

WOMEN

2022

OF NEVADA COUNTY

MEET THE TWO
WOMEN RUNNING FOR
NEVADA COUNTY
DISTRICT 3
SUPERVISOR

- Easy as One, Two, Three
- A Legacy of Love
- Moving on Up

Chris Enss

Bringing history to life



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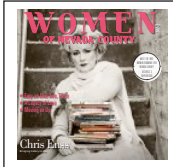


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COVER



Chris Enss is an historian, author, comedienne, and all around amazing woman. Read about her on page 11.

WOMEN OF NEVADA COUNTY

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MIMI SIMMONS

The minute you meet Mimi, you know her passion for real estate and her community. A 5th generation Native of Nevada County, Mimi has been in real estate 38 years and loving every moment. In 1992 Mimi co-founded Cornerstone Realty Group,



starting with 6 agents and built the company up to four offices and 65 agents before selling the company in 2006. During this time, Mimi served a two year term as President of the Nevada City Chamber of Commerce and on the Board for 18 years. She also is former President of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Nevada County Board of Realtors and has received numerous awards for her community service and involvement. Mimi is also involved with NEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters and Nevada Union Connect. Every

escrow that Mimi closes benefits these three non-profit youth organizations. Mimi created Team Simmons with Holli Navo and Tammy Andreozzi, who have been with her for 21 years and welcomed Ruth Poulter to the Team. Team Simmons has been the top producing Team in Nevada County for over 12 years and is currently 5th in the Nation and 18th in the World with Century 21 Global. Mimi is an avid water skier and snow skier, and is married to her only love, Phil Ruble for 24 years. They love to travel and have been to 34 Countries and more to come!

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PROFILE

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PEOPLE

Meet Julia Stidham, *The Union's* New Publisher

By Valerie Costa

After two decades of faithful employment at *The Union*, Julia Stidham was named publisher, a role she never sought but is very well suited for. She is only the second woman to serve in the role in the newspaper's 157-year history. Her knowledge of all aspects of the paper, including the business and editorial sides, her passion for Nevada County, and her exemplary management style make her the ideal person to lead the team through the many changes that the paper has faced in the past couple of years.

Although she was born in Sherman, Texas, Julia is a Nevada County girl through and through. Her mom moved to Grass Valley to take part in the "back to the land" movement that was all the rage across the nation when Julia was two, and they stayed there until she was seven. While living there, Julia got to witness her sister Dawn being born in the tepee that they lived in, at dawn of course. When she was seven years old, Julia's family moved to Nevada City, and she spent the rest of her formative years there going to Nevada City schools, including Nevada City Elementary, Deer Creek, Seven Hills, and Nevada Union. She graduated in 1988 then moved to Tampa, FL, where she started attending the University of South Florida, "That didn't last long; I had way too much fun," Julia joked, "So I went to Hillsborough Community College."

After she completed her studies, Julia started working for General Mills as an assistant manager in their food service division, and then got to a point where they offered to move her to Sacramento. Her goal had been to get back home, and that was the closest the company could move



Julia (right) and her sister Dawn in the late 1970s.

her. She left General Mills in 1994, and then began her career in media which has lasted to this day. She first worked for Brehm Communications on the *Foothill Trader*, which was a shopper at the time and part of the *Auburn Journal*. After two years, she went to work for the *Auburn Sentinel*, which also published *Sierra*

Heritage Magazine. It was there where she met Donna Brazil, who now works at Lake Wildwood Association and collaborates on *The Wildwood Independent*, the newspaper for Lake Wildwood which *The Union* produces in partnership with the organization.

After that position, Julia went to work for KNCO for a couple of years,

where Lynn Stahlmer was her boss and second mentor. "She was great," Julia said. "I learned a lot from her, but one of my main mentors was at General Mills; she was an amazing boss and taught me a lot about how to be an effective manager."

In 1999, Julia started working at *The Union* as a sales representative for the real estate category. Shortly after, her manager added Nationals to her role, as well, and she did that for nine years. Then, she learned that her mother had ovarian cancer, and she left for a year. Julia had two children, but luckily her husband had a good job and although things were tight financially, Julia spent that year helping her dad and sister care for her dying mother, to whom she was very close. She and her sister Dawn would take shifts caring for their mother during the day before their dad returned home from work in the evening. Although it was an incredibly difficult time for all of them emotionally, Julia is grateful for the time she had with her mother during her final year, and says that the experience taught her a lot. She was incredibly thankful to Hospice of the Foothills for their incredible support, and has been a supporter of the nonprofit ever since.

"Hospice was amazing while my mom was dying, we could not have done it without them," Julia said. "I learned a lot from one of their nurses, and I loved talking with her. There are things I remember so vividly, like mom waking up from a nap saying her mom was knocking on the door, and her mom had died years before. The nurse said that is not unusual, it's part of the journey home. That's really hard work, I admire them so much to be able to do what they do. I learned a

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lot through that experience.”

After her mom passed, then-publisher Jeff Ackerman called her and said that he would love to have her back, when she was ready, as the classified/online advertising manager. She returned and did that for a couple of years, and then when advertising director opened up in 2010, she applied for the job. “I had to go through interviews like everyone else, which was a little frustrating at the time, but I was grateful in the end because I got it and I knew it wasn’t because I had already worked there. I had to go through the process like everyone else and was the best person for the job,” Julia explained.

Julia remained advertising director for a decade, overseeing the advertising, special sections, classified, and events departments. She was and is well respected and genuinely liked by everyone she has managed throughout the years, and the skills she has learned and honed in that position are serving her well in her new role. Previous publisher Don Rogers promoted Julia to the associate publisher in the midst of Covid because her work ethic and deep knowledge of the business and employees was invaluable to him through that very difficult time. “Covid was another big lesson about people. Everyone had their own way of dealing with what had been unthinkable until we were in that situation, and I had to figure out the best way to help and encourage everyone I oversaw through that difficult time,” Julia said. “I try to seek first to understand when dealing with people. I know I’m not the smartest person in the room and I never will be, but I get people and I recognize their talents and their strengths and work with those. Part of the reason why I enjoy what I do now is that I love learning what is important to people and how they work. I feel like it’s something you constantly have to work at, and you’re always learning and always making mistakes.”

