



The Art of Nature

Images from the Wildlands of Nevada

by Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education &
George Baumgardner PhD, Curator of Natural History

The power of living fearlessly in a harsh environment produces an exhibit stunning in its clarity.

Vegas, is on display at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City through August 2009. The exhibit highlights nine places in southern Nevada. Schafer now lives in Boulder City, where she owns and operates Skydance Studio. In addition to her prolific work in southern Nevada, Schafer has traveled widely in her research as a wildlife biologist. Don't miss her presentation, *Artist in Antarctica: Walking among the Emperor Penguins*, which features Sharon's research and exquisite images of another desert (see November 25 Frances Humphrey Calendar of Events' listing). Come with an open heart. Schafer's work is certain to bring out the naturalist in everyone!



The Art of Nature, Nevada State Museum's newest exhibit, features the work of wildlife biologist, artist, naturalist, and river guide, Sharon K. Schafer. The exhibit combines Ms. Schafer's sketches, paintings, photographs, and words with some of the museum's excellent taxidermy to help the viewer discover the hidden beauty and grace of Nevada's less traveled wilderness areas. Schafer's accurate vision coupled with her meticulous attention to detail serve as a testimony to her love affair with wildlands. Sharon's powerful art is capable of transforming the skeptic, proving that lands once thought of as desolate are teaming with life—a miraculous spectrum of diverse species.

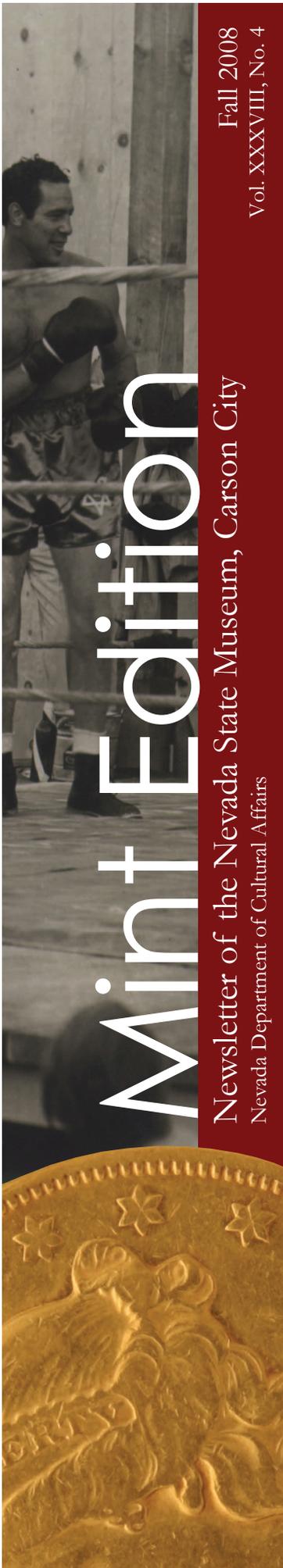
The Art of Nature, on loan from the Nevada State Museum, Las

