



STAFF REPORT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING DATE: 12/14/11

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Report by Department of Planning regarding public outreach items

BACKGROUND

No relevant case history.

ANALYSIS

Please enjoy the attached articles.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No action required.

BACKUP DOCUMENTS

- Article, "Downtown Emerging as Epicenter for Performing, Cultural, Visual Arts," Las Vegas Review Journal, October 12, 2011.
- Article, "Rare Skull on Display at Museum," Las Vegas Review Journal, October 12, 2011.
- Article, "Spirit of One Fremont Street Loves On," Las Vegas Review Journal, October 12, 2011.
- Article, "Nevada State Museum Finally Ready for Springs Preserve Home," Las Vegas Review Journal, October 17, 2011.
- Article, "Tule Springs Fossils Attracting Paleontologists From Around World," Las Vegas Review Journal, October 31, 2011.
- Article, "Get This," Local News- Las Vegas City Life, November 3, 2011.
- Article, "Not-so-great Expectations," Local News-Las Vegas City Life, November 3, 2011.
- Article, "Sahara Hotel-Casino Renovation Approved," Las Vegas Review Journal, November 3, 2011.
- Article, "Debate on Nevada's Oldest Settlement Turns on Diary," Reno Gazette Journal, November 6, 2011.
- Article, "Neon Museum Facility Taking Shape to Preserve Local History," View-Review Journal, November 8, 2011.
- Article, "Railroad Car Recommended for Historic Landmark List," The Associated Press, November 11, 2011.
- Article, "Clark County Museum Offers Holiday Exhibit," Las Vegas Review Journal, November 15, 2011.

- Article, “Book Chronicles Life of Pioneer Helen J. Stewart,” Las Vegas Review Journal, November 20, 2011.
- Article, “Carson City District Listed on National Register,” The Associated Press, November 20, 2011.
- Article, “Memorial Service Friday for Longtime Nevada Historian,” Las Vegas Review Journal, November 20, 2011.
- Article, “Museum Marks Milestone with Dinosaur Ball,” Las Vegas Review Journal, November 20, 2011.
- Article, “Discovery of Dinosaur Footprints at Red Rock Excites Scientists,” Las Vegas Review Journal, November 21, 2011.
- Article, “Listing Sought for Historic Nevada Motor Car,” My News 3-KSNV, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Downtown emerging as epicenter for performing, cultural, visual arts



PHOTO BY ERIC JAMISON

The Mob Museum opens Feb. 14, 2012. It is currently under construction inside this historic former federal courthouse and United States post office in the heart of downtown Las Vegas.

A PROMOTIONAL FEATURE OF THE LAS VEGAS
REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Oct. 12, 2011 | 2:00 a.m.
Updated: Oct. 12, 2011 | 11:40 a.m.

In a watershed moment for the cultural landscape of Las Vegas, Symphony Park broke ground in April 2008. Now that the Smith Center for the Performing Arts is nearing completion at Symphony Park, the downtown neighborhood is emerging as the epicenter of the city's performing arts. Just a few short blocks from the Smith Center is the 18b Arts District, home to the Arts Factory and dozens of small galleries that showcase the city's visual arts community. Together, the Smith Center for the Performing Arts and the 18b Arts District are nurturing culture within our valley.

Scheduled to open on March 10, 2012, the Smith Center is a world-class performing arts center designed by architect David M. Schwarz. The \$470 million, five-acre facility includes the 2,050-seat Reynolds Hall, complete with stunning balconies, a dramatic stage and a full orchestra pit capable of seating as many as 100 musicians; the 300-seat cabaret theater ideal for intimate jazz and

cabaret performances; and the 200-seat studio theater, suitable for rehearsals, children's theater and community events. Each theater is meticulously designed to provide optimal sightlines and refined acoustics.

The Broadway Las Vegas Series launches the Smith Center's first season with productions of "The Color Purple," "Mary Poppins," "Million Dollar Quartet" and "Memphis." These exceptional shows join the ranks of the previously announced "Wicked," which will open the Smith Center's first full-length season in August 2012. The center also houses two of Southern Nevada's finest performing arts companies, Nevada Ballet Theatre and the Las Vegas Philharmonic. In addition, the Smith Center will host first-run theatrical productions, international dance troupes and concerts via a "designer" series that allows patrons to select the shows they want to see.

In late 2012, the Lied Discovery Children's Museum will relocate to the Smith Center as the Discovery Children's Museum. The institution's new 58,000-square-foot, three-story facility will include temporary and permanent hands-on exhibits exploring science, art, culture and early childhood development, as well as programming and workshop spaces.

Four other downtown cultural centers and museums enable visitors to explore everything from the city's prehistoric beginning to its atomic era and mob history.

Located at 300 Stewart Ave., the 41,000-square-foot Mob Museum opens Feb. 14, 2012. It presents an exciting and authentic view of the mob's impact on Las Vegas history and its unique imprint on the world. With tales so intriguing they need no embellishment, the museum reveals an insider's look at the events and people on both sides of this continuing battle. True stories of mob history will be brought to life in a bold and contemporary style via engaging exhibits and multisensory experiences.

The Nevada State Museum moves to the Springs Preserve this month. The 13,000-square-foot permanent exhibit gallery offers an interactive visitor experience that interprets the history of Nevada, spanning millions of years.

The Las Vegas Natural History Museum is located at 900 Las Vegas Blvd. North. The museum features an array of visiting and permanent exhibits including Treasure of Egypt, "Engelstad Family Prehistoric Life Gallery, International Wildlife Gallery, Las Vegas Founders' African Galleries, E.L. Wiegand Foundation, Wild Nevada Gallery, Marine Life Gallery, Geology Gallery and The Pharaoh's Tomb.

The Neon Museum is preserving the history of Las Vegas through its accumulation and preservation of many of the city's iconic signs. The museum's Neon Boneyard is not yet open to the public, but is available for prearranged tours by calling 702-387-NEON. Many of the museum's refurbished historic signs can be seen downtown, including the Hacienda Horse and Rider, Aladdin's Lamp and The Flame -- all located at Fremont Street and Las Vegas Boulevard. It is already a popular spot for magazine, rock band and bridal photo shoots.

The 18b Arts District, bordered by Commerce Street, Hoover Avenue, Fourth Street, Las Vegas Boulevard and Colorado Avenue, features numerous art galleries and a growing number of artist studios and art-related businesses. At the heart of the 18b Arts District is the Arts Factory. Located in a rehabbed 50-year-old warehouse at 107 E. Charleston Blvd., the Arts Factory features more than two dozen galleries and businesses and offers a variety

readings, outdoor film screenings and festivals.

Also located throughout the Arts District are stand-alone galleries. One such gallery is the award-winning Brett Wesley Gallery that presents internationally recognized and widely celebrated artists.

Owner Brett W. Sperry says, "Our goal at the Brett Wesley Gallery is to expose people to great art that entertains, amuses and enriches their life. It is our desire to share the unique power of art, the joy of ownership and the enduring value of owning original works. We're proud to be located downtown in the heart of the arts district; with exciting new developments all the time, it's becoming more dynamic every day."

On Fremont Street, the Fremont Medical Building has been renovated as Emergency Arts. A creative collective, Emergency Arts houses film, TV and commercial production companies, working artist studios, art galleries, hairstylists, clothing designers, tattoo artists, photographers and dark rooms, musicians, yoga studios, writers, dancers and other creative genres.

One of the founding tenants at Emergency Arts, Michael Patrick Thieme, owner of Mikel Patrik Gallery, says, "I continue to be amazed by the synergy and excitement about Fremont East redevelopment. During my recent travels across the U.S., from California to Florida, I make it a point to tell people that I am a practicing artist who lives and works in Las Vegas. My goal is to maintain my downtown roots while focusing on educating everyone I meet -- from national TV show producers, to gallery owners, to NPR radio hosts -- that Vegas will be known for more than just the Strip; it will be known also for its art, talent and culture."

