

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.

Southern Region To Sever Ties With the Nevada Women's Fund and State NWHP Organization

Jean Ford envisioned a state organization to further her goal of including women in the written history of Nevada. To further that goal she sought to be a part of the Nevada Women's Fund and to operate under their tax exempt umbrella. She teamed with Fritsi Ericson, then CEO of the Nevada Women's Fund, who had plans to also operate statewide. The Nevada Women's History Project became a statewide organization, but the Nevada Women's Fund did not.

NWHP has continued to operate two regions -- North and South, plus a state committee -- all these years.

We are grateful to the Nevada Women's Fund for having allowed us to be a committee of their organization and to operate under their tax exempt status. In order to continue in that capacity, our organization must operate under their by-laws and meet their reporting and banking rules. All fund raising and projects are reported to them. Because the NWHP state organization rents its office from the Nevada Women's Fund and we share building space, it is a fairly simple matter for those of us in the North. This has not been the case for the Southern Region. The current economic situation, the aging of committee members, and their recurrent health problems have created logistical problems for the organization. It is no longer feasible for



the Southern Region leadership to report to the Women's Fund or for any of us to attend statewide meetings. We have all suffered trying to maintain three governing levels with their meeting and reporting requirements.

Therefore, leadership at every level has voted to simplify our lives and devote our limited energy and resources to pursuing our mission of promoting women's history projects. To better fulfill our mission the Southern Region will end its association with the state NWHP and the Nevada Women's Fund. Their leadership is actively seeking a new

501(C)(3) affiliation and will be called the Southern Nevada Women's History Project, with their own newsletter, logo, rules and regulations. The state NWHP will continue as always as a committee of the Nevada Women's Fund. All members may choose to belong to either organization or both, participate in all activities and contribute biographies and articles to

publications, newsletters and websites. I and several other state members intend to belong to both organizations and hope that other members will also. The state committee has agreed to accept the Southern Region's resignation from the state organization and has approved their plan for a separate organization, subject to approval from the Nevada Women's Fund. Once the new Southern

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NWHP Members!
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We Celebrated the Pink Tea With Nevada's First Ladies

On a beautiful spring day, the members and guests of the Northern Chapter of the NWHP and Dr. Linda Miller from our Southern Chapter in Las Vegas, NV, gathered at the Governor's Mansion for the annual Pink Tea. Bonnie Bryan, wife of Governor Richard Bryan (1983-1989), and Dawn Gibbons, current First Lady, were also in attendance as guests. Also attending this year's Tea were Uma Dickerson portrayed by Kathy Noneman, Julia Scrugham (1923-1925) portrayed by Barbara Finley, Vita Boyle (1915-1922) portrayed by Patti Bernard and Marjorie Russell (1951-1958), portrayed by Grace Davis. The First Ladies who were in character used the Grand Staircase as a stage, where each gave a Chautauqua "snapshot" of their lives while living in the Governor's Mansion.

Many other members of the NWHP attended the tea in period costume and it was interesting to note "the old and the new" fashions mixing together throughout the various rooms and surrounding porch of the Governor's Mansion. Denver Dickerson, great-grandson

of Uma Dickerson, was introduced by Kathy Noneman as her guest. An inaugural gown that had been worn by Mrs. Dickerson and that had been restored at the Marjorie Russell Textile Foundation was on display in front of the Grand Staircase.



Mary Anne Convis, Dawn Gibbons, and Bonnie Bryan

The NWHP Pink Tea also honors the Suffragettes who used Pink Teas to build support for the right to vote and to discuss political and education rights. Since opponents of women's rights would disrupt public meetings where women gathered to discuss voting rights, Pink Teas became a cover for the free discussion of political issues and the formation of plans to encourage voting rights. After all,

who would suspect that such lovely gracious women would be discussing and making plans to further the cause of women's rights while attending a Tea – Pink or otherwise? Starting in 1886, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the American Equal Rights Association (an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of universal suffrage), and continuing until August 26, 1920, when the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed, women worked tirelessly to obtain the right to vote. The Amendment prohibits states and the federal government from denying any citizen the right to vote.

Perhaps Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said it best: *"I think about how much we owe to the women who went before us - legions of women, some known but many more unknown. I applaud the bravery and resilience of those who helped all of us - you and me - to be here today."*

Marcia Cuccaro

(Continued from page 1)

So. Region To Sever Ties

organization has obtained its tax exempt status and has met all the legal requirements for their separate organization, the Nevada Women's Fund will allow them to withdraw and they will no longer be subject to its rules and regulations.

The State Committee has accepted two letters of resignation: Diane Steele as President and Su Kim Chung as Treasurer. First Vice President Lisa Marie Lightfoot has

agreed to move up to the Presidency and North Treasurer Linda Wycoff has agreed to be the state treasurer. Your leadership, both North and South, consider this a positive step toward revitalizing our organization and accomplishing our mission more efficiently.

