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NEVADA

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WINTER, 1979 $1.50

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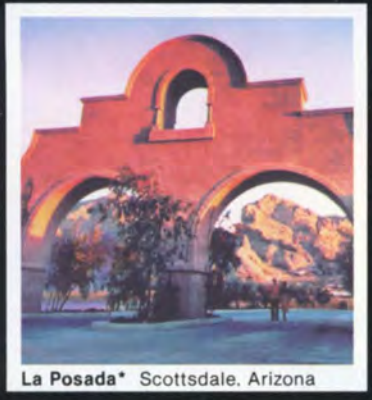

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ISSUES TO COME:

Nevada Secedes
Wagon Train across the Forty Mile
How Does Your Garden Grow?

COVER PHOTO: Heli-skiing Elko County. By Joe Royer

NEVADA

Volume 39 • Number 1
January/February/March
Winter 1979

FEATURES

YESTERDAY

PEOPLE

SPECIAL

GUIDE TO WINTER SPORTS

DEPARTMENTS

Editorial

NEWSWEEK, November 27, 1978: "A shake-out was inevitable: with new magazines being born virtually every week in the past few years, they simply couldn't all survive. And last week, when both *New Times* and *Viva* announced they would suspend publication at the end of the year, it looked as if it might already have begun."

According to *Newsweek*, Rolling Stone's *Outside* had lost $2 million in two years before it was bought out by another outdoors publication, *Mariah*, who instantly halved its frequency from a monthly to bi-monthly; *Horizon* used to be a national magazine, now it's a regional; *Politicks* folded last spring after only six months in business; and *Your Place*, a new magazine put out by *McCalls*, will no longer be in existence by January 1979

With increasing costs, lack of capital, declining readership and advertisers, many magazines are becoming victims of the high price of publishing.

Because of regular and healthy postal rate hikes (for the post office), publishers are seeking alternate ways to deliver magazines. Because of large increases in the price of production, publishers are rethinking magazine size, paper stock, and/or their method of printing. Since the Postal Reorganization Act went into effect in 1970-71, average postal salaries have increased 127 percent. A comparison of new and old second-class postage rates shows that for a regular-rate publication, out of the county rates have increased at more than 60 percent. Paper costs during the past 24 months have risen almost 20 percent.

Viva was a glossy magazine published specifically for women by the owners of *Penthouse*. With an initial print-order of one million copies, they folded with a run of 300,000. And even with those big numbers, they still couldn't afford to stay in business.

All this is not to say that *Nevada* Magazine is unhealthy To the contrary But costs have been rising for us just as they have for the larger national publications, and we, too, have to do something about it.

You may notice that this month the price has been raised to $1.50 and that a subscription will cost $6.00 for four issues effective January 1, 1979 But we have good news too. Our advertising pages have been increasing steadily and because of that you will be receiving a larger more colorful magazine by the end of the year You will actually receive a lot more Nevada material for a little extra money because we will also be increasing our frequency to bi-monthly The new six-issue rate is $7.75, a savings of $1.25 off the newsstand price.

* * *

Check our Classified section on pages 42 and 43. This is a first for *Nevada* Magazine and we expect it to be of great service to our readers.

* * *

And thanks for your tremendous response to the "Great Nevada Christmas Package." Our staff worked nights (as well as days) for weeks just trying to keep up with your mail. At least we know now to advertise the 1979 Christmas package early next summer! *C. J. Hadley*

Letters

MATTER OF TASTE

The Fall 1978 issue looks good. And I'm not complaining about not winning the sweepstakes prize in the Great Nevada Picture Hunt; judging from her picture. I reckon Jill Janow needs a new camera worse than I do.

Richard Menzies
Salt Lake City, UT

Unfortunately, the Sweepstakes Winner's photograph was printed so badly that even the winner barely recognized it. It's a pity; it really is a great photograph.—Ed.

Your photo contest judges should be placed last in the amateur division.

Harold Cummins
Sutter Creek, CA.

After eagerly awaiting the current issue of Nevada Magazine since the close of the "Great Nevada Picture Hunt," I feel compelled to express my great disappointment in the winning selections. Not because I pesonally did not have any entries accepted—I did not expect that—but because I was expecting to see some really great photographs.

Nevada has so much to offer that is "typically Nevada," I cannot see the justification for such a bad shot of a pair of sheep that could have been taken anywhere. Such a shot should have at least been taken with a lens fast enough to stop the action. The blurred background tells the story of movement as this seems to have been taken from a moving vehicle. A fast lens stopping the action with the animals' hooves off the ground would have told the story of motion.

Please cancel my subscription until Nevada Magazine returns to the quality it once had.

Janet W Williams
Sparks, NV

STROKES

After reading about someone canceling their subscription, I am prompted to write.

My husband and I enjoy each issue more than the previous one. Your magazine has everything the State of Nevada has—beautiful scenery, history laughter and a change of pace. We wish your magazine were issued monthly.

Lenore Moa
Stanwood, WA.

The biggest problem with Nevada Magazine is four issues a year just isn't enough to prevent withdrawal symptoms the other eight months!

For those of us who are totally hooked on Nevada, couldn't you at least give us a bi-monthly? Surely there must be thousands more readers who feel as I do!

Linda Kirsch
Oceanside, N.Y

Kirsch, you're perfect; and you're right. We hope Nevada Magazine will soon be issued bi-monthly.—Ed.

BIONIC NEVADANS

Not desiring to defray from the accomplishments or honorable intents and efforts of another or others I however would like to comment on the fact that a small female child, aged 14 years, could not pull or tow a conveyance (that was designed for two horses or mules) nine miles and save four persons and a dog in a burning dwelling (Fall issue, 1978). The tow would require several hours—at least four hours because it requires an hour of steady walking to walk three miles—and were not the inhabitants awakened when the alarm was given as to the fire and perhaps the undertaker had thoughts of conveying the remains to the last ride in having hitched to the wrong vehicle.

Such articles may defray considerably as to the credibility of your magazine and its contents.

Yohauen Austerlitz
Bella Vista, AR.

FANS FOR WRITERS

The story "The Phantom Railroad," by Paul Christian is great! (Fall issue, 1978) Please tell me where to find anything else he has published.

Richard Lynch
Reno, NV

You can expect more from him in future issues.—Ed.

FANS FOR STATE

Having lived in the midwest for 15 long years, your magazine has kept me in touch with my native state until the great "Blizzard of 78" (with several feet of snow five months of ice and rain, and at least several days of minus forty weather) when your magazine and its fantastic photos kept running thru my mind—until I finally could stand it no longer!

Pictures no longer were sufficient and I had to see, smell and touch my deserts and valleys again—and watch the sun set over a distant mountain range! Having come back "home" through Central Nevada I can see it's just like I remember it. It's still the most beautiful place in the nation!

David T Coons
Las Vegas, NV

INFLATION CUTS US OUT

Due to inflation I will not renew at this time. Loved your magazine.

Walter J. Sorenson
San Francisco, CA.

Due to inflation, we need you more now than we ever did before.—Ed.

(Continued on page 61)

COME TO LIFE!

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Nevada's mountaineer skiing is the best kept secret in the U.S.
By Whitey Nelson

UP THE DOWN MOUNTAIN

Whitey Nelson, Evan Ungar and Mike Starrett, all expert skiers, climbed some of Nevada's highest peaks for the purpose of skiing down. Even though their original plans were a little far fetched, the trio eventually did climb portions of Boundary (13,140 ft.), Wheeler (11,890), Mt. Jefferson (11,800), Charleston (11,910), North Schell Peak (11,890), Ruby Dome (11,340), and Mt. Rose (10,800). They elected to climb during early morning hours and on moonlit nights when the snow was frozen over, then ski down when the snow had softened just a little. It didn't always work.

"Nevada is all mountains, everywhere you look you will see an enormous range. There are at least 20 peaks over 10,000 feet above sea level and with the abundant snowfall the winter of 1976-77, I knew that the spring mountaineer skiing would be excellent.

I used to work as a back country buckaroo and knew many of the ranges, and my original plan was to cruise through the state climbing and skiing whatever looked attractive. This dream had to be abandoned though because it soon dawned on me the climbs were going to be more involved than anticipated and the trip would have to be executed in a more realistic manner

Evan Ungar, an excellent skier and amateur photographer, was a little skeptical of the skiing possibilities in Nevada. Originally from Davis, California, and practically a flatlander, he's one of many people who hold a gross misconception of the state. "There's nothing there," he says, while precious few others realize that Nevada snowsports opportunities are the best kept secret in the United States. Mike Starrett, a good friend and ski instructor who operates Ski Tech & Rental in Reno, was all for the trip because he knew the state better than Evan and sparked the venture with his usual high energy

We had three weeks to spare and after careful analysis chose seven peaks. We found different action at each:

MT ROSE: We used this area for a warm-up climb because we were all familiar with the mountain and knew it posed no real difficulties. We decided on the big northeast face, climbed early morning and were rewarded with a spectacular sunrise. Our timing was perfect and after drinking a little hot chocolate on top, the snow felt just right for skiing.

The first 500 vertical was real rough wind cups we dubbed "lunar" snow, but it soon smoothed out as we skied around a ridge and dropped down into Galena Creek. The run had been enjoyable and easy and we hitched back to our car in high spirits, planning to move south the following week.

BOUNDARY PEAK: The highest peak in Nevada, at 13,140 feet, Boundary Peak lies in the White Mountains between California and Nevada. I had scouted a route up a day before the others arrived and we decided on an east running ridge as our ascent. After a restless night we began, thinking the hike would take three hours when it actually took more than twice that. We had started before sunrise, about 5:30 a.m., but it was much too late. Our miscalculation meant skiing in "bottomless gush."

"Many times on this climb," Mike recalled, "I know all of us felt like going, hey, this is too far You are always looking at the next ridge, thinking that must be it. But when you get to that one, you say, oh my God, because then there always seems to be another one."

We finally did make it to the top and the backdrop was beautiful. Our initial descent was a north facing chute of good wind packed snow for about 1,000 vertical feet. We traversed out of this chute into a saddle to catch a huge east facing bowl approximately 3,000 vertical. It was here we encountered the gush and our already exhausted legs were really forced to work. It was definitely worth it though, when at the bottom we looked back to see our tracks in the enormous bowl.

"One thing that I hate more than mosquitos, is sinking in spring snow up to my knees," said Mike. "It is very frustrating because when you're climbing and you put your foot down, you think you're going to walk right on top of the snow But you sink and it's just a real bummer But I guess I really love anything to ski and even though Boundary was slush up to our knees and it meant slogging down hill, I had

Hiking Lamoille Canyon, just before the storm
A quiet camp in the forest (bottom).

EVAN UNGAR PHOTOS

View toward Ely from Wheeler Peak.

a great time."

This peak was exhausting, but it was also especially exhilarating, not only because it is the highest peak in Nevada but because we believe we were the first to ski it and carve the place.

MT JEFFERSON lies in the Toquima range of Central Nevada. It can be seen from Boundary Peak. Even though there were many excellent mountains close to Jefferson, we selected that one because I had worked on a ranch at the base of it in 1976 and knew it offered good skiing.

And we weren't to be disappointed.

We climbed a long, bare south-facing ridge shortly after lunch, because we had planned on a sunset cruise down the north side. The hike was easier than expected and in five hours we were on top with a dazzling sight and more good skiing than could have been imagined. The north bowl was steep with two big long ridges off each side, both offering numerous chutes and bowls. We decided to follow the Pine Creek ridge out to Monitor Valley where we camped for the night.

"It was really quite amazing," said Evan. "It was dusky at the top because we left the climb too late and the lighting was bad. It was to be our longest descent—about 5,200 vertical—and it took almost an hour to ski down. We skied through quaking aspen for miles and miles; it was rough but really fun. The skiing was really fantastic."

