

# Mint Edition

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

Spring 2024  
Vol. LII, No. 4

## Gone to the Dogs: K-9 Training at the Nevada State Museum



by Dr. George Baumgardner and Brett Fisher

The Nevada State Museum began the new year by letting the dogs in. We were pleased to assist local public safety agencies in K-9 detection training that helps to protect Nevadans.

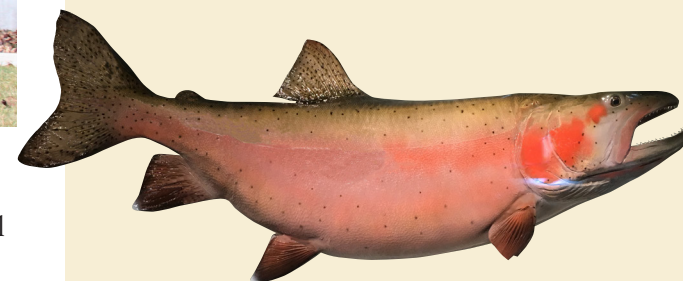
Multiple law enforcement, fire, security, and rescue agencies participated in trainings held early this year at the Nevada State Museum campus. K-9 units, which include their human handlers, search for dangerous or illegal substances as well as evidence of crime or misfortune. They do this

by taking advantage of a dog's keen sense of smell and the handler's skill in directing and interpreting the actions of their canine partner.

Dogs are particularly well adapted at differentiating among very low concentrations of odors. The canine nose has 200–300 million scent receptors (compared to the six million possessed by humans), and the odor interpretation portion of their brain is about 40 times larger than ours. A dog can perceive smells on both inhalation and exhalation with each nostril working

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**top detail and above:** Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi*), the largest subspecies of cutthroat trout and Nevada's state fish. This replica can be viewed in the *Nevada Stories* gallery. The fish was caught from Pyramid Lake in 1925 by Johnny Skimmerhorn at a record-breaking 39 inches long and weighing 41 pounds.

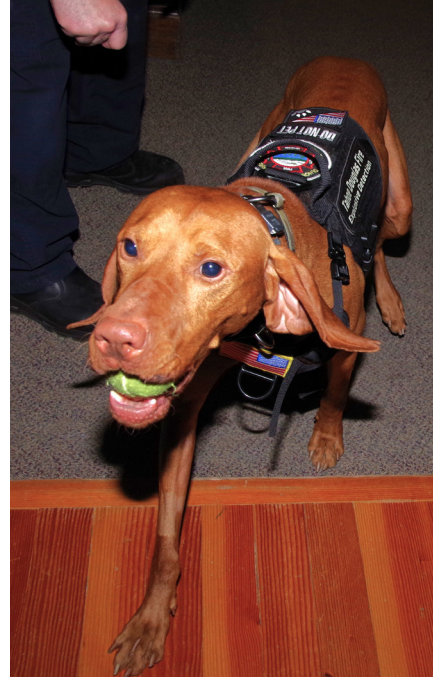
**left:** K-9 Honey with handler, Kirk Stewart; K-9 Khyber with handler, Rob Van Diest; K-9 Sapa with handler, Robyn Wasser; and K-9 Greta with handler, Eric Ramos. Photo: Brett Fisher



**far left:** K-9 Greta in the firearms gallery.  
Photo: Brett Fisher



**middle left:** Kris Rowlett hides a target in the mine.  
Photo: Laurel Weil



**left:** K-9 Tracker seems to enjoy his tennis ball reward in the Mint. Photo: George Baumgardner

**below left:** K-9 Sapa with handler, Robyn Wasser, seem pleased with their find in the basement.  
Photo: Brett Fisher



K-9 Khyber with handler, Rob Van Diest, in the Nevada history gallery. Registrar Mary Covington looks on.  
Photo: Brett Fisher



independently. This second adaptation allows them to more easily determine the direction in which a scent is stronger.

These dogs are selected early in life and begin their training at a young age. They must be temperamentally stable—not afraid of noise, people, or animals; not human or animal aggressive; be comfortable working in unfamiliar environments and locations; and capable of dealing with slick surfaces, unstable footing, and confined spaces. They are driven by a combination of the desire to hunt, chase, and play. Training involves getting the dog to recognize and indicate the presence of specific odors. The dogs signal they have found their target odor by recognizable changes in their behavior—typically by sitting or lying down. Some dogs will even turn their heads to look at the handler as if to say, “It’s here.” A successful find is then positively reinforced when the handler provides the dog with some form of play, a favorite toy, or an edible treat. Many dogs that search by smell are trained to respond to single classes of scents such as explosives, various other substances, illegal drugs, or human remains.