Rare skull on display at museum

A PROMOTIONAL FEATURE OF
THE LAS VEGAS REVIEW-
JOURNAL

Posted: Oct. 12, 2011 | 1:59 a.m.
Updated: Oct. 12, 2011 | 11:40 a.m.

The newest attraction at the Las Vegas Natural History Museum isn't new at all. It's a rare Rhynchotherium skull, a 3-million-year-old elephant fossil that was discovered in Arizona and donated to the museum by the Joshua Reid Anderson Foundation.

Located at 900 Las Vegas Blvd. North, the Las Vegas Natural History Museum opened in 1991 and is a private, nonprofit institution dedicated to educating children, adults and families in the natural sciences, both past and present.

Through its interactive exhibits, educational programs and the preservation of its collections, the museum strives to instill an understanding and appreciation of the world's wildlife, ecosystems and cultures.

Admission is \$10 for adults; \$8 for students, seniors and military; and \$5 for children ages 3-11. Children age 2 and younger are free. Admission includes access to the entire museum. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Visit www.lvnhm.org or call 702-384-3466 for additional information.



This 3-million-year-old Rhynchotherium skull can be seen at the Las Vegas Natural History Museum.

Spirit of One Fremont Street lives on

A PROMOTIONAL FEATURE OF
THE LAS VEGAS REVIEW-
JOURNAL

Posted: Oct. 12, 2011 | 1:59 a.m.
Updated: Oct. 12, 2011 | 11:40 a.m.

The Golden Gate enjoys the distinction as the oldest hotel in Las Vegas. And in a city that is home to many of the world's largest hotels encompassing more than 145,000 hotel rooms, that's quite a statement. While the hotel's management recently announced a major expansion, the allure of Las Vegas' original "destination" is in its rich history exemplifying the entrepreneurial and vibrant "spirit" of downtown Las Vegas.

The Golden Gate opened in 1906 as The Nevada Hotel complete with \$1 a day room and board, electric lighting, ventilation, steam heat, a "first-class" review by the Las Vegas Age newspaper and, of course, gambling. The city's first phone line -- phone number 1 -- would be installed in 1907. Under the ownership of Las Vegas pioneer John F. Miller, who purchased the land at One Fremont Street for \$1,740, the hotel was the pre-eminent Las Vegas hospitality location of its time.

Gambling was outlawed in 1909, but 1931 saw gambling return to the property and the installation of the first exterior electric sign, a precursor to the neon sign. The Golden Gate began using its current name in 1955 when Italo Ghelfi and Robert Picardo moved from San Francisco to Las Vegas, reopened the casino and later took over the enterprising hotel. Inspired by Fisherman's Wharf menu selections, the free-wheeling entrepreneurs were the first to introduce the famous shrimp cocktail to the desert.

The Golden Gate has seen a number of upgrades throughout its long downtown Las Vegas history including a major renovation and expansion in 1964 that



Historic photographs of the movers and shakers of One Fremont Street, like this one of John Miller's wife, Rosa, look down on Fremont Street from the third floor windows of the G l d G t

changed and modernized the façade. In 1990, Italo's stepson, Mark Brandenburg, began buying out the Golden Gate partners and restored the building to its original historical appearance.

On March 20, 2008, Desert Rock Enterprises, owned by Derek and Greg Stevens, became partners with Brandenburg and renovated the rooms and casino. In 2011, the owners announced plans for a \$12 million expansion including the addition of a five-story structure and new 1,600-square-foot suites. Reminders of its rich history remain through the hotel and casino including the very first telephone, celebrity photos and guest books from the early 1900s.

Nevada State Museum finally ready for Springs Preserve home



RONDA CHURCHILL/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

A Columbian mammoth skeleton is displayed in the permanent exhibit area of the Nevada State Museum's new digs at the Springs Preserve. The 70,000-square-foot museum is scheduled to open Oct. 28, six years later than planned because of statewide budget issues. *(enlarge to view more photos)*» [Buy this photo](#)

BY KRISTI JOURDAN
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Oct. 17, 2011 | 1:59 a.m.
Updated: Oct. 17, 2011 | 8:37 a.m.

For awhile it seemed the brand new Nevada State Museum at the Springs Preserve would never open its doors.

There wasn't enough money or staff to make it happen. The \$51.5 million building sat empty as state budget issues delayed its opening.

On Oct. 28, the museum will finally be open for business, six years later than planned.

County officials are pinning their hopes on the museum to boost revenue and visitor volume at the \$235 million, 180-acre Springs Preserve.

Museum officials said they're just happy to be up and running.

But quietly, discussions are taking place as to how the museum can generate the needed increase in attendance to be

sustainable while maintaining its identity as a separate entity from the preserve because of its attachment to the Las Vegas Valley Water District-owned property.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

David Millman, museum director, said the two facilities have different content, with the museum focusing more on collecting and preserving the state's history while the preserve deals with nature and water conservation.

"We're not the Springs Preserve," Millman said. "We're part of the Springs Preserve, but we're different."

The museum's identity will change in that it has more room to display a more extensive statewide history, he added.

Scott Huntley, water district spokesman, said the museum should be viewed separately from the preserve because it is funded and operated by the state. But Huntley added that there are connections between the two groups because they are located so close to each other.

As for the museum's presence increasing revenue and attendance, Millman added that he believes the museum will come through the way county officials hope.

"We think working with the water district, it will be a very good boost, but I can't be specific until we open," he said.

Entrance fees at the preserve won't go up, which means membership programs for each are reciprocal, and ticket prices will include museum admission.

For that reason, county officials said the museum needs to attract at least 10,000 visitors per year for the project to be viable. Millman said he believes that figure is reachable.

"But we've got to be patient and give it time," Millman said. "These things don't spring up and form community attachment overnight" at a new location.

The museum will only be open four days per week, Friday through Monday.

VISITOR VOLUME

Water district officials estimate 18,000 visitors will come to learn about the state's history annually, said Scott Huntley, district spokesman.

Attendance at the Springs Preserve, which opened in 2007 at Valley View and U.S. Highway 95, has increased every year but is still just one-third of early projections that called for about 600,000 visitors annually, most of them out-of-town tourists.

In two decades at Lorenzi Park, the museum saw attendance fluctuate between 12,000 and 60,000 visitors annually, Millman said. The smaller number reflects how visitation was affected during the move.

"If attendance doesn't go up, it won't be good for the preserve," Commissioner Steve Sisolak said. "We'll have to wait and see and cross our fingers."

In its first year at the preserve, the museum is expected to

that will go toward operational expenses, leaving \$120,000 to be split equally between the district and the state. County commissioners, acting as the water district board, fronted the museum \$53,000 in seed money earlier this month.

Springs Preserve officials didn't want to discuss specifics about their new neighbor. They issued a written statement saying the museum "will compliment and enhance the wide array of events, programs, classes and interactive exhibits available to our guests."

Commissioner Lawrence Weekly, who represents the area and serves on the preserve board, said the museum will give Nevadans a place to take in the state's history in its entirety.

"We have a history of not doing a good job at keeping track of the great things that have gone on here," Weekly said. "Here's a home that will house a lot of that great history that Nevadans can come and participate in."

'THE CLOCK IS TICKING'

Workers buzz inside the building, hanging exhibits and stocking store shelves in preparation for the museum's opening.

Millman struggled for words to describe the effort put into moving artifacts down the road from the old Lorenzi Park location into the new 70,000-square-foot facility.

"It's exhilarating to some degree," Millman said. "Once Oct. 29 comes, I'll be able to sleep. It's been very difficult. It's not an easy process. Now the clock is ticking."

Permanent exhibits cover the state's flora and fauna, with stuffed desert animals and a fake drip cave devoted to geology and bats.

Across the room is an area for paleontology, where prehistoric animals rest their bones in sand and rock.

Other exhibits include Cornish miners who helped develop square-set timbering, as part of the Comstock mining method helped miners dig at certain heights without the fear of a cave-in.

