

Recalling Such Luminaries as Howard Hughes, Mark Twain, Nick the Greek,  
Dat-So-La-Lee, Hank Monk, Julia Bulette, Bill Harrah, Clara Bow,  
Harry Webb, Bugsy Siegel, Will James, Melvin Dummar, and the Big Blast of 1953

# NEVADA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAL WEST

FEBRUARY 1986/\$1.95

# 1936-1986

From Famous to Obscure, Outlaws to the Pure,  
Nevada Magazine Celebrates 50 Years of Greatness



Harry



Clara



Bugsy



Hughes



Julia



Harrah





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# NEVADA

Volume 46, Number 1

January/February 1986



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For the artist, Nevada is the great equalizer.

### Cowboys on Canvas

For the artist, Nevada is the great equalizer. Page 46

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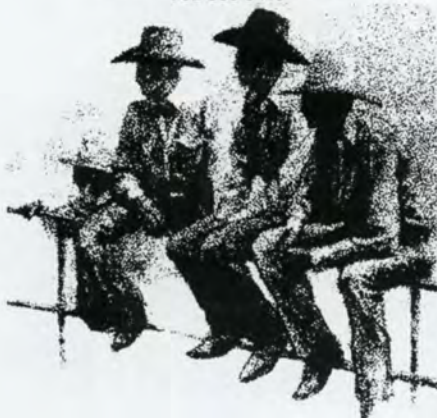
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**Cover:** Movers, shakers, and Nevada makers. From left to right: Harry Webb, Clara Bow, Bugsy Siegel, Howard Hughes, Julia Bulette, and Bill Harrah.



# NEVADA

Capitol Complex  
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702-885-5416



**Caroline Joy Hadley**, Publisher  
**Mike Maurer**, Business Manager  
**David E. Moore**, Editor  
**Dale Smith**, Art Director  
**Ann Henderson**, Marketing & Entertainment  
**Jim Crandall**, Feature Editor  
**Melissa Cronin Loomis**, Events Editor  
**Cliff Glover**, Associate Editor  
**Patty Noll**, Advertising Coordinator  
**Nancy Quinn**, Advertising Assistant  
**Brenda Craig**, Marketing Assistant  
**Debi Frame**, Subscription Manager  
**Billie Shaffer**, Computers  
**Susie Bongers**, Senior Help  
**Richard Menzies**, Derelicts & Specials  
**David Muench**, Showcase  
**Norm Nielson**, On the Airways  
**Julian Stone**, At-Large  
**Leon Mandel**, In Grosse Pointe

**DICK BRYAN**, Governor

**CONTRIBUTORS:** John Bardwell, Seong Wan Choi, Linda Dufurrena, Phillip Earl, Buddy Frank, Russell R. Goebel, Howard Hickson, A.D. Hopkins, William Jeanes, Meggan Jones, Warren Lerude, Pete Mikla, Guy Richardson, Guy Shipier, Roger Smith, Robert Stelson, Bill Willard.

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# Up Front

## Half Century of Cussing and Cuddling

For 10 years I have cuddled and cussed *Nevada Magazine*, pleased and disturbed several of Nevada's finest politicians. But I am satisfied, because, today, almost a quarter of a million people read each issue, and they do so because they like the magazine and care about the state and its people.

With this, our 50th anniversary edition, we recall some of those colorful Nevadans—our cover subjects—who have enlivened the magazine's pages.

As we know, Nevada has had a less than perfect image because of guys like Bugsy, women like Julia, and Yucca Flat. They have brought upon us a reputation for strange and powerful people, and things that are different. They have altered the face of a state that no one particularly wanted a century ago, and, because of them, we are now remembered.

Take Bugsy Siegel. No one wanted him. In 1946 he built a flashy pink gambling palace in what seemed to be the middle of nowhere. He was a mean-eyed little gangster who was trying to clean up his act but never did manage to earn any points toward respectability. He was gunned down in Beverly Hills shortly after his beautiful Flamingo was completed, but not before he predicted that Las Vegas would become the greatest resort center in the world.

Howard Hughes agreed with Siegel. The invisible billionaire made his mark on Nevada by acquiring gambling properties the same way other rich and lusty eccentrics collected perfect women and pieces of art. Between 1966 and 1970, Hughes took possession of six casinos in Las Vegas and another in Reno (page 18). It is said that Hughes moved faster than any gambler before or since, yet no one ever saw him, except for aides and occasional desert wanderers like Melvin Dummur who never expected to meet any billionaires and weren't believed even if they did (page 35).

After Bugsy, Hughes was a great relief to Nevada leaders. His name brought respectability, and corporate clout, to the gaming business. But he wasn't alone. Pappy and Harold Smith had been making an enormous mark on Reno since the early '30s. And close on the heels of the Smiths was a quiet yet driven bingo operator seeking relief from the pressures

of the illegal and constantly-moving games of California.

That gambler was Bill Harrah, and his mark was rather more subtle. In 40 years Harrah managed to change casinos from loud and flashy joints into comfortable places of quality (page 35). He was as tasteful as Siegel was garish. It was the Smiths' and Harrah's vision and savvy that brought gaming's northern face out from Reno's back alleys.

Nevada has always encouraged people of independent spirit. Cowboys like Harry Webb, who rode with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and trained horses for the movies and the army. He was a mustanger, trapper, musician, and rancher in Palisade. But Harry was even more. He was a classic western storyteller. A favorite, "Cigarette George," is retold, starting on page 53.

Others didn't come to Nevada to leave a mark, but rather to disappear. Hughes managed both. Clara Bow just wanted to fade from sight. As the silver screen's favorite glamour queen in the '20s, all Clara wanted was to escape the stresses of Hollywood. She moved to the desert near Las Vegas, married Rex Bell, had two children, and lived on their 350,000-acre ranch near Searchlight. Nevada did exactly what Clara wanted; it left her alone.

Nevada also nurtured another kind of queen, one who became a legend after her death. Julia Bulette was a plain working woman, a frontier prostitute who worked the line near the mines of Virginia City. That is, until she was found brutally murdered in her bed one morning in 1867. It was after the gory details had been shared that she became a different woman, somehow more warm and beautiful, mourned by almost everyone in town. One reporter from the *Virginia City Union* wrote: "Let a tear of sorrow for her frailties take the place of scorn for her weaknesses, for she may yet bloom on the tree of immortality."

All the stars on our cover are in some measure immortal. They have shaped the state with their own particular colors and dreams, and they are all remembered.

This issue is in celebration of *Nevada Magazine's* first 50 years. It is dedicated to all of the people who shared them, even the bureaucrats and Bugsy.

—Caroline J. Hadley



# Letters

## B&Bs, Suites, and Rebellion Rousers

### Bragging For B&Bs

I really don't have time to write to you, because of all the business you've sent us at Old Pioneer Garden, but I'll take time anyway. We certainly aren't complaining, mind you. Your Bed & Breakfast article in September/October '85 was great! Your readers are the cream of humanity, at least that's the kind of caliber that have discovered us through reading that article. From California, Washington, Utah, and Idaho; even a homesick former Nevadan from Pennsylvania!

Yours most gratefully,  
Len and Mitzi Jones  
Unionville, NV

I read my *Nevada Magazine* cover to cover and enjoy every word. I intend to stop at the B&Bs you told of in a recent issue. Too bad you don't make it monthly. I think you'd sell them.

Bill McBride  
King City, CA.

It's a delightful magazine and Nevada is one of my favorite hunting states.

W.J. Bray  
Central Pt., OR.

### The Suite Life

In your September/October issue there is an article entitled "The Suite Life" by A.D. Hopkins. It tells of the new 18-story addition to the Golden Nugget. It states there are 27 suites, and each one cost about \$125,000. My friend and I are having an argument on this. I say each suite cost complete \$125,000, and he says that is only for the furnishings, and that each suite cost over one million dollars. Who is right?

Earl Simon  
Newburyport, MA.

*Simon, the Golden Nugget's 18-story addition cost \$55 million, so you could say that more than a million went into each of the 27 suites, which includes 23 one-bedroom duplexes and four two-bedroom, one-level apartments. However, that \$125,000 figure was used in the past regarding decorating costs.—Ed.*

### Remembering the Lost City

It was with complete surprise and happiness that I turned to page 30 of your November/December '85 issue, regard-

ing the Lost City. I am the skinny kid on the top step, holding the large pot. I enjoyed the uncovering of this Lost City, under the supervision of M.R. Harrington and Fay Perkins. The work was easy as we were allowed only a paintbrush and hand trowel, so as not to harm the artifacts.

Some of the memory highlights of this period were the occasional trips to the small town of Las Vegas. There we were able to purchase a one-pound hamburger steak and hot biscuits for 25 cents. The pay was \$30 a month. Of this, \$25 was sent home to my new bride in Lovelock, and I survived on \$5 a month. We did survive, nicely, as this is our 52nd anniversary this year.

Mr. & Mrs. James B. McDonald  
Sparks, NV

Enclosed find my check for another year's subscription to your great magazine and your historic calendar. Two months ago, we at long last were able to move to the great state of Nevada. For me it was a dream come true. I eagerly await each new issue of *Nevada* and read it from cover to cover the day I get it. My only complaint is that it doesn't come out every month.

Kathy Kirtley  
Sparks, NV

### Max And His Art

Thanks for the great job Jim Crandall did with the Nevada Art & Artists piece in September/October '85. I appreciate the layout, and it is very impressive. For the first time now I feel that I'm part of Nevada, after 30 years; "official" is what the *Nevada Magazine* is saying. Keep up the good work, and words can't express my feelings about your interest in me and my art.

Max E. Bunnell  
Overton, NV

### Don't Fence Me In

In response to R.F. Cochrane (Letters, September/October '85) regarding "resuming the Sagebrush Rebellion":

I have always viewed the Sagebrush Rebellion as a clever maneuver on the part of certain private parties to enlist the support of the ordinary person in their efforts to obtain large private holdings of land, that is, to rip off the lands that are

(Continued on page 50)

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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*To Nevadans, who can remember that it was a lengthy adventure, punctuated with dust, jolts, blowouts, and laborious pumping, to traverse 50 miles of typical desert road it is hard to realize that the entire State may now be crossed swiftly and safely in the space of a few hours.*

—First issue of  
Nevada Highways and Parks  
January 1936



# Nevada's Golden Age

The magazine's 50-year joyride

---

By David Moore

Fifty years ago the big news in Nevada wasn't about airports, casinos, French stage shows, or million-dollar jackpots.

Instead, the big news was roads.

Roads were being built everywhere in the state, and from the dust was born *Nevada Magazine*.

"Of particular note is the graveling and oiling and reconstruction work done on the Reno-Las Vegas highway. It is almost completely oil-surfaced throughout its entire length."

So reported the magazine's first issue in January 1936. Called *Nevada Highways and Parks* and published by the Department of Highways, the little 20-page bulletin was the state's first regular effort to promote tourism.





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J.A. WILLIAMS



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Nevadans and visitors often find time to pose at work and play. Like the Boyd Sisters (top left), a Fallon family on their turkey farm, and the Wild Bunch, led by Butch Cassidy (right) and the Sundance Kid (left), after the big Winnemucca bank robbery of 1900.

Although that first issue was filled with highway news and photos of underpasses—products of a furious road-building plan under the New Deal—tourists were surely on the mind of founder and editor Fred Greulich. In the foreword Greulich, publicity man for Highways, stated his hope that “this bulletin will serve a useful purpose in disseminating facts and news about Nevada’s highways and parks, its abundant natural scenic places, and perhaps promote a wider knowledge of its mountains, deserts, and the real western, friendly spirit of its people.”

With this issue, *Nevada Magazine* celebrates its 50th birthday. Today’s magazine is bigger and more colorful than it was half

a century ago, but there are many similarities, too. Attractions like Hoover Dam and Lake Tahoe, the joys of fishing, hiking, and ghost-town exploring—those have always been important topics for Nevada explorers.

But the old editions also show that as the state changed, so did the magazine.

The first issue appeared in the middle of the Depression, a period of hard times but great promise in Nevada. Hoover Dam had been completed and Lake Mead was filling, and their attractions were extolled in issue after issue. So were tours that anyone with plenty of spare tires could explore on a budget—places like Fort Churchill, Valley of Fire, Mount

Charleston, Lake Tahoe, Lehman Caves, the Jarbidge country, and oddly-shaped geysers and sand dunes scattered around the state.

On the topics of gambling and divorce, however, the early *Highways and Parks* kept a low profile. Wide-open gambling and the six-week divorce had been made legal in 1931, and Nevada was known throughout the world for its easy attitude. But references to those tourist inducements, the very cornerstones of Nevada’s tourist industry, were limited to a few excellent photos of downtown Las Vegas and Reno.

Apparently that was how Fred Greulich wanted it to be. “A nice old gentlemen—





LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

*Resplendent in tutus and feathers, Las Vegas showgirls lured visitors from around the globe and helped the growing desert metropolis change its nickname from the City of Destiny to the Entertainment Capital of the World.*

he always wore suit and tie," recalls photographer Adrian Atwater, who worked with Greulich in the '50s. According to Atwater, who retired in 1978 after 30 years with *Highways*, Greulich as a young man had worked as a telegrapher. "He said he stayed up three days and nights when the *Titanic* went down." Ty Cobb, retired associate editor of the *Nevada State Journal*, remembers that Greulich would come by the newspaper at night to pick up his wife, May, a proofreader. "He was short and plump, a pipe smoker if I'm not mistaken, and he was very knowledgeable about the state," Cobb says. "He was genial, interested in everything, but not a glad-hander."

"Fred wanted tourists," Atwater says, "and he loved mining. He did a lot on that." Gaming, though, was never mentioned. "He thought it would be an unhealthy thing to bring it into the magazine."

Instead, early issues were filled with touring articles and highway news. Photographs and themes were constantly recycled; a photo of Eureka might be seen three times a year.

But the bulletin was always full of energy, prodding readers to take not only the modern highways but also the back roads—and maybe even get out and walk if necessary—to seek out Nevada's hidden wonders.

*Americans have at last emerged from the A-card era and entered the "fill 'er up" stage. The Great War has ended. Tourists are reviving and brushing off their dreams.*

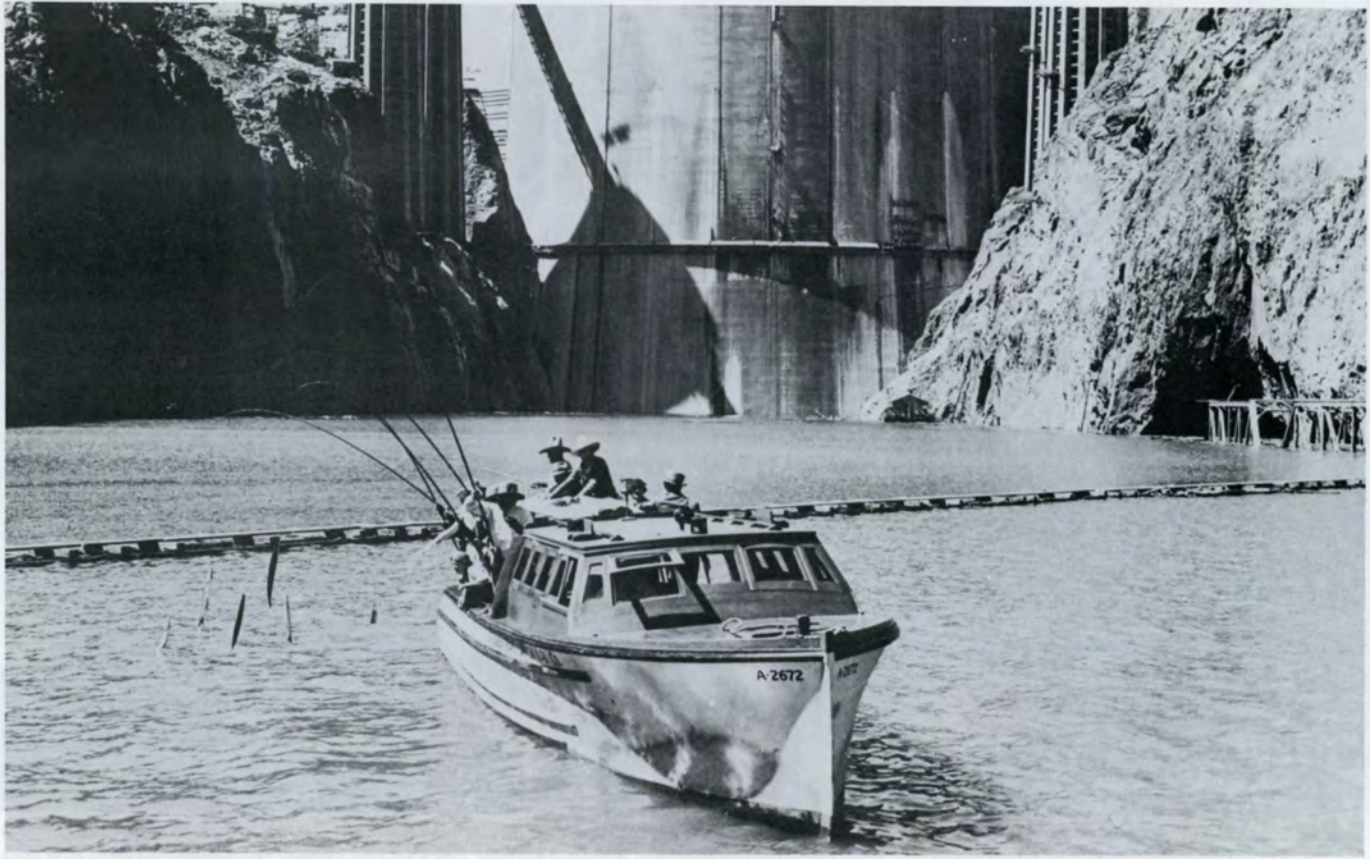
—*Nevada Highways and Parks*  
January/February 1946

During World War II, *Highways and Parks* had suspended publication, so it was with great enthusiasm that Greulich got a new issue back on the presses in 1946. The cover, appropriately, was of the Boulder Highway south of Las Vegas. The four-laner had been built to serve the Henderson magnesium plant, but in postwar years the highway would find new glory by serving swarms of tourists streaming









CASHMAN COLLECTION, UNLV LIBRARY

While Lake Mead was filling behind Hoover Dam in 1935, local promoter Colonel Bob Russell couldn't resist staging a publicity stunt. He found a boatful of cowboy fishermen, some frozen barracuda, and invited photographers to capture the fishy scene at the fish-less lake.



LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU



LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU



CLIFF SEGERBLOM/U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Nevada celebrations have drawn everything from marching mule teams in Vegas in the '50s to marching Shriners on Hoover Dam in the '40s. At right, wet-setters spread the Sand's "fun in the sun" slogan at a floating craps game in the hotel pool.





LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU PHOTOS

After World War II, Nevada boosters celebrated life with a plethora of events and contests throughout the state. Above, future showgirls join hands and model the latest fashions for an appreciative crowd during the Western Baby Contest of 1948 in Las Vegas. The Shirley Temple look was obviously preferred by most of the contestants.

Divided Paved Four Lanes." The theme was typical, but the cover was the first to even remotely deal with gambling. It was a shot of Fremont Street in Las Vegas and featured a pleasing look at the casino row that later would become famous as Glitter Gulch.

The other issue in '53 covered the phenomenon of atomic testing at the Nevada Test Site. Not surprisingly, the main themes weren't health safety but rather national defense and the bomb's awesome power. The cover featured a mushroom cloud billowing above Yucca Flat. The issue is highly prized by Nevada collectors.

In 1955 Greulich retired. He was succeeded by Don Bowers, who joined the magazine after a year of running the *Fallon Eagle*. Bowers had been born and raised in Fallon, and after World War II he worked in the American embassy in Moscow as an editor of the magazine *Amerika*. Friends remember that he probably was more at home with a book of poetry than a horse and saddle, but that few could match his knowledge of the people, places, and lore of his home state.

The staff in the late '50s consisted of Bowers, assistant editor Bill Engel, and Department of Highways photographer Adrian Atwater. An Oakland firm did the color work and layout; the State Printing Office did the printing. The magazine

came out two or three times a year, Engel recalls. "But if there was a legislative session going on, State Printing was swamped with bills, and we took a back seat." About 20,000 were printed each time. Circulation consisted of mailing thousands of copies to people on the subscription list, chambers of commerce, conventions, libraries. There were no newsstand sales. "It was a lot of fun," Engel recalls. "We were smaller then, and the magazine was free, so we didn't have to worry about the business end."

More and more the magazine gave readers in-depth views of places and topics such as hot springs, Nevada artists, fishing at Walker Lake, rustic communities like Paradise Valley, and the 1960 Olympics at Squaw Valley. In 1962 there appeared another gaming cover, again of Fremont Street. But this time the view took in the bright lights of the Mint, the Horseshoe, the Fremont, the Golden Nugget—a modern scene that made the '53 cover look like horse-and-buggy days. And inside was a modern look at what had become "the most famous resort center in the United States" with a map of the Strip, photos capturing the action at gaming tables and showroom stages, features on a family moving to town (opening with them meeting a pastor on the church steps) and the new convention center, and, written by Bowers, one of the first

widely-published histories of Southern Nevada. Like most Nevadans, the magazine was recognizing the changes going on in the state—the rise of gambling, the growth of Reno and especially Las Vegas, and the importance of air travel to the state's tourist economy. The tourist business, and especially gaming, was getting sophisticated as it reached out for visitors.

That's what Bowers wanted to do with the magazine, and sophistication meant it had to be commercial.

*Our new magazine, with pictures and stories you won't want to miss, will be published quarterly. Resort news and features will be of special interest to travelers and vacationers.*

—Nevada Highways and Parks  
Fall 1964

Since 1936 the magazine had been free for the asking and distributed according to a lengthy mailing list and the need for complimentary copies in gas stations and motels. Bowers proposed making it a full-fledged commercial item with national distribution. The magazine would be sold by subscription and on newsstands. Advertising would be sold.

The plan was approved by the legislature, and the 1964 Centennial Issue introduced the new *Nevada*. Its price was 50 cents newsstand or \$2 subscription. Publication had varied from two to four times





Begun in 1935, *Helldorado Days* has always been a great Nevada town party. Here, faro players add sartorial excitement to the festivities.

per year; it would be quarterly. The issue itself was a history buff's dream. Pioneer days were recounted in full-color features on the Humboldt Trail, early Nevada maps, documents of statehood, and Captain James H. Simpson's expedition of 1859. It was a fine beginning for what it called "a new, bigger Nevada Magazine."

The new look evolved over several issues in 1964 and '65, and soon the sturdy old road grader had become a late model touring car. Immediately, the work of some of the state's top writers appeared, such as Robert Laxalt's "The Day of the Gunfighter" and Walter Van Tilburg Clark's "Alf Doten in Como." Phillip Hyde, well known for his Sierra Club photographs, began contributing, as did Cliff and Gene Segerblom and Anthony Amaral. David W. Toll wrote his first story for publication, "Collision on the Comstock," about his distinguished relation, U.S. Senator John P. Jones.

"Stars on the Nevada Horizon," the forerunner of today's Showguide, told where you could find Donald O'Connor or Connie Francis. Exciting things were happening in Las Vegas showrooms, and the arrival of Casino de Paris at the Dunes was reported in full color by the Las Vegas News Bureau. Photographer Doc Kaminski took readers on a nighttime tour of downtown Reno. And there were Ruby Valley ranchers, Gabbs miners, Colorado

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



To most of the world in the '50s, dude ranches like this one near Reno were places you'd watch Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz spend a slapstick TV weekend. But to divorcees seeking sun and good company, they represented the free spirit of the West.

River rafters, Pyramid Lake Indians, and tours of the ghost towns of Aurora and Humboldt City.

The appearance changed with the content. Full-color printing was done by A.B. Hirschfeld Press in Denver. White space grew with larger photos and looser layouts. The logo and title also were transformed; in fact, it changed twice in one year. First, the old, small, squarish logo of *Nevada Highways and Parks* was changed to a stronger "NEVADA" that crossed the top of the cover. Then "Highways and Parks" was added underneath on the left. The logo-motion finally ended when new art director Ken Webster designed one with a snappy Western look—the logo that, with some modifications by John Bardwell, has been used ever since.

Other special issues followed. The Winter 1968 edition on Nevada business and industry accented the growing skylines of Las Vegas and Reno and asked such questions as "How do Nevadans manage to be so affluent?" The issue bulged at 112 pages, and until 1981 it was the magazine's largest. Relying less on ad support was a Summer 1970 report on the state's two universities by writer David Toll and photographer David Muench. Was education in Nevada different? Toll described how UNR students in 1969 had staged a wild demonstration in support of the university president. Two issues later

appeared a look at Nevada in the '70s, in which Guy Shieler noted that "to the increasing thousands who have wearied of smog and power failures and traffic jams the lure of this still-unspoiled world grows stronger." He noted that the state's population in 1970 was 500,000—about half what it is today.

*Cowboys, millionaires, entertainers, and gamblers. The people and their stories are Nevada, good and true. And as you travel the state, keep in mind that, in Nevada, you'll never have an ordinary day.*

—Nevada Magazine  
September/October 1985

In the mid-'70s, two events took place that would shape the magazine for the next decade. First, Don Bowers retired after 20 years as editor. Then *Nevada* was moved from *Highways and Parks* to the Department of Economic Development. Tourism was no longer a matter of simply putting motorists on roads, and the change was a logical way to continue the magazine's legislative mandate, "to promote tourism in and through the state of Nevada."

After Bowers retired in 1975, the editorship shifted temporarily to Judy Casey, who had been managing editor for five years. Casey soon returned to work for *Highways and Parks* and handed the reins to the magazine's field editor, Caroline J. Hadley,



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FOREWORD BY WILLIAM ALBERT ALLARD

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a former managing editor of *Car and Driver*. Hadley quickly put the magazine on the high road, bringing the same zest she had used as a photographer riding shotgun at auto races and dodging bulls on the rodeo circuit. Taming the magazine's budget took more than a little cussing, but she had *Nevada* in the black in January 1978—on Friday the 13th—for the first time in its history.

If staff and overhead were reduced under Hadley, spirit and a commitment to excellence were not. Determined to show Nevada in a more vivid and varied way, she increased the number of features, made people stories a priority, offered special issues on wide-ranging but pure Nevada topics like horses and gaming, and introduced countless new writers and photographers to *Nevada* readers. Wildlife and wildflowers, towns as different as Henderson and Lovelock, cowboys and rodeo, gamblers and sheepherders—she sought to present the immense variety and color of Nevada life.

Not only did she want to present more variety, but she also wanted to present it more often. The legislature agreed to help fund an additional two issues per year, and with the July/August 1979 issue, the magazine became a bimonthly.

That was followed by the publication of the award-winning (and still collected) Special Gaming Issue of 1981. It celebrated 50 years of legalized gaming in Nevada, a subject the magazine hardly touched in its first two decades. At 132 pages, the special issue is the closest *Nevada* to a phone book. In the meantime, Hadley, well known for her mule riding skills at roundup time, also became a popular guest speaker on the rubber chicken circuit.

