

I ♥ RENO

Once Upon
A Time...

Tales from Reno's
Storytellers

There Is A Place
At The Table

For Those Who Stand
Up For Community

Allison Versus the Big "C"

HOW DO YOU MEASURE
PERFECTION?
ONE SIP AT A TIME.



VODKA | GIN | WHISKEY | TASTINGS & TOURS

Open Saturdays Noon-4pm

FREYRANCH.COM | 775.423.4000 | FALLON NV



A Love Note from the Publisher

Recently, I was asked why I produce this magazine. The question wasn't posed with malice, so much as with curiosity about why print (rather than digital) and why in Reno, as there surely must be more lucrative markets to publish a magazine. I must admit, the question stopped me in my tracks and made me take pause, followed by some serious navel gazing. Was this little venture of mine a lost cause or just a distraction? After all, there are plenty of other magazines in town whose publishers also really love this place and want to spread the love throughout. Do we really need another one? After much contemplation and without any hesitation, I am confident, that *I Love Reno* needs to exist, flourish, and thrive within our community. With this being said, taking a page from Reno's history of reinventing and redefining itself, this issue marks a shift in a new direction.

Whenever I describe the things that make Reno so special I think how this place appeals to all five senses: the scenery is so gorgeous that it makes me wish I knew my way around a camera better because I want to capture it all and share it with anyone who doesn't know how beautiful Northern Nevada is; I also wish I could bottle the fragile yet intoxicating scent of the blooming trees and flowers; the food scene is on par with some of the much larger markets; the sound of silence at night juxtaposed with the chirping birds in the morning is like discovering paradise; and then of course there is this magical thing, it happens here every minute of every day - ordinary people reach out and touch other people's lives. They connect, they listen, they lend a hand, and more often than not they reach into their own pocket and make a difference.

I remember when I immigrated to the U.S. from Europe over two decades ago. One of the most profound differences I felt living in Los Angeles was the sense of anonymity and indifference its residents exhibited towards each other. I remember thinking that if I were to face-plant on the sidewalk, or otherwise have some medical emergency that required human interaction, the people



around me would just step over or walk around me and proceed with their clearly very busy and important days. Fast forward to a few years ago when I was still relatively new to Reno: I was stopped at a red light on Wells Avenue and witnessed an older, disheveled man fall off the curb and hit his head on the ground. Within a few seconds not one, but two vehicles pulled over, the drivers got out of their cars and proceeded to assist this man, who obviously needed medical attention. This is the fundamental difference between our community and all others I have lived in. People in Reno simply show that they care, plain and simple. Thus, the path of *I Love Reno* is clear, we are the magazine with a heart - literally and figuratively. We are socially conscious and give voice to the organizations and individuals who are the unsung heroes of our community, who help those who are often unheard at all. The businesses who support us are enabling us to be true to our mission and are thus helping to do what Reno does best, connect. For this, they have our infinite gratitude. In addition to functioning as a philanthropy forum, we will continue to celebrate the doers and innovators in our community. There is no shortage of them, which makes my job as the publisher both challenging (I have to narrow the scope otherwise it would be a book, not a magazine) and exciting. Also, each issue will feature personal stories. Everyone we come in contact with has one. Some

I ♥ RENO

The Love Brigade

PUBLISHER
Irene Voronel

CHIEF RELATIONSHIP OFFICER
Raquel Riggle

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Zoran Mandic

Contributing Writers

Rachel Gatusso
Deidre Kenelly
Abbey Kent
Gwen Bourne
Margaret Stewart
Natasha Bourlin
Mike Draper
Jen Eastwood
Courtney Meredith
Jackie Shelton
Allison List

Publisher

Picon Punch Press
321 S. Arlington Ave, Reno 89501
www.ilovereno.com

To contribute to I ♥ Reno or to advertise please call **775-525-1345** or email connect@ILoveReno.com



POWERED BY
Picon
Punch
Press



stories are funny, others are devastating, still others make us simply stop and think. Perhaps after reading this issue you will feel like sharing a story or two with us? We would be honored.

From the heart,
Irene Voronel

I ♥ RENO RADIO HOUR

**THE MAGAZINE IS
QUARTERLY, BUT THE
SHOW IS WEEKLY.**

To get a dose of I Love Reno,
Tune in to 107.3 on Sundays at
10AM to hear interesting and
exciting stories about the town
we call home.

Facing Tragedy as a Family

How the Reno Ronald McDonald House® Helped the Fosters Face the Road to Recovery

By Rachel Gattuso

On Monday, February 8, as Reno Tahoe residents recovered from Super Bowl Sunday, 15-year-old Jillian Foster and the members of the Davis High School ski race team took to the fresh powder at Boreal Mountain Resort. Jillian's father and step-mother, Robert Foster and Christy Aguirre-Foster, were at their Davis, California, home when they learned she'd been in an accident on the slopes. Thinking it was just a broken bone, Robert left for Reno alone to retrieve her. But later that night, Christy got a phone call.

"Bobby was sobbing uncontrollably, telling me Jillian severed her spinal cord and broke her back," said Christy. In fact, Jillian had suffered a T11-T12 spinal cord injury and her back was out of alignment by a forty degree angle. The accident at Boreal left her paralyzed from the waist down.

In shock, Christy gathered items from their home, including a change of clothes for Robert but not herself. *"I grabbed [Robert's] toiletry case but forgot so many personal items like my toothbrush,"* Christy remembers. *"I had no idea what to bring for Jillian."*

Christy drove the two and a half hours from Davis, California, to Reno that night in tears, recalling Jillian's recent fifth place recognition at a ski race. *"I couldn't stop thinking of how this beautiful little girl I had known since age four was about to face her sixteenth birthday unable to walk and now confined to a wheelchair,"* said Christy. *"Why had this happened, why to Jillian?"*



Jillian Foster before her ski accident

Renown Children's Hospital was closest to Boreal and gave Jillian the best option for immediate attention but it meant the Fosters were separated from their typical resources and needed a place to stay.

"The moment someone mentioned we had access to the Ronald McDonald House I broke down," said Christy.

She's talking about a moderately-sized home painted in shades of blue, with a red and white heart resting on its front eaves tucked behind Renown

Health's main parking garage. For nearly thirty years it has served as a home-away-from-home for families just like the Fosters, families who dealing with the life-altering circumstances of their child's accident, illness or medical condition. The home is known affectionately around the region as the Reno Ronald McDonald House®, the flagship program of five total programs funded by Ronald McDonald House Charities® Northern Nevada, a local non-profit that keeps families close during their greatest times of need.



A New Experience: The Receiving End of Charity

Jillian's traumatic accident turned the Foster's entire world upside down. Big questions were posed to Christy and Robert and difficult decisions needed to be made. With Jillian experiencing a constant rotation of medical professionals, friends and supporters who trekked from Davis, the moments that Robert and Christy had to themselves were heavy with emotion.

"There were so many times Robert and I went to our room at the House and just sobbed together," she said. "We would fall asleep crying about the reality of our new family situation, but we at least had complete privacy to talk about everything and reflect on how we were going to deal with our new situation. We had to get our emotions out so we could remain more positive for her. Neither of us could eat for days but when we were finally ready, there was a homemade meal ready for us. I was able to do laundry as we didn't have enough change of clothes. It seemed like everything we needed was right there in the house. We could just focus on getting back to our Jillian."