Interactive exhibits allow visitors to select survival items as they travel by wagon through trails. Native American tools, baskets and pinto points are showcased.

A few displays away, the federal government's impact on the state is represented through Hoover Dam, Nellis Air Force Base and nuclear testing.

A Howard Hughes time capsule shows preserved pine nuts, mustard, toilet paper and other household items taken from the late billionaire's home and sealed up in 1952.

A pink glittering backdrop showcases Las Vegas' entertainment history with showgirl headdresses, movie screens that play film clips of the Rat Pack and Elvis Presley and old slot machines, poker chips and decks of cards displayed for gambling history.

Across the hall is an area where exhibits will change frequently.

One of the biggest challenges the museum faces before its opening is displaying enough signage to guide visitors to the right area. The winding road leading to the museum parking lot is unmarked, but Millman said staffers are working to fix the problem.

"This is a real positive, not just for us, but as a community. This will add to cultural tourism, the economic diversity of our city and future growth," Millman said.

Contact reporter Kristi Jourdan at kjourdan@reviewjournal.com or 702-455-4519.

Tule Springs fossils attracting paleontologists from around world



JUSTIN YURKANIN/REVIEW-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

Tule Springs is rich with fossils like this tusk of a Columbia mammoth. There is a push to turn 23,000 acres of the Upper Las Vegas Wash into a national monument .
» [Buy this photo](#)

BY [HENRY BREAN](#)
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Oct. 31, 2011 | 1:59 a.m.

The rich fossil beds of Tule Springs at the northern edge of the valley will get the full rock-star treatment this week , as paleontologists from around the world gather in Las Vegas.

Some 1,500 fossil researchers are here for the annual conference of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. The weeklong event features seminars and field trips dedicated to the Upper Las Vegas Wash, where fossils have been found of mammoths, lions, camels and other animals that roamed the area during the last ice age and the ice age before that.

Backers of a plan to turn the area into a national monument hope the convention will shine a spotlight on what one researcher described as the sort of place scientists search for their entire careers.

"It's definitely the most significant ice age fossil site in the country," said Jill DeStefano, founding member of the



Eric Scott, curator of paleontology at the San Bernardino Museum in Southern California, points out a fossilized mammoth tusk during a December visit to Tule Springs at the northern edge of the Las Vegas Valley. Scott will be speaking and leading tours

monument advocacy group Protectors of Tule Springs.

She said Tule Springs is a big part of the reason the international paleontology conference is being held in Las Vegas for the first time in its 71-year history. Roughly one-third of the conference is dedicated to the scientific bounty entombed along the Upper Las Vegas Wash.

Once paleontologists see the site for what it is, DeStefano hopes they will join the chorus of people who demand it gets protected as soon as possible.

Protectors of Tule Springs, the National Parks Conservation Association and others are pushing for a 23,000-acre national monument that would border North Las Vegas, Floyd Lamb State Park and the Desert National Wildlife Refuge.

The proposed park would take in a sawtooth-shaped swath of land littered with fossils of animals that lived and died between 7,000 and 200,000 years ago.

Back then, the area was wetter, cooler and home to a string of spring-fed watering holes similar to the one that still exists at Corn Creek on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge.

Fresh water and abundant plants drew mammoths, horses, camels, bison, llamas and ground sloths the size of grizzly bears. North American lions and other predators came to feed on those animals.

"It's a world-class fossil site," said Joshua Bonde, a local paleontologist and doctoral student at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "You can actually see how ecosystems have transitioned from warm climates to cold climates and back again through several ice ages."

In the world of fossil hunters, they say if you can't find a triceratops in eastern Montana you're not looking hard enough, Bonde said. "Well if you're out in the Las Vegas Wash and you don't find a mammoth, you're not looking hard enough."

Paleontologist Ted Fremd came from Oregon to attend the convention, but he already has been to Tule Springs.

Fremd conducted a brief survey of the property in April 2009, about a month before he retired from the National Park Service. He went in not expecting much but came away impressed by the number, diversity and age range of the fossils he saw.

His "cocktail napkin estimate" for the total number of mammal fossils in the Upper Las Vegas Wash is at least 10,000.

And the site is interesting for other reasons. He said a large dig conducted there in the 1960s marked the first time the technique of radiocarbon dating was put to use in the field.

The property's proximity to Las Vegas also presents a unique opportunity to contrast the region's arid, urban present with its ice age past.

But the fossils are the real draw.

"I saw bone all over the place," said Fremd, now a research associate and curator of paleontology at the University of Oregon. "Some of the (nearby) housing developments are probably sitting on some pretty interesting boneyards. Of course, we'll never find them now."

of the rich fossil beds at the annual conference of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, which is being held this week in Las Vegas. JUSTIN YURKANIN/REVIEW-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

Already, parts of the site have been permanently damaged by off-road vehicles and illegal dumping. "The longer it goes, the more fossils get driven over and the more is lost," she said.

Gov. Brian Sandoval and leaders in Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Clark County have all thrown their support behind the creation of a monument. So has the U.S. Air Force, which wants the area protected as a flyway for helicopters and warplanes from Nellis Air Force Base.

Staff members for Sen. Harry Reid would not say when -- or if -- legislation establishing the monument might be introduced, but spokesman Zac Petkanas said the Senate majority leader believes Tule Springs and the Upper Las Vegas Wash "deserve special protection."

Advocates want the National Park Service to provide that protection, in part because that would likely block a plan by NV Energy to build a new transmission line through the proposed monument.

NV Energy's commitment to the transmission project hasn't changed, and its official comment hasn't either.

In a written statement, the company insists the line is needed to address reliability, expansion and the future delivery of renewable energy into its system.

"NV Energy continues to work with our partners in local government and with proponents of the national monument," the statement says. "Our current proposal allows for the co-existence of both the national monument area and NV Energy's transmission lines, while minimizing the impact to the valuable resources in the Upper Las Vegas Wash."

The company issued an identical statement in September 2010.

DeStefano said opposition to the power line is as strong and diverse as the support for the monument is. But she is done predicting when the proposal might make its way to Congress.

"Two years ago, I would have told you legislation was imminent," DeStefano said. "I just keep hoping it's moving in that direction."

She also hopes that after this week, there will be an army of researchers with rock hammers on her side, eager to help things along.

Review-Journal writer Lynnette Curtis contributed to this report. Contact reporter Henry Brean at hbrean@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0350.

GET THIS

WORDS OF A FEATHER

Is it a warning? A prank? A message from the landlord? In the wee hours of Saturday night/Sunday morning, someone crouched in front of the door of Blackbird Studios, on Commerce Street, and stenciled these words onto the concrete, like an unwelcome mat: "Your days are numbered Blackbird."

Look at the picture. Someone clearly put a lot of care and craft into the stencil -- the type sizes vary to keep the margins even, and "Blackbird" is rendered just like the studio's logo. ("I wish he would have left the stencil behind," joked gallery operator Gina Quaranto. She's wanted one for a long time.)

What's not obvious, of course, is who or why. Is it a zealot's response to Blackbird's new show, which is about atheism? Or just someone -- an artist? -- goofing around? There are a couple of churches nearby, but Quaranto is certain they're not behind it. Anyway, doesn't it seem a little more elaborate than what an angry believer would likely do (heave a righteous rock through the window, or invoke God's wrath)?

What's your gut feeling, Gina: Warning or prank?

"I just don't know," she says. "No idea."

Of course, there's another theory. Gina, look us in the eye and tell us it's not a publicity stunt for your atheism exhi -- "No," she says. "No, no, no, no." We believe her.

If it is a warning against atheism, she's not heeding it. "I mean, I'm a Catholic. I believe. But I can show anything I want in this gallery." We hope she follows a suggestion by a Facebook friend: Turn the stencil into a T-shirt and just own the insult. SCOTT DICKENSHEETS

SEE YA LATER, LORENZI

After a six-year financial setback, Nevada State Museum has left Lorenzi Park and is all moved into its shiny, new digs.

