

Gail Bishop: we harvest the fruit of his labor

You will meet so few of them in your lifetime, those rare people you figure will live forever. They somehow look better as they mature, their depth improving with age and their brightened faces showing it.

They become magnetic over time as we witness them evolve into increasingly interesting individuals.

These you want to count as your friends. Thousands of Nevadans knew such a man in the person of one Gail Alexander Bishop. He came to Nevada 35 years ago with a talent for building things. He used it to support his young family.

Like many of us, Gail and Velma Bishop did not plan early on to make the Silver State a permanent part of their marriage.

Like many of us, they came here because this is where the work was, where the future offered great potential. From the heat of southern Nevada to the wilds of Elko County, Gail Bishop helped construct dams, roads, buildings and air centers.

He operated the heavy equipment that built Ski Incline, the Lake Tahoe Airport and so many other projects. The fruits of his labor dot the region from the Truckee River's high Sierra sources to the farthest reach of its waters down Fallon way.

Thirty years ago, Gail Bishop made the logical progression from raising build-



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ings to building lives. He went to work as Reno business representative for Operating Engineers Local 3, eventually graduating to responsibility for workers in the entire northern Nevada/eastern Sierra region.

He was instrumental in forming the union's apprenticeship program, providing much-needed training for young workers.

In 1965, Bishop, Rowland Oakes, executive director of the Associated General Contractors, and several others gathered in Gov. Grant Sawyer's office as the state's chief executive signed the program's original apprenticeship standard.

"I still have that picture on the wall in my office," says Philip "Pancho" Williams, who now holds Bishop's former position as administrator.

Gail Bishop moved as easily among the prominent and powerful as he did with his pupils.

When Mike O'Callaghan became Nevada governor in the early 1970s, Bishop went to work for his administration as

assistant Nevada labor commissioner. In 1972, a brash kid fresh up from Las Vegas met Mr. and Mrs. Bishop at a local campaign headquarters. I was immediately impressed by the wicked sense of humor displayed by the distinguished, muscular gentleman wearing the eyepatch.

In the back of a union hall or at some political meeting, Bishop the union man transformed into Gailen the philosopher, usually with rambunctious results. At a Pioneer Inn political function many years ago, a bunch of us were standing in back by the bar when a certain state lawmaker walked in late.

As usual, the official was shadowed by his coziest friend, a high-powered lobbyist.

"In public he calls him 'senator'," Bishop quietly growled. "Behind closed doors, he calls him 'darling'."

We boys in the back had to beat a hasty retreat to the hallway as Bishop's commentaries rendered our laughter uncontrollable.

When he eventually left state service, Gail returned to the leadership of Local 3's apprenticeship program, a position he would hold until retirement.

He saw to it that his golden years paid off for others.

No one working full-time plus part-time labored any harder: the Nevada Commission on Aging, the University of Nevada, the National Council of Senior

Citizens, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada.

All benefited from the tireless efforts of Gail Alexander Bishop.

In his spare time, he volunteered for projects like the Great Reno Balloon Races.

The last time my family moved, I asked to borrow Bishop's truck. I ended up borrowing Bishop for a couple of days, too. He was that kind of guy.

A few years back, he called me to set up a radio engagement for Horace Deets, national executive director of the American Association of Retired Persons. Deets was in Sparks for the dedication of AARP's new regional pharmaceutical distribution center.

The timing was wrong for my morning program, so I put them together with future Sparks Mayor Bruce Breslow, who hosted a very interesting call-in show that afternoon. It's a small world. Bishop's old union today represents city of Sparks employees.

He never strayed far from his working roots. He was most recently president of the Nevada chapter of Local 3's retirees association.

One life touches so many others. Who knows how many families, jobs and businesses were created or enhanced because Gail Bishop made opportunities for them.

Who knows how many senior citizens may be a little warmer or healthier this

winter because of his tireless efforts on their behalf. Who knows what wonders the future holds due to Gail Bishop's service at the Sanford Center on Aging at UNR.

Back in college, a philosophy teacher of mine once challenged his class with a simple statement about what would earn his respect: "Show me what you achieve." I can't point to anyone who responded better than Gail Bishop. He left his children and grandchildren with so much to celebrate.

Perhaps a life of honest, hard work provided him the strength and capacity to know what few can handle: maybe he knew his time.

At a Christmas party last December, someone pointed out that former Reno Police Lt. Jim Hartshorne's birthday was coming up in February. To Gail Bishop, that Irish cop was his second son. Hartshorne had passed away not long after last St. Patrick's Day.

For a moment, Bishop remembered all the good times. He wistfully replied he would sure miss seeing his old friend on his birthday, as he had done for so many years.

At Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center last Tuesday, on Jim Hartshorne's 54th birthday, Gail Bishop died.

Andrew Barbano is a Reno-based syndicated columnist and 25-year Nevada resident. Barbano by Barbano originates each Sunday in the Tribune.

NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS

Local 3 member Gail Bishop remembered

RENO – Nevadans are mourning the death of former Reno District representative and apprenticeship administrator Gail Bishop, who died February 15.