Just as we were coming out of the



Julia and her youngest son Harrison on a recent hike.

Covid lockdowns, *The Union* was sold after over four decades of ownership by Swift Communications, who sold all of their publications and properties to Ogden Family Media effective at the beginning of 2022. Then, six months later, Ogden sold *The Union* to Gold Hill California Media, Inc., which has a number of newspapers in the nation, including many in this region. They evaluated the business and selected Julia as the new publisher, asking Don Rogers to move to the editor position, a job he had done very well for many years in Colorado. Don decided to return to Colorado to serve as editor of a newspaper there, instead. “We are going through a lot of changes now; system changes, personnel changes, and more, and we have been doing a lot of hiring and getting ourselves in line with a new corporate roadmap,” Julia explained of

the current situation. “Change is hard on anyone, and we have been through twice as much change as anyone in the last six months. I want to send a shout out to everyone who works here. It has been difficult and challenging, but everyone is still showing up and making it happen every day to ensure that the community has a local paper and knows what is happening in our area. Without the people here we have nothing.”

Things are not going to settle into any kind of “normal” routine any time soon, but Julia and her team are ready and able to meet the changes coming up, including a newly-redesigned website to enhance the reader experience, hiring of new reporters, and ensuring that *The Union* keeps a hyper-local focus. While many small newspapers are folding across the nation, Julia believes that *The*

Union will stay strong and relevant for the people who live here by ensuring everyone has a voice and that we help to ensure that our community stays abreast of everything that is happening here.

“I really feel like it’s a time that newspapers are reinventing themselves and going back to what they were. That’s what people want right now. They are being flooded with information everywhere else, and some of it not accurate, and this is something they can choose and know that they can rely on the information in there,” Julia said, encouraging everyone to remain engaged. “Anyone can participate through letters to the editor and be a part of the conversation in the opinion pages. Reading the paper is the best way to be an informed local citizen.”

A LEGACY OF LOVE

The annual Barbara Schmidt Millar Triathlon Helps Women in Need

Submitted by SNMH Foundation

Barbara Schmidt Millar died of cancer in 1995 at the age of 42. Barbara was a loving wife and mother, a beloved daughter and sister, a dedicated nurse, and a thoughtful and caring friend. She has left a tremendous legacy in this community as she inspired the creation of the Barbara Schmidt Millar Women's Triathlon and 5K. The event is in tribute to her memory to celebrate life and empower women. The event also serves a very powerful purpose—to raise funds to support those that cannot afford their annual mammograms and potential follow-up procedures to increase the early detection of breast cancer in our community. The event also supports scholarships for female seniors graduating from Nevada Union looking to pursue a career in healthcare.

Barbara graduated from Nevada Union High School in Grass Valley in 1971 as the class valedictorian. She then went on to receive a nursing degree and retired to Grass Valley in 1984. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1987, which she overcame and survived. However, two years later she was diagnosed with a more aggressive cancer.

Barbara's cancer journey inspired her

best friend, Cathy Anderson-Meyers, and others to train for triathlons and raise money in her honor for organizations supporting breast cancer while Barbara was continuing her battle and treatment. Barbara was their inspiration and a constant source of encouragement. The group decided to create a local triathlon in her name and it started with a small group the first year down at Cascade Shores. Unfortunately, Barbara passed away before the first planned event happened but the event took place the day following her memorial service in 1995. Thirteen women jumped in the water, fought the hills of Cascade Shores, and crossed the first finish line.

Years later, hundreds of women train and compete to support the early detection of breast cancer locally. While the event has had the challenges of drought, the pandemic, and smoke from wildfire season, the legacy of Barbara lives on in those that continue to raise funds to support the ultimate purpose of the event in her name.

If you are a Nevada County resident who needs support with access to mammography services and follow-up treatments, please call the Women's Imaging Center at Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital at (530) 274-6262 to schedule an appointment and ask



Barbara Schmidt Millar with her son Stewart | Submitted photo

how the Barbara Schmidt Millar Fund can help you.

Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation recently disbursed \$150,000 to the hospital to support the purchase of a new 3D Mammography machine. The new 3Dimensions system is designed to provide higher quality 3D images for radiologists, a more comfortable mammography experience for

patients, and enhanced workflow for technologists.

The event and fund are a program of the Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation. For more information on the triathlon, please visit bsmtri.org. For more information on Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation's program, please visit supportsierranevada.org or call (530) 477-9700.

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MEET THE CANDIDATES

In 2023, District 3 will have a woman representing them in the Nevada County Board of Supervisors. Two women are on the ballot to earn the spot, both with a wealth of experience and big ideas for the future of Nevada County. We asked them to answer a few questions to help our readers decide which woman to vote for in the upcoming general election on November 8.



Patti Ingram-Spencer

Tell me a little bit about where you grew up. Where? What was it like? What did you want to be when you grew up?

I was born in Nevada City at Miner's Hospital where the California College of Ayurveda is now located on Zion Street. Growing up in Nevada City was great fun. My brother and I (my sister is seven years younger) would take our red wagon and walk from Monroe Street to the Food Palace on York Street with a grocery list from our Mom. The owners, Bruce and Alice McKenzie, would fill up our wagon, and off we would head back home. As children, we played hard. We walked

everywhere: to the pool, to church, to play, and to school, rain or shine. It was a wondrous time.

What is your professional background?

After attending Sierra College and Sacramento State, I was hired as an escrow secretary in 1973 and remained in the same profession until retiring as a senior escrow officer in 2016, with my entire career in Nevada County. The title and escrow business are challenging and pressure-laden. Many, many people rely on your abilities to handle the paperwork and funds for sales, purchases, or refinances of homes and land. Emotions run high for the clients, but you learn to listen, care, be accurate, and get the job done.

What is your political engagement history (i.e. what qualifies you to become a Supervisor)?

