

Interest builds for Douglas chapter of Blue Thong Society

By **Roseann Keegan**
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They're more likely to drink bourbon than high tea, and more likely to sport a tattoo than a red hat. They're the members of the High Sierra Thong Snappers, and they may be coming to a town near you.

The club is a Carson City chapter of the Blue Thong Society, a nationwide membership organization formed by and geared toward women of the Baby Boomer generation.

The group's motto is "Fight Frump!" and its focus is friendships, fun and philanthropy. Members support Advocates to End Domestic Violence, and interest has been building for a Douglas County chapter.

"The cause is very important to me, and of course, the cocktails aren't bad," Marilyn Koepenick, 56, said with a laugh. The Minden newcomer joined the group at the urging of her sister and sister-in-law. "I love all the activities that they do. Every time it's something exciting."

On June 13, the group met at Nono's Home Décor in Carson City over wine, the odd can of light beer and towers of hors d'oeuvres. The meeting opened causally with mingling and lots of laughter, and then the subject turned to the group's core charity and its efforts to help women and children living in a shelter for domestic abuse victims.

A collection was started so the shelter families could enjoy a Fourth of July barbecue. In April, the Thong Snappers



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Nono's Home Décor owner Nanette Toland, left, hosted the members of the High Sierra Thong Snappers at her Carson City store on June 13. Toni Loren, second from left, who spoke about home decorating, visits with members Christeen Hanson and co-founder Karin Tancrell, far right.

GET INVOLVED:

Anyone interested in joining the High Sierra Thong Snappers or starting a chapter of the Blue Thong Society should contact Patty Manning at 775-684-3678, or pmanning@dncfp.nv.gov. The chapter Web site is www.highsierrathongsnappers.com.

helped raise \$6,000 for the Family Support Council during a bachelor auction at Sharkey's Nugget Casino in Gardnerville.

Launched last year

The Carson City chapter got its start late last year, when the boyfriend of chapter director Patty Manning saw an article about a group of San Diego

women who founded the Blue Thong Society in 2005. He said the group is "right up your alley," Manning said, and suggested she start a chapter in Carson City.

"So I called two friends, we met for drinks in late November, and we decided to do it," she said.

Manning said the group provides a way for women to

meet and exchange ideas, even though they're "too young at heart to wear red hats and purple dresses," referring to the Red Hat Society, a social organization for women over 50 who gather for tea parties and also focus on the lighter side of aging.

"It's all about attitude," Manning said. "We don't drink

tea out of a cup. We are more likely to drink Tuaca or Bourbon out of the tea cup."

The first Carson City meeting was Dec. 6 of last year with five women. Through word of mouth and media coverage, the group has grown to 57. They named their chapter the High Sierra Thong Snappers, a play on the Blue Thong name.

And about that name: It came about a few years ago when one of the founders turned to another who was turning 50 and exclaimed, "I don't see you wearing a red hat, but I do see you wearing a red thong!"

From there, the color blue was chosen, since it sometimes symbolizes sympathy, harmony, friendship and loyalty, according to the organization's Web site. It should be noted that members aren't required to wear a blue thong-style panty – the thong can also be a beach sandal, a pin, or like member Genevieve "Gen" Fredrick's necklace with a blue sandal charm.

"I love the 'fighting frump' part," Fredrick said. "When I saw that in the paper, I knew I had to be a part of that group. I turn 60 this summer, and I'm going to be fighting frump every step of the way."

The group has received several phone calls about starting a chapter for Douglas County. Manning said the Carson City group will help a sister organization "every step of the way."

Roseann Keegan is a freelance writer and Carson Valley resident.