

# THE CAPITOL SOWER


THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | VOLUME FIVE | NUMBER TWO | JUNE 2013

## Nebraska's Memorial Chamber Honoring Heroic Sacrifice

Capitol architect Bertram Goodhue's design of a tower to house state government offices was both functional and inspirational. A memorial chamber was placed on top of the office tower to remind citizens of sacrifices made in service to others. The Capitol's thematic program devoted the 14th floor's interior chamber to "the ideal moments of the heroic career and the consolation of noble commemoration" and called for eight large murals recognizing military and civilian service. The artwork was not commissioned until 1990. In preparation for the 1996 installation of Stephen Roberts murals, the Office of the Capitol Commission cleaned the chamber from the vaulted dome's ceramic tile sun to the marble tile floor. The amber glass windows were restored as part of the 1998-2010 exterior masonry project.

The Office of the Capitol Commission is continuing restoration work on 14th floor during the current elevator upgrade project. This work includes restoration of the walnut doors on the elevator mechanical rooms, restoration of the original exit sign, cleaning the existing memorial plaques, installation of new benches for the public, and installation of an updated Medal of Honor plaque.

The current Medal of Honor plaque on the second floor does not include all of Nebraska's Medal of Honor recipients. Office of the Capitol Commission and Nebraska State Historical Society staff researched military records and discovered forgotten or reinstated members, as well as one recent recipient from the 1990's. The new

MoH plaque will allow updating and changes through time. It will be cast in bronze and feature larger than life size representations of the Medals of Honor awarded by the three service branches: Army, Navy and Air Force. Once the plaque is cast, finished and delivered, an unveiling ceremony will be held in the Capitol Rotunda on November 11, 2013. The ceremony will be hosted by the Office of the Capitol Commission and conducted by the Nebraska Military Department and the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard. The Medal of Honor plaque will then be installed in the 14th floor Memorial Hall, a most fitting place to honor those who have earned the United States of America's highest award for military valor. 



This sample casting of the Air Force Medal, larger than actual size, will be included on the new plaque.

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Congressional District 3

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Office of the Capitol Commission  
Secretary



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Matt Hansen, *Architect*  
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*Special Events Coordinator*  
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Jamison Wyatt,  
*Tourism Aide*


# Experience and Service

John Mackichan grew up in Lincoln visiting the Capitol with his grandmother. He never expected to work in the building. But now that he's here, he has become a valuable member of Office of the Capitol Commission team. His journey to the Capitol began in the machine shop of a local classic car parts business, where he developed a love of hot rod cars. From there he traveled to building maintenance at the University of Nebraska, and he's now parked in the maintenance shop at the Capitol.

Jonny Mack's love of cars took him to Russia this spring. Through his parents' involvement with the Friendship Force he met a delegation of Russian state legislators. During their stay in Lincoln, Jonny took four of them out on the town and discovered they too loved hot rod and classic cars. This common interest resulted in an invitation to join a road rally in Russia. Jonny spent two weeks traveling to the 13 hero cities, places of significance in Russia's World War II history. While on the Russian


road trip, he traveled in a 1949 Pobeda, a Russian car whose name means victory. Pictured here with the Pobeda parked at the Kremlin,



Jonny said he most enjoyed learning about Russia's history and seeing beautiful monuments and artwork. Working at the Capitol allows him to enjoy the beautiful building filled with history and art, and he gets to maintain the building for future generations, a perfect fit for the Capitol's new plumber. 



Nebraska State Patrol/Capitol Security Director Allen Johnson presents OCC's Mike Marshall with a letter of recognition and the Patrol's thanks for helping with the 2013 Peace Officer's Week Fallen Officer display.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day. Each May, the Nebraska State Patrol displays shadow boxes in the Capitol with photos of Nebraska peace officers killed in the line of duty. This year, Office of the Capitol Commission carpenter Mike Marshall, helped repair and prepare the boxes for the annual Capitol display. The Nebraska State Patrol's Superintendent, Colonel David A. Sankey, recognized Marshall's support with a letter of recognition and a State Patrol 75th Anniversary mug. 