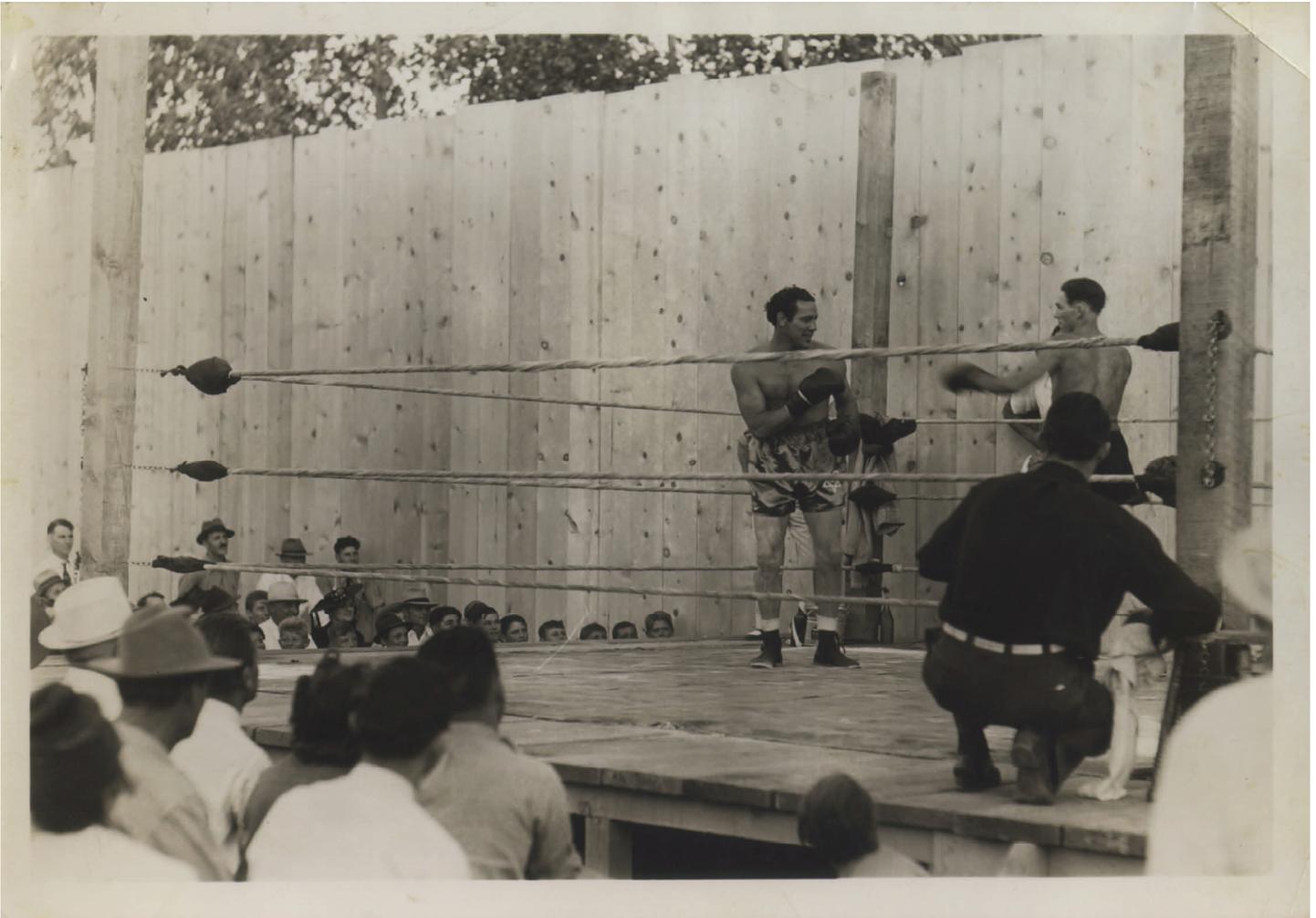


Top:
This burrowing owl makes his home in the Eldorado Wilderness Area.

Middle and Left:
NSM's taxidermy complements Schafer's artwork.

Above:
Schafer at work in her Boulder City studio.





Editor's Note

by Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education

This *Mint Edition* focuses on the theme of embracing fearlessness. The power of fearlessness produced *The Art of Nature*, an exhibit of exquisite beauty and strength. Fearlessness keeps the museum director's optimism intact despite countless construction and budget challenges. Fearlessness motivated volunteer Kurt Christner to tackle a tough engineering aspect of the new CC coin exhibit. It took courage for Big Ed Murphy to fight heavyweight champion Max Baer (p. 2) and for 16 year old Will Robins to teach the art of coin grading to a class of mostly adults (p. 5). Fearlessness keeps *Day of the Dead* alive, Historic Coin Press No. 1 cranking, and staff venturing out to perhaps the largest "Leave No Trace" event in the world (p. 6). In the words of Teddy Roosevelt, "Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to rank among those poor timid spirits who know neither victory nor defeat."

KO at Silver Peak

by Sue Ann Monteleone, Museum Registrar

At the Labor Day celebrations in Silver Peak, Nevada, September 3, 1939, former heavyweight champion Max Baer (L) fought local Big Ed P. Murphy (R). Baer knocked out Murphy in the first round. Look closely and you can see the Star of David on Baer's boxing trunks, a symbol he wore in honor of his Jewish grandfather. Baer began wearing the Star of David symbol in 1933 when he defeated Germany's Max Schmeling.

A copy of this photo was donated to the museum by staff member Lorene Rasner, from her mother's collection. Lorene was raised in Gabbs and Hawthorne and remembered Big Ed visiting at their home in Hawthorne. Her uncle had a bar in Silver Peak, and her stepfather and Ed Murphy often worked together as miners in Silver Peak. Lorene says the fight was strictly exhibition and remembers these people as the salt of the earth.

The Big Picture: see close-up of Max Baer's trunks on the front page.

Creating Community: Museum as Place of Peace

by Deborah Stevenson,
Curator of Education

Thousands of people visit the Nevada State Museum (NSM) each year, creating a community of shared passion. They come to have fun, learn something new, and explore with family and friends. Some come for sanctuary – to escape the stress of the outside world – to connect with something real. These spiritual seekers see the museum as a place of refuge.

El Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), coming to NSM Saturday, November 8, provides an opportunity to connect with people and traditions from another time and place. El Día de los Muertos is a multicultural celebration of life through death with roots in the pre-Hispanic indigenous populations of Mexico. NSM is a safe setting for families to take sanctuary as they remember those who have died with fondness and affection. Exhibits called *ofrendas* (offerings) display photos, favorite foods, and memorabilia of the person whose life is being commemorated.



Day of the Dead promises stories, crafts, and dances to delight the whole family. Try your hand at *papel picado* (cut paper designs), fashion colorful tissue paper flowers, paint a maraca, model a folk figurine, or best of all – decorate a sugar skull with dazzling frosting designs. Sugar skulls sweeten the

trauma of death, especially for children, enabling them to deal with feelings of loss in a more positive way. For Latino visitors, Day of the Dead is a source of pride – a chance to plan for and participate in an event their parents and grandparents told them about, but which many have never experienced.

Is peace possible in these troubled times? Find out for yourself. Embrace fearlessness. Join us as we create community from 10 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Saturday, November 8. Experience the museum transformed into sanctuary... the museum as place of peace.

For more information, see the calendar listing or contact Deborah at 775/687-4810 ext. 237.



Message from the Museum Director

by Jim Barmore

A patron recently took the time to send the museum a thank you card. The note inside expressed precisely what we work so hard to achieve, “Your museum is one of the best I have seen. I will recommend your museum to everyone I meet.” Yes!

Many individuals and groups contribute to the museum’s success. They form a broad base, comprising visitors, museum members, the Friends organization, volunteers, state officials, government agencies, schools, private nonprofit organizations, businesses, individual donors, and others. All deserve recognition for helping the museum succeed. I want to single out one group – not always acknowledged in public ceremonies and sometimes taken for granted – the staff of the Nevada State Museum.

During my career, I have worked in six museums, larger and smaller, in big cities and small towns. Nowhere have I experienced such a committed, collaborative, and professional group. Working with these individuals is such a privilege. Staff are proud of their work at the museum. They care about the educational mission. They readily help their co-workers. They are driven by high standards.

Staff always try to optimize services given available resources. Like other agencies across the state, the museum is experiencing budget cuts. When funding is reduced, staff do all they can to come up with creative ways to maintain services and standards and make improvements. They don’t lower expectations or give up. This is an uncommon quality, reflecting optimism, professionalism, and commitment to providing the best possible public service.

The museum would not be “...one of the best...” without this group of positive and dedicated high-achievers. Thank you staff for working so hard to make the museum so great.

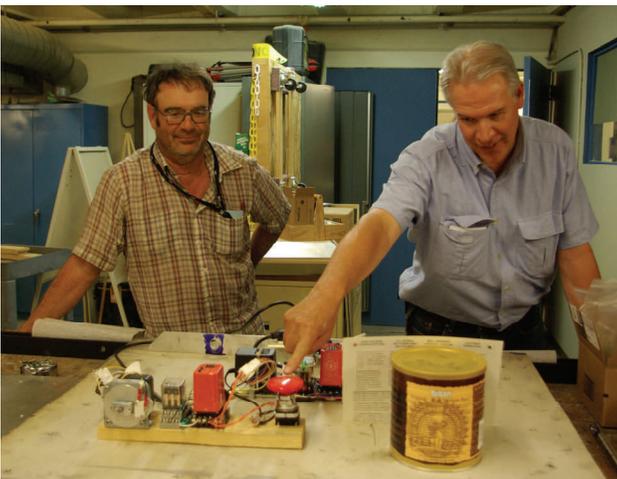
The New Exhibit of the CC Mint Coin Collection OR How Many Electrical Engineers Does it Take to FLIP A COIN?

by Museum Volunteer, Kurt W. Christner, P.E.

The Nevada State Museum's CC Mint coin collection is the rarest and most complete on display anywhere. The collection includes 109 of the 111 different gold and silver coins minted on Historic Coin Press No. 1 and the other presses from 1870 through 1893.

Exhibits Manager Ray Geiser secured a grant to prepare a new display of the collection that would be ADA compliant and allow close viewing of both the obverse and reverse of each coin.

Chris DeWitt and the crew at the Nevada State Railroad Museum fabricated the rugged display cases out of heavy aluminum plate and bulletproof glass to protect the \$3 million collection. Each year of coins is mounted in a vertical aluminum strip connected to a vertical shaft. A rack and pinion mechanism rotates all the shafts and strips in the display case.