While they stayed at the House, the Fosters were able to take advantage of the community's generosity in many ways. They ate meals prepared by volunteers of the Chef Program, where civic groups, companies, and families come in to the House to cook so guests can eliminate one more question from their list of worries: where will the next meal come from? They

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

"When I think I'm having a bad day, I just take a stroll around work," said Marty Ozer, executive director of Ronald McDonald House Charities® Northern Nevada. "I'm quickly reminded that I've never had a bad day in my life compared to what our guests are dealing with."

The Reno Ronald McDonald House® houses families who live more than 30 miles outside of Reno and Sparks, asking only a \$10 donation per night. But they've never turned a family away for an inability to pay. As Marty states, that's where donors come in.

"Local hotels are affordable for a handful of nights, but many of our families are here for weeks," said Marty. "Paying for a room for such a long period becomes a second financial mountain to climb, on top of the almost-certain medical bills to follow."

Though the Fosters were in a daze for the first few days, they quickly realized the power of staying in a quiet environment so close to their daughter's room.

"It would have been terrible if we were not close to Jillian," said Christy. "She needed to know how much everyone loves her and wants her to pull through this. We didn't know how she would cope with this tragedy. The fact that we could just take a quick shower, grab clothes and go back directly to Jillian's room in the PICU meant the world to us. We had to be available whenever the doctors and nurses needed to communicate with us. We needed to be with Jillian to make sure she knew we'd face this as a family."



Wine much?

By Raquel Riggle



for your special occasions: weddings, corporate gatherings, etc; but also provides you with a personalized wine tasting experience in many of California's distinct wineries. Lynn Marie Kremers operates LMK Wine Concierge Services from her quaint office in the McCarran Mansion. A planner by nature, Lynn Marie enjoys helping people learn about wine by organizing spectacular "wine-cations" to Northern California Wineries. When you hire LMK, be prepared to experience wine tasting like never before. Everything from lodging, to private tours and tastings, to restaurant reservations, as well as other non-wine tasting activities such as golfing, fishing, and spa visits will be arranged by LMK. Whether you are a seasoned wine-country enthusiast or are looking for your first experience in the vineyard you are sure to have an extraordinary adventure when you work with LMK.

For those who love great wine and are looking to experience something truly different, LMK who is also an ambassador for Rarecat wines, is able to introduce you to this exclusive Napa winery which is home to some of the most remarkable

wines. The name "Rarecat" refers to an elusive one-of-a-kind creature who touches others in a quiet way. The winery experience and the wines follow suit to this definition. For example, the Audrey Club, Rarecat's wine club, is inspired by Audrey Hepburn. Her grace, elegance, charm, and generosity made her a rare beauty. Membership to the Audrey Club begins with the purchase of a case of Rarecat Cabernet Sauvignon and privileges include invitations to private events in winery owner's home in St. Helena as well as special pricing for visits to Chateau de Amis in St. Emilion. The proprietor, Sharon Kazan Harris believes that the true importance of wine is not only the beauty one finds in the glass but the conversations and friendships one develops while sharing something special.

So, go on, pour yourself a glass and consider the new adventures you can have exploring some gorgeous vineyards not too far from home. Cheers!

LMK Wine Concierge Services:
401 Court Street. 775-815-8688.
LMKWineConciergeServices.com

Few things in life compare to a great glass of wine paired with the perfect dish. However, not everyone who enjoys wine is a connoisseur. Usually casual wine drinkers simply know what type of wine they like: Merlot, Cabernet, Riesling, Chardonnay – but they don't know why and often are afraid to step outside the comfort zone. Luckily for everyone who falls into this category there is a local wine enthusiast who helps to not only select wines

4th Annual Community YARD SALE
of Old Southwest
Saturday, June 4th, 8 AM - Noon

Join our 4th annual community yard sale. Finish up your spring cleaning with a bang!
Please call with questions or for more information.

HOME NV
REAL ESTATE SERVICES

HOW DOES IT WORK?
What you do:
Step 1: Contact our office to confirm your participation in the community yard sale by May 18th.
Step 2: Put the items you want to sell out on your front yard or driveway by 8 am on June 4th.
What we do:
Step 1: Coordinate the yard sale with Old Southwest participants.
Step 2: Advertise and promote the event.
Step 3: Place yard sale signs navigating people to your sale.

Home NV Ltd.
Real Estate Services
321 S. Arlington Ave
Reno, Nevada 89501

Call, email or sign up today to have your home included.
Call: (775) 333-8900 • Email: info@HomeNV.net • Sign up: www.HomeNV.net

FRESH BEGINNINGS

Make Room for *Possibilities*



New **FRIENDS & ADVENTURES** Await

SPRING SPECIAL

INDEPENDENT LIVING 939-1144sf
TWO BED TWO BATH
MONTHLY RENT **REDUCED BY \$500**



MorningStar

SENIOR LIVING
of SPARKS



Living Room



Back Garden



Game Room

2360 Wingfield Hills Road | **775.626.5665** | MorningStarSeniorLiving.com

Help Raise the River

By Deidre Kennelly

Keept Truckee Meadows Beautiful (KTMB), a local nonprofit dedicated to creating a cleaner, more beautiful region since 1989, will be holding its inaugural Raise the River fundraising event August 18, 2016. This unique event presented by Mark Estee Events, pairs local food and drinks to all five senses creating a sensory experience. Guests will enjoy an evening in KTMB's Sensory Garden at Idlewild Park exploring their senses at the Taste, Touch, Sight, Smell and Sound tents. Each tent station will offer amazing food by Mark Estee Events, local craft drinks, and a unique sensory experience that is sure to bring surprises. Throughout the evening, guests will be treated to excellent live music and other fun entertainment by local performers. Proceeds will support KTMB's beautification and education programs, including their efforts to protect the Truckee River for generations to come. Tickets are on sale now at ktmb.org!



KTMB volunteers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

also leveraged the Ronald McDonald Family Room®, a small room of refuge located on the fourth floor of Renown Children's Hospital, just outside the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). For days, Jillian's support network took turns rotating from the Family Room to her hospital bedside.

But it was one item in particular that reminded Christy that anyone can find themselves on the receiving end of charity.

"One afternoon when I went to do laundry I noticed a basket full of knitted items with a note, 'If there is something here you would like, please help yourself,'" said Christy. *"I found a beautiful brown and blue scarf I needed as it was cold outside. In that moment, I realized I was on the receiving end of charity. This is a new experience as I'm used to helping others through my career. The ladies in our knitting club had just knitted 1600 red hats for preemies. I now fully understand how important the work*

our community does to help those in need."

"This time I was one of those people, a complete stranger in desperate need of a warm scarf and the reassurance that people out there care about our family."

In March, Jillian was transferred closer to home to Sacramento Shriners', where her family has begun to renovate their home to accommodate her new wheelchair. Christy and Robert feel as though she has been the strongest member of the family throughout the entire ordeal, and there is no stopping her.

"She's already talking about getting on a sit-ski and being the administrative assistant to her ski coach next year."

And while they've headed home to begin the journey of adjusting to an altered life, they have not forgotten how the Biggest Little City, and the supporters who fund the Reno

Ronald McDonald House®, provided hospitality in a difficult time.