After my dad passed away, my dear friend Dee Mautino came to me and told me that I must run for Grass Valley City Council. I was naïve and inexperienced when first elected, but the citizens of Grass Valley believed in me and I was blessed to win and serve two four-year terms, representing the City as Mayor from 2002-2004. While on the council, I represented the City on LAFCO, the Nevada County Transportation Commission, budget and contract negotiations, and was involved with the naming of Tinloy Street and Hansen Way. I am proud to have been one of many council members who were part of the planning and building of Fire Station 2 and the Dorsey Drive Interchange. After two terms, I believed it was time to leave public service, but not service to the public. I was and still am a member of the Rotary Club of Grass Valley. I am also a board member of the Nevada County Fair Foundation. I was a board member for Hospice of the

Foothills, along with being a member and chair of the Greater Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce. I believe we can learn a lot from history and am fortunate to be a member of Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as Native Daughters of the Golden West. I served on the Grass Valley Planning Commission, was a member of the citizens' oversight committee for both city tax measures N and E, and I served as a member of the Nevada County Planning Commission.

What are the biggest challenges you believe Nevada County is facing now and in the future?

The biggest issue facing Nevada County is the lack of direction and a plan for fire prevention, suppression, and assistance to county residents in removing ladder fuels and providing ongoing economic programs for fire safety. There is no doubt the County is in a precarious situation, but the answer is not to throw Measure V on the ballot without a full debate, without full engagement, and without an economic study of the impacts a countywide general sales tax would impose. This tax, if approved, would punish consumers and retailers for 10 years, if not more, with no plan. The low voter threshold of a general sales tax should give everyone pause. Measure V is a vegetation management plan, and because it is a general sales tax, there is no guarantee that funds could not be re-directed to other uses by this or any future board of supervisors.

Has your gender led to issues with people not taking you seriously in your role? If so, how do you handle that?

I never experienced discrimination due to my gender at all. My chosen profession, working in the title and escrow industry, provided me with an interesting and rewarding career. My knowledge and professionalism were

the reason I was respected.

If money and public dissent were not considerations, what would you most like to see for Nevada County in the future?

If money was not a consideration, our county is lacking an outdoor sports complex. We need to provide more ballfields, and soccer fields, with additional access to youth and adult active sports. I applaud the work done on bike trails, horse trails, and walking paths, but we, as a county, need to encourage young families to move to our community, and what better way than to show we are active and engaged? A sports complex would also provide opportunities for tourism by hosting tournaments for young and old players alike.

What do you love most about Nevada County?

I love our history, the rivalry still existing between Nevada City and Grass Valley to do better for our communities, our hospital, the Sierra College campus, and the fact that we, when it comes down to it, work for the betterment of our land and our fellow community members.

What do you think needs improvement in Nevada County?

It's important to talk and listen to each other. Yelling and being disrespectful isn't positive and doesn't further the conversation or the ability to get things done. As Supervisor, I would like to improve the conversation; get back to listening and being patient.

Give us one fun fact about yourself.

When I was young, my dad would take my brother and me up to Grouse Ridge, just as the sun was coming up, to go fly fishing. Both my dad

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and brother were pretty darn good. Me? I had my line in the trees or I was breaking the barb off my fly by bouncing it off the granite rocks behind me. To make me feel better, my dad taught me how to gut the fish. I am the best trout gutter you ever met!

Why should people vote for you over your opponent?

Elections are about choices. I believe I have the character, temperament, and commitment to be the correct choice to represent District 3. I may not have spent the last 18 years in public service, but I have spent my adult life in service to the public.



Lisa Swarthout

Tell me a little bit about where you grew up. Where? What was it like? What did you want to be when you grew up?

I was born in Sacramento and lived there until I was 14, then we moved to Grass Valley when my parents purchased Stucki Jewelers. I am so glad that we moved to the Foothills, it gave me the opportunity to grow up in a small community where people know their neighbors. I made life-long friends that I still hold dear today.

I've always felt that moving to Grass Valley was one of the best decisions my parents made. I was somewhat entrepreneurial, even as a kid, so I always knew I wanted to run my own business. I wasn't sure what type of business, but I liked the idea of being self-employed.

What is your professional background?

After college, I worked in both the hospitality industry and in retail. For me, retail won out and in 1989 I moved back to Grass Valley from San Francisco and opened my business, the Mill Street Clothing Company, which I owned and operated for 30 years. In those 30 years, I grew my business from a 1,000-square-foot store with two employees to a 3,000-square-foot store with eight employees. I retired in 2019, but even three years later I run into my former customers who continually ask me to re-open another women's clothing store.

What is your political engagement history?

I have a long career in public service. I spent nine years as a Grass Valley Planning Commissioner and 16 years as a member of the Grass Valley City Council, four of those years as the Mayor of Grass Valley. In addition to my political experience, I have been on numerous nonprofit boards and advisory committees in the last 30 years. I have extensive knowledge in land use, government budgeting, recreation, and public safety.

What are the biggest challenges you believe Nevada County is facing now and in the future?

I think some of the biggest challenges we face are preventing large-scale wildfires, lack of reliable broadband, and land use pertaining to environmental issues. I think each of those issues defines who we are as a community and how we moved forward to make Nevada County the best rural county in California. We are lucky that we have an engaged citizenry to help us work through these issues. I believe that if we all work together, we can create solutions to maintain a vibrant

community while also preserving our quality of life.

Has your gender led to issues with people not taking you seriously in your role? If so, how do you handle that?

I have been fortunate in my career that I don't feel that gender issues have held me back. I started out in public service when I was young, so I will say that I think people had a harder time taking me seriously because of my age, not my gender. I had to prove myself by showing up, doing the work, and showing that I could get things done. I was the fourth female Mayor in Grass Valley, and I have always been grateful to Dee Mautino for leading the way as the first female Mayor of Grass Valley.

If money and public dissent were not considerations, what would you most like to see for Nevada County in the future?

There are so many things I see for Nevada County's future. I would like to see reliable broadband in all homes and businesses, a robust recreation district with more community amenities, and the Mine to Pines trail built from Truckee to Nevada City. I would like to see housing built for all ages and income levels so that our young people feel like they can either stay in Nevada County or move back and have a bright future here.

What do you love most about Nevada County?

There are so many things I love about this community, but above all, I love

the people here. My experience has been that Nevada County residents are kind, generous, and supportive. When things happen, either good or bad, our community bands together to show support. I've always said that it's not government or institutions that make a community, it's the people, and that has been proven repeatedly in the many years I've lived here.

