Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs — Division of Museums and History



### VADA STATE MUSEUM **ΙΗ**.' $N \in W S L \in T T \in R$ MAY 2004

**VOLUME XXXII, NUMBER 2** 

# Coin Show Set **For August 28, 29**

#### **By KATHI BAKER** Special Event Coordinator

The tenth annual Carson City Mint Coin Show at the Nevada State Museum will be held on August 28 and 29, 2004. The event is usually held the weekend following Labor Day. However, due to a conflict with other events, we are required to move the date of this year's coin show. The date change doesn't seem to be bothering our regular dealers. We have received deposits on most of the tables already. Again, the dealers will offer buying and selling of coins and many will offer free appraisals.

This year's raffle prizes surpass all others. Grand prize will again be a beautifully framed photo of the Carson City U.S. Mint which will again hold a "CC" mint mark Morgan Silver dollar which was donated by Rusty and Marie Goe of Southgate Coins. The frame will also hold two silver medallions with "CC" mint marks. Allen Rowe of Northern Nevada Coin has donated an 1881 five dollar gold coin with the "CC" mint mark, which of course means the coin was minted at the Carson City U.S. Mint. This is a \$550.00 value and will be the first prize. Second prize is a men's coin watch, third prize will be a ladies coin watch, and fourth prize is a silver certificate donated by A. Jacobs of Carson Valley Currency & Coins, Inc. Special thanks go to these kind dealers.

Raffle tickets will go on sale on March 15 and again are \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. Tickets are available at the admission desk at the Nevada State Museum. Last year over 5,000 tickets were sold, and we are in hopes of exceeding last year's sales.

Of course there will be gold panning, great food, and the Friends of the Nevada State Museum will be selling goods. We look forward to seeing every one of you there!

We want to get the sponsor letters out earlier this year. Last year we had four sponsors for the show: Wells Fargo Bank, International Game Technology, Carson City Nugget, and Mission Industries. We are very optimistic that the same businesses will again sponsor the show. This year we are in the process of picking up eBay as a sponsor. I have been dealing with Troy Thoreson of Auc Pro, Inc., an eBay representative, and it looks like there will be no problem with eBay becoming a sponsor. If they do, the coin show will have it's own web page and auction page. This is a great opportunity!

## Archaeological Awareness and Historic Preservation Week at NV State Museum

#### **By GENE HATTORI Curator of Anthropology**

The Anthropology Program is participating in the State's Archaeological Awareness and Historic Preservation Week from May 9 to May 15. We will again be offering daily Behind the Scenes Tours, Monday through Saturday, with the primary emphasis on our historic basketry collection. Because of the museum's remodeling project, the Dat So La Lee baskets were removed from the gallery. These tours provide an opportunity to view and learn about her baskets.

As promised to previous Behind the Scenes visitors, instead of showing Lovelock Chinatown artifacts, we will showcase artifacts from other historic archaeological sites. These include civilian artifacts from Fort Churchill and artifacts from a depression era squatter's camp associated with Boulder Dam's construction. The Anthropology and Natural History programs will also continue with regularly scheduled Behind the Scenes Tours on the last Friday of every month. To schedule a tour you need to make a reservation by calling Roz Works at 687-4810 ext. 230.

For more information on Archaeological Awareness and Historic Preservation Week go to the State Historic Preservation Office's web page through the Department of Cultural Affairs' website www.NevadaCulture.org, or call Barb Prudic at (775) 684-3448.

#### New Division Administrator Appointed

Department of Cultural Affairs Interim Director Scott Sisco announced this month that Wally Steffan of the West Valley Art Museum in Phoenix has been appointed as the new administrator for the Division of Museums and History. Steffan began his new duties in Nevada on April 19.

"Wally has a strong background in community development for museums and considerable history with involving communities in the development of cultural issues," Sisco said.

Steffan serves as a surveyor for the American Museum Association's Museum Assessment Program, a research associate for the Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu, and President of the Central Arizona Museum Association. He has over 35 years of experience in running museums and in teaching museum studies at the university level.