Thanks to Kurt Christner (left), now, flipping a coin will be easy, even for Exhibits Manager Ray Geiser (right).

As an electrical engineer with previous volunteer work on the Population Counter in the history gallery, Ray asked me to help on the motion control for the new coin exhibit. The design criteria for the project included:

- Very safe!
- Simple, intuitive user operation.
- Rugged, reliable, long-life, low-maintenance design.
- ADA compliant.
- Smooth, accurate 180° rotation of the coins, stopping reliably at 0° and 180° positions.
- Inherent mechanical limits and automatic fault recovery.
- Easy troubleshooting and repair by museum technicians 5 – 10 – 25 years from now.
- "Kid Proof" (Virtually impossible, but at least "Kid Resistant").

The final design meets the criteria: A gear motor with a cam/crankshaft and a connecting rod provides the drive to the rack. The "stroke" of the crankshaft was determined by the rack movement required to rotate the coins 180°. The cam activates a switch to accurately stop at the 0° and 180° positions. The gear motor coasts too far when power is removed, so dynamic braking was implemented by applying a low-voltage DC pulse to the AC motor windings to stop the motor almost instantly.

A large, mushroom-shaped pushbutton starts the motor operation. The motor runs until the cam switch detects the stop position. Then the motor power is removed, and the dynamic braking is activated. A timer disables the pushbutton for 5 seconds to prevent continuous operation by holding or rapidly pressing the pushbutton. After 5 seconds, a "Ready" light illuminates, and the pushbutton is re-enabled.

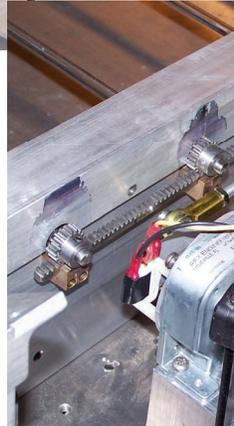
Heinz Doring of Creative Manufacturing, Al Feighen of Cubix Corporation, Wade Cline of the UNR Physics Shop, and Bob Dempsey contributed to the success of the project.

For more information on the exhibit program at NSM, contact Ray Geiser (rgeiser@nevadaculture.org).



Above: Reliability testing of the prototype.

Right: Gear motor, rack-and-pinion mechanism, and connection rod.



News from the Mint: Will Robins

by Sue Ann Monteleone, Museum Registrar

Award-winning numismatist Will Robins did a two week internship at the Nevada State Museum this summer. Will reviewed the museum's coin collections, re-assessed the value of the Biltz CC coin collection, uncovered wonderful treasures, re-packaged collections in archival storage, edited our database entries, toured the wonders of Indian Hills Curatorial Center, and got to type on a real *IBM Wheelwriter3* typewriter, older than him. In addition to his internship work, Will presented an excellent three hour workshop on coin grading during our Coin Education Fair.

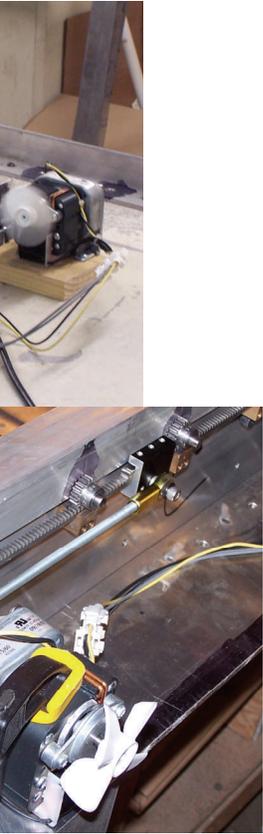
Will was named the 2008 Outstanding Young Numismatist of the Year by the American Numismatic Association, and

already at 16, has won several numismatic awards and competitions. His depth of knowledge and talent at coin grading are truly

remarkable. Watching him at work in the history office, learning from him, and observing the serious attention of the adult coin enthusiasts in his workshop was a great pleasure.

A resident of New York State, Will travelled to Nevada and the west several times and is finding that he likes sagebrush and driving 70 miles an hour legally. Beginning his junior year of high school, Will swims on several teams and has a broad interest in history.

Will's research showed us how valuable a treasure the Nevada State Museum's numismatic collections are. We have not only the first-class CC Morgan dollar collection, but also Federal bank notes, military medals, foreign and ancient coins, and remarkable documents from the U.S. Mint in Carson City. We hope that Will returns to help us with our collections again. Until then, we'll miss his youthful enthusiasm and contagious smile.