The Nevada State Museum offered a unique training environment for the K-9 detection teams to practice their skills. The historic Mint building’s many areas of old smells—especially in the basement and attic—challenged these powerfully keen canine noses to focus on the odors being sought. Held during regular business hours, the training took place amongst museum visitors; an added bonus that increased the degree of difficulty with real-world distractions for the search teams to overcome.



K-9 Storm searches the dark corners of the Museum attic with handler, Kathryn Stewart. Photo: George Baumgardner

The trainers strategically hid target odors to be searched for in our historic structure's many unique folds, small spaces, and dark corners. Each dog searched an area under their handler's direction and leadership. When a dog signaled the presence of a target odor, the exercise supervisor indicated success and the handler rewarded the dog. These exercises were conducted in the museum's public galleries as well as in the basement and attic spaces.

The first teams to avail themselves of the museum's novel training environment were experienced in explosive substance detection—bomb dogs. Nevada Capitol Police Officer Kirk Stewart first recognized the Museum's potential as a training venue after some social visits with his K-9 partner, Honey. Both were excited to try something new and different. With the approval of Director Josh Bonde and Facilities Supervisor Albert Depew, a training date was set.

Stewart said there are about a half-dozen explosive detection K-9s in the Reno-Tahoe region. Five of those units participated in the formal detection

exercise at the Nevada State Museum. Attending were K-9 Greta, a Belgian Malinois, with handler, Eric Ramos, of Caesars Entertainment; K-9 Honey, a Golden Retriever, with handler, Kirk Stewart; K-9 Khyber, a German Shepherd, with handler, Rob Van Diest, of MSA/Allied Security at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport; K-9 Sapa, a German Short-haired Pointer, with handler, Robyn Wasser, of the University of Nevada, Reno Police Department; and K-9 Tracker, a Hungarian Vizsla, with handler, Kris Rowlett, of the Tahoe-Douglas Fire Department.

When local K-9 expert, Mary Cablk, Ph.D., learned of the "bomb dog" training here, she asked if the K-9 teams she works with could do the same. Director Bonde and Facilities Supervisor Depew once again approved, and a date was set. The handlers in this second training are professional volunteers with sheriff's offices in Nevada and California and deploy directly for the state of California's Office of Emergency Services to handle criminal nexus cases. These specialized teams assist law enforcement with homicides, suicides, accidental deaths, cold cases, mass fatalities, high velocity impacts, fatal fires, crime scenes, and



K-9 Greta gets a reward for finding the odor sample from handler, Eric Ramos. Photo: Brett Fisher



K-9 Dax says, "I found it Mommy!" to handler, Mary Cablk. Photo: George Baumgardner

missing persons cases. All the dogs are certified to work on land, and one, K-9 Dax, is also qualified to search for drowning victims working on a boat or from shore.

Members of this group included K-9 Annie, a Belgian Malinois, with handler, Kris Black, who volunteers for the Santa Clara County, CA, Sheriff's Office; K-9 Dax, a Belgian Malinois, with handler, Mary Cablk, who volunteers for the Lyon/Washoe/Carson City/Douglas County, NV, sheriff's offices; and K-9 Storm, a Dutch Shepherd, with handler, Kathryn Stewart, who volunteers for the Sacramento County, CA, Sheriff's Office.

The handlers at both training sessions seemed happy with the museum space and thought it served as an effective training ground. Both museum staff and guests were delighted to see the dogs at work honing their skills. The Nevada State Museum is pleased that its facility could serve as a venue for these critical public safety units. While we haven't yet really gone to the dogs, more of these training days may be in our future. We thank Dr. Mary Cablk for her expertise in reviewing this article.

# Coin Press No. 1 Mints New Datsolalee Commemorative Medallion

by Brett Fisher

The Nevada State Museum has released a new commemorative medallion in its *Nevada Women Series*. On March 20, 2024, historic Coin Press No. 1 minted the first Datsolalee commemorative medallions at a reception honoring the “Queen of the Basketmakers” as part of Women’s History Month. Exhibits Preparator Jeanette McGregor created the graphic that was then sculpted by United States Mint sculptor Tom Rogers. Volunteer Sandy Bell designed the medallion packaging.

The new medallion is the second in the *Nevada Women Series*, following Agnes Scott Train, one of the Museum’s first curators whose commemorative medallion was released in 2021.

“It’s important as we honor the contributions of prominent women in Nevada history, that we represent all Nevadans, including this amazing indigenous woman,” Museum Director Josh Bonde said.

Datsolalee—the Washoe name for “wide hipped woman”—was a prominent Native American weaver at the turn of the 20th century best known in the art world as Louisa Keyser. Her baskets were highly prized by collectors around the world and they remain highly sought-after works of art today.

Louisa Keyser’s baskets are celebrated for their artistic beauty and technological excellence. Her body of documented work spanned 30 years and paralleled the history of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the United States. She completed 120 major works that reflected distinct phases in her basket weaving career.