The 70,000-square-foot museum opened Friday at Springs Preserve, boasting a high-tech permanent collection and a rotating gallery, currently showing colorful, large-scale Nevada landscape photography.

On the perma-side, there's a walk-in cave with stalactites and neon scorpions; a virtual railroad ride with changing scenery; a ground-shaking geography exhibit; historical Native Americans immortalized on high-def TVs; and the ever-popular, ever-glitzzy showgirl wall.

From the land and animals to railroads, mining, aviation, atomic testing and Vegas' glorious Golden Era, the museum tell's the covers the state's history well. KRISTY TOTTEN

SONGS OF HATE

The Westboro Baptist Church is known for pushing the limits of the First Amendment. But in its appearance outside Clark High School on Tuesday, it might've dragged that limit into the realm of copyright infringement. Three protesters from Westboro played odious versions of "Pumped up Kicks," "Philadelphia Freedom" and "Superfreak." Shirley Phelps Roper held three signs and sang



The stencil at Blackbird Studios.



Animal exhibit at Nevada State Museum.

along: Philadelphia treason makes a sissy of a man ...You know you're freaks and perverts. God hates you! But you had to get pretty close to hear her. The three were drowned out by a counter protest that swelled to at least 60 people when Clark let out. "I've seen them so many times disrupting the funerals of soldiers," said Ellie Clinton Issa, a counter protester. "I believe in freedom of speech, but that represents the ugly part of America." She swept her arm behind her at the crowd. "This is the beautiful part." AMY KINGSLEY

EXCHANGE THAT MIGHT (OR MIGHT NOT) REVEAL VOLUMES ABOUT LAS VEGAS AND/OR AMERICA

Me: Have you been selling a lot of these McRibbs?

McDonald's drive-through guy: Oh yeah. A lot. Like, every other car. SCOTT DICKENSHEETS

Last updated on Thursday, November 3, 2011 at 12:08 am

Not-so-great expectations

The Mob Museum is almost built. Will the people come?

by AMY KINGSLEY

Even the Italian mafia didn't knock off this many people. As the Mob Museum prepares to open on Valentine's Day, its leaders have slashed visitation estimates from 600,000 people to 300,000.

"We're being very conservative in our financial planning," said Executive Director Jonathan Ullman.

The Mob Museum is slated to open on the 83rd anniversary of the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre, the infamous murder of seven mobsters in Chicago. Construction workers have renovated the interior of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse on Stewart Avenue. State, federal and local funds paid for the \$42 million facility, which is formally known as the Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement. Local consultants Applied Analysis originally said the museum might attract as many as 600,000 visitors. But in light of the lingering recession, Ullman and his team cut that number in half and gave themselves a more conservative operating budget for the year.

"A lot has changed in the environment since that study took place," Ullman said. "That number made sense at the time, but it may not any more."

Estimating visitation at a museum that hasn't opened is an imperfect science. Consultants and economists who create the estimates try to compare the proposed attraction to similar places in Las Vegas and around the country. But there's no exact analogue to the Mob Museum in Las Vegas, and no way to predict how it will do. So Ullman plans to spend as though they'll have 300,000 visitors while trying to attract more.

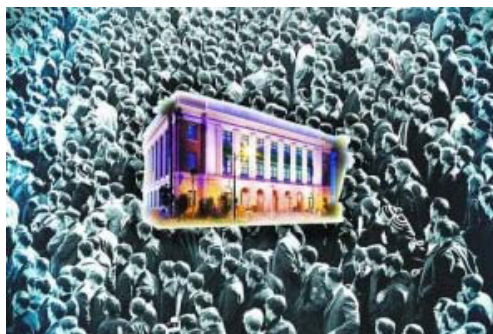
In creating the new visitor estimates, Ullman looked at attractions such as *Bodies... The Exhibition* and *Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition* on the Strip. He also examined the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, which were designed by Dennis Barrie, who designed the exhibits for the Mob Museum.

But none of those attractions have exactly the same features as the Mob Museum. Because of its location in downtown Las Vegas, the museum needs to attract a good mix of locals and tourists, and it must attract some people from the Strip.

Other attractions have had a hard time doing that. When it was launched in 2007, Springs Preserve estimated that it could capture 1 percent of the tourist market, bringing 360,000 paying customers through the gates every year. It hoped to attract the same people who travel off the Strip to visit the Hoover Dam and Red Rock. Locals would make up the rest of the 600,000 estimated visitors.

In its first year, Springs Preserve had 157,547 paying visitors. In 2009-2010, the number exceeded 200,000.

The numbers are important because the Mob Museum and Springs Preserve were built with public money. It's easier to get that money if you promise a huge economic impact. Allan Palmer, executive director of the Atomic Testing Museum, said visitation estimates are notoriously inaccurate because the consultants who create them are paid to make rosy predictions. During his career in museums, he's only ever heard of one that exceeded its estimate -

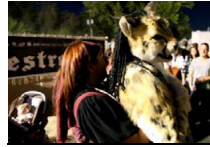


- the U.S.S. Midway Museum in San Diego.

Former mayor Oscar Goodman has been one of the biggest boosters of the Mob Museum. In 2006, he said the museum would be so successful it would pay for itself. "We'll sell more sweatshirts and hats than at the World Series," he said. "I think it will be a huge money-maker."

With that said, visitation numbers may not be the best indicator of a museum's health. According to Dewey Blanton, director of strategic communications for the American Association of Museums, museums are struggling despite increased attendance.

The recession has forced people to stay closer to home, creating a spike in museum attendance. The Atomic Testing Museum had a 15 percent increase in visitation this year. The nuclear meltdown in Japan increased public interest in the museum, Palmer said.



Admission prices for museums are also a relative bargain compared to other attractions. Tickets to the Mob Museum will cost \$10 for locals and \$12 for tourists. The Atomic Testing Museum costs \$14 for adults. By comparison, a ticket for *CSI: The Experience* at the MGM Grand costs more than \$30.

But museums also rely on donations and public funding. Donations have decreased, and public funding has shrunk.

"Twenty years ago, museums used to get 39 percent of their funding from public sources," Blanton said. "Now it's 24 percent."

The real story, said Palmer, is that public and corporate funding for museums is drying up even as the public increasingly relies on them. Unfortunately, the taxpayers' appetite for supporting struggling museums is waning, especially in economically depressed communities such as Las Vegas. That may be one of the reasons the Mob Museum adjusted its numbers, so it won't look like a failure if it fails to hit an unrealistic target.

Ullman said there is a lot of fascination with the mob. Troubles with the Mob Experience at the Tropicana, which is in bankruptcy court, shouldn't reflect on the Mob Museum, he said. The Mob Experience shares a theme with the museum, but has been dogged by mismanagement and legal troubles. It's unclear how much of its financial troubles were caused by those issues, and how much was due to lack of interest. "We're as confident as ever in the interest in our content," Ullman said.

Even if the attraction fails to live up to expectations in the first year, it can always adjust in the future. When the Springs Preserve failed to attract visitors from the Strip, it remade itself as a resource for locals. It has increased its weekend offerings and recast itself as a destination for families.

And it's working. Six thousand more people attended its Haunted Harvest this year compared to last year. Attendance at the preserve has increased by 14.75 percent from January. Springs Preserve may not be drawing 600,000 a year, but it is trying to become a fixture for local families.

"We are definitely trying to appeal to the Las Vegas community," said Dawn Barraclough, spokeswoman for Springs Preserve. "We're adding several events and trying to increase the opportunities for families in the community."

Palmer said the museum community is starting to come together to help promote themselves to the community.

"We hope the Mob Museum is successful," he said. "Because if they are, we all benefit."

Last updated on Thursday, November 3, 2011 at 12:08 am

Sahara hotel-casino renovation approved



JESSICA EBELHAR/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

The closed Sahara hotel-casino, seen Wednesday on the Strip, will get a face-lift and new life. » [Buy this photo](#)

BY KRISTI JOURDAN
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Nov. 2, 2011 | 6:22 p.m.
Updated: Nov. 3, 2011 | 7:23 a.m.

