

FYI regarding Art Hannafin

Living, learning and sharing with retired seniors

AUGUST, 26 2012
BY SAM BAUMAN

Working as a volunteer for the RSVP Respite program is like rolling the dice at your favorite casino. You never know what's up. In the past I have worked with clients mostly suffering from Alzheimer's disease; they make up some 70 percent of those suffering from dementia.

And no two are alike.

Similar, but different.

One of my clients was a chatterbox; he could talk for two hours without stopping, recounting his earlier life. Another often asked the same question again and again. But he liked to eat lunch at a local casino, where the waitress knew him and took care of his order. Neither man could safely be left alone in the home or outside.

Recently, I was introduced to a new client, a man in his early 80s, once a rugged outdoorsman but now suffering from Parkinson's disease. (I think Parkinson's was called "dropsy" in my youth and is also now called "palsy.")

Since he was my first Parkinson's client, I scurried to the Wikipedia for information. According to Wikipedia: "Parkinson's disease (also known as Parkinson disease, Parkinson's, idiopathic Parkinsonism, primary Parkin□sonism, PD, or paralysis agitans) is a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system.

The motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease result from the death of dopamine – generating cells in the substantia nigra, a region of the midbrain; the cause of this cell death is unknown. Early in the course of the disease, the most obvious symptoms are movement-related; these include shaking, rigidity, slowness of movement and difficulty with walking and gait. Later, cognitive and behavioral problems may arise, with dementia commonly occurring in the advanced stages of the disease. Other symptoms include sensory, sleep and emotional problems. PD is more common in the elderly, with most cases occurring after the age of 50."

Armed with this and more I sat down with Art in his home in the Historic District of Carson City. He is lean and displays the symptoms of Parkinson's: he twitches his hands and sometimes other part of the body. I found that he has problems swallowing (a common symptom) and walks with a shuffling step. He is recovering from an unfortunate clash between medications that put him in the hospital for more than a week.

But Art's mind is as sharp as when he was designing hundreds of homes in Carson City and Reno. He does not suffer from dementia but at times has minor cognitive problems. His memory is excellent. He has designed a complex of five houses that share a single back yard in harmony and occupies one of them. His illness has not affected his mental processes, so we can sit for hours and talk about life, both past and present.

And he has lived an impressive life. He sat on the committee to protect houses in the Historic District from developers. He helped write the legislation that now protects the Historic District. He has been active in civil affairs.

And from my point of view, he has a lot to share with me while his wife is out playing Bridge once a week – that's the point of Respite, to give caregivers who deal with someone 24/7 a few hours away and in a different context.

As I mentioned, he was an avid outdoorsman, skiing both downhill and cross country. And a hiker and mountain climber – he has topped Mount Shasta and Mount Whitney, something I can only envy, as Mount Tallac is as high as I got (without a ski lift, that is). He's also hiked nearby Job's Peak and Job's Sister and Freel Peak, at nearly 11,000 feet. He also served in the Marine Corps.

Art is at ease with his Parkinson's symptoms. At one time he was contemplating brain surgery with electrodes, which would relieve his discomfort. But he was turned down because of his age, but he accepts that philosophically. He has a fine sense of humor and welcomes old friends as visitors. Yes, his speech is somewhat hard to understand, but with my hearing aids I need only ask him to repeat it.

Parkinson's disease is as I said part of the panoply of dementia illnesses. In Parkinson's disease the dementia often does not exist or comes late. Actor Michael J. Fox is perhaps the most visible celebrity struck by the disease, and he hid it for several years and eventually set up a clinic to seek a cure. But there is no cure as with Alzheimer's. But Art and his charming, ever able wife don't dwell on the future. They have a splendid past with seven children, two of whom served in the Peace Corps. Their home (he designed it and it's charming) is awash with photos showing Oscar as the handsome, sportsman that he was. And he still is, even if he can't climb Mount Whitney and Shasta anymore.

He climbed another peak of sorts last week when the Carson Board of Supervisors awarded him a plaque at their Thursday meeting. It was a handsome plaque and it reads in part: "for his contributions to preserving the state's most valued possessions."

You also could list him as one of the state's most valued possessions.

- Sam Bauman is a Carson City writer.

