

THE CELLHOUSE SNITCH



Nevada State Prison Preservation Society

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2020-21 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Vacant, Treasurer
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Wes Mattice, Collections
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Myron Carpenter, Honorary Board Member

CADRE:

Susa Bernard, Paranormal
Brian Hutchins, Legal Counsel
Bill Fletcher, Tour Guides

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

After taking a couple of months off for the holidays, the Board is starting preparations for the upcoming tour season.

Tentatively, tours will start in early May and conclude Nevada Day weekend. We are looking at a potential of 22 tour dates for the upcoming season. The Board will continue discussions and hope to finalize the dates at the March meeting. We will be looking for a slate of volunteers to help with the tours as well as running the store. There will be several training opportunities for volunteers in both these areas over the coming weeks.

Speaking of the store, we have received our first batch of new shirts to sell for the upcoming season. New colors and designs for both men and women will be available along with new keychains and can coolers.

A sub-committee has come up with a proposed capital improvement plan to guide maintenance and repair projects around NSP for the next several years. The next step is to come up with cost and time estimates for the various projects to see what we can accomplish this year and what will be deferred until future years. We will also be looking for potential grants for some of the big projects, like replacing the aging roofs. We look forward to seeing you as volunteers and possibly on tours this summer.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

For the month of: November/December, 2021

Active Members: 255 + 23 = 278

- a. Individual 18-59: 150**
Paranormal tour : 138
- b. Individual 60+(Senior): 25**
- c. Military: 1**
- d. Student: 3**
- e. Family 6 + 3 (Mike Budge converted to Senior Member)**
- f. Lifetime Individual: 61 + 20**
- g. Lifetime Family: 0**
- h. Business-Bronze: 9**
- i. Business-Silver: 0**
- j. Business-Gold: 0**
- k. Business-Platinum 0**
- l. Benefactor (\$1,000): 1 (included in Lifetime)**
- m. Sustaining (\$100): 1 (included in Individual over 60)**

PROJECTS:

Gary Schnepf, an Eagle Scout candidate, completed his project yesterday at NSP. This has been in the works with Maurice for a while. President Jim Wells and Brew Brewster performed the supervision as Maurice was traveling.

Gary's project was to refresh the three checkerboard tables, two tables in front of the culinary and four benches: two at the basketball court and two in front of the caves. He and his team replaced all the wood on the checkerboards (tabletops and seats) and all of the wood on the four benches.

Gary matched the blue for the tables and benches quite well, and the yellow/tan for the checkerboard table frames. The red/white checkerboards look great, and Gary's team finished the tabletops with a spar varnish coating. I think that the YLC should refresh the coating annually, or at least, yearly :-)

Brew is working on getting a donation of a set of checkers, and maybe a chess set that are scaled for the refreshed tables. By the way, Jim's Lab/Boxer mix, Willow, was a more than capable supervisor at the jobsite. Check it out the next time you're at NSP, I think you'll be pleased with the final product.

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TOURS:

Now that the COVID event has calmed down somewhat we have scheduled our first Guide training session of the year. This training will be for current guides and prospective guides. It will be a PowerPoint presentation of the development and construction of the Prison from its beginning through the expansion of in the 1980's. Glen Whorton will be presenting on Feb. 26, at 1:00 pm in the Courthouse. This class is designed to increase our guides' knowledge so as to make our tours as informative as possible. Beyond that, the historic photos used in the class are really interesting.

MUSEUM – COLLECTION:

The Museum/Collection Committee is ramping up its activities. The Committee presented its plan for the development of the Museum to be housed in the Visiting Room. The Committee will be moving some of our larger artifacts in the next month and staging them in the Admin area till the painting of the Visiting Room is complete.

We have a meeting with the Director of the State Museums early next month to discuss the loan of prison artifacts to our museum.

Part of operating a legitimate museum is accounting for your artifacts. We have been gifted a computer database program specifically designed for museums. This program, 'PastPerfect', and a laptop were donated to us by the Silver State Peace Officers' Museum when they closed in Virginia City.

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Because the laptop is a 'boat anchor' with an old operating system and missing keys from the keyboard, we contacted the PastPerfect company to determine if we were allowed to transfer this license to another computer. We were successful in moving the license/program to a more up to date laptop, donated by Glen Whorton. So, we're ready to begin documenting our historic objects.

With all this action we are still looking for more committee members. We have volunteer opportunities in:

Display design and construction,
Collection documentation, and
Oral history interviews.

We are accepting donations of any objects, documents, or photos related to NSP. You can contact Glen Whorton at 775-722-0394 or gvwhorton@charter.net to increase our collection and document our history.

HISTORY: 'The Daily Appeal' 2-10-1882

I know that it was a different time but maybe some of the past criticism of NSP's treatment for the mentally ill was justified.

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A Maniac Convict.

J. J. Combs, who was sent to the State Prison from this county about seven months ago for cattle stealing, has become a raving maniac. His apparent mania is so violent that the authorities have chained him to the wall in the tailor shop. The prison physicians, Drs. Fox and Lee, in company with the Prison Commissioners, Lieutenant Governor Adams, Secretary of State Babcock and Attorney General Murphy, were at the prison yesterday, when the case of Combs was called to their attention. Combs was carefully examined by the doctors and closely observed by the commissioners, resulting in a disagreement regarding his mental condition. Dr. Fox and Secretary of State Babcock feeling convinced that the man is a perfect maniac, while Dr. Lee and the other commissioners believe that he is "playing possum." Dr. Fox treated Combs before he was sent to the State Prison, and asserts that he had periodical insane spells prior to that time, which have been seriously aggravated by reason of his incarceration. Dr. Lee thinks that a strong club would do Combs more good than anything else, while Dr. Fox thinks that he should be treated like a crazy man; but when doctors disagree, who is to decide?

Perhaps Dr. Lee was not incorrect in his diagnosis as the following article from Honolulu in 1900, would indicate.

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MISSING MAN

Police Search For J. J. Combs.

Wailuku Bankrupt Said to Have Sailed to San Francisco on Alameda.

Where is J. J. Combs? the police are asking. Mr. Combs has been a resident of Wailuku, Maui, and has been adjudged a bankrupt by the court of the Maui circuit. On July 21 Judge John W. Kalua sent a peremptory demand to High Sheriff Brown in which he stated that whereas "it appears that J. J. Combs, a bankrupt, was duly ordered and cited to appear before the Circuit Judge of the Second Circuit Court at the court house in Wailuku on Saturday, July 21, in person by an order and citation issued out of this court on July 18 to answer a certain petition or information of Jas. L. Coke, under oath, filed herein, wherein it is charged and alleged that he, the said J. J. Combs, since being declared a bankrupt by this court, has with intent to defraud his creditors secreted and sold certain property belonging to him, and has committed other unlawful acts alleged in said petition or information. You are commanded to arrest and take the body of the said J. J. Combs and forthwith have and produce him before me at the court room of this court, there to show cause where he, the said J. J. Combs, should not be adjudged guilty of contempt."

According to the police they were too late in looking up Mr. Combs, for he is said to have quietly hid himself away on the steamer Alameda for San Francisco, leaving his creditors to mourn his loss. Mr. Combs is well known in the Islands. While the transport Sherman was in port he was in Honolulu and visited some friends who were aboard the transport en route for Manila. He returned to Maui for a few days and then returned to Honolulu and was here up to ten days ago as far as his movements can be traced.

Combs left a wife, a native girl, who resides at present in Honolulu. The order for his arrest came to the High Sheriff's office too late to be of any service in apprehending the young man and it is supposed he is by this time in San Francisco, and will probably go to Chicago where he has relatives.