

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 49—Senators Jacobsen, Amodei, Care, Carlton, Coffin, James, Mathews, McGinness, Neal, O’Connell, O’Donnell, Porter, Raggio, Rawson, Rhoads, Schneider, Shaffer, Titus, Townsend, Washington and Wiener

Joint Sponsors: Assemblymen Hettrick, Anderson, Angle, Arberry, Bache, Beers, Berman, Brower, Brown, Buckley, Carpenter, Cegavske, Chowning, Claborn, Collins, de Braga, Dini, Freeman, Gibbons, Giunchigliani, Goldwater, Gustavson, Humke, Koivisto, Lee, Leslie, Manendo, Marvel, McClain, Mortenson, Neighbors, Nolan, Ocegüera, Ohrenschall, Parks, Parnell, Perkins, Price, Smith, Tiffany, Von Tobel and Williams

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Commemorating the contributions of legendary mail carrier John A. “Snowshoe” Thompson in anticipation of the memorial to be dedicated in his honor in Genoa on June 23, 2001.

WHEREAS, Jon Torsteinson-Rue, more widely known as John A. “Snowshoe” Thompson, was born in Norway in 1827 and arrived in California in 1851 with high hopes of staking a claim and realizing his fortune; and

WHEREAS, Finding that mining did not suit his temperament, John Thompson abandoned the miner’s life and bought a ranch in the Sacramento Valley, but the mountains to the East beckoned him and he looked for a reason to spend his life in the Sierras; and

WHEREAS, In 1856, John responded to an ad in the *Sacramento Union* which read “People Lost to the World: Uncle Sam Needs a Mail Carrier” and was offered the position which required him to carry mail across the Sierras over snowdrifts as high as 50 feet on a 90-mile route that served isolated mining communities of the California foothills which until that time had been cut off from the rest of the world during the winter months; and

WHEREAS, All attempts by previous postmen to cross the Sierra on woven snowshoes had failed until John Thompson carved a pair of “ski-skates” fashioned after the ski-shaped snowshoes he remembered from his childhood days in Norway, and his skill in using them quickly earned him the nickname “Snowshoe”; and

WHEREAS, Twice a month every winter from 1856 to 1876, Snowshoe Thompson made the daunting and danger-filled 3-day trek from Placerville, California, to Mormon Station, later renamed Genoa, and, upon delivery of his precious cargo and preparation of his load for the return journey, would reverse his course and return to Placerville; and

WHEREAS, Dressed in his Mackinaw jacket and wide-rimmed hat with his face covered in charcoal to prevent snow blindness, Snowshoe Thompson carried no gun, heavy coat or blankets in order to focus his strength on the important sack that often weighed more than 100 pounds and contained the mail as well as life-saving medicines and other items needed by the early pioneers; and

WHEREAS, Despite a constantly changing, snow-covered landscape where landmarks were often obliterated and only the stars were available to

guide him when he traveled at night, Snowshoe Thompson did not use a compass because, as he once said, "There is no danger of getting lost in a narrow range of mountains like the Sierra, if a man has his wits about him"; and

WHEREAS, Never thinking of the cost to himself, Snowshoe Thompson often rescued prospectors caught in the snow, and in one instance, his heroic efforts saved the life of a starving, half-frozen trapper; and

WHEREAS, In the 1860s, Snowshoe Thompson homesteaded in Diamond Valley and married Agnes Singleton with whom he had a son, Arthur Thomas, who is buried next to his father in the Genoa cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Although Snowshoe was never fully compensated for his efforts as a lifeline between Nevada and California, he continued his "Snowshoe Express" until his death in 1876 just for the look on the faces of the people living in isolation; and

WHEREAS, To honor his 20 years of courageous service, a monument in Mormon Station State Park in Genoa will be dedicated on June 23, 2001, during the Snowshoe Thompson Festival; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the members of the 71st session of the Nevada legislature do hereby commemorate the contributions and the heroic deeds of the legendary mail carrier John A. "Snowshoe" Thompson during his years of service to the early pioneers of Western Nevada; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this body congratulates the Snowshoe Thompson Committee of the Greater Genoa Business Association for their unceasing efforts to honor this great man with a fitting memorial in Genoa; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Snowshoe Thompson Committee.