What do you think needs improvement in Nevada County?

The biggest improvement I would like to see is in our infrastructure. We need to repair our roads, provide broadband to all, and figure out a way to fund our recreational facilities. I feel that the County does the best job possible with the resources we have, but I am committed to working on these issues with greater outcomes.

Give us on fun fact about yourself.

In 1979/80 I, along with my good friend Holly Yocum, were the Miner Mascots for the Nevada Union Basketball team. It was one of the highlights of my time at Nevada Union High School.

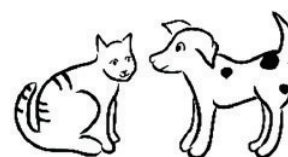
Why should people vote for you over your opponent?

I believe people should vote for me because of my experience. When I'm elected, I hit the ground running, as I am up to speed on many of the County's issues. I have the knowledge, leadership skills, and community relationships that will make me successful in the job as the next Supervisor for District 3.

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EASY AS ONE, TWO, THREE

By Lynn Wenzel

In 1972, I marched for the right to control my own body. We carried signs. We were loud. And we were angry. Then came Roe. And we relaxed, at least for a while. We took our eyes off the ball in the mistaken belief that Roe was “settled law.”

Yesterday, a young woman in her thirties said with a mystified expression on her face, “I just took it all for granted. It never occurred to me that things would change.”

Those of us, battle-scarred and wary, had often warned young women to stay alert. And now, they are shocked. Well, the antis have not rested for those 50 years—they have plotted and planned to remove the human rights of all people (except white men) and to own only for themselves the right of bodily autonomy.

The Supremes are in charge now. We understand that. We also understand that without control over our biology, we can never become fully participating members of society. They understand that too, especially those who identify as “Evangelical.” If a good woman is doing what she should, they say, she is home, having babies to add to her “quiver.” Good women find husbands and do what they’re told. They heed the warning. We do not care what you think or even IF you think. Whatever made you think you are an equal partner?! Oh, and we don’t really need abortion because... well adoption or whatever.

Thanks for the advice, Amy Coney Barrett. No problem. Easy as one, two, three. Well, giving away a child is not something to treat lightly, despite Barrett’s cavalier dismissal of the subject. Contrary to what she suggests, adoption does not allow women to “quickly move on with their lives.”

A long-term study of unplanned pregnancies co-authored by Gretchen Sisson found that when women were unable to get the abortion they wanted, only nine percent chose to give their child away. Elizabeth Spiers in



Abortion rights demonstrators rally, Saturday, May 14, 2022, on the National Mall in Washington, during protests across the country. | AP Photo/Amanda Andrade-Rhoades)

The New York Times said she felt compelled to track down her biological mother who, when she became an adult, said she was heartbroken, even four decades later. Adopted children feel a loss too, as a form of stress that has lasting effects.

In a recent issue of the *New York Times*, women who had chosen adoption wrote about giving away their children as being “wracked with guilt... for decades.” One woman said, “...after going through childbirth...you leave the hospital alone. Your body knows you have given birth and it wants you to be looking for that baby.” Another adoptive parent wrote, “For years my kids cried themselves to sleep wondering why their birth mothers ‘gave them away.’” No big deal, right Amy?

There are so many children stranded in foster care—about 437,000 in care right now in the U.S.—60,000 of whom live in California. Those numbers are likely to skyrocket as women’s access to abortion care is curtailed or prohibited completely.

What happens if you age out of foster care? After reaching the age of 18, 20% of the children become instantly homeless. They will have higher rates of behavioral and emotional problems compared with their peers. Within two to four years of leaving foster care at age 18, 40% are homeless, 40% experience drug or alcohol abuse, 51% are unemployed, and 84% become parents.

The right to a safe, legal abortion is a fundamental question of health care access that concerns women’s

physical safety, mental and emotional health, as well as their personal freedom. Conservative evangelicals who seem to be the ones driving the latest attack on women’s rights and the right to abortion come at the subject from complementarianism, the Biblical philosophy of conservative evangelicals (check out the Supremes, especially Barrett) that masculinity and femininity are ordained by God and that men and women were created to complement, or complete, each other. Complementarians believe that the gender roles found in the Bible are purposeful and meaningful distinctions and divinely ordained roles of men and women. Complementarianism

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follows Ephesians 5:21–33 as the model for the home. The husband is the head of the family. The wife has the role of nurturing her children and intentionally, willingly submitting to her husband's leadership. Along with all of this has come "purity culture" and family values based on a foundation of sexism and white supremacy.

Eugenics also plays into this philosophy. Procreative, heterosexual marriage is the single most important duty for evangelicals and must be pursued at all costs, even including physical and psychological harm to women. Eugenics, or "responsible breeding" for those who do not know, is the belief that the "unfit," i.e., the poor, the disabled, the immigrant, and the person of color—must be weeded out to ensure the population remains majority

white, able-bodied middle class, ergo, "Jews will not replace us!" (See Charlottesville, 2017) Married women are shamed for not wanting to have a "quiver full" of children, especially in circles where ideas of white decline pervade conversation.

As the Supremes are well-aware, though, "categorically eliminating a constitutional right that tens of millions of women have counted on and... more than three-quarters of Americans support upholding would incite an enormous social and political backlash."

No kidding. Before the Dobbs decision, close to 500 restrictions in one form or another were passed in the past decade, falling hardest on poor and rural women and women of color. How is that "biblical?" Just asking...

We are a secular society, whether evangelicals like it or not. As my

grandfather always used to say, "Believe what you want. Just do not try to make me believe it!" The fight for abortion rights should center on equality and liberty, as successfully done in the fight for the LGBTQIA+ rights movement. It is inconceivable, yet now legal, to tell millions of people that they are unentitled to liberty for their own bodies. Reproductive justice should encompass not only the right to have an abortion but the right to parent and the right to raise healthy, well-fed, and educated children. And the right to decide to have no children at all.

Well, now we have to hit the streets again. Because this will ultimately not be decided by the courts but by the citizens in a concerted political campaign "that harnesses public support with a message of openness and pride and a focus on women's equality and

bodily autonomy." It must include the right to end a pregnancy and the right to easy access to contraceptives as well as a focus on public policy. Success will be about "the impact of...regular people and their power to change the way we think about—and defend" our most intimate decisions.