If you would like to help with this process or have any questions or comments, please contact your local leadership. We welcome your participation and assistance.

Kathy Noneman

Volunteer Help Wanted!

We need someone to help pick up NWHP telephone messages. Can be done from your home. Please contact Kay Sanders at 747-1740 or Grace Davis at 853-3200.

"Mysteries For All Ages" to be Theme of Author's Luncheon

Over 25 authors will enjoy a luncheon and discussion with their readers on Saturday, November 7, 2009, at the Atlantis Casino in Reno, between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Dave Finley will again be our moderator/interrogator as he seeks to discover our authors' writing secrets. Just how do they develop those wonderful characters that we all know and love to read about?

Robyn Carr, our keynote speaker, will describe her latest Virgin River series. This town and its colorful inhabitants have become favorites with readers from around the world. A Henderson resident, this New York Times bestselling author has been writing screenplays, historical romances and even a psychological thriller during her 20 year career.

Another of our featured authors is Dale Brown. His techno-

thrillers combine his pilot's knowledge and military experiences with a wonderful imagination to produce his bestselling adventure novels.

Dale has had over 15 books on the New York Times bestseller list. A



Robyn Carr

Nevadan who lives in Incline Village, Dale's latest works form a series called Dreamland which features top experts who create and operate the latest weapons systems.

For all our cartoon aficionados who love Earl and Opal, this will be an opportunity to meet their creator, Brian Crane of Sparks, Nevada. Brian will tell us all about his "Pickles" comic strip.

Because many of our last year's guests asked us to include more authors and books for young adults and children, we have asked Ken Ramirez, Terri Farley and several other Nevada children's authors to return. We are also lucky to have

many of our own members who have agreed to come with their books. A complete list of the authors will be listed in our forthcoming brochure (to be distributed in early Fall). Meanwhile, members may call Carrie Porter at 775-322-1830 for a current list of authors.

The event will again cost only \$50, half of which will be a tax deductible donation to the NWHP. This luncheon is our main fund raiser for the Jean Ford Research Center and our Oral History program, which helps pay for rent, utilities, supplies and other necessities. The Barnes & Noble booth will be well-stocked with many of the guest authors' books. Books not carried by Barnes & Noble will be sold by member Isabel Espinoza at the NWHP booth. Before and after the luncheon, authors will autograph their books, which will make dandy holiday gifts. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for more

Kathy Noneman

Congratulations to Lisa-Marie Lightfoot - Our 2009 Woman of Achievement

Lisa-Marie Lightfoot, our honoree at this year's Nevada Women's Fund 18th Annual Salute to Women of Achievement luncheon, was recognized for her volunteer work with several organizations. In addition to working fulltime in a demanding job as administrator of the Washoe County School District volunteer program, she has extended her time and talent doing volunteer work for several non-profits, helping women and children achieve their goals. In 2008 Lisa-Marie received the International Reading Association Award for Literacy in recognition of her efforts in literacy promotion.

A member of NWHP since 1998, Lisa-Marie has worn many hats. Last year she was elected to

the position of 1st Vice-President of the State Committee. Due to the resignation of our State President Dianne Steel, Lisa-Marie has assumed that position until our next election. She is the Webmaster for the NWHP Web site and serves as co-chair of the Northern Region Communications Committee. Thus, she has fulfilled her promise to our founder Jean Ford to continue her support of our organization.

The luncheon's keynote speaker Carla Christofferson, lawyer and co-owner of a W.N.B.A. professional basketball team, the L.A. Sparks, gave an inspiring talk about her life growing up in the tiny town of Tolna, North Dakota, starting out as the youngest of five children in a

single mother family, to eventually receiving her law degree from Yale Law School. Her experiences as an all-state basketball player and a cheerleader at her high school taught her important life lessons on how to work passionately to achieve her goals. Being a beauty queen - all the way to Miss North Dakota in the Miss America pageant - was a huge benefit, because of the college scholarships she won.

Enjoying the event at the NWHP table were Lisa-Marie's husband Bruce, Linda Wycoff, Kay Sanders, Kathy Noneman, Marcia Cuccaro, Patti Bernard, Grace Davis, Barbara Finley, Mary Anne Convis, and Cynthia Pickett.

Congratulations, Lisa-Marie, on your wonderful contributions as an outstanding member and volunteer.

Kay Sanders

August Calendar

August 15 (Saturday): Historic Snow Sheds above Donner Lake. Hiking and lecture host: Tammy Buzick. 4-mile, moderate (level) trail along abandoned railroad tracks over Donner Pass. Bring your own flashlight, lunch, water, raingear, repellent, sunscreen, etc. Car pools will meet at 8:30 a.m. in parking lot of Scolar's market at Robb Drive exit from I-80 West, or at 9:30 a.m. in parking lot of Donner Ski Ranch at Donner Pass on old Highway 40. Please RSVP to Tammy (747-8849) or Holly WB (772-2086).