"With all my heart, I believe the House allowed us to deal with the harsh reality that our beautiful daughter will use a wheelchair for the rest of her life," said Christy. *"In our moments of sorrow, the kindness and compassion showed to us helped us gather strength to move forward. I will never forget how they helped our family face the biggest challenge of our lives thus far."*

Ronald McDonald House Charities® Northern Nevada is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization that seeks to create and support programs that directly improve the health, education and well-being of children and families. Each year it is tasked with raising more than 90% of its annual funding directly from the local Reno, Sparks and Tahoe communities. To learn more about how you can help families like the Fosters, visit www.rmhc-reno.org.

OVER 7,000 SQUARE FEET OF
L U X U R Y

OFFERED AT \$1,715,400



- Spectacular views of downtown and Mt. Rose
- Gated community of exclusive homes
- Moments to Wolf Run Golf Course
- 6 master bedrooms including one executive master suite
- Sweeping open floorplan
- Spacious loft bonus room plumbed for wet bar
- Top of the line kitchen appliances
- 2 dishwashers and 2 refrigerators
- 3 sets of washers and dryers
- Large open spaces inside and out. Endless entertainment possibilities!



IRENE VORONEL, MBA
Broker/Owner/Realtor



RAQUEL RIGGLE
Realtor



GREG PROUGH
Realtor/SFR/CDPE/REO/BPO



NATHAN PROUGH
Realtor

PROUDLY LISTED BY



321 S. Arlington Ave, Reno NV 89501
775-333-8900 • www.HomeNV.net

One Kernel at a Time



By Abbey Kent

Argan oil is produced from kernels of the Argan tree (*Argania spinosa* L.) and has been a hidden secret ingredient used for culinary and cosmetic purposes in some parts of the world for centuries. The secret is out and there has been much buzz about the beneficial properties of Argan oil. Some research suggests comparable heart-health benefits comparable to olive oil. Argan oil's nutrient-rich composition, which includes omega-6 linoleic fatty acid has been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties. Companies using Argan oil as a key ingredient in their cosmetic products tout the oil's ability to "fight signs of aging" and "protect skin from free-radical damage."

For generations, the hard work of extracting oil from the nut of the Argan tree has been performed by Berber women, the indigenous people of North Africa, many of whom live in Morocco's Argan region. The work is extremely labor intensive. It can take one woman up to eight hours to crack the nuts for one liter of oil. This work provides the women with an opportunity for social and economic freedom that they would not otherwise have.

A Berber Women's Cooperative Production Association in Morocco has partnered with Zayna Worldwide,

headquartered in Reno, to provide 100% organic Argan oil to be distributed through various channels. The goal of the partnership is twofold: to support the Berber Women's Association by providing them with a sustainable living wage, education, and healthcare while delivering the much sought after organic oil from the Argan tree to the people all over the world.

To learn more about Argan oil produced by the Berber Women's Cooperative and distributed by Zayna Worldwide LLC please visit www.zaynabeauty.com or Call: 775-440-0974



Into the Woods

By Gwen Bourne
Photos by: Great Basin Institute

Since 2010, when the Great Basin Institute entered into a partnership with Washoe County and the US Forest Service to operate the new Galena Creek Visitor Center, we have capitalized on the unique natural environment of Galena Creek, providing quality outdoor, nature-based education to over 22,000 local youth, from preschool to high school. Collectively known as *Great Basin Naturalists at Galena*, our programs have been recognized with a Nevada Recreation and Park Society Program Excellence Award. Community support for science education in the outdoors has been extremely positive, as reflected in Nell J. Redfield Foundation's multi-year support of the *Scholarships for Nature Discovery*

program, and Community support has come from the Community Foundation of Western Nevada, the Pennington Foundation, the Great Basin Institute at *Galena's* Community Board, and individual community donors. This support has provided full tuition scholarships to local youth, many of whom had never ventured into the outdoors for such an extended period of time. Our programs are serving the community, increasing diversity in our outdoor classrooms, and enriching the collective youth and community experience in our region.

This July will mark the sixth-year anniversary of the Galena Creek Visitor Center, and we have much to celebrate!

When the Great Basin Institute, U.S. Forest Service, Washoe County and community members convened for strategic planning, the resounding message was that we were to be unique. While we function very much as a traditional Visitor Center, we have found our "niche," and it turns out that niche rests with the bugs in the dirt, the birds in the trees, and everything in between—we connect our community with nature.

Our community gains experiential connection with the beautiful Humboldt Toiyabe forest through weekly Saturday guided hikes, educational presentations each month, family Friday campfires, and exhibits in the visitor center. You may sign up for the monthly newsletter online at www.GalenaCreekVisitorCenter.org to be in the loop with events and news.

Great Basin Exploration Summer Camp 2016 begins with weekly day and residential camps on June 13 through the first week of August. In addition to the 8-12 year old camp, we offer a Teen Science and Service Learning Camp, where teens spend time on public lands with researchers and land managers. Teens will go on extended day field trips and overnight adventures to area ecosystems, spend a day at Lake Tahoe, and gain leadership experience.

Please call 775-849-4948 for more information or visit the website at www.GalenaCreekVisitorCenter.org.



You never know when you might find yourself under the rainbow during the weekly guided hikes offered through the visitor center

There Is A Place At The Table For Those Who Stand Up For Community

By Margaret Stewart



their private foundation into a donor advised fund at the Community Foundation in the future.

Not content to just recommend grants from the charitable fund, Beth gives her considerable energy and precious time to support local nonprofit organizations serving youth.

Philanthropy is a family value

Beth became aware of the specific problems facing “unattached” young adults as she was growing up. Jan Monroe, a business owner, frequently

hired employees from this population to lend them a hand. When the family moved to Reno they established the V.I.P.S. life and career coaching program with the Reno Rodeo Foundation. “My mom and I taught classes to and casually mentored aging-out-foster-youth. Over time we grew close to this population in Reno.” As the Community Foundation Initiative focused on homeless youth it became apparent that this population had no central place to turn to for important services, comfort off the streets, or a listening ear. Community activist and advocate for young people, Lynette Eddy, decided to open a drop-in center.

Elizabeth (Beth) Schuler not only stands up for community; she dives “all in” into the causes she cares about.

Schuler is a Trustee and fund advisor with the Community Foundation of Western Nevada. In this capacity she is a driving force on the Community Foundation Initiatives Steering committee. Her passion and that of her late mother, Jan Monroe, is helping adolescents and young adults without family.

The Community Foundation of Western Nevada is a public charitable foundation that serves families and businesses in our area. Donors are drawn to work with the Community Foundation in part because it accepts appreciated property and complicated charitable gifts to establish charitable donor advised funds or scholarships. Beth’s family is planning to sunset



L.toR. Jan and Chuck Monroe Tristan, Mike, Trevor, Beth and Tasha Schuler with horse, Rosie.



Together is Better

Working through the Community Foundation, Beth collaborated with other donors and volunteers to make things happen. Beth and her family were one of the first major financial supporters of the Eddy House YOUth Resource Center (The YOU). Beth guided Community Foundation fundholders on tours of The YOU and talked about the needs The YOU filled. Her example and enthusiasm for the project inspired more grants from Community Foundation fundholders. Located on East 6th Street, The YOU offers showers, a computer lab, simple food and place to get off the streets for a few hours. Service providers offering health, job search, education and housing information are available. There is a social worker on staff.

