

### Our Mission

To provide visibility and support for the gathering and dissemination of history about the roles and contributions of Nevada women of every race, class, and ethnic background.

## 1996-2009, Thirteen Years of Dedication And a Famous Statue to Prove It!

Did you know that between 1960 and 2005 the only statue in the Capitol Rotunda representing the State of Nevada was that of Senator Pat McCarran (1876-1954)? Each state was allowed two spaces, so in 2001 our organization (only five years old at the time) started a campaign to erect a statue of Sarah Winnemucca (c. 1841-1891), a famous Paiute activist and educator in Nevada. Even when the Legislature agreed it should be done, they didn't allocate any funds, which were estimated to be over \$200,000. Undaunted, the Nevada Women's History Project raised \$235,000, which the Department of Cultural Affairs used to hire a young sculptor from South Dakota. His magnificent statue of Sarah, with the wind ruffling her buckskin skirt, was dedicated on March 9, 2005 in Washington, D.C. A duplicate statue stands in the State Capitol in Carson City, while smaller statues were dedicated in Las Vegas and Winnemucca. The plaque on the statue's base reads, "Defender of Human Rights, Educator, and Author of First Book by a Native Woman." Recently, the statue was selected as one of 24 to be displayed in the new Capitol Visitors' Center. (See Holly Van Valkenburgh's article in this newsletter about her trip to Washington to see Sarah in her new location.)

This is just one example of the hard



work and determination of the members of the NWHP, which has thrived – thanks to your support -- as a successful non-profit organization since 1996, furthering the cause of gathering and disseminating histories of Nevada

women. Our journey began after the late Jean Ford, a former Nevada Assemblywoman and Senator from Clark County, recognized that there was a serious lack of written material about the history of women in our state. To remedy this unacceptable situation, in 1995 she involved a core group of interested women to work on creating an organization dedicated to researching and writing about Nevada women. Fortunately, one of them was Fritsi Ericson, the first President and CEO of the Nevada Women's Fund. Fritsi invited our fledgling organization to become a program of the Nevada Women's Fund, thus enabling us to be officially ratified as a non-profit in January 1996. The NWHP office is still located within the headquarters of the Nevada Women's Fund in Reno.

In addition to our quarterly newsletter, the NWHP has published two books. The first, "Women in Nevada History – An Annotated Bibliography of Published Sources," came out in 2000 and was distributed to

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## Thirteen Years of Dedication

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schools and libraries in Nevada. It was the result of hard work by 90 members who reviewed over 600 books in a four month time span. The second book, "Skirts That Swept the Desert Floor" (2006), containing 100 biographies of Nevada women, was the result of years of work by our Southern Region members. Copies were sent to school libraries throughout the state.

Initially the Northern Region held monthly luncheon meetings called "Research Roundtables" at which speakers shared their research. Later, the Hannah Clapp Lecture Series in Carson City focused on presentations about historic Nevada women. Recently, planners in the north have included speakers in most of their monthly programs, interspersed occasionally with other activities such as walking tours. The Southern Region continues to hold luncheons featuring speakers of interest.

NWHP loves doing tours. The first Silver State Sampler Tour took place in October 1998 when two busloads of members and guests visited towns and sites in eastern and southern Nevada. This was so successful that several succeeding tours have been conducted, visiting such fascinating places as rural Nevada and the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, California. Walking tours in Reno include historic homes and women's clubhouses as well as seedy back alleys in the downtown casino area.

Jean Ford, our beloved leader, died in on August 26, 1998, prior to the first tour which she helped plan and had hoped to take. Jean was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer the fall of 1997. Always the active leader, she continued her

dedicated involvement with NWHP practically up to the day of her death. After her diagnosis, she served for a few months as NWHP State Coordinator, completed a "Saga of Nevada Women's Suffrage: 1869 – 1920" tour for schools in northern and eastern Nevada, and worked on the "Annotated Bibliography", all the while dealing with her illness. We honor her memory every year in August with a short hike to her final resting place near the Tahoe Rim Trail at the top of Spooner's Summit, Highway 50.

Our Web site, [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org), contains information about our organization, a calendar of events, our most recent newsletter, over 70 biographies of historic Nevada women, information on useful links, and instructions for researching, writing, and submitting biographies. The Jean Ford Research Center, located in our Reno office, houses files on hundreds of Nevada women in addition to photographs, newspaper clippings, books, oral histories, collections of CDs, VHS cassettes, and other related material. Funding from John Ben Snow Memorial Grants has enabled the Center and our Web site to continue.