Once the epicenter of Las Vegas glitz and glam, the Sahara now sits empty on the Strip.

No more 6-pound burritos. No more roller coaster.

The Sahara was forced to close its doors six months ago after falling victim to the recession, but a remodeling plan approved unanimously Wednesday by the Clark County Commission could breathe life into a hotel-casino that served celebrities and common folk alike for almost 60 years.

County officials also hope the project will breathe new life into the north end of the Strip, which has seen better times.

According to the plan, the existing room towers, the Tunis, Tangiers and Alexandria, will be renovated. The roller coaster will be dismantled and a 2,830-square-foot beer garden will be constructed. The number of hotel rooms

will be decreased from 1,700 to 1,622.

Retail, tenant and restaurant spaces will be added, and the casino floor will be renovated. A 21,000-square-foot nightclub will be built, and 41,000 square feet of meeting and convention space will be added with a new pool deck area.

It's unclear when construction will start and how much the renovation project will cost. Those figures were not included in the plans, and owners SBE Entertainment of Los Angeles and private equity firm Stockbridge Real Estate of San Francisco did not comment.

According to county staff analysis included with the plans, remodeling the nearly 18-

South and Paradise Road could enhance the area where construction projects such as Fontainebleau and the Echelon resort have stalled.

Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani, who represents the area, echoed the comments and said the plan will generate the foot traffic needed to boost the economy in that portion of the Strip.

"This may be the synergy needed to kick start some of the properties on that side. ... This is spending in the economy, taking the package you have and using it to the best of your advantage," Giunchigliani said. "I'm excited. I'm happy and glad that the Sahara, even though it might not have the same view, is still there."

The issue of Internet gaming is generating a "comfort level coming back into that area in the realm of gaming," which could indicate somewhat of an economic rebound, she added.

"I think we're still premature in that," Giunchigliani said. "I think people are poised. It will take a couple of years to do the remodel and what not, but it might be the right window. For commercial and housing, we're still a way off."

This isn't the first discussion county officials and property owners have had regarding renovation.

Redevelopment of the Sahara property began in 2007 but was put on hold two years later because of the economic downturn.

It's one of the oldest existing properties within the resort corridor and was most recently renovated in 1999. Mega-resorts constructed during the area's two-decade building boom dwarfed the aged Sahara.

The property owners acquired the hotel-casino in 2007 from the family of late casino pioneer William Bennett.

In March, SBE said it was "no longer economically viable" to operate the Sahara. The Moroccan-themed hotel-casino closed in May, and the property's 1,050 workers had to search for employment. About two dozen of them were hired by the Stratosphere.

SBE has been able to find funding since then, Giunchigliani said. Details on that funding were not released Wednesday.

Contact reporter Kristi Jourdan at kjourdan@reviewjournal.com or 702-455-4519. Review-Journal writer Howard Stutz contributed to this report.

Debate on Nevada's oldest settlement turns on diary

BY SUSAN VOYLES
RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Posted: Nov. 6, 2011 | 1:59 a.m.

RENO -- A library assistant at the Nevada Historical Society has rekindled the biggest historical debate in Nevada: the dueling claims of Genoa and Dayton as the first permanent settlement in Nevada.

Heidi Englund, the assistant, said the original journal of Lucena Parsons, who stopped a few weeks in the Dayton area in the spring of 1851, has never been found. And she thinks a typewritten copy of the diary prepared in 1928 could have been embellished.

That journal is the "smoking gun" in the debate between Genoa and Dayton, said Guy Rocha, former state archivist and a longtime Nevada historian. According to Parsons, the founder of Genoa passed by more than 200 people in the Dayton area panning gold on his way to resurrect Genoa, meaning Dayton got its start at least several weeks before Genoa was founded in 1851.

Rocha said Englund needs to produce a lot more evidence to discredit the diary. He said institutions commonly receive typed copies of journals because families wanted to keep the originals.

According to the journal, Parsons was on a covered-wagon train that arrived at Gold Canyon, as Dayton was then known, on May 28, 1851. The next day, she reported that about 200 people had packed over from California to prospect for gold in the canyon. And she and her husband joined in.

The smoking gun: On June 5, she reported that a man named Reese, a merchant from Salt Lake City, arrived.

"He had some 16 wagons, mostly loaded with flour, to supply Carson valley," she wrote. "He stopped near our camp."

She wrote that he left the next day.

John Reese, who built a trading post that

Mormon Station, later named Genoa. Mormon settlers were there before but had left in the winter of 1850-51, abandoning their claim as the first settlement, Rocha said.

In 1928, Elizabeth Wilbur and Elene Wilbur donated the transcript of Parsons' diary called "The Woman in the Sunbonnet" to the special Collections Division of Stanford University's library.

From her research, Englund said she thinks Elene is Parsons' daughter but is no relation to Elizabeth. With Parsons and Wilbur being common names, the family history is hard to nail down, Englund said.

Elizabeth Wilbur wrote an introduction to the transcript. In it, Wilbur romanticizes the American woman as the true hero in the great Western migration.

"It's very emotional," Englund said. It also includes details about Parsons' family that Englund thinks must have come from Elene.

Englund said Elizabeth Wilbur was a poet and songwriter. She wrote poems about being homesick. And she said Parsons had great difficulty controlling her homesickness in the diary.

Englund said scratched-off markings on the document indicate Elizabeth Wilbur had prepared the document for a movie script.

"I'm not disputing this is a diary," Englund said. "We don't know if it came from a list of letters or scraps of paper. We just don't know. No one has ever seen it. So we don't know how much Elizabeth wrote into the diary. We just don't know."

Englund said the manuscript was submitted to the library without any backup material.

The diary later gained fame when it was reprinted in "Covered Wagon Women," Volume 2, compiled by Kenneth Holmes, in 1983. Holmes noted the typescript was donated by the Wilburs to Stanford University. The chapter was given the title of "The Journal of Lucena Parsons."

"It was nothing more than a transcript. It was not the original diary," Englund said. "Without the diary, you don't have a primary source, and you can't prove that claim," she said, of Dayton's claim to being the first settlement.

Englund was raised in Gardnerville, not far from Genoa. She considers Genoa the first settlement in the state as Mormons from Utah began arriving in 1847.

Don Buck, a retired trail historian in Sunnyvale, Calif., has studied hundreds of diaries from pioneers in the West, mostly those who crossed Utah and Nevada. Buck said he recently reread Parsons diary and finds her account to be authentic.

Rocha said he has a hard time finding a good reason why Elizabeth Wilbur would have changed the diary, particularly the key passage where she describes Reese on his way to Mormon Station.

The battling claims between Dayton and Genoa evolved only in modern times.

"It's the biggest historical debate in Nevada. Those two women in 1928 could have foretold that?" Rocha said. "If you put this before a judge of history, Lucena wrote what she wrote in the moment."

Neon Museum facility taking shape to preserve local history



SPECIAL TO VIEW

A rendering shows the proposed design for the Neon Museum's planned event facility.

BY LISA CARTER
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Nov. 8, 2011 | 12:20 a.m.

A decade-long vision is scheduled to come to fruition next year when construction of the La Concha Visitor Center at the Neon Museum, 821 Las Vegas Blvd. North, is complete.

The visitor center, which has an expected completion date of May 14, 2012, will be located in the former La Concha Motel lobby. The Neon Museum acquired the shell-shaped building, designed by Paul Revere Williams, who also was the architect for the Las Vegas Motor Speedway and the Royal Las Vegas Casino, in 2005.

Danielle Kelly, the Neon Museum's chief operating officer, said the cost of renovations to the shell is \$1.39 million. Kelly said the museum has the funds necessary for renovations but is still in need of money to reach the \$3 million



A rendering depicts the planned Neon Museum visitor center, which will be housed in the renovated La Concha Motel lobby building. The facility, dubbed the La Concha Visitor Center, will feature an archive room with artifacts and documents.

mark, which will help with its staffing needs.