The Nevada State Museum Newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, Auust and November by the NSM Docent Council, for the benefit of museum members. This issue edited by Jack Gibson. Printed by Capitol City Press, Carson City. Please address all communications to Newsletter, Nevada State Museum, 600 N. Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701.

The museum is an agency of the State of Nevada Kenny Guinn Governor Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs Scott K. Sisco Interim Department Director Division of Museums and History Wally Steffan Division Administrator Nevada State Museum Jim Barmore Museum Director Become a member and support the Nevada State Museum. Membership includes free admission to all seven state museums, a 15% discount in all museum stores, the Nevada Historical Society Quarterly, newsletters, and selected invitations

to exhibit openings, educational pro-	
grams, and events.	
Individual	\$35
• Family	\$50
Sustaining	\$100
Contributing	\$250

• For seniors who simply want free admission and a 15% discount and not the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, a special senior membership is available at only ... \$20

Other facilities included in your membership are:

- Nevada State Historical Society, Reno
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- Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City
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# Views of the Past...



This photograph of the Carson City U.S. Branch Mint taken in 1870 is the earliest known image of the building taken shortly after it was completed. It along with many other unique items was placed in the corner stone of the Nevada State Capitol back in June of 1870. When the Capitol building underwent extensive restoration in the late 1970s this photograph was among cornerstone memorabilia removed from the copper box and placed on display in the lobby of the museum. The photograph and other items were placed back into a new cornerstone box with additional items and put back inside the wall of the Capitol. A copy of this photograph is the number one prize at this years Coin Show along with a Morgan Dollar, and two silver medallions minted off Coin Press No. 1.

## **Tours Behind the Scenes**

The Nevada State Museum is offering behind-the-scenes tours of its anthropology, and plants and animal collections on the last Friday of the month. Advance reservations are required due to limited space. To arrange a tour, call Roz Works at (775) 687-4810, ext. 228.

The museum actively engages people in understanding Nevada's natural and cultural heritage. The museum collects, preserves, studies and shares this heritage through exhibits, educational programs, publications, and research. Exhibits highlight the state's geology, plants, animals, history, Coin Press No. 1, a replica walk-through mine and ghost town, and the U.S.S. Nevada silver service.

#### Planning Begins for Tin Cup Tea

The Governor's Tin Cup Tea and Chuck Wagon BBQ will be held on September 11 this year. The planning committee for this event usually begins meeting in June.

# **Orr Nugget Goes On Exhibit**

The Orr nugget discovered in 1850, a rare piece of Nevada history, just went on exhibit in the history gallery.

The thumb sized gold nugget was found in Gold Canyon on June 1, 1850 by Mormon pioneer John Orr, while traveling with a Mormon wagon train on its way to California. The wagon train stopped in Carson Valley, where they waited three weeks for the Sierra passes to clear of snow. Orr and several others returned to Gold Canyon and began prospecting at a fork in the creek. Eliot Lord in his book Comstock Mining and Miners tells about the discovery. He wrote, "The party had few tools, and Orr had nothing but a butcher knife. While Kelly, a prospecter, was working, Orr noticed a very narrow place at the fork, where water barely covered a slab of slate rock. Idly he examined it, and noticing a small crevice near the edge, drove the butcher knife into it, breaking out a piece. The water running over it washed out the underlying dirt. And in a few seconds Orr discovered a gold nugget which the rock had covered. It was quickly removed and afterwards found to weigh \$8.25. This was on 1st of June, 1850, nearly 30 years ago. Prospecting was continued, and though gold dust was found in several places throughout the canyon, Orr's was the only nugget found. The party lacked tools and provisions, and being bent on reaching California, abandoned the canyon. Orr offered the nugget to Kelly, who refused it, so Orr kept the nugget....."

News of the discovery of Orr and others prompted Nevada's first gold rush as parties of California miners traveled eastward over the Sierra. From 1850 to 1859, Gold Canyon supported 100 to 180 miners before the Comstock Lode was discovered in 1859.

John Orr later settled north of San Francisco at Duncan Mills. He had a colorful life as a stagecoach driver. He died in El Dorado County, California in 1891. Orr passed the nugget



down as a family heirloom and it was donated to the museum by the discovers' great-nephew, Lt. Colonel William D. Orr and his wife Wanda in 1969. The nugget measures 1 1/4 inch in length and 7/8 inch in width and weighs .68 ounces. In 1850 the nugget was worth \$8.25.