The NWHP constantly strives to involve new members, with monthly programs and tours. Currently, we are providing training for oral histories and writing biographies. As we begin our 14<sup>th</sup> year, we encourage you and your friends to get serious about writing your stories, either your own autobiographies or those of your family members. There are many, many interesting Nevada women whose life experiences are waiting to be told.

Kay Sanders

## President's Message

A new year, new ideas, new goals. This is the year for change. Change can take many forms - change for the better or the worse. As the State President of our Nevada Women's History Project, I have had the chance to speak with members of both regions and have been given every indication of change for the better for history lovers in Nevada. Many celebrations this year will showcase historic women in our State.

Some statewide projects are also shaping up and I can hardly wait to have our next statewide meeting to review all the proposals for approval. Please take a moment and send any agenda items to my attention by February 28<sup>th</sup>, so we may take care of the business in an efficient and effective manner for all our members. In this, our 13<sup>th</sup> year, we need to pull together and ensure our continued success for future generations. The more we engage in support for our state and regional projects, the more information we preserve about the fabulous women we memorialize.

I am proud to be your State President. I am sure you know that the reputation of this organization is held in high esteem throughout the State of Nevada. You have made my job easier as I speak to members of other groups. This is due to all of us working for a common mission, often putting aside our personal opinions and busy schedules to lend a hand to our chosen tasks. Our network reaches many other social and civic groups because we have engaged in many successful projects that have fulfilled our mission. Let's keep up the good work we have begun and ensure a notable change for the better for each of us personally and for the State of Nevada as a whole. Thank you all for your hard work and sacrifice.

**Happy New Year!**

Judge Dianne Steel, State President



## Gene Segerblom—Featured NWHP Member (b. 1918)

Native Nevadan Gene (Genevieve) Segerblom has had many diverse professional experiences, all of them benefiting Nevada. Gene has been an educator (teaching high-school government and civics), a Boulder City councilwoman, a four-term State Assemblywoman and, with her artist/photographer husband, Cliff, a writer who has traveled the state and recorded its uniqueness for *Arizona Highways*, *Nevada Magazine*, *Family Circle*, *Popular Mechanics*, and other publications.

It's not surprising that Gene has spent several decades serving Nevada because service runs in her family. Her grandfather, W. J. Bell, was in the Nevada Legislature, and her mother, Hazel Bell Wines, was a Humboldt County Assemblywoman.

In addition to political service, Gene's family has made its mark on Nevada's history in other ways. Her grandfather Bell owned the Buckskin Mine near Winnemucca, her mother taught in a one-room schoolhouse in Humboldt County, and her father ran the last horse-drawn stage in Ruby Valley in Elko County. Born in Ruby Valley, Gene has lived many years in Boulder City, where she has aided the Boulder City Boys and Girls Club, served as advisor to the Boulder City Museum and Historical Association, and participated in the Boulder City Branch of the National Association of University Women.

Gene and her family moved to Salt Lake City when she was a baby, but the Great Depression brought them to the Reno area, where Gene attended junior high school. After graduating from high school in Winnemucca, Gene enrolled as a mechanical engineering student at the University of Nevada but

changed her major to education. Also attending the university was a young man who was an art major with a football scholarship. One year he was unable to go home to California for Thanksgiving, so the Wines family asked him, Cliff Segerblom by name, to share their holiday meal. Gene and Cliff stayed in contact, and, after graduation, Gene took a teaching job in Boulder City where, according to her contract, she could not marry. Their destiny together took its first step forward when Cliff was also lured to Boul-



der City by a job offer.

Cliff's career by then had led him to photography and he was hired as the chief photographer for the Bureau of Reclamation's Hoover Dam Project, working out of Boulder City. But Gene obeyed her contract and did not dare think of marriage until Cliff was hired to go to Panama to photograph a project to enlarge the canal's locks - a venture which ended with the onset of W. W. II. Gene and Cliff at last were married and went to Panama, where their first child, Robin, was born. Robin Segerblom Liggett is now a professor of architecture

at UCLA.

While in Panama, Gene worked for an American newspaper. "I needed a part-time job," she explained, "So I rewrote the news that came by cable from the States." That job was the first of her many writing assignments.

Finally, the Segerbloms returned to Boulder City where they had another child, Richard "Tick" Segerblom, who is now a Las Vegas attorney and an Assemblyman representing District 9. Tick's election means that he is a member of the only Nevada family with four members who have served in the legislature.