September 12 (Saturday): 100th Anniversary of Governor's Mansion. NWHP needs 12 members to come dressed in period costumes and help with the First Ladies portion of the program. Volunteers should contact Mary Anne Convis at 888-9867.

October 17 (Saturday): Halloween walking tour of Hillside Cemetery in Reno. Leader: Tammy Buzick (747-8849). More details to follow.

October 31 (Saturday): Nevada Day Parade in Carson City. NWHP members will march holding Abraham Lincoln's Funeral Flag.

November 7 (Saturday): Second Annual Authors' Luncheon: Mysteries for All Ages. Popular author Robyn Carr will be keynote speaker; many prominent authors in attendance. Atlantis Casino, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Contact Kathy Noneman (853-8393). More details later.

News From the North

I recently had occasion to visit Washington, D.C., and visited the Sarah Winnemucca statue in the Capitol Visitor Center. Because it was spring break for students, lots of families were there, and it was all I could do to not say to them, "Let me tell you about Sarah." Seeing her statue there made me very proud of our organization and its contribution to our nation's capital.

On May 9th, the Annual Pink Tea celebrated the 100th birthday in the historic rooms of the Governor's Mansion. (Ed. Note: The beautiful Classical Revival structure on Mountain Street was designed in 1909 by George Ashmead Ferris, 1859-1948, who also designed Reno's four Spanish Mission-style elementary schools and the El Cortez Hotel.) Some of the NWHP members came in costume as First Ladies from Nevada's past. See the accompanying story and photo in this issue.

Speaking of the Governor's Mansion, another centennial celebration will be held on September 12th. We have been asked to provide at least 12 members, dressed in period costumes, to serve as hostesses at the event. This invitation is quite an honor, and I hope that many of you will volunteer for this important event. Please call me at 888-9867.

Mary Anne Convis

2010 Mark Your Calendar

More Info Will Follow

January 23 (Saturday): Ladies of the Mint, hosted by Bob Nylen.

February 20 (Saturday): Historic Reno Preservation Society members show their new film, "Literary Reno."

March 6 (Saturday): National Women's Day Celebration; joint meeting with AAUW and local women lawyers' groups.

April 24 (Saturday): Barn and Ranch Tour in Douglas County, PLUS wine tasting!

May 8 (Saturday): Pink Tea, Governor's Mansion, Carson City

June 6 (Sunday): Annual Meeting and Picnic, Crissie Caughlin Ranch, Reno

July 24 (Saturday): Annual Wildflower Hike.

August 21 (Saturday): Celebrating Women's Suffrage Movement, Capitol Building, Carson City

October 23 (Saturday): Nevada Museum of Art luncheon and program

Articles for the November 2009 newsletter are due to Newsletter Editor, Holly Walton-Buchanan, Ph.D., no later than October 23rd, 2009. E-mail her at: mtjudah@aol.com

New & Rejoined Members

Jean Carbon

Gloria Castillo

Diana Haberland

Nancyann Leeder

Kathleen Lynch

Diana Monfalcone

Phylliss Noblitt

Myra Rosenberg

Book Drive

NWHP will be participating in an ongoing book drive for the Washoe County School District's (WCSD) Read & Succeed Incentive Book Program.

If you have a new or gently used Kindergarten thru 6th grade level book you would like to donate, please drop it off at the WCSD Volunteer Services Office at 7495 South Virginia, from 8:00 AM. to 4:00 PM.

Books are distributed three times a year to children who are reading below grade level and working on their reading. Students take home a book to keep and share with their families. For some students, it is the start of a home library.

Questions, directions? Please contact Lisa-Marie Lightfoot, 851-5655, lightfoot@washoe.k12.nv.us

Thank you for caring!

Lisa-Marie Lightfoot

Unusual Women in American History

This new section will focus on what the National Women's History Project calls "Path Breakers" on their Web site: several unusual women who were not particularly famous but who have contributed – some in strange ways – to American history.