Hadley also has overseen enormous jumps in circulation and advertising. The most dramatic gain has been in subscriptions. When she came on deck in 1976, there were 11,000 subscribers, most in-state and many unpaid. Today there are nearly 63,000 paid subscribers, 8,000 newsstand sales, and a quarter-million total readers. About 68 percent are from out of state, and comps are rarer than a cloudy day in Boulder City.

Indeed, 50-year-old *Nevada Magazine* has become one of the best regionals in the country. Its striking photography and captivating tales are read in every state and in 43 foreign lands. And if the magazine has strayed somewhat from the asphalt paths carved by early-day editors, its message is still the same—all roads in Nevada lead swiftly, and safely, somewhere spectacular. □

*Senior Editor David Moore's first job with Nevada Magazine was as a Circulation Gofer. His first day on the job he put a dent in the state van's left rear fender.*





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March 1936: STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

# Mornin' On The Desert

Mornin' on the desert, and the wind is blowin' free,  
And it's ours, jest for the breathin' so let's fill up, you  
and me.

No more stuffy cities, where you have to pay to breathe,  
Where the helpless human creatures move and throng and  
strive and seethe.

Mornin' on the desert, and the air is like a wine,  
And it seems like all creation has been made for me and mine.  
No house to stop my vision, save a neighbor's miles away,  
And the little dobe shanty that belongs to me and May.

Lonesome? Not a minute! Why, I've got these  
mountains here,  
That was put here jest to please me, with their blush and  
frown and cheer.  
They're waitin' when the summer sun gets too sizzlin' hot,  
An' we jest go campin' in 'em with a pan an' coffee pot.

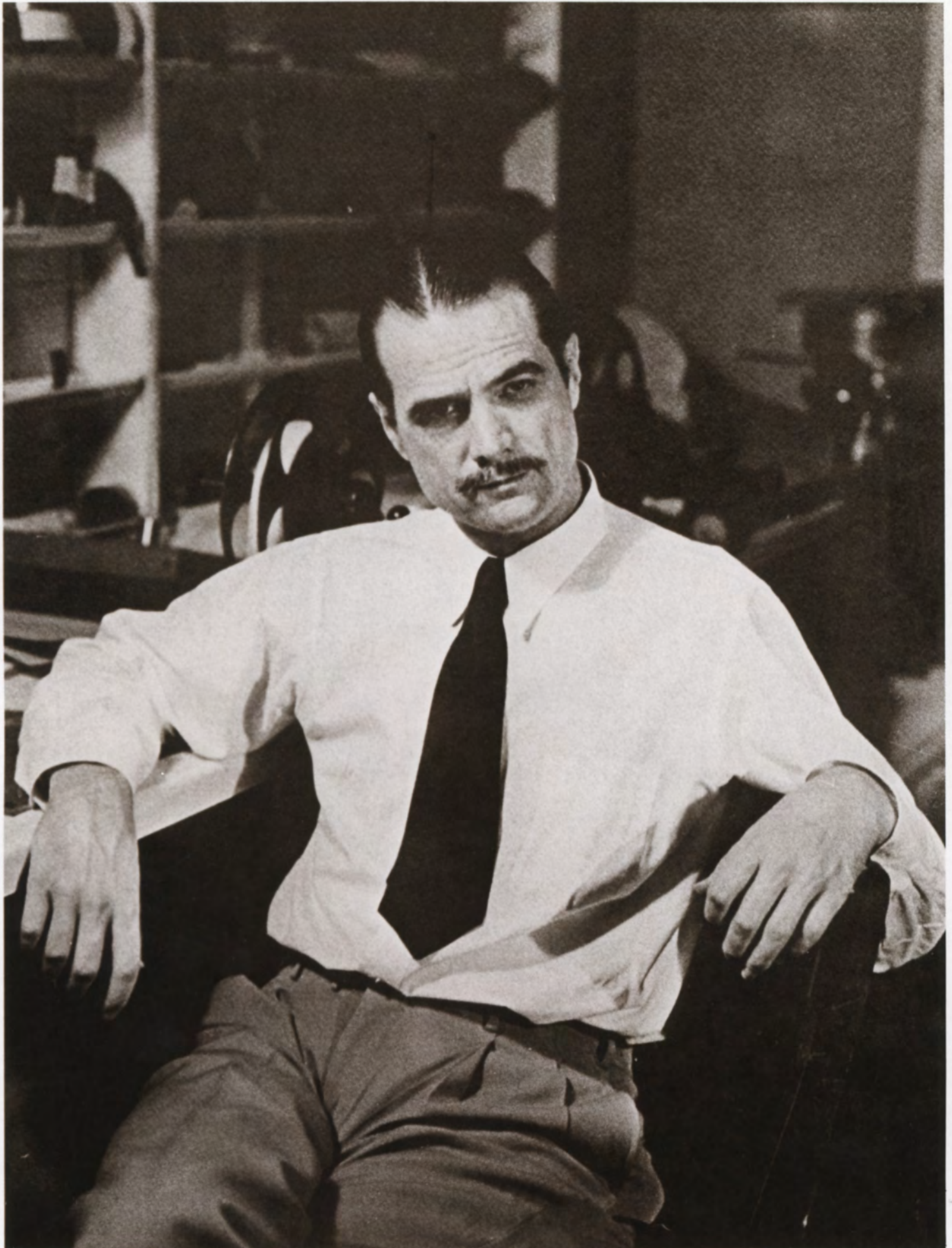
Mornin' on the desert — I can smell the sagebrush smoke,  
I hate to see it burnin' but the land must sure be broke.  
Ain't it jest a pity that wherever man may live,  
He tears up much that's beautiful that the good God has to  
give?

Sagebrush ain't so pretty? Well, all eyes don't see the same.  
Have you ever saw the moonlight turn it to a silvery flame?  
An' that greasewood thicket yonder — well, it smells jest  
awful sweet  
When the night wind has been shakin' it — for its smell is  
hard to beat.

Lonesome? Well, I guess not! I've been lonesome in a  
town.  
But I sure do love the desert with its stretches wide and  
brown.  
All day through the sagebrush here the wind is blowin' free,  
An' it's ours jest for the breathin' so let's fill up, you and me.

*(Found written on the door of an old cabin in Southern Nevada)*







# The Shadow Emperor

Without facing a single state official, realtor, or anyone else save a tiny handful of trusted personal aides, Howard Hughes built a business and financial empire so vast as to put most of Nevada's early mining barons in the shade.

By Guy Shipler

In the early morning hours of November 27, 1966, a passenger car was detached from a through train and shunted to a siding in the Las Vegas railroad yards. Shortly thereafter a man left the car and was whisked by automobile directly to the Desert Inn on the Strip. He did not stop in the lobby to register. Instead, he went straight to an elevator and rode to the hotel's ninth-floor penthouse.

As far as anyone knows for sure, Howard Robards Hughes did not leave that suite again for four-and-a-half years.

All that might seem bizarre enough, but the billionaire's unusual arrival and tenancy turned out to be characteristic of the most remarkable—and possibly the most important—development in the history of legalized gaming in Nevada. Without budging from his secluded hideaway—and without facing a single state official, businessman, or anyone else save a handful of trusted aids—Howard Hughes built a business and financial empire so vast as to put most of Nevada's early mining barons in the shade.

The heart and soul of that empire lay in some of the state's major gaming operations. Moving faster than any professional gambler before or since, Hughes began collecting casinos like other wealthy

people might collect old cars and antiques. After buying his residence, the Desert Inn, he quickly took over the Sands, the Castaways, and the Frontier. By 1970 he had added the Landmark and the Silver Slipper and had leased the world-famous Harolds Club up in Reno.

Thus, in three-and-a-half years his

“

**Hughes began collecting casinos like other wealthy people might collect old cars and antiques.**

”

\$100-million worth of casinos, hotels, and motels had made the unseen, unheard occupant of the ninth floor of the Desert Inn the state's biggest property owner. And they were just the foundation; soon Hughes owned an airport, a Las Vegas television station, a huge and expensive ranch in Clark County, and 2,700 mining claims across the state.

All this property was bound to affect the lives and fortunes of people and the

state, and it did. The invisible Mr. Hughes had become Nevada's largest employer with 8,000 people on his payrolls (the Nevada Test Site was employing only 6,300). His seven casinos, most of which he had never seen, accounted for almost 16 percent of the state's gross gambling revenues, or around \$84 million a year. And Hughes himself, thanks to those seven casinos and the enthusiasm with which the state received his ownership of them, had become the holder of more gaming licenses than anyone in Nevada.

At first the whole thing looked to most Nevadans like a fairy tale come true, and with good reason. Although Nevada's legalized gambling had progressed from an era of underworld influences to a point where “untainted” people had taken over and virtually eliminated its questionable aspects, the state's reputation had remained tarnished. Even the many respectable elements who had come before had been unable to brighten the image.

But Howard Hughes could do it. True, he was already a man of mystery before he came, but he had also become something of a folk hero because of his spectacular and glamorous exploits in aviation and in Hollywood. In the eyes of the public he was a sort of business daredevil, an innovator and trend-setter whose associates





*Hughes had learned how to deal with bureaucracy long before he moved to Las Vegas. In 1947 he skillfully defended himself at U.S. Senate hearings, where he came under fire for spending \$40 million on two airplane projects that never flew. To placate his critics Hughes took one of the planes, the famous wooden Spruce Goose (above), on its one and only flight. Soon afterward the hearings were called off.*

ran the gamut from movie stars to brilliant engineers. And mostly, he was a highly successful businessman. His great wealth proved that, and it was accepted that he had come by that wealth honestly. He was a gambler only in society's accepted ways; he took his risks in the respectable lanes of commerce. So, it was reasoned, he would risk a good chunk of his fortune in Nevada's "real" gambling only if he found it, too, to be respectable.

Even the timing seemed perfect. This had been one of those stressful times when Nevada was under great pressure from one of the federal government's

periodic witch hunts. Some gambling-house operators here were of the "old school" and still had some relationships, however remote, vague, or inactive, which were suspect. So when Hughes moved to buy the Desert Inn, state authorities were not only delighted but also willing to take whatever steps were necessary to smooth his path. Those steps included making exceptions to what had been regarded as ironclad rules. One of those rules was that every prospective licensee be questioned in person by gaming authorities. That requirement was waived in deference to Hughes' insistence

on absolute privacy, and he was permitted to apply through what were believed to be his chosen representatives.

It was also felt that the customary background investigation could be curtailed. The state rationalized that nothing was to be gained by insisting on Hughes' physical presence or prolonging an investigation whose results were obvious before it began. The position was that such concessions were actually made out of a realistic assessment of gaming's relationship with the federal government. In short, quick action by the state might turn down the heat.





In 1937 (top) Hughes set a coast-to-coast speed record of seven hours, 28 minutes. Ten years later he was grilled by Congress.

And so it was. The shortcuts were made, the heat lessened, and there was little serious complaint—at first. But the rest of the gaming industry, which had received no privileges, resented it when the state gaming authorities permitted Hughes to be licensed on what seemed to be the spur of the moment. (One licensing was said to have been made virtually by a single midnight phone call.)

The atmosphere in the state began to change. No longer did Hughes' presence appear universally to be a bonanza. So rapidly had his purchases moved, always with that shroud of mystery, that fear and

uncertainty began to surface. Out-of-state news media began making jokes about Hughes "buying Nevada." Local people were increasingly concerned that he might suddenly leave and let the whole thing die. They knew that seven casinos, all shut down, would spell at least temporary economic disaster.

These uneasy visions were intensified when an internal dispute rocked the Hughes empire. Robert Maheu, leader of the team overseeing the casino operation and presumably Hughes' right-hand man, was suddenly out of the picture, his opponents having stressed that under the Maheu stewardship the Hughes operations had fared poorly. (All but two of the seven casinos had lost money in the first quarter of 1971.) A new team led by Chester Davis, Hughes' most powerful attorney, took over. Davis claimed to have acted on Hughes' direct order.

But things were not the same in state government, either. Mike O'Callaghan

“

**The rest of the gaming industry resented it when state gaming authorities permitted Hughes to be licensed on what seemed to be the spur of the moment. One licensing was said to have been made virtually by a single midnight phone call.**

”

had become governor in the midst of the dispute, and he had been acutely aware of both the Hughes-Maheu-Davis uproar and the shortcut licensing procedures. He sensed that the time had come to get the Hughes operations out of the shadows. He was convinced that the key to this lay in absolute assurance that Chester Davis and William Gay, both of whom had reputedly engineered the ouster of Maheu, actually did represent Howard Hughes.

O'Callaghan made it clear that while he respected Hughes' insistence on privacy, the recluse would have to find some acceptable way to prove that Davis was acting with his full authority. The state could no longer afford to take casual assertions of that as irrefutable fact—and irrefutable fact was all the O'Callaghan administration would accept. That meant more concrete personal representation than letters, phone calls, and emissaries. After getting one letter allegedly from Hughes, O'Callaghan said:

"In no way do I want to indicate that I believe I received a letter from Howard Hughes. I place no more confidence in such a letter than in a phone call. I refuse to get involved in the game-playing by telephone and letter. I don't know the authenticity of it and furthermore, I am getting fed up with all the intrigue surrounding the entire matter. I'm tired of shadow-boxing."

It took a while for the Hughes people to become convinced that the governor and his gaming control people would not give in. But after the failure of subsequent attempts to convince the state officials that Chester Davis was Hughes' valid representative, a meeting with Hughes himself was finally arranged. On St. Patrick's Day, 1973, O'Callaghan and Philip Hannifin, chairman of the Gaming Control Board, flew to London, the bashful magnate's new home, and spent two hours with Hughes himself.

Out of that meeting came the approval, at long last, of Chester Davis as a licensee. An even more important result was the creation of the Summa Corporation, a parent company for Hughes' Nevada gaming interests. Under this setup, instead on one man (formerly Robert Maheu, now Chester Davis) being at the top of the pyramid, each casino operation had its own management group responsible for everything in that establishment. And that group, in turn, was responsible to a board of directors.

When Howard Hughes died, the Summa Corporation proved to have been a fortuitous move for both Nevada and the Hughes estate. Summa had assumed from Hughes Tool Company the control of six of the casinos (Hughes personally owned the seventh, the Silver Slipper), thereby preserving the corporate structure.

This gave the properties a stability and a prospect for continued operation they would not otherwise have had. Authorities believe that that security has lately been enhanced through the appointment by the Delaware courts of Will Lummis, a Houston, Texas attorney and cousin of Howard Hughes, as administrator of the Hughes estate. He has the power Hughes himself had—to vote the Summa stock. As a result of Lummis' leadership, there has been a reorganization of the Summa empire, so Chester Davis and others no longer have their titles as directors.

Some day a court-accepted will may provide for some other disposition of the Hughes holdings. Unless and until that time, all signs point to their continued operation along the lines that Howard Hughes himself worked out with the state of Nevada. □

*Guy Shieler is a famous newspaper columnist and TIME-LIFE correspondent based in Carson City.*





William Wright had his own nom de plume, Dan De Quille.



Sam Clemens became Mark Twain in Virginia City.



C.C. Goodwin worked with De Quille in the 1870s.

## Princes of the Fourth Estate

**T**he long lost *Territorial Enterprise* was one of the great newspapers of the frontier West. So brilliant was the paper's history that books have been written about it, and in one of them, *Comstock Commotion*, Lucius Beebe writes, "The story of the *Enterprise* in its early years is a story of perfect timing. Almost at the very moment that Goodman and McCarthy assumed complete ownership, it became established that the Comstock's surface diggings and ores of easily accessible outcroppings were actually the merest superficial traces of incalculable bonanzas which would be available for deep mining."

The timing, of course, was perfect, but what made the *Enterprise* a great paper was its staff, and the roster of names reads like a Murderer's Row of pioneer western journalists.

Editor Joe Goodman had been the founder of the *Golden Era*, a popular monthly published in San Francisco during the tumultuous years of the California gold rush. He was a practical printer, a poet of high reputation, and an accomplished duelist as he demonstrated in 1863 by shooting Tom Fitch in the knee. Fitch was the editor of the rival *Virginia City Union*.

Goodman's partner, Denis McCarthy, ran the mechanical side of the paper and later published the *Virginia Evening Chronicle* for many years.

Rollin Daggett, later Congressman and after that United States Minister to King Kalakaua of Hawaii, was Goodman's associate editor and himself a celebrated writer. "The pen, in his hand, is like a mighty trip-hammer, which is so nicely adjusted that he can, at will, strike a blow

which seems like a caress, and the next moment hurl hundred-ton blows, one after another, with the quickness of lightning, and filling all the air around with fire." That was the assessment of Judge C.C. Goodwin, himself an *Enterprise* editor in the 1870s who later edited the *Salt Lake City Tribune* for more than 20 years.

And, as local reporters, Mark Twain and Dan De Quille.

Dan De Quille—born William Wright in Iowa in 1829—had come west in 1857 leaving his wife and daughter behind in West Liberty, Iowa, as he tried his luck in the California gold fields. While working as a miner, he also wrote articles and sketches for magazines such as the *Golden Era*. He came to the Comstock in 1860, settling in Silver City as a prospector, and when Joe Goodman and Denis McCarthy took over the *Enterprise* in 1861, he began





Alf Doten filled in  
when Dan went on a spree.



Joe Goodman was a printer,  
poet, and dueling editor.



Rollin Daggett later served  
as Nevada's lone Congressman.

Anyone who read the Territorial Enterprise of the early 1860s could have told you which of its two local reporters would go on to fame and fortune. Mark Twain? No, Dan De Quille.

By David W. Toll

sending them correspondence. He was hired as local reporter that year, and by the time Mark Twain, as Sam Clemens, joined the staff in the spring of 1862, Dan De Quille was already acquiring a reputation for his graceful and elaborate hoaxes, like the Traveling Stones of the Pahrana-gat Valley, which inspired offers from P.T. Barnum and scholarly inquiries from Europe, and for his detailed and cogent reporting on the mines.

"In those early days there were in the town many desperate characters," De Quille later wrote, "and bloody affrays were of frequent occurrence. Sometimes while a reporter was engaged in gleaning the particulars in regard to some shooting scrape another would start (growing out of something said in regard to the first), and the news gatherer suddenly found himself in the midst of flying bullets, and

had before him a battle, the particulars in regard to which he need not take at second hand."

De Quille also recalled that in those early days "the arrival of an emigrant train was still a big event. The 'captain' and other leading men of the train were cornered and encouraged to relate all of interest that had happened during the journey across the plains. The train often remained encamped in the suburbs of the town several days before proceeding to California, and before they left, all hands were pretty thoroughly 'pumped.'"

When Mark Twain joined the growing Enterprise staff, he was a careless, abrasive Missourian who took a reporter's job because he preferred using a pencil to a shovel. Twain, who until February 1863 signed himself "Josh," had sent in correspondence from Aurora before being

offered the \$25 a week job.

"I can never forget my first day's experience as a reporter," he wrote 10 years later in *Roughing It*. Among other hilarious and dumbfounding experiences he recalled that in the afternoon he had found some emigrant wagons going into camp and had learned "that they had lately come through the hostile Indian country and had fared rather roughly. I made the best of the item that the circumstances permitted, and felt that if I were not confined within rigid limits by the presence of the reporters of the other papers I could add particulars that would make the article that much more interesting. However, I found one wagon that was going on to California, and made some judicious inquiries of the proprietor. When I learned, through his short and surly answers to my cross-questioning, that he





*The back shop of the Territorial Enterprise, shown here in the 1890s, probably looked much the same when Mark Twain and Dan De Quille began their careers at the paper. At least the scene would have been familiar: printers standing at the type cases and writers reading by the stove.*

was certainly going on and would not be in the city the next day to make trouble, I got ahead of the other papers, for I took down his list of names and added his party to the killed and wounded. Having more scope here, I put this wagon through an Indian fight that to this day has no parallel in history.

"My two columns were filled. When I read them over in the morning I felt that I had found my legitimate occupation at last. I reasoned within myself that news, and stirring news, too, was what a paper needed, and I felt I was peculiarly endowed with the ability to furnish it. Mr. Goodman said that I was as good a re-

porter as Dan. I desired no higher commendation. With encouragement like that, I felt I could take my pen and murder all the emigrants on the plains if need be and the interests of the paper demanded it."

Those two quick glimpses of the wagon train are enough to hint at the characteristic differences in viewpoint of the reporters: De Quille's clear, straightforward description versus Twain's distorted and exaggerated vision.

It is easy to picture them as they sat on a winter's night at a table in the press room, stabbing their steel-nibbed pens into a shared ink bottle, scribbling madly and bantering back and forth: 27-year-old

Mark Twain, stocky and rumped, with a bushy auburn mustache and the eyes of a wolf, and Dan De Quille, 33, tall, slender, and dark, with a stringy black beard and an amiable nature. As it is completed, each story is handed to the printers, whose hands fly over the type cases like trained birds, and the reporters drink beer while they wait for the proofs, each reading the other's copy. Twain remarks that it is cold out, and De Quille launches into an animated description of the former *Enterprise* building on A Street, with its simultaneous extremes of hot and cold when the stove was stoked up until it glowed cherry red in the freezing building. Every-



one pulled their writing tables and type cases as close to the stove as they could get, and the pressmen worked with their feet wrapped in burlap bags against the biting cold.

But that wasn't the worst of it. The worst of it was when the weather warmed up a little and all the snow and ice began to melt and trickle through the holes in the roof. He pantomimed for the grinning Twain how they had tacked strings to the ceiling at the worst of the leaks, to lead the dripping water over to the side of the structure, away from the furniture and machinery. Sometimes there were so many strings, he said, that the upper part of the building looked as if it were festooned with the gleaming wet webs of some huge, hideous spider.

When they had corrected the proofs, they shouldered their way into heavy wool coats and thundered down the stairs to the wooden sidewalk of C Street. They hurried south through the frosty night to the International Bar, where they swept in almost to applause, minor princes of the fourth estate, to drink whiskey and eat oysters in the company of prosperous men.

From the International they pushed out into the frozen night again and climbed Union Street to the B Street boardinghouse. There Mark stealthily helped himself to a wedge of the mince pie left out to cool in the kitchen and to four or five sticks of firewood from Tom Fitch's woodbox to heat the room he shared with Dan.

Some nights they didn't go home at all but trooped up and down the streets until dawn, sometimes with an excursion to the D Street line. Other nights they stayed on at the office, writing until breakfast through the clatter of the thrashing presses and the chattering of the newsboys coming in at six.

Mark Twain and Dan De Quille partnered for more than a year as reporters on the *Enterprise*, and years later Joe Goodman remarked that if anyone had asked him at the time which of the two would emerge as a leading American literary figure, he would have answered without hesitation: Dan De Quille.

Well, we know how that worked out. Twenty years later Mark Twain was spending his mornings in bed, propped up on silken pillows and smoking cigars the size of dynamite sticks, writing his immensely popular books, making huge investment blunders, and vacationing in Bermuda. Dan De Quille was still pounding the board sidewalks of Virginia City, drawing his \$50 a week and gathering news for the *Enterprise*.

Until the 1880s he was a familiar sight limping along the shabby streets of the played out city in his antiquated black cloak and his sparse chin whiskers, an

eccentric old mandarin.

Alf Doten, himself a daily reporter for the *Union* and later for the *Enterprise* before becoming editor and publisher of the *Gold Hill News*, kept a daily journal all his life. Dan De Quille's name appears in it often during the 1860s, most frequently in connection with late nights and drinking sprees. On Christmas Eve 1869, Doten noted in his journal, "Ran the *News* till we got it to press, then walked to Virginia and this evening ran the *Enterprise*, as Dan is discharged again for drunkenness."

De Quille was rehired, and he served the *Enterprise* more or less faithfully until 1885, when he was let go. He was employed again in 1887 and Doten's journals again mention his former colleague of earlier years. April 14, 1887: "Dan De Quille got drunk again today for the first

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**'I gathered the impression  
that Clemens was  
regarded as the prime  
s.o.b. of Virginia City  
while he was here,'  
said Farnsworth,  
who heard Twain damned  
as a foul-minded,  
dirty-talking  
four-flusher.**

”

time since he has been back in his old position as local of the *Enterprise*." June 23, 1887: "About 7 PM met Taggart on the street and he got me to fix up the local department of the *Enterprise*, Dan being too drunk—he has been drinking heavily the last few days & other parties have had to do his work occasionally." June 27: "Was about getting items, but Dan was sober enough to work tonight, so I was not needed."

June 29, 1888: "Dan on deck again." Eventually De Quille's career just evaporated, and he got by on a small pension paid by mining baron John Mackay.

**O**n July 14, 1897 after nearly 40 years on the Comstock, Dan De Quille went east to die. The following entry is in Alf Doten's journal for that date. "On board the passenger train this afternoon I found Dan De Quille (William Wright), wife and daughter Lou—I had a talk with Dan during the ten minute stop—Going to West Liberty Iowa, their old home He never expects

to come back, for he is so terribly broken down with rheumatism and used up generally that he cannot live long anyway—Is racked with it from shoulders to knees, back humped up double and is merely animated skin and bone, almost helpless—can only walk about the house a little, grasping cane with both hands—has not been able to walk down from his residence on A St, Va., to C St and back for nearly or quite 2 years—looks to be 90 years old, yet was 68 on 9th of May last—2 months and 10 days older than I am—Promised to write to me when he gets home—Poor old dear boy Dan—my most genial companion in our early Comstock reportorial days, goodbye, and I think forever personally on this earth "

Dan De Quille died March 16th, 1898, and comparisons with his old partner are irresistible: spectacular Twain the grand success and quiet De Quille the seedy failure.

But that is not the way they were remembered in Virginia City. Joe Farnsworth, the former state printer, now deceased, gave his youth to the *Enterprise* back shop in the 1890s and learned about Twain from the old timers who had known him in the early days. "From them I gathered the impression that Clemens was regarded as the prime s.o.b. of Virginia City while he was here." Farnsworth heard Twain damned as a foul-minded, dirty-talking four-flusher.

"One old fellow used a phrase I remember: 'Mark Twain had no earmuffs on when somebody else was buying. He could hear a live one order a round three doors from where he was standing. But he was deaf as a post when it was his turn to shout.