### Message From the Museum Director, Jim Barmore

How does the museum decide what to collect? Who can borrow museum collections? How does the museum care for and secure collections for long-time preservation? These and other questions are answered in the museum's recently revised collection management policy.

The museum's collections committee, comprising curators and myself, completed a comprehensive review and update of collection management policy, culminating more than a year of work. The committee reviewed all activities related to managing the museum's varied and complex collections. Collections range from bugs to bottles to baskets. They number over two and a quarter million objects. They are housed at several locations. Collections are used by the museum for numerous educational purposes and by outside researchers, cultural organizations, government agencies, and the general public. Some collections are controlled by the museum, and others are controlled by federal agencies.

The collection management policy establishes a comprehensive set of written legal and ethical standards, consistent with professional practices, for managing and developing all museum collections. The policy helps maintain loyalty to the museum's statutory purpose, mission, and commitment to high standards of public service. It promotes organizational integrity and public confidence in the museum's public trust role. The policy assists consistent and fair service to all members of the public. It defines levels of authority and responsibilities for the board, administrator, museum staff, and volunteers. This facilitates effective communication and understanding within the museum and for the public. Everyone refers to just one set of guidelines. Implementation of standards defined in the policy requires adequate planning and resources. The policy assists strategic planning and resource allocation.

The collection management policy represents an established professional expectation and fulfills a requirement for accreditation. The museum's reaccreditation review by the American Association of Museums occurs this coming May. Completing and updating all policies positions the museum for a successful stamp of approval by the national museum organization.

I thank all the curators for their help in achieving this major professional milestone.

## Natural History Spotlights: Western Poison Ivy

#### By GEORGE D. BAUMGARDNER Curator of Natural History

Those of you that have walked through the woods in much of the United States may be familiar with a plant capable of causing an irritating, red rash. Poison ivy is fairly easy to recognize by its three-part leaf. Many people assume this structure to be three leaves radiating from a common point, but in fact, it is a single leaf composed of three leaflets. Regardless of its true construction, the saying "Leaves of three, let it be" is a descriptive, if not anatomically correct, way to identify this plant. If you thought that by living in Nevada you could avoid the irritation of dealing with poison ivy, you're nearly correct—but not entirely. Most people are unaware that this potentially noxious plant has been found in our state. While your odds of encountering it are extremely low, the possibility does exist.

Western Poison Ivy (Toxicodendron rydbergii) lives across much of Canada and the United States (except for the southeastern states and California). Until recently, this plant was not known from Nevada, but in 1988 it was discovered north of Gerlach by Ann Pinzl, Curator of Botany retired, of the Nevada State Museum. Ann and two other botanist colleagues found it as they worked along an isolated canyon. Only a portion of this plant was kept as the pressed specimen shown in the photo. The remainder of this species was left growing where it was found. Without revisiting the site, there is no way to know if it still lives there but, given the remoteness of the area, the continued existence of this plant there seems likely. As far as I can determine, this is the only known example of Western Poison Ivy from Nevada. Because this species had never been reported from this state, Ann sent this specimen to other experts to double check its species identification. Noted botanist, Arthur Cronquist, confirmed it was Western Poison Ivy and felt it was an important enough record to refer to it in his book Intermountain Flora: Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, USA. Vol II Part A (Cronquist A., H.H. Holmgren, and P. K. Holmgren; 1997, New York Botanical Garden, 446p).