When the children were growing up, Gene and Cliff, with daughter and son in tow, roamed Nevada looking for stories. Gene wrote and Cliff photographed. This collaboration resulted in over 200 articles dealing with Nevada's history and geography and it also provided some memorable family vacations. According to Gene, they never passed up "a state park or a dirt road."

The late 1970s found Boulder City in the throes of a conflict over whether the city should initiate a controlled growth ordinance, which would divorce it from the building boom that Las Vegas was experiencing at that time. Gene says, "I felt we were running out of water, out of power, and did not have any definite plans where we were going to get any more, so I thought the ordinance was on the right track and said so. And people began hounding me to run." It was no surprise that the person who had taught the process of government to a great many local citizens was now running for a seat on the Boulder City Council.

Having won the seat, Gene began working with the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

*(Continued on page 6)*



## Northern Region Calendar

**Feb. 21 (Saturday):** "Reno Now and Then," historical presentation by Reno historians Neal Cobb and Jerry Fenwick. 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Bartley Ranch Regional Park, Reno. \$25 includes lunch; call Patti Bernard (826-3612) or Grace Davis (853-3200) to register.

**March 2 (Monday):** Northern Region Steering Committee meeting, 5:30 p.m., NWHP office, Reno.

**March 8 (Sunday):** International Women's Day Scholarship Dinner, hosted by Nevada AAUW, Nevada Women's Lobby, NWHP, and Delta Kappa Gamma. 6:30 p.m., Gold Dust West, 2171 Highway 50 East, Carson City; \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door. Frankie Sue Del Papa is keynote speaker; Holly Van Valkenburgh will portray Anne Martin. To register, fill out the registration form in this issue (page 7) and mail to Donna Clontz (747-5452, [donnanorm1@yahoo.com](mailto:donnanorm1@yahoo.com)).

**April 18 (Saturday):** Presentation by Bob Nylan on "Women of the Mint," the history of the women who worked in the Carson City Mint. 10:00 a.m., State Library & Archives; salad luncheon, \$15. More information to follow.

**May 9 (Saturday):** Pink Tea, Governor's Mansion, Carson City; 2:00-4:00 p.m. Invitations will be mailed later.

**May 21 (Thursday):** Women of Achievement Luncheon, Nevada Women's Fund, Reno. More information to follow.

**June 20 (Saturday):** Annual Northern Region Luncheon Meeting, 11:30-1:30. Keynote speaker Karen Abbott will speak about the Galileo surgical robot. Silver Oak Country Club, 1251 Country Club Drive, Carson City. More information to follow.

## News From the North

The Northern Region board met on January 5<sup>th</sup>. We now have a wonderful group of members planning the direction that the Northerners will take for the next several years. Oral history is our focus for 2009, and this year's programs include an oral history training on January 17<sup>th</sup> at UNR, conducted by professional oral history teachers. Kathy Noneman is our new Program Chair, with assistance from Karen Benna and Carlene Ernst, who have provided many programs and ideas over the years. Our new treasurer, Linda Wycoff, is one of our founding members. We are also working on a Speakers' Bureau, as we receive frequent calls for presentations to organizations.

Mary Anne Convis  
North Region Chair

## Newspaper Series Planned in the Reno Gazette Journal During March 2009 Women's History Month

The *Reno Gazette Journal* is planning to include twenty-one biographies of Nevada women in their Neighbors and Voices section during the month of March, 2009. This special interest component will appear on Sunday and from Tuesday to Friday each week. A different biography with a photo will be featured on each of those days.

Kay Sanders and Donna Clontz will meet with the editor of that section in early February to select the historic Nevada women whose shortened biographies will be used. Most of them will be taken from our Web site. Last year the Reno newspaper published 25 mini-biographies to celebrate Women's History Month. In March, 2007, the *Nevada Appeal* in Carson City featured a Women's History Month section which contained 31 condensed biographies of Nevada women.

We will be asking the original authors of the selected biographies to condense their works to 250

words. If these authors are not available to do this, we plan to ask for volunteers to assist with this task.

Please contact Kay Sanders at 775-747-1740 or Donna Clontz at 775-747-5452 if you are interested in helping with this project.

Kay Sanders

PLEASE INFORM THE STATE MEMBERSHIP CHAIR AND YOUR REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP CHAIR OF ANY CHANGES IN YOUR ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, AND/OR E-MAIL ADDRESS.