Vigilance demands we recognize and **call out** the first steps in a great power erasure of one-half of humankind. Remember the poem by Pastor Martin Niemoller— "and then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak." Now take that to church!

Lynn Wenzel is the author of four books and too-many-to-count magazine and newspaper articles. She was also a managing editor and a book reviewer. She is currently the Director of Communications for Nevada County Citizens for Choice.

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CHRIS ENSS

Bringing history to life

By Valerie Costa

Chris Enss comes by her love of old western history honestly. An Army brat who moved often as a child, the longest place her family ever stayed was Sierra Vista, Arizona, near the historic town of Tombstone. She graduated from high school while living there, and then stayed in the southwestern state to attend the University of Arizona, where she majored in journalism and cinematography while working her way through school doing standup comedy and singing telegrams.

During one of those singing telegram assignments, it was very hot and she was dressed as a giant frog. “I don’t know why I thought I could drive in this costume with webbed hands and feet. I shoved the cab of my pickup full of balloons, put my keys in the car, and then shut the hand of the costume in my car door. I started waving at people and they thought I was an advertisement and waved back, but I was stuck,” Enss recalled. “It seemed like my every day was filled with what I was going to do for my comedy routine that night.”

After college, Enss worked in television and radio stations handling the traffic and commercials, still doing standup comedy, and then in 1989 she got married and shortly after moved to Grass Valley in 1991, when her husband got a job with a semiconductor company which was later bought out by Texas Instruments. This has been her home ever since. Shortly after she moved to the area, Enss got a job working at KNCO doing history minutes, and that’s when she started researching local history. She also created a scenic travel tape for the Forest Service that started in Nevada City and went through Downieville, Loyalton, back up to the Reno area and back to California, and you could learn about the history of the area listening to the tape while driving. It was doing research for that project where she first learned about Nancy Kelsey (Mrs.

Benjamin Kelsey), the first woman to cross the Sierra, who did so barefoot carrying a one-year-old baby on her hip. That story was what enticed Enss into learning the history of local woman.

“She was the only woman on that wagon train, and endured a lot of heartache and hardship. The strength of character of women like Nancy made me want to focus on writing about women, along with putting to rest the entire notion that history was strictly written by men to leave women out. The more I got into it, the more I realized that that notion is just silliness,” Enss opined. “A lot of the men in the west only knew prostitutes, and they weren’t going to put that in history books. You can read the journals of these men who were on the Bartleson wagon train party and what they had to say about Nancy. When there was a woman of quality they wrote about that.”

Combining her storytelling abilities and passion for history, Enss began writing books giving voice to the human side of history; particularly history of the American West. She has written 54 books since she started, nearly all about women in history. “I haven’t slept since ’72,” she joked. “I have the pleasure of being able to write about these women who have traveled all over the world and affected history. I’m jealous of them, because they got to affect history and I just get to write about it from my office.”

Enss loves to find women who truly did stand out in their own time and for all time to feature. Some examples are Isabella Bird, who was the first woman inducted into the Royal National Geographic Society, who became a world traveler and wrote the guides about traveling in China, Indonesia, and Pakistan. In her book *The Widowed Ones*, Enss writes about Elizabeth (Libbie) Custer and the women who lost their husbands at the Last Stand. Elizabeth Custer became an unofficial US ambassador who traveled around the world with a photographer.

On one trip, the pair went to Pakistan and came back with numerous photos of beheadings there. Closer to home, Enss greatly admires Ellen Clark Sergeant. “We owe her a debt of gratitude. She was able to do what she was able to do because she had a supportive husband. He loved his wife and supported her. Not all men were misogynistic cads who wanted to keep their women in slavery,” she reflected.

To help her get to the truth of historical stories, Enss has a Private Investigator’s license, which she uses when she travels to the locations where the historical events she writes about took place. Enss is currently working on a story of Kathryn Thorne Kelly, wife of Machine Gun Kelly, and she was the person who was the driving force in that gangster family. Enss has been using her PI background and FBI files to track down family members. She even located a great-granddaughter of one of the women from *The Widowed Ones*, and got to talk with her about her grandmother and get images that no one had seen before the book was published.

“I love to write about history because I want to be able to embrace history for all it was; all that was good and all that was uncomfortable, and all we might find socially unacceptable but is true. It was what happened,” Enss said. “The other thing about history, we are talking about things that we like to think of as so far in the past, but my great-grandmother wasn’t able to vote; that’s how recent that history is. We say history and we think we don’t have a connection to it, but it’s right there. It just happened.”

Her latest book, *An Open Secret: The Story of Deadwood’s Most Notorious Bordellos*, comes out next June. Prostitution came to be in Deadwood in 1876 and was outlawed in 1980; that’s 103 years of prostitution there. But it was a business that people didn’t feel as though they needed to stamp out because it brought money into the community. For a lot of women it was their only option,



Photo courtesy of Chris Enss

and Enss cautions that to think that all women hated it is erroneous. Some said they wished they had started earlier, they would have owned the entire town, she explained.

“I’ve written a lot about prostitution. I’m not advocating for people to be prostitutes, but we have a lot to thank those soiled doves for; they were the first women allowed to vote. It’s a part of our history, our present, and our future. In writing this book, I have been criticized by people saying I’m nothing more than a sex trafficker,” Enss said. “People don’t like the darker parts of our history; they want you to not mention it or tell those stories, but erasing them is dangerous. You can’t just embrace the good and throw the rest away. History isn’t always attractive or comfortable, but we can’t learn from it unless we know it and all of its complexities.”

To learn more about Chris Enss and to peruse all of the books she has written, visit chrisenss.com.

ELIZABETH MCDONALD WATSON

Soldier of the Living

By Chris Enss

“Many is the Californian living today whose mother traveled a long distance to Nevada City because she had heard that a baby could be born at Miss Watson’s spic-and-span hospital in safety.”