Mary Peck Butterworth: The Perfect Counterfeiter

In the late 1600s Plymouth Colony, in today's Massachusetts, was in constant turmoil. King Phillip's War, a bloody and violent conflict that raged in 1675-1676, pitted Massachusetts Indians against English settlers. The short but furious war wiped out thousands of Indians and hundreds of colonists, leaving destroyed crops and ruined homes across the region. But instead of pursuing peace in the war's aftermath, Massachusetts and Rhode Island then bitterly fought each other over religious and monetary issues, while also fending off British demands for higher taxes. Mary Peck was born in Rehoboth, Plymouth Colony, in the aftermath of King Phillip's War, in 1686, and at age 25 married John Butterworth. The new bride drew her husband into her family's prosperous business, which was helping them survive the continuing hard times of the mid-

1700s. This was no ordinary family business: her siblings had perfected the art of counterfeiting money. Mary's own fine needlework skills and attention to detail helped the family produce at least eight types of different bills, including the large denomination £5 bills of Rhode Island. She used a process similar to what T-shirt makers use today: she made the counterfeit bills by placing fine muslin on a genuine bill and then used a very hot iron to transfer the image to clean rag paper. She then quickly but carefully disposed of the muslin, while the brothers lettered the new bills with pens made from crow quills. The family kitchen was a busy workshop of counterfeiters, involving brothers and sisters and their spouses. The Peck family "laundered" the fake bills through the town clerk and members of the county court, who bought them at half their face value. Inevitably, one of the accomplices snitched to the Massachusetts governor, but after a search of the family's house, nothing was found and charges were dropped. Mary had to spend a few days in jail, however, but was eventually released and died at the ripe old age of 89 in 1775, at the dawn of the American Revolu-

State Treasurer's Report

The Northern Region bank account has a balance of \$14,440.97 as of the end of June, 2009. This includes \$3,830.00 in membership dues and \$3,225.00 in program income for the year-to-date 2009.

We are in the process of transferring the state bank account from Las Vegas to Reno. The end of June balance in the account is \$10,812.99. The reason for the transfer is that Su Kim Chung, who has been the State Treasurer for several years, is resigning in order to concentrate on her doctoral dissertation.

Linda Wyckoff

STATE MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Thank you to all of our re-joined and new members. The total number of individual memberships statewide now stands at 235.

We have 10 member clubs and organizations as well as one corporate member...plus we are providing digital newsletters to 20 or more libraries.

If you know of anyone who might have forgotten to renew their membership for 2009, please let them know that we would gladly welcome them back.

Betty Miller and Grace Davis

tion. As the National Women's History Project Web site points out, she is honored because "there was no bloodshed and no conviction."

Holly Walton-Buchanan

Featured Historic Nevada Woman: Marjorie Ann Russell

Born: April 16, 1916

Died: March 3, 1997

Maiden name: Marjorie Ann Guild

Race/nationality/ethnic

background: English/Scot

Primary city and county of

residence and work: Carson City,
Carson City, Nevada

Married: Charles Hinton Russell on
March 19, 1939

Children: Clark George, Virginia
Ellen, Charles David, Robert Craig,
James Todd

Major fields of work: Nevada State
Museum Board of Trustees (1977-
1992); First Lady of the State of
Nevada (1951-1958).

Other role identities: Teacher,
mother, U.S. Congressional wife
(1947-1949), member of St. Peter's
Episcopal Church, Carson Tahoe
Hospital Auxiliary, PEO



Marjorie Ann Guild was born in Yerington, Nevada, on April 16, 1916. She came from a long line of native Nevadans dating back to the 1860's. Her paternal grandfather, Lucius A. (Brad) Guild traveled from western New York State to Dayton in the 1860's and settled in the area. Her father, Clark J. Guild, was one of eleven children born to Lucius and his English immigrant wife, Maria Varley Wheatley. Clark J.

later moved to Yerington where he practiced law, became a judge, and met and married Virginia Carroll. Virginia ("Virgie") was known for her beauty and also her love of music. She was a very accomplished musician.

Virgie's maternal grandfather was J. S. Craig, a pioneer Nevadan who was one of the founders of a community near Yerington called Greenfield. He later became Justice of the Peace there. Marjorie named one of her twin sons Craig in honor of his memory.

At the age of fourteen, Marjorie's life changed dramatically. Her mother, who had been ill for several months, died. She and her brother Clark Jr. briefly spent some time at the Guild family ranch in Yerington where her mother's sisters often stopped by to help out. Her father decided to send Marjorie to the Castilleja School for Girls in Palo Alto, California, to finish high school. She graduated from there and was accepted to Mills College. At Mills, she majored in Speech and Dramatic Art. She became an accomplished pianist and performed in many of Mills' drama productions including the opera version of Hansel and Gretel. Many of her life-long friends were those she met at Mills College. During that time her father had relocated to Carson City where he held the position of District Court Judge. Upon graduation she obtained a teaching job in the nearby community of Silver City. The Nevada State Legislature went into session in Carson City that year and Marjorie was introduced to a highly sought-after and dashing White Pine County State Assemblyman by the name of Charles Russell.