STATE: BETTY MILLER, 2633 LEGEND DRIVE, LAS VEGAS, NV 89134-8810.

E-MAIL: [beteldon@msn.com](mailto:beteldon@msn.com)

NORTH: GRACE DAVIS, 14145

SADDLEBOW DR. RENO, NV 89511-6730.

E-MAIL: [kandgdavis@pyramid.net](mailto:kandgdavis@pyramid.net)

SOUTH: JOAN LEMERE, 4755 S. PEARL STREET, LAS VEGAS, NV 89121-6007.



## News From the South

The Helen J. Stewart statue project is alive and well. On February 5<sup>th</sup> the Heritage Museum on Boulder Highway held a Centennial Celebration, to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Clark County as well as to salute Helen's important role in its history. The Biography Committee, headed by Joan LeMere, is researching the life of Mabel Hoggard, the first African-American teacher hired in Nevada.

Our Christmas Extravaganza Tea on December 20<sup>th</sup> was celebrated at Jeanne Greenawalt's spacious Summerlin home. Hosted by Jeanne, Dianne Steel, Mary Gafford, and Bette Ault, the catered feast offered a myriad of dishes, all delicious. Over 45 members attended and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Mary Gafford  
Southern Region President

## Check Out Digital Version of Our NWHP Newsletter

Last fall we asked our members if they wished to receive the newsletter by email rather than a hard copy. After a trial run, an email link was sent to those individuals, who read the November newsletter online. They also received a hard copy of the November edition in case there were any unplanned glitches in their receiving the email link. Some of those members reported how surprised and pleased they were to see that the online version's photographs were in color -- which enhanced their enjoyment of reading about our people and events. Some informed us that they then printed their own newsletter copy. The digital link worked perfectly and we now refer those individuals to the "Newsletter" link on our web site. This February issue will be the last hard copy mailed out to those who choose to receive the digital version only.

To check out the online version of the newsletter, just go to [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org). Then, if

you decide that you would like to receive only the digitized version, specify that on the membership renewal form on the back of this newsletter, or notify us at 775-786-2335 or [nwhp@pyramid.net](mailto:nwhp@pyramid.net).

**All members will continue to receive the hard copy of the NWHP newsletter, unless they specifically request the digital version.**

**Articles for the February 2009 newsletter are due to Newsletter Editor, Holly Walton-Buchanan, Ph.D., no later than April 23rd, 2009.**  
**E-mail her at:**  
**[mtjudah@aol.com](mailto:mtjudah@aol.com)**

## Southern Region Calendar

**March 7 (Saturday):** Southern Region Luncheon, Marie Callender's Restaurant, 4800 S. Eastern Ave., Las Vegas; 11:00 a.m.; \$20. Speaker: Evelyn Cannestra, American Ambassador, retired, will talk about famous women she knew in her career (e.g., Pat Nixon, Lillian Carter, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan). Call Bette Ault (360-3233) to register. "Your reservation is your word."

**March 21 (Saturday):** Centennial Celebration of Clark County, 10:00 – 6:00, 6301 West Charleston Blvd. Collaborative project between NWHP-Southern Region and Clark County Library. More information: Mary Gafford ([mmgg165@cs.com](mailto:mmgg165@cs.com))

**May 2 (Saturday):** Southern Region Luncheon, Marie Callender's Restaurant, 8175 W. Sahara Ave., Las Vegas, 11:00 a.m.; \$20. Speaker: Beth Rosenberg, Professor of English, UNLV, will enlighten us about women as portrayed in literature. Call Bette Ault (360-3233) for reservations.

### Some NWHP News Contacts

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89112-0184



## Reno Now and Then—Saturday, February 21

This second event in the 2009 NWHP Northern Region Program series will be held at the "Brick House" at Bartley Ranch Regional Park, 6000 Bartley Ranch Road.

Please join us for a delightful lunch and lecture (\$25) on Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, from 11:30 to 2:15.

Neal Cobb and Jerry Fenwick are both Washoe County natives who have just published a wonderful book of historical photos accompanied by

contemporary re-photography of selected locations. The authors illustrate the tension between growth and stability that characterizes Reno. The topic of this book could serve as a model for other towns within our state that still share facets of their Old West character in conjunction with the progress of modern day changes.

These two colorful history buffs will enlighten us about Reno's



Downtown Reno in the 1920s

history in an interesting, informative and accurate manner. Their book will also be available for purchase by check or cash with the opportunity to have it autographed.

