

Carson City's own muse welcomes all

by **Ronni Hannaman**

Associate Editor

Truly the muse who presides over the arts in Carson City, June Joplin, owner of Comma Coffee, would have been the most popular salon hostess in 17th century France had she lived at that time.

The salon was a French idea to gather stimulating and attractive people of quality under the roof of an inspiring hostess, partly to amuse one another and partly to refine their taste and increase their knowledge of the arts. This sentence is the best description of the eclectic Comma Coffee and its beautiful, warm, talented and charming hostess.

A multi-talented artist who acts, sings, plays piano and creates art pieces found throughout Comma Coffee, June had the vision of opening a smoke free coffee shop in Carson City five years ago on Nevada Day. She strongly felt the need to draw people together to showcase talent and provide a hospitable atmosphere for conversation.

Talented folks are just naturally drawn to the stage at Comma Coffee and enjoy practicing before a live audience. Venues such as Wild Sage and the Mile High Jazz Band approached June to be able to perform there for tips only. As June stated, "I just can't say no, and as a result, folks in Carson City have been able to see great talent for just a cup of coffee!" The Mile High Jazz Band now performs at Comma Coffee monthly and draws quite a crowd. Many of the "new talent" showcased at Comma Coffee have gone on to be successful and play many "gigs" elsewhere.

When asked how Comma Coffee

came to be, June looked around the shop lovingly as she replied: "I have always had a clear philosophy of what Comma Coffee was to be. This business is like a living being and reflects my philosophy and my heart from the moment I gave birth to it." She further stated that she is always looking to make changes to make the "salon" even more inviting. As it is now, guests can sit in comfortable vintage chairs or at artistic tables designed by June and study the art-filled walls or play billiards, enjoy a book or two and maybe listen to new talent.

The Comma Coffee crowd is like "family" to June. Many regulars come in daily to begin their day and the staff (also "family") has learned much from the regulars. Take Crossword Puzzle Steve for example. This brilliant gentleman has been a regular for four years. He orders his coffee and settles down to his crossword puzzle. At first shy, he has now taught the staff so many new words and meanings that they have become confident in their ability to do the puzzles as well.

The regulars have become family amongst themselves as well. Joe, once the pianist for the likes of Sinatra and other greats of his day, always enjoyed tinkling the ivories on the old piano prominently placed on the center wall of the shop. He would delight guests for hours with his wonderful talent. Sadly, Joe died two years ago leaving behind his beloved dog, Toby. Crossword Puzzle Steve adopted Toby and now brings him to Comma Coffee, thus bringing back a bit of Joe. June calls this the Comma Coffee Club where lasting friendships have been born.



Ronni Hannaman / Sierra Sage

From the first time June arrived in Carson City over seven years ago, she loved the energy of Carson City and the region and just knew that this is where she wanted to raise her youngest children and begin her career as a "business" person showcasing the talent of others and serving great coffee. Over the years, the business has expanded to include breakfast and lunch and is open seven days a week to serve the Comma Coffee Club crowd and anyone who walks through the door.

Some folks pronounce Comma as coma – not understanding the meaning of comma. In June's words: "If life were a sentence, Comma Coffee would be the comma.....the pause.....the breath...the break between two thoughts." She

is all about "community," which she feels comes from within. The sense of community is strong for June, mother of four sons and one daughter ranging in ages 10, 16, 20, 22 and 26, and grandmother of two young boys. When seeing June, you won't be able to distinguish her from her much younger staff, let alone believe she is the mother of five and a grandmother to boot!

Comma Coffee has become one of Carson City's treasures and brings a welcome environment to our town where "everyone can know your name!" Stop by on Nevada Day and say "Happy Birthday!" June, the guiding spirit, the source of inspiration, as is defined for the word muse, will be on hand to warmly welcome you into her community!