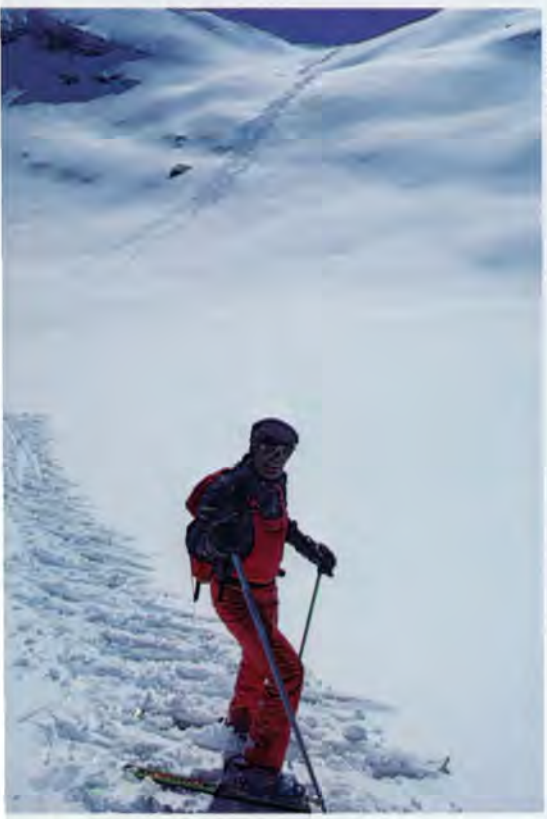
CHARLESTON PEAK offers excellent mountaineering and skiing within 20 miles of Las Vegas. It is the highest peak in the Spring Mountains and in Southern Nevada. We didn't know if we could ski off it or not, but Mike was really keen to go—so we did. The moon was full, and we made a late afternoon ascent of the north rim to a bivouac at over 10,000 feet. The climb was spooky, through burned, dead trees with a moaning wind. From our camp site on a small ledge, the lights of Vegas looked surrealistic. It was a lonely spot and I was glad of my companions.

"Charleston was too much walking and too little skiing," Evan said. "Those chutes are dangerous and it was a drag to me because I didn't think it was pretty The wind howling through the trees sounded like wild cats and all the scorched trees seemed to be saying, 'Go back, go back.' "

In the morning we were up early,

HELI-SKIING ELKO

By Sue Mollison



JOE ROYER

By helicopter, solitude and lots of virgin powder.

Powder snow enthusiasts know there is nothing more exhilarating than to ski virgin snow on every run. And with helicopter skiing this kind of dream is possible.

Wilderness airlift skiing is an individual sport. Along with a fairly flush wallet, it requires keen judgment, good physical condition and the ability to handle any type of snow While this sport is as private and personal as jogging, it adds a natural glow of adventure: the performer goes out of normal bounds. Lifted away from commercialized areas into roadless mountains, there are no lift-line waits, no crowded slopes, no overused terrain.

Deep powder snow skiing is not meteorologically feasible everywhere. Vast low-humidity desert country must surround mountains high enough to attract considerable moisture in order to create "bottomless" light dry snow Quality powder skiing is therefore possible only in the intermountain West—between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada.

Northeastern Nevada's Ruby Mountains, stretching 100 miles and reaching 11,000 feet, form an alpine archipelago in the Great Basin desert sea and suit such requirements perfectly An average of 400 inches of snow fall at higher elevations annually to make some of the best potential skiing in the U.S.A. Backcountry slopes are within 15 air minutes of Elko, a city of over 10,000 population. The mountains are merely a hop, schuss and a jump from Nevada entertainment, meals, lodging and city services, crucial to skiers in fair weather or foul.

Nevada is the latest intermountain state to host airlift skiing. Born in Utah during the mid-sixties, the sport was not without growing pains. It was and still is an adjunct to existing commercial areas and "it was hassles, fist fights and who made first tracks on the slopes to get at the new powder," says one Utah ski area employee.

The idea for Nevada heli-skiing came to Carl and Lillian Fischer on one

(Continued on page 59)

heading for the summit at a brisk pace because it was clear and cold with an icy wind ripping at our faces. As we followed the ridge toward the summit it became more treacherous and we called a halt to review our situation.

"The south ridge that leads up to Charleston is very steep and it doesn't hold the snow well," Mike explained. "And it's about the only chute we could have skied. The Forest Service people told us there would be less snow coming up the north rim but it was very steep going with lots of cliffs and jags."

"We were bummed out," Evan added, "because it was freezing cold and just too, too steep."

It was decided that we turn back. Without ice axes, crampons and ropes it would have been crazy to continue. It was defeating to leave without finishing what we came to do, but it was better than not coming off the mountain at all.

Mike flew to Vegas a few weeks afterwards and realized what we had done wrong. "I just ate my heart out," he says now, "because right away when I saw Charleston from the plane I saw which way we should have gone. Via the south rim. At least we would have got to the top. Even so, from our camp Las Vegas was like looking at the space ship in 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind.' It was so realistic it was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen."

The only place that was really cold during all our climbs was Mt. Charleston. We went from the desert and yucca trees to where it was freezing cold and crazy in just a couple of hours. We had been in Vegas the day before, swimming and lounging around and it was too hot, but up on top of Charleston we had to put our swim shorts on our head to keep from freezing.

WHEELER PEAK: We were all a little down-hearted after the failure on Charleston but our spirits got a lift in Caliente when we heard it was snowing in the Ely area. As we pulled into the town of Baker, the mountain was obscured and little flurries were dusting the town. Two friends, Neal Houx and Kym Kelly met us for this climb and we camped in an empty lot in that small town.

In the morning the skies were clearing. We toured Lehman Caves, then drove as far as we could toward the upper campground. Then we hiked to our base camp from which we would

(Continued on page 59)

GEAR: The Best So Far

Equipment for mountaineer skiing is still just a compromise. By Phil Finch.

Ski mountaineering equipment occupies a niche of its own in the field of outdoor gear It's possible to head into the high mountains with skis, boots and bindings originally designed for another purpose, but to do so is to risk, at the very least, the pleasure intrinsic in the sport. At worst, it is gambling with basic comfort and safety

A lot of ski mountaineers lately have begun to use standard cross-country skis and bindings. Understandably: they're efficient at kicking up hills and extending the glide between strides in flat, open, terrain. Their drawback is that there's hardly a more precarious way of negotiating a steep downhill. And though advances in materials and design have made x-c skis far stronger than in the past, there's still a reasonable chance of splintering a ski—bad news in the back country

For that reason the most popular choice is a specialized mountaineering ski that's a hybrid between x-c skis and those designed strictly for alpine (downhill) running. It's slightly thicker than a x-c ski, with a metal edge that makes it possible for a moderately skilled skier to carve downhill-style parallel turns. They're not only sturdier than x-c equipment, but they make downhill slopes more fun than fright. The penalty is somewhat heavier weight and reduced glide on the flat. Most major x-c manufacturers make a mountaineering model, some in wax and non-wax surfaces. Probably the best regarded of these is the "Mountain Edge" model by Trucker

Until a few years ago, the standard mountaineering binding was a cable affair that looped around the grooved heel of a heavy hiking boot. It was durable but clumsy Now many ski mountaineers have removed the cable bindings and replaced them with standard x-c nordic norm three-pin toe bindings that permit a full kick and glide. The problem is that only specialized shoes will fit such a binding, and most such shoes are smooth-soled, non-insulated and absolutely unsuited to protecting the foot from snow or keeping it warm in an overnight bivouac situation. There are three solutions: to carry a spare pair of winter boots, to buy one of the new lug-soled, high-top boots being offered for the first time this season by the Vasque company, or to use a flexible overboot like the one made by Rivendell Mountain works in Victor, Idaho, which covers a standard cross-country shoe and pulls tight around the upper calf, at least offering minimal protection against snow and slush.

Mention ought to be made at this point of a couple of devices that most ski mountaineers will want to consider One is a heel locator consisting of an upright notch that is screwed to the ski and a short extension that is fastened to the heel of the boot. The extension lifts out of the notch to permit normal x-c striding, but nestles down in the notch to hold the heel in place and allow the foot to transfer more torque to the ski when running downhill. The gadget really comes into its own when used with metal-edged skis. It is, undeniably, a crutch, but for most recreational ski mountaineers it can add another dimension of enjoyment.

Then there's the Ramer binding made specifically for heavy-duty ski mountaineering. It's a plate hinged at the toe that permits use of big winter hiking boots. An adjustment near the heel lets the skier ascend a steep hill in an upright, balanced position. There are few neutral opinions about the binding. Purists claim it is too heavy and that the inflexible plate restricts x-c striding. But mountaineers who ski the highest, steepest slopes say that when they outfit their skis with the Ramers and mohair "skins" that prevent back sliding, there is no snowfield that they can't climb. Also, the heel can be clamped down to give real stability on downhills. One drawback is the price. At $90 or more, they can nearly double the price of a set of skis.

All of which underscores the point that ski mountaineering equipment is a series of compromises and that nobody, yet, has made the compromise that is best for all situations.

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 DeQuille. By David W. Toll.

Princes of the Fourth Estate

Mark Twain

Dan DeQuille

The long lost *Territorial Enterprise* was one of the great newspapers of the frontier west. So brilliant was its 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 frontier 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 including 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 sending them correspondence. He was hired as local reporter that year, and by the time 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 Pahranagat 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. Until February, 1863, he signed himself Josh and 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 dumfounding experiences he recalled that in the afternoon he had found some emigrant wagons going in to camp and had learned "that they had lately come through 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 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 vocation at last. I reasoned within myself that news, and stirring news too, was what a paper needed, and I felt I was particularly endowed with the ability to furnish it. Mr Goodman said that I was as good a reporter 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 rumpled, with a bushy auburn mustache and the eyes of a wolf Dan De Quille, 33, tall, slender and dark, 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. Everyone 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 cobwebs, the gleaming wet webs of some hideous huge 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, and hurried south through the

C. C. Goodwin

Rollin M. Daggett

PHOTOS COURTESY NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Alf Doten

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 their B Street boarding house. 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 late 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 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 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 Dan's career just evaporated, and he got by on a small pension paid by John Mackay

On 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 is 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." □

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The Lens **Nevada, as seen with a differing eye.**

When some eyes are turned on the State of Nevada, the beholders claim to see nothing. They say, "There is no color here, no warmth." But the photographers and other lovers of the state disagree. They see Nevada as it really is. Beautiful. Soft and subtle with great panoramas of empty, often alarming countryside. And people and animals that can be found only in the West.

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The sheep industry is a way of life for many Nevadans. Here LINDA DUFURRENA captures shearing in Humboldt County, and an inquisitive lamb.

A cold winter day at Washoe Lake, with the Sierra Nevada to the west.
B. J. KAUSLER

Hummingbird moth and flower
PAUL CHRISTIANSEN

A fearless Norwegian who led the way to a favorite American sport.

By Michael Western

The Unconquerable Snowshoe Thompson

John "Snowshoe" Thompson pioneered skiing in the Sierra in January 1856, when he strapped on a pair of handmade, 10-foot-long Norwegian "snow-shoes" and made the first of a remarkable series of dead-of-winter mail runs between Placerville, California, and Genoa, Nevada.

He hauled an 80-pound mail sack on his first trip between the two main stops on early emigrant trails, covering the 90 miles of high country that separated them in four days. Such long-haul treks, without detailed topographic maps and the fine equipment available now, continued until shortly before Snowshoe's death in May 1876.

