

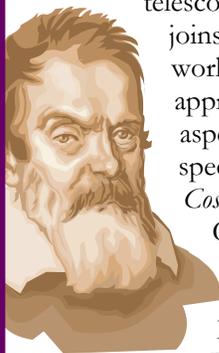
Winter 2009
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Winter Edition

Newsletter of the Nevada State Museum, Carson City
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs

The Universe: YOURS to DISCOVER

The Nevada State Museum kicks off 2009 by participating in a global celebration, the *International Year of Astronomy!* This worldwide event highlights the contributions of astronomy to society and marks the 400th anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei. NSM



joins institutions throughout the world in promoting a greater appreciation of the inspirational aspects of science. Join us for a special presentation, *Galileo's Cosmos and Beyond*, by Robert

Collier at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, January 27. This program is part of NSM's Frances Humphrey lecture series.

Regular admission fees apply.

Now is a great time to become a member and enjoy free admission throughout the year.

Astronomy is the most ancient of all the sciences. Galileo is considered the father of modern astronomy and modern science.

Galileo's use of the telescope to view celestial objects

marks the beginning of observational astronomy as we know it



Above: Robert Collier at the Jack C. Davis Observatory.

Top and Right: M74 Spiral Galaxy and M27 Dumbbell Nebula photographed by Western Nevada Astronomical Society staff.

Left: Collier's lecture is part of a world-wide event.

today. Galileo's passion for physical observation gave us bigger eyes into the expanding universe.

As Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Robert Collier taught at Western Nevada College (WNC) for over 22 years. Originally from Virginia, Collier fell in love with Lake Tahoe and the big blue skies of Nevada. Finding Carson City's high altitude and arid climate perfect for celestial observation, Collier founded the Jack C. Davis Observatory at WNC in 2003, which he



continues to direct. The observatory is open to the public on Saturday evenings throughout the year.

In his lecture, Collier investigates the world of Galileo, including the cultural setting of the time, Galileo's interaction with the Church, and his relationship with other scientists. Collier begins his presentation by covering the foundations of scientific inquiry, observation, and experimentation, and culminates with a discussion of cutting-edge astronomical developments, including space probes and current happenings in the world of astronomy.

For more information, contact Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education at 775/687-4810 ext. 237 or [dstevenson@nevadaculture.org](mailto:d Stevenson@nevadaculture.org).



MERCI!

by Sue Ann Monteleone, Museum Registrar

The Nevada State Museum received a planning grant of \$4,000 from Nevada Humanities to research the wonderful collection of gifts that arrived on the Merci Train in Carson City on February 23, 1949. The citizens of France filled boxcars with gifts of mementos and treasures for each state of the U.S. in gratitude for food and clothing aid sent by U.S. citizens in 1947. The Nevada boxcar currently resides at the Nevada State Railroad Museum and most of the gifts are in the Nevada State Museum collections. Each gift was accompanied by a note, most of them handwritten in French, expressing the heartfelt appreciation of the donors. The gifts are each very meaningful – medals from veterans of WWI, family treasures from before 1900, wedding dresses, paintings, and children's toys. The grant work will involve translating a sample of those notes and connecting them to the gifts.

This project is known as *Compassion and Gratitude: The Nevada Friendship Train and the Merci Train*. We hope to reach out to the community for people who remember the arrival of the boxcar and interview them about their memories of the Merci Train and American and French relationships following WWII. Bob Nylen, Sue Ann Monteleone, and grant worker Mary Works Covington are the primary



Editor's Note

by Deborah Stevenson,
Curator of Education

2009 is a year of expansion and possibility. In this issue, we celebrate the 400th anniversary of Galileo's use of the telescope, Chilean travel adventures, costumed interpreters, and tour guide training opportunities. As we broaden our perspectives, new audiences experience NSM as a leader in scientific inquiry as well as historic and cultural explorations. From a prestigious Great Basin archaeology text to memories of the Merci Train, this issue promises to awaken and delight. Now is the time to stand by your museum as "keeper of keepsakes" and "source of pride – exemplifying the best in Nevada!"

researchers on the project and welcome information from Nevadans who remember anything about the arrival of the Merci Train. Please call Bob Nylen at 775/687-4810 ext. 239, Sue Ann Monteleone at 775/687-4810 ext. 240, or the NSM history office at 775/687-4810 ext. 241.

The letters and the significance of the gifts represent the best of humanity – the kindness that humans can give and share in the face of great suffering, the deep connection possible across cultural and spatial boundaries. The Compassion and Gratitude Project has the potential to restore this manifestation of graciousness to the citizens of Nevada. This historical event is as meaningful in today's world as it was so long ago.