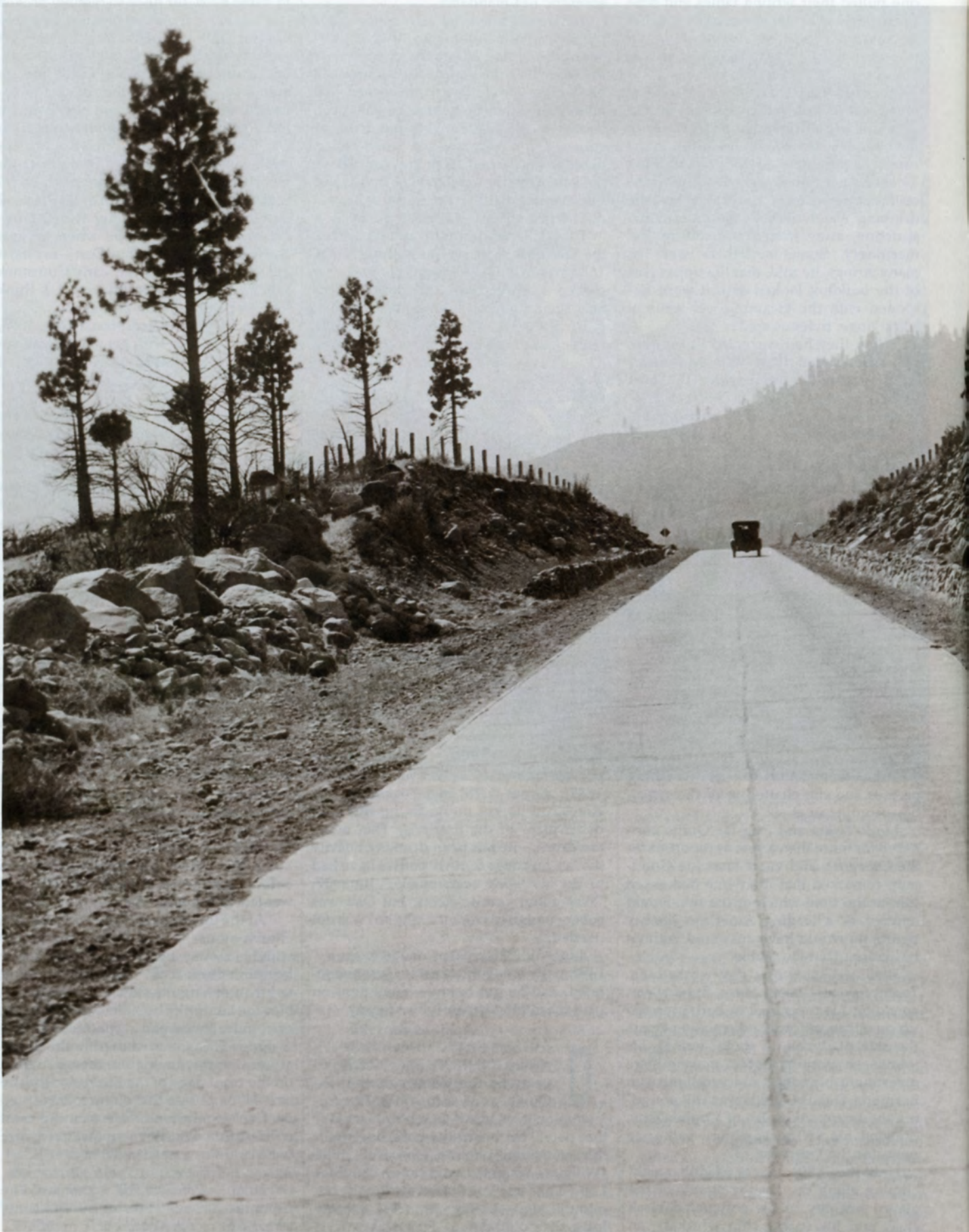
"I never heard admiration expressed for him personally by men who knew him personally," Farnsworth said. "Everybody on the staff hated Mark Twain and everybody really loved Dan De Quille. I think he was the most wonderful old man I ever knew. He couldn't say three words to you before you were friends for life and wanted to put your arms around him.

"At the time I speak of he was poor as a church mouse. I don't know what he did with his money, but in his old age I know he didn't drink at all He was the grand old man of Virginia City and everyone in Nevada knew him by sight. I never knew a man more loved and respected."

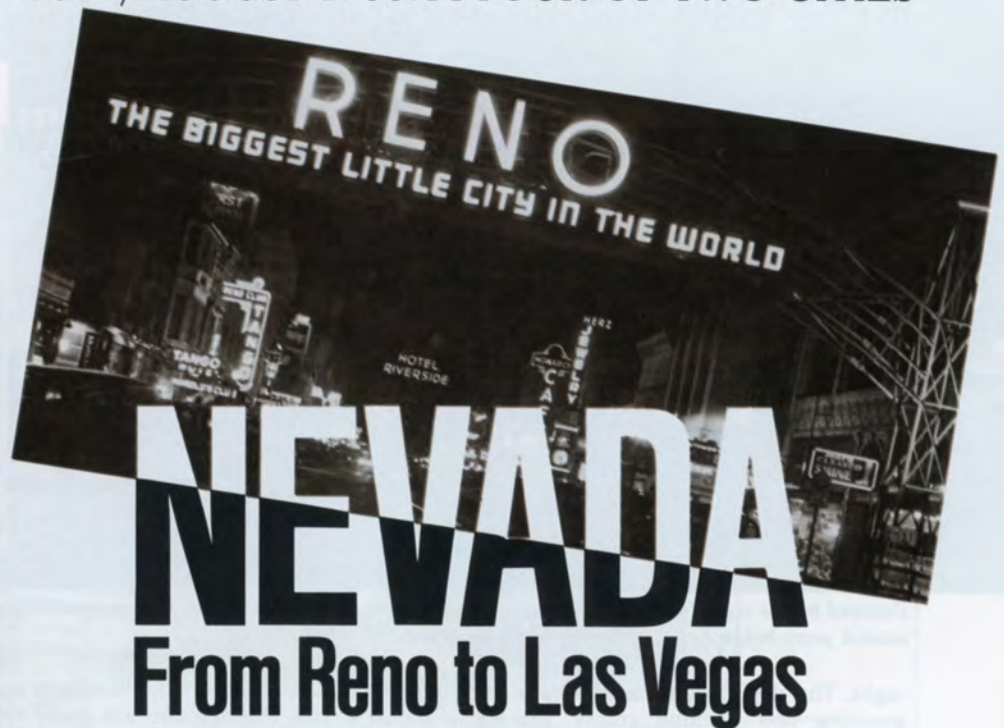
Judge C.C. Goodwin wrote the obituary of Dan that took more than a column on the front page of the *Enterprise*. In it he coined the phrase that ought to be carved on Dan's tombstone: "He was the most efficient and valuable man that ever wore out his life in a newspaper office." □

*David W. Toll of Gold Hill is author of The Compleat Nevada Traveler, a new edition of which was recently released.*









# NEVADA

## From Reno to Las Vegas

Recovering from the Great Depression and unaware of impending war, Nevada boosters were inclined to paint fantastic pictures of the wonders to behold in the Silver State.

**F**ill up the gas tank and come with us in your motor car. Roll down over the mountains and across the valleys from Reno to Las Vegas on one of Nevada's finest hard-surfaced highways. The distance is about 450 miles and affords one of the most interesting and colorful drives in the West.

Between these two western but thoroughly modern cities in a desert state of wide open spaces and small population, the route is packed with scenic thrills. These range from the modern version of rip-roaring mining camps where western history was made to gorgeously colored sunrise and sunset skies.

Rugged mountains, snowcapped and colorful; broad valleys, some green with lush vegetation in peaceful pastoral settings, others parched and reflecting typical desert hues; and lakes of varying size and outline, picturing the intense deep blue of the desert skies, will be found along the route.

You will probably be able to drive the entire distance under cloudless skies with a friendly sun overhead. Picturesque cowboys in typical western outfits, Indians gaming on their reservations, and hardy prospectors with packs ready for the solitude of the hills will all blend to make a striking picture as your car covers mile

after mile toward the southern tip of Nevada. In between you will be able to stop at "dude ranches," roll over long stretches of sage-covered lands, tarry in small modern towns, stop long enough to revive historic memories at alluring "ghost cities," skirt dry lakes or playas whose glistening white stretches of surface are often mistaken for water, and cross acres and acres of yucca-studded land which has an attraction peculiar to this region.

If conditions are favorable you might even have the experience of a mirage on the desert and see cities, large bodies of water, forests, or expansive mountain scenes realistically represented. Objects hundreds of miles from the spot and entirely foreign to the region appear suspended in the clear atmosphere and are apt to deceive even veterans of the desert. These images hang lifelike in the foreground as you approach nearer and nearer, only to vanish suddenly, leaving you in a state of semibewilderment.

You will be surprised, too, to learn that this vividly colored desert which radiates plenty of heat at midday becomes cool and pleasant as soon as the sun's golden disc begins creeping down behind the haunting and ever-changing hills. This also means you can enjoy a comfortable





*Powered by the recently finished Boulder (Hoover) Dam, downtown Las Vegas was sparkling several years before hotel developers broke ground on the Strip.*

night. The dry, pure air accentuates the morning and evening colors, making them truly magnificent in a land of limitless, unobstructed vision.

Reno, a thoroughly modern city of 25,000 typically western people, spreads over a portion of the Truckee Meadows just east of and guarded by the rugged and lofty Sierra Nevada Mountains. Reno, known as the crossroads of the world, holds a singular position among the cities of the nation. It has life and action.

Cosmopolitan in aspect, its tolerance is almost a fault. Divided into two parts by the Truckee, a cool swift mountain stream, the city's clean, shady streets lined with modern homes, numerous churches, schools, and hospitable citizens reflect the true western spirit of America.

With Reno as a rendezvous you can reach in all directions with your motor car, travel leisurely to see and enjoy such contrasting scenic places as the rugged Truckee Canyon, or Pyramid, a desert

lake of deep blue waters, with some very fine fishing; Lake Tahoe, one of the most beautiful lakes in the world; history-making mining camps, and beautiful Mount Rose, from the top of which can be seen, in all directions, endless chains of mountains, forests, deserts, lakes, canyons and valleys. If you prefer mountain climbing, the view from this 10,800-foot observation point, which is readily accessible, will more than repay you for the energy expended.

**L**as Vegas, city of destiny, on the southwestern desert is the southern Nevada objective. With a population of about 7,000 it is one of the few cities in the great southwest retaining its truly western character. Because of the great volume of low-cost electric power made available at the generating plants of Boulder Dam the future of Las Vegas holds much promise and its people are highly optimistic. In the center of the vast region possessing tremendous potentialities for mineral and metal production and fabrication, this city enters a new era of commercial development. Because of its rail and highway facilities and its proximity to Boulder City and the dam, Las Vegas holds a strategic position in a newly created recreational area embracing some of the world's most noted scenic wonders.

Las Vegas, the older and larger of the two cities, is the hub of the district. Because of the 115-mile long artificially created Mead Lake which the Colorado River has poured into the heart of the desert, "Vegas" has assumed the status of a point of departure for scenic motor-boat trips into the Grand Canyon as well as possessing diversified recreational opportunities never dreamed of before. Boating, swimming, horseback riding down the trails, airplane trips up the river and water sports and fishing have taken on new meaning.

In fact Las Vegas, a replica of the old western town of romantic books, presents a strange contrast of life in the great open spaces where modern conditions prevail. Citizens of the southern Nevada town and the surrounding region reared in the traditions of life in the saddle among rim rocks, box canyons and granite peaks are becoming nautical minded so they may be able to adapt themselves to maritime customs. This miracle of the desert known as Mead Lake lies at the foot of a thoroughfare which stretches from Reno in the north to beyond Las Vegas in the south. It portends the transition of a desert state whose people are wondering if they are destined, in the near future, to be classified as desert mariners.

In no other state can such a transition be seen as that which you will find along the Bonanza Highway between Reno and Las Vegas in Nevada. □



*Pre-war adventurers could set off on scenic side trips to such wild and woolly watering holes as the Ghost Casino in Rhyolite.*



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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*After occupying the Northern, Harrah's joined the Bank Club as a Center Street landmark.*

## Arrival in Gomorrah

Bill Harrah arrived in Reno in 1937 to discover a town one national magazine called 'The City That Sex Built.'

**By Leon Mandel**

**W**illiam Fisk Harrah, 26-year-old charmer, pathological car lover, and bingo entrepreneur; William Fisk Harrah, who would spend the next four decades building a gambling monument as marbled and sturdy as the Arc De Triomphe; William Fisk Harrah, who was not yet but soon would be assembling the world's most important collection of automobiles; William Fisk Harrah, the man who industrialized gambling; *that* Bill Harrah arrived in Reno, Nevada, in May of 1937



He came to a town that was four or five or six communities superimposed upon one another. There was the City of Ranchers and Businessmen. There was Reno: Mecca of Divorcees. Another city within the city waited at the end of the trail for every shepherd and buckaroo in Northern Nevada. There was the City of the Players. And, of course, there was Reno, the Nation's Harlot.

Not quite \$23 million in assessed city property clumped in four square miles didn't leave sloganeers much choice but to call Reno the Biggest Little City in the World if they wanted to call it anything; unfortunately for the cause of accuracy Reno wasn't big and it wasn't little and any Easterner worth his chauvinism would have laughed at the idea of calling the place a city, although the 22,000 persons who lived there were proud to do so.

What's more, they would have argued the point. Didn't the city have an airport with four daily transcontinental mail and passenger flights? And almost 30 car dealerships including Short Gibson on Sierra Street selling Terraplanes? And 10 barber shops? Not to mention 27 dentists, five department stores, four libraries, two mortuaries, three newspapers, 10 public schools, 42 physicians and surgeons, 115 lawyers, 17 "places of amusement," and two permanent meeting places for the United Ancient Order of Druids? Talk about your haven for professionals! Thank God the medicos went along with the city directory people who described Reno as "the city with the most enjoyable climate in the world, where the sun shines every day in the year and sickness is banished."

If sickness was banished in Reno before the Second World War, so were spouses. Divorce was the city's most prominent industry. Six times over the next 40 years Bill Harrah would take advantage of local expertise in this craft. At the moment of arrival, however, everyone was doing just fine without his business. The Reno divorce had taken on a cachet ever since Mrs. William Ellis Corey, wife of the young and prominent president of U.S. Steel, sued successfully for divorce in July of 1906, winning a \$2 million settlement. What the newly rich Mrs. Corey didn't do, Mary Pickford accomplished 14 years later when she went to Reno for the divorce that would free her to marry Douglas Fairbanks.

Understanding the value of its remunerative if eccentric cottage industry, the state engaged in a quarter-century underbidding contest with the rest of the U.S.—indeed the world—to keep its advantage.

From six months residency, Nevada lowered its requirement to three months when Mexico City and Paris began to compete for the divorce trade. Upstarts Idaho and Arkansas waited three years to watch the experiment and thereupon re-



Bill Harrah found room to ride horses when he moved to Reno in the 1930s, but cars were still his favorite means of travel.

duced the required term of residence themselves. Nevada replied to the threatened loss of an estimated \$5 million annual divorce revenue by cutting the three-month term to only six weeks. That did it. Not only did divorce business pick up—and these were the years of the Depression—but so did the supply side of the divorce equation: marriages, which outnumbered separations 3 to 1.

The establishment city of Reno—whose mouthpiece was the *Reno Evening Gazette*—was not entirely sure it approved of these goings on: "The *Gazette* has not changed its opinion about the character of [the divorce bill]. It is designed to further commercialize the courts and law-making power of this state and ignores entirely the social side of the marriage relation with which, only, the laws and courts are presumed to deal." That was mild. The husband of a woman newly returned from Reno shed of him was less complimentary. Reno was "a city where perjury and more perjury is the order of the day, a city where every effort is exerted to make the marriage institution seem like a farce and where practically the entire populace feeds like vermin on profits from the divorce mill," quoth New York lawyer J.S. Robinson in *The American Weekly*.

But Reno was also a shopping hub for ranchers, their families, and their hands, sturdy, plain people. Reno had two hospitals, terribly important then and now for

the folk who lived in the cow counties—Churchill, Lyon, Storey, Ormsby, Douglas, Mineral, Nye, Lander, Humboldt, and Pershing—an area that would come to be known as an extended Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. The city had: Baptist, Christian Science, Congregational, Episcopal, Jewish, Mormon, Lutheran, Methodist (white) and Methodist (black), Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and Seventh Day Adventist churches. There were four theaters; there was an auditorium with seating for 2,000. The University of Nevada had an enrollment of just over 1,000 students. There were 383 stores selling \$16.5 million worth of merchandise each year. All of this was dazzling to those simple ranchers whom Nevada prose laureate Robert Laxalt described as "leathery men with quizzical, judging eyes, women who get up in the darkness to cook huge breakfasts of sausage and eggs and homemade bread and pots of steaming coffee deeply religious [people] gentle with their children, but restrictive in a way that would shock modern parents." They came to Reno to shop, to socialize, to worship, to study; some of them came to play. But they brushed only briefly against the City of the Players.

In part that was because the players in Reno slept late. In part it was because the players gambled, drank, and womanized to the exclusion of normal social intercourse, an exclusion, by the way, that was reciprocated. Of the 17 "places of amusement" listed in the Reno City Directory, there were three of particular consequence to Renoites and newcomers, particularly Bill Harrah. The Palace Club on Center Street was a monument to one of Reno's legendary early gamblers: Johnny Petricciani. Harolds had opened two years before Harrah's arrival, and the Smiths, *pere* and *fiis*, would serve as rivals and exemplars to Harrah during the early growth periods of his own business. But it was the Bank Club where the action was and the Bank Club that was also the epicenter for unsavory activity in the Players City. The place was owned by Bill Graham and Jim McKay, who, had they been born a generation later, would have sent Senator Estes Kefauver into paroxysms of delicious outrage. In fact they did, although by the time the man with the raccoon cap got around to uncovering their activity, both of them were long gone.

Graham and McKay had come to Reno from the boom town of Tonopah. Before opening in the Bank Club, they had operated a variety of small bootleg cum gambling joints in Reno as well as a nightclub near Verdi, hard by the California border, an extravagant and lavish place catering to the western equivalent of the Hamptons set. According to one chronicler of Reno



gambling, Raymond Sawyer, the two men took "executive offices" in the Riverside Hotel bank, "spreading the word they were interested in *any* deal involving the movement of cash." The record shows McKay and Graham arrested in 1934 for using the mails to defraud in a \$2.5-million horse race swindle. After four years and three trials they were convicted, fined \$11,000 each, and eventually shipped off for nine years apiece in prison. That much is certain. Also on record is a shooting death inflicted on one Blackie McCracken by Bill Graham, which was instantly dismissed as self defense. From there things get murky.

Bob Laxalt has no trouble at all attributing criminal innovation to the pair, giving them credit for "laundering money stolen in the rash of bank robberies that was sweeping the nation. Hit-and-run robbers of the ilk of Baby Face Nelson and Alvin Karpis headed straight for Reno with their loot. There, they turned traceable greenbacks over to Bill Graham and Jim McKay, and received clean money in return, less, of course, a modest handling charge." Graham and McKay's Bank Club tables were the laundromats of their day. Although a number of memoirs and even a few histories suggest that Baby Face Nelson spent a lot of time keeping

out of sight during these banking transactions, he evidently didn't keep *that* far out of sight, which brings us back to the murkiness.

A key witness against Graham and McKay in the mail fraud case was one Roy Frisch, who worked at the Riverside Bank. In the classic way of prosecution witnesses of the era, he suddenly disappeared. Raymond Sawyer is certain he knew what happened:

"It was revealed later that before the bullet-ridden corpse of Baby Face Nelson was recovered from a ditch somewhere in Illinois, Nelson had been traced to Reno and it was established that he was in town at this particular time, as well as on the night that Roy Frisch disappeared.

"A gangster named John Chase, in jail at Alcatraz, confessed that he and Nelson had taken Frisch from the street, killed him, burned his body just before burying it off a dirt road in a mountain range somewhere southeast of Reno."

Chase would not testify and Nelson was beyond it, so Frisch is listed to this day as a missing person.

This incident at least suggests Graham and McKay were not deacons of Reno's social church, but that didn't make much difference to their fellow players, including Bill Harrah. The Bank Club was a regular hangout also for Virgil Smith, who would later own Colbrandt's, a very tony club; the Harolds Club Smiths; Bob Ring, Harrah's confidant and drinking partner; and the rest of the rather select group of carousers who made up Reno's gambling establishment.

Every night Harrah would make the rounds: Harolds, the Palace, the Wine House, and the Bank Club; a young and healthy Bill Harrah was a thirsty Bill Harrah, and he did not stint on the Canadian whiskey or the Cutty Sark.

Whether Harrah made it a point to be at the Bank Club at 2 a.m. when the ladies came up from the stockade, no one is willing to confirm. At any rate, he was often there late and they were *always* there, courtesy, who else, Graham and McKay, who had taken a substantial position in that business, too.

Prostitution was a given fact of Reno life in 1937. There had been quarrels in the city council about its blatant presence; blue nose Reno was and always had been outraged by the sight of painted women within the city limits. But a permissive mayor, E.E. Roberts, and a resigned council decided that regulated prostitution was better than unregulated, and considering that whoring would be in Nevada come what may, they would confine the ladies to an undistinguished quarter of town and require health inspections.

That quarter was called the Stockade. Nowadays it is the site of the Reno headquarters of Nevada Bell, to the delight of



Douglas Alley in the 1940s offered Reno prowlers a wide choice of clubs and cafes. Among the casinos connected by the alley were the Palace, Harolds, and Harrah's growing bingo club.



some old timers. Its existence scandalized the country and provided highly spiced copy for the sensational press, of the likes of *Real Detective*:

"New York Betty was dressing. Filmy silk panties, skin tight and gossamer sheer, blended indistinguishably with the warm, pink flesh of her curvaceous body. "It was pretty racy stuff for the day. But special investigative reporter Con Ryan was not content to be descriptive; what was needed here was a little socio-economics.

"The Bull Pen, also known throughout Nevada as the District, the Stockade, the Line, or the Old Homestead, consists of 75 individual cribs, each occupied by a girl in various stages of undress, plying the oldest trade in the world with the sanction of local and state law and by the grace of a shadowy Chinese known only as 'Wong' [a.k.a., as we have discovered, Graham and McKay].

"The cribs are two-room affairs, facing inward on the Bull Pen, built of red brick, with a shoddy lean-to shanty tacked on at the back. A bed occupies most of the front room or parlor. The door and window of each crib are always open to the passerby on the sidewalk, giving an intimate glimpse into the cribs."

As for those passersby, Con Ryan is not complimentary. "There were bandy-legged cowboys, hairy and smelly; sleek Filipinos, nut-brown and overdressed; stolid, slant-eyed Chinese farm hands; the inevitable sightseers; a half-drunk Reno businessman the flotsam and jetsam of male humanity, swayed by the same immemorial urge that has activated men since the dawn of life."

Obviously Gomorrah.

Which is why, in large extent, Bill Harrah brought his wife Thelma Batchelor Harrah from Venice, California, to Reno, Nevada, in the May of 1937 and thrived there until his death. For as a young man buffeted by the on-and-off enforcement of laws against the sins of bingo in Southern California, he saw in Reno an oasis of freedom. And as a live-and-let-live Westerner he saw absolutely nothing wrong with the likes of Bill Graham and Jim McKay, who after all ran straight games at the Bank Club. What they did on their own time was their business. All they wanted was to be left alone, and if anyone should have been able to understand that, it was Bill Harrah. □

Leon Mandel, formerly of Reno, lives in Grosse Point, MI. He is editor-in-chief of *AutoWeek*, editorial director of *Monthly Detroit*, and a regular Nevada contributor. "Arrival in Gomorrah" was excerpted from his book, *William Fisk Harrah: The Life and Times of a Gambling Magnate*, 1982, Doubleday & Company,

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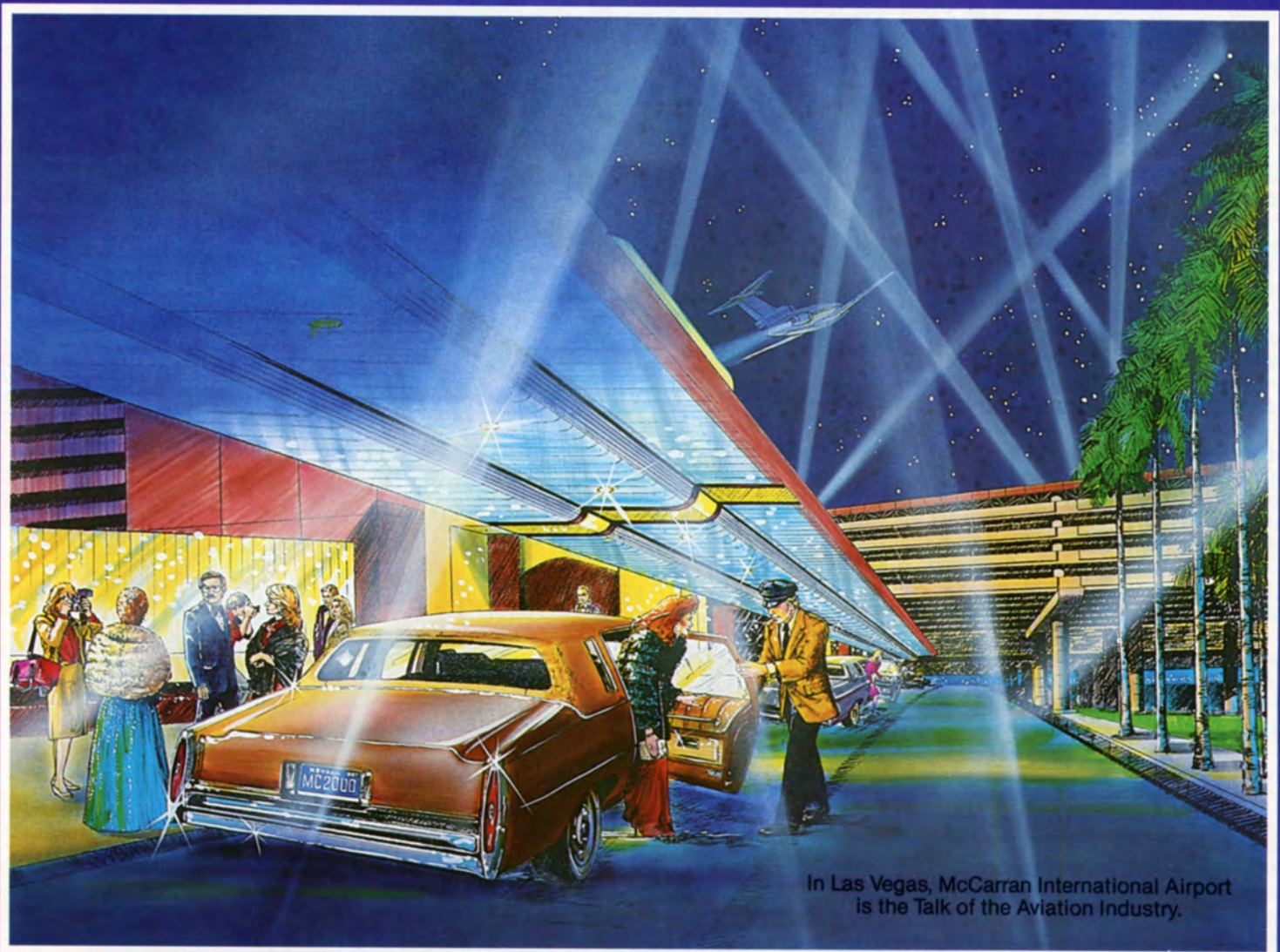
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RICHARD MENZIES PHOTOS

## Melvin Dummar Revisited

The real-life star of 'Melvin and Howard' inherited more fame than fortune after he picked up a ragged stranger on the highway near Beatty

By Richard Menzies

**I**t's a dark moonless night in Central Nevada as we chase our high beams along Highway 50, steel-belted radials turning hapless field mice and suicidal jackrabbits into magpie fodder. The high-intensity halogen spotlight scans the shoulder for range cattle, while the fuzz-buster on the dash monitors the darkness ahead for telltale radar signals. Inside, the passengers snuggle amid a mounting bilge of soft drink cans, potato chip bags, Kentucky fried chicken bones and spent .22 cartridges.