Although he was not trying to set records and amaze people with his feats, Thompson wanted to get the mail through to towns that would otherwise be isolated during long winters. He continued the job even though it paid him little, in the process carving out a niche in history as one of the most fearless, sturdy Pacific Coast mountaineers. His biographers have described Thompson as a man of courage, strong will and strength, who never backed off when his spirit of adventure was challenged, and whose main motive was to help his fellow man.

Thompson was born Jon Torsteinson Rui in April 1827 at Upper Tins, Norway He came to this country with his family at age 10, and lived in Illinois, Missouri and Iowa before striking out on his own for the California gold fields in 1851. He adopted his stepfather's last name and tried his hand at placer mining for gold but never really caught the "gold fever" that prevailed.

A friendly but quiet man, Thompson steered clear of the wild mining camp life—at one point acquiring the nickname "Holy John" because he didn't drink or smoke. He did manage to pan enough gold to make a payment on a piece of land on Putah Creek in the Sacramento Valley and he divided his time between his farm and the Sierra, memorizing the lay of the land while he hunted or hiked.

While at his farm, Thompson spotted a newspaper ad saying "People Lost To The World—Uncle Sam Needs A Mail Carrier," and explaining the as-yet-unsolved problem of the trans-Sierra mail run during winter He recalled the skiers in his native Norway, drew some sketches, and then created his first pair of skis—bulky 25-pounders which were 20 pounds heavier than the cross-country skis used today.

Thompson practiced on his "snow-shoes" or "snowskates" for about two weeks, in the hills above Placerville, until he could skim downhill and traverse or crow-step up steep slopes. Then he offered to take the mail-carrying job, starting his first run the next day

His general course roughly paralleled U.S. 50 through the American River Canyon and over Echo Summit. He dropped down again but then had to climb the far east ridge of the Sierra, near Genoa Peak, to reach his destination. Astounded Genoans greeted him like a hero when he swept down the mountain into town. The same sort of welcome greeted him a few days later when Thompson returned to Placerville with the westward-bound mail.

And the saga of Snowshoe Thompson was started.

Through the rest of that winter and for many winters to come, Thompson carried the mail over the mountains, making roundtrips about twice a month. He made a lighter pair of skis and gradually developed stopping places like small caves or simply rock overhangs where he could hole up in storms. Thompson often skied at night, so that his unwaxed skis wouldn't stick in snow turned soft by late afternoon sun. He took no blankets or even a heavy coat, relying on his own exertion and campfires to stay warm.

Snowshoe was usually able to make the eastward journey from Placerville to Genoa, where he now lies buried, in about three days; the return trip down the long western Sierra slope took two days. He is said to have saved the lives of many people he stumbled upon in the mountains, and was never seriously hurt even in the most violent blizzards.

William Wright, a *Territorial Enterprise* editor who used the name Dan De Quille and who interviewed Thompson just before the famed skier died in May 1876, described Thompson's route as "a Siberia of snow" in which he almost always was alone. De Quille said Thompson told him, matter of factly, "I was never lost—I can't be lost There's something in here (tapping his forehead) which keeps me right."

"Thompson," De Quille added, "was a man of splendid physique, standing six feet in his stockings and weighing 180 pounds. His features were large, but regular and handsome. He had the blond hair and beard, and fair skin and blue eyes of his Scandinavian ancestors, and looked a true descendant of the sea-roving Northmen of old a man most adventurous, fearless and unconquerable."

The glowing accounts by De Quille and other writers who followed him seem justified on the basis of the Placerville-Genoa mail run alone. But there's much, much more. For one thing, Thompson started carrying parcels as well as letters. He hauled medicine, supplies, tools, ore samples and even parts for the *Enterprise's* printing press. It's said that he carried the ore samples from Virginia City to Califor-

nia that assayed out at more than $2,000 a ton in gold and silver and started the rush to the famed Comstock Lode.

He also started making side trips to isolated mountain settlements and lonely cabins along the way, and continued serving those areas after completion of the Central Pacific railroad over the Sierra in 1868 made it unnecessary for him to pack the Genoa-Placerville mail on his back.

On one of those side-trips, Thompson found a man named James Sisson marooned, his feet frozen, in a snow-covered cabin near Lake Tahoe. Thompson pushed on into Genoa, got help and went back for the man. A rough sled was made and Sisson was hauled back to Genoa. Thompson, so the story goes, then skied back to Placerville, picked up chloroform needed by the doctor who was to amputate Sisson's legs, and returned to Genoa.

While Thompson was a workhorse, he had time for fun too. After he moved to Diamond Valley in Alpine County, California, a ski club was formed and it's said that Snowshoe would astonish his friends by plummeting down steep slopes and making leaps as long as 180 feet—a distance not excelled for more than 60 years.

He was inveigled into a race in Plumas County where skiers had developed new techniques and were using "dope," a waxy substance used on the bottoms of their skis to help produce some astonishing speeds. Thompson, who didn't use the wax, was beaten over a short course. He retaliated with a challenge for a return match at Silver Mountain, including a run from the top to the bottom and a jump over a 15-foot-high precipice. He bet $100 that no one could keep up with him for one day The challenge was not taken.

Thompson didn't limit himself to the Sierra. On a trip to Washington, D.C., in an unsuccessful effort to collect $6,000 for what at that time added up to 15 winters of service, he was stopped in Wyoming when his train hit huge snow drifts. Snowshoe is said to have walked some 50 miles into Laramie, only to find trains backed up by snow there. He walked another 50-odd miles into Cheyenne, the only person to emerge from the blizzards behind him in more than two weeks.

As a Cheyenne newspaper produced the headline "California Mountaineer Outruns The Iron Horse," Thompson boarded a train for the east.

In the winter of 1875-76 Thompson was still making his long, hard trips by "snowshoe." In the following spring, shortly after he turned 49, Thompson took ill and died.

Cross-country skiers in the Sierra Nevada may fantasize a bit about following in the footsteps—or ski trail—of the incredible Snowshoe Thompson. But fantasy is about as far as it goes. More than a century after the famed mailman on skis traversed the icy spine of the Sierra, Thompson remains the unrivalled master of some of the toughest phases of skiing.

De Quille, eulogizing, described Thompson as "the father of all the race of snow-shoers in the Sierra Nevadas his equal in his particular line will probably never again be seen. The times and conditions are past and gone that called for men possessing the special qualifications that made him famous." □

In October, 1906, the opening of the Walker Lake Indian Reservation to mining precipitated shootings, new camps and Nevada's only naval battle. By David E. Moore

THE RUSH TO DUTCH CREEK

Dutch Creek, like its neighbors Gillis, Copper Hill, Lakeview and Cottonwood in the Walker Lake region, lived a brief life. But its birth was a spectacular one, flamed by the promise of riches and announced in the wildest, most lawless land rush of its day.

The opening of the Walker Lake Indian Reservation to mining was officially declared by President Teddy Roosevelt's proclamation of September 26, 1906. In all, 268,000 unsettled acres were to be available for prospectors to stake their claims, excluding the farming and grazing land allotted to the Paiutes who lived on the reservation. The opening day was to be Monday, October 29 and the Indian police were charged with keeping interlopers off reservation lands before the official signal was given.

Excitement was great in Nevada's cities and camps. For years prospectors had sneaked into the reservation, bringing home tales of gold-laden ledges. Some carried out specimens of rock that, according to the Tonopah *Bonanza*, "in nearly every instance run high in gold, silver, copper and lead."

A week before the opening the paper reported, "every subterfuge is being resorted to in order to get a peep into the sacred precinct."

Indeed, it soon came to light that locating parties of large mining syndicates, posing as federal surveyors, had infiltrated the reservation. The outcry across the state was led by the prospectors from Goldfield, then the state's largest city The Goldfield *News* charged, "Every one of these operators has some political or social 'pull' with high government officials, either in Nevada or California."

The Goldfield forces saw another scandal in the timing of the rush, which had been scheduled by a Republican president and a Republican government just before Nevada's state elections. "The miners of Nevada, almost to a man, vote the Democratic ticket," declared the Goldfield paper "To open the reservation at this juncture, just preceding the State elections, would greatly redound to the chances of the Republican ticket. .It is a joke upon the streets of Goldfield that if one is a Democrat and wants a grubstake for the Indian reservation, all he has to do is go to the Republican headquarters and he will be outfitted."

The mining sages of Esmeralda County had determined that there were three attractive zones on the reservation: one on the north end, a second between Yerington and Walker Lake, and a third on the lake's east side. In planning their assault, the miners went to great lengths to arrange their transportation. Some, like Hawthorne hotelman J W Miller, got the fastest horses they could find. Others parked autos at the starting line, camped in town and readied racehorses for the LeMans start to their cars.

The most ambitious decided to go over the lake instead of around it. On October 25 the Walker Lake Navigation Company brought the second of its two boats through Reno on its way from San Francisco. By Saturday, two days before the opening, there were three launches at Thorne on the lake's south end preparing for a dash to the west shore. That night in Hawthorne a gathering of prospectors ruled that the launches would be prevented by force if necessary from leaving port before the noon signal Monday

As the miners debated the rules of the rush, Goldfielder Joe Hanlon slipped out of town. He was determined to gain every possible fair inch of ground in the direction of Dutch Creek, a stream on the lake's west side where a lonely German named Schnitz had worked an arrasta claim in the 1860s. The area was rumored to be the richest on the reservation. Hanlon made his way to a ridge near the old diggings, laying in the brush and sleeping two nights in the open.

Over the weekend more "sooners" were sneaking into the forbidden ground. Entire pack trains were reported entering the reservation, and the Indian police force of 60 men was hopelessly outnumbered along the border

By Monday morning 5,000 men had assembled at Schurz and another 5,000 near Hawthorne, poised for the great rush, their horses and mules fed, their cars gassed up, and their guns ready at their sides.

At last the signal came from Mount Grant, where a pile of dynamite was touched off at noon. Dust and shouting filled the air as the prospectors pounded across the desert in a mass that one observer likened to "a mighty river bursting its banks." Some luckless miners on foot were knocked to the ground by onrushing horses, and others, jealous of the advantage of the auto drivers, shot out the tires of those cars that did not get stuck in the sand.

But the most explosive action was taking place on the lake itself. Gunfire broke out between the Walker Lake Navigation Company crews and two Goldfield men, Tom Crowley and James May, who had outfitted a launch of their own for a race to Cottonwood Creek. One of the navigation company's boats fired two volleys across the Goldfielders' bow and a third that broke the rudder and disabled their craft.

Since they were only 100 yards from shore, Crowley instructed his partner to cover him. He then stripped off his clothes, dove in the water and swam a frantic freestyle toward shore. May put holes in three small boats lowered from the launches, but several navigation company parties made it to shore as Crowley staggered onto the beach in a blaze of gunfire from the retreating launches. Several women, aroused by Crowley's naked condition, pelted him with rocks and he crept back into the water Finally May fixed the rudder and picked up his friend. Crowley pulled on his pants, and they both headed for the hills.

A view across Walker Lake, scene of Nevada's great naval battle of 1906.

Meanwhile, J W Miller, the horseman from Hawthorne, raced around the lake and beat the launches to Cottonwood by 20 minutes.

At the noon signal, Joe Hanlon jumped from his hollow in the brush and ran down the ridge to Dutch Creek—only to find four "sooners," two whites and two Indians, there ahead of him. Unintimidated, Hanlon went about setting his monuments and located four claims as other men arrived.

By nightfall the rush was over "From the height of Dutchman's Creek," reported the Goldfield *News'* correspondent, "the launches could be seen making their runs on the lake, and across the water could be seen a hundred camp fires, where prospectors had set up their possessions and were holding them with their guns."

