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Photo by Jeff Dow
Nevada Alumni Council

For 2015, the 27-member Nevada Alumni Council will be led by Matt Clafton and six executive committee officers. We also welcomed six new board members this year.

R.J. Boyajian '14 M.A.
GSA President

Delores (Bercellos) Clewe '69
Peter Costa '84, '88 M.D.
Tim Crowley '92
Matthew Forman '06
Mary-Ann K. Brown '85, '96 M.S.
Vice President for Membership & Marketing

Amy (Stechman) Ozuna '08
Vice President for Community Outreach
Mike McDowell '03
Vice President for Chapter Development

Ty Windfeldt '01
Past President
Nick Butler '02, '06 M.A.
Treasurer/President-elect

Joe Nannini '00, '10 Ed.S.
Vice President for Student Outreach

Mary-Ann K. Brown '85, '96 M.S.
Vice President for Membership and Marketing

Amy (Stechman) Ozuna '08
Vice President for Community Outreach
Mike McDowell '03
Vice President for Chapter Development

Board Members
Gary Aldax '92
Derek Beenfeldt '93, '11 M.D.
R.J. Boyajian '14 M.A.
GSA President

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Mary-Ann K. Brown '85, '96 M.S.
Vice President for Membership & Marketing

Amy (Stechman) Ozuna '08
Vice President for Community Outreach
Mike McDowell '03
Vice President for Chapter Development

Staff Members
John K. Carothers
Vice President, Development & Alumni Relations

Bruce Mack
Associate Vice President, Development & Alumni Relations

Cheryl Zurek Carothers '01 M.A.
Director, Alumni Relations

Christy (Upchurch) Jerz '97
Director, Alumni Relations

Juliane Di Meo '14 M.A.
Assistant Director, Alumni Relations

Carrie Busha '06
Coordinator, Alumni Relations

Angie Cooper
Coordinator, Alumni Relations

Kevin Price
Coordinator, Alumni Relations

Hope Hepner
Administrative Assistant II
Mari Kay Bickett, J.D., ‘73 (management) is the CEO of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ). She leads the oldest and largest judicial membership organization in the nation dedicated to supporting judges in the critical work they do to improve outcomes for children and families. Headquartered on the University of Nevada, Reno campus since 1969, the NCJFCJ provides cutting-edge training, wide-ranging technical assistance and research to help the nation’s courts, judges and staff in their important work.

Donald “Craig” Houk ’85 (criminal justice) retired from the U.S. Army in June 2014 after 30 years of service. He was assigned to the Military Police in various commands, including Fort Lewis, Wash., Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Korea and Fort Carson, Colo. He also served two deployments in Afghanistan. He retired a “Full Bird Colonel” and now lives with his wife, Brenda, and their beloved husky in Phoenix, Ariz.

Dr. Jim Pappas ’82 (biology), ’86 M.D. has established an amniotic stem cell therapy program at his practice, Active Sports Medicine, in Reno. Jim has experience in stem cell technologies and has utilized them in his practice during both in-office and surgical procedures to aid in the healing process.

Anne Pershing ’83 (speech/theatre) earned third place in the Nevada Press Association’s 2014 Better Newspaper Contest for her story, “The Road to Medical School,” which ran in the spring 2013 issue of the Nevada School of Medicine’s Synapse magazine. She was honored in the category for “Best Explanatory Journalism.” Anne is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated newspaper woman who is a member of the Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame and served on the board of the Nevada Press Association for 16 years, including one year as president.

Valerie (Nichols) Coffey ’90 (physics) and her partner Mitch Rosich sent their children to college in August and promptly sold their homes, cars and most of their belongings, and left the cold of Massachusutts to travel the U.S. as full-time RVers. They now work and

With 2 graduate students, 2 master degrees, 5 soon to be grads in 2015, 5 undergraduates, 7 wolf cubs and 10 University faculty – the past, present and future alumni of the University of Nevada, Reno gather together in the infant room of the Child and Family Research Center (CFRC). Charlston Rigney with baby Lucy Gillen, teacher Heather Sergi with baby Violet Frost, Samantha Brumbach with baby Caylen Milliard, Katie Draughon with baby Sydney O’Hair, teacher Arryell Davis ’08, ’11 M.S., with baby Charlie Folmer, Grace Hoak with baby Elliott Franich, and Christina Fegundez. Baby Charlie Tuttle was out sick.
live aboard a 45-foot motor home, checking
off states they’ve never seen, visiting national
parks, and seeing friends and family. Valerie
is documenting their adventures on her blog,
RVLuckorWhat.com.

Robyn Campbell-Ouchida ’93 (journal-
ism) was recently honored as a Distinguished
Women of Nevada at a luncheon held Oct.
22 at the Jim Rogers’ Sunbelt Auto Collection
Museum in Las Vegas.