Beth and Mike take their community commitment personally

The Schulers donated furniture from their home, and helped move the staff into the Center. Beth donates her accounting and fundraising development skills to this venture. She volunteers countless hours at The YOU and has an office set up in the building. Mike works on repairing and remodeling the facility.

Beth exemplifies the spirit of community. She stands up for those who need her, and she stands with the Community Foundation, because she knows that it is by working together in collaboration that our region becomes strong.

Mentor Match Website Goes Live

The Community Foundation initiative to help homeless youth in Reno and Sparks identified that this population had few trusted adults in their lives to learn from or talk with. They lack examples of success, of problem solving, or future planning. The Community Foundation learned that local organizations that encourage and offer mentoring programs are critically short of volunteer mentors, especially men. Boys

were being turned away because waiting lists were simply too long to feasibly hope for a match.

After the Drop-In Center opened, Beth encouraged the the Community Foundation Initiative staff to focus on increasing volunteer mentor matches. Potential mentors are wary of the time commitment, unaware that there are programs that can fit their schedule. Staff at the Community Foundation researched available mentor programs and were surprised by the variety of guided mentorships available for volunteers. Using the web dating introduction example the Community Foundation has created www.nevadamentors.org



Omero and his Big Brother Ross are matched through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada.

Looking for a mentor program?

You can find ways to help mentoring one-to-one after school one to two hours a week. If you are nervous about working by yourself, you can join group that meets every other weekend for an activity. You can even help a child by reading with them one-on-one each week at school. Mentor programs featured on the site help teens with potential to enter college, children through faith-based programs and long established programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters. There is even a method of contacting other volunteer mentors for questions and support.

"Even when I failed, they didn't give up on me—heck, they reached out to me even when I wasn't reaching out to them. They've helped me learn about working, get a job, create a resume and budget and keep going with my life." - Rosean

www.nevadamentors.org

To learn more about the Community Foundation of Western Nevada, please visit www.NevadaFund.org or call 333-5499.

Once Upon A Time... Tales from Reno's Storytellers

In recent years there has been a ton of buzz about Reno. Not just in certain circles but in general, Reno is on the radar as one of the "it" spots. The stories shared with media outside the city limits has been one of progress, growth, and momentum. It's been fun telling friends and family about more flights coming in and out of the Reno/Tahoe Airport, all of the new companies moving to town, and the amazing gastro scene rivaling that of major foodie epicenters around the country, but we were guessing the story hasn't always been as fun or as easy to tell. We turned to our PR community and asked if they would like chime in on this topic. Below are the responses we received from some of Reno's proudest storytellers. It seems that it's a great time to be in PR these days!

We Are Scrappy And Bold And Thick-skinned

By Natasha Bourlin



Reno has been my home since I was very young, but originally being from Las Vegas, we used to travel here to visit friends and family about every other month. So I grew up seeing both sides of our Silver State, and I distinctly remember thinking - "grass is always greener" philosophy or not - that Vegas was by far the more exciting and glamorous part.

Living in suburban Reno, it seemed hours away from any sort of civilization at that point. What is now one of the swankier areas of Reno, was once simply remote ranchland. My mother would have to call my grade school and tell them I'd be late because the Callahan's cows had gotten out again and were grazing in our yard, so we couldn't get out of the driveway. Also, back then, you befriended anyone your age who lived near you just to have someone to play with. And there was not much for children to do in town, but our imaginations were powerful and we kept entertained by riding bikes, creating forts and—eventually—Atari 2600.

Upon entering teenage-hood, there was REALLLLLLLY nothing to do; if you weren't 21 but had a rebellious streak, you essentially wreaked havoc on the town in a variety of ways (never harming anyone, of course), visiting your friends in bands who practiced in warehouses deep in Sparks, or sat for countless hours at the Pneumatic Diner or Deux Gros Nez philosophizing. Or - if you were interested in debate like I was - you'd often attend public forums or political functions to see how far you could push the envelope,

argument-wise. Because as teenagers, we knew it all!

When we traveled, I wasn't from Reno, I was from... Lake Tahoe. Vegas. Anywhere the person you were speaking to may actually know existed.

Everywhere seemed more interesting than Reno. And nearly everyone who grew up here had grandiose plans for their departure as soon as they were of legal age. Some left and came back (the Reno boomerang effect), some left for good.

However, these days it's an exciting time to be here—the community is evolving monthly, it seems, with new and interesting bits of culture infusing this once "good ol' boy" run town. Now, college students are coming here by choice, not by financial necessity being Nevadans, and the message is slowly trickling out there: Reno is the underground "hip" place to be anymore.

For years, people associated not just Reno but Nevada with vices. In northern Nevada, we were "number one in all things bad" for decades. Want to drink all night, then get a cheap room and meal? Cross over the county line and indulge another nefarious vice? We've got you covered. And we haven't entirely changed that, which is in fact part of who we are as a society. We're scrappy and bold and thick-skinned. But who outside of this region understands or values that? Growing up there were many people who had never left the county, much less the state. But there were also many

immigrants who brought their culture, their palate, their artistic ideals to the region. Most notably the substantial Italian and Basque populations, but certainly many others. Also, we have the pioneers, the miners, the truly rugged people who cascaded through Reno on their way to other parts of the state or country that added a distinctive flavor to this town from its beginnings.

When entering into the PR industry, I was working for local special events that had national and international appeal. So it was fun and exhilarating to relay stories to people outside of our region that were surprising to them. "Really, all that happens in Reno?" Indeed.

Upon entering the agency world, I worked for a firm based in northern California that had many well-known clients near Reno, but not within the town. So frankly the people I worked with across the country, and even world, were flabbergasted when they learned where I was based—while pitching international-caliber destinations to them. And it was fun to tell them why I was based here. There's an airport 12 minutes from my house, some of the most beautiful outdoors on the planet practically outside my door, world-class cuisine and people who are friendly and warm everywhere I go. Why wouldn't I live here??

Change is great and ever present, however one thing I would hate to see change in this community is our fortitude. Our resiliency and pride are very strong, and I hope it stays this way.

Natasha Bourlin is the Public Relations Partner at Biggest Little Group.

Grit and Moxie

By Mike Draper

Reno has changed immensely since I started my career many years ago and, as such, it's dramatically changed how I represent clients and the region. When I started out in public relations, the stories I pitched were geared more towards the novelty and spectacle of various facets of our region. Now,



the most successful media pitches encompass various aspects of the quality of life in our community, with individual clients only a piece of a much larger story. I was born and raised in Reno and I have always been proud of it. This town has significantly grappled with an identity crisis over the past several years that a clever ad campaign or inspirational slogan was never going to fix. Our city has always had its own compelling story based on history and region. But, thanks to a shift in collective attitude – an overwhelming sense of pride – in the last several years, our community believes in its story and hangs a lantern on its story, rather than shy away from it. This new attitude brings out the best in individual businesses and professionals and this makes for a much more attractive narrative and draw for those living outside of our region. I do believe that we still have a ways to go. I think as we progress and evolve and become more comfortable in the uniqueness of Reno, there are still pockets of collective insecurity and sometimes it feels our region is more accepting of the failures of businesses, industries and individuals than we are in the success of those businesses, industries and individuals. I think as northern Nevadans continue to become more comfortable with what Reno is and isn't we'll be able to more fully support success than occasionally relish in failure. Looking forward, I get concerned that, in its excitement and anxiousness to be what we aspire to be, the community might get ahead of itself and not adequately address the foundation – education, infrastructure, community issues (homelessness) – that's needed for long term prosperity. Reno is a unique mix of old and new, of history and progress, of grit and moxie. We're cool dive bars and amazing, modern restaurants,

passionate and dedicated individuals who have been here for generations and talented transplants who have come because they believe Reno is a great place to live, work and play and they're anxious to add to that. If we, as a community continue to embrace this diversity and contrast, we'll continue to have an exciting story that will appeal to the rest of the world.