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FYI

- Courtesy

McKeen Motor Car designated historic landmark

OCTOBER, 18 2012
[NEVADA APPEAL](#) STAFF REPORT

The McKeen Motor Car at the Nevada State Railroad Museum, one of the state's historic treasures, has been designated a national historic landmark by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar.

Called one of Nevada's significant historic treasures, the McKeen vehicle at the Nevada State Railroad Museum earned the recognition from Salazar and ample praise from Gov. Brian Sandoval.

"As we begin to celebrate Nevada's 150th anniversary of statehood in 2014," said Sandoval, "this is yet another opportunity to attract tourists to our great state."

Approximately 160 such motor cars were built from 1905 to 1920. Nevada's version served on the famed Virginia and Truckee Railway.

The motor car is a rare example of William McKeen's effort to use internal combustion engines in rail travel.

McKeen also experimented with streamlining and the use of lightweight metals for his motorized rail cars, lowering costs for passenger service or express service on sparsely-settled rail branch lines.

Sandoval called the car "a wonderful piece of history" and said Nevadans should be proud of the designation.

Ron James, Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, called the designation noteworthy.

"There are only 2500 National Historic Landmarks in the nation," James said, "so this is a noteworthy distinction."

Retired in 1945, the McKeen Motor Car was converted into a restaurant and later into Carson City retail space. In 1995, it was donated to the railroad museum and staff spent years restoring it.

That restoration made it the only surviving McKeen Motor Car that is able to move under its own power. It also is the eighth Nevada resource to receive such a landmark designation distinction.

The others are Hoover Dam, the Comstock Historic District, Fort Churchill, Fort Ruby, the Nevada Northern Railway Complex at Ely, Leonard Rockshelter in Pershing County and the Francis G. Newlands home in Reno.

James gave credit to Rep. Mark Amodei, formerly a state senator from Carson City who "played a pivotal role" in moving the motor car's restoration forward.

He also credited Michael "Bert" Bedeau, district administrator of the Comstock Historic District Commission, for drafting the nomination to secure the designation.

The motor car operated four times annually, including at the museum on Nevada Day Oct. 26. The other three times are Independence Day, Father's Day and National Train Day.

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FYI



The great Carson City prison escape of 1871

OCTOBER, 11 2008
TRENT DOLAN
SPECIAL TO THE APPEAL

I often wonder what warden and Nevada Lt. Gov. Frank Denver was thinking as he viewed 60 militiamen and field artillery soldiers as they moved up Warm Springs Road (Fifth Street) to the Nevada State Prison that March day in 1873. This is war!

But how did it all start? Let's go back to the great escape of September 1871.



JAMES W. DENVER

The Great Escape

Denver was the warden responsible for the largest escape of prisoners at that time in the west. The prison was built to house 112 inmates and 29 escaped. It resulted in the deaths of many locals and prisoners as well as the renaming of an area lake, stream and mountain. Denver himself was wounded in the hip.

On that Sunday the convicts quickly subdued the one guard left to put the men in their cells for the night. The noise of inmates breaking through the lath and plaster in assistant warden Zimmerman's room woke the sleeping administrator. He then ran to where Denver, his wife Mary, and 6-year-old daughter were eating dinner and entertaining friends. Denver grabbed his Derringer and shot ringleader Frank Clifford. Denver was hit by a slingshot, knocking him to the ground. Inmates then entered the armory, taking Henry rifles, shotguns, several five and six shooters and up to 3,000 rounds of ammunition.

Of the 29 escapees, 22 went east, two went west and five went toward Empire City. Since Gov. Bradley was absent from Carson, his private secretary, Charles Belknap, took charge and telegraphed General Batterman in Virginia City. Batterman arrived with a guard on a special train within hours. Some historical accounts say hundreds arrived to help hunt down the criminals. The Carson Appeal ran an advertisement from the governor's office offering rewards for the escapees virtually every day for months. Stories on the escape ran nationwide.

"Rattlesnake Dick," who had recently been paroled from prison to Virginia City, asked to be shadowed by police directly after the breakout because he was sure he would be implicated in the escape. Noted as a career criminal, Rattlesnake Dick, aka Richard Darling, esq., was let out some weeks before the escape. It was obvious to many he was fully aware of the plan.