Since the museum opened in 1996 and became a non profit organization in 1997, the number of its visitors is limited, as advance-only, \$15 per-person tours are offered at noon and 2 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday.

featuring Las Vegas' neon history. The project, in conjunction with the construction of the event facility, administrative offices and renovation of the Boneyard, is set to be completed by May 14, 2012. SPECIAL TO VIEW

Kelly said having a visitor center will better accommodate the number of people seeking tours, which continues to grow.

"The idea of having a visitor center started about 10 years ago, and the acquisition of the La Concha Motel lobby really helped to catapult that process," Kelly said. "Once construction is completed, it will serve a much-needed purpose."

In addition to creating a visitor center, construction also includes complete renovation to the Boneyard, which contains more than 150 neon signs, and the addition of an event facility and administrative offices.

To separate the shell from these new additions, glass elements will be placed between them.

The former La Concha Motel lobby shell is listed on the city of Las Vegas Historic Register. Because of its history, construction on the shell must adhere to several structural guidelines, such as not adding objects to the shell itself and making any additions reversible.

Patrick Klenk, president of WESTAR Architects, said striking the balance between the old and new elements while following the National Trust for Historic Preservation guidelines is a challenge, but visitors can expect these spaces to complement one another.

"The new addition has its own aesthetic so it won't be competing with the shell," Klenk said. "We're replicating the pendant lights (from the old lobby) and re-creating the desk to have this building come as close as possible to what was here before."

Once the museum opens to the public, Kelly said visitors can

The event facility will be available for meetings, weddings, parties and other festivities, and the new structure will house administrative offices. There also will be a multipurpose room available for lectures and a space for archived items, including artifacts, videos and documents in a collection that Kelly said will continue growing over time.

But even with the acquisition of the shell, Kelly said that what visitors can truly look forward to is seeing the completed Boneyard.

"The completion of the Boneyard had always been approximated," Kelly said. "This will mark the completion, and seeing those signs back into place is going to be spectacular."

Bill Marion, chairman of the museum's board of trustees, said that because few people are able to tour the Boneyard, its impact is limited. He said the new structures will positively change this impact.

"I think the Neon Museum is going to be an economic catalyst to bring people downtown who didn't necessarily go downtown before," Marion said. "We're going to be part of that renaissance that renovates downtown."

Marion anticipates opening the Neon Museum to the public in June. He said the museum will provide visitors with an insight into the history of neon as an art form.

"(The neon) is something that really captures people's attention," Marion said. "The best neon designers came to Vegas and created these world-class signs that make downtown so unique."

Contact Paradise/Downtown View reporter Lisa Carter at lcarter@viewnews.com or 383-0492.

Railroad car recommended for historic landmark list

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Posted: Nov. 11, 2011 | 2:02 a.m.
Updated: Nov. 11, 2011 | 7:40 a.m.

CARSON CITY -- The National Historic Landmarks Committee is recommending that the McKeen Motor Car at the Nevada State Railroad Museum be listed as a national landmark.

Nevada Historic Preservation Officer Ron James said if the nomination is accepted, it will be the first piece of railroad equipment to win a place on the list of National Historic Landmarks.

About 160 McKeen Motor Cars were built from 1905 to 1920. The motor car at the museum in Carson City was used on the Virginia and Truckee Railway. It was retired in 1945 and converted into a restaurant and then retail space.

Clark County Museum offers holiday exhibit



MICHAEL LYLE/VIEW

The Giles/Barcus House on Heritage Street at the Clark County Museum is among the historic structures to be decorated for the holidays.

BY MICHAEL LYLE
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Nov. 15, 2011 | 12:20 a.m.
Updated: Nov. 15, 2011 | 8:48 a.m.

The Clark County Museum is inviting people to enjoy decorations from different cultures and religions at "Decorate the Season."

The museum, 1830 S. Boulder Highway, is scheduled to host the holiday exhibit Monday through Dec. 25.

"It is a look at the Christmas tradition," said Mark Hall-Patton, museum administrator. "It is a look on how it has evolved."

Dawna Joliff, the exhibit curator, said because the museum didn't do anything for Halloween, it made sure to celebrate the winter holidays.

"I noticed a neighbor going through old Christmas decorations and throwing them out," Joliff said. "I told them, 'Don't throw

them out.' They had tons of hand-crafted decorations."

Joliff has salvaged items from the '50s and '60s that people don't often see any more. She also has brought in Christmas lights from her own collection.

Regular donors have provided Christmas memorabilia from Santa mugs to Nativity sets.

Along with more classic decorations, there are homemade Christmas items such as strung popcorn to go on Christmas trees.

But it isn't just American traditions.

Joliff said there are items from other cultures such as a Nacimiento from Mexican culture, which depicts the birth of Christ similar to a Nativity set.

The exhibit also features traditions such as Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

"We have the Hanukkah section with different menorahs, dreidels and games," Joliff said. "We have the Kwanzaa section with different games and candle holders."

The display houses along Heritage Street also are set to be dressed in holiday decor that reflects the owners' religion and era. Joliff said the houses will be decorated until January. Hall-Patton said two of the houses will be decorated for Hanukkah.

From 5 to 8 p.m. Dec. 9- 10, the museum plans to host Heritage Holidays, a free open house with carolers, hot cocoa, crafts for children and a visit from St. Nick. A scale model holiday railroad display is scheduled to be set up inside the Historic Boulder City Union Pacific Railroad Depot. Houses along Heritage Street are set to be lit up for the event.

"Except for the house representing the '20s," Joliff said. "They wouldn't have lights."

The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. Admission for the exhibit is \$1 for people 18 or younger or seniors 50 or older and \$2 for everyone else.

For more information, call 455-7955.

Contact Henderson/Anthem View reporter Michael Lyle at mlyle@viewnews.com or 387-5201.



The Donald W. Reynolds Print Shop is part of the Clark County Museum's Heritage Street exhibit that will feature holiday decorations. MICHAEL LYLE/VIEW

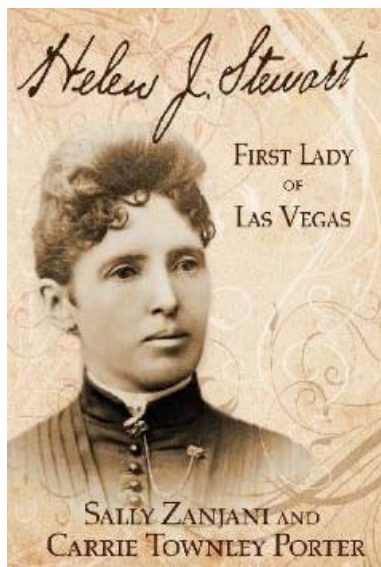
Book chronicles life of pioneer Helen J. Stewart

BY ALEXANDER HEFFNER
SPECIAL TO THE LAS VEGAS
REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Nov. 20, 2011 | 2:03 a.m.

The rise of female governors in neighboring Arizona and New Mexico, as well as national heroines from the region such as U.S. Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, is deeply rooted in the Southwestern ethos.

In an erudite and vivid new biography, "Helen J. Stewart: First Lady of Las Vegas," Nevada scholars Sally Zanjani and Carrie Townley Porter chronicle the courageous journey of a 19th-century pioneer who shattered glass ceilings for women long before her contemporary reincarnations.



COURTESY PHOTO
"Helen J. Stewart: First Lady of Las Vegas"

A household name to historians in Nevada, Helen J. Stewart was known as "the mistress of the Mormon Trail." As the authors suggest, Stewart could have succumbed to the lack of freedom among women married to the frontiersmen of the era. She gave birth to her first child at 20 and, a decade later, became a widow with four children after the murder of her husband.

Against improbable odds, Stewart tenaciously fought on and became a central force in shaping modern Las Vegas. In evolving roles of landowner, school board member and family matriarch, Stewart worked with Native Americans and local politicians alike. A virtuous and stable force in Nevada's early history, she appeared to have one abiding concern: improving the lives of those who populated the growing region.