At one time this plant was considered to be the same species as Eastern Poison Ivy (Toxicodendron radicans) but about 30 years ago biologists realized their growth forms were different enough to justify their being separate species. Eastern Poison Ivy has aerial roots that grow from the stems above ground and can grab on to other objects. Such plants can take on a vine-like appearance and will wind around and sometimes strangle other plants. Western Poison Ivy, on the other hand, normally grows like a small scrub, less than three feet tall. The somewhat woody stems lack aerial roots, are either single or sparsely branched, and arise near one another from a much-branched root system. Both forms have long, stalked leaves divided into three coarse-toothed leaflets. Their leaflets are deep green in color, oval in shape, and have pointed tips. The flowers of both species are arranged in small, dense clusters and the cream colored berries have a waxy surface. Both forms also have milky oil, called urishol, that when emitted from damaged tissue, often causes blisters and rash after it contacts human skin. While poison ivy can be irritat-



Photo of a specimen of Western Poison Ivy (Toxicoderndron rydbergii) found north of Gerlach, Nevada in 1988.

ing to humans, it appears to have little effect on wildlife and it is even lightly browsed by livestock. Western Poison Ivy is considered a weed that will readily invade disturbed areas such as roadsides, fencerows, lakeshores, and sites subjected to fire. This species rarely covers large areas but it can be rather abundant in wet situations with moderate sunlight such as canyons, ravines, creek banks, and stream bottoms. Consistent with these habitats, the collection site for the Nevada specimen was in the bottom of a narrow canyon. The occurrence of wild rose and willow here indicates that water was also present.

The closest population of this species to the Nevada locality will be in either southeastern Oregon or southern Idaho (Cronquist et al., 1997). At the very least, this is a distance of 50 miles. I think we can safely assume that no human intentionally transplanted this species to such an isolated spot. How then did Western Poison Ivy come to be growing along a canyon bottom in northwestern Nevada? Birds are the likely culprits responsible for transporting this plant here. Partly eaten fruit could have been deposited in a bird's dropped waste or seeds, stuck by their waxy surface to a bird's feathers, may have fallen off. Once these seeds germinated, the plant could have reproduced in two ways. One method is through production of seeds. The other form of reproduction is through vegetative means. Poison ivy can send out rhizomes (root-like structures) from which erect stems will develop. Reproduction by this means can establish colonies of plants that are genetically identical to one another.

There is one other closely related plant, Western Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), living in Nevada capable of causing rashes in humans. Unlike our poison ivy, the poison oak in this state has leaflets that are more rounded and with

# **Meet the New NSM Curator of Education**



Deborah Stevenson was conducting her first seminar with Docent tour guides when caught by the camera of the editor of the Newsletter.

#### Western Poison Ivy (Continued)

blunter tips. Our poison oak also has aerial roots and can climb objects. This plant is common in the Sierras of California but is limited to the Virginia Mountains west of Pyramid Lake in Nevada.

Some people question the reasons for surveying a region to see what lives there. Surely, they say, all this information can be found in books or on the Internet. Not so. These things have to be found in the wild before they can be reported. Only through detailed searching might some of these rarer organism be found at all. I am aware of at least three species of plants (and I'm sure there are more) not previously known to live in Nevada that were discovered through the efforts of Ann Pinzl while she was at the Nevada State Museum. One of these species was previously unknown to science. In the past five years, due to the efforts of field crews from other organizations, at least two species of mammals have been documented for the first time in Nevada. While these newly discovered residents are unlikely to have a profound impact on many people, their presence, even in small numbers, enriches our knowledge of the flora and fauna of our state. Even if there are rarely any economic benefits realized from such discoveries, increasing our knowledge of the things living in Nevada is important to us all.

Curator of Education, Deborah Stevenson, represents the newest addition to the staff at the Nevada State Museum. Originally from Colorado, Deborah spent the last ten years in the Four Corners Region working at Edge of the Cedars State Park Museum (EOC) in Blanding, Utah. At EOC Stevenson was known for her consistent quality public programing, and successful grant writing and innovative marketing strategies. After serving seven years as Curator of Education, she was promoted to Park Manager, making history as the first woman Park Manager in the history of Utah State Parks. Through Deborah's ability to form effective partnerships with Native American tribes and federal agencies, EOC became a model for other heritage parks. Stevenson is perhaps best known for her work as coordinator of the Four Corners Indian Art Festival and Native American Art Awards Exhibit. She earned her master's degree in Anthropology from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks.