Reno residents will remember fondly some of the scenes depicted. Newcomers and individuals from surrounding locales will find their project an interesting historical perspective of a town that grew up in the "wild" Wild West but has since transitioned into a city more typical of the now "mild" Wild West.

To register, please contact Patti Bernard (826-3612), Grace Davis (832-3200) or Kathy Noneman (853-8393).

Patti Bernard

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This experience led to her running for the Nevada Assembly from District 22. In her first attempt, she lost to the incumbent, but she kept trying and her tenacity paid off. Gene Segerblom served in the Nevada Assembly from 1993 to 1999.

Many years ago, Gene's mother, Hazel Bell Wines, helped pass a bill appropriating funds for the restoration of the Nevada Museum and Historical Library and the preservation of important state documents. Her daughter Robin continues this work. As one of the founding members of the Boulder City Museum and Historical Association, Gene succeeded in obtaining funds for both the Boulder City Museum and the historic building which houses it - the Boulder City Hotel. She has also served on the board of trustees of the Outside Las Vegas Foun-

dation, an organization dedicated to preserving and developing the natural, historical and archaeological aspects of nearby federal lands. In addition, she supports her hometown by being an active member of the Boulder City Chamber of Commerce.

Through the years, Gene has been honored for her work for Nevada -- its young people, senior citizens, history, and geography. She was a Beta Sigma Phi Woman of the Year, a Clark County Political Mother of the Year, and a Distinguished Woman of Southern Nevada. In 2004 she was declared one of 25 Notable Las Vegas Women (although she made it plain that she would accept the award as long as everyone knew she was really from Boulder City). One of her most cherished achievements is that, when she was in the legislature, she was the only woman inducted into the Cowboy Hall of Fame!

Gene Segerblom represents

the best of our state. With grace and humor, she has served as a role model for the rest of us who are proud to call Nevada home, and she hasn't stopped yet!

Fran Haraway

### DUES REMINDER

Annual memberships cover the period of January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. We don't want you to miss a single issue or event, so please renew your membership promptly. We thank those who have already renewed.

**Remember:** NWHP Guidelines require discontinuance of the NWHP Newsletter if dues are not received by March 31<sup>st</sup>.



## Nevada's First Black Licensed Teacher

Mabel Hoggard, who was hired in August 1946 to teach at Clark County's Westside School, was the first licensed African-American teacher in Nevada. She will be the subject of a display to be set up at the West Charleston Public Library (6301 W. Charleston) as a part of Black History Month.



Library Branch Manager Mrs. Denise Gerdes is working on the project with our Southern Region members. The display is to run throughout the month of February, which will include information about her fascinating life and the many awards she received. After Mabel Hoggard passed away on May 31, 1989, she was honored by Nevada

politicians in the Congressional Record, in June 1989. The Clark County School District also named its first elementary magnet school after her, the Mabel Hoggard Math and Science Elementary Magnet School.

Nevada Women's History Project – Southern Region is proud to be playing a part in recognition of this great lady!

Mary Gafford

## International Women's Day Scholarship Fundraiser Dinner March 2009

By Donna Clontz

Make your reservations now for the 2009 International Women's Day Dinner on Sunday, March 8 at 6:30 PM at the Gold Dust West in Carson City. Tickets are \$35 and all proceeds will go to women's programs/scholarships. Fabulous guest speakers are Frankie Sue Del Papa, Nevada's first woman Secretary of State and first woman Attorney General, and NWHP's own Holly Van Valkenburgh, who will portray Anne Martin, one of Nevada's great suffragists and political activists. The event is co-hosted by Nevada AAUW, Nevada Women's History Project, Nevada Women's Lobby and Delta Kappa Gamma chapters. Make your check to "AAUW" and mail it and your registration to Donna Clontz, PO Box 33244, Reno, NV 89533 by March 1, 2009. Questions? Call or email Donna at (775) 747-5452 or [donnanorm1@yahoo.com](mailto:donnanorm1@yahoo.com).

### REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Vegetarian meal requested

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I can't attend, but am sending a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the fundraiser.

I'd like you to send my portion of the proceeds to (check only one):

\_\_\_\_\_ College of Southern Nevada

\_\_\_\_\_ UNLV Women's Studies

\_\_\_\_\_ Great Basin Community College

\_\_\_\_\_ UNR Women's Studies

\_\_\_\_\_ Nevada State College

\_\_\_\_\_ Western Nevada College

\_\_\_\_\_ Truckee Meadows Community College



## Clark County Centennial Celebration

Our Southern Region has been invited to participate in a project with the dual purpose of honoring important Nevada women while celebrating the centennial celebration of the founding of Clark County. The event is to be held in the auditorium of the West Charleston Library, 6301 West Charleston Blvd. on Saturday, March 21, 2009, from 10:00 a.m. until 6 p.m., with an hour lunch break.