Tony Illia ’96 M.A. (English) was named public
information officer for the Nevada Department
of Transportation. He will serve as primary
agency spokesman for District 1, encompassing
the Las Vegas Valley, as well as Clark, Lincoln,
Esmeralda, Mineral and Nye counties. Tony
has served as Nevada special correspondent
for the McGraw-Hill Construction Group,
including Engineering News-Record (ENR),
Architectural Record, and ENR Southwest,
from 2000 to 2014. He had also been a frequent
contributor to the Las Vegas Business Press,
Las Vegas Review-Journal and CityLife, among
other publications, during the past decade.

Kirsten Mashinter ’98 (English), ’03 M.A.
(teaching English as a second language) has
rejoined Vermont-based PH International as
an English Language Teacher Trainer. She
currently resides in Tbilisi, Georgia where
she trains, coaches and mentors public school
English teachers as part of the English Lan-
guage through Civic Education Program.

Michael Huggins ’00 Ph.D. (chemistry) was
recently appointed dean of the newly formed
College of Science, Engineering and Health at
the University of West Florida. He is excited
for the opportunity to continue strengthening
the STEM and health programs, while devel-

Val Tramonte ’00 (pre-medicine), ’04 M.D.
and Katie (Monson) Tramonte ’04
(elementary education) welcomed
their third son, Silas Justice, into
their family Sept.
14, 2014.

Patrick Carey
’06 (criminal
justice) and Lacey
(Wolf) Carey ’06
(journalism), ’11
M.A. (elementary
education) would
like to announce
the birth of their
daughter, Elizabeth Jane Carey, on
oping new academic programs that advance educational and economic development.

Jocelyn Weart ’00 (biology) is a supervising criminalist at the Santa Clara County Crime Laboratory in the South Bay Area. She married David Farkouh in August, and they love to enjoy the outdoors in their spare time. Jocelyn and other Pack grads in the Bay Area have just established a Bay Area Alumni Chapter. Check them out, as there will be lots of fun events over the next year!

Dano Kraig Fernandez ’03 (criminal justice) is a 2015 doctoral candidate in public policy and administration with a specialty in homeland security policy and coordination. Dano currently resides in South Burlington, Vt. with his wife, Eva, and works with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Enforcement and Removal Operations in Williston, Vt.

Denise Sheldon ’03 (psychology) served as team leader for the U.S. Women’s National Team when they won their first ever world championship gold medal at the 2014 FIVB (International Federation of Volleyball) World Championships in Italy in October. The team defeated China in the final match, and was led by legendary volleyball player and coach, Karch Kiraly. Denise currently lives in Colorado Springs and works for USA Volleyball and the U.S. Olympic Committee. She is committed to helping Team USA win Olympic gold in Rio and beyond.

Rebecca Eckland ’04 (English literature), ’09 M.A. (foreign language and literature) ’09 M.A. (English) recently won the World Championship title in the individual 6-hour cycling time trial in the 6-12-24 Hour World Time Trial Championships held in Borrego Springs, Calif. Rebecca is an elite triathlete and writer who still calls Reno home.

Matt Miller ’04 (political science) has been named director of business operations of athletics at San Jose State University (SJSU). After earning a masters in sports management at SJSU in 2006, Matt was hired by the Spartans Athletics Department to perform fiscal operations and event coordination. His new assignment includes director of home football games.

Michael Huggins ’00 Ph.D. Karyn Leanos ’07
Karyn Leanos ’07 (social work) has worked with the Child and Family Research Center with the University of Nevada College of Education for 16 years, first as an early childhood teacher and most recently as a home visitor. She loves working with children and their families. Karyn recently won the Nevada Alumni Association’s 2014 Homecoming Facebook Contest. Karyn won a trip for two to cheer on the Pack in Las Vegas when they battled the Rebels Nov. 29.

John Beck ’08 (geography and anthropology), ’10 M.A. (criminal justice) has been promoted to global law enforcement industry manager at Esri Inc., where he’s been since 2011. Previously, John was a deputy sheriff with the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office. At Esri Inc., John uses geospatial intelligence to assist law enforcement agencies worldwide.

’10s

Tyler Anderson ’10 (political science) recently graduated cum laude from Willamette University College of Law with his doctor of jurisprudence. He was admitted to the Oregon State Bar in October and is currently working as a judicial clerk to the Hon. Jay A. McAlpin at the Lane County Circuit Court in Eugene, Ore.

Gallagher Lawson ’10 (English) is the author of “The Paper Man,” a novel to be published by Unnamed Press, available in May. He is represented by the Hill Nadell Literary Agency. Gallagher has worked as a travel writer and technical writer. He lives in Los Angeles.