Charles was editor of the Ely Record and much involved in local politics. Marjorie took a teaching job in Ruth, Nevada, near Ely, and

the romance blossomed. They were married in 1939. Clark was born in Ely in 1940, followed by Virginia in 1942. After winning a White Pine State Senate seat in 1944, Charles went on to claim Nevada's U. S. Congressional position (1946-1949). Twins Craig and David were born in Reno in 1945 and James Todd was born in Washington, D.C. in 1947.

After his congressional term, Charles accepted a position that took him overseas in assisting in the implementation of the Marshall Plan. This was a major United States aid program designed to assist in the rebuilding of Europe after World War II. He traveled throughout Europe while Marjorie remained in Washington with their five children. Mildred and Lucy Novich, who were friends of hers from McGill, came to Washington to help her with the children while he was away. Charles returned from Europe and, in 1949, the family moved back to Carson City where they temporarily resided with Judge Guild. While Marjorie set about enrolling the children into school, Charles reentered Nevada politics by running against incumbent Governor Vail Pittman.

Charles was elected Governor of Nevada in 1950 and re-elected to that position in 1954. During those years the Mansion did not resemble the beautiful structure that exists today. The Mansion's roof leaked. There was a lack of furniture and Marjorie found herself on a tight budget with no resources to purchase new furniture. She had to resort to borrowing furniture from local churches in order to hold some state functions. Her official role was to entertain and attend the many state functions, be available for interviews, preside over teas and charities, and to travel throughout the state's seventeen counties rep-

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resenting her office as First Lady of the State. In addition to those duties, she was also expected to keep the Governor's Mansion open for public tours. All of this was in addition to her role of wife and mother to five young children in whose many activities she participated in or supervised.

The Mansion became a real home for the Russell family. Football was played on the front lawn; neighborhood basketball games were an ongoing activity in the back driveway; and cardboard boxes were flattened to use to slide down the Mansion's grand staircase. There was almost always an extra child or multiple children at the dinner table. There were Scout meetings, slumber parties, and other family activities being held continuously. The Mansion may have been a state house, but "Marge" and "Charlie" made it a home for their family.

James Todd Russell wrote of his mother's patience in meeting unexpected challenges in fulfilling her "First Lady" duties: "I recall that a man from Florida came into Dad's office with an alligator on a leash and then presented him with a small baby alligator. This alligator was named Demon Dan. Craig was particularly fond of him but Mom wanted him gone. He lived in the downstairs basement in a large metal tub. Mom had a gown hanging in the basement that she needed for an event. During a Little League game down the street, he got out. They had to come and get Craig to put him back into the tub. Dad gave him to the Marines at Pickle Meadows as a mascot. That was the last we ever saw of him." Daughter Virginia Russell Sakal added, "I can just see her descending the basement stairs and seeing the tub empty ...worried about her

gown..."

Marjorie handled those years as the lady that she always was, with grace and dignity. (On September 13th, 1989, Marjorie and Charles Russell celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at their former home, the Governor's Mansion.)

In 1960 Charles was offered the post of Director of the United States Operations Mission, now called the A.I.D. Mission, by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The entire family relocated to Asuncion, Paraguay. Marjorie continued her role as mother and public servant in her new position as U.S.O.M. Director's wife. She traveled with Charles throughout South America and into the interior of Paraguay. She entertained ambassadors and diplomats, belonged to an American Wives Club, studied Spanish, and became an accomplished golfer. The Russell family flourished in their new environment. Marjorie set an example for her children by thriving in each new experience and encouraging her children to do the same. This included shopping at open-air markets and tolerating strange animals. Charles often brought home such animals as a carpanico, a large rodent, and an armadillo from the Chaco, located in the interior of Paraguay.

Moving back to Carson City in 1963 brought new challenges. Charles took a position with the University of Nevada. After the purchase of their first house in Carson City, the family settled into a more traditional routine. Marjorie became a very active member of the Nevada State Museum's Board of Trustees. Her father, Clark Guild, founded the State Museum in 1941. She remained an active board member for twenty-two years (1977-1992). When Marjorie finally decided to

retire from this position, then Governor Bob Miller showed his refusal to accept her resignation by tearing up the resignation letter at a luncheon held for her in honor of her many years of dedicated service work.

Her love of Nevada's history, and her personal passion for historical textiles and clothes, led her to assist in the creation of a new branch of the State Museum. The Nevada State Museum's Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Research Center was established and named in her honor. Many donations of historical importance have been made to this state facility because of her. Today, this museum preserves and houses thousands of items that were important and illustrative of Nevada's textile history. With the realization of the new museum branch, her passion became a reality.

In later years Marjorie's love of needlepoint became a way of using her creative talent, although this skill was made increasingly more difficult by the rheumatoid arthritis that she endured. Many of her beautiful needlepoint pieces are now in the homes of her children. Her unique needlepoint of the State Seal of Nevada resides on the wall of attorney son David's law office.