West Charleston Library Branch Manager Denise Gerdes and Librarian Florence Jakus will begin the program with the history of how Clark County was created out of the original Lincoln County. Then Dr. Linda Miller, past Southern Region president and local college professor, will relive this event with a Chautauqua presentation of Helen J.

Stewart, a famous Las Vegas from its earliest days. Several important women's organizations in the county and the state will then be recognized. NWHP member Betty Rumford, current president of the 99-year old Mesquite Club, will tell the story of this oldest women's organization in Clark County, and list its many community service projects.

Mary Ann Hantout, President of GFWC, will do a presentation on the origin of that organization and its association with the Mesquite Club. In addition, former Nevada State NSDAR Regent and Southern Region member Joan Dimmitt will highlight this year's Centennial Celebration of the establishment of the first Nevada NSDAR in Goldfield, Nevada, in 1909. Jean Ford's role in starting the Nevada Women's

Project will also be described.

The afternoon session will include presentations by Boulder City residents Gene Segerblom and her politically-active family (see her biography in this issue) and Mimi Rodden, accomplished writer. Readings of the biographies of several Nevada lady trailblazers will include Dr. Linda Miller's presentation on the life of Sarah Winnemucca, who was honored in 2005 by the placement of her life-sized statue in the Capitol in Washington, D.C. (replicas were also erected in the State Capitol and in Las Vegas City Hall). The Chautauqua presenters will include some Utah Women Pioneers.

Mark your calendar for March 21<sup>st</sup>. What a grand and interesting celebration this will be!

Mary Gafford

## Sarah Winnemucca Statue in Visitors' Center, United States Capitol

The Sarah Winnemucca Statue has been moved to the new Visitors' Center in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. It was one of only 24 statues selected because it is a recent donation and also reflects the diversity of the country. These statues are now more accessible to the visiting public. The first Nevada statue, of Senator McCarran, remains in its original location in the Rotunda.



Holly Van Valkenburgh and Sara Winnemucca Statue

Nevada's Sarah Winnemucca statue is located at the bottom of the stairway from the Upper Level to Emancipation Hall. Directly across from her is the plaster model for the bronze statue of Freedom that is on top of the Capitol Dome (often mistaken for a Native American because of her feathered headdress, Ed. Note). Nearby are exhibits concerning the history of Congress and the Capitol, including "detailed architectural models that trace

the evolution of the Capitol Grounds from a rural landscape to the home of the world's most recognizable symbol of democracy".

The Visitors' Center contains memorabilia and two theatres – one for the Senate and one for the House. The website <http://www.visitthecapitol.gov> contains a reproduction of the brochure, map, and descriptions of the Exhibits.

Although I spent almost three hours at the Emancipation Hall and Exhibits, I would recommend planning most of a day to do everything available at the new Visitor's Center, such as taking a guided tour of the Capitol building, viewing the films and spending more time admiring the 24 statues.

Holly Van Valkenburgh



## How Did National Women's History Project Get Started?

The year 2009 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday of the founding of the women's organization that would eventually be called the National Women's History Project. The idea of celebrating women's contributions was not a new one. It had been first proposed by the Socialist Party of America in 1909, which was followed by the designation of International Women's Day at a Socialist International meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1910. In 1979 the first countrywide meeting took place during the Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. In attendance were not only women representing national organizations for women and girls (e.g., Girl Scouts) but, most

importantly, a contingent of Sonoma County, CA, ladies who were already holding a marvelous annual celebration of



*...Congress passed a Resolution declaring a National Women's History Week in March. By 1987, the newly organized National Women's History Project had convinced Congress to expand the celebration to the entire month of March.*

women's history complete with a parade through downtown Santa

Rosa. The California example spurred the East Coast leaders to push for a national campaign for education and awareness of women's history issues. Within two years, Congress passed a Resolution declaring a National Women's History Week in March. By 1987, the newly organized National Women's History Project had convinced Congress to expand the celebration to the entire month of March.