The man behind the wheel is familiar, a dead ringer for the cuddly, endomorphic actor Paul Le Mat, and no wonder. He is the real life Melvin Dummar, former milkman and gas station operator, would-be heir to the Howard Hughes empire, and current American folk hero celebrated in the Oscar-winning film "Melvin and Howard."

The movie, according to director Jonathan Demme, is an "imaginative interpretation" of the actual events of Dummar's life. Still, the celluloid version isn't far off the mark.

"For the most part, all those things happened to me at one time in my life or another," Melvin admits. "I didn't like the way they made me appear naive and frivolous, but mostly it's a fun movie."



"I really don't like the advertising campaign that Universal's put out. I don't think that the title, 'Melvin and Howard, an American Love Story,' is very appealing at all. If I wasn't Melvin, if I wasn't familiar with the story, I'd think it had something to do with the gay community. That's a little embarrassing to me."

Embarrassment, notoriety and worldwide publicity seem to have had little effect on the real life Melvin Dummar. He's still an ingenuous, hard-working member of the middle class, the sort of average specimen outer space aliens would be likely to pick for a close encounter of the third kind, or to whom God would appear in the guise of George Burns. And sometimes it doesn't seem so improbable that Howard Hughes would single out Melvin as a logical heir to his fortune.

As it turned out, however, Melvin inherited more fame than fortune. Still a member of the working class, he spends most of his time these days traveling Nevada and Northern California as a salesman for Trans Alaska Seafoods. On the side, he sells boxes of synthetic milk substitute and sometimes peddles T-shirts bearing the slogan: "Even bad wills make rich attorneys." At home in Ogden, Utah, his wife Bonnie helps pay the bills by selling homemade brownies at flea markets. For rest and relaxation, the pair enjoy camping and cruising the highways and byways of the Great Basin.

"I guess I've driven every paved road there is in Nevada," says Melvin, who grew up on the outskirts of Fallon and is intimate with most every geographical feature of Nye and Churchill counties. Off to the right he points out Sand Mountain, where as a boy he went sledding on an old automobile hood; to the left is the ghost town of Fairview, where his prospector father made and lost a fortune in gold, and where his sister Mary Ellen was killed in a fall down a mine shaft.

Melvin never cared much for mining, but prospecting and rock hounding are in his blood. He's also the sort of guy who can't resist stopping to inspect cardboard boxes lying beside the road, and as he drives, one eye is always trained on the shoulder for bits of jetsam blown from passing trucks. Over the years the roadside has rewarded him with tools, cash, clothing, a broken lot of stuffed teddy bears. But the biggest find ever was the time outside Beatty when he happened upon the prone figure of recluse billionaire Howard Hughes.

"I think it was either on the 29th or the 30th of December, 1967," Dummar recalls. "He was lying about a hundred yards off the main highway on sort of a dirt road. Looked like, appeared to me like somebody'd dumped him out there. When I first seen him with my headlights I



*Melvin and Bonnie said they'd get along fine without Howard's millions.*

thought he was dead. So that's when I went over and helped him get up. Took him back over to the car and put him in."

As the saying goes, the rest is history. Thawed by the car heater and aroused by Melvin's singing, the ragged stranger regained consciousness and became conversant.

"We were talking about different things I was doing, where I was working. And I think we were talking about the aircraft industry, because I'd been in the Air Force and I was trying to get a job in one of the aircraft plants. And that's when he told me he was familiar with Hughes Aircraft because he owned it. Up until then I thought he was just a wino. In fact, I still thought he was a wino after that. I thought, 'Wow, this guy's really squirrely. He's been out here a little too long.'"

After dropping his strange passenger off at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, Melvin says, he didn't give the incident much thought—that is, not until April 1976, when he learned he'd been named beneficiary of one-sixteenth of the late billionaire's estate. The love story of Melvin and Howard blossomed, only to end in divorce after a seven-month trial that judged the so-called Mormon will a fake. Instead of being a hundred and fifty million or so in the black, Melvin found himself broke, discredited and thousands of dollars in debt.

Almost all of the \$80,000 he and Bonnie were paid for film rights to the story went to pay leftover legal fees. Their contract also entitles them to three percent of the net profits from the film—

money that still seems as remote as Howard's millions. What Melvin had really hoped for was a starring role in his life story; instead, he had to settle for a bit part as a waiter.

Dummar still thinks he'd make a good actor or perhaps a television game show emcee, just as he once almost made a career of being a contestant. He also has singing ambitions, and when not busy selling fish, headlines with a country-rock group called Melvin and Revival. In fact, he carries a demo tape in his car, ready to play at the drop of a hint. His favorites are songs he's composed himself, homespun ballads such as "All American Dreamer" and "Thank You Howard." And, of course, there's the now infamous "Santa's Souped Up Sleigh." Backed by a good band and professionally recorded, it's really not bad at all. Included with his first album, he says, will be a free facsimile of the original Hughes will.

Though they're still amazed to see their names in lights and sometimes grow wistful at the sight of big yellow jetliners, Melvin and Bonnie Dummar remain remarkably unchanged by the whole affair. Basically they're ordinary people caught in a workaday world of jobs, bills, house payments, and recalcitrant children. The fan mail and crank calls have slowed to a trickle; TV comedians have mercifully exhausted their repertoire of fingerprint jokes. Melvin once wondered if the movie might do for Gabbs what "Urban Cowboy" did for Gillies' bar, but so far there's been no pilgrimage of would-be Melvin Dummars to Basic Industries.

"I've met the Hollywood stars and I'm not that impressed," Melvin says. "It hasn't changed the way I live. I'm still doing the same things I would have."

Asked if his celebrated "love affair" with Howard Hughes has cooled, the genial samaritan of Highway 95 laughs.

"Well, you know, I think it was kinda neat that he left me in his will and everything and remembered me. But I only wish that he'd have handled it differently and had filed in court himself, or had his attorneys do it or had it notarized or whatever they do to 'em, so everything wouldn't be falling on me. And accusing me and my whole family, friends, neighbors, and everybody else of having some big plot or scheme going. That's what really hurt."

If he had it all to do over again, Melvin says he wouldn't hesitate to pick up anyone in distress. But as far as the last will and testament goes, he'd definitely handle it differently if he had another chance. For one thing, he wouldn't handle it at all. □

*Richard Menzies is a Salt Lake City-based writer who was picked up by Melvin Dummar while hitchhiking on assignment for Nevada Magazine.*





## When they said "Go West" they meant Southwest

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# The Exposing of the Silver State

For photographers, getting a Nevada subject to hold still can be a rewarding experience.

**C**apturing Nevada's beauty on film is a task that can frustrate all but the most persistent and artful photographers. A vista that is sun-scorched and colorless in summer may explode into a fairyland of pastels for 30 seconds during one winter sunset. An old shack may look like an old shack for 100 years, only to one day bristle with dignity like an old man who knows too much—and won't tell you anything.

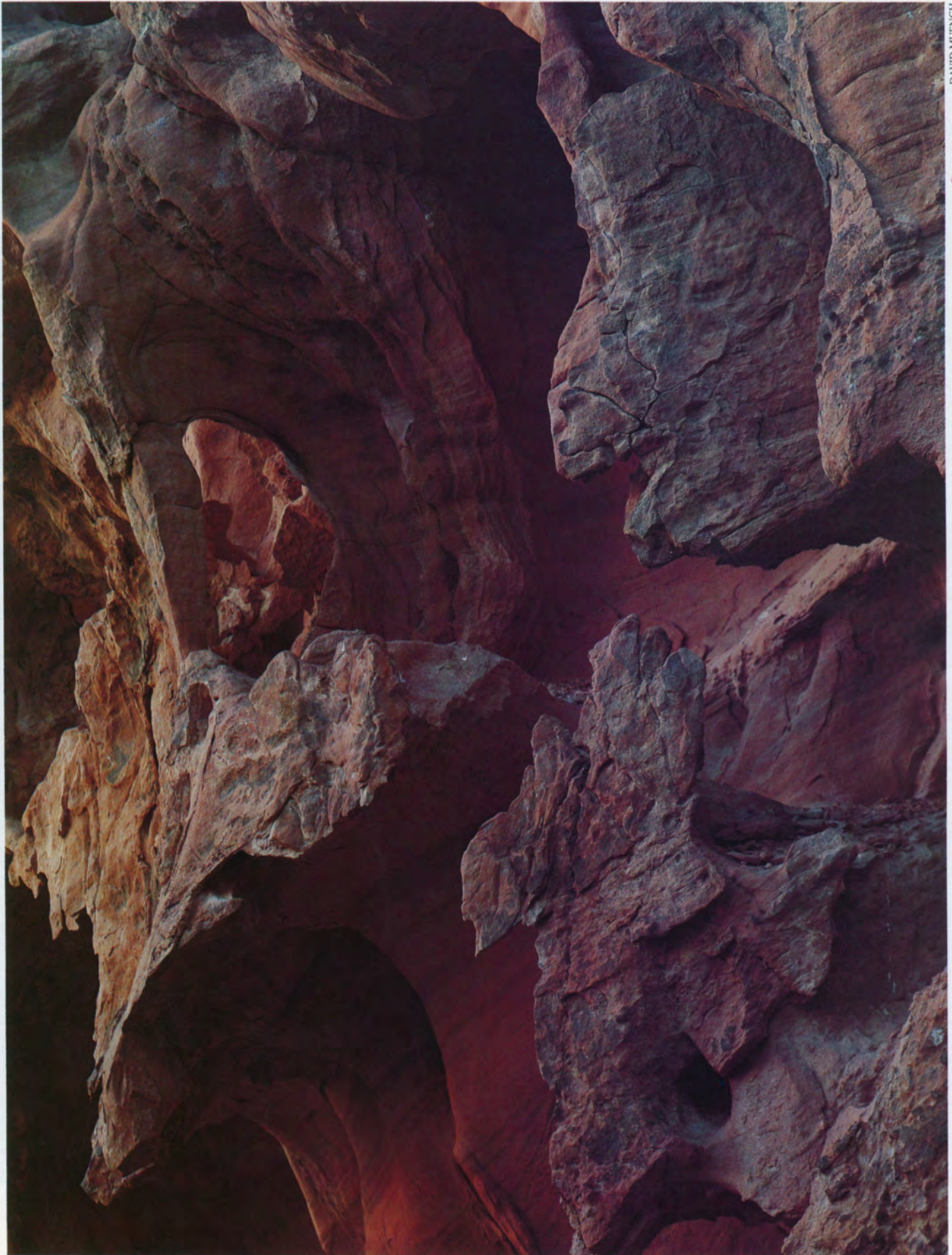
During the past 50 years *Nevada Magazine* has been a showcase for those photographers who manage to pry the truth from Nevada's secret soul. The first memorable photos appeared during the '30s and '40s, when Highway Department photographers produced an invaluable collection of black-and-white images of Nevada life in the Depression and war years.

In the 1950s, after Adrian Atwater came on staff, the book began to come alive. Atwater toted his 4x5 Speed Graphic around the state, patiently photographing desert sunsets, ghost

towns, and A-bomb tests. In the '60s magazine readers saw the work of staffer Jim Reinheller and freelance shutter wizards like Philip Hyde and young David Muench. Then in the late '70s came publisher Caroline Hadley, herself a photographer for national publications. She has featured ace *Nevada* shooters like Linda Dufurrena, Tony Diebold, Richard Rowan, Larry Prossor, Jay Dusard, Kurt Markus, and many others. Prominent among them is Muench, whose work appears in each issue.

To say thanks to so many photographic contributors, we present here two of our finest color shots. On the facing page, David Muench offers, in profile, the ever-changing sandstone faces of the Valley of Fire. The photo originally appeared in January/February 1985. And on the following spread, from November/December 1984, photographer David Lorenz Winston lets a 100-year-old Virginia City boardinghouse speak for itself.—JC





DAVID MUENCH



*"Virginia City Winter"*

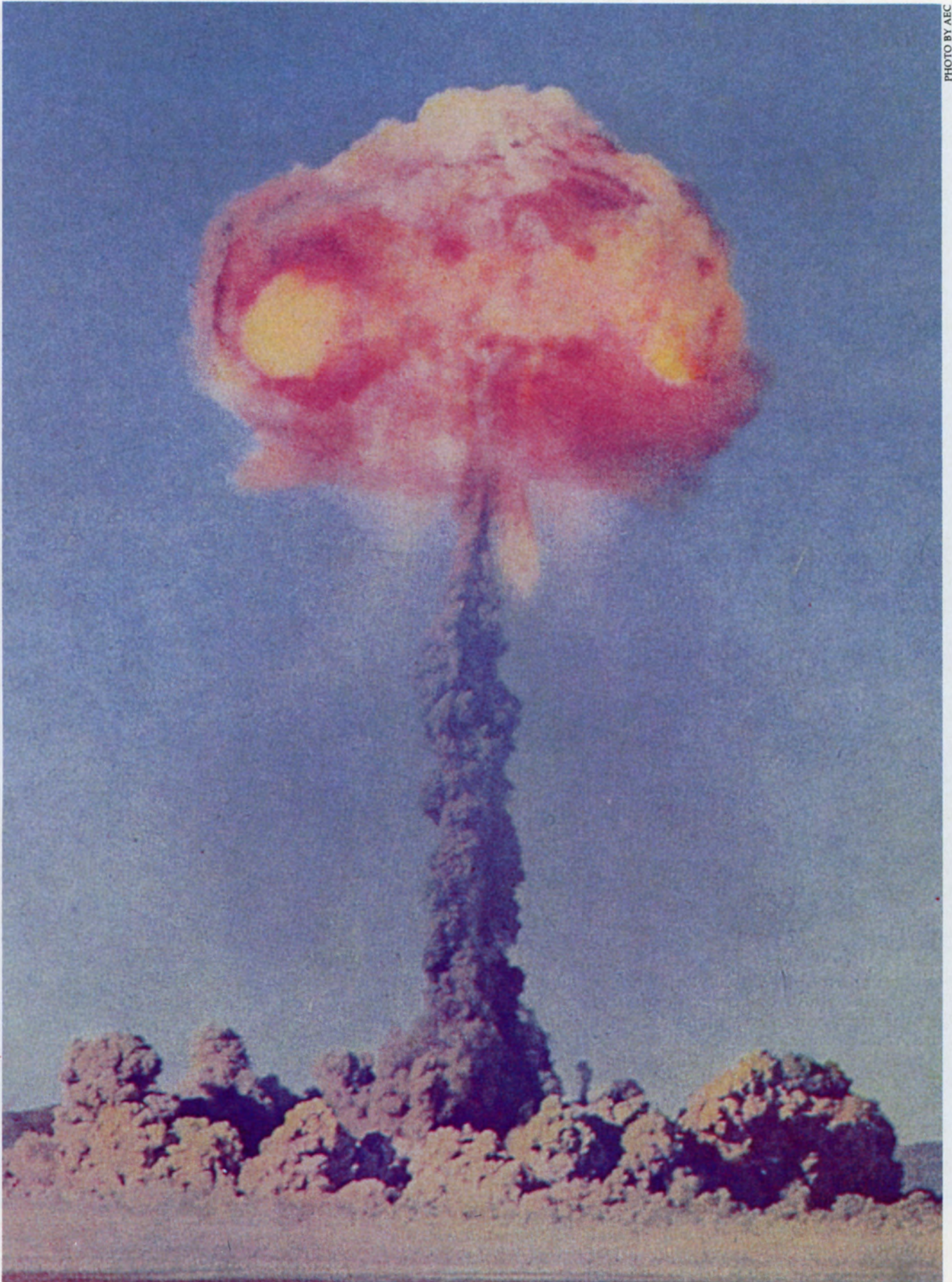
BY DAVID LORENZ WINSTON











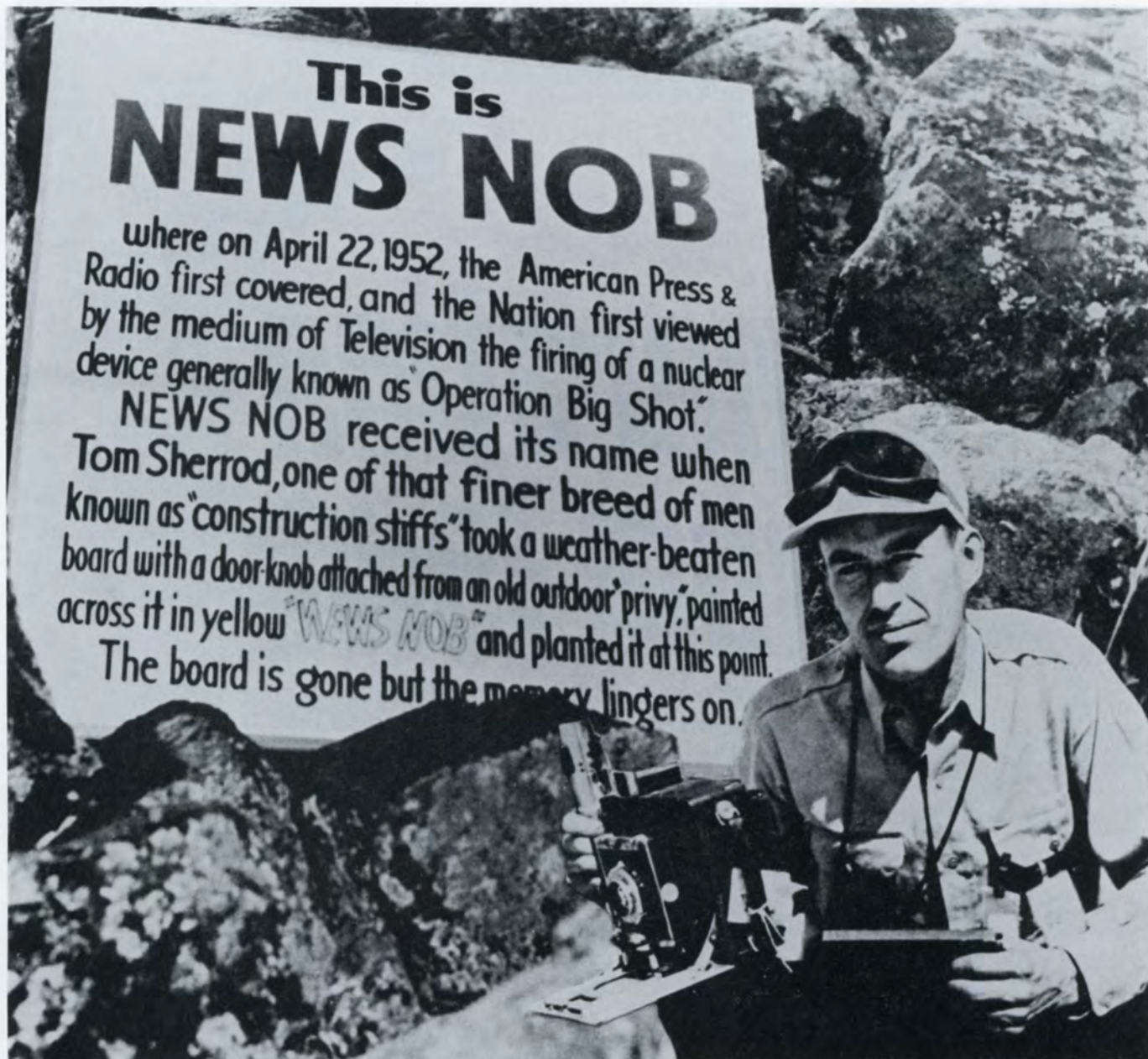


# *Operation 'Doom Town'*

On March 17 1953, hundreds of officials, journalists, and soldiers gathered at Yucca Flat for the biggest blast of their lives.

**T**he "Observation Shot" project was a big show. Only 600 persons saw it "on location," but about 15 million in the nation saw it on television screens in their homes. It was the first public demonstration by the Atomic Energy Commission of an A-bomb blast. The locale was Yucca Flat in southern Nevada where the AEC maintains one of its continental proving grounds. Primarily the March 17, 1953 explosion was a scientific experiment but secondarily it was for the purpose of impressing Americans with the deadly seriousness of nuclear device detonations and the need for arousing a





Ace Nevada photographer Adrian Atwater poses with his trusty Speed Graphic at the scene.

keener interest in civilian defense.

Besides six State Governors, AEC top brass, several Army generals, a dozen colonels and many officers of lesser rank, the Navy and the Air Force were well represented. GI's were stationed in the forward trenches for the first time, and the civilian defense organization from nearly every state had observers on the scene to view the terrific potentialities which the A-bomb packs.

To give the event widespread public notice, national news gathering association writers, special reporters from dozens of metropolitan newspapers, magazine writers who get by-lines in the million

“  
At ground zero nothing  
can survive. The earth  
is seared and blackened,  
steel towers vaporized,  
hot, death-dealing  
radioactive sand and  
dust particles spread out  
and ascend to  
great heights.  
”

circulation bracket, television crews, radio announcers whose names are daily household callers, expert photographers by the score, and amateur photographers in greater number covered the event from a spot news as well as from the feature angle.

The AEC, in cooperation with the United States military forces, made every effort to see that the broadest coverage of the event would prevail. To provide background for the event—explosion of a tower-dropped missile, equal in energy to 15,000 tons of TNT—the entire group was taken to the proving grounds two days before the actual blast occurred. Citizens



of Las Vegas, Nevada's city of destiny and the fastest growing city in the Southwest, acted as host to the gathering and showed every courtesy to those who came to see one of the greatest spectacles of human civilization—an atom bomb explosion.

On Sunday, March 15 the entire group was taken by caravan to Yucca Flat, in the heart of the desert about 65 miles north of Las Vegas, and guided over the ground to get "atmosphere" and impressions of things to come.

The AEC, in conjunction with the Civil Defense Administration, had constructed two houses for test purposes and these were the objects of interest for the observers. A tour had been arranged over the proving grounds, past the 300-foot steel tower, the first house 3,500 feet distant, and then later to the second house 7,500 feet away. At the second "house of doom" the observers were permitted to inspect every detail of the structure which was sturdily built to resist the big blast. Radio and television programs originated at this location on that Sunday afternoon and were broadcast to the nation.

On Sunday, March 15, 1953, those two houses were intact, inviting, and the envy of all who saw them. Two days later the story was different. The AEC also had placed several dozen automobiles of various makes and models in strategic locations to test the effect of the blast.

On Monday about midnight the 19 buses loaded with observers left Las Vegas for News Nob, 65 miles distant. There the group waited for zero hour and the blast. Upon reaching News Nob where an unobstructed view of ground zero was to be had, television transmitting sets were trained on the spot and adjusted, radio announcers checked their scripts and mikes, and each photographer had a favorite spot for his camera, as time marched fast. Out over the Joshua trees and sagebrush in the sloping foreground at ground zero, seven miles from News Nob, a tiny light at the top of a tower from which the bomb would be dropped sparkled in the early morning darkness. This light remained visible until zero hour, then was seen no more. The two houses could not be distinguished in the pitch-dark desert. A public announcing system at News Nob was used to keep the crowd informed of developments and last-minute precautions.

As the first faint streaks of dawn poked over the distant hills, the blast came. A vivid flash of light pierced the desert darkness and lighted up the entire countryside. It lasted but a moment or two then was gone. All eyes then turned toward the spot where the bomb had exploded. They saw a big ball of furiously churning fire, smoke, sand, and debris rising rapidly from the ground in huge, rolling waves. The afterglow remained for several



*This AEC man sincerely believed that his padded jump suit and booties would protect him as he monitored radiation levels near ground zero only four hours after the blast.*

minutes while the mushrooming cloud continued to rise, then drift away and apart. The sun was still below the horizon but daylight was coming fast. Broad streaks of sunlight slanted over the mountain tops like ghostly fingers clawing at the heavens. Rumbling of the shock wave

## Desert Holocaust

Atomic bomb tests conducted at Yucca and Frenchman's flats in southern Nevada, while becoming quite commonplace, must not be passed off lightly. They are serious in aspect and deadly in effect. Even the smallest one of the 1953 series, labeled officially as "Observation Shot," had a kick equivalent to 15,000 tons of TNT explosive. All of the blasts are frightfully terrible yet unbelievably magnificent; they are hellish but beautiful; horrible yet spectacular. The whole range of human emotion is brought into play upon observing such a detonation. From a distance each appears as a gorgeous fireworks display on a gigantic scale. Nagasaki and Hiroshima tell the story differently, however, on what could happen should one be dropped on an American city by a relentless enemy. Just thinking of the terrible toll which is possible makes the shivers run up and down your spine.

The flashes can be seen, and the shock waves felt, for many miles from the explo-

## No Danger

Atomic Energy Commission officials declare there is no danger to travel over Nevada highways from radioactive "fall out particles." U.S. 95, the Bonanza Highway, courses nearest the Yucca Flat test site, 45 miles north of Las Vegas. General terrain, colorful panorama, and expansive solitude of the Nevada desert are strikingly impressive along that highway. No restrictions are in force, but security measures at Mercury, the post of entry to the test site, are in force at all times.

continued for nearly five minutes, bouncing back and forth from one mountain wall to another.

Down on Yucca Flat at ground zero a heavy fog of dust obscured the two houses which had been guinea pigs to the full impact of the blast. Soldiers in trenches about 2,000 yards from ground zero, for the first time, had observed the shot and lived through strange emotions.

The steel tower was completely dissolved and nowhere to be seen. House No. 1 was entirely collapsed and wrecked. House No. 2 was still erect but badly damaged. A big, circular, seared spot marked ground zero. Sagebrush had been toasted, Joshua trees blackened, sand bags scorched, but one lone lizard, apparently unharmed by the blast, was seen scurrying among the small rocks on the desert floor, probably wondering what it was all about. "Observation Shot" became a part of history. □

sion site. At ground zero nothing can survive. The earth is seared and blackened, steel towers vaporized, hot, death-dealing radioactive sand and dust particles spread out and ascend to great heights. At times this material is slow in dissipating and alleviating the dangers. No living thing exposed to the radioactive areas can escape some harm. It is not a pleasant thought to contemplate, but it is a fact.

Out on Yucca Flat very little damage occurs. The desert is broad, open, and free from any cultural obstruction. If that terrific force was let loose in a thickly populated, closely built community, the toll would be a holocaust indeed. So far, thank God, these holocausts occur on the Nevada desert where no one is harmed, but those forces of energy can be used for good or evil. God forbid that his totally destructive force ever should be used for an evil purpose. □



# Cowboys on Canvas

For the artist, Nevada is the great equalizer.