The phrase used to describe Marjorie again and again is that she was "a lady full of grace and style". She liked roses in the garden, fresh flowers on her coffee-table and the ever-present dish of lemon drops. She had thirteen grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren. Marjorie died on March 3, 1997. She is buried in Dayton, Nevada beside her beloved husband Charles and generations of family members.

Perhaps Governor Michael O'Callaghan's tribute spoke to

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A Wonderful Day To Be A Woman

I was very surprised and excited the day I was told that I was chosen as the Nevada Women's History Project's awardee for the Nevada Women's Fund Woman of Achievement Luncheon in June. First, I made sure my husband could attend, and then I went off to Ross Photo to have my picture taken. Then came the hardest part: In 250 words, I had to write about my life and accomplishments!

Our NWHP filled a table of ten, but the awardees and presenters sat on a very large stage in the center of the room. The room was so full of energy and excitement. You can tell Nevada Women's Fund (NWF) has been doing this event for a while because everything is very well organized.

My presenter was Isabel Espinoza, who was last year's awardee. On the day of the event Isabel and I had our picture taken together. After pictures, the awardees were invited to a special breakfast, with a NWF hostess at each table. Our hostess, Marlene Collins, was lovely, so warm and inviting. During breakfast, we learned about the lives of several NWF scholarship recipients, followed by table talk about these difficult times are affecting people, and how thankful we should be for what we have.

I was especially lucky that morning as Nancy Cashell, this year's Hall of Fame recipient, sat next to me. I loved her stories about her family, specifically her

children and grandchildren. She was so grateful to have the opportunity to see the kind of people they turned out to be, despite financial hardships. All her children and grandchildren were doing something to help others in the community, and she was so pleased and proud of them.

If you know of a NWHP member who we should honor for her accomplishments, please contact anyone on the NWHP steering committee. We have so many accomplished members that should be honored.

Thank you, NWHP, for a spiritual and inspiring day I will never forget.

Lisa-Marie Lightfoot

History of LeRue Press The Publisher of the NWHP Newsletter

As with many things, LeRue Press started with a dream.

Our family loves books; reading books, collecting books, writing books, and publishing books. On the artistic side of creativity are several members of the family that have a very good sense for art and photography. Combine that energy and "Publishing from the Heart" was born in 2000. We attribute the true vision of this venture to Janice Hermesen, one of the founders who is also my sister and business partner. The primary goal was to use our family and its talents to support and promote other authors and artists.

In 2006, we took stock and realized we needed to refocus and rebrand ourselves. We wanted to maintain the same principles and ideas from the original company, so we put on our thinking caps. Our answer

soon became clear as we reached to our origins. In 1971, Leonard, our Dad, was forced to retire early due to physical limitations. He had worked 12 hours a day for many years so retirement did not come easily.

He needed to do something constructive, interesting, and income producing. He told Mom (Ruby) he didn't have anything he could do...but Mom, being who she is, said, "You don't know what you can do until you try!" Dad bought a Chandler & Price Letterpress and supplied the local community with always needed printed napkins, match books, and business cards (remember, this was 1971 before personal computers were in every household). What did he call the company? LeRue Enterprises. "Le" for Leonard and "Rue" for Mom, Ruby.

Our branding problem was solved; we had a new company

name "LeRue Press, LLC", (www.leruepress.com) directly from our family history. In keeping with that history, we added a printing division (LRP Printing) for authors who prefer self-publishing as an option and for businesses that need business cards (in Dad's tradition), forms or graphic design.

Today, LeRue Press is in an evolutionary phase. We carry collectible books and newspapers in addition to our new titles. Our first children's book was released in March of 2008 ("Pick Me, Pick Me" by Elizabeth Horton and local Reno illustrator, Sean Kinsley). The LeRue Review Magazine has been in circulation for a year. We are getting positive feedback about our book, music and movie reviews. We are adding a spanish publication, El Espejo (The Mirror) that will provide even more opportunities for businesses to advertise.

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Nevada's First Ladies' Clothing Featured

The Nevada State Museum's Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Research Center actively collects garments and personal items from Nevada's First ladies. The collection extends from the Julia Scrugham's wedding dress in 1906 to our most recent accession, that of First lady Dawn Gibbons.

Nationally, the idea of saving First Ladies' attire, began in 1916, when two prominent Washingtonian women realized that most of the Smithsonian's collection clothing was that of prominent white men and not much women's wear had been preserved. It was Cassie Myers and Rose Hoes who first recognized that clothing "illustrative of the fashions of the women of the US from colonial times, including all manner of accessories and embellishments and the articles of their particular sphere of home life", should be collected and preserved. Today, the First Ladies exhibit hall is one of the most popular exhibitions at the Smithsonian.