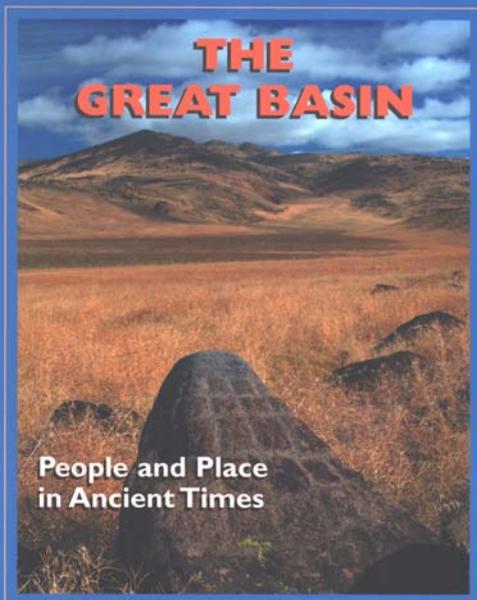
Top: A peek at some of the Merci Train's treasures.

Left: The boxcar arrives!

NEW BOOK on Great Basin Archaeology

In October, the prestigious SAR Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico, published *The Great Basin: People and Place in Ancient Times*, edited by Catherine S. and Don D. Fowler. Written by specialists in their fields, this fascinating archaeology book examines a variety of subjects, including the Great Basin's natural history and past environments, rock art, archaeological sites and artifacts, and ancient cultures and their past lifeways. This non-technical book is not meant to be a complete overview of Great Basin archaeology, but rather to present a selection of topics that the editors believed would appeal to interested, general readers.

Nevada State Museum artifacts are prominently featured throughout the book, and Gene Hattori, Curator of Anthropology, and the late Alanah Woody, former Collections Manager, helped write several of the chapters. NSM Research Associates, Pat Barker, Kay Fowler, Ed Jolie, and Ruth Burgett Jolie also wrote chapters. The softbound version of the book retails for \$24.95 in the Museum Store, NSM Members receive a 15% discount.



Edited by Catherine S. Fowler and Don D. Fowler

Message from the Museum Director

by Jim Barmore

Many of you already contributed to the Nevada State Museum's *Annual Appeal* fund drive. Thank you for your support! For those who haven't, please consider making a donation.

These are hard economic times, and everyone is feeling the strain. The museum is no exception. Like most state agencies, we've experienced budget reductions, and more cuts are likely. I'm asking for financial assistance but recognize your contribution may be less this year. Regardless of amount, I assure you the museum will greatly appreciate your donation. You'll help maintain collections, exhibits, and education programs. Just as important, you'll provide a vote of support, as the state confronts the need to cut costs. You'll affirm the value of the museum as:

- A keeper of our keepsakes – caring for over two million artifacts, specimens, and historical records
- A trusted authority on Nevada's heritage – assisting almost 2,000 research inquiries a year
- A source of identity – offering ongoing and changing exhibits, defining who we are and where we live
- A place for residents to learn about their home – conducting tours of the museum and state capitol for over 12,000 school children a year
- A showcase for tourists – highlighting what makes Nevada unique from any other place in the world
- A forum for bringing communities together for greater understanding – featuring over 130 education programs a year for diverse audiences
- A source of pride – exemplifying the best of Nevada

As we confront economic challenges, museum staff and volunteers remain positive and deeply committed to the museum's mission, high standards, and a vision of improvement. We have so much to look forward to. The museum will experience a major enhancement next spring – opening of the new central concourse linking our buildings. The distinctive architecture will unify the complex, draw visitors, and improve operations. Opening the concourse will celebrate the value of the museum and signify optimism in our future.

Please make a tax-deductible contribution to the *Annual Appeal*. Contributions are secured in the museum's Private Dedicated Trust Fund, strictly for the benefit of the museum. Make your check payable to the Nevada State Museum, write on your check "*Annual Appeal*," and mail to:

Jim Barmore, Museum Director
Nevada State Museum
600 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701-4004

Thank you for supporting the preservation, education, and celebration of Nevada's heritage!

NEWS from the MINT:

Period Costumes Enhance Visitor Experience

by Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education

Volunteers Ken and Karen Hopple, serving as Chief Coiner and Adjuster in the Historic Carson City Mint, proudly display their new period costumes. Ken, a tool and die maker by trade, runs Coin Press No. 1. Karen assists her husband, checking the medallions for accuracy and carefully packaging the commemoratives for sale at the press and in the Museum Store. She also helps design cards and envelopes for the new medallions. Ken and Karen, who have volunteered at NSM for over seven years, are frequently photographed near Coin Press No. 1 with dignitaries in conjunction with the production of the coveted .999 fine silver “CC” medallions. Medallion production, coordinated by Bob Nysten, Curator of History, generates much needed revenue for museum programs.