# CONSERVATION PROJECTS

## Bronze Plaque Restoration

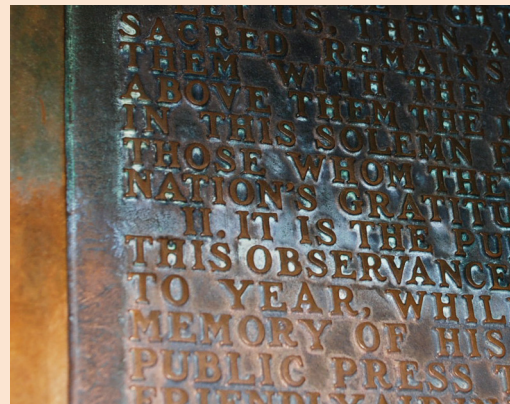
The 14th floor Memorial Chamber currently contains two plaques which commemorate the idea of heroic sacrifice; they will be joined by a new Medal of Honor plaque this fall. These two bronze plaques, installed as part of the original Memorial Chamber construction, were dedicated to honor the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union Civil War veterans, by its auxiliary, the Women's Relief Corps, Department of Nebraska, on April 6, 1929. It is interesting to consider that in 1929 there were widows and children of Civil War veterans living in Nebraska and remembering the great sacrifices of that conflict. These two plaques would have carried special meaning for many Nebraskans. One of the plaques features the words of the address Abraham Lincoln gave at the dedication ceremony for the cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The other provides the text of Grand Army of the Republic Commander in Chief John Logan's May 5, 1868, Memorial Day General Order No. 11.

These bronze plaques are an important feature of the Memorial Chamber and are being cleaned and restored. The enemy of most cast bronze architectural ornament is well-meaning but misguided polishing. In this case the conservator is removing residue left by past cleanings. Originally patinated to a statuary bronze finish and naturally turning darker with time, past caretakers of the Capitol would have seen this natural process as a problem to be solved. The solution would have been to get out the polish. Unfortunately, the polishing left residue which eventually discolored the bronze and diminished the appearance of the lettering and relief. Additionally, all polishing removes surface material, and reduces the crispness of the detail.

To remove the residue without damaging the surface, the conservator



The Gettysburg Address plaque in the Memorial Chamber has been cleaned, left. Some of the original statuary bronze finish remained on the surface and was not removed by excessive polishing. The original Memorial Day Order with the bottom quarter cleaned, right.



In this detailed view of the plaque on the right above, the polish residue is visible in the lettering and along the outer border. The residue is very hard and must be removed with a sharp bamboo skewer, much like plaque is removed by a dentist.

is using a combination of vinegar and elbow grease. A bamboo skewer is being used to pry the residue out of lettering and decoration. Once the restoration process is completed, an account of the current restoration activity and instructions based on modern preservation techniques will be placed in the files to help future caretakers preserve these important features of the Memorial Chamber.

# Credenza Conservation

*Looking  
good  
after 80  
years...*

Conservation staff at the Nebraska State Capitol recently restored a credenza in the Governor's Private Office. Part of the original suite of custom furniture ordered for Goodhue's most beautiful office, the credenza has served seventeen governors and been in continual use for 80 years. A periodic review of furniture condition revealed the credenza top had substantial color and finish loss. OCC staff moved the credenza from the 2nd floor office to the furniture shop and began the restoration process.

An overall inspection revealed the cabinet was in good structural condition with only minor finish damage beyond the top. While the preservation of original finish is preferred, shop staff determined there was sufficient finish loss and water staining to warrant the removal of the remaining finish on the top surface. The original finish on all other surfaces was masked off and preserved. The entire case was cleaned, with special attention given to the intricately carved sides of the case. Small wear and finish loss areas were in-painted and sealed with shellac. Water stains on the top were removed and the surface was lightly sanded; a pigment was used to return color to the surface. Ten coats of shellac were applied to the top surface and finally the entire case was waxed. Other work included cleaning and waxing wood drawer guides, and the addition of supplemental drawer stops. A glass top was placed on the credenza once it was returned to the Governor's Office to protect the new finish and ease cleaning.