**W**hen internationally acclaimed Western artist Maynard Dixon moved to Fallen Leaf Lake near Lake Tahoe in 1933, the rustic Sierra resort seemed an inspirational setting. Waterfalls spilled from the Desolation Wilderness, Mount Tallac pierced the heavens, and quaint cottages and boat docks posed prettily on the shore.

He couldn't stand it.

He later told La Verne Rollin, whose feature on Dixon appeared in the Fall 1967 issue, that the Tahoe Basin was just "too artsy" with all its "postcard scenery."

And so he came to the Nevada desert, as have other great Western artists like Will James and Craig Sheppard, to discover the West in the raw. Indeed, the ranches, buckaroos, and rugged terrain of the Silver State are sculpted by harsh elements. The Nevada cowhand is marked by a steely squint, a sandblown complexion, and a stance that leans into the wind. For Western artists, the land and its rough-hewn tamers are irresistible subjects.

Over the years *Nevada Magazine* has featured some of the finest Western art ever to draw life from a brush. A dramatic example, on the facing page, is Dixon's "Rider," painted in Carson City in 1936. The original hangs in the office of the director of the Getchell Library at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Will James discovered Nevada during the early 1900s as a

youth roaming from ranch to ranch. He had time to perfect his drawing skills while doing a stretch at the State Prison in Carson City in 1914 for cattle rustling. He later moved to the less confining digs of a cabin in Washoe Valley, where he wrote the classic book *Smoky* in 1926. His painting of a bronc rider on page 48 ran with Anthony Amaral's story on James in the Spring 1966 issue.

On the heels of James and Dixon came Craig Sheppard, who was a dominating figure on the Nevada art scene from 1947 when he joined the art staff at UNR, until his death in 1978. As in the painting on page 49, which originally appeared in a feature by Molly Flagg Knudtsen on Basque buckaroos in Fall 1966, Sheppard portrayed the Nevada cowboy in abstract tones, merging sumi art techniques with bold watercolors.

One of the state's finest present-day Western artists is Douglas Pendleton Bennion, who was raised in Mesquite and now lives in Las Vegas. His work appeared in the January/February 1983 issue. Influenced by the soft focus of French Impressionism and the photo-realism of contemporary American painters, Bennion manages to capture the creases and wrinkles of his cowboy subjects while leaving the viewer enough space to draw his own conclusions. Bennion's is powerful work, and with those of the masters of old—and some new ones—will help continue the legacy of the truth of life in the Silver State.—JC





*"Rider"*

BY MAYNARD DIXON, 1936





WILL JAMES  
'29

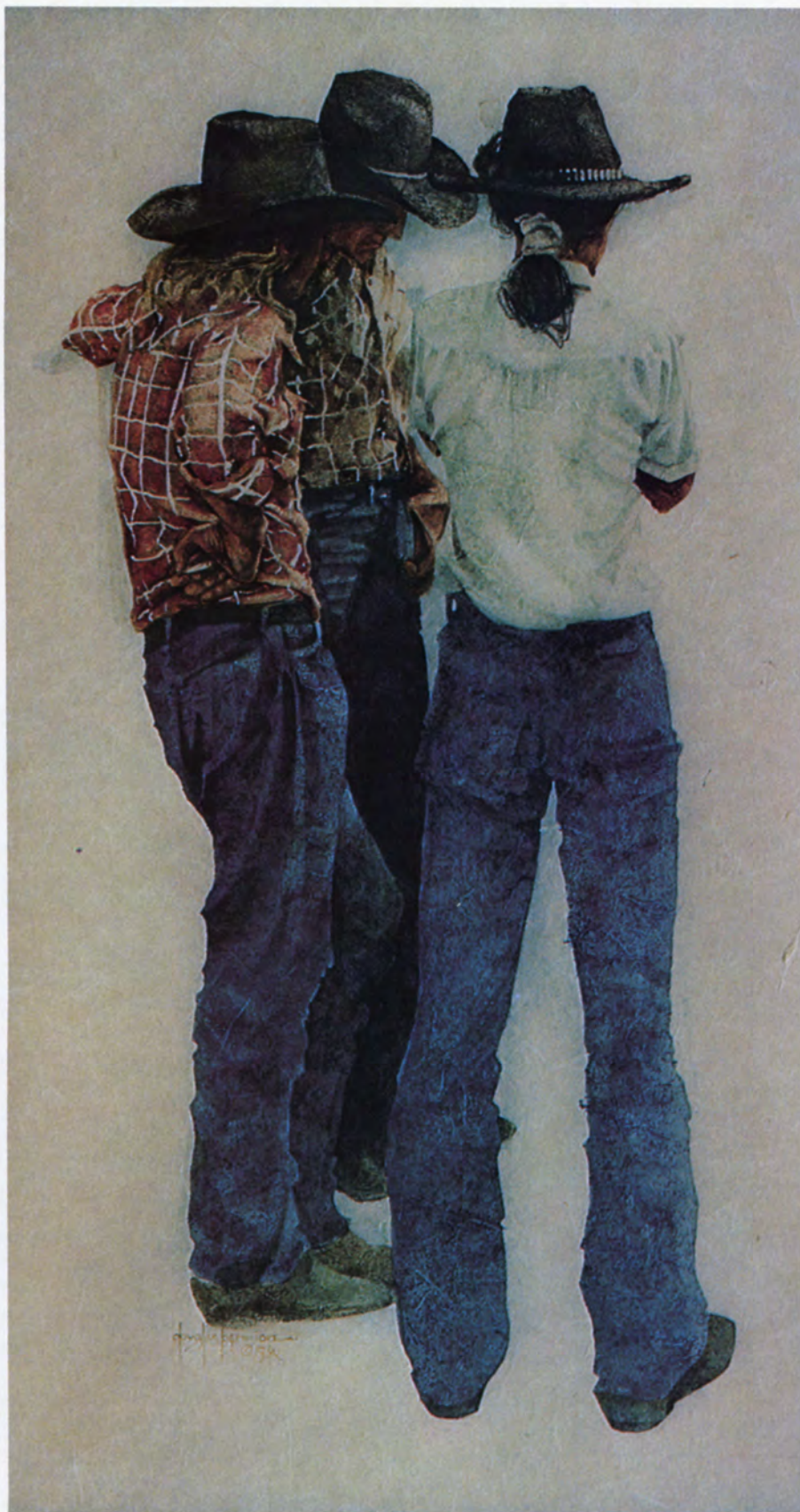
*"A Cow Outfit of My Own"*  
BY WILL JAMES, 1929





*"Basque Buckaroo"*  
BY CRAIG SHEPPARD, 1966





*"An Indian in the Rodeo"*  
BY DOUGLAS PENDLETON BENNION,  
1981

## LETTERS (Continued from page 5)

now publicly held. It would be even worse if the land was given to the state to "manage," i.e., become a giant political football.

Regardless of the failings of the Bureau of Land Management, the fences they erect have unlocked gates, allowing us ordinary folks access to the mountains and backcountry of Nevada. If the land fell into the hands of private individuals, those gates would sprout locks faster than it takes time to say it, and all of us citizens who now own and enjoy that land would certainly be denied access to it.

Susan Stornetta  
Silver City, NV

### Praise For Honest Reporting

I have read "The Legend Builders" in the May/June '85 issue with a great deal of interest, because I was on the payroll of the Six Companies, Inc. from May 1931 until May 1935. It was a joy to read some honest reporting after so much trash about the construction of the Hoover Dam had been published in recent years.

John H. Meursinge  
Yorba Linda, CA.

This letter is to express my appreciation and to compliment you on the May/June '85 issue, which featured the "Legend of Hoover Dam." The articles were most interesting and the photography superb.

I am very proud to have been the mayor of Boulder City during this historic anniversary year, and have heard only positive statements on all the events held and the feature article in your magazine. The Council members and citizens of Boulder City join me in expressing our thanks for a great issue and one which is sure to be a collector's item.

Robert S. Ferraro, Mayor  
Boulder City, NV

I much enjoyed the article on Laura Spitzer ("Beethoven in the Boondocks," September/October '85). Another Nevada tour we fund is with the New World Brass Quintet, also of Las Vegas. They're superb, and would be worth your consideration for an article sometime.

Bill Fox  
Nevada State Council on the Arts  
Reno, NV

### Encouraging the Hard Way

*Nevada Magazine* is directed to lure out-of-state people to come to Nevada, leave their money, and make the state a trash dump. By your magazine touting the places of beauty, publishing maps, expounding on the hunting and fishing, is what causes the beauty, hunting, fishing to disappear. Let these tourists find out

(Continued on page 92)



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ILLUSTRATION BY KATIE GROTEGUT

## CIGARETTE GEORGE

No one knew where he came from, who he was, and where he'd got that endless supply of gold coins he'd plunk down on the bar.

By Harry E. Webb

**M**ost small towns have their share of peculiar characters, but Palisade, Nevada, had the oddest of all in a five-foot, 120-pounder known only as "Cigarette George." If George had a surname he never divulged it during the 26 years he trod Palisade's single street.

Cigarette George was an enigma from the moment he stepped off a Southern Pacific train until his death. In fact, the

skain of his life became more tangled *after* his death.

His first puzzling move was when he edged up to old John Swann's bar, his huge cowboy hat barely topping the bar, plunked down a \$20 gold piece and meekly said, "Will you gentlemen join me in a little drink?" The "gentlemen" or otherwise all agreed it was a good idea as an early May blizzard was howling up

through the sheer-walled palisades.

That was the beginning of the town's acquaintance with this little man from nowhere. Folks didn't ask questions and, aside from saying, "Just call me George," the newcomer volunteered nothing except to ask if there was "any little house or cabin that might be for rent."

There being no such commodity in this town where the Eureka-Nevada Narrow Gauge was the chief succor for the town's few citizens, George paid \$10 for an old "popcorn wagon." Then with the help of a few of his new-found friends, a heavy trunk and the wagon were deposited near a pint-sized spring that furnished the Narrow Gauge and half the town's folks their water supply. The Southern Pacific owned every odd-numbered section 20 miles each side of its tracks from "here to there," and since Palisade was on an odd section, anyone and everyone had built a home, store, or saloon where they pleased.

With George established in his expopcorn wagon he soon became the town's most popular citizen, though his popularity stemmed mostly from the gold coins he used in lieu of "rag money," and there seemed no end to his gold wealth. Just who dubbed him "Cigarette George" made little difference, but at least it was appropriate. He was seldom seen without a Bull Durham cigarette in his mouth or rolling a fresh one.

Equally as odd as his supply of gold was the five-gallon black hat he wore. Under this enormous, fuzzy headgear he resembled a small boy with an expensive velour umbrella over him. That hat was like a trademark. For 26 years he was never seen without it as it became floppier.

Naturally, folks thought him eccentric and in many ways he certainly was. Although gold money was common in our towns in those days, no one had any such supply as Cigarette George. Even though, in buying drinks or groceries, he would be given greenbacks in change, it wasn't until the last couple of years of his life he tendered anything but gold. He could reach in a pocket, even a pocket of his perennial vest, and slap down a \$20 or \$10 coin.

As year after year wore on, the steady use of his gold was so unorthodox folks began saying, "That darn little booger must have a couple five-gallon cans of that money buried some'eres around his shack! But what the hell does he do with the paper money he gets?" So this mystery was compounded as Cigarette George worked like a beaver building a wide rock foundation for his five by nine home.





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It was queer, all right, and George's eccentric doings were discussed not only in Palisade but on far out ranches and towns. Hundreds of folks who never saw this nonconformist knew "all about him," although we who were close to him actually knew nothing. Nothing, that is, except that "that crazy galoot has more money than Old Man Carter has pills!"

As the years passed, it was obvious George was growing shorter and shorter and blacker and blacker. Folks believed—and rightly so—that his cramped quarters and the fact that he burned coal in his one-room abode accounted for the shriveling and pigmentation process.

George's friends made no secret of declaring him peculiar, but when he took to cutting the tall bluegrass alongside the S.P. tracks and building a haystack, we felt he had gone off his rocker for fair. His closest neighbor, Emmie Hawkins, had given him a big bed tick, and mornings and afternoon he would scythe down a few swaths of grass. Then after it had cured a few hours he would stuff the tick full and be seen carrying mountainous packs across town and depositing them inside a wire fence he had put up. Day in and day out during summer he worked at his haying, sloping his haystack from one end so he could walk up it to empty the tick. And those watching from saloon benches would laugh and shake their heads.

Although Cigarette George hadn't as much as a goat, summer after summer he piled a new crop on the old until his stack required a ladder for him to dump his tick load of hay. Then at the end of each season's haying he was particular in narrowing the stack's crown to keep out rain and melting snows, and the loungers would remark, "By God, ol' Cigarette sure knows how to build a good stack!" Watching those ponderous bundles go by with nothing but George's feet showing was a comical sight, and folks would say, "Now, who but a lunatic would work like that when there's no reason for it?"

But time was gradually taking a toll of George, and one hot day he had set his balloon-size bundle down in front of Martinelli's saloon, wiped his brow with a grimy bandanna, and said, "Come on fellows, let's go wet our whistles." We all wet our whistles, and as our host pocketed a gold piece and some bills Bill Hammond said, "George, for Christ's sake tell us where the hell you got all that gold! The whole town's goin' to be as nutty as you are if you don't! For 15 years or more you've done nothin' but plunk down double eagles. So how come?"

At the door Cigarette called back, "I make 'em, Bill. But my old Pappy always said, 'Never teach another man your trade, son, or he'll put you out of business.' " Cackling over this he rolled and lit a

cigarette, then got under his bulging tick and left us to wonder further.

"Ol' Cigarette's sure failing," Martinelli remarked as we watched the huge bundle weave on its way. "Be hell poppin' if he set that bundle on fire, wouldn't there?"

"Might just as well," Bill Hammond put in. "Been storing up that hay for five solid years and not a damn thing to eat it. But that gold is what gets my nanny! Some day he'll kick the bucket and Palisade'll see the biggest gold rush since the one to the Klondike. Everybody'll start diggin' up ol' Cigarette's yard for them cans he must have planted."

Weeks later several of us ranchers were shipping our beef, and after the last car door was slid shut and bolted we headed for Frank Martinelli's thirst emporium where Cigarette George had just "decorated the mahogany." Not with gold, but with a \$10 bill. "You damn fellers must've smelled this greasy bill," he said through a cigarette. "But come on, I'll buy."

"Well, look at George!" Bill Blair exclaimed. "He's down to dirty ol' rag money! Run outa gold, George?"

"You better keep abreast of the times, Bill," Cigarette replied. "Didn't you know Uncle Sam made us turn in our gold for this huing-fodder a while back?"

"Yeah," Bill laughed, "but I supposed you were exempt. You know anybody that's lost their buttons ain't responsible in the eyes of the law." At this the crowd began cracking jokes about Cigarette George having the biggest haystack along the Humboldt River. "What yuh go'nta do with it, George? Eat it yourself?"

After taking their good-natured razzing for a while, George said, "That's all right fellows, but I'm not like a lot of you. I'm no I.W.W. I was born to *work*, so I put up hay just to keep busy. Besides, some of these winters a lot of you cow fellows would give your eye teeth for that little ol' stack of mine."

We hadn't long to wait for George's words to bear fruit. It caught us all unawares. On November 12, 1931, it started snowing, and one howling blizzard swept in on the tail of another without let up until March. It was what some called the old equalizer. It reduced big cowmen to ex-cowmen as their cattle starved to death by the thousands.

George Goodfellow was the first to run short of hay and made arrangements to ship 500 head of his strongest cattle to the San Joaquin Valley in California. But how to get the cattle to Palisade was the problem, though a start had to be made and the sooner the better. A trail was broken by several strong horses wherever possible and men with scoop shovels made a path through the 10-foot drifts.

Three days after starting, the cattle, now weak, had made the 20 miles to Palisade where Goodfellow received bad



# RAMSES II

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news from the S.P. agent. "Not a chance, George, to get stock cars here for at least three days."

"Three days!" Goodfellow exclaimed. "These cattle have already gone three days without feed! Another three days and they'll be too weak to ship!"

Cigarette George had made the 300 yards from his house to Martinelli's saloon on snowshoes made from barrel staves, and on hearing of Goodfellow's plight he said, "If you can get your cattle down near the slough where I got that stack of hay, you're welcome to it. I got plenty pitchforks."

Half the town turned out with trail-shoveling scoops and the Goodfellow cattle were soon "in clover," so to speak. But the queer part of the transaction was, even though hay had zoomed from \$5 a ton to \$50—wherever any could be had—Cigarette George wouldn't accept a penny for his lifesaving stack of bluestem.

"You're the biggest damn fool this side of hell!" George was told as he bought hot-toddies for the crowd.

Each year as his haystack had grown he had been razed aplenty, but now that it was no more and the cattle were rolling to a less inclement climate, the remarks were out of the joking stage.

"You could have shook Goodfellow down for any price you asked! Talk about crazy! You're even crazier than crazy!"

"Well," George began meekly, "I never claimed to be bright, but I've always had a soft spot for animals besides liking to treat folks when they're in trouble just as I'd like to be treated. And Goodfellow was in plenty of trouble. As for the money, I don't recollect ever hearing of anybody taking any of it with 'em when they shuffled off. Let's have another round, Frank."

**H**ad it not been for killing a raccoon one fall day as I rode in to Palisade for mail, it is doubtful if I would have ever learned one whit more of Cigarette George's past than had any other of his friends.

He lived but a few yards from two members of the Hawkins family and was largely dependent on them for little favors. He was a daily visitor at Mrs. Bill Hawkins' for a cup of coffee and depended on Mrs. Nat Hawkins to take a train to Carlin, nine miles distant, and fetch him a loin of pork. In those days a two-foot loin cost but a couple dollars, yet in handing her a 10 spot he would always say, "And get yourself something with what's left!" Under the circumstances if George confided anything of his former life it would have been with these two. But if he did they certainly kept their lips buttoned.

George all but lived on fat meat, which



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# MIDDLE MANAGEMENT.

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brings us to the raccoon in question. On spying the pelt tied behind my saddle he said, "Where in tarnation did you get the coon? They're better eating than the best hog that ever grunted. Tell me where you left the carcass and I'll go get it."

The upshot was, I went back two miles and retrieved the carcass that was white with fat. The old saying, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," proved true with George. "Come in," he invited, "and have some coffee and beans while I wash the gravel out of this fellow. Haven't had a taste of roast coon since I left California." As I had never been inside his domicile, I accepted his invitation.

His mentioning California was an opening wedge, and as I sat on the narrow bed, blackened like everything else from coal soot, George unfolded a tale that was as tragic as it was humane. "Believe it or not," he related, "I once owned one of the finest dairy farms in the Marysville, California, district, besides having a prosperous butcher shop business in the heart of town. But when a man's family turns on him, well—but you don't want to hear about family fights. Now if you ever want to cook a coon, always roast him."

I got George stopped on how to cook a raccoon and asked what became of his Marysville business.

"She still have it, I reckon," he replied. "Yessir, my wife was the meanest woman God ever put breath in! Two daughters wasn't any better. They always sided with their mother no matter how much to blame she was. So when I couldn't stand her jawing any longer I went to a lawyer and signed over every stick and critter to her and " George held up the carcass that now resembled an overfat lamb. "There now, I'll have me a roast coon tonight that will make your mouth water."

"Well," he continued, "we had a good-sized joint account in the bank so I drew out \$20,000 which left a little more than that for her. Then I went home and told her to have at it. She's all yours, I says, and wished her luck. When I walked out that house she threw her head back and mocked me and says, 'When will you be back, George?' and I says, 'By God, never!' And that's the way it's been. I was never a drinking man and outside of a sociable drink I've stayed that way. Money means nothing to me, but I've enough to last from here on out."

I pondered this all the way home, trying to make myself believe his bizarre tale. Was his mind playing tricks on him or had he been spoofing me? I decided to keep mum on the subject and let the town go on wondering.

A year later I had been north of the Humboldt looking for a horse of mine that had gotten away with a saddle on him. I had sold the bronc and saddle to a young fellow who promised to pay me the \$50



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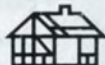
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"in a few days." But the kid was sparking a neighbor Mormon girl and in the interim had gone over one afternoon to the Pace homestead to visit her.

The numskull had tied the bronc to Mrs. Pace's clothesline post when the line was filled with dresses and Lon Pace's underwear, and on hearing a commotion outside she had run out in time to view an exasperating sight. The horse was headed north up the canyon with her line of laundry hooked under the saddle horn. The young fellow had received such a bawling out from Allie's mother he left the country, and I was out a-horse and saddle.

All day I had been searching the hills north of Palisade. As I came back through town I stopped at Nat Hawkins' house. "Nat around?" I asked his wife, Myra. Nat was the deputy sheriff.

"He's up at the jail," Myra replied, and I noticed she had been crying. "Cigarette George died this morning, so Nat and some of the folks have him laid out at the jail waiting for the undertaker to get here from Elko." This was an unexpected shock, as George had been plenty active two days before. In the forepart of the jail, which served as a polling place, I saw George, looking smaller even than in life, laid out on a 2x12 plank resting across a couple of chairs while Nat and his son-in-law sat at a table playing cards.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Heart attack, I guess," Nat replied. "Maybe he et too much raccoon. He had stopped in at Emmie's for coffee and wasn't feeling good. So after a while Emmie went over and found him on the floor by his bed."

The talk turned to George's hidden "five-gallon cans" of wealth. "Find any money around?" I asked.

"Not a dime," Nat said. "But he must have it buried because we sure as hell gave that shack a real shakedown." We were discussing this puzzle when the undertaker and coroner arrived.

"Who's handling the funeral arrangements?" the undertaker asked as the coroner began examining the corpse.

"Far as I know," Nat answered, "it's up to the county. I've phoned to Edgar Eather in Eureka and he and Sheriff Jim Ratattzi'll be down. Eather's our district attorney and said we'd bury George here on the hill."

An exclamation from the coroner brought our attention and we saw him untying a large tobacco sack. "Had this pinned inside an undershirt," he told us. "He had two undershirts on." At the table he began counting bills as our eyes bugged out further with each counted hundred. "Seventeen hundred and fifty dollars!" the coroner said. "Have you any way," he asked Nat, "to keep this money until your district attorney gets here?" He



was told the money could be kept in the safe at the Narrow Gauge office, so Nat signed a form and George's earthly remains was on its way with the undertaker.

"Now ain't that one hell of a note!" Nat exclaimed. We knew exactly what he meant and agreed that it sure as hell was!

If finding the money pinned to George's coal-blackened underwear was a revelation it was nothing in comparison with what was unearthed when Sheriff Ratattzi pulled the lock off a tunnel door, back of George's domicile which he had dug for a cellar and storeroom.

"Lord!" Ratattzi exclaimed. "Where do you suppose Cigarette George got all this stuff and how did he ever cart it here? Talk about a pack rat!" At this I couldn't resist telling him and Nat what George had revealed to me. "Well," Ratattzi said, "that accounts for all that money he had, but all this stuff is a damn sight more puzzling!"

"Puzzling" was the understatement of the age. It appeared that any item in the line of hardware and whatnots was represented in George's cache. Yet, there was scarcely an item among the tons of brand-new articles that George had, or ever would have had, any use for. But the queerest part was: no one had ever seen George bringing them there!

**M**onths later, as the sheriff and district attorney stood among us ranchers and town people on a hillside that looked like a junk dealer's dream, Ratattzi said, "Now folks, here's the proposition. We've been in touch with a couple of women who claim to be George's daughters, so they are entitled to their dad's estate, which they think must be enormous, as he was once rich. But from what we've learned they're the last persons on earth poor old George would want to get a dime. But we haven't liked the tone of their sarcastic letters so we're going to see that his estate isn't worth a postage stamp. Get what I mean?" We well understood what Jim meant, and we all laughed when he added, "So you better all have a wad of money because this sale is cash on the barrel head!" We savvied a hidden meaning there also.

"All right, then," he began, "each of you pick out what you want and when I auction it off I don't want anyone to raise another bid. We'll start with that grindstone." Dan Rand was the only rancher with an engine to turn the 36-inch stone that would normally cost \$45. "Fifteen cents," Dan said. "Sold!" said the sheriff, as Edgar Eather kept books. Dan bid 10 cents on a dozen new irrigating shovels and divided them among us. Frank Yates said, "Ten cents!" when a 100-pound anvil was auctioned.

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Three kegs of assorted horseshoes fetched two bits and were divided between three of us. Three bundles of pitchforks of five to a bundle put another 30 cents in Eather's sale book and a dozen long-nosed spike-mauls went to C.B. Sexton, manager of the Eureka-Nevada Railway, for a quarter.

Monkey wrenches, Stillson wrenches, and claw hammers were lumped off to Sam Zunino at a dime for two dozen or more and divided among us ranchers and himself. Fourteen six-pound sledgehammers, with S.P. stamped on them, went back to the Southern Pacific agent for free.

Wendel Jones bid 10 cents on a complete set of bronze fireplace tools, screen, and gargoyle andirons. Not that he or anyone around had a fireplace, but as Wendel said, it was for "speculation." That and one other item were the puzzlers of all Cigarette George's hoard—a magnificent chandelier. That *was* a thought provoker.

A 200-foot coil of steel stacker cable was knocked down to Bill Blair on his magnanimous bid of 30 cents. Two new wheelbarrows put another 20 cents in the estate's coffers.

Then came the crystal teardrop chandelier, which was the envy of all. This went to our postmistress for her exorbitant bid of 50 cents. A fancy grilled electric hearth brought a quarter from Tony Demale, even though he was 50 miles from electric power, and some wag said, "You'll have to plug that into your Coleman lantern, Tony!"

And so on down the line as *objets d'art* and whatnots went for a dime each including a two-foot high Turkish vase. George's Winchester pump shotgun brought a whole quarter from John Craig, the Narrow Gauge's boilermaker.

"Now," Ratattzi said, "I think the proceeds of this sale and that found in Cigarette George's shirts will just about cover funeral and other costs. Don't you think so Edgar?"

"To be explicit," our district attorney replied, "I don't think so, I damn well know so."

So ended an era of a once-prosperous individual's life. No doubt the authorities had learned the name of the deceased but if it was used anywhere no one remembered it. To us he was just "Cigarette George." In life he and his gold coins had been a deep enough mystery but it was nothing in comparison to what his death had left behind for us to ponder over. □

Harry E. Webb, an Elko County rancher for 30 years, was well loved as a novelist and writer of true western tales. Webb, who died two years ago at age 97, rode with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show before World War I and was honored by the Cowboy Hall of Fame in 1984.



"My mother never bought a car in her life. Dad always said, 'The husband picks the car. The wife picks the color.' And that was fine for them. But I'm 28 and still single. So if I had the money, I'd get a black 200 Turbo for myself. Because I'm willing to wait for a husband. But I've waited long enough for that car."