The Union Newspaper – April 6, 1951

The sky over North San Juan, California, on April 10, 1904, was gravel gray. Large storm clouds had formed, blotting out the ash color of the sun. Anyone caught on the main thoroughfare of the small gold mining town when the rain began to fall scurried for cover. The wheels on the horse-drawn buggy traveling fast through the downpour rolled over puddles and patches of mud before coming to a stop in front of the Bradbury Hotel. Thirty-nine-year-old Elizabeth McDonald Watson leapt out of the vehicle carrying a black, weathered medical bag and raced into the building. The Bradbury family, whom the hotel was named for, was suffering from a bacterial disease known as diphtheria. Two family members had already died from the illness and without medical attention, the others were destined for the same fate.

There weren’t any doctors in North San Juan to call on. The ailing relied on the help of the one woman in the area with nurse’s training. Elizabeth had been nursing patients for more than twenty years prior to her arrival in Nevada County. Her practical experience in medicine combined with her willingness to travel wherever her services were needed earned her the trust of everyone in the area. She read every book and article available on medicine and familiarized herself with afflictions and disorders from burns and rashes to measles and diphtheria.

Elizabeth knew from the medical journals she’d acquired in 1890 that it was discovered that serum made from the blood of immunized animals contained an “antitoxin” which, when injected, cured diphtheria. Elizabeth managed to get doses of the serum to administer to people who had the disease. The Bradbury family’s health improved after Nurse Watson gave them their shots and she stayed with them until they were fully recovered.

Born on October 13, 1865, in Durris, Kincardineshire, Scotland, to Catherine and Alexander Watson, Elizabeth never knew a time she didn’t want to be a nurse. She left home at eighteen to attend school to learn about medicine and get a degree in the field she had dreamt of since childhood. No sooner than her studies began when she was called home to help care for her mother, brothers, and her father who had become ill. Alexander died in 1896, and the following year Elizabeth traveled to the United States to be with her brother John, who was in a hospital in Detroit, Michigan. John was a 25-year-old carpenter who had contracted a disease of the spine. He passed away on January 25, 1897.

Elizabeth decided to go west after her brother’s death. She settled in eastern Idaho where she took a job teaching school at the Lemhi Indian Agency. In addition to educating children, she assisted a local physician with his practice. As a nurse in training, she continued to learn more about medicine. It reignited her passion to pursue a career in the profession.

Elizabeth made several friends while working at the agency, including Dr. Herbert Dudley and his wife and family. Both Elizabeth and Dr. Dudley left Idaho in early 1899. The doctor relocated to Nome, Alaska, and

Elizabeth moved to Butte, Montana. The two corresponded often. Dudley shared with Elizabeth that while en route to Alaska he stopped to visit a colleague in a scenic town in northern California called Nevada City. His description of the area was so complimentary she was convinced she had to see it for herself. Elizabeth traveled by train to the area in late December 1899 and arrived in Nevada City on January 2, 1900.

Elizabeth was captivated by the mining town. The beautiful Sierra mountain range that surrounded the community, the magnificent oak and pine trees that reached the sky, the quaint houses, and the generous people led her to believe she had moved to the most idyllic spot in the state. Fortunately for Elizabeth, Nevada County was in desperate need of nurses and doctors. She was called on to help tend to employees at the Empire Mine, logging companies, poultry farms, and ranches. When she wasn’t working, she was focused on the correspondence courses in nursing she was taking from the Chautauqua School in New York. She received her long-awaited diploma in 1905.

Although Elizabeth was content with working as a private nurse, she recognized the county needed a hospital and she was determined to see that residents had one. In 1910, she and another practicing nurse named Laura Mary Peterson opened the Nevada City Sanitarium. The modest medical facility had eight rooms for patients, a well-equipped operating room, a reception area, and a dining hall. The location of the sanitorium was conducive to patients requiring long periods of rest. The half-acre where the sanitarium was located featured manicured lawns, shade trees, and an abundance of flowers. As the demand grew so did

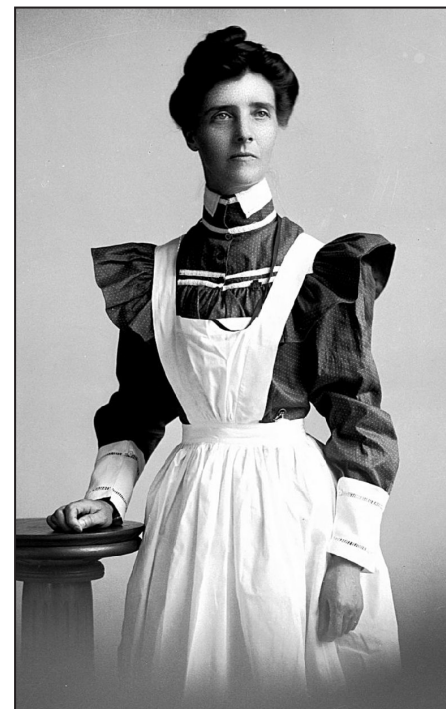


Photo courtesy of Chris Enss

the hospital, and by 1920, a new wing was added to the building and was supplied with every convenience for the sick.

For more than ten years Elizabeth’s sanitarium was the only hospital in the county. Miners injured in explosions, wranglers kicked by horses, men and women hurt in automobile accidents, expectant mothers, and citizens who contracted the flu during the epidemic of 1918 were treated at the facility. Not only did the sanitarium attract patients in a 56-mile radius, but doctors as well. Physicians attending to patients at the hospital were impressed with the efficiency in which Elizabeth ran the business and the attention paid to cleanliness.

There were many times when the hospital was filled to capacity, but that didn’t mean anyone needing help was turned away. Babies were delivered in

continued to page 13

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the hallways, and children who had to have stitches or broken bones set were tended to in Elizabeth's personal office. She was patient with those who could only pay their bill a little at a time and forgiving of those who had no money to pay at all.

The Nevada City Sanitarium closed in 1946. After 36 years in business, Elizabeth decided it was time to retire. It was estimated that approximately 3,000 children had been born at the hospital since it opened its doors. Besides births, there had been thousands of patients with ailments ranging from slight injuries and major illnesses to major surgeries. "In announcing my retirement at this time, I wish to take the opportunity of thanking on behalf of the staff and myself our many friends in Nevada and surrounding counties for their kind and loyal support," Nurse Watson told a local newspaper reporter.