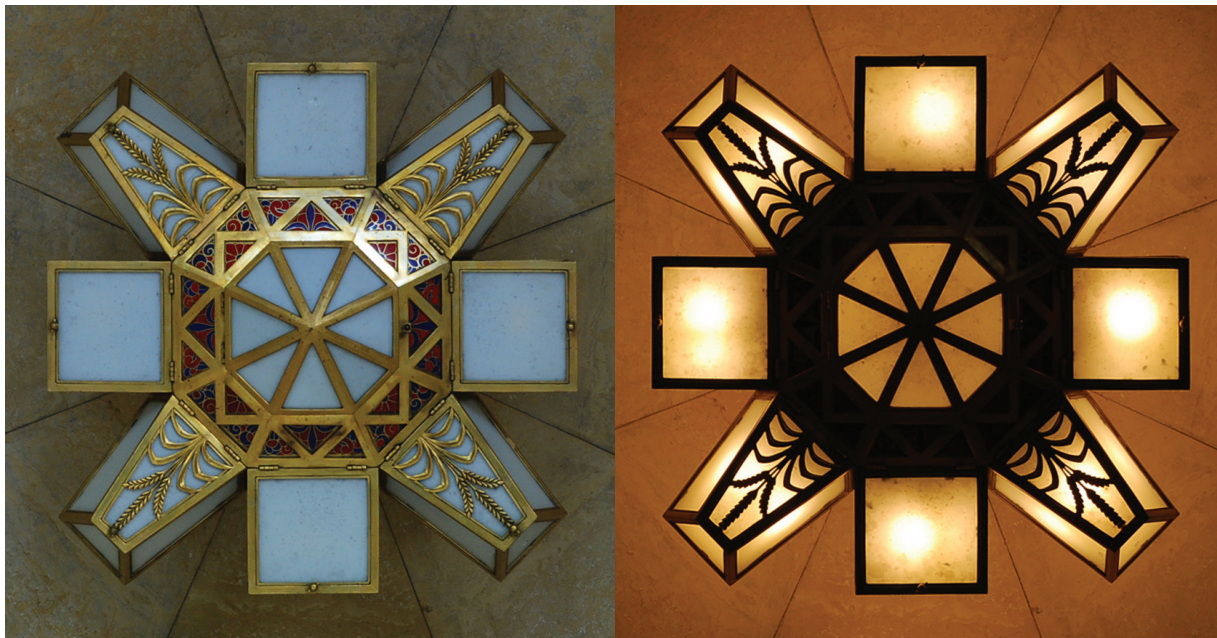
*The custom designed credenza in the Governor's Private Office recently underwent finish restoration and cleaning. Returned to service with a protective glass top, it will continue to serve Nebraska's governors decades into the future.*



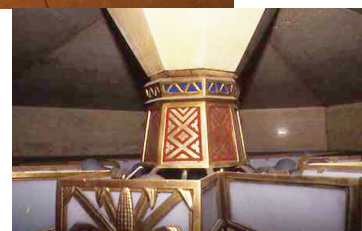
*Documentation is an important part of the conservation staff's work. These photos show the condition of the credenza before restoration, above, and after the work is completed, right. These condition reports will provide valuable information to future caretakers of the Nebraska Capitol Collection: Circulating Collection.*