Four prisoners were caught, and \$900 in reward paid, when they were found on the Walker Lake Road. The names of the prisoners were Frank Clifford, E. B Parsons, J.E. Chapman and George Roth. Indians reported two more strange men in the vicinity.

Billy Poor, a 23-year-old Pony Express rider, was found some 200 yards from Sulfur Springs with a gunshot to the head. It is thought those captured shot Poor in an attempt to keep news of the escape from reaching towns ahead of them.

Several days later a San Francisco detective caught a man in Gates saloon in Los Angeles. A second man was held in jail awaiting transport to Carson City.

Then there was the story of Irishman Thomas Ryan, who was arrested by detectives Seelinger and Stone, who had just returned to bed at the Empire Lodging House in San Francisco. He said he was given up by a man he'd seen somewhere else.

A few of the escapees were found within walking distance of Virginia City, hiding out in a cave and stealing vegetables from local gardens.

The most famous of the escapees were caught and lynched after a shootout at Monte Diablo Canyon near Monte Diablo Lake, now known as Convict Creek and Convict Lake. The saga is recounted in "Murders at Convict Lake" by George Williams III.

Of the 29 who escaped, 18 were returned. Historic records show 11 escaped and were never found.

The escape led to further conflict, in 1873, when the Legislature, intent on avoiding a repeat of the escape, determined that the warden's job should be professional, rather than one given to the lieutenant governor. Denver wasn't about to give up the position that easily.

The Prison War

Denver had admittedly gotten himself into a pickle. His guards were on the wall, ready to repel the ordered taking of the prison by then-Gov. Lewis Rice "Old Broadhorns" Bradley. He had served as a politician in California before moving to Nevada. During his terms the state capitol building was constructed and fenced, presumably, to keep the animals from grazing the grounds, a real problem in early Nevada.

Denver had refused to admit the Prisons Board comprised of the governor, the secretary of state and attorney general to the prison after Bradley signed the bill making the warden's position appointive. That's where the problem comes in.

On March 13, Denver forcibly evicted, Mr Linn, who was to take his place. Linn had arrived at the prison with Attorney General Buckner to give Denver his walking papers.

"Anyhow, the State Prison is the source and scene of no little botheration and vexation to the minds of several worthy gentlemen," wrote the Appeal, "who, we hope, will straighten things out and set them at rights before they get so irretrievably at loggerheads as to make bad matters worse. Mr. Linn still continues to reside near the Prison - that is to say at the Warm Springs Hotel."

On the 14th the field artillery arrived along with men from the National Guard, Emmet Guard, Sarsfield Guard, and Montgomery Guard. Major General Van Bokkelen is then charged with putting P.C. Hyman, Denver's successor, in charge of the prison.

In the Appeal that day:

The Movements of the Army. The Lambent Flame of War!

The lurid fires of civil strife which are about to light the horizon and lend a ghastly luster to a flow of blood which threatens to soak the very earth and incarnadine the rivers and the sea and the warm springs will be lighted upon the hitherto peaceful peat bed which surrounds the Penitentiary today. ... we wouldn't be in Frank Denver's place for anything short of a suit of new clothes and five-gallon demijohn of whiskey. Moreover, we wouldn't be a Spring chicken, nor a stray pig, nor a turkey gobbler, nor a clean shirt, nor a square meal in this dreadful emergency for anything we can think of. What a terrible time our noble soldiers will have in the trenches! ... We wish this cruel war was over!

But Denver quickly changed his mind about the fight.

On receiving the summons, Denver was quoted in the Nevada Appeal as saying: "Under military, necessity, and

from the fact that you have a superior force in numbers, and that if I should stand by my rights by meeting force with force, innocent blood might be shed, and the convicts escape, I hereby surrender to you as commander of the military force."

Denver later sued the state for \$8,000 for back pay, which was denied by the Nevada Supreme Court. He later moved to San Francisco. Accounts have him passing away in California and buried in Lone Mountain Cemetery, presumably in San Francisco, as the cemetery here does not have a record of his burial.

P.C. Hyman, the first paid warden, built a rather successful boot industry at the prison, putting the state in the black for the first time for that part of government.

- Trent Dolan is the son of Bill Dolan, who wrote a column for the Nevada Appeal from 1947 until his death in 2006.

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