In clear and descriptive language, Zanjani and Porter, both leading historians in the state, have combed through years of

is illuminating because it closely considers both the historiography of the region and the personality of its people. This should not surprise readers: Zanjani and Porter have studied the formation of the American West for years.

In Stewart's early years, the founding mother of Las Vegas studied at California's co-educational Hesperian College, where she probably participated in the school's unusually active social life. It is here that she probably first discovered her promise as a literate and civic-minded young woman.

Stewart married a ranch owner in the region, and they ultimately relocated to the Pioche settlement. Stewart was hardly intimidated by the region's lawlessness and murders, befriending the Southern Paiutes whose artistry she embraced. "Seeing them bereft of their traditional lands and food sources, she sympathized with their plight and tried to help sustain them. She nursed them when they sickened," the authors write.

Constant reminders of education's importance, Stewart's encounters along the trail influenced her most significant contribution to Las Vegas: the creation of a legitimate school district. "To swell the ranks, Helen invited part-Indian boys to attend," write Zanjani and Porter. As the area matured, with more appealing homes and a water system, Stewart assumed other duties, such as postmaster of the valley.

Stewart witnessed Las Vegas develop into a town that could provide its citizens real services. This included "railroads (that) would become the backbone of the Las Vegas economy" as well as the viability of local markets where she saw "an agricultural paradise" and "opportunities for raising cattle on the wild grasses in the region."

"Recognizing her place as the valley's first historian, people brought her artifacts relating to the Spanish presence in the area, to add to her already fabled collection of Indian basketry," the authors add.

While Stewart was not a vocal advocate of the women's suffrage movement -- it had yet to bloom in most circles during her day -- Zanjani and Porter think her spirit invigorated the ongoing crusade for women's rights.

"Helen's methods were tactful and gentle. Instead of fiery speechifying about the need for women on the school board, she simply would offer herself as a candidate for election (and win)."

Stewart was especially interested in civic activities, but the biography does not neglect her family life. With equal attention, the authors weave together a nuanced history of professional and personal experiences -- a public and private persona not unlike those of many wives or mothers in politics today.

In sum, Stewart's path was one that transcends the city she helped bring to life and stretched the cause of women's empowerment across the nation.



Carrie Townley Porter
COURTESY PHOTO



Sally Zanjani COURTESY
PHOTO

Stephens Press is a division of Stephens Media, which owns the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

Carson City district listed on national register

The Associated Press

Sunday, Nov. 20, 2011 | 1:25 p.m.

Part of the Carson City Historic District is being listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its important role in city and state history.

The Nevada Appeal reports (<http://bit.ly/rt6uli>) that the West Side District was recently designated for protection.

The West Side District covers about 70 acres within the larger Carson City Historic District, which the city established in 1982.

Among the buildings that will be preserved by the designation is the Governor's Mansion. There are also houses, churches and commercial buildings within the district.

Carson City's central district was originally laid-out in 1858.

The National Register of Historic Places was created in 1966 as a way to support efforts to preserve areas that have a historical, cultural or archeological significance.

Memorial service Friday for longtime Nevada historian

LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Nov. 20, 2011 | 2:00 a.m.
Updated: Nov. 20, 2011 | 8:17 a.m.

A memorial service will be held Friday for Maryellen Vallier Sadovich, a well-known Nevada historian and businesswoman. The service will be at noon at the Palm Mortuary, 800 S. Boulder Highway, Henderson.

Sadovich was author of "The Mysterious Valley," a history of Caliente and the surrounding part of Lincoln County, and numerous magazine and newspaper articles. For four decades she operated the Midway Motel in Caliente.

She sold the property in 2010 and lived in Henderson at the time of her death in July. She was 85.

In 1959, Sadovich and the late Celesta Lowe founded the Southern Nevada Historical Society, according to one of its past presidents, Elizabeth Warren. Active through the mid-1980s, the society successfully fought to have the Old Las Vegas Fort declared a state historic site.

Sadovich also uncovered much of the historical significance that led to establishing Spring Mountain Ranch State Park.

Together Lowe and Sadovich interviewed the last few Southern Nevada pioneers, or their aging children, collected historic documents from them, and deposited many in the Special Collection archives at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where researchers use them regularly.

"Maryellen was a friendly, outgoing person, and she shared her information, so others could do further research building on her own," Warren said.

Sadovich was particularly active in documenting the early history of Henderson, and in 1967 helped found there the institution now known as the Clark County Museum.

Mark Hall Patton, the museum's

Collection, our first important acquisition."

Park's antiques, ranging from Paiute baskets to cylinder record players to ore samples and mining machinery, established the fledgling museum as a principal repository of the region's historic artifacts.

Sadovich later helped found The Caliente Heritage Boxcar Museum.

"She instigated it and others added to it," said Caliente Mayor Keith Larson. "It preserves the history of the families that originated here."

Because Caliente was founded by a railroad, the museum is literally housed in a boxcar, parked beside the photogenic former railroad station that now serves as City Hall.

Sadovich was noted for careful, almost compulsively detailed research, and in the 1970s published articles in the Review-Journal's history-oriented Sunday magazine, The Nevadan. She also wrote for the Henderson Home News and the Lincoln County Record, and was designated a Nevada state historian by then-Gov. Paul Laxalt.

Sadovich was born Sept. 29, 1926, in Engadine, Mich., the daughter of Edmond and Claire Vallier, dairy farmers.

She was married briefly to Glynn Harris of Shreveport, La. They lived in Tooele, Utah. She moved to Southern Nevada in the early 1950s as the bride of Joseph Sadovich, her second husband and an employee of Henderson's Stauffer Chemical Co.

Sadovich held a bachelor's degree in romantic languages from the University of Utah and a master's in history from UNLV. She achieved an advanced rank in kung fu in her late 40s, and became a registered nurse at 60.

Following the death of Joseph Sadovich, she married John Clark. After Clark's death, she married Earl McWilliams, who survives her.

She is also survived by two daughters, Glenda Harris and Julianna Sadovich Cambell; two sons, Craig Harris and Joseph Sadovich; two brothers, Vincent and Francis, and a sister, Rita McAllister. Brothers Bernard, Lawrence, Wayne, Stanley and Kenneth, and sisters, Jan and Shirley, preceded her in death.

Dorothy Huffey | THE R-J GOES TO A PARTY



Museum marks milestone with Dinosaur Ball



MARIAN UMHOEFER/REVIEW-JOURNAL

Felix Rappaport, from left, Marilyn Gillespie, Louise Rappaport and John H. Good
([enlarge to view more photos](#))» [Buy this photo](#)

Posted: Nov. 20, 2011 | 2:02 a.m.
Updated: Nov. 20, 2011 | 9:27 a.m.

The Las Vegas Natural History Museum celebrated 20 years of providing learning adventures and educational programs at its Dinosaur Ball Nov. 11 at The Mirage.

A surprise was the announcement that the gala's 2011 honoree was museum executive director Marilyn Gillespie. She was escorted to the lectern by former museum board chairman Denny Weddle, dressed as a showgirl, and dinner committee member Philip Varricchio, dressed as a tuxedoed Chippendale.

The paleontology-themed black-tie event offered a silent auction during the cocktail hour in which board members Stephanie Stallworth, Felix Rappaport, Chuck Creigh, Anthony Guenther, Don Polednak, Denny Weddle, Carol Levins, Michael Severino and board chairman John H. Good mingled with guests Tim Cashman, Susie Black and Steve Manriquez, Jeff Shaw, Helen Foley, Jan and Owen Nitz, Carolyn Sparks, Jeannie Goodrich, Scott Adams, Marsha MacEachern and Shawn Tempesta, Beth and Stephen Wells, Harry and Helen Mortenson, and Commissioner Larry Brown.

The ball was sponsored by the Rappaport family: Mirage President and Chief Operating Officer Felix Rappaport, his wife, Louise, and daughters Alexandra and Briana.