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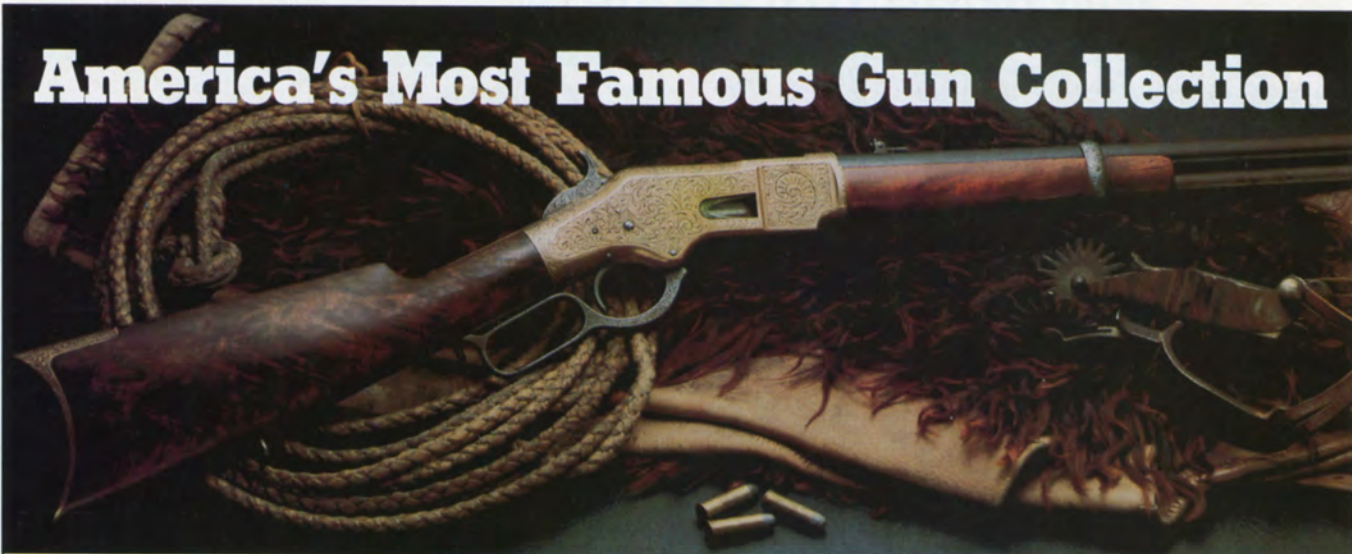
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## HELL BENT WITH HANK

Stagecoach driver Hank Monk had orders to deliver Horace Greeley to Placerville on time, and by God, he would do just that.

**R**epresenting most of the trades that helped tame the continent was a whole galaxy of real and not-so-real heroic figures like Davy Crocket, Paul Bunyon, and Johnny Appleseed; strange, then, that the immensely popular fraternity of stagecoach drivers had no ambassador to offer up to the demanding public. Worthy of such distinction were dozens of drivers whose names were no less colorful than their manners—Charlie Parkhurst, Uncle Jim Miller, Dutch John, and Curly Jerry Robbins, to list a few of the hearties who were stirring up the dust in California and Nevada a century ago.

It was in the person of a relatively unknown but very real man, Hank Monk, that the public finally found the stagecoach hero it demanded. Hank, in 1859, was still a fairly young man, a lanky, sharp-eyed fellow who had taken to riding the hard trails of the California Stage Line almost as soon as he arrived on the Coast from his native New York in 1857. The exact facts about the ride which made him famous were forgotten long ago,

victim to the legend which immediately replaced the actual event.

Stories vary as to what route the ride covered, but certain it is that Hank was the driver that day in 1859 and that Horace Greeley, king politician of his own and perhaps many another generation, was the impatient passenger who had to get to Placerville for a rally that evening. As the American humorist, Artemus Ward, tells the story, passenger Greeley moaned about the slow progress of his craft as it worked its way up the steep slopes of the Sierra Nevadas, all the while assured by the implacable Hank that he had orders to arrive by seven and arrive by seven he would.

Greeley's impatience soon turned to terror. Hank had by now negotiated the summit and was plunging downward at a frantic speed, urging his team in the most vivid language to continue the pace. In spite of Greeley's loud pleas for mercy, Hank refused to slow his careening, leaping coach, tossing his distraught passenger about like a flock of gold in a placer

miner's pan. As they neared their destination, the stagecoach gave one last, desperate lurch and left the startled Greeley in a standing position, his head poking out through the roof. In this manner, so the story goes, the great politician arrived before his welcoming delegation—somewhat worse for wear but exactly on time!

As a result of this ride, Hank Monk's name was soon familiar in all parts of the country, the delighted public elevating him at once into the hero's seat which had so long been vacant. Apparently little affected by his unexpected fame, tough old Hank never stopped driving stagecoaches until shortly before his death in 1883. The people of Carson City honored him with one of the largest funerals ever held in the capital, burying him in the cemetery north of town. His death was hastened, some think, because he turned a coach on its side during one of his last runs. For Hank, this certainly would have meant the end. □



JULY/AUGUST 1981 LOVELOCK-BY-THE-SEA

# BASIN AND RANGE



RICHARD MENZIES

John McPhee's *Basin and Range*, from which this chapter is excerpted, is in its author's words, the consequence of "trying to develop at least a rudimentary understanding of the long history and odd behavior of the planetary surface where our kind has made its sudden and alarming appearance." The first two sentences of *Basin and Range* define McPhee's brief: "The poles of the earth have wandered. The equator has apparently moved." How did this come to be?

McPhee's course of discovery took him first to Kenneth Deffeyes ("His surname rhymes

with 'the maze'"), professor of geology at Princeton. McPhee joined Deffeyes on a trip to Nevada. "The earth is splitting apart there, quite possibly opening a seaway. It is not something that happened a couple of hundred years ago. It only began in the Miocene [5 to 22.5 million years ago] and is going on today. If you want to see happening right now what happened here [in New Jersey] two hundred million years ago, you can see it all in Nevada."

With Deffeyes, McPhee charts the shifts of basin and range as he would human passages;

it is a story of the earth come alive. Geologist and writer see growth and change in highway cuts, in paleomagnetic samples, in abandoned silver workings, from Carlin to Winnemucca—across and up and down the state.

As he finally comes to Western Nevada, McPhee sums up the consequences of his discoveries, and then, in a seamless shift of technique, he goes out into the community to hear the reactions of everyday Nevadans to the surprising story of what is to become of their state.—Ed.



Nevada's underbelly is still rumbling and shifting, and in geologic time frames, Lovelock could be under water in the blink of an eon.

By John McPhee

**T**wenty miles out of Winnemucca, and the interstate is dropping south toward the Humboldt Range. A coyote runs along beside the road. It is out of its element, tongue out, outclassed, under minimum speed. Deffeyes says that most ranges in the Basin and Range had one or two silver deposits in them, if any, but the Humboldts had five. We have also entered the bottomlands of the former Lake Lahontan. The hot-springs map shows more activity in this part of the province. Extension of the earth's crust has been somewhat more pronounced here, Deffeyes explains, and hence there are more ore deposits. He feels that when a seaway opens up, the spreading center will be somewhere nearby. Or possibly back in Utah, in the bed of Lake Bonneville. "But this one has better connections."

"Connections?"

"Death Valley. Walker Lake, Carson Sink." An Exxon map of the western United States is spread open on the seat between us. He runs his finger from Death Valley to Carson Sink and on northward to cross the interstate at Lovelock. "The ocean will open here," he repeats. "Or in the Bonneville basin. I think here."

A few miles off the road is the site of a planned community dating from the nineteen-sixties. It was to have wide streets and a fountain square, but construction was delayed and then indefinitely postponed. Ghostless ghost town, it had been named Neptune City.

With the river on our right, we round the nose of the Humboldt Range, as did the Donner Party and roughly a hundred and sixty-five thousand other people, in a seventeen-year period, heading in their wagons toward Humboldt Sink, Carson Sink, and the terror of days without water. But first, as we do now, they came into broad green flats abundantly fertile with grass, knee-high grass, a fill for the oxen, the last gesture of the river before it vanished into the air. The emigrants called this place the Big Meadows of the Humboldt, and something like two hundred and fifty wagons would be resting here at any given time.

"There was a sea here in the Triassic," Deffeyes remarks. "At least until the

Sonomia terrain came in and sutured on. The sea was full of pelagic squid, and was not abyssal, but it was deep enough so the bottom received no sunlight, and bottom life was not dominant."

"How do you know it was not dominant?"

"Because I have looked at the siltstones and the ammonites in them, and that is what I see there."

Visions of oceans before and behind us in time, we roll on into Lovelock. SLOW—DUST HAZARD. Lovelock, Nevada 89419. There are cumulus snow clouds overhead and big bays of blue in the cold sky, with snow coming down in curtains over in the Trinity Range, snow pluming upward over the valley like smoke from a runaway fire. Lovelock was a station of the Overland Stage. It became known throughout Nevada as "a good town with a bad water supply." An editor of the *Lovelock Review-Miner* wrote in 1915, "There is little use in trying to induce people to locate here until the water question is settled. Maybe the water does not kill anyone, but it certainly drives people away." In 1917 Lovelock was incorporated as a third-class city, and one of its first acts was to enforce a ban on houses of prostitution within twelve hundred feet of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Another was a curfew. Another ordered all city lights turned off when there was enough moon.

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Here in the Big Meadows of the Humboldt, the principal employer is the co-op seed mill on the edge of town, which sends alfalfa all over the world.

On the sidewalks are men in Stetsons, men in three-piece suits, men in wind-breakers, tall gaunt overalled men with beards. There are women in Stetsons,

boots, and jeans. A thin young man climbs out of a pickup that is painted in glossy swirls of yellow and purple, and has a roll bar, balloon tires, headphones, and seventeen lights.

There are terraces of Lake Lahontan above the ballfield of the Lovelock Mustangs. Cattle graze beside the field. The Ten Commandments are carved in a large piece of metamorphosed granite outside the county courthouse.

NO. 10:

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"Lovelock was a person's name," Deffeyes cautions.

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Across the valley is a huge whitewash "L" on a rock above the fault scar of the Humboldt Range.

We go into Sturgeon's Log Cabin restaurant and sit down for coffee against a backdrop of rolling cherries, watermelons, and bells. A mountain lion in a glass case. Six feet to the tip of the tail. Shot by Daniel (Bill) Milich, in the Tobin Range.

I hand Deffeyes the Exxon map and ask him to sketch in for me the opening of the new seaway, the spreading center as he sees it coming. "Of course, all the valleys in the Great Basin are to a greater or lesser extent competing," he says. "But I'd put it where I said—right here." With a pencil he begins to rough in a double line, a swath, about fifteen miles wide. He sketches through the axis of Death Valley and up into Nevada, and then north by northwest through Basalt and Coaldale before bending due north through Walker



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Lake, Fallon, and Lovelock. "The spreading center would connect with a transform fault coming in from Cape Mendocino," he adds, and he sketches such a line from the California coast to a point a little north of Lovelock. He is sketching the creation of a crustal plate, and he seems confident of that edge, for the Mendocino transform fault—the Mendocino trend—is in place now, ready to go. He is less certain about the southern edge of the new plate, because he has two choices. The Garlock Fault runs east-west just above Los Angeles, and that could become a side of the new plate; or the spreading center could continue south through the Mojave Desert and the Salton Sea to meet the Pacific Plate in the Gulf of California. "The Mojave sits in there with discontinued basin-and-range faulting," Deffeyes says, almost to himself, a substitute for whistling, as he sketches in the alternative lines. "There has to be a transform fault at the south end of the live, expanding rift. The sea has got to get through somewhere."

Now he places his hands on the map so that they frame the Garlock and Mendocino faults and hold between them a large piece of California—from Bakersfield to Redding, roughly, and including San Francisco, Sacramento, and Fresno—not to mention the whole of the High Sierra, Reno, and ten million acres of Nevada. "You create a California Plate," he says. "And the only question is: Is it this size, or the larger one? How much goes out to sea?" British Columbia is to his left and Mexico is to his right, beside his coffee cup on the oak Formica. The coast is against his belly. He moves his hands as if to pull all of central California out to sea. "Does this much go?" he says. "Or do the Mojave and Baja go with it?" A train of flatcars pounds through town carrying aircraft engines.

My mind has drifted outside the building. I am wondering what these people in this dry basin—a mile above sea level—would think if they knew what Deffeyes was doing, if they were confronted with the news that an ocean may open in their town. I will soon find out.

"What?"

"Are you stoned?"

"The way I see it, I won't be here, so the hell with it."

"It's a little doubtful. It could be, but it's a little doubtful."

"If it happens real quick, I guess a couple of people will die, but if it's like most other things they'll find out about it hundreds of years before and move people out of here. The whole world will probably go to hell before that happens anyway."

"You mean salt water, crests, troughs, big splash, and all that? Don't sweat it. You're safe here—as long as Pluto's out there."



"We got a boat."

"That's the best news I've heard in a couple of years. When I go bye-bye to the place below, why, that water will be there to cool me. I hope it's Saturday night. I won't have to take an extra bath."

"It may be a good thing, there's so many politicians; but they may get an extra boat. I used to be a miner. Oh, I've been all over. But now they've got machines and all the miners have died."

"The entire history of Nevada is one of plant life, animal life, and human life adapting to very difficult conditions. People here are the most individualistic you can find. As district attorney, I see examples of it every day. They want to live free from government interference. They don't fit into a structured way of life. This area was settled by people who shun progress. Their way of life would be totally unattractive to most, but they chose it. They have chosen conditions that would be considered intolerable elsewhere. So they would adapt, easily, to the strangest of situations."

"I've been here thirty-three years, almost half of that as mayor. I can't quite imagine the sea coming in—although most of us know that this was all under water at one time. I know there's quite a fault that runs to the east of us here. It may not be active. But it leaves a mark on your mind."

"Everybody's entitled to an opinion. Everybody's entitled to ask a question. If I didn't think your question was valid, I

JOHN BARDWELL



Our nautical artist's rendering of Sierra islands and Nevada ocean-front property.

wouldn't have to answer you. I'd hope the fishing was good. I wouldn't mind having some beachfront property. If it was absolutely certified that it was going to happen, we should take steps to keep

people out of the area. But as chief of police I'm not going to be alarmed."

"It'll be a change to have water here instead of desert. By God, we could use it. I say that as fire chief. We get seventy fire calls a year, which ain't much, but then we have to go a hundred miles to put out those damned ranch fires. We can't save much, but we can at least put out the heat. I got a ten-thousand-gallon tank there, which is really something for a place with no water. I guess I won't still be here to see the ocean come, and I'm glad of it, because I can't swim."

Meanwhile, Deffeyes, in Sturgeon's Log Cabin, applies the last refining strokes to his sketchings on the map. "The Salton Sea and Death Valley are below sea level now, and the ocean would be there if it were not for pieces of this and that between," he says. "We are extending the continental crust here. It is exactly analogous to the East African Rift, the Red Sea, the Atlantic. California will be an island. It is just a matter of time." □

John McPhee, one of America's most acclaimed writers, is the author of more than a dozen books. His latest is *Table of Contents* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1985). The preceding story was excerpted from *Basin and Range* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), copyright 1980 John McPhee, and originally appeared in the *New Yorker*.



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# Single Men's Protective Society

In 1876 the men of Pioche hardly dared venture in the streets for fear that they'd be married before they got home.

Craig MacDonald

**T**here was no doubt about it. In the early 1870s, Pioche was a man's town. So much so that it had earned the reputation of being the wickedest mining camp in Eastern Nevada.

"Some people do not hesitate to fire a pistol or gun at any time, day or night, in this city," one newspaper reported. "Murderers who shoot a man in the back get off scot-free but the unfortunate devil who steals a bottle of whiskey or a couple boxes of cigars has to pay for his small crime."

Pioche was said to have had 75 deaths of violence before anyone died of natural causes. Not aiding to the sanity of the town of 6,000 were the 72 saloons that kept the inhabitants well lubricated.

However, as is the case in all diggings, times change, and by 1875 Pioche was losing its reputation as a rip-roaring town. One of the reasons for the change was the influx of women into the male-dominated community.

Many of the women married miners, and gradually the rugged camp became

civilized—but not without a fight.

The July 8, 1876, *Pioche Daily Record* told its readers, "An association is being formed amongst the unprotected male sex, the object being to protect themselves from the encroachments of the female sex, which of late have become so dangerous, that the poor male is getting to be an object of pity."

"Many have lately been caught up and married before they hardly knew it. Females are arriving from all directions by stages and private conveyances.



"In consequence of this frightful state of affairs, men are getting so timid that they hardly dare venture in the streets for a short walk for fear they will be married before they can return. This association proposes to ameliorate the condition of affairs."

That night the Single Men's Protective Association crowded into a private, smoke-filled room for the purpose of devising ways and means whereby single men could be protected from the "rapidly increasing encroachments of the fair sex."

The following men were selected association leaders: C.H. Patchen, president; W.P. Goodman, secretary; Julius Hoffman, treasurer; and Joseph R. Hoag, sergeant-at-arms. Hoag's job was to keep all women from getting anywhere near the meeting room.

After \$5 dues were collected, a resolution was introduced calling for members to "pledge to withstand the wiles of all females who should propose throughout 1876." The resolution excited considerable discussion. Some wanted the association to guarantee that it would do every-

“  
Many men have lately  
been caught up  
and married before they  
knew it. Females  
are arriving  
from all directions.

”  
thing within its power to keep each member single.

Suddenly, as the resolution was nearing a vote, a large thud was heard outside the door, followed by a tremendous crash.

The locked door was being battered down!

Moments later a bevy of women stampeded into the room. Chaos ensued as the intruders chanted their demands to be heard. Male occupants fell over chairs and tables in an effort to escape. Association members made headlong dives out the windows. None stayed behind to listen.

Nothing was heard about the association until July 15 when the *Daily Record* carried the following item: "The members of the association, having finally recovered from their panic and bruises of last Saturday evening, will hold another meeting tonight, at which time they will elect a new sergeant-at-arms, as the present incumbent declines to serve any longer.

"He states, and with pretty good reason, that his experience of last Saturday evening, in being knocked down and trampled upon by a swarm of indignant

feminines, is not exactly the kind of business that he enjoys and he thinks someone else should hold that post of honor for a few meetings.

"It is whispered around that the treasurer is a little short on his collection and trouble may be anticipated if accounts do not come out square."

What did occur at the evening's meeting was known only by the members who attended. The Single Men's Protective Association was never heard from again, but rumors had it that the group went underground and held gatherings under the oath of secrecy.

As to the success of the association, only time can be the judge. However, the

marriage tally lengthened as more churches were constructed.

To the happiness of many but to the sadness of some the Pioche newspaper later reported: "The people of this city have been on their good behavior for nearly two months now and there have been no homicides or altercations."

Pioche had become civilized. Its reputation as the wickedest mining camp in Eastern Nevada had bitten the dust, due in part, no doubt, to the "dangerous" influence of women over a society of men. □

*Craig MacDonald is a freelance writer based in the Bay Area. He also has written about Clara Crowell, Nevada's first woman sheriff.*



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ROBERT (LEFT) AND DOMINIQUE LAXALT, BY JOYCE LAXALT

# The Shepherd

There's a bearing and a cast of face that come with men who lived in that American day when the ranges were open and the western streets were dirt. My father was one of them.

From 'Sweet Promised Land' by **Robert Laxalt**

**M**y father was a shepherd, and his home was the hills. So it began when he was a boy in the misted Pyrenees of France, and so it was to be for the most of his lifetime in the lonely Sierra of Nevada. And seeing him in a moment's pause on some high ridge, with the wind tearing at his wild thickness of iron-gray hair and flattening his clothes to his lean frame, you could understand why this was what he was meant to be.

My mother used to say a man like that should never get married, because he didn't go with a house. And in her own way, I guess she was right, because I could remember thinking it and knowing it too when I saw him bent over a campfire at night, with the light playing against the deep bronze of his features and making dark hollows of his eyes, and with its own humor, etching more strongly a nose a little off kilter from where he'd been

kicked in the face during his horsebreaking days.

I believe that if there had been a hundred sheep camps in the hills, I could have known my father's in an instant. In that little circle of canvas and leather, things had as much their own place as in a living room.

If it was a new camp and not an old stop, he laid the fire pit to his precise liking, in a sheltered half cave of rocks faced against the afternoon wind, so that there would be as few ashes as possible in the evening meal. His cayaks or pack bags were always stacked to the left of the tent flap, covered by a square of canvas, and held down with a shovel or a carbine. Summer or winter, his canvas bed and mattress of boughs or branches was placed inside the tent with its head near the entrance, so that if it were winter and there was a little tin stove inside, he could

reach over and start his morning fire without getting out of bed.

When I was a boy, and we brothers would visit him each summer for a few weeks, I wondered about his neatness in the camps. It seemed to me that the mountains were a good place to shuck off the most of manners and cleanliness. And then, finally, I came to realize that the sheep camp was my father's house.

In all the time that we were growing up, I can remember my father's presence in our white frame home in Carson City only in rare and fleeting visits. The sprawling rooms and old-fashioned high ceilings were as much a mystery to him as any other cluster of four walls. Except for the wedding portrait in its gold frame or the one suit hung far back in the bedroom closet, the house carried little hint of a father's existence.

The garage, however, was a different



matter. From ceiling to floor and flush with the front, it was filled with the chronicle of my father's life since he had come to this country. In that mountain of leather and canvas and old pelts, you could find hair chaps from when he was a horsebreaker, a cartridge belt from the early time of trouble with the cattlemen, an old packsaddle with the wood polished and worn that he put away when his Jenny died, and, sometimes, a brand-new sheep hook or braided rawhide reins, because so often when he bought something new he would put it in the garage to save it, and then forget he bought it.

There's a bearing and a cast of face that come with men who lived in that American day when the ranges were open and the western streets were dirt. You can see it in the old-timers who come to the big rodeos in Reno, and fewer of them each year, who carry themselves as straight as if they were still in the saddle, with the quiet dignity and privacy in their faces that come from much time spent alone, and they are not unlike the faces of old Indian chiefs.

These were the men of leather and bronze who had been rich as barons one day and broke and working for wages the next, who had ridden big and powerful horses, and who had met in the lonely desert and talked a while, hunkering over a sagebrush fire and a blackened coffee-pot, and, even though they had battled with life, they had learned to accept it, because they had learned first to bow their heads to the winter blizzards and the desert sun. And my father was one of them.

One summer, my father was ranging the sheep in the Sierra foothills. It was country where the meadows ran for miles through the forests, and so the sheep could feed for weeks in that one range.

The first time I went to visit him, he mentioned that a pair of mountain lions had been bothering the sheep. He had cut their tracks a number of times, and on two different nights in his camp had heard them coughing from the canyon. His dog, Barbo, made furious nightly forays into the trees, but of course he was careful not to get within fighting distance.

The lions must have been killing elsewhere, because they had not as yet taken any of the lambs. Still, they were working up to it, and the time would not be long. My father did not have a carbine in the camp with him, so I said that I would bring one the next time I came. He shrugged and said, "It won't do no good. When it happens, they'll be durned sure I'm not looking."

It was a few weeks before I could make another trip to the camp, and when I did it was with the right carbine and the wrong cartridges. By the time I discovered my mistake, I was already in the hills and too

far from home to turn back.

When I reached the camp, I learned that the lions had already hit the band. It had been a quiet kill, and my father had no knowledge of it until he noticed a ewe bleating lonely and searching for her lamb. Then he backtracked to the bed ground of the night before and found the splash of blood that marked the slaughter.

He must have been mad at the time, because when he told me about it there was still heat in his eyes. I felt a new twinge of conscience about my mixup with the carbine and cartridges, but he didn't seem to mind. In spite of his anger, he was a little bit philosophical. Now that the lions had made their kill, he felt he would be left alone until the sheep had moved from the meadow country.

It was late afternoon and the shadows long when I started the walk to my car. My father came down the hill with me, on his way to gathering the band. There was an evening breeze coming up, and it was in our faces, and it brought with it the occasional tinkle of a bell. Every once in a while, as we cut down through the ravines, we could catch glimpses of the sheep scattered in the meadow below.

Then, almost inaudibly, the breeze brought to us the low sound of running hoofs. My rather stopped and peered down into the meadow. Abruptly, he changed our direction and began to walk to the right of the hill in front of us. At his heels, Barbo started to whimper, but my father silenced him with a quick command. I wanted to ask him what he had seen, but, for some reason, I had the feeling it was none of my business.

To one side of the hill in front of us, there was a narrow ravine that emptied into the meadow below. My father swung into it with his long stride, and I followed, trying to make as little sound as possible. We descended rapidly, and in a few minutes we were almost out of the ravine. My father was about 20 feet in front of me when he reached the meadow, and came face to face with the lion.

I had been looking at the ground, and the first warning I had of it was when I heard the sob in Barbo's throat. I jerked my head up and saw the lion. I remember only feeling an odd shock at the fact of his freedom, and then my mind and my face both froze.

They must have stared at each other for full seconds. The lion cocked his head to one side, almost curiously, and rumbled once deep in his chest. Then, slowly, my father raised his *makila*, his walking stick, and began to advance toward the lion. The rumble started again, this time in ominous warning, and with that startling suddenness of motion the lion dropped into a crouch.

Even then there was not a hint of hesitation in my father's movements. He

did not falter once in his stride. His stick was still raised in the air, as though not to fend but strike, and his pose was menacing. They were only a few feet apart when the lion, as though he had suddenly become uncertain, straightened and then crouched again, and then incredibly began to back up. And now, his neck was not rigid any more. He tossed his head, snarling and showing his fangs. And still my father pursued him in that relentless advance.

When I remember, I realize that the lion must not even have known where he was backing, because when his hind-quarters met the pole fence he recoiled as if he had been burned, and in one lightning motion wheeled completely around. And when he turned to face my father again, the confusion was gone and the motion deadly. This time, his eyes were burning red and he was crouching to spring. And still my father did not pause an instant, but came toward him with his stick raised in the air.

There was a single beat of time before the lion sprang when he seemed to arrest his muscles and reset them. Afterward I could remember, but at the instant I could not understand that this had happened. When the lion left the ground, my mind had already prepared its next image, that of seeing my father go down in a blinding flurry of talons. But he did not. By some feat, the lion seemed to leap directly at him, and then arch his body away so that he actually came to light at the side of my father.

And then, almost in the same motion, he began to run away. He did not bolt, but took his leave loping unhurriedly in the direction of the trees, looking back and snarling every once in a while, as though maintaining a degree of self-respect. My father did not follow him, but stood now with his stick to the ground and leaning on it a little, watching until the lion had disappeared in the trees.

When it was over, I felt hot words at my lips. But then my father turned and there was a private pity in his face that had not yet fully vanished, as though now he felt sorrow at the lion's shame, and I could not say a word, because I knew then that foolhardiness had been no part of it at all. □

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*Robert Laxalt of Reno is well known as a novelist and as a frequent contributor to National Geographic. The preceding was excerpted from his Nevada classic, Sweet Promised Land (Harper & Row, 1957), a portrait of his father, Dominique, and the story of his return to the Basque Provinces after 47 years in America. Among Laxalt's other books are A Man in the Wheatfield, In a Hundred Graves, Nevada: A History, and A Cup of Tea in Pamplona, which was recently published by the University of Nevada Press.*



## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1979 A GAMBLER'S CHRISTMAS



# Saint Nick of the Strip

On the night before Christmas, legendary gambler Nick the Greek helped sweeten the pot for 100 Las Vegas families who were down on their luck.