Elizabeth retired from the sanitarium but continued working as a nurse at a facility that was transformed into a rest home. Among the people she cared for was her business partner, Nurse Peterson. Elizabeth's nephew Alec Watson, a veteran with the Scottish forces in France during World War I, worked for his aunt maintaining the property inside and out.

Elizabeth passed away on January 3, 1957, at her home in Nevada City. Her obituary read in part, "[she] was beloved to all for great humanitarian work and unselfish interest in the community...and its people.... Her affection for Nevada City and Nevada County...gave her a deep feeling for the needs of the people here and she kept her hospital for local patients almost exclusively."

Nurse Watson was ninety-one when she died.

This story is an excerpt from Chris Enss's forthcoming book: The Doctor Was a Lady: Women Physicians of the Old West.

Submitted by SNMHF

Sandra Barrington moved to Nevada County in 2006. Growing up "down the hill," Sandra spent time as a child and teenager coming "up the hill" to enjoy all that Nevada County has to offer. There were trips for Victorian Christmas, visits to Empire Mine, and day trips to the river that are part of her childhood memories. When the opportunity presented itself to be able to move to Nevada City and live and work in this community, the choice was easy.

While in college at Chico State, Sandra worked in the Chico State Call Center and was that student that would call you on the phone and ask you to support the university, which is how she started in the fundraising world. Sandra has done university fundraising, museum fundraising, contract grant writing, and even had a short stint in real estate before moving to Nevada City.

Now, Sandra Barrington is a Certified Fundraising Executive with more than 20 years of nonprofit development experience. Sandra has been with Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation since 2007 and is currently the Executive Director. Her specialties include major gifts, grant acquisition and management, planned giving, strategic planning, and fundraising events. Sandra has a degree in English with a certificate in Editing and Publishing from California State University, Chico. Originally striving for a career in magazine editing and publishing, Sandra realized that living in a large city and working in the for-profit world was not for her. Having a career that focused on service was more her

MOVING ON UP

Sandra Barrington the new Executive Director of Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation

mission. Growing up, Sandra was very involved in service projects through the family's church, traveling to Mexico several times to build houses, volunteering in soup kitchens and shelters, and raising guide dogs for the blind. Service is part of the culture she was raised in.

Her community involvement includes past board member and past President of Sierra Harvest, member and current President of Grass Valley Rotary, and current trustee of the Nevada City School District. She is also a graduate of the Nevada County Leadership Institute and Center for Nonprofit Leadership's first Executive Director Academy. Rotary's mission of "Service Above Self" is at the heart of what motivates Sandra to serve this community. It is about doing what is best for the greater good.

Sandra has been with Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation for 15 years because of the incredible impact that Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital has in this community as a nonprofit community hospital. Increasing access to healthcare is at the heart of everything the Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation does, and there could be no better way to serve this community than being able to provide the necessary healthcare to live and thrive in a rural area. Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation has raised millions and millions of dollars to support our local hospital including funding for the Cancer Center, the Emergency Department, Cardiology and Cardiac Rehab, Breast Cancer technology and programs, Surgery, telemedicine, Alzheimer's caregiver support and respite, and much more.

The current program that Sandra is



Sandra Barrington | Submitted photo

most proud of is the development of the Sierra Nevada Family Medicine Residency program, which was started with grant funding through the SNMH Foundation. The Residency Program was nationally accredited recently and will start matching the first two physician residents for the program in the spring. By 2025, our community will have six physician residents training in family practice. The program is in collaboration with Chapa De Indian Health and Methodist Hospital of Sacramento.

Sandra resides in Nevada City and has one daughter who is eight years old. They can often be found on walks to town for ice cream at Treats, coffee and cookies at Three Forks, at the lakes and river, snowboarding, and spending time with family.

COMMUNITY BEYOND VIOLENCE IS FOR EVERYONE

By Stephanie Fischer

“Everyone deserves to be seen, heard, and loved.”

This statement may be easy to agree with on the surface, but when you reread those words, does it truly resonate? *Everyone* deserves to be seen...heard...and loved. **Everyone knows someone** that could use a little more love in their life. It is said that being loved gives you strength and being able to love gives you courage. When someone has love in all aspects of their life, they will operate from an empowered place and can give their gifts to the world. That is what inspires me, as a woman, as a mother, and as leader in the community. I want my children to grow up strong and courageous, in a world where they are seen and understood, where they have a voice, and they are loved unconditionally for who they are. Every child and every adult deserve that. It is not a privilege; it is a basic human right. This is why Community Beyond Violence exists.

Since 1978, Community Beyond Violence (CBV) has provided services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and their families in Western Nevada County. Although our services are free and non-discriminatory, some victims in underserved populations still do not access these programs, namely the LGBTQ+ community in Nevada County. There continue to be barriers that affect the ability and willingness of victims to engage with our organization and other local resources, even though they experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at higher rates than non-LGBTQ+ individuals. A 2017 Gallup poll suggests that 4.5% of the population identifies as LGBTQ+. If we apply that percentage to Nevada County, that's roughly 4,400 residents that might identify as LGBTQ+ in our community. Last year, our agency data indicated that we only served 34



LGBTQ+ clients.

One in three people experience domestic or sexual violence in their life. There are at least two conclusions someone can draw from that statistic. First, we can estimate that a very large portion of LGBTQ+ individuals in Nevada County (approximately 1,400) are estimated to be experiencing violence and are not reaching out for services. Bias and discrimination by service providers can result in underreporting and underserving this community. One main barrier for LGBTQ+ survivors, across the state, is the fact that many domestic violence shelters only serve cis-women, and many homeless shelters provide gender binary accommodations that do not meet the needs of nonbinary and trans identifying individuals. In fact, 30% of trans-survivors report being turned away from traditional shelters because they could not be “sorted” into dormitories.