Today thousands of schools and communities celebrate National Women's History Week, supported by governors, mayors, city councils, state departments of education, and local school boards. More recently, a new President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in History in America held hearings around the country, gathering information on state and local activities, in order to make recommendations for future events. In addition, the new Women's Progress Commission will also hold hearings on how to identify and preserve important historical sites. The National Women's History Project continues to promote women's issues, publishing curriculum guides and posters, training teachers, and supplying materials through a Web-based catalog (the 2009 edition bears the ambitious title "Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet").

Meanwhile, in February 1995 the Nevada Women's History Project was founded, the subject of our cover story.

Holly Walton-Buchanan

### STATE MEMBERSHIP REPORT

When renewing your 2009 membership, please remember that dues are now \$30, payable no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>.

We now have over 300 members statewide, including the 18 new and rejoined members listed in this issue. Because every program event seems to bring in more and more women (and a few good men) who want to join our exciting organization, we are always armed with new membership forms. We are very happy to welcome all newcomers, some of whom have been taking on active roles in our 13-year-old organization. Jean Ford would be so proud.

### New & Rejoined Members

Karen Rae Abbott, M.D.  
Janet Bremer  
Churchill County Museum  
Association  
Gwen Clancy  
Persia Golden  
Donna S. Hall  
Mary Larson  
Kathleen M. Lindsay  
Marlene Kay McCauslin  
Rose McQuade  
Marty Matles  
Victoria Paluzzi  
Guy Rocha  
Joan Shonnard  
Marsha Sidwell  
Donna L. Staiff  
Kris L. Stendell  
Delores Stendell



## More Than a Song and a Dance

Patty Cafferata's newest book takes us back stage at Piper's Opera House in Virginia City in the late 1800s. Published in Fall 2007, *More Than a Song and a Dance: The Heyday of Piper's Opera House Virginia City, Nevada Circa 1863 to 1897*, shows how the theater played a prominent role in the lives of the residents on the Comstock during the Gold Rush. Piper's was the scene of not only entertainment, but also of important political and social events. Having survived disastrous fires that destroyed two previous opera houses, Piper's Opera House is now being restored.

The book contains eighty-seven pages with 40 photographs and

illustrations, and a map showing the sites of the town's previous opera houses. The story also includes information on owner John Piper's tragic personal life.

Patty received the Roll of Honor Award in 2008 from NWHP. She has authored several books and recently was appointed as the Executive Director of the Nevada Commission on Ethics. Patty is a former Nevada State Treasurer (1983-1987), State Assemblywoman (1981-1983) and district attorney of Lincoln, Lander and Esmeralda counties. Her mother, Barbara Vucanovich, served in the U.S. Congress from 1983 to 1997.

Her book is available at Borders,

Sundance Book Store, Barnes and Noble, and the Nevada Historical Society.

Kay Sanders

### DUES REMINDER

Annual memberships cover the period of January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

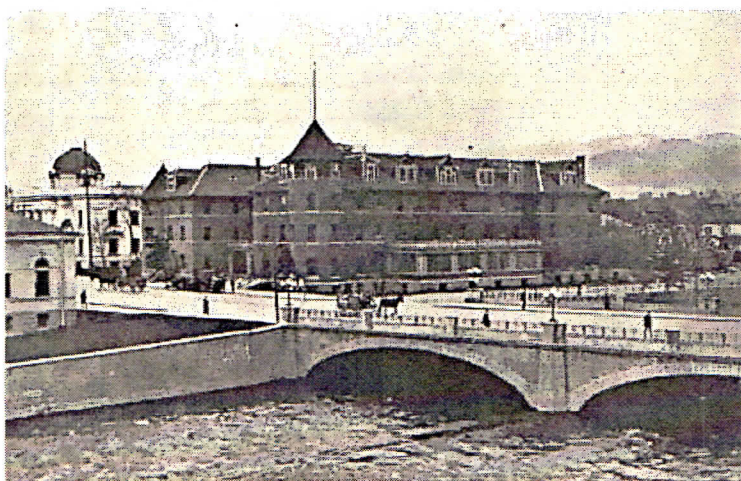
We don't want you to miss a single issue or event, so please renew your membership promptly. We thank those who have already renewed.

**Remember:** NWHP Guidelines require discontinuance of the NWHP Newsletter if dues are not received by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Reno's Divorce Racket & Wedding Rings in the Truckee River

The Northern Region's first program of the year got off to a rollicking start with historian Mella Harmon's presentation on January 23<sup>rd</sup> of Reno's place in history as the Divorce Capital of the World. Beginning in 1931 with the legalization of gambling and six-week divorces, Reno's "divorce dude ranches" -- complete with obliging cowboys -- and its downtown casinos attracted thousands of women, determined to get "Reno-vated" by shedding their spouses. The "divorce racket" changed Reno's face dramatically, adding racy new nightclubs where lonely women congregated, often courted by a few equally lonely males in town for the same reason. Several partici-

pants shared their memories about the divorce trade in Reno, which surprisingly included a record number of marriages between the newly-divorced.