By Tricia Hurst

**T**he other day I had to borrow 20 cents to make a phone call. As I stood in the booth listening to the ring on the other end, I was reminded of another such call years ago and my first and last introduction to Nick the Greek.

I was doing publicity at one of the casinos on the Las Vegas Strip, and famous names and faces were as familiar to me as the housewife's butcher is to her. After the thrill of rubbing elbows with the stars had worn off, I began to look around and found there was just as much poverty and pain a few minutes from the Strip as there was in any other town.

It was nearing Christmas, and I had the bright idea of soliciting funds from well-heeled hotel owners to make up Christmas baskets for needy families. In a week's

time there was enough money for 100 baskets—a great deal of it coming from bartenders, cocktail waitresses, showgirls, and other casino employees.

On Christmas Eve friends helped load the baskets, filled with the traditional turkey and trimmings and toys, into the casino station wagon. Just as I was leaving, the manager handed me a pickup slip and asked if I'd meet the guest who was arriving shortly at the airport.

Meeting and greeting VIPs was part of my job, so there was nothing I could do but grin, shift into first, and head for the airport with the baskets bouncing all around the car. The VIP was one Mr. Nicholas Dandolos, and he turned out to be a heavyset, graying man with not a trace of the arrogance and impatience I

had encountered so many times with my pickup slips. He gave a shy smile and opened and closed the door for me when we got into the wagon.

I apologized for the crowded conditions and explained I was delivering Christmas baskets. As one of them threatened to topple over, Mr. D placed it in his lap, thoughtfully examining the contents and rearranging them.

As we neared the casinos, he spoke for the first time since we had gotten in the car. "I wonder if you would stop here and do me a favor," he said. I pulled into the driveway of a rival casino. "I'd like you to make a call for me," he said. "It's very important you let the phone ring 15 times or they won't answer."

He jotted down a number with a short message on a slip of paper, and I strode into the casino muttering under my breath. Polite or not, Mr. D seemed to be as eccentric and lazy as the rest. Also, I had to use my own dime. It never seemed to occur to a big spender that a dime was still a dime.

After dialing and waiting, then redialing to be sure, I returned to the car and informed my passenger that his party had not answered. He thanked me, and three blocks later I delivered him into the hands of the casino's doorman and bellhops. As far as I was concerned, they could make his phone calls for him.

It was almost midnight when I finished delivering my baskets of Christmas cheer and fell into bed with a sense of all's right with the world and I had contributed.

It was apparent the following morning that I'd never guessed how much.

The calls started coming in during the night, and by nine in the morning the switchboard was jammed. Laughing and crying, the callers could hardly express what the baskets had meant to them: Christmas was not Christmas without a turkey and toys for the children. And the hundred-dollar bill tucked into each basket was truly the star on top of the tree.

I was stunned, but not too stunned to realize I had been gloriously duped. Phone call indeed! I rummaged through my handbag and dialed the number on the slip of paper. No one answered, but the day after Christmas I tried it again, and sure enough, it was a Las Vegas bank—which would be closed in the evening.

Let it ring 15 times—and I had redialed to be sure. Time enough for someone to fill a hundred baskets; that is, if he were the kind of someone who walked around carrying \$10,000 in hundred-dollar bills.

It didn't take long to ferret out the fact that Mr. D was *the* Nick the Greek—a legend in the gambling world and a name I had heard daily in my six months in Vegas.

According to *LIFE*, as his friends figured it, he had distributed \$2 million in



day-to-day touches during his lifetime, given at least \$500,000 to charities, sent 28 children of friends to college, started 300 men in business, and paid hospital bills for 600 people. He had been quoted as saying, "Money has been made a substitute for everything. Even character. It shouldn't be an ambition. I'm sorry we have to use it. It's just a stake."

**H**e obviously was also a man whose one ambition in life, at least for the moment, was to avoid me as if I were carrying the bubonic plague. After many unsuccessful attempts to contact him, it dawned on me that Mr. Dandolos did not want his exercise in Christianity known. I had been in Vegas long enough to learn you don't go around talking a lot about money. It wasn't that it was considered vulgar, as it might be in Boston or Philadelphia; it was just, well, you might say unhealthy.

Not that Nick the Greek was anything but a gambler and a gentleman. If he was going to take \$10,000 off his income tax as a charitable contribution, I figured he could break it to the government in his own way. But I still wanted to thank him personally for a gesture that surpassed my craziest dreams.

I got the chance a week later when I received another pickup slip. Mr. D was departing, and he acted as if he had never set eyes on me in his life, but I couldn't resist one final nudge.

"By the way, Mr. D, did you ever get through on that call? I mean to the bank that's closed at night?"

With not a change of expression, my passenger looked me straight in the eye and replied, "Now why would an old man like myself ask a pretty young lady, and a very thorough one, I might add, like yourself, to run my errands? You don't think I can dial my own phone?"

As we stood at the airport waiting for the boarding call, Nick put out his hand and, hesitating only slightly, raised it to my head and patted me. Then, without a word, he strode off.

Heading for the parking lot, I heard my name called and turned to see the plane's steward running after me, waving his arm.

"The gentleman who just boarded the flight asked me to give you this," he said, catching his breath. "He must be some kind of nut or something. He tipped me a ten spot to catch you."

The steward turned and hurried back to the plane. I looked down at the palm of my hand. In it was a dime.

Nick the Greek was a giant of his kind, and on Christmas Day in 1966 he died broke. Smart gamblers are a funny breed. They always pay their debts. Merry Christmas, Mr. D, and sleep well. □

Tricia Hurst lives in Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico.

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## Southern Nevada Show Notes

By Pete Mikla

Desert Inn headliner Tony Orlando turns every performance into a party by getting the audience to clap and sing along with him. Asked how he learned to create that festive atmosphere, Orlando credited his mother.

"Every year my mother would give a great New Year's Eve party in the basement of our home," he recalled. "I used to love to watch all my relatives, who were always so serious all year long, cut loose and have a good time. That's the philosophy behind my show."

☆

The Sahara Hotel will dance its way into New Year's with a held-over hit, Maynard Sloate's musical production of "A Chorus Line." The smash show signals the success of the hotel's recent entertainment policy of making Broadway-type stage musicals and comedies the main attractions. But longtime headliners Don Rickles and George Carlin haven't been left in the wings. They still break up Congo Room audiences with their machine-gun humor during weekend or one-week engagements. When sharing the stage, the big namers are on early and the thespians work the late shift.

Sloate says well known stage types may be cast in upcoming productions. "Last summer we booked Frank Gorshin as star of 'Promises, Promises,'" he said. "We'll be looking for more name stars."

☆

Las Vegas Hilton star Norm Crosby has done many TV commercials and variety shows during his 20 years in the business, but never a TV sitcom. "I've received many scripts, but unfortunately I haven't found the one that I feel will show off my Mr. Malaprop character to the best advantage," explained Crosby, whose fractured sentences make grammar teachers wince and audiences roll in the aisles.

A few years ago Crosby lost a supporting role in a sitcom to another actor. "I have to admit they were right," he said. "At the time, all the actors in the cast, including the stars, were totally unknown. It wouldn't have worked to have a recognizable face like mine in a third banana role. Besides, the fellow who got the part did a darn good job with it." The part called for a bartender who mixed up his logic more than drinks in a little bar called Cheers. The role went to the late Nicholas Colasanto. □

*Pete Mikla is entertainment editor and a columnist for the Las Vegas Review-Journal.*

# SHOWGUIDE

Where the stars and shows are playing this winter.

By Melissa Loomis

Following is a muster of the stars, revues, and extravaganzas you can see in Nevada showrooms in January and February. Hotels and casinos are listed by territory as shown on the map in this issue's Nevada Calendar. Schedules can change, so it's wise to call ahead for times, dates, and reservations. For out-of-state callers, Nevada's area code is 702. For the hotels' toll-free phone numbers, call 800-555-1212.

## LAS VEGAS TERRITORY

**Aladdin**, 736-0111 Lounge entertainment

**Barbary Coast**, 737-7111 Entertainment nightly

**Caesars Palace**, 731-7333: Entertainment TBA

**Circus Circus**, 734-0410: Circus acts



*Did you hear the one about Joan Rivers? You will this winter at Caesars Tahoe.*

**Desert Inn**, 733-4566: Bobby Vinton/Smothers Brothers, 12/26-1/15; Neil Sedaka/Fred Travalena, 1/16-2/5; Tony Orlando/Juliet Prowse, 2/6-26

**Dunes**, 737-4110: Lounge entertainment

**Edgewater**, Laughlin, 298-2453

**El Rancho**, 796-2222: Lounge entertainment

**Flamingo Hilton**, 733-3333: City Lites, revue, indf., 7:45pm dinner show from \$15.95, 11pm cocktail show \$10.95, includes 2 drinks; *Casino Lounge*: Cheryl Cotten/Scott & Ginger, 12/24-1/20; *Flames/Command Performance*, 1/21-2/3; *Command Performance/Sonny Turner*, 2/4-10; *Sonny Turner/Then & Now*, 2/11-3/3

**Four Queens**, 385-4011: Sun Spots, thru 1/5; Marlene Ricci, 12/26-1/12; *Platters*, 1/21-2/2; *Van Dells*, 2/4-23; *Dondino*, indf., Monday Nite Jazz, indf.



*Fred Travalena impersonates other celebrities at Harrah's Reno and the Desert Inn.*

**Frontier**, 734-0240: Siegfried & Roy in *Beyond Belief*, indf.; 7pm & 11pm cocktail shows Tues.-Sun; dark Mon.

**Golden Nugget**, 386-8100: Entertainment TBA

**Hacienda**, 798-0571: *Fire & Ice*, ice spectacular indf.; 8pm optional dinner show from \$14.95, 8pm and 11pm cocktail shows \$10.95, dark Thurs.

**Holiday**, 369-5222: *Rocky Sennes' Roaring '20s*, indf.; 9pm & 11:30pm Mon.-Fri., 8pm, 10pm & 12:30am Sat., dark Sun.; \$6.95, includes 2 drinks

**Imperial Palace**, 733-0234: *Legends in Concert*, indf., 8pm & 11pm cocktail shows \$11.95, dark Sun.

**Landmark**, 733-1110: *Mickey Finn Show*, indf.

**Las Vegas Hilton**, 732-5661: *Bal du Moulin Rouge*, indf., 8pm and 11:30pm shows; *Vic Damone/Dick Shawn/Garza Brothers*, thru 1/14; *Vic Damone/Norm Crosby/Garza Brothers*, 1/15-2/25; *Louise Mandrell/Jim Stafford/Anthony Gatto*, 2/26-4/1



*When Tony Orlando puts on a show, he remembers his mother's secret formula.*



**MGM Grand Hotel**, 739-4567; *Ziegfeld Theatre*: Jubilee! indf.; 7:30pm & 11pm, dark Wed., \$25; *Celebrity Room*: Dean Martin, 1/2-8; Wayne Newton, 1/9-15; Rich Little, 1/16-22; Wayne Newton, 1/23-2/5; Tom Jones, 2/6-19; Dean Martin, 2/20-26; Johnny Mathis, 2/27-3/5

**Marina**, 739-1500: Old Burlesque '85 with Bob Mitchel, indf.; 8pm & 10pm; dark Mon., \$6.95

**Maxim**, 731-4300: Entertainment TBA

**Mint**, 387-6468: Sandy Hackett's Talent Showcase, indf., 8pm Sun.

**Palace Station**, 367-2411: Lounge shows

**Peppermill's Western Village**, Mesquite, 346-5232: Nightly entertainment

**Regency Casino**, Laughlin, 298-2439: Piano bar, Wed.-Sun.



Juliet Prowse lights up the stage at the Desert Inn in February.

**Riverside Resort**, Laughlin, 298-2535

**Riviera**, 734-5301: Splash! production show, indf.; An Evening at La Cage, indf.

**Royal Casino**, 733-4000: Nightly entertainment

**Sahara**, 737-2424: "A Chorus Line," Broadway musical, indf.



It's not unusual to find Tom Jones at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

**Sam Boyd's California**, 385-1222: Nightly entertainment, 7pm-7am

**Sam's Town**, 456-7777: Continuous entertainment; western dancing with free lessons Sun.-Thurs., 7-9pm

**Sam's Town Gold River**, Laughlin, 298-2242

**Sands**, 733-5000: Outrageous, revue, indf.; 8pm, 10pm & midnight, dark Mon., \$9.50, includes 2 drinks

**Silver Slipper**, 734-1212: Boylesque, revue, indf.; 8pm, 10pm & midnight, dark Thurs., \$6.95

**Stardust**, 732-6325, Lido de Paris starring Bobby Berosini's orangutans, indf., 7pm & 11pm, \$17.50, includes 2 drinks

**Sundance**, 382-6111 Kathy Dahl/Richard Yusco, indf.

**Tropicana**, 739-2411: Folies Bergere, indf.; 8pm dinner show \$15.95, 11:30pm cocktail show \$11.95, dark Thurs.

**Union Plaza**, 386-2444: Broadway entertainment nightly; 8pm dinner show from \$11.95, 11:45pm cocktail show from \$7.50



Does Mom really like Dick best? The Smothers Brothers tell all at the D.I.

## RENO/TAHOE TERRITORY

**Caesars Tahoe**, 588-3515: Star Street, revue, indf.; Joan Rivers, 2/7-9; Gallagher, 2/14-16

**Carson City Nugget**, 882-1626: Motifs, 12/24-1/19

**Carson Valley Inn**, Minden, 782-9711 Nightly music and dancing, no cover or minimum

**Circus Circus**, Reno, 329-0711 Circus acts

**Crystal Bay Club**, North Tahoe, 831-0512: Sutro, thru 1/5

**Del Webb's High Sierra**, Tahoe, 588-6211 Shake, Rattle, and Roll, revue, indf.; Pat Collins, 1/20-2/2; Ricky and the Redstreaks, 2/3-9; Danny Marona, 2/10-3/9

**Eldorado**, Reno, 786-5700: Music Tues.-Sun.

**Harolds Club**, Reno, 329-0881: Lin Maureen & Dennis, Ricky Santos & Bobby Reynon alternate thru 1/5; Lin Maureen & Dennis and Cameron alternate 1/6-2/23



There's jazz and red-hot action in Harvey's new revue, *Feminine Touch*, at Tahoe.

**Harrah's Lake Tahoe**, 588-6611: *South Shore Room*: Wayne Newton, thru 1/1 Hot Ice, revue with Tai and Randy, Charlie Tickner, & Dorothy Hamill, 1/4-26; Oak Ridge Boys, 1/31-2/6; Roy Clark, 2/7-13; Bill Cosby/Vanessa Williams, 2/21-27 *Stateline Cabaret*: Breakin' Loose, revue, indf., Wed.-Mon.; Platters, 12/24-1/5

**Harrah's Reno**, 329-4422: *Headliner Room*: Suzanne Somers/Fred Travalena, 12/26-1/8; Lynda Carter, 1/9-15; Bill Cosby/Tony Tillman,

## Northern Nevada Show Notes

By Guy Richardson

Winter hangs its icy blackjack over Northern Nevada, cold seeping into entertainment directors' spines. Still, there's money to be made. Caesars Tahoe damns the snow and full speeds ahead with Joan "Mighty Mouth" Rivers and Gallagher the melon-smasher. Reno Hilton had plans to tear out its showroom for a buffet but apparently has given way to a star policy. No stars yet announced, but just you wait, says Hilton big guy Don DeVoto.

Olympians Dorothy, Tai, and Randy shower ice at Harrah's Tahoe followed by hot names like Roy Clark, the Oak Ridge Boys, and Bill Cosby. Suzanne Somers snark snarks at Harrah's Reno for 1986's first week with Fred Travalena, who's much better on stage than his TV show.

Sparks Nugget entertainment director Jim Thompson experimented with \$5 shows in early winter, doing well by alternating a good revue and headliners. Look for the stars to reappear after the showroom's January remodeling.

☆

This winter, though, lounges are hot. Breck Wall's "Bottoms Up '86" ('87 by the time you read this; Wall leaps ahead of even Detroit) is packing 'em in at Harrah's Reno. David Harris' Pavarotti send-up is worth the \$5 admission.

Then we've got local rock phenoms Sutro shattering the air at the Crystal Bay Club, using a crisp horn section.

Sonny Turner falsettos the walls at Harvey's. Who he, you ask. The voice on most of the Platters' hits. He looks about 30, must be a couple of decades further on, but his voice is, if anything, hotter than in 1958. This show will melt the snow off your boots.

☆

Backstage glimpses: Lee Greenwood's son, Tedd, dancing in "Bottoms Up" at Harrah's Reno. Cute kid. Try this on your trivia-fiend friends: What Harrah's rock star was a barber? Most people know Perry Como cut hair (you didn't?) but Paul Revere not only scissored but owned three barbershops in Idaho while still a teenager. Doug Kershaw's making plans for main rooms after being the latest of a long line of musicians to quit cocaine because it clogged his career. Joan Rivers claims she caused husband Edgar's heart attack last year: "We were making love, I took the bag off my head, and over he went!" □

Guy Richardson covers the entertainment beat for the Reno Gazette-Journal.



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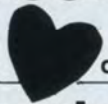
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1/24-30; Don Rickles, 1/31-2/5; Mel Tillis, 2/6-19;  
Glen Campbell, 2/20-26; Joel Grey/Charlie  
Callas, 2/27-3/5; *Casino Cabaret*: Bottoms Up  
'86, revue, indf., Wed.-Mon.; Mamas and the  
Papas, 12/24-1/5

**Harvey's**, Tahoe, 588-2411: *Top of the Wheel*:  
Ron Rose Sound, indf.; Dare thru 1/5; *Theatre  
Lounge*: Feminine Touch, revue, indf.; Body Lan-  
guage, revue, indf.; Sonny Turner, thru 1/12;  
Entertainment Committee, thru 1/12

**Hyatt Lake Tahoe**, 831-1111: Garfin Gathering,  
thru 1/5; Perfect Circle, 1/7-19; Penny Lane, 1/21-  
2/2; Dae Han Sisters, 2/4-23; Friends, 2/25-3/9

**John Ascuaga's Nugget**, Sparks, 356-3300:  
Entertainment TBA

**Karl's**, Sparks, 358-4771: Gary Xavier at the  
piano, days, indf.; entertainment nightly

**MGM Grand Hotel**, Reno, 789-2285; *Ziegfeld  
Theatre*: Hello Hollywood Hello, indf.; *Lion's Den*:  
Danny Marona, 1/8-2/4; Pat Collins, 2/5-3/4

**Mother Lode**, Carson City, 883-0900: Cains,  
thru 1/5

**Ormsby House**, Carson City, 882-1890: R.C. Kin,  
1/7-26; Blind Date, 1/28-2/9; Garfin Gathering,  
2/11-23

**Peppermill**, Reno: 826-2121: Tommy Bell, thru  
1/5; Lelands, thru 1/26; Lucy Lucille, 1/6-12;  
Laura St. Romain, 1/13-19; Network, 1/20-2/2;  
Connection 1/27-2/23; Tommy Bell, 2/3-23;  
Lucky, 2/24-3/16; Wray Brothers, 2/24-3/30

**Pick Hobson's Riverside**, Reno, 786-4400:  
Nightly dancing, Tues.-Sun.

**Reno Hilton**, 785-7100: Entertainment TBA

**Reno Ramada**, 788-2000: Live entertainment

**Sharkey's Nugget**, Gardnerville, 782-3133

**Topaz Lodge**, Topaz Lake, 266-3339

**Western Village**, Sparks, 331-1069; St. Romain,  
thru 1/12; Wray Brothers, thru 2/9

## COVERED WAGON PONY EXPRESS & PIONEER TERRITORIES

**Battle Mountain**: Owl Club, 635-5155

**Elko**: Commercial Hotel, 738-3181 Red Lion,  
738-2111; Stockmen's Hotel, 738-5141

**Ely**: Hotel Nevada, 289-4414

**Fallon**: Fallon Nugget, 423-3111

**Jackpot**: Cactus Pete's, 755-2321; Horseshu,  
755-2331

**Pahrump**: Saddle West Casino, 727-5953

**Tonopah**: Mizpah Hotel, 482-6202; Station  
House, 482-9777

**Wendover**: Nevada Crossing, 664-4000; Live  
entertainment nightly, Tues.-Sun.; Peppermill,  
664-2255; Red Garter Casino, 664-2111; State  
Line Casino, 664-2221

**Winnemucca**: Winners Hotel-Casino, 623-2511

**Yerington**: Casino West, 463-2481 Dini's Lucky  
Club, 463-2868; Live entertainment week-  
ends □



# THE NEVADA CALENDAR

## January & February 1986

Your complete day-by-day guide to events  
and celebrations in the Silver State.

Compiled by Melissa Loomis, Prose by Lee Adler

### LAS VEGAS TERRITORY

#### January

**New Year's Eve Fireworks**, 12/31, celebration downtown on Fremont Street with live music and fireworks at 9pm at the Union Plaza, 386-2317

**Christmas Exhibit**, thru 1/10, the Clark County Southern Nevada Museum's Heritage Street and Beckley House are decked out in Christmas finery of the '20s and '30s, Henderson, 565-0907

**Museum Exhibit**, thru 9/27 effects of light and color, Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, 385-0115

**Art Exhibit**, 2-31, oil paintings by Adel Rusk, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

**UNLV v. Utah State**, 2, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Stairway to the Stars Poker Tournament**, 2-23, 28 different poker events, Stardust Hotel, 732-6587

**Historic Toys Exhibit**, 2-31, Clark County Southern Nevada Museum, Henderson, 565-0907

**Star Program**, 4, bring flashlight, 7:30-9:30pm, Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center, 17 miles west of Las Vegas, 363-1921

**Jackpot Team Roping**, 4, open to public, 10am, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**UNLV v. San Jose State**, 4, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Traditional Karate Tournament**, 4-5, Frontier Hotel, 734-0385

**Golden Blackjack Classic**, 5-7 Four Queens Hotel, 385-4011 ext. 2100

**Art Exhibit**, 5-29, oil paintings by Lucile Spire Bruner, Las Vegas Art Museum, 647-4300

**Art Exhibit**, 5-2/2, 44 works addressing nuclear disarmament, Museum of Natural History, UNLV, 739-3381

**Amateur Rodeo**, 11-12, open to public, 1pm, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**Firefighting Exhibit**, 11-2/26, photos and artifacts of early Las Vegas volunteer firefighters, Clark County Southern Nevada Museum, Henderson, 565-0907

**Tropicana Cutting Spectacular**, 13-23, Tropicana Hotel, 739-2546

**UNLV v. UC Santa Barbara**, 16, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

#### Grand New Opry

Move over Nashville. Las Vegas is going whole hog with a proposed 8,000-seat Grand Ole Opry-style theatre and a museum of country music and western art. The theatre and museum aren't scheduled to open for another two to three years, but the Far Western Country and Western Music Foundation is already celebrating. From February 27 to March 1 more than 400 western artists will exhibit their works in a show taking place simultaneously at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Caesars Palace, and the Sahara Hotel. Several fund-raising bashes also are planned, including a \$65-a-plate banquet and a country music show, which will seek donations ranging from \$10 to a cool \$1 million per seat.

**"Whose Life Is It Anyway?"** 16-19, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Las Vegas Little Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 734-6971

**Ballet**, 17-18, several ballets including "Cinderella," 8pm Fri., 2pm and 8pm Sat., Nevada Youth Ballet Company, Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 458-7575

**Jackpot Team Roping**, 18, open to public, 10am, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**Piano Concert**, 19, featuring Vladimir Jan Kochanski, 8pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**Lucky Sevens Slot Tournament**, 19-22, Frontier Hotel, 734-0385

**UNLV v. New Mexico State**, 23, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**"Whose Life Is It Anyway?"** 23-26, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Las Vegas Little Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 734-6971



#### Homer on the Range

The thought of rugged cowboys firing blank verse rather than six-guns might sound like the product of a PR man suffering from cabin fever, but, in fact, cowboys have been writing and reciting about the joys, sorrows, and hardscrabble existence on ranch and range for more than a century. This tradition of verse, stories, and song will be cherished and exulted at the second Cowboy Poetry Gathering, January 30 through February 1, at the convention center in Elko, a ranching community where buckarooping is still a matter of fact rather than of nostalgia.

KIM STAFFORD



## Back by Popular Demand

Halley's comet, a flashy act that's literally out of this world, has been booked for a limited engagement in the Nevada skies. This "eerie, flamelike apparition," as one startled observer called it, is now just a neighborly 53 million miles or so away after 76 years on the road. Over the centuries it has been viewed as both mystical and mundane, as a sign of God's intentions, and as a jazzy, cosmic garbage truck, hauling away the debris of the universe. Shakespeare associated comets with the deaths of princes and other great events, but Halley's last fly-by of earth, in 1910, coincided with such drab commonplaces as the creation of the kingdom of Montenegro and the popularity of the tango.

During the comet's current visit, prime viewing times in Nevada will be early January, March, and April. For comet viewing in Southern Nevada, the Clark County Community College Planetarium plans to have special activities, and the Las Vegas Astronomical Society will locate the best viewing spot in the area. For activities and viewing dates, call 702-643-6060, extension 326.

In Reno, UNR's Fleischmann Planetarium has acquired a 17.5-inch-diameter telescope especially for the comet's visit. The Planetarium's domed, 360-degree theater is offering the show "Comet Halley: Once in a Lifetime," which will run until April 27. There also are plans for a Halley's Time Capsule to be sealed February 9 and re-opened on July 26, 2061, when the "dirty snowball" of space again drops by for a visit. For the best viewing days and times, call the Planetarium's comet hot line at 702-784-4811. Meanwhile, the Astronomical Society of Nevada will look for the best viewing spots in the Reno area; you can join them by calling 702-673-3421.

In Incline Village, star seekers at Sierra Nevada College will gather to view Halley's at McLean Observatory on Mount Rose. There's a \$15 registration fee; call 702-831-1314 for information.

**Blackjack Tournament**, 24-26, Marina Hotel, 739-1500

**UNLV v. Cal State Long Beach**, 25, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Open Triples Lawn Bowling Tournament**, 25-30, open to the public, Hacienda Hotel, 739-8911

**Indoor Archery Tournament**, 29-2/3, Tropical Hotel, 739-2581

## Many-Splendored Montage

A many-faceted view of a many-faceted state can be found in the Nevada 85 Photographic Exhibition now ending a year-long tour. The assorted images—ranging from the intensely personal and minute to the panoramic—will be on display at the White Pine County Library in Ely until January 3, and at the Lincoln County Courthouse in Pioche, January 10-30. The show will then join with its Nevada 86 successor at the Northeastern Nevada Museum in Elko, February 28 through March 31.

**Las Vegas Open Dart Tournament**, 29-3/2, Union Plaza Hotel, 451-9221

**"Whose Life Is It Anyway?"** 30-2/2, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Las Vegas Little Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 734-6971

## A Night at the Opera . . .

A murky and melodramatic tale of lust, hatred, and vengeance—no, it's not "Dynasty," but Giuseppe Verdi's masterpiece, "Il Trovatore," anvil chorus and all, February 20 and 22 at Reno's Pioneer Theater. It's produced, of course, by the Nevada Opera Association, the Lorimar of the Silver State stage.