The second conclusion we can draw is that if one third of the population experiences domestic violence or

sexual assault, **everyone knows someone** who has experienced it. CBV offers crisis intervention, emergency shelter, food, transportation, clothing, individual counseling, advocacy, and accompaniment to victims of all genders and sexual orientations. However, access to safe and stable housing is of particular concern for our LGBTQ+ community. Queer individuals are twice as likely to experience homelessness in their lifetimes as cis-individuals and 40% of homeless youth ages 18-24 identify as LGBTQ+. Disparities in access to services and healthcare means that queer victims and survivors are receiving less mental and physical healthcare than non-LGBTQ+ victims, and while California has antidiscrimination laws in place, people who identify as queer receive fewer responses when inquiring about rental properties and are even quoted higher rents. As we consider the lack of housing options in our community, and how to address it, we need to ensure we are also looking at how to offer more inclusive and culturally competent

housing options and services to our LGBTQ+ population.

CBV is working to increase our outreach to our community to let you know our services are available, safe, and non-discriminatory. Our housing case managers and advocates are working diligently to provide quality, meaningful, and impactful services to clients of all identities; especially the ones who have less access to resources and support elsewhere. Staff and volunteers at CBV help others when they are at their most vulnerable, victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, to make them feel visible, to help them find their voice, and to be loved and supported. CBV is committed to promoting healthy relationships across the broad spectrum of our community to prevent and reduce domestic violence and sexual assault.

If you or someone you know is experiencing an unhealthy relationship, there is help, there is hope. **#Every1KnowsSome1**. Call the 24-hour crisis line at (530) 272-3467 or visit CBV.org.

GOING TO BAT FOR SENIORS

By Courtney Ferguson

Following a decades-old career and a recent move to Penn Valley, Leslie Lovejoy was adjusting to retirement—at least she thought she was. However, life can take surprising turns.

With an impressive background as an executive leader in healthcare, she was ready to repurpose some of her skills and serve on the board of a nonprofit agency here in Nevada County.

“My career also included being a registered and social psychologist,” she added, “and my core mission has always been to improve the quality of life for community members.”

Having read an article in The Union about Gold Country Senior Services’ need for board members, Leslie thought that it seemed like a good fit. She applied and was welcomed in July of 2021. The following April, she became the board’s president.

A few months later, everything changed when the agency suddenly was faced with the challenge of finding a new executive director. “Although much of my career in nursing has been spent advocating for those who are vulnerable, either as a case manager or as a supervisor, it was still a bit daunting when I was asked if I would take the reins and fill in, at least for now.”

She said “yes.”

“Although I’ve reported to hospital boards most of my professional life, heading a board is very different. I’m learning how to lead in a way that aligns with who I am and make the most of the talented people who support GCSS—our board members, staff, volunteers, partners, and donors.”

By stepping up to the plate, Leslie is helping to ensure that our older residents continue to receive nutritious meals, as well as winter warmth. “For many, Meals on Wheels and the Senior Firewood Program are lifelines,” she said, “and it is an honor to be part of this vital work. Making progress on our new senior center



Kitchen Manager, Kim Sewell (l) and GCSS Board President, Leslie Lovejoy, double-check the supply ready to be delivered by one of the Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers.
| Photo by Courtney Ferguson

is another important priority. For many, isolation during the pandemic has led to a decline in their physical and emotional health. Socializing is a basic human need—just as important as meals and warmth. When completed, the senior center will offer an innovative place where our older residents, their families, and the entire community can interact and thrive.

“Here I am, a senior going to bat for other seniors. While it may not be the retirement I’d imagined,” she laughed, “I’m enjoying the challenge. Life simply offered me a different option, and going with the change of plan is invigorating. I can’t think of a more worthwhile way to support the seniors we serve.”

Courtney Ferguson lived in England for 30 years and has worked with Gold Country Senior Services for over 15 years. She’s also a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to Senior Living, focusing on ways to stay active and engaged throughout maturity. She can be reached at courtneycopy@gmail.com



Music in the Mountains' Executive Director

Jenny Darlington Person

honored by the state-wide organization Association of California Symphony Orchestras

Competing against larger markets and California Institutions like the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony, Nevada County's local Music in the Mountains Executive Director was honored with the state's most prestigious award for Executive Leadership from the Association of California Symphony Orchestras (ACSO).

On Thursday, August 25, 2022, ACSO announced that Jenny Darlington-Person, Executive Director of Music in the Mountains (MIM), is the recipient of its 2022 Executive Leadership Award.

"It is an honor to be entrusted with the responsibility of co-leading one of Nevada County's oldest cultural institutions," said Ms. Darlington-Person. "I was both surprised and touched when I learned of the nomination."

The Executive Leadership Award recognizes the chief executive officer, executive director, or managing director of an ACSO member organization for extraordinary leadership in the classical music field by advancing the mission of their organization, creating a vision that inspires others, creating strategies to overcome challenges, and uniting a team to meet the demands of the changing world of classical music performance.

Music in the Mountains is a platinum-star-rated nonprofit organization that pairs world-class musical performances with a deep commitment to music education.

Tickets for all upcoming events and concerts are available at
musicinthemountains.org
or by calling the MIM box office at 530-265-6124



Mimi Simmons

CalDRE# 00871435

Mimi is now the Team Listing Broker, supported by Tammy. She works directly with Sellers from signing listing papers and reviewing Disclosure Statements to presenting and negotiating all offers, meeting the inspectors and appraisers and completing transactions by attending the Sellers signing appointment at the Title Company. Her 38 years of real estate experience, as well as her enthusiasm establishes her as the best Listing Broker in the County. Her passion sets her apart from other agents in the industry.



Holli Navo

CalDRE# 01370492

Holli is the Team's Exclusive Buyers' agent and meets with clients. Her management background, as well as her attention to detail makes her the ideal Buyers agent. She treats every client with the utmost care, whether they are buying a million dollar home or a first time Homebuyer. She also attends every inspection, reviews every document with her buyers and provides knowledgeable advice for a smooth transaction. Holli also attends every sign off with her clients at the Title Company. She is known for her attention to detail!



Tammy Andreozzi

CalDRE# 01264357

Tammy is a licensed Broker and has worked in all aspects of real estate over her 20 year history, but loves the paper trail and has been Mimi's Transaction Coordinator for 20 years. She is responsible for making sure all documents are signed by all parties and understands the legal in's and out's of a technical transaction. She also supports Holli with her Buyers and Sellers.