Virginia Street Bridge, c. 1912

Our second guest speaker was Jerry Felesina, who used a dredge 30 years ago to dig into the

Truckee River gravel under the Virginia Street bridge. By 1980, he and his two friends had recovered over 400 rings, in addition to gold and silver medals, gold teeth, locks, and rare coins. Jerry displayed some of the treasure trove and shared funny stories with us about the dredging project. One hilarious "only-in-Reno" story was about a scantily-clad buxom young lady who leaned over the railing above them, showing most of her precious assets to the three young men below. Suddenly a gust of wind lifted her skirt from behind, revealing even more to the astonished pedestrians on the bridge and causing a major traffic jam.

Holly Walton-Buchanan



## Celebrating Lincoln—Workshops in Las Vegas and Reno

The Nevada Women's History Project's Teacher of the Year Committee is anxiously awaiting the arrival of the first applications, which were due as of February 1. The results will be announced in the May newsletter.

The Nevada Council for History Education will hold a workshop celebrating the Lincoln Bicentennial on February 28 at the College of Southern Nevada, West Charleston campus, from 8-5 pm. This year's program, "Battle Born: The Lincoln Bicentennial in Nevada," is co-sponsored by the Library of Congress Teaching With Primary Sources program and the



University of Northern Colorado. President Lincoln and Civil War participants will be portrayed by

re-enactors who will help teachers learn how to develop dynamic lessons for teaching the Lincoln Bicentennial in Nevada. The event is free but limited to 28 people. A similar workshop will be held April 11 in Reno. For details contact Dr. Linda

Karen Miller (pictured here), who will teach both workshops, at 702-492-7742 or [kckidinlv@hotmail.com](mailto:kckidinlv@hotmail.com)

Dr. Linda K. Miller

## Oral History Training

As part of a new emphasis on recording oral histories of Nevada women, the first NWHP Oral History Training session was held on January 17<sup>th</sup>. As part of an agreement with the University of Nevada Oral History Program, Director Dr. Mary Larson conducted the intensive training session, while NWHP member Joann Peden filmed the event for future training purposes. Over twenty NWHP members attended this initial training, which covered pertinent oral history terminology, interview preparation, questioning techniques, interview ethics, and types of recording equipment.

This new partnership between the NWHP and the UNR Oral History Department is designed to capture oral histories of Nevada women. A typed transcript as well as an audio version of each oral

history developed through this endeavor will be made available to researchers and interested general public by both organizations.

Those in attendance were Marian Lavoy, Kathy Noneman, Margee Richardson, Holly Walton-Buchanan, Linda Conlon, Margie Evans, Nancy Cummings, Helen Studwell, Grace Davis, Nell Fozard, Marcia Cuccaro, Mary Lee Fulkerson, Carrie Porter, Linda Conlin, Carlene Ernest, Jackie Falkenroth, Patti Bernard, Lisa Marie Lightfoot, JoAnn Peden, Marilyn Dousharm, Martha Gould, and Carolyn Gardner.

For additional information on this project, please contact your NWHP Oral History Committee at [www.nevadawomen.org](http://www.nevadawomen.org) (775-826-6865) or UNR's Oral History Program at [ohp@unr.edu](mailto:ohp@unr.edu) (682-6466).

Marcia Cuccaro

## NWHP Leadership

### Northern Region

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Kathy Noneman: Program Chair  
Cherry Jones: Past Chair  
Holly Van Valkenburgh: Research Historian

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#### Executive Committee

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#### Northern Region Representative

Mary Gafford:

#### Southern Region Representative

Denise Yoxsimer: Nevada Women's Fund Representative

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#### Editor for State Newsletter

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Cherry Jones: Past President

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### Membership Application (Calendar Year)

Individual Membership: Dues \$30/Year • Student Membership: Dues \$15/Year  
Organizational Membership: Dues \$50/Year • Corporate Sponsor: Dues \$250/Year

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Mail to NWHP: North members - 770 Smithridge Dr., Ste. 300, Reno, NV 89502  
South members - 4755 S. Pearl St., Las Vegas, NV 89121-6007

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