Mike Draper is the Senior Vice President at Argentum Partners

Reno was cool, before Reno was cool

By Jen Eastwood



I was born and raised in Reno and was never one of those people who just couldn't wait to get out. I've always loved my town and have been its champion and staunch defender for as long as I can remember. I always felt that those who knocked it, just hadn't discovered all the cool things I had. Because Reno was cool, before Reno was cool. There were incredible restaurants before Campo opened, you could bar hop and find funky shops on S. Virginia before it was Midtown, you could float the Truckee long before the kayak park was built and businesses were doing business in Nevada before Tesla even existed.

Of course, all those things and numerous others have helped put Reno on the map. So I find that the telling of Reno's story hasn't changed really as much as the reception of it has. It's

easier to tell Reno's story because it's so much more openly received. There are more and more people that make associations with the Reno I know versus the palm-tree laden city of Reno 911.

The challenge in the past was getting journalists to understand that it wasn't spin when we were pitching Reno's vibrant downtown corridor with a robust food and drink scene, incredible nightlife and entertainment options, a world-class kayak park steps from the casinos, countless museums, galleries and theaters and a festivals and events calendar that could rival any city. We weren't embellishing when we said you could ski in the morning and golf in the afternoon. And it wasn't hyperbole to say that we have one of the most comprehensive arts festivals in the country each July with Artown. The challenge was getting writers here. The easy part was letting Reno shine once they were.

Of course, it's also easy to give someone the highlight reel over a few days. Reno is fun and quirky but it also has a seedy side. I personally like that about Reno. I like the characters, the history, the authenticity. I think we, as a community, have tried for so long to prop Reno up, to show only its best side and to gloss over everything else, that anytime Reno is shown or mentioned in a less than flattering light, we freak out. We need to get over it and not be so darned uptight. If people are going to be loud and proud about Reno, they're going to need to embrace the less-than-perfect part of it too.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't strive to make Reno a better place. This town is so full of creators, and innovators and doers who are constantly making our community better. Reno's future is bright and there are great things on the horizon. Let's just cut Reno some slack along the way.

All this being said, I would regret Reno being too polished, too sanitized, too "perfect." And I would regret Reno being the next Austin, Portland or fill in the blank city. I hope Reno can continue to be the best version of itself while retaining its gritty authenticity.

Jen Eastwood is the Director of Public Relations at the Bauserman Group

Reno-proud

By Courtney Meredith



Over the years I have had the privilege to work with the revitalization efforts of many of the growing districts and sections of the city that were once viewed as unsafe or unapproachable. My firm's mission has been to tell the story of the many small businesses, family-owned companies and non-profit organizations working hard to succeed in Nevada. In the last five or so years this story has changed significantly as we have seen the induction of many new businesses, an active Riverwalk, a vibrant culinary scene, a variety of options in entertainment and really the addition of new innovative startup companies who are now proudly calling these vibrant neighborhoods home. In the past it was incredibly difficult to grab the attention of tourism based publications, bloggers or outside media and have them feature the downtown corridor, Riverwalk District and even the city's new MidTown area. The media really struggled with seeing Reno as having newsworthy establishments. Reporters would drive through and only see the outer layer of blight or buildings being rehabilitated, so as a marketing and PR firm, we have had to do a lot of handholding, which included guided tours to really show how the city is progressing. The story we are telling now is that we have turned ourselves out of the recession and are moving full steam ahead; there in itself is the true gem, a community who has come together to

increase civic pride and enhance the brand of a city as a whole. Universally businesses owners are excited to call this area home and the media is proud to support them.

The most difficult part of what we have had to do was actually educating our own community on the new and exciting changes happening in the area. To some degree the greater population does not always see these new changes and we want to make sure they do. We want our community to not only be Reno-proud but we want them to be Nevada-proud, this is a tight-knit community and word-of-mouth still has great weight. The more we support our local establishments, events and neighborhoods the more these stories have real value.

Over the last few years telling the Reno story has become increasingly easier, and I can say that many of my peers are very pleased in the direction it's going. We like that we can collaborate more and we are not jumping hurdles to make ourselves known. Our clients are working harder than ever to create better products that are comparable to larger markets and that the quality has greatly enhanced. We are creating organic, thoughtful content that journalists want to write about.

I believe that Reno will always be changing, we have a lot of areas that still need some help, but we are making small steps of impact month to month. I want to think that what we are ultimately creating is the next generation of Nevadans who love to call this place home, who are enrolling in our University, staying here to gain employment, and helping to contribute to this great city.

If there is one thing I would hate to see change in Reno, it would be the nostalgic areas and establishments that have added so much character to our city. I think we should continue to embrace our quirkiness and definitely cherish our past.

Courtney Meredith is the co-owner of Design on Edge and the co-author of Reno's Riverwalk District (Images of America Series)

We deserve nice things

By Jackie Shelton



I've lived in Northern Nevada my entire life and it feels like I've been defending Reno for as long as I can remember, including much of my professional career. However, this has changed.

I love Reno and the fact that you can see theater-goers in jeans and cowboy boots mingling with their friends in velvet gowns. It makes me happy that people feel comfortable being who they are and that Reno's quirkiness allows for that. But that hasn't always been the case.

Growing up, whenever I would travel out of state I would say I was from Sparks. Though technically true, it

also helped me avoid questions about how much time I spent gambling and looking at hookers. Back then, out-of-staters didn't understand teenagers weren't allowed to gamble or visit bordellos.

Fast forward a few years to 1995 when the Pioneer Center introduced our area to "Broadway Comes to Reno," and I got to do the marketing for the series. I had a hard time convincing my friends, let alone the general public, that it was the same touring show they would get to see in Seattle or Los Angeles. Why? Because Renoites have (had?) a bit of an inferiority complex and we didn't believe that we deserved nice things. In February 2016, I went to see "Book of Mormon" in downtown Reno, an event that sold out the day it went on sale. It was incredibly rewarding seeing that same Pioneer Center packed to the brim.

In 1997 I wrote a cover story for *Comstock's Business Magazine* about the downtown Riverwalk, the Century Riverside and the whitewater park being planned under the guidance of then-mayor Jeff Griffin. During my interviews, and after the story was published, I was bombarded with negativity. "Why would they build a movie theater down there?" "Why did the city invest all that money in the Riverwalk?" "Nobody is going to actually kayak there." The theme throughout all these comments? "Residents will not go downtown, so why are we even trying?" Have you tried finding a parking space in the Riverwalk area lately?

In 2004, my team and I started *RLife* and *Family Pulse* magazines. I can't tell you how many times I heard, "Your magazines are really great... for Reno." We had and still have incredible talent in this community - writers, graphic designers, photographers, illustrators - and many of them were contributing to our publications. The magazines were really great... for anywhere. Today we have amazing local magazines and my guess is that their publishers aren't hearing the "for Reno" comment quite as often as we did.