The following day thousands of disgruntled miners gathered at saloons at Hawthorne, Yerington and Schurz to mourn the lack of available claims. The special land agent in charge of the Walker Lake affair, Frank Parks, wired Washington, D.C. to request that the opening be annulled, that "those who honestly waited for the formal signal got nothing for their efforts." But Washington allowed the opening to stand.

When the dust settled, an estimated 4,000 claims and 10 townsites had been located on the reservation by 3,000 miners. Gas launches were ferrying spectators around the lake, and an anonymous "tenderfoot from New Jersey" became an instant hero by locating a rich claim on the north side of Dutch Creek.

A month later visitors to Dutch Creek were impressed by the bustle and promise of the young camp. The miners, who were unusually closed-mouthed about their claims because of the tremendous confusion over who was first where, were served by a grocery store, several restaurants, a boarding house, three saloons, a butcher shop and a handwritten newspaper The town had two streets, Main and Dutch, and a population of several hundred.

In April 1907 a post office was established at Dutch Creek, but it lasted just two years. Because of the lack of profitable ore, the community—and the whole district—declined in production and population, and by World War I the town was abandoned. Its site now lies within the boundaries of the Hawthorne Army Ammunition Depot.

Like many Nevada mineral rushes, the stampede to the Walker Lake country resulted in a relatively meager output of gold and silver But the opening of the reservation lands and the tumultuous rush to claim them marked a spirited point in an exciting decade that saw the booms of Tonopah and Goldfield and the doubling of Nevada's population to more than 80,000.

And while many "honest miners" missed their chance at fortune, the Republicans fared even worse in the November elections, as Gov John Sparks led a near-sweep of Democratic and Silver party victories.

For one day, October 29, 1906, a section of Nevada had more men than jackrabbits scampering madly about the desert. As one Goldfielder chided, "It was a farce." □

In 1908 Dutch Creek was still a "coming city" in the opinion of the well-armed residents shown here.

PHOTOS COURTESY NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tales of a big Irish jock politician who cared. By Guy Shipler

The People's Bureaucrat

A hallmark of Gov Mike O'Callaghan's administration has been his unannounced arrival at state agencies to see how they were really running. Since he tends to arise at hours which most people regard as ungodly, one day early in his administration he drove from Carson to the Sparks mental health institute in time to have breakfast with the patients, and fell into conversation with the man next to him. Afterwards the governor described this scene:

Patient: "Where you from?"

O'Callaghan: "Carson City " The patient paused, took a couple of spoonsful of oatmeal, glanced at O'Callaghan, then back to his oatmeal.

Patient: "What you do there?"

O'Callaghan, trying to be casual: "Work for the state."

Again a pause, and a sideways glance.

Patient: "What job?" At this point it was clear that he was no longer going to remain anonymous, so O'Callaghan shrugged and said: "I'm the governor "

The patient looked around in alarm, leaned toward O'Callaghan and said in a low voice: "My God! Don't let anyone hear you say that or they'll *never* let you out of here!"

Although that is one of his favorite stories about his eight years in office, O'Callaghan takes similar glee in telling about people's astonishment when they think they are talking to someone else and suddenly discover they have been talking to the governor

"After I announced that the day after Thanksgiving would be a state holiday in 1978," he recalls with a chuckle, "a bank official called the governor's office to complain. I answered the phone and he read me the riot act, about how this would disrupt the whole banking system because it meant a four-day holiday I asked him what bank he worked for, and after he told me I said, 'Well, I checked with the president of your bank to see if it really would be disruptive, and he assured me it would not.'

"There was a pause, and then he said, 'Who am I talking to?' When I said, 'The governor,' there was a great sputtering on the other end of the phone"—and O'Callaghan breaks into his loud laugh.

O'Callaghan, a happy but serious reserve. OFFICIAL U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO

Such incidents reflect the lighter side of a job which O'Callaghan has taken with great seriousness. He sees the governorship as the fulcrum between government and the people—and that means people of all ages, starting with children.

Take, for instance, the day last May when the big Irishman was flown some 200 miles southeast of Carson to a spot that even many Nevadans have never heard of, a remote farming area some 30 miles off a lightly traveled highway in Fish Lake Valley There, O'Callaghan landed on the air strip of a local ranch in answer to a "most gracious invitation" to speak at the graduation of Dyer Elementary School's eighth

grade class—which consisted of four students.

Why would an outgoing governor, not seeking the votes of their parents to help him get reelected, make a trip simply to graduate four eighth graders? To O'Callaghan, an effort like that is of vital importance to the kids involved.

"The best way for children—or anybody else—to learn about government," he explains, "is by going to the source of government. Therefore they must feel that they have full, free and easy access to government. In the case of the executive branch, it's ideally represented by one man—the governor The legislature has no one person who can represent it, and no one person represents the judicial body. But one person *can* be identified as the key to the executive branch."

Last year O'Callaghan carried out this principle by traveling more than 1,000 miles (mostly driving his own car) to speak to a total of fewer than 200 graduates in five of the state's high schools. During his two terms in office he has made a practice of accepting invitations to speak at any graduation that his busy schedule would allow In addition, every year an average of 10,000 Nevada and Calfornia students have made visits to his office in Carson City Usually they have come in large groups and were advised that they could stay with the governor for five or 10 minutes.

Invariably, 45 minutes later, the students were still in his office, while his frantic staff was trying to explain the delay to some waiting dignitary

You can't pinpoint the O'Callaghan character through his fondness for children alone. He seems to like almost everyone, and the significant thing is that he is likely to treat the lowliest bum and the most respected citizen with equal warmth, consideration and attention. Once he puts them at ease he likes to trade jokes or mock insults, or show great interest in the details of their families, or discuss politics (a native instinct with him) or—one of his favorite topics—sports of any kind.

An intriguing aspect of the O'Callaghan nature is that this quality makes it unnecessary for him to show the classic characteristics deemed essential for political success. Thus he hasn't the flair or charisma of, say, Ronald Reagan, and he is not a particularly good public speaker (although he has improved considerably during his

Time out at the Governor's office.

DON BOONE

eight years as governor). But the common touches of personal warmth, approachability and obvious interest in people have kept his popularity remarkably high. There's an axiom abroad that, third term jinx or no, he could have been reelected in 1978 with the greatest majority in Nevada history

His own background and interests are probably the main elements of O'Callaghan's success both as an administrator and as an individual with popular appeal. He has been a football player and an amateur boxer, an ironworker and a school teacher He still swims daily whenever possible and would no doubt have kept active in more rugged sports had he not lost his left leg from a mortar shell while fighting in Korea. It is illustrative of his nature that he served not in one but in three of the U.S. military branches—Air Force, Marines and Army

That incident in Korea may have pointed O'Callaghan to the governorship of Nevada. He once told an interviewer for a Catholic newspaper that had he not lost his leg he might have stayed in the military; he obviously felt supremely at home there. All available information indicates that he was a tough and courageous fighter on the battlefield—a fact recognized by his being awarded the Silver Star for bravery

A lot of people who have had to deal with him since regret that O'Callaghan failed to leave some of that toughness on the battlefield. They complain that he has run his governorship too much like a military operation—unfortunately (they say) not in the formal, proper way of a General Omar Bradley but with the flair, drive and dazzling nature of a General George Patton.

As governor, O'Callaghan became famous (infamous, to the people involved) for calling meetings with groups like the Washoe County commissioners at 5 or 5:30 in the morning—and the meeting place was his office in Carson City, 30 miles away from the commissioners' homes. His hyperactivity ran everywhere from calling people on the phone in the middle of the night for a piece of information to being constantly on the go, at work or play, with the latter usually meaning attending a baseball or football game if it was within reasonable traveling distance. Sleeping late to him meant getting up at 5:30 a.m. instead of 4:30 a.m. He was usually at his office by six, but would take time out at seven to go up King Street to St. Teresa's Catholic Church for mass, which he never missed when in town. Usually he would then show up at the Ormsby House coffee shop at 7:30 to join some "late" starters for coffee. He would regale them with his schedule and achievements, then go back to work.

O'Callaghan justifies what seems to normal people to be a 24-hour schedule by pointing out that the very nature of the governor's job demands it. "I work when there are problems to be solved or prevented," he says, "and many times the identification of the existence of these problems cannot take place between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday So what I have to do is work the regular hours everybody else does plus the hours when problems come up. I get calls in the middle of the night because of emergencies, and that means I have to call others who can help resolve them—or give me needed

(Continued on page 62)


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Marie Bill,
surviving in a changing world.
By Kristi Steber

INDIAN SUN SONG

KRISTI STEBER

On a late fall afternoon Marie Bill sings an old Indian song. The sunlight filters through the leaves and dances along the lines of her face in time with her soft chant and the beat of her drum.

The song is timeless; it has been sung in the flickering light of hundreds of afternoon suns. Time has no particular meaning.

"That is a sun song," Marie says. "It was my father's song. I'll never forget it."

What do the words mean?

Marie laughs at such questions. The sun song has no words to tell you about the sun. The sun song makes you *feel* the sun and you become sun specks dancing through autumn leaves.

Holding the drum closer to her ear, the beat imperceptibly changes and Marie begins another soft chant. She knows many of the old songs. She learned them nearly a century ago in a time when Indian fathers sang their songs over and over to their children.

At age 95 Marie Bill bridges the gap between the old Indian ways and the new She is the last to sing her songs. She is the last to know how it was to live the way Indians had always lived when eastern Nevada was theirs.

Marie's grandparents remembered life before the white man and told her of when the first white men came to their lands. She does not like to tell these stories.

The stories Marie likes are the legends of older times she heard her grandfather speak. She remembers how he would choose her father or one of her brothers to repeat his words so that his tales would be heard and remembered. Sitting back in the shadows of the tepee Marie heard, too, and remembered.

"Once there were two old Indian hunters," she said. "They argued over a buffalo hide. What was best to roost under on a cold freezing night.

"The one who won the argument took the buffalo hide, the other had to choose a skin of rabbit made into a blanket.

"It was probably January, a really freezing night. The man with the buffalo hide threw it away and tried to crawl in under the rabbit hide." Marie laughs at the story

Marie lived a childhood not unlike her ancestors, but she has never known a world without the white man and the changes he brought to her people. She was born in the fall of 1883 near Owyhee to a Shoshone father and a Paiute mother She lived in a tepee with 14 brothers and sisters and they traveled from the Owyhee River to south of the Ruby Mountains. They

stopped to camp wherever game was plentiful and moved on when hunting became scarce.

In her early years the white man did not really affect the lifestyle of her family Towns offered attractions and materials never known before by the Shoshone and ranches provided the means to earn money to buy them, but Indians were generally free to wander back and forth across the desert and camp wherever they pleased.

Marie's father, Reese Harney Henry, trapped birds and deer for the family to eat. He wanted a gun but never had the money to buy one. Once in a while when money was needed for flour or other supplies Marie would go with her sisters and mother to work on a ranch for two or three days. They never worked longer than to earn enough money for immediate needs, just as they never killed more game than they could eat before it spoiled.

Marie's father remained a hunter until he died but Marie was born too late to live with the old ways. She had to learn to live in a changing world. When she was 11 the government superintendent at Owyhee picked Marie to attend the Indian boarding school in Stewart. She didn't want to go, she didn't want to leave her home and family, but she was chosen.

With four other girls she climbed into a buckboard wagon for the trip to Elko to catch the train. She remembered only that it was a tiresome trip over rough roads and took three days. At night the girls slept in the wagon and wondered if they would see their home again.

Happily for Marie the stay at Stewart was not to be a long one. Shortly after arriving doctors hospitalized the scared little girl with what they thought was the dreaded tuberculosis. It wasn't, but fearing an epidemic they sent her home. The other girls from Owyhee refused to stay there without her and they all came home together

But Marie could never come home again. The old ways were gone and when she became a young woman she moved into Elko and washed and cleaned for the white women, as other Indian women did. During haying season the Indians moved their tents to the ranches and lived and worked, and moved on when work was done or they had made enough money to spend.