Photographer unknown, Louisa Keyser with LK 44 and LK 59, circa 1916, gelatin silver print, 8½ x 6½ inches, Nevada State Museum



# Calendar of Events

Check [www.carsonnmuseum.org/events](http://www.carsonnmuseum.org/events) for more detailed information

From Tikky the Quail, courtesy Jenny Lin



## April 2024

### Monday and Tuesday, April 8–9

Spring Volunteer Training, South Gallery, 10 am–3 pm

### Saturday, April 6

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, April 13

Museum Store Spring Book Signing, 10 am–2 pm

### Saturday, April 13

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, April 20

Family Fun Saturday,  
Earth Day: Beehive Hotel,  
Auditorium,  
Session One: 10–11:30 am  
Session Two: noon–1:30 pm

### Saturday, April 20

Historic Coin Press No. 1  
history and demonstration,  
11 am–3 pm

### Thursday, April 25

Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, Historic Archaeology at Fort Churchill, Nevada, by Dr. Gene Hattori, Dema Guinn Concourse, 6:30–7:30 pm

### Saturday, April 27

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

## May 2024

### Saturday, May 4

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm



### Thursday, May 9

Mark Twain Days Kickoff Reception, Dema Guinn Concourse, 5:30–7:30 pm

### Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, May 10–12

Mark Twain Days,  
8:30 am–4:30 pm,  
Coin Press No. 1 will be  
minting its commemorative  
.999 silver half-ounce  
medallion of Mark Twain



### Saturday, May 11

Family Storytime: *The Tale of Tikky the Quail* by Jenny Lin, Dema Guinn Concourse, 1–1:30 pm and 2–2:30 pm

### Saturday, May 11

Family Fun Saturday: Making Gratitude Cards, Auditorium, 10 am–3 pm

### Saturday, May 11

Mark Twain Days Bow Tie Ball gala, Dema Guinn Concourse, 6–9 pm

### Saturday, May 18

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Thursday, May 23

Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, TBD, Dema Guinn Concourse, 6:30–7:30 pm

### Saturday, May 25

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, May 25

“American Jezebel: Anne Hutchinson” Chautauqua by Kim Harris and American Heritage Partners banquet, 5:30 pm

## June 2024

### Saturday, June 1

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, June 8

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, June 15

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Saturday, June 22

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm

### Thursday, June 27

Frances Humphrey Lecture Series, TBD, Dema Guinn Concourse, 6:30–7:30 pm

### Saturday, June 29

Historic Coin Press No. 1 history and demonstration, 11 am–3 pm



# Nevada State Museum Welcomes the Return of Mark Twain Days



by Brett Fisher

**D**id you know that Mark Twain was “born” in Carson City? It’s true. While working for Virginia City’s *Territorial Enterprise* newspaper and covering events happening in the Nevada state capital, Samuel Langhorne Clemens penned a story entitled “Letter from Carson City” on January 31, 1863, and signed it “Yours, dreamily, Mark Twain.”

That was the first time the iconic American humorist and author used the name Mark Twain in his writing. To mark the birth of this literary legend, Carson City launched its inaugural Mark Twain Days in 2023. The community-wide celebration proved so successful that it returns again this year from May 10–12, 2024.

Festival activities include art and literary workshops, music, historic walking tours, themed train rides, and more. The Nevada State Museum is minting its special commemorative Mark Twain medallion on historic Coin Press No. 1 during the festival and hosting a Family Fun Saturday craft. The Bow Tie Ball gala is going to be held at the Museum and be sure to check out the colorful Mark Twain mural commissioned by Visit Carson City adorning the south side of the campus.

Check [visitcarsoncity.com/mark-twain-days/](https://www.visitcarsoncity.com/mark-twain-days/) for information about free activities and to purchase tickets for other events.

Sam Clemens ventured West to Nevada shortly after the American Civil War began. His older brother, Orion, had been appointed Territorial Secretary of Nevada and Sam joined him as his personal secretary. The brothers arrived in Carson City by stagecoach in July 1861. When secretary work proved too dull for the younger Clemens, he dabbled in logging and mining before finding his niche as a writer and cementing his legacy as one of America’s most beloved wordsmiths.

**above left:** Mark Twain mural on the south side of the Museum. Photo: Brett Fisher

**above right:** Mark Twain commemorative medallion. Photo: Brett Fisher

**right:** Bow Tie Ball image courtesy Brewery Arts Center





K-9 Dax in the confines of the Mint's spiral staircase.

