbara Vucanovich, Mona Reno, Grace Davis, Dinah Jordan, Peggy Etchemendy, Margaret Thomsen, Mary Lee Fulkerson, Elizabeth Anderson, Patti Cafferata, Martha Gould, and the Twentieth Century Club. Your support is very much appreciated!!

## Thanks to:

- Cherry Jones, our Outstanding Outgoing State President. She did a great job in heading our organization. We wish her all the best in her new location and hope to see her at some of our future events.

## Celebration:

- Long-time Southern Nevada member Gene Segerblom recently was honored by the city of Boulder City on her 90th birthday. We join them in wishing her a Very Happy Birthday and Great Year Ahead!

## Condolences to:

- The family of Harriet Smith, an NWHP member who passed away in Las Vegas. Also, our sincere sympathy to members Patricia McNutt, and Billie Kenney, both of whom recently lost their husbands.

## Good Feedback:

- The series of articles taken from our Web site on historic Nevada women, condensed and printed in the Reno Gazette-Journal during National Women's History Month, was greatly appreciated by an elementary school teacher in Reno who wrote to express her appreciation for them. They will be part of her Nevada history unit for the coming school year.

PLEASE INFORM THE STATE MEMBERSHIP CHAIR AND YOUR REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP CHAIR OF ANY CHANGES IN YOUR ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, AND/OR E-MAIL ADDRESS. BETTY MILLER'S ADDRESS IS: 2633 LEGEND DR., LAS VEGAS, NV 89134-8810. IN THE NORTH PLEASE ALSO NOTIFY GRACE DAVIS AT: NWHP, 770 SMITHRIDGE DR., SUITE 300, RENO, NV 89502.

Articles for the August 2008 newsletter are due to Newsletter Editor, Kay Sanders, no later than July 25, 2008. E-mail her at [ksanders@unr.nevada.edu](mailto:ksanders@unr.nevada.edu).

# NWHP Leadership

## NORTHERN REGION STEERING COMMITTEE:

Mary Anne Convis: Chair  
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Vice-Chair  
Holly Van Valkenburgh: Treasurer  
Patti Bernard: Secretary  
Kay Sanders: Communication Co-Chair  
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Communication Co-Chair  
Isabel Espinoza: Finance Chair  
Grace Davis: Membership Chair  
Carrie Townley Porter: Project Review Chair  
Carleen Ernest and Karen Benna: Program Chairs  
Cherry Jones: Past Chair

## SOUTHERN REGION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mary Gafford: President  
Betty Ault: First Vice President  
Joan LeMere: Second Vice President  
Bev O'Connor: Recording Secretary  
Yvonne Kelly: Corresponding Secretary  
Mary Margaret Rhea: Treasurer

## NWHP STATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dianne Steel: President  
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: First Vice-President  
Betty Miller: Second Vice-President  
Holly Van Valkenburgh: Third Vice-President  
Su Kim Chung: Treasurer  
Patti Bernard: Secretary  
Denise Yoxsimer: Nevada Women's Fund Representative  
Kay Sanders: Editor for State Newsletter  
Lisa-Marie Lightfoot: Webmaster  
Carrie Porter: Archivist

WEB SITE: [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org)

## Some NWHP News Contacts

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**South:** P.O. Box 12184 • Las Vegas, NV 89112-0184

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Editor: Kay Sanders





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### Membership Application

Individual Membership: Dues \$25/Year • Student Membership: Dues \$15/Year

Organizational Membership: Dues \$50/Year

Corporate Sponsor: Dues \$250/Year

Name: Individual or Student \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Organization or Corporate Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

President or Director \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Representative to NWHP \_\_\_\_\_

Make a Donation to NWHP:  Amount sent

Mail to NWHP: North members - 770 Smithridge Dr., Ste., 300, Reno, NV 89502

South members - 2633 Legend Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89134-8810.

### *New & Rejoined Members*

Eileen Brown  
Aggie Canfield  
Dane Chabot-Fence  
Lesley Cohen  
Pat Cuellar  
Nancy Cummings  
Margie Evans  
Valerie Guillory  
Maggie Hinton  
Dora Leanne Ivanov  
Joyce King  
Linda Langdon  
Susan Martinovich  
Melanie Massey  
Marie McMillan  
Mary Kozlowski Pichot  
Elizabeth Rassiga  
Betty Rumford  
Deborah Schumacher  
Kathleen Thompson  
Larma Volk  
Nancy Zangl





## 2008 Ballot for NWHP Northern Region Steering Committee

The NWHP Northern Region Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following slate of nominees for the coming term commencing at the Regional Annual Meeting. These positions must be filled by election and it is your privilege as a member of the NWHP to let your vote count. You may either vote for the listed nominees or you have the opportunity to write in additional candidates. Please be advised that before you can add a name, you must have that person's written permission to do so.

Terms of office are two (2) years.

### NORTHERN REGION

Chair: Mary Anne Convis  
Vice-Chair: Holly Walton-Buchanan  
Secretary: Patti Bernard  
Treasurer: Holly Van Valkenburgh

I accept this slate as nominated \_\_\_\_\_  
Your signature

I propose the following alternatives: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your signature (attach written permission)

Please mail your completed ballot by June 1, 2008 to:  
NWHP, 770 Smithridge Dr., Ste. 300, Reno, NV 89502 or FAX: 775-786-8152









## QUESTIONNAIRE

MAY 2008

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 1:** Would you prefer to receive the NWHP Newsletter digitally?

☐ YES

☐ NO

*Rationale:* Due to increased costs of production, the NWHP Newsletter Committee is considering recommending that members download and print the digital version available on our Web site. Members who do not have computer and printer access would continue to receive paper copies via mail.

**Question 2:** Volunteer opportunities: Please check all areas of interest to you.

- ☐ Office assistance
- ☐ Membership
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Program planning
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Archives (papers, records, photos, etc.)
- ☐ Education (conferences, seminars, workshops, presentations)
- ☐ Living history, Chautauqua, drama
- ☐ Oral history: tapes, manuscripts, videos
- ☐ Research and writing biographies
- ☐ Tours, field trips
- ☐ HerStory, Pink Tea
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 3:** Ideas and suggestions for consideration by the officers and committee members of the Nevada Women's History Project.

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Thank you for your participation.

***Please fill out and return this form to:***

NWHP, 770 Smithridge Drive, Suite 300, Reno, NV 89502

**Deadline: June 1, 2008**