For many years, both the Education and History Programs at NSM have dreamed of having costumed interpreters in the manner of Colonial Williamsburg and historic houses throughout the country. Ken and Karen seemed perfect for outfitting because of their devoted service to NSM’s mission, stressing the importance of Coin Press No. 1 and the Historic Mint.

With so many talented seamstresses in the area, it was difficult to choose a costume designer. Jan Loverin, Curator of Clothing and Textiles at the Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile Center, highly recommended Gini Vogel, Chair of the Art Department at the University of Nevada Reno, because of her expertise in theater and costume design. “Gini is a pro,” said Jan. “I have complete confidence in her work. She will do the

research and attend to every detail.” Intern Diane Pickett assisted Gini in the production of the “vintage” clothing. Diane is a fiber artist who loves quilting and sewing. “Working with Gini allowed me to advance to the next level,” she explained. “It was my first opportunity to work on an historic dress.”



Coin Press No. 1 runs the last Friday of every month. Refer to NSM’s calendar of events at www.NevadaCulture.org for a complete schedule.

With Jan Loverin’s help, the Hopples will add period costume interpretation to their monthly talks at the press. Visitor’s come from around the world to see the famous “CC” Mint Coin Collection and for the rare opportunity to see an historic press in operation. Ken and Karen’s presence in historic dress will surely enhance the visitor experience of the Historic Mint and provide memorable photo opportunities.

Nevada Costuming Goes International

by Jan Loverin, Curator of Clothing & Textiles

All of us at the Nevada State Museum are passionate about our fields, and I am no exception. I love the history of clothing and textiles, and love cataloguing and observing the current changes in our society's appearance. As a costume historian, I am a member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and have been able to attend several of their international meetings. This fall my husband and I traveled at our own expense to Santiago, Chile, for the ICOM Costume Committee Meeting. It was a wonderful conference, with a pre and post-program. We attended the opening of the *Museo Histórico Nacional's* costume exhibition, which featured elaborate 19th century gowns. The accompanying text

included detailed textile fiber analysis of each garment. The opening was highlighted with Chilean music, dancing, and traditional handicrafts. I heard numerous papers on the development of

western fashion in Chile and the impact of western styles on the indigenous peoples of South America. I also presented a paper on a recent discovery of Nevada clothing. The *Cultural Centre of Recoleta Dominica*, where our meetings were held, had facilities for translating English into Spanish and vice versa.

The post-program included visits to small rural Chilean villages to see their traditional textiles, haciendas, and many churches. We toured the World Heritage Site of Valparaiso and met with community leaders. We saw the magnificent Andes and the gorgeous Chilean seacoast. It was a wonderful meeting, where we networked with our fellow costume curators and learned about forthcoming exhibitions, research, and new developments in the field of costumes and textiles.



A behind-the-scenes look at fashion exhibition design was a highlight of Jan Loverin's trip to Chile.

An Artist's Journey

The Nevada State Museum said "Adios" to veteran Exhibit's staff member Dorothy Nysten, who retired at the end of December 2008. A career spanning over 13 years with



Dorothy frolics with the fishes in the Devonian Sea exhibit.

NSM's exhibit program, "Dot" (as Larry Tanner used to call her) was instrumental in countless temporary, traveling, and permanent exhibit installations – including the Devonian Sea Exhibit, the Minerals case, the History Gallery Complex, the *USS Nevada* Silver Service display, Under One Sky- "...why the list goes on and on Jenny B..." (an "inside" joke in Exhibits).

Holding degrees in Anthropology and Art, Dorothy has illustrated several books; she's done contract work for the Keck Museum and the Nevada Historical Society, as well as contract work here at the Nevada State Museum, filling in for Barbara Herlan's absence when Barbara went to Jerusalem for two years. She has also done countless graphics for everything from the Carson City Mint Coin Show to the Tin Cup Tea.

Dorothy has served on the Museum's Safety Committee for years and has previously written regular columns on minerals for our newsletter.

I have no doubt that Dorothy will enjoy her retirement just as much as she's enjoyed her job here at the museum!

From all of us to you: CONGRATULATIONS – and the very best of luck as you head out on your new journey!

(Captain Chaos)

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.

State of Nevada
Jim Gibbons
Governor

Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs
Michael E. Fischer
Department Director

Division of Museums and History
Peter Barton
Acting Division Administrator

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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Wake Up Your Brain Cells with TOUR GUIDE TRAINING

If your New Year's resolution was to wake up your brain cells and get more involved in the community, plan now to attend Nevada State Museum's Winter Tour Guide Training, January 13-14 and 20-21, 2009. Experts in Nevada history, Native American culture, and plants and animals of the Great Basin present a wide array of interesting topics certain to chase away those winter blues. Outstanding scholars incite curiosity and invite exploration through lectures, slide presentations, poetry, and discussions.