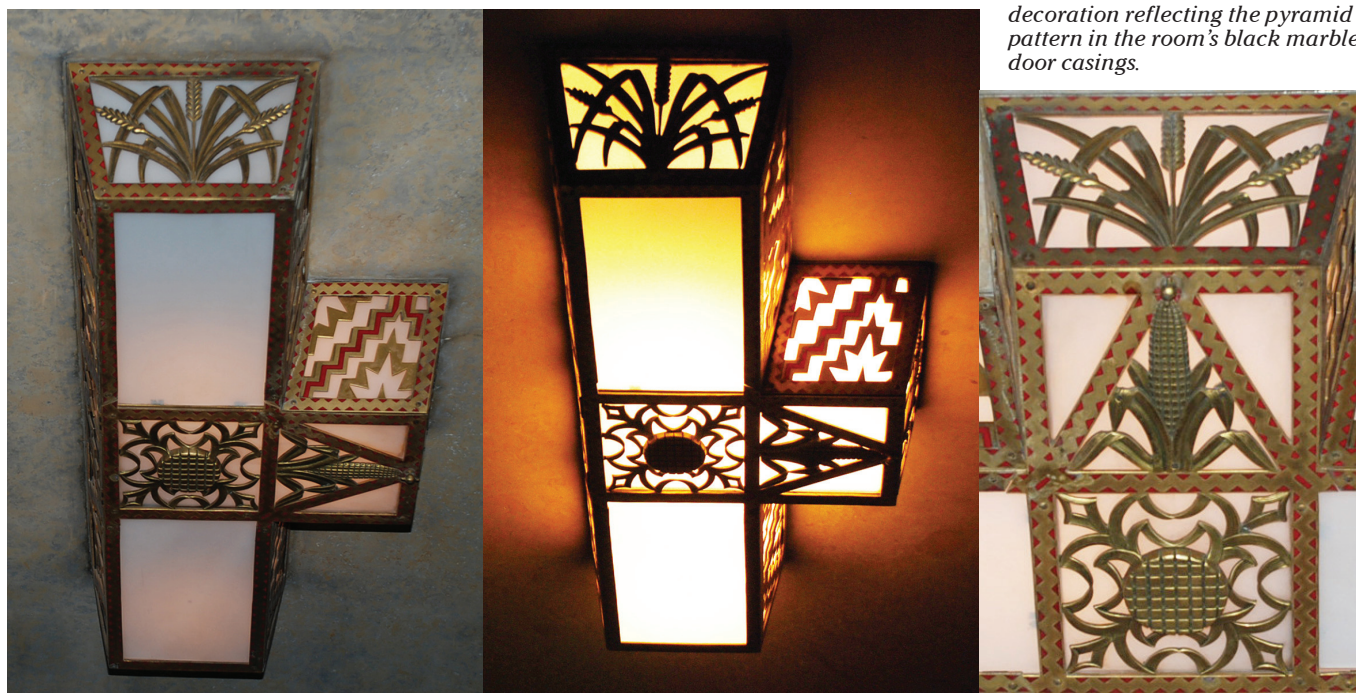
# Art Deco Gems



The decorative detail which the designers of the Capitol incorporated into every aspect of the building is nothing less than amazing. Functional elements, such as the lighting on 14th floor, feature hidden ornament unseen by the casual observer. In the examples above and below, the lamps are shown as they appear with design elements in shadow against the illumination. Without the contrast and glare, the gold plated bronze and enamel fixtures reveal their beauty. In the case of the turret lamps, above, some of the decoration cannot be seen by the public, only by those lucky enough to change the bulbs when they burn out. 