Gail came to Nevada 35 years ago with a talent for building

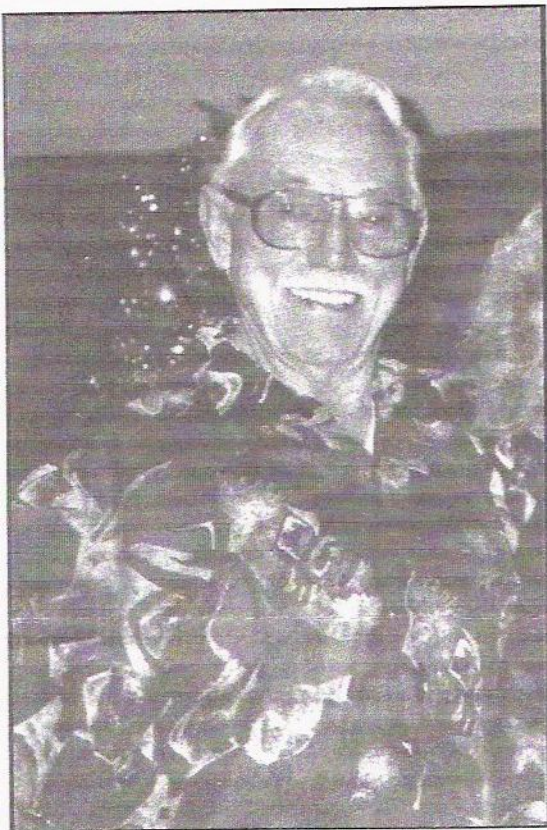
many other projects.

Thirty years ago, he went to work as a Reno District business agent, eventually moving up to district representative. He was instrumental in getting the union's apprenticeship program established in Nevada. In 1965, Gail, along with Rowland Oakes, executive director of the Associated General Contractors, and several others gathered in Gov. Grant Sawyer's office as the state's chief executive signed the program's original apprenticeship standard.

When Mike O'Callaghan became Nevada governor in the early 1970s, Gail went to work for his administration as assistant Nevada labor commissioner. When he eventually left state service, Gail returned to Local 3 as apprenticeship administrator for Northern Nevada, a position he held until retirement.

During his golden years he volunteered for the Nevada Commission on Aging, Sanford Center for Aging at the University of Nevada, Reno, National Council of Senior Citizens, Food Bank of Northern Nevada and the Great Reno Balloon Races. At the time of his death, Gail was the president of the Reno Chapter of the Local 3 Retiree Association.

— *By Andrew Barbano, Reno-based syndicated columnist and media consultant to organized labor in Nevada*



Gail Bishop

things, and he used these skills to support his young family. From the heat of southern Nevada to the wilds of Elko County, Gail helped construct dams, roads, buildings and airports. He operated heavy equipment that built Ski Incline, the Lake Tahoe Airport and so

Union

Building trades push

The AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department is urging federal regulators to take a hard line on asbestos exposure. The sense of urgency was produced during a national conference in Reno, which also saw renewed interest by many in the industry. The report said that more than 100 million people are exposed to chrysotile form.

Building trades health officials are trying to convince regulators that chrysotile asbestos is safe. Union officials are also urging the Environmental Protection Agency to consider further regulations of asbestos.

Union mem

After 14 years of decline, the number of union members in the States increased during 1993, according to a report from the U.S. Labor Department. The report shows that in the public sector, as private industry shows declining union members.

The Labor Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis showed that union membership showed that up by 200,000 or 1.3 percent from 1992.

The proportion of all employees in the U.S. work force who belonged to unions combined — who belonged to unions — was 16.5 percent, according to the BLS notes. The BLS notes that about the same rate of union membership was seen in 1992.

NLRB changes w

The National Labor Relations Board is making administrative changes aimed at better resolving disputes and fairness in resolving disputes. The changes are being outlined in a report from the Clinton administration's nominating committee.

Delays in the NLRB hearing process have caused changes. The use of hearings by employers during union elections has been a problem. Parties to be barred from raising issues themselves taking a position.

Another change would be for the NLRB to go forward without deciding whether a hearing would be held. That way the parties would know what would be held and rulings on election would be necessary if they would determine the outcome.

Reich promises to

At a January 24 news conference, President Clinton promised swift, tough punishment for the worst violators of labor and safety laws. He said that the victims of these violations would be protected.

Vowing to vigorously enforce labor and safety laws, the department will not allow business to violate these laws.



October 3, 2010

Dear Readers:

The 20 February 1994 Daily Sparks Tribune/Barbwire column in remembrance of Gail Alexander Bishop has been uploaded as a companion to the passing of Velma Bishop, memorialized on Oct. 3, 2010.

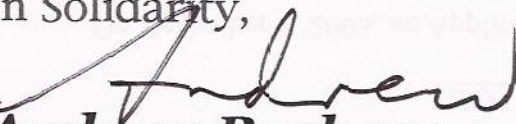
"Velma Bishop: Mom is gone" is available in html format at <http://www.nevadalabor.com/barbwire/barb10/barb10-3-10.html>

I encourage you to send me your personal remembrances of Gail and Velma at the e-mail address, below. They will be posted permanently and linked to their respective columns at NevadaLabor.com.

Thank you.

Be well. Raise hell.

In Solidarity,



Andrew Barbano

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