Our community has worked hard to build Reno up to a place that we can all be proud of, in every way. Midtown business owners took a somewhat sketchy area and turned it in to an artistic treasure trove. Downtown is bustling with restaurants, theaters and our beautiful river. Our government and business leaders have encouraged companies like Tesla, Switch and Amazon to move and expand here, helping with our local economy. The gaming properties are bringing in world-class dining and entertainment. And we don't even need to talk about the fabulous outdoor recreational opportunities we have all around us.

Now comes the hard part - we need to actually be proud of our city and to accept that we do indeed deserve nice things. We've earned them.

Jackie Shelton is the Vice President of Public Relations at the Estipona Group

I ♥ RENO Winemaker Dinner
FEATURING OPOLO VINEYARDS

Join us on April 30th at The Bridge Restaurant & Bar. Enjoy a welcome cocktail followed by five delectable courses paired with exquisite Opolo wines. Learn about the inspiration, history, and techniques that went into creating these fine wines.

TICKETS ARE \$80 PER PERSON AND MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE. LIMITED SEATING.

PLEASE CALL 775-432-1633 FOR TICKETS OR MORE DETAILS.

Allison Versus the Big “C”

By Allison List

Allison List is a 33-year-old breast cancer survivor who lives in Reno. She kept a journal during her battle with cancer which she then turned into a blog and wittily named it Allison in Cancerland. When I first approached Allison about the possibility about publishing excerpts from her blog I was quite nervous since this is a very personal topic and I didn't want to encroach or impose. The response I received was an astounding “YES!” Allison believes that if her story can help one person dealing with a frightening diagnosis then the blog has served its purpose. I am honored to have Allison's journey grace the pages of I Love Reno Magazine. We will be publishing entries from her blog throughout the upcoming issues. If you would like to read ahead, please visit her blog at www.AllisonList.blogspot.com.



Allison and Darin List with son Marco and baby Simone

For the past 4 months I have been debating how to share my experience. The one thing that has been constant is my desire to get my story out so that it may help someone, even just one person, who receives that scary life changing news of a cancer diagnosis.

With that being said, I can honestly say that my cancer diagnosis has actually saved me in many ways. It has forced me to look at my life, behavior and my interactions with others differently and re-evaluate and re-prioritize my life. I have as the famous Elsa would say from Frozen, learned how to “let it go”.

My hope is this blog (despite its emotional content) brings you laughter and inspiration as I chronicle my crazy journey into Cancerland.

Here is some background information that will help shape this whole insane situation. I started journaling a few days after my diagnosis...

February 2015: My husband Darin and I find out we are pregnant with baby #2!

Early June: I meet with an OB in my group about weirdness happening with my right boob during a prenatal exam. I was told to wait until my regular OB returns to get her take on the situation.

Mid/Late June: I meet with my regular OB (whom I absolutely love and would move her into my home if I could) and I can tell that something is wrong by her reaction. She orders a biopsy to be done with a breast surgeon and tells me that it will take about 3 weeks because the surgeon is very busy. A sick feeling in my stomach begins to grow.

Late June: The surgeon's office calls and I'm told that they have moved people around to squeeze me in.

1st week of July: I meet with my surgeon and we discuss possibilities of the infected area. As I am leaving the surgeon's office, she grabs me by the shoulder and looks me dead center in the eye and says, “I'm sorry.” It is this moment where a chill is sent down my spine and I realize that on some unrecognizable level that I have cancer. I have a biopsy done and then go home to research a form of nipple cancer called Paget's Disease. (In researching I find that I hold every possible symptom for Paget's. Awesome.)

4th of July: I sit at my sister's house and watch my family swim in the pool. I can't talk or interact with anyone and just sit and zone out because I have a sick feeling that something bad is happening. The morbid thoughts keep coming and I can't even convince myself that I am overreacting, because I already know what's coming my way.

July 5th: I have a terrible nightmare that I am told over the

phone that I have breast cancer. Drenched in sweat (like, soaking through the sheets kind of sweat) I wake up with fear looming over me. My heart is racing and I am having trouble catching my breath. Darin is sound asleep next to me- I am glad he doesn't wake up.

July 6th: My nightmare comes true, I am told over the phone that I have breast cancer...

It is here, that I will start to share my series of journals that I kept once I received the news. The beginning is pretty dark for both myself and my family as we tried to navigate this whole crazy situation, but it does lighten up.

So... without further interruption-let's dive in!

July 6th 11:42 AM Monday

I am informed over the phone that my biopsy results came back positive and I have breast cancer. When I hear the information given to me, my heart

starts racing and I instantly become drenched in sweat. The medical assistant, Lorena, would never know on the other line because I stay cheery and friendly and act like I am putting in a to-go order for a sandwich as she explained to me that I needed to see the Dr. that afternoon at 4:50 to discuss my treatment and to bring my husband if I needed to. I hung up the phone, fell into a lump on the floor and began to sob. My son came running in and said, "What wrong mommy?" I dialed my husband at work and sobbed for him to come home. He couldn't understand a word that I was saying and at one point asked if I was playing a joke on him. I then called my mom, told her my results and she said that she'd come right over right away. When Darin came into the house he had a look on his face that I will never forget. His body was slumping forward and he made this whimpering sound and just grabbed on to me. The first thing that ran through my head was, "This poor guy, loses his mom to lymphoma and now he's going to lose his wife to cancer." He started to cry and I just stood there. Watching someone I love breakdown always sends me to the

opposite end on the emotion scale and I am able to hold it together for the other person. It's very strange, it's as if my body seizes up and will not let me show any emotion in the hope of staying stable for the other person in need. My parents arrive shortly after Darin and I watched as my mom and dad entered the house crying. My dad went directly to the back of the house and cried. He couldn't look at me or talk to me. I even tried to offer him a grilled cheese (who doesn't love grilled cheese when they're sad?), but he said no. In fact he looked at me like, "What the hell is wrong with you? NO, I don't want you to make me a sandwich." My mom held me and cried, saying that this should've happened to her. I just watched as everything moved in slow motion. I was in shock. I called my sister as well and she also came in with her kids.

It was the strangest thing. My dad was crying and refusing sandwiches, my mom was crying and accepting my Kleenexes that I was handing out, Darin kept telling me to stop taking care of others, Marco was playing with his superheroes and Gobi (our dog)



was absorbing everyone's stress and walking backwards across the floor to only stand in front of the wall and lick it for hours. I stood and watched all of this go down and inside I was laughing because it was an absolute circus going on and I had a front row seat. My life. Lord help me. It was here that I came to the conclusion that I needed to pull it together and be the stable one for everyone I love. You see cancer doesn't impact only the person diagnosed. When someone gets cancer the whole family and support system gets cancer. Everyone is traumatized, everyone is grieving, everyone is scared and everyone is hoping for the best. It was the longest afternoon possible and it was pouring rain. That's a nice depressing setting for a cancer diagnosis, don't you think? We all just kept busy kind of operating independently of each other. When we left the house, Darin wanted to drive and couldn't figure out where he was going and he refuses to use windshield wipers, even though it's raining. I kept reaching over and turning them on and just wanted to scream as we hit every. single. red. light. possible. I hadn't learned yet how to "let things

go" as I mentioned at the beginning of this blog so, I might have had a minor fit in the car.