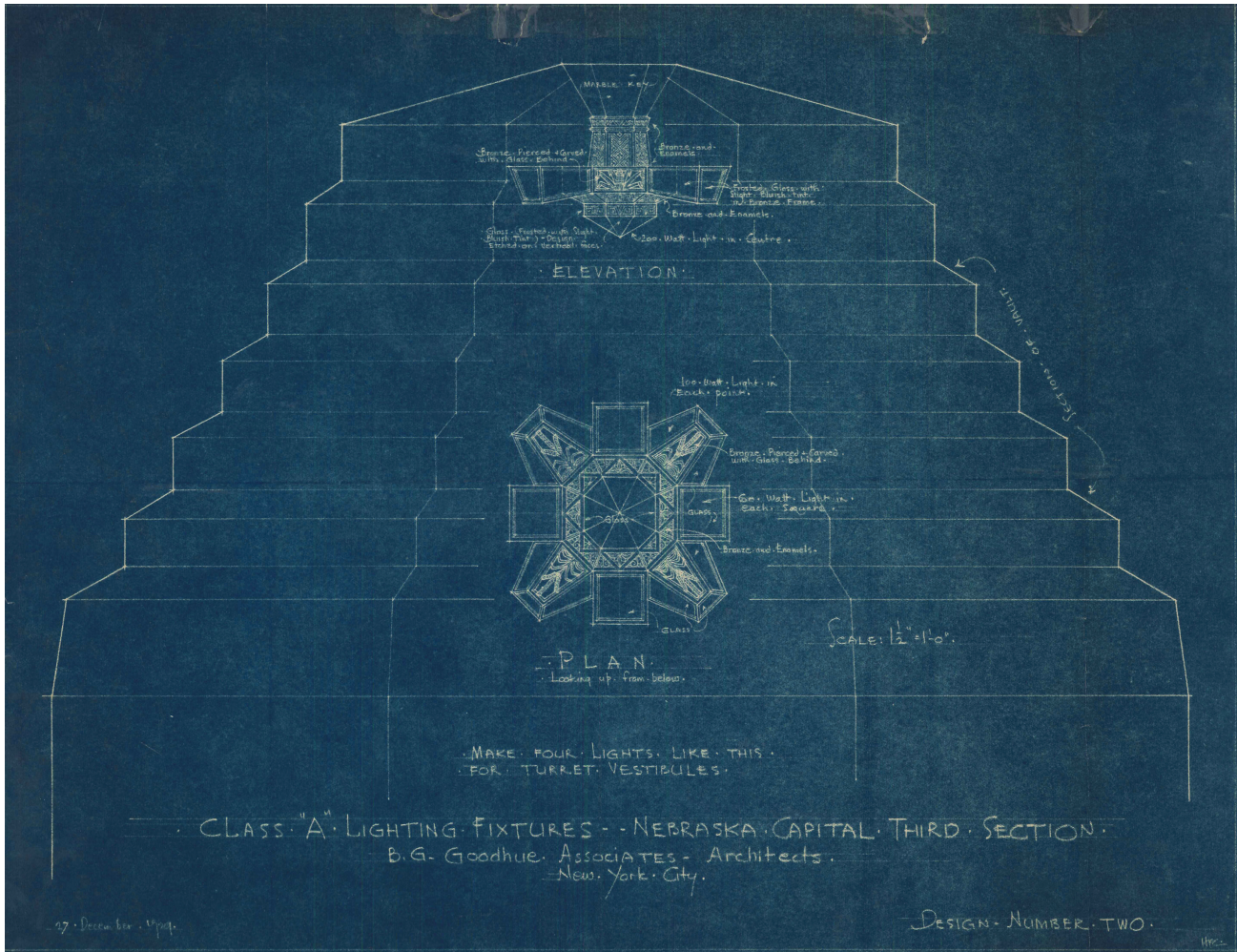


Above, the ceiling mount of the turret lamp features blue and red enamel decoration. Below, bronze wheat, corn and sunflower motifs have a red enamel chevron border decoration reflecting the pyramid pattern in the room's black marble door casings.



# WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

## Deco Design



Architectural and decorative styles changed during the ten years of Capitol construction, 1922-1932. By the late 1920's the Art Deco movement was coming across the Atlantic Ocean and the Bertram G. Goodhue Associates in New York would have been influenced by this modern style. Their plans for the Capitol's tower featured the latest Art Deco geometric motifs and designs. The Nebraska Capitol Collection Archives contain architectural drawings such as the blueprint, above, for the design of the turret lamp pictured on page 5. Right, compare the architect's design detail with the finished fixture. The 1929 design includes blue and red cloisonné enamel work with the abstract forms popular in Art Deco design.



# CAPITOL EVENTS

## **Cornhusker Girls State**

**June 6, 2013**

The American Legion Auxillary sponsors this government day program for Nebraska high school girls in the 2nd floor rotunda.

## **Cornhusker Boys State**

**June 7, 2013**

The Nebraska American Legion will bring high school boys to the Capitol to visit their elected officials.

## **Girl Scouts Awards Ceremony**

**June 15, 2013**

The Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska Homestead Service Center will present awards to girl scouts from across Nebraska at a 2:00 p.m. ceremony in the 2nd floor rotunda.

## **Binational Migrant Teacher Program**

**June 24, 2013**

The Nebraska Department of Education and the Latino American Commission will honor visiting teachers from Mexico in the 2nd Floor Rotunda of the Capitol at 10:00 a.m.

## **Jr. Duck Stamp Exhibit**

**September 16-27, 2013**

This first floor rotunda display showcases the best artwork submitted by Nebraska youth in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's annual Jr. Duck Stamp art contest.