## More Doggone K-9 Training Photographs



**above:** K-9 Annie nears her target in the Ghost Town.

**below:** Exercise supervisor Kris Black (right) announces success for K-9 Dax and handler, Mary Cablk. All photos: George Baumgardner



# Welcome to Our Newest Nevada State Museum Members!

## **New Members Sustaining**

Eric & Judy Anderson  
Pam & Scott Denny  
Kathy & Ed Holton  
Steve & Jane Moon

## **Family**

Stephanie Cox  
Barb & Gent Culver  
Gayle Gardner & Manny Schatz  
Valerie Hatton  
David & Deedee Jenson  
Sadie Kolbet  
Laurie Lile & Tim Glenner  
Marisela & Brandon Lima  
Alisa Lynch & Alan Broch  
Tabitha Maher  
Benjamin & Jaina Moan  
Tracy & Tim Nelson  
Timothy & Kayla Ortiz  
Alan & Christine Peters  
Louisa & Brandon Weeks  
Terry White-Vukelic

## **Individual**

Patricia Armendariz  
Georgia Busch & Michael Frederick  
Lyll Collins  
Mardee Farrall  
Walter Gorski  
Sara Maners  
Daniel Maykel  
Kathy Powers  
Ward Roney  
Susan Saltgaver  
Marjorie Smith  
Nora Stefu  
Jim Sutton  
Sydney Waskey

## **Renewed Enhanced Memberships**

### **Benefactor**

Jed Block  
Dennis Charley

### **Patron**

David Book & Lucy Moreton-Hall  
Robert & Sheryl Fitzgerald  
Jeanne & Todd Russell

### **Contributing**

Charles Blanchard & Sarah DeCew  
Don & Kay Fowler  
Dave & Kathy Pierson  
Dirk & Autum Roper

### **Sustaining**

Shelly & Jay Aldean  
Michael Cassidy  
Nicholas & Karen Chickering  
Alfred Cromer  
Anthony & Marlene Cueto  
Jay Deinken  
Gene & Pat Duncker  
Barry & Barbara Fleischer  
Grace & Bud Fujii  
Lyn Hudgens  
Doris & John Johnson  
Jonathan & Christine Jones  
Pat & John King  
Timothy Martell  
Glen Moore  
Greg Novak  
Anne Lee & Donald Oakes  
Janice Pine  
Glenn & Diane Rick  
Phil & Cil Rivera  
Allen Schnaser  
Michael Turrini  
Kris Wells  
Alison Williams

**right:** Detail of a butterfly specimen drawer in the Discovery Lab.



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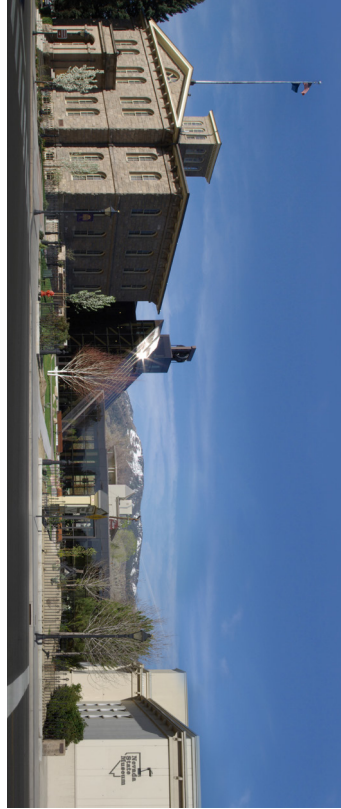
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 775/687-3002

Marjorie Russell Clothing and Textile  
 Research Center  
 775/687-6173

Anthropology Resource Center  
 775/687-0665

Bretzlaff History Resource Center  
 775/687-0696 or 775/687-0697

Natural History Resource Center  
 775/687-0661



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Open 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Tuesday through Sunday  
 Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day

Members  
 Children (17 & under) Free  
 Adults \$10

Memberships:  
 \$45 individual  
 \$75 family  
 \$125 sustaining  
 \$20 senior discount on any  
 membership level

The Nevada State Museum in Carson City is an agency of the Division of Museums and History within the Nevada Department of Tourism & Cultural Affairs. The museum engages diverse audiences in understanding and celebrating Nevada's natural and cultural heritage.

State of Nevada  
 Joe Lombardo, Governor

Nevada Department of Tourism & Cultural Affairs  
 Brenda Scolari, Director

Division of Museums and History  
 Dan Thielen  
 Division Administrator

The Friends of the Nevada State Museum, a 501(c)(3) private nonprofit organization, supports the museum through volunteer assistance, fundraising, and advocacy. For more information contact Jim Spain, Chair at [spainnopain@charter.net](mailto:spainnopain@charter.net)

The Nevada State Museum publishes the *Mint Edition* newsletter for the purpose of highlighting museum exhibits, education programs, special events, and collection activities.

Museum members receive the *Mint Edition* as a benefit of membership if they provide an email address.

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