Kelley Riegner ’10 M.A. (educational leadership) was recently selected for a one-year orthopedic physician extender residency program with Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine Teaching and Research Foundation (OTRF) in Westmont, Ill. Kelley will evaluate and educate patients, take their history, order diagnostics, care for wounds, and assist in sur-
A great thing about being Persian is that you get to celebrate the New Year twice! Just like the Chinese, many Middle Eastern people hold their New Year parties in the spring. It makes sense because that’s when the grass is growing, birds are chirping and baby animals are being born.

Wait. New Years in March? If that sounds a little odd, don’t worry, you aren’t alone. I never really paid attention to it myself. My father immigrated to the good ol’ USA from Iran in the ’70s and decided to settle and raise the family in Reno. I starting hearing about all these traditions I should have already been exposed to for the first time after moving to Los Angeles after college. That’s when I first learned of Nowruz (Persian New Year), a holiday where children receive gifts, money, candy and new clothes. I thought to myself, “Wait, Dad never told me about this? Someone owes me some ‘back-holiday-child-support!’”

Instead of getting mad, I got educated by hiring a camera crew and embarking on a mission to learn everything I could about Nowruz through a not-so-conventional comedy tour. The result is a 90-minute documentary. The journey begins in Reno highlighting all the great things Nevada has to offer, then I meet with family, friends and scholars. From that point, it’s full speed ahead as we crisscross North America, attending Nowruz parties ranging from a small basement gathering to a huge sold-out theater with thousands in attendance. Celebs like The Iron Sheik (legendary wrestler), Maz Jobrani (Comedy Central), Ahmed Ahmed (TBS/Sullivan & Son), Rudi Bakhtiar (CNN) and many more pop up to bring the funny at every stop along the way.

By the end of the whirlwind tour, you’ll have seen a standup comedian perform under some tough conditions, effortlessly learn some intriguing history, and thoroughly enjoyed yourself the entire time.

The best part is you don’t have to be Middle Eastern to enjoy the film. Find out about a holiday that 300 million people celebrate each year. Some argue it started the Easter tradition of painting eggs, and had a guy with a white beard handing out gifts to children 2,000 years before the idea of Santa Clause even existed.

I gave the past three years of my life to create a film that can be enjoyed with your whole family. With the help of an incredible crew, it has generated buzz and grabbed the attention of the BBC, NPR, TEDxTalks, and even won at a few film festivals. If you like standup comedy, history, culture, food or dancing, here’s a unique blend of all the above. I’m hoping my Nevada friends will support this dream that’s become a reality by checking out “NOWRUZ: Lost & Found.” HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE!

K-von ‘03 is a comedian, tv host and now writer/director. If you are interested in knowing more about the film, pre-ordering a copy, or want to see the trailer, please write to info@K-vonComedy.com.
Nevada Alumni Association honors Fall 2014 Senior Scholars

More than 75 family, friends, college deans and others from the University of Nevada, Reno’s administration joined the Nevada Alumni Association in honoring the Fall Senior Scholars Dec. 4. These top graduating seniors from each school or college at Nevada were recognized for their hard work and dedication throughout their collegiate journey. The faculty mentor who had the most impact on their academic career at the University was honored as well. BACK ROW: Professor Stacy Demitropoulos, James Winn, Quinton Bunk, Melissa Burnham, James Trexler, Kelley Stewart and Sheri Faircloth. FRONT ROW: Jordan Forman, Alyssa Addington, Matthew Folsom, Kelsey DeRose and Cayla Harvey.

College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources
Kelsey DeRose
Mentor: Kelley Stewart
GPA 3.914

College of Education
Alyssa Addington
Mentor: Melissa Burnham
GPA 3.985

College of Science
Matthew Folsom
Mentor: James Trexler
GPA 3.969

Division of Health Sciences
Jordan Forman
Mentor: Stacy Demitropoulos
GPA 3.964

College of Business
Cayla Harvey
Mentor: Sheri Faircloth
GPA 3.939

College of Liberal Arts
Quinton Bunk
Mentor: James Winn
GPA 3.975
Go Greek.

Or Thai, or Brazilian, or Tahitian ...

Pack your bags and join fellow Nevada alumni on an exotic Oceanic Cruise to one of the many exciting destinations our Pack Tracks travel program has to offer. From white-sand beaches and golden temples to emerald rainforests and crystal-clear lagoons, your destination awaits.

**Greek Isles Odyssey**: Sept. 26 – Oct. 5, 2015
**Pagodas & Palaces**: Jan. 6 – 24, 2016
**Radiant Rhythms**: Feb. 27 – March 11, 2016
**Atolls & Islands**: March 25 – April 4, 2016

To plan your trip, visit alumni.unr.edu, or call GO Next at (800) 842-9023.