"Tepees were good to live in," Marie said. "They were movable. All you did was take the sticks down and put them behind the horse. We loaded everything there and the horse moved camp."

But the government decided the Indians should not move from place to place but have ranches of their own. They bought reservations and gave the land to the Indians and loaned money to buy cattle. Marie said it was not good for them.

"Roosevelt bought us this reservation and said we could be ranchers. But the Indians didn't like ranching, they didn't know about it. They thought it was better working for ranches instead of owning ranches.

"They put us in houses. We weren't used to that. We liked living in tents and moving them wherever we wanted."

Marie has lived on the Te-Moak reservation south of Elko for the last 26 years in a railroad tie house built for her by her Shoshone husband Bobby Bill. She has a few cattle and her neighbors help her put up the hay that grows in her meadow along the bottom of Dixie Creek. She lives alone and chops the wood that fuels her wood heating stove herself. She earns spending money by braiding rugs and selling them.

Life is slow and quiet on the Te-Moak reservation. Houses are dotted here and there along the creek and few cars travel the dusty road through the reservation. Visiting there on an afternoon gives a sense of finding time has stopped, or is moving in slow motion.

Marie's house sits along the creek bottom nearly hidden in a grove of poplars. Hardly anything looks different from when Bobby built it for her There are few modern conveniences. Marie is content with the way things are; she has no desire for change.

Her family has suggested that she move to town where she would be closer to doctors but she refuses.

"There's too much noise in town," she says. "It makes me nervous. I like my home here, it's quiet and peaceful."

Change is coming once more to Marie's world, again in the form of government assistance. It can be seen in the new tribal offices and meeting center. The air is rent with hammers and saws building new HUD homes. A rodeo grounds has been built with federal funds and Marie has decided to accept help in re-siding her house.

"Every year is different for us," she says with a shrug of acceptance. "Things are always changing." □

Calendar

SOUTH

JANUARY

1-31 Western Art Show, VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK
1-31 Art Educators Show, LV Art Museum, LAS VEGAS
1-31 Group Tours of Southern Nevada Historical & Cultural Sites, Allied Arts Council, LAS VEGAS
1-31 Free Tours of Old LV Fort, LAS VEGAS
1-31 Displays of Artifacts & Historical Pieces, Southern Nevada Museum & UNLV Museum of Natural History, LAS VEGAS
2-6 "The Subject Was Roses," drama, The
9-13 Meadows Playhouse, LAS VEGAS
2-31 "Sunward!" planetarium show, Sat. & Sun., Community College, HENDERSON
4-28 "Public Ear-Private Eye," drama, Thurs.-Sun., LV Little Theater, LAS VEGAS
6 Weaving-warping Demonstration, Old LV Fort, LAS VEGAS
12-28 "The Wizard of Oz," children's theatre, Fri.-Sun., Reed Whipple Center, LAS VEGAS
16 Korean National Orchestra, Master Series Concert, 8 p.m., Ham Concert Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS
19-21 Nevada Dance Theatre, Fri. 8 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 2 & 8 p.m., Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV LAS VEGAS
22-27 UNLV/UNR Art Faculty Show, 12-4
29-2/3 p.m., Grant Hall Gallery, UNLV LAS VEGAS
28 Sahara World Championship of Blackjack, Final Round, LAS VEGAS
30-2/24 "Livin Fat," comedy, The Meadows Playhouse, LAS VEGAS

FEBRUARY

* Boss for a Day, HENDERSON
1,2 UNLV/UNR Art Faculty Show, UNLV Art Gallery, LAS VEGAS
1-4 "Public Ear-Private Eye," drama, LV Little Theater, LAS VEGAS
1-4 Boat, Sport & Travel Show, Convention Center, LAS VEGAS
1-28 Western Art Show, VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK
1-28 American Mothers Exhibit, LV Art Museum, LAS VEGAS
6-28 "Sunward!" planetarium show, Sat. & Sun., Community College, HENDERSON
1-28 Free tours of Old LV Fort, LAS VEGAS
1-28 Group Tours of Southern Nevada Historical & Cultural Sites, Allied Arts Council, LAS VEGAS
1-28 Displays of Artifacts & Historical Pieces, Southern Nevada Museum & UNLV Museum of Natural History, LAS VEGAS
2-4 Vegas Shoot, archery tournament, LV Convention Center, LAS VEGAS
4 LV Chamber Players Concert, 2 p.m., Ham Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS
6 Carol Kimball, Soprano, recital, 8 p.m., Ham Concert Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS
10 Quilting Demonstration, 1-4 p.m., Old LV Fort, LAS VEGAS
10,11 4th Annual China Show, Tropicana Hotel, LAS VEGAS
15-17 "A Raisin in the Sun," 8 p.m., Bonanza High School Theater, LAS VEGAS
15-17 "The Time of Your Life," play, 8 p.m., Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV LAS VEGAS
15-18 "Witness for the Prosecution," mystery, Reed Whipple Center, LAS VEGAS
17,18 Vegas Cat Club Show, Convention Center, LAS VEGAS
18 Las Vegas Bottle Club Show, Convention Center, LAS VEGAS
18 Europe Style Flea Market, Convention Center, LAS VEGAS
19 Andres Segovia, Master Series Concert, 8 p.m., Ham Concert Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS
19-28 Sybil Griffin Exhibit, UNLV Art Gallery, LAS VEGAS
24-25 "Eckankar—A Way of Life," seminar, UNLV LAS VEGAS
27 Richard L. Soule, flute, recital, 8 p.m., Ham Concert Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS

MARCH

1-3 "Witness for the Prosecution," murder mystery, Reed Whipple Center, LAS VEGAS
1-4 "Plaza Suite," comedy, CC Little
9,10 Theatre, HENDERSON
1-31 Group Tours of Southern Nevada Historical & Cultural Sites, Allied Arts Council, LAS VEGAS
1-31 Photography & Abstract Art Exhibit, (T), LV Art Museum, LAS VEGAS
2-4 Ballet West, Dance Concert, Fri. 8 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 2 & 8 p.m., Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV LAS VEGAS
4,9-11, "The Star Spangled Minstrel," children's
16-18 play, Grant Hall Little Theatre, UNLV LAS VEGAS
3-23 Richard Shaw/Kenneth Price Exhibit, UNLV Art Gallery, LAS VEGAS
4 "Israel in Spring," LV Musical Arts Workshop, 3 p.m., Ham Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS
4-29 Nevada Watercolor Society Show, Blvd. Mall, LAS VEGAS
6 Honolulu Symphony, Master Series Concert, 8 p.m., Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, LAS VEGAS
6-7 "Sunward!" planetarium show, Community College, HENDERSON
8-10 Southern Nevada Basketball Tournament, Convention Center, LAS VEGAS
8-4/8 "Oliver," LV Little Theater, LAS VEGAS
9-10 "An Evening of One Acts," Bonanaza High School Theater, LAS VEGAS
10 World Wide Flea Market, Convention Center, LAS VEGAS
11 Las Vegas Chamber Players Concert, 2 p.m., Ham Concert Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS
13- "The Lion in Winter," comedy-drama,
4/17 the Meadows Playhouse, LAS VEGAS
13-18 "Footsteps," planetarium show, Community college, HENDERSON
16-31 "Aladdin," children's theatre, Reed Whipple Center, LAS VEGAS
17 Dried fruits demonstration, 1-4 p.m., Old LV Fort, LAS VEGAS
18 UNLV Wind Ensemble, 2 p.m., Ham Concert Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS
22-4/1 "The Little Foxes," 8 p.m., Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV LAS VEGAS
23 Renaissance Festival, 7:30 p.m., Moyer Student Union Ballroom, UNLV LAS VEGAS
24,25 LV Civic Symphony concert, call 386-6211 for times, Charleston Heights Library Center, LAS VEGAS
25 UNLV Chorus, 2 p.m., Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, LAS VEGAS
30,31 8th Annual Contemporary Music Festival, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV LAS VEGAS
31 Pizza Hut Basketball Allstar Game, Convention Center, LAS VEGAS

Nevada's events, shows and celebrations are listed by region as a speedy reference for weekend trips and vacations.

WEST

JANUARY

2 UNR-Southern Univ., basketball, 8 p.m., Coliseum, RENO
2-5 New Life Crusades Evangelical Rally, Pioneer Theater, RENO
3 Reno Gem & Mineral Society, "Opals," 480 S. Rock Blvd., 8 p.m., SPARKS

5 "Focus on Nevada," movie, Walker Wassuk Arts Alliance, 7 p.m., HAWTHORNE
5-7 "The Royal Hunt of the Sun," Reno
11-13 Little Theater, RENO
7 Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, 2 p.m., Pioneer Theater, RENO
10 Walker Wassuk Arts Alliance, "Protest and Communication," 7 p.m., HAWTHORNE
11 UNR-Loyola, basketball, 8 p.m., Coliseum, RENO
13 UNR-Pepperdine, basketball, 8 p.m., Coliseum, RENO
17 Pittsburgh Symphony, Washoe Co. Comm. Concert (subscription), 8:15 p.m., Pioneer Theater, RENO
18 Harlem Globetrotters, Coliseum, RENO
20 Rock Concert, Coliseum, RENO
24 Walker Wassuk Arts Alliance "The Hero as Artist," 7 p.m., HAWTHORNE
25 UNR-Southern Oregon State, Coliseum, RENO
26,27 "Vanities," Sparks Civic Theater SPARKS
27,28 Nevada Energy Expo, V & T Room, Coliseum, RENO
30-2/6, Walker Lake Fine Arts Seminar, Pottery
13 & Clay Sculpture, 7 p.m., HAWTHORNE

FEBRUARY

1-3 "Vanities," Sparks Civic Theater
8-11 SPARKS
2 "Gatecliff American Indian Rock Shelter," movie, Walker Wassuk Arts Alliance, 7 p.m., HAWTHORNE
3,4 Merchants Salathon, V & T Room, Coliseum, RENO
9,10 Nevada Opera Guild, Gounod's "Faust," 8:15 p.m., Pioneer Theater RENO
9-11 Reno Boat & RV Show, Coliseum, RENO
12-18 "Bugs Bunny Meets the Superheroes," children's show, Pioneer Theater, RENO
14 Walker Wassuk Arts Alliance, "Man—The Measure of All Times," 7 p.m., HAWTHORNE
15 UNR-USF, basketball, 8 p.m., Coliseum, RENO
16-18, "California Suite," Reno Little Theater,
22-24 RENO
17 UNR-Santa Clara, basketball, 8 p.m., Coliseum, RENO
25 UNR-Portland, basketball, 8 p.m., Coliseum, RENO
27 Dave Boyer, gospel concert & orchestra, 8 p.m., Pioneer Theater, RENO

MARCH

* Lunch & Fashion Show, Carson-Tahoe Hospital Auxiliary, Ormsby House, CARSON CITY
2 "Great Comstock Silver Strike," "Lehman Caves National Monument," movies, Walker Wassuk Arts Alliance, 7 p.m., HAWTHORNE
2,3 Northern Nevada Zone Basketball Tournament, Coliseum, RENO
3 Mardi Gras Ball, Carson-Tahoe Hospital Auxiliary Ormsby House, CARSON CITY
4 Aleta Gray Benefit Concert, Sierra Arts Foundation, 2 p.m., Pioneer Theater, RENO
11 Reno Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, 2 p.m., Pioneer Theater RENO
15-17 Reno International Jazz Festival, Pioneer Theater and (on 16,17) Coliseum, RENO
16,17 "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie," Sparks
22-24 Civic Theater, SPARKS
20 Nancy Hauser Dance Company Nevada Council of Arts-UNR, 8 p.m., Pioneer Theater, RENO
22,23 Up With People, 8 p.m., Pioneer Theater RENO
24 Matting, Framing & Exhibiting Seminar, Walker Wassuk Arts Alliance, 7 p.m., HAWTHORNE
25 Nevada Symphonic Association Concert, 3 p.m., Pioneer Theater RENO
27 Youth Symphony Concert, 8 p.m., Pioneer Theater, RENO
29-4/1 Sekulich Antique Show, V & T Room, Coliseum, RENO
29-4/1 Autorama, Coliseum, RENO
30 Leona Mitchell, Soprano, Washoe Co. Comm. Concert (subscription), Pioneer Theater, RENO
29-4/1 "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie," Sparks Civic Theater SPARKS