When it was time to meet with the Dr. I was shaking and sick to my stomach. I don't really remember that appointment. But, one thing that I did pick up on was that it looked like my Dr. had been crying before she came into the consultation room. Either that or she had a cold, but she definitely didn't seem to have a cold. She informed me that I had Paget's Disease and we had to start the hard conversations about treatment and balancing decisions carefully with my pregnancy. I have the type of cancer that is almost always associated with additional tumors in the breast. I also have the type of cancer that on average is diagnosed in women around 57 and only makes up for about 3% (if that) of cancers. There is little to no research on Paget's. I find out that I need an ultrasound to detect more cancer in my breast and then we'd need to make a decision from there, on what we need to do in terms of treatment. I am sick to my stomach that I am even having the conversation yet weirdly focused at the

same time. I wonder if I am going to have to terminate my pregnancy? Then the worry sets in that I may possibly be leaving behind two small children, and how that is NOT an option.

I come home, still in shock but feel good that we're moving forward with a plan, even though I have no idea what that is yet. I do know that a mastectomy is my best choice and if I want to live, that is what I need to do. We have a discussion in my living room with my family on the prognosis and everyone seems relieved. My parents decide to go back to Elko the next day and I agreed that I would go to my ultrasound alone to detect the additional cancer and I would be fine. Our neighbors, Mike and Mariluz come over for dinner that night. Mariluz can't stop crying. I am still watching everyone's reaction, yet not having one yet. Since breaking down when I first got the news, I have not shed a single tear. It is like I am watching all these people go through emotional pain and I have yet to connect the pieces that they are crying for me. We eat dinner in the living room and hang out. They both look and seem very concerned. I love them like they are my family and have that weird reaction again where I can't connect emotionally because I feel like I need to be strong for others around me.

I sent a text to my boss that night asking to meet the following day because I was going to report back to school in a few weeks. Trying to figure out how I was going to balance all this news and be a counselor to middle schoolers was overwhelming me. How was I going to pull that off? I was shaking so badly I could hardly type. I kept changing my response so that it wouldn't scare or lead anyone to think anything really bad.

This is where a turning point for me happened and I started my journey of "letting it go". I started worrying over sharing this information with people who needed to know, like my bosses. I then started to worry about hurting feelings of those who weren't going to hear the news from me directly like family, co-workers, friends, yet I was starting to have anxiety over having to share what was happening repeatedly. It was getting to the point, where I wanted to just deal with it and move forward. It seemed like the reaction I was getting from everyone was so bad



Allison was pregnant with baby Simone when she underwent a mastectomy upon being diagnosed with a rare form of breast cancer

that in order for me to move forward and kick this cancer in the ass I needed to limit my interactions with as many people as possible. It was like trying to figure out who to invite to a wedding or birthday party... "If I invite Barbara, then we'll have to invite her sister and cousin." After much criticism from a certain neighbor, let's just call her Mariluz for now, she helped me realize that I have got to stop worrying about inconveniencing people. I was in the early stages of coping with this stupid cancer for crying out loud and I was worried about hurting someone else's feelings who would get the news second hand. Plus, I had zero answers on anything except for the fact that I had breast cancer. It took a few days, but once I was able to unhook that cart it was pretty liberating. I was able to move forward and be empowered with the thought that if someone was upset that they didn't hear the news, that it was their problem, not ours.

July 7th Tuesday

I was up all night. Not really thinking about anything in particular, but just up tossing and turning. I can tell I have a lot on my mind but my brain has put up a mental block and I cannot access any type of processing of the situation. I feel like I am just stuck in mud. I get out of bed at 5:00 AM and watch the sunrise in the playroom. I research breast cancer support groups and research Paget's Disease. Darin stays home with me in the morning and we decide to go to breakfast together. Everything seemed fine and I was glad to be getting out of the house and going to do one of my favorite things (EAT!). We laughed, ate breakfast and had a normal time that a normal couple would have. I drove us home and a song came on the radio that I hadn't heard in years. It had no significance to me, except for one portion of lyrics that talked about a little boy sitting at home all alone while his mom was out looking for money to feed him (I will give/send \$5.00 to anyone who can guess the name of the song. Added bonus, you can make money while reading this blog!). There was no particular significance to the meaning of this particular lyric either except for the words "your son". It kept playing over and over again. I could feel a response happening in my body that was unstoppable. I could feel the food traveling up out of my stomach and into my throat. I could feel the sweat pouring out of me. Tears started filling up my eyes, but I had sunglasses on and it wasn't noticeable yet. Darin was rambling on about something and I could make out the tone of his voice but I couldn't make out a single word he was saying. All I could hear was the repetition of that lyric. I pulled the car over suddenly and broke down. When I say "broke down" I don't mean I cried and then felt better. I sobbed. I shook. I hyperventilated. I cried really hard. Like snot running out of my nose, soaking my shirt. I was drenched in sweat and ready to vomit. Darin pulled me out of the car and was trying to hug me but I could barely stand. I looked up and noticed I was in the CVS parking lot, cars were driving by and people were staring at me. I wondered what that looked like to someone, this, what appeared to be "unstable person" having this huge meltdown in a parking lot?

We get home and Darin has me lay on the couch with a blanket. I've stopped crying by this point and zone out on the couch. I started to feel somewhat better and told him he was fine to go to work and that I would call him if I needed to. I

told him how worried I was to tell my boss and that I didn't think that I could go up to school to do it because I didn't want to see anyone else. Darin said to ask him to come to the house. I still have no answers on if the cancer has spread anywhere and I don't know how to explain my situation to anyone, but school is starting soon and I need to get a plan in place. I told Darin that I'd be fine, so he left for work. 2 minutes later he marches Mariluz over to the house and apologizes for rattling me out about my meltdown but that he knows that I need help with telling my boss. She yells at me in a joking way that I need to let people help me and that she'll be back in 30 minutes. Darin smiles at me and waves goodbye, because he knows if he sticks around any longer that I'll yell at him for going to get me help. I call my mom and we cry together on the phone and she says she's coming. I told her I woke up and things were sinking in a little bit at a time and that I was scared. My phone rings while I am on the phone with my mom and it's Freddie from the Dr.'s office. They moved schedules around and got me an appointment at 1:00 to have an ultrasound. I feel relieved and thankful that people have been working so fast on my case.

Mariluz comes over to clean my house and her eyes are full of tears. I can't cry, I just feel bad for her because I don't want her to be sad for me. I am still numb . My mom shows up and her and Mariluz cry together. I just stand in the kitchen and give them Kleenex like they are watching some tear jerker movie. I am still numb. Darin comes home for my appointment. I am grateful but feel bad that everyone is giving up all this time to be with me. I can't cry or have a reaction. I keep looking at the clock because the time is coming for us to leave for my appointment, but my bosses haven't showed up yet. Finally with about 10 minutes to spare Bruce and Scott show up. I instantly begin sweating, shaking and pacing. My eyes fill up with tears. I act happy when they show up, but they are both looking at me concerned when they see everyone who is in the house. We sit down at the table and I start to fumble over my words. They are both staring at me and I can tell that they know something major is happening. Darin is standing behind me rubbing my shoulders. I blurt out that I have breast cancer and they seem calm. I start to feel embarrassed, like I am overreacting to my situation so I start talking really fast and stutter over my diagnosis. Luckily I look at the clock and see that I need to leave for my appointment and Mariluz agrees to stay and discuss the details with them. The whole way to my appointment I get hung up on whether I am over reacting to this whole ordeal and begin to feel guilty for people feeling concerned for me.