All current and new tour guide volunteers are encouraged to attend the four-day training session.

Celebrate the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birthday with a special presentation by Curator of History Robert Nysten. Jeff Kintop, State Archives Manager, presents *Lincoln and the Nevada Constitution*. Guy L. Rocha, Assistant Administrator for Archives and Records, investigates Lincoln's connection to Nevada's statehood in *Why Did Nevada Become a State?*



Join ornithologist Alan Gubanich on a volunteer adventure to Washoe Lake. Identify common Nevada birds like this Canada Goose. Photo courtesy Sharon K. Schafer

Virginia City poet, Shaun Griffin, presents *Landscape, Literature and Longing: A Poet's Story*, a Tumblewords Program. This Tumblewords residency is funded, in part, by a grant from the Nevada Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Take a closer look at *Indian Education Today* in a presentation by Fredina Drye-Romero, Indian Education Consultant at the Nevada Department of Education. Join Ernest and Frances Hooper as they share *Memories of Stewart* (Indian School), followed by updates on the Stewart Museum by Sherry Rupert, Director, Nevada Indian Commission. Curator of Anthropology, Dr. Gene Hattori, sheds new light on the *Under One Sky* exhibit and Sue Ann Monteleone, Museum Registrar, demonstrates tule basketmaking.

Nature lovers will enjoy two full days of Natural History programming with a focus on birds of Nevada. Join ornithologist Dr. Alan Gubanich as he presents *What's that Bird* and leads volunteers on a field trip to Washoe Lake. Curator of Natural History, Dr. George Baumgardner, presents *John James Audubon: Artist and Naturalist*. Check out the museum's new Discovery Room for a practical hands-on lesson on *Bird Beaks and Feet*.

To receive a copy of the complete agenda, register with Deborah Stevenson, Curator of Education, at 775/687-4810, ext. 237 or dstevenson@nevadaculture.org. No prior experience is necessary; all materials are provided free of charge.





The Chronicles of Chaos

By Scott Klette, Facility Supervisor

Captain Chaos here-

This is probably the first year I can remember that I *haven't been* bent out of shape and ticked off at seeing Christmas trees and decorations out on the retail shelves in September. For me, it was more of a "happy reminder" that the construction and associated headaches here at "Chaos Central" were almost over. And yet, I'm still hearing people say: "... man – where did this year go?" or, "I can't believe it's JANUARY already!" Well ... I can....

Personally, I measure the passage of time based on the number of meetings I attend *without* slipping into a coma (the ones where I was unconscious don't count) ... and trust me – time has been passing *slowly*....

At the time of this writing, we've been under construction for better than 436 days, and we've less than 60 or so to go.

So – here's the "situation report": the Disabled chair lift is up and running, the west side bus parking and sidewalks are done, the landscaping in front of the Historic Mint is done, the central parking lot is done, and all of the glass is in. By the time this hits the presses, the heat should be on, the rest of the sidewalks and associated

hydronics (heated sidewalks for snow melt) should be finished, the Nevada map in the park should be done, and the overall testing of HVAC systems should be under way.

The big push now for museum staff is the complete re-configuration of the museum store and its new cabinets, selection of artifacts that will be on display *inside* the new concourse, exterior signage, the re-routing of the mine exhibit, the re-*re*-location of the new admissions desk, and the opening of the Natural History Discovery Room for guided tours.

The re-gaining of our temporary loss of space for collections in the basement (due to construction and contractor access) can only be compared to working a "Rubik's Cube" puzzle while under the influence.... All of this, of course, is to be completed before the official opening of the concourse in late spring of '09.

And now - for the "disclaimer":

Chaos Disclaimer

The information contained here-in represents the most current information available at the time of this writing, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the author ... however, it probably does. In the *likely* event that the accuracy of the times, locations of and/or description of tasks and/or completion dates contained in this writing are questionable and are believed to be in fact- *not true and accurate*- the author accepts no liability and/or responsibility relative to said inaccuracy....

Contact the Museum

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Natural History Resource Center
775/687-4810, ext. 236

Morgan
of the Museum

by J.D. McGregor 2008





**Nevada
State
Museum**

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Carson City, Nevada
89701-4004

Phone: 775/687-4810
Fax: 775/687-4168

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

REFRESH

Be a part of the expansion
by volunteering in our
brand new Museum Store!

RENEW

Receive a special discount
of **25%** for contributing
20 hours or more per month.

RESTORE

Choose your shift:
9:00 am – 12:45 pm
or 12:45 pm to closing.

in 2009!

For more details, contact
Museum Store Manager,
Charmain Phillips, at:

775/687-4810 ext. 244 or
charmain@nevadaculture.org.