Deborah is excited to be a part of the Nevada State Museum. "The opportunities are endless!" she exclaims. Stevenson looks forward to using her skills in audience development, programming and marketing to increase visitation and revenue for the museum. She is currently working with a team of docents to create a "thematic" tour for the *Under One Sky* exhibit. The team will combine relevant historic context with "people stories" to make the artifacts and exhibit themes come alive. Deborah is especially interested in maintaining a living connection to the prehistoric past. She is working with Native Americans to schedule summer craft demonstrations to complement *Under One Sky* and will use Native American advisors when applicable for tour development.

Since the education program at the Nevada State Museum is brand new, Deborah is building the program from the ground up. The thematic tour for *Under One Sky* will serve as a model for developing structured tours for other parts of the museum. Once the tours are in place, new docents will be recruited and trained. Visitors and school groups will be able to select the tour that best matches their topic of interest and/ or curriculum needs. All school tours/programs will have a "hands-on" or experiential component. The school tours program for *Under One Sky* should be "up and running" by fall. New tours will be added each year.

In addition to promoting commercial bus tours and designing school programs, Deborah is working with Curator of History Bob Nylen to develop a communications trunk for school outreach. This "Museum in a Trunk" program will serve as a model for other outreach programs and will include a packet for teachers with background information and related activities to extend the learning environment.

For more information on museum education or to volunteer, contact Deborah at 775-687-4810, ext. 237.

The museum is looking for a few good people that like to talk to visitors about the exhibits. Join the Docents (now officially known as Friends of the Museum) and be a part of the Nevada State Museum. Call Chairman Pat Puchert at (775) 887-0710 for information.

### Inaugural Ball Gown Notecards Go On Sale



Reno's Wooster High School students pose after assembling 500 boxes of the First Ladies Inaugural Ball Gown notecards.—Staff photo

#### **By JAN LOVERIN** Curator Clothing and Textiles

As you have undoubtedly heard, he Nevada State Museum has just produced boxed notecards of the First Ladies Inaugural Ball gowns. I am very proud of this project, as it has been a dream of mine for several years. What makes this project interesting is that the notecards feature a close up detail photograph of the color, texture and weave of the fabric of each gown and then on the back, is a full length photo showing the silhouette of the garment.

Nevada State Museum photographer Scott Klette took the full length photographs of each gown and graphic designer Margery Marshall of Lone Star Studios took the close-ups and did the layout and color matching.

Each box features 24 cards (with envelopes), and two photographs of each gown. I am certainly no mathematician, but figuring 24 notecards times 500 boxes yields 12,000 individual cards and envelopes. These all had to assembled into boxes, labels applied to the back and finished with silver ribbon. This was going to be a daunting task.

Welcome, Wooster High School students. Once again, government teacher Diane Boone asked me to host a work project for these wonderful high school students. On the day of the assembly, I was a bit nervous as we had to be incredibly organized, efficient and accurate. We couldn't sell a box of wards with only 23 envelopes or fill a box with too many notecards. Well, we gathered these students around two tables and each one was assigned to a specific image and they manually stuffed each box. Two students became the expert envelope counters, one became the official label applicator, two became runners and our wonderful Sue Ann Monteleone became the silver ribbon expert. Thank you all for your help with this fun project.

This postcard project was funded by the John and Grace Nauman Foundation and in part by proceeds from the Tin Cup Tea and the Russell fund. The notecards are currently available for sale at \$15.95 at the Nevada State Museum gift shop and the Greenhouse Garden Center gift shop. In the future we hope to have them available at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno and possibly at the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society in Las Vegas.

### Winters Silver On Display in Reno at Silver Legacy Casino



The beauty and elegance of the Winter's family silver collection can now be seen from all sides. The large rectangular display case on the main floor of the Silver Legacy will be the new temporary home for the display.

The installation required careful teamwork between museum and casino personnel. The security of the case lies in its inaccessibility. The plexiglass covering for the display case measures about 4 feet by 5 feet and is made up of almost one inch thick clear plastic. The entire lid is so heavy it must be raised with a forklift, then shimmed on all four corners leaving a gap between the wooden base and the top to work through. Since the casino never closes people moving past the exhibit had to be directed around the entire operation.

Two exhibit personnel set up the exhibit while a third kept a close eye on the silver set as well as the previous archaeological artifacts that were being removed. This turned out to be a delicate and time-consuming installation, but it certainly drew a crowd of spectators who seemed mesmerized by the exquisite silver and the refection of the crimson velvet drapery.