Master of ceremonies was Steve Schorr, vice president of Cox Communications.

Entertainment included the Fantasy Girls from Luxor providing song and dance, and Mirage headliner and "America's Got Talent" winner Terry Fator.

The Arthur Murray Dancers performed the fox-trot, cha-cha, waltz and rumba. Leading off a dance competition was the Natural History Museum's Marilyn Gillespie and John H. Good.

A live auction was held for first-time naming rights to the museum's 35-foot animatronic tyrannosaurus rex, which was sold to Felix Rappaport for six months for \$2,500 and to Anthony Guenther for \$2,500 for the remaining six months of the year. The life-size Egyptian mummy replica will be named for Don Polednak for \$400, and the extinct, hair-covered Australopithecus will be named for Laura Fitzsimmons for \$400, each for a year.

Seen among the 350 guests were Steve Stallworth, Laura Schmitt and Al Guida, Dave Levins, Chris Creigh, Rosita Kanes, Jack Howard, Ann Luczkowski, Grace Sanders, Ruth and Jack Lillis, and Gayle Anderson.

The four-course dinner was prepared by Mirage executive chef Jeff Braun and pastry chef Everett Williams.

The band Wild Card played for dancing.

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Discovery of dinosaur footprints at Red Rock excites scientists



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT COURTESY PHOTO

A fossilized footprint recently discovered in Red Rock Canyon still shows the ripples left in the mud by a small dinosaur that walked the area roughly 190 million years

BY HENRY BREAN
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Nov. 21, 2011 | 1:59 a.m.
Updated: Nov. 21, 2011 | 7:24 a.m.

In a sea of dunes stretching to the horizon, a dinosaur the size of a Doberman strode through wet sand that squished between its talon-tipped toes.

Where the creature was headed and why has been lost forever down the well of geologic time, but its muddy footprints march on in a block of sandstone 25 miles from the Strip.

Officials at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area have confirmed the discovery of dinosaur footprints and other tracks laid down roughly 190 million years ago.

The footprints were found in early September by some regular visitors to Red Rock who also volunteer at the conservation area.

Researchers confirmed the find during a field trip to the site just before the start of an international paleontology conference

held in Las Vegas early this month.

At least one of the three-toed prints is ringed with what looks like ripples caused when the animal's foot splashed down in the mud.

"They step down, the ripples go out, and it stays there for 180 or 190 million years. It's mind-boggling," said Tim Wakefield, filed manager for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management at Red Rock.

It is the first discovery of its kind within the 195,000-acre conservation area. Experts are calling it the first set of dinosaur tracks to be formally documented anywhere in Nevada.

A PREHISTORIC SECRET FOR NOW

Brent Breithaupt is a regional paleontologist for the BLM and part of the group of researchers that confirmed the discovery.

At first blush, he said, the tracks appear to come from a two-footed, meat-eating dinosaur that was probably no more than about 3 feet long from nose to tail.

But Breithaupt warned that it is "very premature" to say almost anything with certainty about the creature.

"We know we have tracks there. Right now, we're at the very beginning of our observation," he said. "Every track site has a story to tell. Trying to figure out what that story is -- that's what's exciting about being a researcher."

The BLM, which operates Red Rock Canyon, isn't releasing the location of the fossilized footprints. The site will be kept under wraps until it has been documented and experts decide how best to protect it.

The footprints were found in a layer of Aztec sandstone, the same type of rock in which fossilized dinosaur tracks have been discovered in Utah and Arizona.

All officials will say is that the site is remote and difficult to reach. Wakefield described it as a hard, two-hour hike from one of the parking areas in what he called Red Rock's "core area," which basically includes all the land visible from the visitor center.

"We're not trying to be secretive. We just want people to be respectful of it like they already are with our cultural areas for the most part," he said. "If we don't do this right, we run the risk of losing something we can never get back."

The bureau plans to post some temporary displays about the discovery at the Red Rock visitor center within the next few weeks.

A more detailed exhibit, including reproductions of the fossilized footprints, could be up by early next year, when officials hope to hold an open house so visitors can talk directly to researchers about the find.



Footprints, possibly left by an early Jurassic spider or a scorpion, decorate sandstone in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Symbols on the measuring bars next to the tracks are used by researchers to produce three-dimensional images of the tracks. That allows scientists to take physical moldings without damaging rocks. COURTESY OF BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Wakefield said it probably will take at least a year for scientific work to be completed and a decision to be made about how -- or whether -- to direct visitors to the tracks themselves.

"We are so anxious to share this with the public," he said. "This is so exciting."

DOCUMENTING THE DISCOVERY

Breithaupt and company logged dozens of tracks in an area stretching roughly a quarter of mile.

In addition to dinosaur prints, they found what appears to be a line of tracks from a spider or scorpion about the same size as the ones that roam the area today.

The arthropod tracks are from the same time period as the other fossilized prints, Breithaupt said. "They were scurrying around with the dinosaurs."

After conducting a cursory survey of the site, the paleontologists snapped three-dimensional pictures of the tracks by using an extremely high-resolution camera that can capture details down to a tenth of a millimeter.

The images are good enough to produce 3-D reproductions of the tracks without having to take physical moldings that can damage the rock.

"It's the most noninvasive way to make a cast of a fossil," Breithaupt said.

Local paleontologist Josh Bonde hasn't seen the tracks yet, but he knows a little something about sifting through present day Southern Nevada for traces from the age of dinosaurs.

His work in Valley of Fire has helped to identify fossils of dinosaurs, fish, turtles and crocodiles from the Cretaceous period, roughly 100 million years ago.

He said finding tracks from the early Jurassic is "actually really cool" because sites from that time period are rare in this region.

"Those rocks are few and far between," Bonde said.

WHAT THEY COULD TEACH US

Eventually, detailed analysis of the footprints could reveal the size and type of dinosaur that made them and the condition of the soil in which they were left. They could offer clues to the animal's behavior.

"We'll be able to say something about the stride and the pace," Breithaupt said.

It is painstaking work that involves equal measures of observation and interpretation.

"We never find a dinosaur dead in its tracks," Breithaupt said. "It's sort of like paleontological forensics. These are the ultimate cold cases."

And this case is about as cold as they come. Since the tracks were left in the wet sand, the sun has risen and set over Southern Nevada roughly 70 billion times.

In the early Jurassic, the continents were still clumped together, and the land mass that would become North America was closer to the equator. Nevada was part of a massive desert back then that makes the present-day Mojave look lush by comparison.

To turn footprints in sand dunes into fossils in sandstone requires water and pressure and a great deal of luck. For those tracks to lie buried for tens of millions years and then be lifted and exposed by erosion at just the right time to be spotted by humans is about the least likely chance encounter imaginable.

Breithaupt said the tracks probably have been exposed on the surface, waiting to be discovered, for thousands of years. But he is not surprised it took until now to find them, even in a place as busy as Red Rock.

Fossilized tracks often get overlooked in areas not known for evidence of dinosaurs. Once word gets out about the tracks in Red Rock, Breithaupt expects it to lead to more discoveries in Red Rock Canyon and elsewhere in Nevada.

"People will start thinking about dinosaurs being there. They will get a search image in their mind," he said. "This may be the tip of the iceberg in terms of what may be preserved there."

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Listing sought for historic Nevada motor car

CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) — The National Historic Landmarks Committee is recommending the McKeen Motor Car at the Nevada State Railroad Museum be listed as a national landmark.

Nevada Historic Preservation Officer Ron James says if the nomination is accepted, it will be the first piece of railroad equipment to win a place on the list of National Historic Landmarks.

About 160 McKeen Motor Cars were built from 1905 to 1920. The motor car at the museum in Carson City was used on the Virginia and Truckee Railway.

It was retired in 1945 and converted into restaurant and then retail space.

In 1995 it was donated to the Nevada State Railroad Museum, where it was restored.

Museum officials say it's the only one left that is able to move under its own power.