Above and Left: The art of coin grading requires detailed observation.

Right: Up in the History office, Robins made some striking discoveries.



The Nevada State Museum in Carson City is an agency of the Division of Museums and History within the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs. The museum engages diverse audiences in understanding and celebrating Nevada's natural and cultural heritage.

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Nevada State Museum
Jim Barmore
Museum Director

The Friends of the Nevada State Museum, a 501(c)(3) private nonprofit organization, supports the museum through volunteer assistance, fundraising, and advocacy. For information contact Bonnie Rieckhoff, Chair at 775/841-2108.

The Nevada State Museum publishes the *Mint Edition* newsletter in collaboration with the Friends of the Nevada State Museum for the purpose of highlighting museum exhibits, education programs, special events, and collection activities. The publication is available on a quarterly basis in January, April, July, and October in print or online at nevadaculture.org. Museum members receive the *Mint Edition* as a benefit of membership.

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Exhibits Manager Nearly Struck by Six Foot Chicken on Bicycle



By Scott Klette, Facility Supervisor

Captain Chaos here:
Now, in our defense, we'd already been there a week – "Burning Man" in the Black Rock Desert. Ray and I, along with our two friends Mark and Greg from the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) had received "early entrance" passes for our project. We arrived on Friday, three days before the official opening, to get all of our equipment set up.

The surface of the playa itself was extremely soft, making bicycle riding close to impossible...everywhere we went, would have to be on foot, and we'd have to take everything with us: water, goggles, dust masks, GPS unit, and cameras.

Ray and I hiked nearly 17 miles on Tuesday. The "odd & bizarre" was becoming more and more common place. We took most of Wednesday off to ice a couple of swollen knees...but Thursday afternoon, decided to hike the two miles back into center camp to mail a couple of post cards to the museum that would have the "Black Rock City, NV-2008" postmark. The temperature was 101 in the shade; blazing sun and zero air movement...a six foot chicken on a bicycle appeared in the distance, pedaling towards us...I was carrying two cameras, and never even thought to take a picture...

"...Ray...Look at that!"

He looked at me and said: "...look at what?"

Almost speechless, I said: "...it's...it's a six foot chicken on a bicycle!"

Ray said: "...where?"

My worst fears had been realized: Ray was "going native"...

The Burning Man Event is arguably the largest "Leave No Trace" event in the world, and probably the largest temporary art exhibit in the world. This year, Black Rock City had nearly 50,000 residents for one week, but this "city" will have vanished completely by October 2008. The land use issues, the impact, or lack-there-of to the playa environment and the cultural aspects of this event are totally unique to Nevada, and need to be documented.

Nevada State Museum and UNR decided to do a collaborative project to document via High Definition time lapse video, the set up and break down of "Black Rock City," as well as conduct High Definition video interviews with some of the participants. At the same time, I was documenting the "costumes" of Burning Man for our Curator of Textiles, Jan Loverin.

Shooting over 500 images, I can only expect that sometime in the near future, there will be another evening lecture here at the museum on this event, and components of the time lapse will likely appear in our new Natural History Galleries.

*It should be noted here that **all of the expenses** for this trip were paid by Ray and me...the tickets to the event were supplied by the Burning Man Organization.

P.S. The connecting structure is still moving along, with completion expected to be mid March, 2009...I can't wait...

Nevada
State
Museum



www.nevadaculture.org



Ray Geiser attests – No chickens in sight atop this ten story steel structure erected at the 2008 Burning Man event.

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Give the Gift of Membership!

Grandpa doesn't need another tie and Aunt Helen doesn't need one more bottle of *eau du toilette*. If you're looking for a unique holiday gift that everyone will love, we have the perfect suggestion! Gift memberships are available at all levels, and are a great way to share the fun and interest of Nevada culture with your family and friends all year long. For more information, contact Holly Austin, Membership Coordinator, at 775/687-4810, ext. 222.

Morgan of the Museum

A trip through the Ghost Town with Curry's Compliments!

by J.D. McGregor 2008





Nevada State Museum

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www.nevadaculture.org

Visit the Museum

Open 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Daily
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas,
and New Years

Adults	\$5.00
Seniors (65+)	\$3.00
Children (under 18)	Free
Members	Free



Nevada State Museum
DAY of the DEAD CELEBRATION
Saturday, November 8, 2008

Stories * Crafts * Dances
Exhibits * Lecture

An event for all ages from
10:00am through 4:00pm

Admission is \$5 for adults,
\$3 for seniors, and FREE
for under 18

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