## **Bar Induction Ceremony**

**September 17, 2013**

Newly admitted members of the Nebraska Bar Association will be sworn in by the Supreme Court at a 10:00 a.m. ceremony in 2nd floor rotunda.

## **NDCS Awards Ceremony**

**September 26, 2013**

Annual awards ceremony to recognize employees and managers of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services will begin at 2:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor rotunda.

## **Hispanic Heritage Month Program**

**October 4, 2013**

The Nebraska Latino American Commission will commemorate Nebraska's Hispanic Heritage at a 3:30 p.m. program in the 2nd floor rotunda.

## **World's Down's Syndrome Day**

**October 5, 2013**

The Capitol will appear blue in the evening at the request of the Down's Syndrome Association for Families of Nebraska.

## **Hispanic Heritage Month Exhibit**

**October 7-18, 2013**

The Nebraska Latino American Commission will have a photo exhibit in the Capitol's 1st floor rotunda titled "My Nebraska/Nuestra Nebraska".

## **Lights On After School**

**October 17, 2013**

The Nebraska Community Learning Center Network will have the Capitol lit in the evening to recognize the importance of afterschool programs.

## **Dias de los Muertos Display**

**October 30 - November 5, 2013**

The Nebraska Latino-American Commission is sponsoring this first floor rotunda display which honor Nebraska leaders which have passed away and will present information about the Day of the Dead holiday.

## **Governor's Recognition Program**

**October 30, 2013**

The Nebraska Administrative Services-State Personnel Division will hold the annual Employee and Supervisor/Manager of the Year recognition in the 2nd floor rotunda at 10:00 a.m.

## **Prematurity Awareness Week**

**November 8-18, 2013**

The March of Dimes will sponsor a 1st floor rotunda display focusing on premature births in Nebraska and the Capitol will be lit blue on November 17, 2013.

## **Medal of Honor Plaque Unveiling**

**November 11, 2013**

The Office of the Capitol Commission and the Nebraska Military Department will unveil a newly cast Medal of Honor plaque in the 2nd floor Rotunda.

## **Gettysburg Address Commemoration**

**November 16, 2013**

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will present Abraham Lincoln's famous words in the 2nd floor rotunda at 10:30 a.m.

## **Commissioner's Recognition**

**Ceremony**

**November 25, 2013**

The Nebraska Department of Education will present awards to high school students who were winners in national career education competitions at 3:00 in the 2nd floor rotunda.


## **Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony**

**December 8, 2013**

The Governor will light the Official Nebraska Holiday Tree at 2:00 p.m. in a Pinewood Bowl, Inc. sponsored ceremony in the 2nd floor rotunda.

## **The Governor will sign Proclamations**

**at 10:30 a.m. in the Warner Chamber on January 23, February 21, March 13, April 10, May 15, June 12, July 17, August 14, September 18, October 16, November 13 and December 11. For proclamation information please contact Sarah in the Governor's Office at (402)471-2256.**

**All events at the Nebraska State Capitol are free and open to the public.** 

## **Nebraska State Capitol**

**Guided Tours** are offered Monday-Friday hourly from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, except at noon. Saturday and Holidays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, except at noon and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Please call 402.471.0448 or visit [www.capitol.org](http://www.capitol.org) for more information.



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | JUNE 2013

## Nebraska Capitol Commission

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402.471.6691



*Capitol Architect  
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, 1869-1924*

## A Girl and Two Boys

**N**ebraska Game and Parks Commission Non-Game Wildlife Biology staff and Nebraska Raptor Recovery staff banded three Peregrine Falcon chicks at the Capitol on June 10, 2013. Game and Parks will hold a "Name the Chick" Contest



during June. To find out more about the banding and naming contest go to the Game and Parks website:

<http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/blogs/peregrine-falcons-state-capitol/> or e-mail your names for the little girl and her brothers to: [ngpc.nongamebird.temp@nebraska.gov](mailto:ngpc.nongamebird.temp@nebraska.gov).



*The three chicks, or eyas, pictured here were hatched the third week of May, 2013. The female, on the left, is called a falcon in adulthood and the males, to the right, are called tercelts when fully grown. They grow quickly and are currently about 10 inches tall with a wing span of 12 inches. Their three inch long talons and curved beaks are already functional weapons.*