## February

**Amateur Rodeo**, 1-2, open to public, 1pm, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**Art Exhibit**, 1-28, works by contemporary artists, Museum of Natural History, UNLV, 739-3381



## The Sounds of Silence

World-famous pantomimist Marcel Marceau will prove that you don't need the language of sound to articulate the language of life when he makes his Las Vegas debut on February 10 at UNLV's Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall.



STEVE TIMKO

## . . . and a Day at the Races

The descendants of ancient war wagons will be Ben Hur-rying it along as part of the melee in Ely that is the Bristlecone Chariot Races, March 1-2 at the White Pine County Fairgrounds. For more of the same kind of horsing around, try the city of Wells, 137 miles to the north, where the chariots of mire will be running on weekends throughout March.

**Art Exhibit**, 1-3/31 paintings by Joyce Jones, Max Bunnell, and Phyllis Carpenter, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

**Art Show**, 2-26, sponsored by Nevada Mothers Assn., Las Vegas Art Museum, 647-4300

**UNLV v. Pacific**, 6, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**"Petrouchka,"** 7-8, play with puppets, 7:30pm Fri., 2pm Sat., Tears of Joy Theatre, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**Slot Machine Tournament**, 7-9, Marina Hotel, 739-1500

**Black History Month Film**, 8, "Don't Start Me to Talking or I'll Tell Everything I Know," 8pm, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6211

**Jackpot Team Roping**, 8, open to public, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**UNLV v. Fresno State**, 8, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Fur Trade Exhibit**, 9-3/31 Clark County Southern Nevada Museum, Henderson, 565-0907

**Marcel Marceau**, 10, performance by one of the world's greatest mimes, 8pm, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 739-3838

**"Night, Mother,"** 14-15, drama, 8pm, Clark County Community College Theatre, North Las Vegas, 643-9118

**Beefmasters Bull Sale**, 14-17 Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**UNLV v. UC Irvine**, 15, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**"Footfalls,"** 15, drama by Samuel Beckett, West Coast Experimental Theatre, Clark County Community Theatre, North Las Vegas, 386-6553

**Antique Bottle Show and Sale**, 15-16, 9:30am-5pm Sat., 9:30am-4pm Sun., Hacienda Hotel, 645-1787

**UNLV v. Cal State Fullerton**, 17 basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Lost City Exhibit**, 17-3/17, on Nevada's ancient Pueblo Indians, Valley of Fire State Park, 55 miles northeast of Las Vegas, 397-2088

**"Night, Mother,"** 20-22, drama, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., also 2pm Sat., Clark County Community



College Theatre, North Las Vegas, 643-9118  
**"Catastrophe,"** 21, comedy by Samuel Beckett, West Coast Experimental Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**"The Plough and the Stars,"** 21-22, poetic drama, Dept. of Theatre Arts, Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 739-3801

**"Vagabonds,"** 21-3/2, historical play about Mark Twain and a young runaway, Rainbow Company Children's Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**Jackpot Team Roping,** 22, open to public, 10am, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**Hike,** 23, strenuous 3-mile round-trip hike to the top of Calico Hills, 9:30am-2pm, Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center, 17 miles west of Las Vegas, 363-1921

**Triple Crown Futurity Barrel Race,** 25-3/2,

Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

## Snow Ball!

The Lake Tahoe area will spread its finest white linen this winter and throw several parties. The guiding ethos of these goosepimpily galas seems to be anything goes. You'll find everything from sled dog races to Hawaiian luaus. Check listing.

**"AAA" Division II Basketball Playoffs,** 26-29, and 3/1 boys and girls, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3761

**"The Plough and the Stars,"** 27-28, poetic drama, Dept. of Theatre Arts, Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 739-3801

**Art Show,** 27-3/1, works by cowboy and western artists, held at the Convention Center, Sahara Hotel and Caesars Palace, 382-0084

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**"That Time,"** 28, short play by Samuel Beckett, West Coast Experimental Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**"A" Division II Basketball Playoffs,** 28-3/1 boys and girls, Bonanza High School, 870-7238  
**Banquet,** 3/1, fundraiser for Far Western Country & Western Music Foundation, Caesars Palace, 382-0084

## PIONEER TERRITORY

### January

**El Capitan Cutthroat Derby,** thru 4/25, \$600 for largest cutthroat trout, \$250 for 2nd, \$150 for 3rd, \$100 for all 10-pound-and-over cutthroats, registration at El Capitan Casino, Hawthorne, 945-3321

**Ichthyosaur Fossil Shelter Tours,** 1-5/23, guided tour by park rangers, 10am and 2pm Fri-Mon., Berlin Ichthyosaur State Park, 23 miles east of Gabbs, 867-3001

**Nevada 85,** 10-30, photo show, Lincoln County Courthouse, Pioche, 962-5390

**Rhyolite's 82nd Birthday Celebration,** 11-12, on Sat. dinner and dance at 7pm (reservations needed), on Sun. party from 2-5pm, train depot, 1 West Nevada St., Rhyolite No. 2.

### February

**Hell 100 Hare & Hound Moto-Cross,** 22-23, dirt bike endurance race, Rhyolite City Park, Rhyolite No. 2

## PONY EXPRESS TERRITORY

### January

**Museum Opening,** thru 5/31 open weekends only, 6/1-10/31 open every day, Nevada Northern Railway Museum, Ely, 289-8877

**Nevada 85,** thru 1/3, photo show, White Pine County Library, Ely, 738-3418

**Hidden Cave Tours,** 11 & 25, meet 9:30am at





County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677  
**Sentimental Snow Run**, 18-19, ride train from Hazen to Sacramento and back, stay overnight in Sacramento and visit Old Town and the railroad museum, call Hazen Preservation Society at the Hazen Bar for reservations by December 30, 867-3066

**Railroad Show**, 25-26, detailed models, memorabilia, noon-5pm, Hazen Bar, on U.S. 50-A, Hazen, 867-3066

## February

**Bristlecone Birkenbeiner**, 1 5km and 10km cross-country ski race, open to all, Murry Summit, at the base of Ward Mountain, Ely, 289-8877

**Hidden Cave Tours**, 8 & 22, meet 9:30am at County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

**State "A" Wrestling Championship**, 15, high school, Battle Mountain, 635-5436

**Concert**, 16, String Beings perform classical and pop music, 2pm, Hazen Bar, on U.S. 50-A, Hazen, 867-3066

**Bristlecone Chariot Races**, 3/1-2, futurity, derby, and invitational, fairgrounds, Ely, 289-8877

## COVERED WAGON TERRITORY

## January

**New Year's Eve Celebration**, 12/31, town's fire sirens will sound at stroke of midnight, Cactus Pete's and Horseshu casinos, Jackpot, 755-2321

**New Year's Eve Celebration**, 12/31 celebrate the new year twice, once at midnight Utah (Moun-

## Hoopla Over Hoops

Both University of Nevada basketball teams—the Runnin' Rebels of Las Vegas and the Wolfpack of Reno—won their conference titles last year and made it to the NCAA playoffs. This winter they are aspiring and perspiring all over again with exciting schedules (see listing). Also, the Pack will host the Big Sky Conference championships on March 6-8.

tain) time, and again at midnight Nevada (Pacific) time, Red Garter Casino, Wendover, 664-2111

**Art Exhibits**, thru 1/22, works by left-handed artists and exhibit by Charlie Paul, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

**Chariot Races**, thru 3/29, horse-drawn chariot races scheduled for every Sat., noon at the chariot track, Wells, 752-3344

**Red Lion Bowling Tournament**, 17, continues for 11 weeks, Rainbow Lanes, Elko, 738-6525

**White Weather Square and Round Dance Festival**, 24-25, high school gym, Jackpot, 755-2321

## Duel of the Green Felt Titans

The chips will be down, the tension level up, and the pots truly prodigious as the world's best poker players compete for profit and pride in the million-dollar Stairway to the Stars tournament, January 2-23, at the Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas. The high-rolling continues with the Super Bowl of Poker, January 29 to February 14, at Caesars Tahoe at Stateline.

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# Sagebrush Gourmet

A diner's guide to the Silver State

*Following is a selective guide to reader-approved Nevada restaurants whose advertisements appear in this section. Besides descriptions of menu and atmosphere, the listings include prices, hours and other details for your convenience. If you have any comments on the establishments listed, drop us a line at Nevada Magazine, Sagebrush Gourmet, Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV. 89710-0005.*

### CATTLEMENS

Hwy. 395, Washoe Valley  
Between Reno and Carson City. 849-1500  
A ranch-style restaurant, the cozy Cattlemens offers excellent meals at moderate prices. The special sirloin steak dinner is a popular and good buy. Currently \$6.45, this dinner includes a baked potato, salad, bread, ranch-style beans, sirloin steak and a glass of wine. Other entrees range from a simple hamburger steak to a filet mignon and lobster. The Alaska king crab is delicious! Open seven days a week for dinner from 5 p.m. No reservations. AE, MC, VISA.

### COMSTOCK HOTEL & CASINO

Second and West Street  
Reno. 329-1880

Home of the famous One-Pound New York Steak Dinner for only \$5.99. The Comstock's popular 24-hour **Miner's Cafe** also features complete breakfast, lunch, and dinner items. Enjoy reasonably priced meals served in an intimate and relaxing atmosphere in the **Comstock Dinner House**. Full-course dinners are a bargain at \$5.99 in the **Specialty Room Restaurant**. Every fine meal tastefully prepared to your order. Valet parking available. The Comstock Hotel and Casino, "Where the Old West comes alive every day in Downtown Reno." AE, MC, VISA.



### LOUIS' BASQUE CORNER

301 E. 4th Street  
Reno. 323-7203

Louis' restaurant offers a warm, unhurried atmosphere that hints of yesterday. Master chefs prepare genuine Basque cuisine such as Tripes Callos, Poulet a la Basquaise, Paella, Boeuf Bourguignon, and entrees including Coq au Vin (chicken in red wine sauce), Lapin Chasseur (hunter's rabbit), and Ris de Veau (sweetbreads) as well as many other delicious French and Spanish Basque dishes all served family style with complimentary wine. You can enjoy a famous picon punch, cafe royale or perhaps an Izarra. Basque culture is reflected in the pottery, artifacts and pictures from the Pyrenees which grace the walls of the two traditional dining rooms. Louis and Lorraine Erreguible host many special dinners and parties in this authentic Basque restaurant. Ample free parking. Lunch: Mon.-Fri., 11:30-2:00. Dinner: 6 p.m., nightly. All major credit cards accepted.

### MARTIN HOTEL

Railroad & Melarky Streets  
Winnemucca, NV. 623-3197

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**Cowboy Poetry Gathering**, 30-2/1, second annual get-together features recitations of poetry, exhibits of cowboy arts and crafts, and performances of cowboy music, Elko Convention Center, 738-7508

## February

**Mardi Gras Ball**, 8, costumes, dinner, and dancing; recognized by the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Elko Convention Center, 738-4091

**Chamber of Commerce Basketball Tourney**, 8-9, open to any team, Wells High School, 752-3247

**Annual Fish and Wild Game Feed**, 24, free, auction included, Cactus Pete's, Jackpot, 755-2321

**State "B" Basketball Championships**, 27-28 and 3/1 boys and girls, Elko High School, 738-7281

**"A" Division I Basketball Playoffs**, 28-3/1 high school, Lovelock, 273-2625

**Nevada 85 and Nevada 86**, 28-3/31 1985 photo show and premiere of 1986 show, North-eastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

## RENO/TAHOE TERRITORY

## January

**Lost City Exhibit**, thru 1/10, on Nevada's ancient Pueblo Indians, Nevada State Museum, Carson City, 885-4810

**Planetarium Show**, thru 4/27 on Halley's Comet, starting 2/7 show accompanied by film "Riches: The Story of Nevada Mining," Fleischmann Planetarium, UNR, 784-4811

**Art Exhibit**, 1-31 Native American art and modern art by Page Tigar and Carlos Warner, Reno City Hall, 786-9635

**Concert**, 2, Christian rock groups Stryper and Under Cover, 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 786-5105

**USSA Freestyle Ski Meet**, 4-5, ballet competition Sat., moguls Sun., Boreal Ridge, Truckee, 916-426-3666

**Flea Market**, 4-2/23, weekends only, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307

**Equitable Family Ski Challenge**, 5, Northstar, North Lake Tahoe, 916-562-1010

**Ski Race Series**, 6-2/24, Mondays, Alpine Meadows Ski Area, Tahoe City, 916-583-4232

**Historical Talk**, 8, Phillip Earl, Curator of Exhibits at Nevada Historical Society, talks about Nevada ghost towns and mining camps, open to public, 7:30pm, Reno Gem & Mineral Society, 480 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks, 826-6866

**Bicycle Moto-Cross Racing**, 8, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307

**UNR v. Montana**, 9, basketball, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4500

**Western Gymnastics Assn. Tournament**, 9-11 Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 322-4531

**"The Elephant Man,"** 10-12, drama, 8pm Fri.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**Museum Biennial**, 10-2/23, show of contemporary Nevada art, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333

**Henry Weinhard's College Cup Ski Race**, 11 Boreal Ridge, Truckee, 916-426-3666

**UNR v. Montana State**, 11 basketball, Lawlor Events Center UNR, 784-4500



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**Reno Philharmonic Concert**, 11 8:15pm, Pioneer Theater, 329-1324

**"The Elephant Man,"** 16-18, drama, 8pm, Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**Mid-Winter Gala**, 17 opening celebration for new exhibit of James D. Santini's basket collection, 6-8pm, Nevada Historical Society Gallery, 789-0190

**Flips International Children's Gymnastic Tournament**, 17-18, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 331-2200

**Auto Show 1986**, 17-19, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 825-8474

**Photo Exhibit**, 17-2/7 photos by Gus Bundy, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 883-1976

**Alpenglow Cross-Country Ski Races**, 18, 5km and 10km, Tahoe Donner, Truckee, 916-587-7005

**4-H Livestock Judging**, 18, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307

**Ski Races**, 18 and 2/1 and 15, open to everyone, Alpine Meadows, Tahoe City, 916-583-4232

**Citizens' Ski Race**, 19, open to all, Northstar, North Lake Tahoe, 916-562-1010

**Bicycle Moto-Cross Racing**, 19, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307

**Slot Machine Marathon**, 19-20, Eldorado Hotel, 786-5700

**Tommy Lasorda Night**, 20, annual fundraiser for UNR baseball team, \$100 a plate includes cocktails, dinner, and talk by the manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers, Peppermill, 826-2121

**Men's Peugeot Grand Prix Pro Race**, 23-26, world's top ski racers compete for \$50,000 in slalom and giant slalom event, spectators welcome, Heavenly Valley, Stateline, 916-541-1330

**"Loot,"** 24-26, dark comedy, 8pm Fri-Sat, 2pm Sun., Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**Reno Chamber Orchestra Concert**, 26, featuring Marilyn Sevilla of the Reno Philharmonic, 3pm, Trinity Episcopal Church, 826-8742

**Tahoe World Nordic Championships**, 26, 15km cross-country race starts at 10am, advance registration required, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-9858

**Christian Pop Concert**, 27 featuring Randy Stonehill and Leslie Phillips, 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 786-5105

**San Francisco Special Olympics**, 27-31, mentally handicapped athletes compete, Boreal Ridge, Truckee, 916-426-3666

**South Lake Tahoe Winter Carnival**, 28-31 includes the Snowshoe Thompson Historical Ski Race, chili cook-off, barrel-staves race, pre-schoolers picnic, costume-fun obstacle race, senior citizens race, ice cream eating contest, snowshoe cocktail race, Legislator's Cup Ski Race (matches Nevada legislators against California legislators), free, Sierra Ski Ranch, Twin Bridges, 12 miles west of South Lake Tahoe, 916-659-7519

**Super Bowl of Poker**, 29-2/14, Amarillo Slim hosts eighth annual tournament, Caesars Tahoe, 588-3515

**UNR v. Idaho**, 30, basketball, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4500

**"Loot,"** 30-2/1 dark comedy, 8pm, Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**Cribbage Tournament of Champions**, 31-2/2, Karl's Hotel, Sparks, 358-4771

## February

**UNR v. Boise State**, 1, basketball, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4500

**Far West Freestyle Competition**, 1-2, ballet, aerials, and mogul competition, Donner Ski

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Ranch, Norden, 916-426-3635

**Telemark Race and Festival**, 2, Northstar, North Lake Tahoe, 916-562-1010

**4-H Sheep Wet Lab**, 2, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307

**Nevada Special Olympic Winter Games**, 4-7 Ski Incline, Incline Village, 832-1177

**Exploration Talk**, 5, Robert Watters, assoc. prof. of geological engineering at UNR, speaks about the 1979 John Mackay Mt. McKinley Expedition, open to public, 7:30pm, Reno Gem & Mineral Society, 480 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks, 826-6866

**Art Exhibit**, 5-23, contemporary art in miniature needlepoint by D.R. Wagner, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333

**"Margie,"** 7 film made in 1946 at UNR starring Jeanne Crain and Alan Young, film moderator is Howard Rosenberg, 7pm, Jot Travis Student Union, UNR, 784-6682

**Ski Races**, 8, Alpine Meadows, Tahoe City, 916-583-4232

**4-H Livestock Judging**, 8, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307

**Winterskol**, 8-9, celebrity and pro races, Ski Incline, Incline Village, 832-1177

**Rothrock Memorial Ski Race**, 8-9, Boreal Ridge, Truckee, 916-426-3666

**Halley's Time Capsule**, 9, sealed, not to be opened until Halley's Comet returns to perihelion on July 20, 2061 Fleischmann Planetarium, UNR, 784-4811

**First Western States Energy Policy Forum & Exposition**, 9-11, MGM Grand Hotel, 885-4420

**UNR Winter Carnival**, 10-15, races, snow sculpture, parties, 784-6589

**Reno Philharmonic Concert**, 11 8-15pm, Pioneer Theater, 329-1324

**Valentine's Day Crafts**, 12, children 6-11 make plastercrafts heart box at this workshop, \$5, pre-register, Reno Recreation Center, 785-2262

**Nugget Hereford Sale**, 13, auction of prize bulls and heifers, Celebrity Room, John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 356-3438

**Valentine's Day Couples Race**, 14, Northstar, North Lake Tahoe, 916-562-1010

**Mexican Dance**, 14, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307

**Art Exhibit and Sale**, 14-17 works of Nevada artists and craftsmen, John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 356-3438

**UNR v. Northern Arizona**, 15, basketball, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4500

**Torchlight Parade**, 15, Tahoe Donner, Truckee, 916-587-6028

**Truckee Lions' Sierra Sweepstakes Sled Dog Races**, 15-16, \$5,000 purse, races begin at 9:30am each day, on Sun. crowning of Lady Jibboom at noon, Truckee-Tahoe Airport, Truckee, 916-587-3276

**Snowshoe Thompson Telemark Classic**, 16, novice and expert ski races, Donner Ski Ranch, Norden, 916-426-3635

**Cross-Country Ski Races**, 16, 7.5km and 15km, Tahoe Donner Ski Area, 2 miles west of Truckee, 916-587-7005

**Tanner's Worldwide Flea Market**, 16, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 382-8355

**Lockett's Boat and Sports Show**, 19-23, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 323-6055

**UNR v. Idaho State**, 20, basketball, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4500

**"Il Trovatore,"** 20 and 22, 8pm, Nevada Opera Assn., Pioneer Theater, 786-4046

**Carson Capers '86**, 21-22, comedic collection of vaudeville, local satire, song, and dance, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 883-1976





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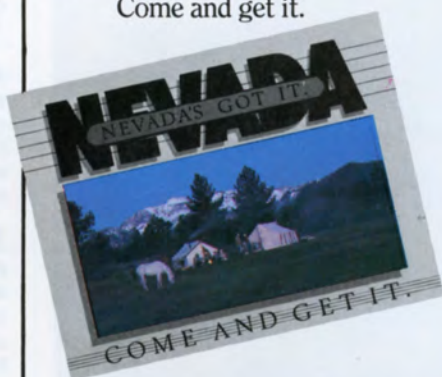
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**State "AA" and "AAA" Wrestling Championship**, 21-22, Reno High School, 322-6953

**"Fifth of July,"** 21-23, contemporary drama, 8pm Fri-Sat., 2pm Sun., Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**UNR v. Weber State**, 22, basketball, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4500

**Doctors' Wives Rummage Sale**, 22, Reno Sparks Convention Center, 323-2692

**4-H Livestock Judging**, 22, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307

**Carson City Chamber Orchestra Concert**, 23, free, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 883-1976

**Equitable Family Ski Challenge**, 23, Northstar, North Lake Tahoe, 916-562-1010

**Sacramento Special Olympics**, 23-27 Boreal Ridge, Truckee, 916-426-3666

**"Mother is a Freshman,"** 24, film made in 1949 at UNR starring Loretta Young and Van Johnson, 7pm, Jot Travis Student Union, UNR, 784-6682

**Full Moon Ski Tour**, 24, \$7 Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-9858

**Choral Festival**, 25, 7:30pm, Washoe County School District, Pioneer Theater, 786-5105

**"AAA" Division I Basketball Playoffs**, 26-28 and 3/1 boys and girls, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4659

**"Fifth of July,"** 27-3/1 contemporary drama, 8pm, Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**Snowfest**, 28-3/9, winter fun all over North Lake Tahoe and Truckee includes parade, Mr. Lake Tahoe contest, Miss Sierra Snowfest pageant, Great Ski Race, snowmobile races, crab & pasta feed, wine tastings, Monte Carlo Night, street dance, torchlight parade, Trivial Pursuit tournament, dress up your dog contest, ice cream eating contest, model railroad, and photo shows, call for complete schedule, 916-583-7625

**Art Exhibit**, 28-3/30, works by Jim McCormick, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333

**Art Exhibit**, 28-4/6, abstract works by Sam Francis, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333

**The Great Ski Race**, 3/2, 30km cross-country ski race, 9am start at Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, part of Snowfest activities, Tahoe City, 916-583-9858

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

### March

**Chariot Races**, thru 3/29, every Sat., Wells, 752-3344

### April

**Reno International Jazz Festival**, 3-5, 916-587-8670

**Henderson Industrial Days**, 15-20, 565-8951

**Panasonic Las Vegas Invitational**, 30-5/4, PGA golf tournament, 382-6616

### May

**Boulder City Spring Jamboree**, 2-4, 293-2034

**Armed Forces Day**, 16-18, Hawthorne, 945-5896

**Jim Butler Days**, 22-26, Tonopah, 482-3859

**Elks Helldorado**, 30-6/8, Las Vegas, 385-1221

**A Reminder:** To confirm dates and times, use the phone numbers listed with each event. For out-of-state callers, the area code is 702 throughout Nevada. For toll-free numbers, call 800-555-1212. □



# Classified

## BOOKS

**GLADIATORS OF THE GLITTERING GULCHES** by Frank Bell. An authentic and lively history of boxing, 1864-1939. Virginia City, Butte, Helena, MT 176 pages, illustrated. \$7.95, postpaid. Western Horizons Books, P.O. Box 4068, Helena, MT 59604. ISBN-0-318-04407-2.

**"TALES OF TAHOE"** by David Stollery, Lake Tahoe newspaper columnist. Fourth printing. 250 pages of Tahoe history and legend. Illustrated. Order from David Stollery, P.O. Box 1792, Encino, CA 91316. \$10.80 postpaid.

## COLLECTIBLES

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E. Total distribution:	65,157	71,470
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(2) Return from news agents:	4,773	5,800
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.—Caroline J. Hadley, Publisher

## MAPS

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## MISCELLANEOUS

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

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## LETTERS (Continued from page 50)

where to go the hard way. Turn back the Las Vegas-Reno gaming magazine to the old Nevada Magazine.

A.H. Guardia  
Elko, NV

### Nevada Like North Dakota?

I have read the September/October issue from cover to cover three times, and I don't want to miss the next one. We go to Nevada every year, and I thought we had covered the state. We still have a lot to see.

Mrs. Ralph Pence  
Iola, KS.

I thoroughly enjoy meeting Nevadans and can see much similarity between the deserts of Nevada and the prairies of North Dakota. This year for the first time I plan to see Nevada in the winter on the ski slopes of Lake Tahoe. Thanks so much for the November/December issue on skiing. It was very helpful.

Ila Lovdahl  
Minot, ND

I have visited in your lovely state four times. I especially love Las Vegas and those exasperating slots.

Lucile Lewis  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI.

I'm a little amused sometimes by some of the letters you publish. It seems people come here from other states to escape the crime, noise, smog, etc., then, finding they can't make over Nevada in the image of their former city, they show their displeasure by canceling their subscriptions. I for one think it's a fine magazine, and I'm happy to renew mine and a gift subscription.

Robert A. Balmgren  
Washoe Valley, NV

Just finished my Christmas issue. It was outstanding as usual. Now comes the long two-month wait for the next one. How you people can jam pack every issue with so much totally diverse and interesting (if not just plain fascinating) articles is a marvel to me. When you visit Nevada for the first time, you will probably fall into one of two categories—you love it or you don't. If you love it, it becomes a part of you that you will never be able to erase. That is pretty much how I feel about your publication. There are a lot of frills out there that I could live without, but I sure would hate to be without my Nevada Magazine! The only criticism I have is that there just aren't enough issues in a year.

D. Van Houten  
Point Mugu, CA.

Houton, you're right. There are a lot of frills I can live without, but Nevada isn't one of them.—Ed.

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# Queen of the Basketmakers

Washoe weaver Dat-So-La-Lee turned reeds and roots into masterpieces.



*Adding new twists to traditional techniques, Dat-So-La-Lee left a legacy of basketry. At the height of her career in the 1920s, her pieces sold for as much as \$5,000.*

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Her life span was well over 90 years, extending from her primitive Indian childhood to her place in modern Western culture.

In 1844, when she was already an adult, legend says she witnessed the entry of John Fremont and his party into her native Carson Valley; as a very old woman in this century, she peered at the admiring crowds gathered around her while she demonstrated her art of basket weaving at the St. Louis Exposition of 1919.

Time took Dat-So-La-Lee far. And, although she may not have understood the reasons, she was a famous woman when she died at the age of about 96 in 1925.

Dat-So-La-Lee, the huge, stolid Indian woman was a familiar figure in Nevada's capital city where she lived and worked most of her life. During her later years, she



was supported by the Cohn family of Carson City, many of her baskets being offered for sale in the store they operated there.

Although they were friends, Dat-So-La-Lee was only slightly tutored in the ways of the white man. But she knew one thing well: the art of weaving she had learned in her tribal days. She spent weeks gathering her materials, the saplings and plant roots which grew in hidden places along the Sierra foothills. Then, withdrawing, she spent longer weeks at pensive work, her worn fingers bending her materials into basket creations so tightly woven and skillfully shaped that they still stand out above all other western Indian basketry. Through her work, she has become known as the greatest of the basket makers. □



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