The same can be said of Nevada's First Ladies collection. It is enormously popular and we have featured the 14 gowns several times at the Governor's Mansion for the Tin Cup Tea. Each time, we display the current first lady's gown on the

grand staircase in the Mansion and the setting is stellar. One year we borrowed the governor's tuxedo and positioned both the gown and the suit on the staircase. It is a stunning venue with the chandelier overhead, and curved balusters on either side. Just recently we mounted Una Reilly Dickerson's gown on the staircase for the NWHP's Pink Tea and we have been asked to do so again in September for the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Mansion.

Our first, First Ladies garment donated to the Museum came in 1964 when Marjorie Russell donated her Ceil Chapman gown. Mrs. Russell wore it to her husband's gubernatorial ball in 1952 and again in 1956. It was then a few years later that Mrs. Vail Pittman donated her Ceil Chapman gown from 1946. Interestingly, both of these gowns were designed by Chapman but are very different. Mrs. Russell's gown is lavender tulle with panniers while Mrs. Pittman's is white tailored brocade.

From the 1960s forward, each first lady has donated her ball gown to the Museum. Bette Sawyer's gown was Nevada designed, created by Countess Angela Dandini of Reno. Jackie Laxalt's is an empire styled Emma Domb brocade, Kathy List's is a blue crepe Halston, Carolyn O'Callaghan's is a heavy brocade with matching capelet and Bonnie Bryan's is a brown silk and sequined gown with matching shoes and purse. Mrs. Miller donated both of her gowns, which were designed by Dr. Parvin Modaber Jacobs and made my Mia Designs, both of Las Vegas. Mrs. Guinn's ensemble is an Eavis and Brown design, which was purchased at Sak's Fifth Avenue in New York. Mrs. Gibbons' burgundy silk and velvet gown is an

Armani and it was purchased in Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas.

For many years, we had a void in our First Ladies collection, having nothing from the early and mid-20th century, nor the 19th century. Several years ago, Keni McKenzie called me and offered her great grandmother's gown, that of Una Reilly Dickerson. She and her cousins all agreed that the Museum was the best place for their family's treasured heirloom gown. In the 1990s we were able to acquire two gowns, which were worn by First Lady Idelle Balzar, whose husband Fred Balzar served from 1927 until 1934.

However, that is not to say that we don't have an earlier garment attributed to a Nevada First Lady and that is Julia Scrugham's wedding dress from 1906. Her husband, James Scrugham, served as governor from 1923-1926 and the family donated many of their personal items. Mrs. Scrugham's daughter distinctly remembers her mother's inaugural ball gown, which was yellow, but no one seems to know where it is.

As members of the Nevada Women's History Project take on characters of our First Ladies and we struggle to find personal histories of these women, it is ever so important to expand our collection of First Ladies' artifacts. We are continuing to search for that rare item which may have belonged to the First Lady in these governing families: Nye, Blasdel, Bradley Kinkead, Adams, Stevenson, Bell, Colcord, Jones, Sadler, Sparks, Oddie, Boyle, Griswold, Kirman, Carville.

*Jan Loverin,
Curator of Clothing and Textiles,
Nevada State Museum's Marjorie
Russell Center
Clothing and Textile Research*

(Continued from page 8)

We have added more family members as partners (Kathy Szudajski and Tanisha Chacon). We have more books in different phases of the publishing process and many submissions in the cue. We still love what we do and our dreams are becoming a reality.

Watch us go!

*Janice Hermsen and
Lenore Halfide, Owners*

Among the Missing: Nevada's First Ladies

While researching Nevada's First Ladies for Chautauqua 'First Lady Presentations' for NWHP's Annual Pink Tea at the Governor's Mansion, I was surprised to find little information on our First Ladies other than very brief biographies on the State web site. Those biographies generally contain basic facts such as birth information (if known), plus some marriage and death dates. This information is generally encapsulated in a two or three paragraph article, the first about the woman and the rest on their Governor husbands. A photograph or painting of the First Lady usually accompanies each biography. Other state-authored biographies are similar in nature. The most complete documented biography of any Nevada First Lady is a new NWHP biography of *Marjorie* Marjorie Russell, written by Virginia Russell Sakal, which has recently been posted on our Web site, and is in this issue (see pgs. 7 and 10).

My search progressed through the various historical repositories in the North and I enlisted the help of my research compatriot, Grace Davis, NWHP Education, Outreach and Review Chair. At the Nevada State Library in Carson City, we met Head of Public Services Librarian Joyce Cox, who led us to a vertical file on First Ladies that contained some newspaper and magazine articles.

Except for some obituaries and articles from newspapers or periodicals, we discovered there was no individual documentation on some of the women, although First Lady Bette Sawyer's 1961 biography project, titled "Nevada's 100 Years of First Ladies," included more personal information on Governor's wives

from 1865 (Blasdel) through 1958 (Russell) than is generally known. I was able to get in contact with daughter Gail Sawyer and she is now looking for a draft of her mother's original article.