I am the youngest person in the Women's Breast Clinic by many years. By MANY years. I walk by to use the bathroom and I see women peek up above their Good Housekeeping magazines to look at me and my pregnant belly which makes me wonder what people are thinking. I go back for my ultrasound and it's painful. My right breast is sore and so are my stitches. The tech presses really hard over my stitches and it makes me cringe. We are led to a really cold waiting room and I start to get irritated that no one is having any fun. I have hardly laughed at all today and that makes me feel crappy. I download the Ellen DeGeneres game "Heads Up" on my phone to pass the time. To make a note of this experience, don't ever have my mom on your team. For one: she doesn't know hardly any answers, for two: she starts with these laughing fits, which are very entertaining, but not good for winning. The Dr. comes in and says that the ultrasound

did not show any tumors in my breast. I get a call to see Dr. Chu the following day at 8:00AM.

I don't remember anything else for the remainder of the day. Except Marco asks to sleep with us and falls to sleep immediately. I lay awake in bed all night because my nightmares have set in and I'm scared to go to sleep.

Wednesday July 8

Marco never sleeps all night, nor does he sleep in. Oddly, this morning Marco sleeps in; and I, my mom and Darin need to go to my Dr.'s appt. We haul Marco over to Mariluz's house while her and Mike are still in bed. I know he's feeling the aftershock of everything and that's why he crashed hard last night and slept. As much as I've been trying to protect him from the mess, I can't.

I asked Darin to take a different route to the Dr.'s office. He laughs and says, yes. Everyone who works at the Dr.'s office seems to look at me sympathetically when we walk in. I try not to look at people for too long because I am afraid of breaking down. I am afraid of a lot of things and am trying to not let my mind get out of control. The Dr. discusses with us her concern with my ultrasound, even though it seemed clear, this cancer is still almost always associated with underlying tumors. In twelve years she has only seen 5 patients with this cancer. She has never seen it in a young pregnant woman so our conversations are full of ethical dilemmas and grey areas because of the lack of additional tests we can conduct and only being able to go off of "what ifs" and the little information that has been gathered on Paget's Disease. My Dr. is very intense, but comforting at the same time. I am grateful for her and have a strong feeling that I can trust what she says and that she's going to kick ass and take names...my type of lady. After hearing her explanation of my situation and options of treatment plans, I decide (I had actually decided on Monday of this week, but had not really expressed it) to move forward with a mastectomy first, a possible removal of my lymph nodes second and a breast reconstruction third. Every step is carefully calculated because I can only undergo anesthesia for so long until it poses risk to the baby. Two procedures (mastectomy and lymph node removal) were too risky, however so was one surgery, because if the cancer has already spread to my lymph nodes then I may be screwed if I wait for too long. But, we won't know anything until I can send my removed tissue off to pathology.

I do feel a sense of relief when I actually say out loud that I want to get a mastectomy and when it comes down to it, it's just a boob right? I mean they're already in bad shape and if I now have the opportunity to get a newer model I should jump on it, because after all, it is an opportunity. Darin asks a lot of questions. He is so smart, but things that are not black and white he struggles with. I can see him trying to make this situation less difficult by calculating risks and balancing statistics, but it all boils down to the fact that I need to make the decision that is going to bring me peace now and for the rest of my life. When I speak to the Dr., my mom and Darin just stare at me. I can't tell if they think that I am not making any sense at all because everything seems to be moving in slow motion. When we begin to discuss my mastectomy the

Dr. says that if she was in my position, she'd make the same decision, which makes me feel relieved with moving forward. The medical assistant sends me to scheduling and Darin keeps asking me if I am SURE I want to do this. When I say he keeps asking me, I am not over exaggerating. He literary keeps asking me over and over. I am not answering his question in hopes that ignoring him will make him stop, which is such a stupid intervention to use with him because it NEVER works. It works well with children, but not 33 year old husbands. He just assumes that I can't hear him, even though he's practically sitting on my lap. With each time he asks me THAT question, I begin to feel hot and sweaty and irritated because I feel he is questioning me and downplaying this whole situation. It was almost as if he was making me feel dramatic and crazy for opting to remove something that potentially was going to kill me, if I didn't kill it first. This decision has given me the first sense of calm and relief in three days, actually seven days of terror (I had a feeling it was cancer since my biopsy). I snap at him in the waiting room and make everyone uncomfortable, then immediately feel bad. My mom puts her head down and does what I do when I feel uncomfortable...pretend like what I am seeing is not happening. I used to get in trouble a lot in school for screwing around and whenever I got called out by my teacher I would put my head down and start working furiously and pretend that she was yelling at the "other" Allison in class that was clearly the problem student. I feel like I want to scream because it's my body, my breast, my peace of mind, my psychological wellbeing, my life at risk...then I stop and remember that this cancer actually belongs to all of us, not just me.



FREE! **HOME NV** **FREE!**
REAL ESTATE SERVICES

4th Annual

SHRED-A-THON
Saturday April 23rd

11am - 1pm
321 S. Arlington, Reno

Just in time for the after Tax Day document purge!
Bring any papers you would like to have shredded safely on site. You can watch while it happens! There is a limit of 4 bankers boxes worth of documents per household.

Shredding is free but donations are welcome!
Donations benefit Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful.
www.HomeNV.net • 775-333-8900

 KEEP TRUCKEE MEADOWS BEAUTIFUL  

MONSTERS ARE REAL

Monster Fish: In Search of the Last River Giants features stunning, life-size sculptures, hands-on interactive exhibits, and evocative video installations that put you face-to-face with more than 20 species, each at least six feet long or weighing more than 200 pounds!

MONSTERFISH

IN SEARCH OF THE LAST RIVER GIANTS

ON EXHIBIT THROUGH SEPTEMBER 5TH

Presenting
partner



University of Nevada, Reno
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE



Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum

An exhibition from  NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

490 S. Center Street · Downtown Reno · 775-786-1000 · nvdnm.org

Picon Punch Press
321 S. Arlington Ave.
Reno, NV 89501

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
I LOVE RENO

ECRWSS - EDDM

Residential Customer

LOOKING FOR A HOME LOAN?

THINKING OF PURCHASING OR REFINANCING WHILE RATES ARE STILL LOW?

The Reno Team at Alpine Mortgage Planning
is equipped to address your mortgage needs as a real leader in
the market place. Please use us as a resource for ANY
questions you may have regarding a mortgage.



6900 South McCarran Blvd., Suite 2020 Reno, Nevada 89509

775.332.6660

SUE BARRY
Branch Manager/
Mortgage Advisor
MLO - 366040

PATTI BOORMAN
Mortgage Advisor
MLO - 404393

KEVIN EDWARDS
Mortgage Advisor
MLO - 1269816

JOHN "GOOSE" RITTER
Mortgage Advisor
MLO - 1225177

MICHAEL RAYBURN
Mortgage Advisor
MLO - 906083

JODY DRAKE
Mortgage Advisor
MLO - 1221187

GARY MADSEN
Mortgage Advisor
MLO - 294290

KRIS COLLINS
Mortgage Advisor
MLO - 326477