We appreciate the support of the management and staff of the Silver Legacy Casino. Our thanks to Ron James, State Historical Preservation Officer, for helping to coordinate this project.—*Ray, Exhibits Manager* 





Kathy Holden stands alongside the new cabinets.-Staff photo

# A New Look For Behind the Scenes

By EUGENE HATTORI Curator of Anthropology

The Anthropology Program extends its sincere thanks to the following: The Robert and Joy Leland Charitable Trust, Kirk and Analease Odencrantz, anonymous donors, and Don and Kay Fowler. Their recent gifts enable the museum to increase the level of care for many of our historic baskets and other Native American objects entrusted to us. Our staff and volunteers are currently transferring collections from plywood cabinets to new steel, museum cabinets.

The Anthropology Program has always been concerned with "proper" storage for the public's archaeological and anthropological collections. Over the past few decades, however, museum standards changed considerably, and the museum profession now frowns upon what we formerly considered proper artifact storage. Our most important artifacts were formerly stored atop cotton batting in individual cardboard trays within plywood cabinets.

Now, individual artifacts are packaged in "food grade" polyethylene bags, with acid free labels. When artifacts are displayed in storage drawers, we use "ethafoam" or archival cardboard containers. These changes benefit the longevity of the artifacts, and we have addressed a number of serious conservation issues. Our first endeavor was remodeling the basketry vault (see *NSM Newsletter*; May 2003). All 650+ baskets contained in the vault are now well cared for, thanks, also, to the public's generosity. Unfortunately, this left over 1,000 baskets in the old plywood cabinets. Now, this too is being addressed.

Enough funding was provided to our Collections Care Fund to properly store the remaining basketry and many other objects in our care. We still have a considerable way to go, but, thanks to the public's support, we are well along with our improvements. Come and take a look during our monthly *Behind the Scenes Tour* or ask any of the Anthropology staff for a look at our progress.

### **Coming Events**

NEVADA STATE MUSEUM

May 8: Native American Craft Demonstration, Making a Tule Duck Decoy and Egg Bag, by Mike Williams, Paiute/ Shoshone. 10:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. For information call Deborah Stevenson, 775-687-4810, ext. 237.\*

May 20: Free Lecture by Lynn Downey, Historian, Levi Strauss, San Francisco, at the Governor's Mansion, 7:00 p.m.

May 25: Lovelock Chinatown Gold Coins, by Eugene Hatorri, Ph.D. Curator of Anthropology at the Nevada State Museum, Franes Humphrey program.

**June 19:** *Washoe Basketmaking Demonstration* by Sue Coleman. 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. For more information call Deborah Stevenson at 775-687-4810, ext. 237.\*

June 22: Sagebrush Vernacular: Rural Architecture in Nevada, by Steve Davis, Assistant Director of the Nevada Humanities Program, Frances Humphrey program.

July 27: Traveling America's Loneliest Road by Jack Hurst.

August 24: Dat-so-la-lee, A Woman's Legacy to Nevada, by Sue Ann Monteone, Registrar, Nevada State Museum, Frances Humphrey program.

These programs are part of the Museum's Frances Humphrey evening lecture series held on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. There is no charge for the programs. The Loftin Park entrance on the north side of the museum complex will be used for all programs. For more information call 687-4810, ext. 239.

\* Museum admission required.

#### NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

May 12: The Oregon-American Lumber Company Ain't No More, by Morely Ed Kamholy.

June 9: To be announced.

July: No program in summer.

Programs at the Nevada State Railroad Museum are held in the Interpretive Center at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, and are sponsored by the Friends of the Museum. Admission is free.



Visiting scholar Dr. Judy Polanich (California State Parks), discusses 1,200 year old Charlie Brown Cave basketry with Ruth Burgette (UNR), Gene Hattori (NSM), Professor Catherine Fwler (UNR), Ed Jolie (UNR), and Sue Monteleone (NSM, not shown). Ed and Ruth are completing studies on this basketry for their master's degrees from UNR.—Staff photo by sue Ann Monteleone