CENTRAL

FEBRUARY

17,18, Bristlecone Singles Classic Bowling
24,25 Tournament, ELY

MARCH

3,4, Bristlecone Singles Classic Bowling
10,11, Tournament, ELY
17,18,
24,25

NORTH

FEBRUARY

* Old Timers Rodeo, ELKO
3,4 Winnemucca Chariot Races, WINNEMUCCA
10,11 3rd Annual Chariot Cutter Races, Elko County Fairgrounds, ELKO
12 Salute to Abraham Lincoln, JACKPOT
14 Annual Volunteer Fireman's Ball & Steak Dinner, JACKPOT

MARCH

* Elko Single Classic Bowling Tournaments, ELKO
17 Shamrock Day JACKPOT
20 Potted Plants Display Cactus Pete's, JACKPOT

*Date to be set

MARILYN NEWTON

Big league basketball has arrived in Nevada this winter. Both Las Vegas and Reno were awarded franchises in the new Western Basketball Association, and the two teams, the Dealers and the Bighorns, already have shown an exciting, professional style of play.

The home schedules of the two teams are as follows:

RENO BIGHORNS

January 4—Montana. 5—Fresno. 12—Salt Lake City. 14—Tri-Cities. 15—Tucson. 16—Fresno. 26—Tri-Cities. 27—Las Vegas.

February 14—Tri-Cities. 16—Tucson. 28—Montana.

March 5—Salt Lake City. 13—Fresno. 14—Tri-Cities. 19—Montana. 20—Fresno. 21—Salt Lake City. 23—Las Veagas.

All games played at 7:30 p.m. at Centennial Coliseum.

LAS VEGAS DEALERS

January 6—Montana, 5:30 p.m., CHS. 7—Fresno, 5:30 p.m., CHS. 14—Tucson, 5:30 p.m., CHS. 20—Salt Lake City, 5:30 p.m., CHS. 28—Reno, 5:30 p.m., LVCC. 29—Tucson, 7:30 p.m., LVCC. 31—Tri-Cities, 7:30 p.m., LVCC.

February 2—Reno, 7:30 p.m., LVCC. 3—Fresno, 5:30 p.m., LVCC. 16—Tri-Cities, 5:30 p.m., LVCC. 18—Salt Lake City, 5:30 p.m., LVCC. 24—Montana, 5:30 p.m., CHS. 25—Tri-Cities, 5:30 p.m., CHS.

March 4—Montana, 5:30 p.m., CHS. 11—Tucson, 5:30 p.m., CHS. 12—Fresno, 7:30 p.m., CHS. 19—Tri-Cities, 5:30 p.m., CHS. 25—Salt Lake City, 5:30 p.m., LVCC. 27—Montana, 7:30 p.m., LVCC. 29—Reno, 7:30 p.m., LVCC.

Games played at Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC) or Chaparral High School (CHS).

The Spring Mountains offer great winter sport only minutes from The Strip.

SKI LAS VEGAS

By Tom Martin

When many vacationers see the billboard that reads "SKI LEE" north of Las Vegas on U.S. 95, they think somebody is pulling an expensive practical joke. After all, Las Vegas is known for its mild desert climate with an average daily high of 80 degrees, 3.7 inches of rain a year and 320 days of sunshine annually—strictly weather for fishing, waterskiing, golf and tennis.

If the billboard is a joke, the highway department goes right along with it. Set in the desert sand and framed by shrubs and Joshua trees, stands a sign announcing "Ski Area" with an arrow pointing westward up State Route 52 toward the towering, forested ridges of the Spring Mountains and 11,918-foot Mt. Charleston.

A 4,500-foot climb ends 17 miles later at the Lee Canyon Ski Area. The slopes were established in the early Sixties, and the present facilities have been in operation for 12 years. Lee's slopes are located at the base of cliffs that top out at nearly 11,000 feet, providing protection from the prevailing westerly winds.

The bottom of the lifts is a mile and a half in elevation. The runs off the double chair lift (3,000 feet long, 1,000-foot rise) face north, and runs off the T-bar (2,700 feet long, 800-foot rise) face northeast.

Although it may appear that the Spring Range has little snow when the south slopes are seen from Las Vegas in the winter, Lee Canyon usually will have plenty During good snow years Lee is an excellent beginner and intermediate ski area. When the area closed last March, the lodge had eight feet of snow, but 1977-78 was an exceptional season. Snow-making equipment is usually needed to groom the slopes.

When owner Ken Highfield named the runs, he followed a Las Vegas theme, although the slopes and trails did not have monickers for such a long time that Las Vegas skiers still ignore the official designations. The area around the top of the chair lift is called High Roller, which leads to two intermediate runs, Keno and Blackjack. A short trail leads to an advanced run named Slot Alley, but most locals still call it The Gully, treacherous in powder or soft snow.

The main run off the T-bar is called The Strip at the top and Jeannie's Run at the bottom. A winding trail, which boasts a 50-degree pitch for the last 100 yards, is called Bimbo. This is a shute where skiers have to look out for the ponderosa pines on the right and then pray they can stop before running into the lodge or lift line.

Swiss native Marcel Burel operates Lee Canyon's ski school, and a lesson with him is as good as any found at major ski areas of the West.

"Lee Canyon is an excellent place to learn how to ski whether you are a visitor or a Las Vegas resident," Burel explains. "It is an easy road up the hill, and a beginner can make a morning or afternoon of it. As a beginner gains some experience, Lee Canyon offers varied terrain and short runs.

"Because Lee Canyon is so far south," he adds, "conditions are often marginal in late November and December January, February and March are usually the best months."

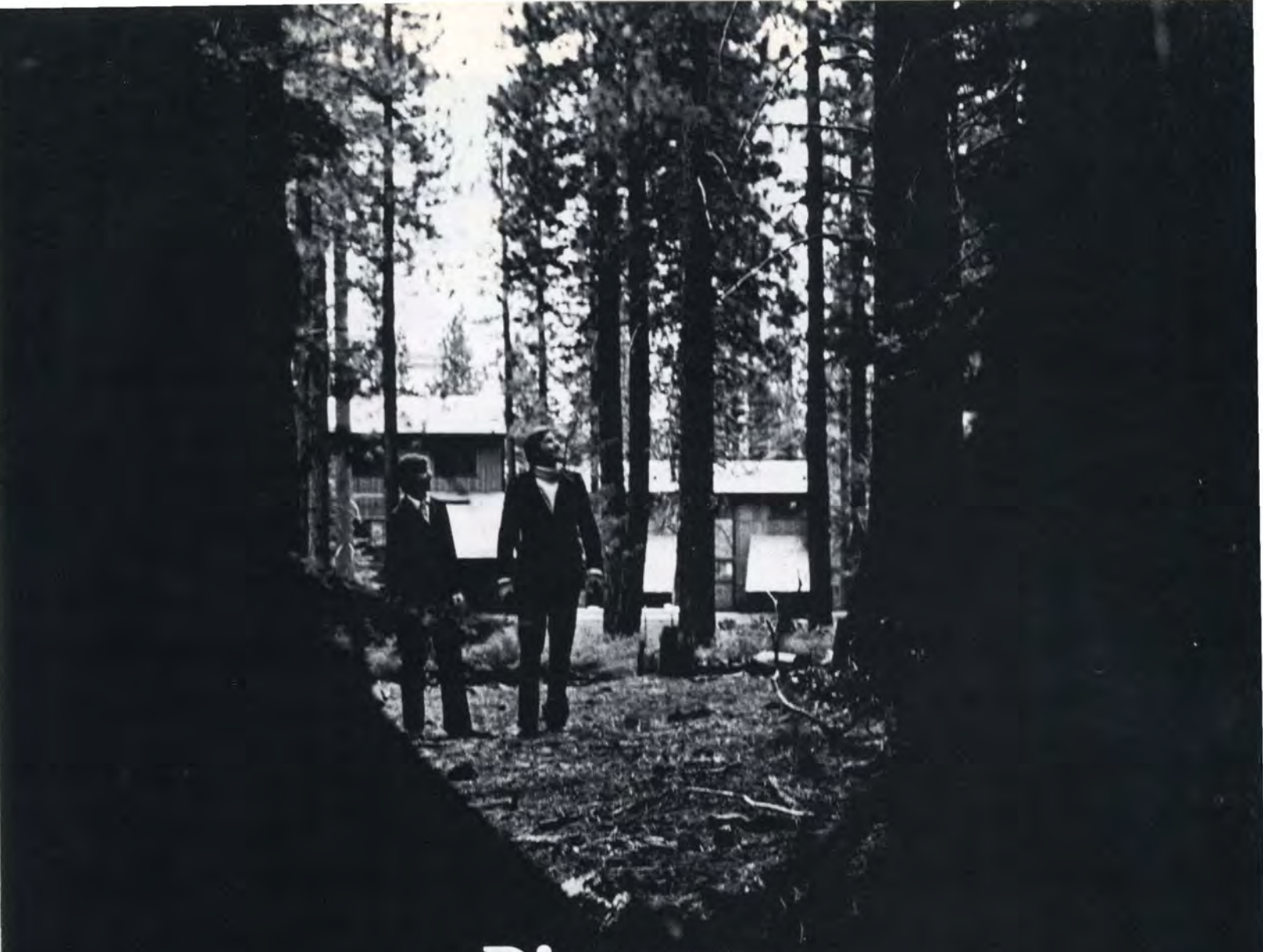
Serious Las Vegas skiers are not confined to Lee Canyon, and can range into Southern Utah and Northern Arizona in search of good snow The most popular resort for Southern Nevada skiers is Brian Head near Cedar City, Utah, about a four hour drive from Las Vegas. Brian Head is developing into a major ski area and should complete its third chairlift this winter. For alpine skiers Utah powder is the lure, and the slopes at Brian Head are rarely as crowded as areas near Salt Lake City or Reno/Tahoe.

Brian Head is one of the highest ski areas in the country, with the bottom of the chairs at slightly over 9,000 feet and topping out at 10,500. The terrain and scenery in the Brian Head/Cedar Breaks National Monument area make for excellent cross-country skiing and snowmobile touring.

Other ski areas popular with Las Vegans are Mt. Holly, located about 50 miles north of Brian Head, and the Arizona Snow Bowl near Flagstaff. □

COURTESY LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

The many choices of Charleston.



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Skiing in the middle of the desert. By Dan Leeth and Dennis Ghiglieri

Touring Toiyabe

Skiing in the Toiyabe Mountains south of Austin, Nevada, means no chairlifts or rope tows, no tickets, no crowded parking lots, crowded slopes or apres ski social hours.

Instead, cross-country touring in the Toiyabes offers the beauty and solitude of one of Nevada's Great Basin ranges as the skier travels with food, clothing and shelter on his back.

Last winter, planning a Washington's Birthday weekend tour, we scouted locations in Nevada's interior with several "musts" in mind. The terrain would have to be steep enough to provide good downhill runs, but gentle enough not to make uphill climbs too exhausting or dangerous. The area should be relatively safe from avalanches, have easy access, and allow for alternate escape routes in case the weather changed.