That library visit and subsequent visits proved invaluable. The end result has been positive for the Nevada State Library, Nevada State Cultural Affairs Web site and the NWHP. For Library patrons, Joyce has compiled an index to the copies of documents available in the library's vertical First Ladies file, which has been added to the Nevada State Cultural Affairs Web site. We will take it a step further by publishing the index on our Web site, which will be continuously updated as we acquire new information. Hard copies of documents will be available at the Jean Ford Research Center and in a digital format, which can be sent by email.

How can you as NWHP members and the general public assist our organization in gathering additional information on Nevada's First Ladies? If you know of any First Lady relative or individual who could provide additional information on any of the following women please contact me or Grace Davis at the NWHP office (email address nwhp@pyramid.net) or call the office (786-6865) and leave a message with your name and phone number so we can contact you. We do not wish to keep your documentation but would appreciate the opportunity to make both hard and digital copies for our files and Web site index. If the owner of the documentation prefers to have future control regarding the use of photographs or other personal written material, that also can be arranged.

Our goal is to provide

additional information to the public on our First Ladies, and to promote the writing of greater in-depth biographies on each First Lady, which will be posted on our First Lady Web site link. We welcome all potential writers -- whether NWHP members or not -- to submit biographies on these women. First Lady Bette Sawyer did a wonderful job almost forty years ago with the information available to her at that time in bringing these women, so important in our state's history, to the public's attention. The State Web site has used some of the facts she tirelessly gathered for her project in their brief biographical profiles. But it is now time to build upon her efforts and fill in missing information that will add to each woman's character and life achievements.

As the old adage says, "Behind every successful man there is a successful woman." Considerable history is available for those successful men. Now we need to fill in the huge gaps on all those successful women. **Help us give each Nevada First Lady her long overdue recognition.**

Patti Bernard

(Continued from page 7)

Marjorie Ann Russell

Marjorie Russell's contributions to the state best when he described her as "a lady who has been a shining light for the Silver State. She has given thousands of fellow Nevadans the pleasure of enjoying her as First Lady, wife and mother, and dedicated worker for the historical preservation for all aspects of life in the Silver State."

Written and researched by Virginia Russell Sakal. Posted to NWHP Web site June 2009.

News From the Southern Region

Two workshops were held in Las Vegas in April highlighting the NWHP book, *Skirts That Swept The Desert Floor*. Stephens Press, the book's publisher, hosted a Nuts & Bolts Writing Workshop at the East Flamingo Public Library. Stephens Press editor Carolyn Hayes-Uber stated that the book was one of her favorites.

The other workshop, for writers, was sponsored by the Henderson Writers Group at Sam's Town, on April 17-18-19, 2009. A

cocktail party hosted by Stephens Press honored NWHP members Mary Gafford and Nancy Sansone and about 15 other attendees for having had a book published by their publishing house.

Interestingly, Nancy Sansone has written a romance novel with certain chapters alluding to such locations as Pahrump, Nevada, and surrounding areas. We wish Nancy the best of luck in finding a publisher.

Mary Gafford

Annual Meeting Not for a Weak Stomach

Our annual meeting and luncheon at the Silver Oak Golf Club in Carson City included a graphic presentation of surgery as performed by famed Da Vinci Robot specialist Dr. Karen Abbott. We were scarcely through our delicious lunch when Dr. Abbott turned on the projector and began to show us the amazing contraption with four mechanical arms that pierces the human body through tiny incisions. A full-color, enlarged video clip demonstrated her guiding the tiny, razor-sharp "fingers" in and around a pulsating heart and other organs. Aided by a laparoscopy camera located on one of the robot's arms, she used a curved needle to sew up the two ends of a severed fallopian tube! Obviously enthralled with the new device, Dr. Abbott travels the world to train other surgeons in its use. Based in Reno, she attended medical school at the University of California at Davis, and is one of our long-time members. Everyone seemed to enjoy the presentation, especially when we got a chance to play with her tools afterwards. Some members demurred, possibly because of a queasy stomach! The

medical profession certainly needs more surgeons like Karen Abbott. We're lucky to have her as a long-standing member and strong supporter of our organization.

Holly Walton-Buchanan

Attention all NWHP Members!

Please note that all members, Southern Region included, are considered cherished members of NWHP until their dues have expired in December 2009. You will continue to receive a NWHP newsletter and are welcome to participate in any NWHP events or publications. All current (and former) members will have the opportunity to be a member of NWHP. Those in the Southern Region who join the new organization currently being set up in the South are invited to also continue being members in NWHP and renew their membership in January 2010. Thank you for your support and love of women's history in Nevada.

NWHP

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