Many of Nevada's desert ranges offer great touring possibilities for the cross-country skier, but our attention quickly focused on the Toiyabe Mountains. This 126-mile chain cuts through the center of the state, and deep winter snows accumulate on the high peaks and plateaus, much of it falling when the famed "Tonopah low" settles in (with humid air from the south mixing with cold air from the north). The crest of the range is long and softly rounded into a series of summits and ridges. Major valleys strike out in either direction from the crest, providing excellent exit routes.

Nevada's scenic U.S. Highway 50 crosses the Toiyabes just east of Austin. Once a booming mining town, Austin now has a population of about 400. It's not a ski resort town, but has several fine motels and cafes, a grocery store, a bank, and one of the most active Liar's Clubs in the state.

Ski touring in the wilderness is not for novices. Our group consisted of Pat and Peter Fisher, Bay Area refugees; Dennis Ghiglieri, a third-generation Nevadan; and Dan Leeth, a desert rat from Arizona. All lived in Reno and were accomplished cross-country skiers.

We planned the journey in detail, studying dozens of maps before picking a route along the western crest of the range. We decided to leave U.S. 50 near Austin summit and ski along the ridges southward to Kingston Canyon. As the buzzard flies, only 19 miles. As the skier slogs, perhaps three times further

DAN LEETH PHOTOS

Before leaving home we called the rangers at the Toiyabe National Forest office in Austin about snow conditions. They were most helpful, saying the snow looked deep and stable but we still should be careful.

The sun was just popping over the horizon as we sped through fog-laced Dixie Valley east of Fallon. In Austin, we had a quick breakfast, left word of our plans with the Sheriff's office, and then drove south. We left one vehicle at the base of Kingston Canyon and the other on Austin Summit. Skis were waxed, backpacks were hoisted, and we were off on our adventure.

We started climbing toward a small grove of aspen, then zig-zagged up a smooth slope. The sagebrush, grass and rocks were all nicely concealed under a deep covering of white. The several feet of snow cleansed the mountain of trails and roads, leaving only the grand structures of mountain peak and open plain in evidence. We reached the crest near the intersection of two barbed wire fences almost totally covered with snow Around a big bowl, over a ridge, down some gentle slopes, then up some more. The sun was unobstructed, the air crisp and the skiing perfect. It was a joy to be out; we were free spirits moving deeper into a vast empty land.

All too soon, as the shadows lengthened and the air chilled, fatigue crept into our muscles. It was time to camp for the night. We came upon a high plateau guarded by mountain mahogany groves. Wind-blown ice clung to the lee side of the tiny, curling leaves. Small alcoves in the trees were ideal spots to pitch our tents atop the deep snow.

While snow melted into water in our small stoves, we paused to watch the sky erupt in evening color—from orange to red, crimson and finally purple—before receding into gray night.

As the colors faded, the temperature

dropped. Our boiling water was converted quickly into a macaroni and cheese dinner More snow was melted to refill our canteens, and some hot Jell-o was brewed. Soon after, we climbed into our sleeping bags and fell asleep.

At dawn the thermometer read almost 20 degrees, far warmer than expected, and we soon discovered the reason. A dense fog covered our mountain and insulated us from the cold morning air

After coffee and cereal, we started off. But progress was slow. The fog prevented us from discerning details in the featureless white world, and even though we checked our maps carefully, they were not much help. Slowly, we felt our way southward along the crest.

Later in the morning the fog broke apart. Occasionally we caught a glimpse of massive Toiyabe peak in the distance or of the Reese River far below. We stopped for lunch at a small clump of trees, and when we were able to get a clear view of where we were, we saw it wasn't far enough! Kingston Canyon lay too distant for us to reach as planned; to complete the trip would have required an extra night's camp. Too many people would be worried if we didn't come out on schedule, so we had no choice. We dropped off the crest and into an alternate route in the Birch Creek drainage.

In long sweeping traverses we glided effortlessly down the slope into the valley Mountain mahogany gave way to scattered pinyon and juniper as we skied down the broad, open reaches of the upper canyon. Water birch thickets and clumps of willows and aspen gradually filled the valley We picked our way around them, enjoying the patterns of animal tracks connecting the trees together like a puzzle.

As the shadows of the mountains darkened the canyon, we stopped for

MARK ARONOFF

Beautiful options in Toiyabes south of Austin.

the night. Our camp was in a small meadow along Birch Creek, and we talked of our exhilarating but tiring day When the sun's last rays were extinguished, we wasted no time crawling into our sleeping bags.

The second morning was much colder than the day before on the ridge. The clouds had disappeared and the temperature was four degrees. After working frozen fingers to start the stoves, we stood around trying to absorb the warmth of the early morning sunlight. By the time we broke camp, the day was warming up.

The farther down the canyon we traveled, the more growth we encountered. Pinyon and juniper, trees well adapted to cold winters and dry summers, were found in dense groves. Smaller shrubs clogged the route in many places. After passing the remains of the Arena Ranch, we followed a snow-covered road. The conditions were perfect, and we enjoyed a morning of skiing over smooth, untracked snow

We stopped for lunch on a rise overlooking the Big Smoky Valley to the east. The entire basin lay covered with an almost unbroken coating of snow, and the distant Toquima Mountains glistened. Overhead, a pair of crows squawked, and in the far, far distance a diesel truck could be heard climbing the highway toward Hickson Summit.

It was not far now After one last turn in the canyon, we were out on the flat with nothing but open snow-covered desert separating us from Highway 8A. To the local ranchers, we must have looked strange standing beside the highway, our four sets of cross-country skis stuck in the ground pointing skyward. Three of us were wearing European style knickers and the other looked equally odd in his baggy, nylon wind-pants. In spite of (or because of) our strange looks, the first car we saw stopped to give us a ride back to our car

Leaving the Toiyabe Mountains behind, we reflected on our wilderness experience for those three days. We were physically tired, but spiritually refreshed. We had to depend on ourselves, and we were not disappointed. Powerful feelings of satisfaction and joy filled our bodies. Even before we had finished dinner on our way back to Reno, we were planning our next trip to the Toiyabes.

Ski Austin? Of course. We couldn't think of a better place to spend a wilderness cross-country skiing weekend.

Cross-Country: THE FIRST STEPS

How to get on the right track.

By Louis Bignami

Cross-country skiing offers a fine means of combatting winter spread when most folks are parked in front of the tube. In the West, the Tahoe Basin is an ideal place to learn. By taking lessons and renting gear from an established x-c area, you'll avoid the usual beginner's problems and have more time to enjoy your time in the snow Later, you can purchase gear and ski on your own across the hundreds of miles of open rolling Nevada hills. But at first, supervised skiing on groomed tracks is the safest and most enjoyable way to go.

Safety is important, and there are three major areas where beginners can get in trouble. First, beginners off-track can get lost and wander into country that's too tough for their conditioning and technique. Second, there can be gear problems; the wrong wax, broken ski tips or even boots that don't fit can make you miserable. The last problem is the weather; when a Sierra storm blows in I can count on spending time in search and rescue looking for lost folks.

The answer to these problems is track skiing in a properly controlled area. Tracks—twin grooves in packed snow—make it impossible to get lost and solve the route selection problem as well. Good tracks *never* offer a tight turn at the bottom of a long downhill; off-track skiers ahead of you don't offer this.

First timers might try Incline and Heavenly Village cross-country areas in Nevada at the north and south end of the lake. Royal Gorge Ski Touring, in Soda Springs at the top of the Donner Pass, is my own favorite and has over 106 kilometers of double tracks. Double tracks allow passing and one-way traffic so they're more fun.

Renting at the x-c area makes sense so you can exchange gear if problems develop. Do call ahead to reserve equipment; x-c is growing at about 30 percent a year and it's not unusual for gear to be completely rented out by 10 in the morning. Incidentally, if you rise late you'll love x-c because tracks are at their best from about 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Earlier and later than that they'll ice up and are more difficult. The exception to this is spring skiing when mornings are prime time.

Once you've made your reservation gather your usual winter clothing. Knickers and wool knee socks and a sweater are traditional. The experienced or the fit opt for nylon warmup or racing suits. Beginners, who fall some and rest a lot, are better off with wool worn over mesh underwear Wool gloves and a wool hat will complete your outfit except for a parka that's nice when you're standing around. If the day is a fine one you'll feel better skiing in a cotton turtleneck with your sweater around you waist.

Add wax, if you're using waxable skis, and lunch or snacks and you're all set.

During your first lesson you'll learn how to use your gear and do some single-striding, the natural walking motion that's basic for x-c. You'll also learn step turns and a few simple ways to slow down. Falling is part of the program, and learning to fall safely and well is a must if you want to stretch your technique. A short period of downhill will complete the half-day lesson so you can spend the rest of the day practicing. Take a Saturday morning lesson, practice that afternoon, ski no more than four miles on Sunday and you'll improve skills without fatigue dulling your day

If you opt for waxless skis your first time out, try wax skis a second weekend during your lessons. Experts prefer wax for most conditions as you can fine tune your skis and change waxes as the snow softens or hardens. A second weekend half-day lesson will bring you to the point where you can try easy terrain on your own in a group. Groups are a must for safety, and four to six people is ideal. The logging roads behind Harrah's and the golf course at Incline are nifty spots for early tours.

Once you know you like the sport you can buy your own outfit (poles, shoes and skis run a little over $100) and move on to longer trips with more vertical runs. For now, take your time, enjoy being out in the snow and savor one of winter's finest recreational opportunities.

TAHOE'S TOP TEN

In the Tahoe Basin, finding a prime cross-country area to ski may be as easy as getting out of your car at a mountain meadow, or it can require considerable driving. Many Lake Tahoe x-c schools offer excursions. Note that the open meadows near Mount Rose offer the earliest skiing of the year, and that the old roads between Nevada casinos and Heavenly Valley offer fine skiing as well. You also can contact Reno ski shops for special tours tailored to your interests and ability.

INCLINE NORDIC, 690 Wilson Way, Incline Village, NV 89450, (702) 831-2700 or (702) 831-3211 for snow conditions. This area uses Incline Village for "safe and sane" touring for beginners, and is an excellent spot to learn with daily lessons and weekly tours. Lodging at South Lake Tahoe or Incline Village. Tracks, rentals, retail sales and a warming hut.

SUGAR HOUSE WEST, Meyers, CA 95705, (916) 541-6811, offers track skiing, lessons and no track fee. Their specialty is guided tours into both the Nevada and California sides of the Sierra. Lots of lodging nearby and you're only a short drive from casinos and shows.

THE MEADOWS: This is a sleeper for those who've rented gear elsewhere. Drive up to Mt. Rose from Reno and continue just over the pass towards Incline Village. The meadows off-road to the east usually have snow when everywhere else is brown. Stay near the treeline to the south of the meadow and plan on a morning trip if there's only four to six inches of snow. In the afternoon when things warm up this can eat up your ski bases.

HEAVENLY VALLEY: The largest downhill resort in the Sierra should have organized x-c skiing, but it doesn't. However, you can rent gear in South Tahoe and "mess about" on the flats and through the trees east of the resort, which offers all other activities and hot mulled wine when you're done.

Note that some individuals regularly ski the White Mountains, but any off-road skiing in primitive areas must be done with an experienced group.

ROYAL GORGE SKI TOURING, Box 178, Soda Springs, CA 95728, (916) 426-3793, at the top of Donner Pass near Truckee offers the finest x-c skiing in California and, perhaps, in the entire U.S. Close to 100 miles of double tracks, a rental shop, lessons—even a Norwegian racing instructor!—tours to the lodge three miles from the road, and much, much more. There's citizen's racing, telemark turn competitions and lots of warming huts. Weekend and week long lodging and lessons are available at the ski-in lodge. There's even a hot tub and sauna!

BIG CHIEF GUIDES, Box 2427, Truckee, CA, 95734, is midway between Truckee and Tahoe City on Highway 89. Rentals, a dorm, and tours of both the California and Nevada sides of the North Lake Tahoe area are available. Call (916) 587-4773 for ski or lodging at Big Chief Lodge.

NORTHSTAR NORDIC, Box 129, Truckee, CA 95734, (916) 562-0396, is 45 minutes from Reno via Highway 80 and the Central Truckee turnoff to Lake Tahoe. All services, lots of beginners trips on easy terrain and overnights to a mountain cabin. Moonlight tours are also popular on the golf course and meadow above Martis Creek.

SQUAW VALLEY, Box 2288, Olympic Valley, CA 95730, (916) 583-4316, is the spot where the U.S. Nordic and Biathalon teams train. The 1979 Junior Nordic Nationals will be held here and the area has all services. Easy skiing on the meadow; more demanding skiing on the logging roads south to Alpine Meadows.

TAHOE NORDIC, Box 1632, Tahoe City, CA 95730, (916) 583-9858. A couple of miles east of Tahoe City on Highway 28, this center offers you the chance to ski with a view of the lake to Carnelian Bay. It's designed for those with some experience, but excellent beginner's lessons are available. Trails are free and set after each snow so they can be a bit marked up if not set in the last week or so.

MAMMOTH SKI TOURING, Box 93546, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546, (714) 934-6955, is the nearest x-c skiing to Las Vegas and accessible to Nevada skiers via Highway 395. All services and lessons with hot springs, night routes, clinics and NASTAR skiing. It can be crowded with Los Angeles skiers, and reservations for lodging and skiing lessons are recommended. □

Harry Webb was an actor, horsetrader and award-winning author, but most of all, he was a cowboy. By Bud Hage

Pine Mountain Storyteller

One day in 1909 Harry E. Webb and two other cowboys rode into Cody, Wyoming, for a couple of days on the town. The bustling young cowtown was a fine sight for the dusty buckaroos, until a piece of wire laying in the street spooked Harry's horse and the bronc took him bucking and bawling down the street, veering across a board sidewalk and through the glass front of a drugstore. Cut and bleeding, Webb, with the help of his friends, untangled the bronc from the wreckage of the display window

Just then a tall, white haired, goateed gentleman stepped out of the crowd and addressed Harry Webb. "Young man, if you can ride like that, you deserve a place in my show " Pulling a contract from his pocket, the man said, "Fill this out and send it to my hiring agent. Be ready to join us in the spring."

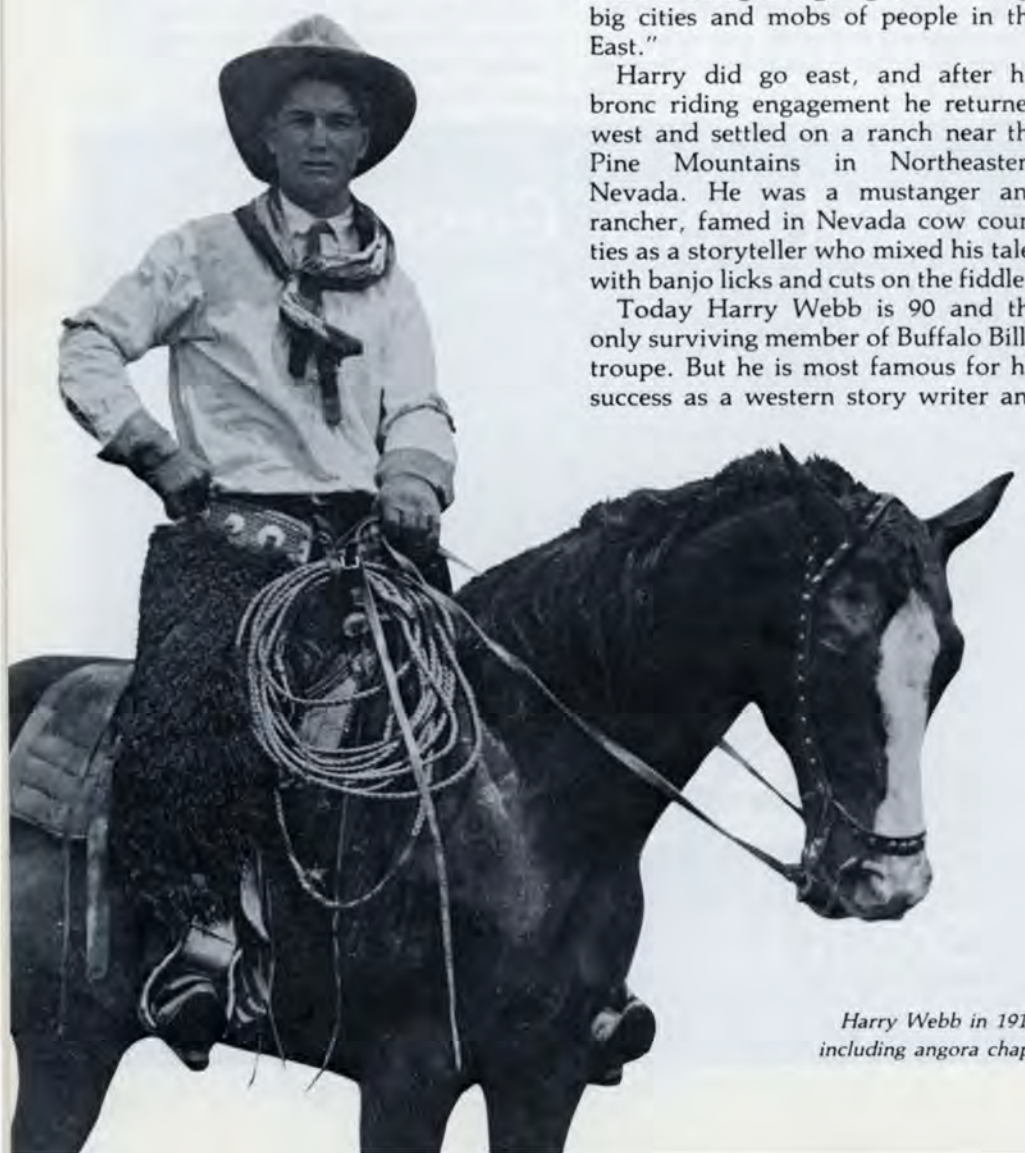
Harry, still dazed by the wreck, looked at the stranger and asked, "What show?"

"Why, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show?" the big man thundered.

The three cowhands mused over the contract for some time. As Webb says today, "It wasn't the bad horses Buffalo Bill had that made me hesitate. It was the thought of going to the strange big cities and mobs of people in the East."

Harry did go east, and after his bronc riding engagement he returned west and settled on a ranch near the Pine Mountains in Northeastern Nevada. He was a mustanger and rancher, famed in Nevada cow counties as a storyteller who mixed his tales with banjo licks and cuts on the fiddle.

Today Harry Webb is 90 and the only surviving member of Buffalo Bill's troupe. But he is most famous for his success as a western story writer and novelist—a career he began on his Nevada ranch—and as an award winner sought out by historians and folklorists seeking to tap his knowledge of western ways and history



Harry Webb in 1910, including angora chaps.

Harry's own story is as gritty and romantic as the ones he spins so artfully for his reading audience. Born a miner's son in Colorado in 1888, he moved with his family from camp to camp, and Harry was able to achieve only a fifth grade education in that migrant life. At 15, Harry left home, his only possessions an old horse and a shotgun. Wyoming was his destination. He hoped to find his older brother, and learn to be a bronc rider for the big cow outfits.

Some months later he arrived in Lander, minus his horse and shotgun which had been stolen by "new found friends." He ended up pasting labels on bottles in a drugstore to earn money so he could eat. But, even so, Harry never missed an opportunity all that winter to practice riding a "bad one." By spring, after enough hard falls to take the bronc riding ambition out of most young fellows, Harry landed his first job breaking horses.

Harry wasn't just a good bronc rider, he was outstanding. Later, as a bucking horse rider with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, he traveled to all the big cities on the east coast and midwest, then played the larger towns and cities in the West. That was a year of tremendous excitement and lasting experience for Harry Besides working with people like Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, and Annie Oakley, he became acquainted with Chief Iron Tail of frontier fame, Evelyn Nesbit Thaw, the reigning beauty of the era, and Charles M. Russell, the immortal western artist.

In 1910 Charles Russell was having his first major exhibit in New York City when Buffalo Bill's show played there. Russell, who also was not impressed by the big city and mobs of people, would come to the show grounds almost every afternoon to visit with the bronc riders. One after-

noon Russell arrived with eight pen sketches, giving one to each bronc rider in the show Harry says, "He penned us all, true to life, standing side by side with him in the middle." Each one was entitled, "Me and My Friends."

After leaving the show Harry took a job breaking and training horses in Pennsylvania for one of the early silent movie companies. Horse training soon led to acting and the one time Wyoming cowboy was using his horsemanship and the other talents in the film "Battle of Shiloh."

But acting the part of a cowboy was somewhat dull compared to the action and excitement of being one, and when, in 1914, the mushrooming demand for horses developed for use in the European wars, Harry quickly returned to the West to break broncs. He started again in Wyoming but was soon convinced that better money and greater opportunity beckoned in Nevada. Harry arrived at the Hat Ranch, seven miles south of Palisade, in 1915, to continue the application of his bronc riding talents in gentling war horses.

Bronc riding wages, though good compared to most jobs at the time, were not enough to make a man independent. Harry observed the vast herds of wild horses on the surrounding ranges and decided to enter the horse business himself

There was a beautiful little canyon with good water and a meadow on the side of Pine Mountain, and Harry wasted no time filing a homestead application on it. He registered a brand and purchased four horses from a neighboring ranch. By turning these four horses loose on the open range, wearing his own iron, he too could gather wild horses legally

For the duration of the war, the horse business prospered, but with the signing of the Armistice in the fall of 1918, the demand for horses ended overnight. Big horse outfits found themselves without a market and were going broke in rapid sequence.

Harry applied for the position of government trapper to generate another source of income. He was still mustanging, but the horses he gathered were mostly sold for $4 per head at the railroad yards in Elko. He continued to trap, run mustangs, work hard and over the years he purchased more land and built up a nice herd of cattle.

Among his neighbors, Harry was know as a "damn good hand" but also as a somewhat colorful character He had the ability to observe the most common, everyday incident and relate it back, weeks or months later, in vivid detail, bringing out the humor and pathos in a way that always caught people's attention. Most folks liked to see Harry stop by, if for no other reason than to listen to his storytelling or hear him play the fiddle or banjo, because if one was handy, Harry could make pretty fine music with either of them.

It was probably inevitable that he would someday have his stories in print, but Harry's start as a writer was almost accidental. He was reading a magazine one evening at the ranch and after finishing a feature story about the West, full of inaccuracies and distortions, he threw the magazine down and said, "Hell! I can write a better story than that." He promptly took up a pencil and paper and wrote a story about trapping bobcats, mailing it to that same magazine, and several weeks later he received a check in the mail. The magazine accepted eight more of

May's Landing, New Jersey, 1912: Harry Webb (furthest right) poses with other actors for the Lubin Picture Co.

After World War I, Harry was a predatory animal hunter, a fancy term for government trapper.

his stories without a rejection.

His appetite for writing was stimulated considerably by the publication of his first stories, but he still had the demanding pressure of running a ranch and caring for his wife and son. Serious writing would have to wait.

It wasn't until many years later, after Harry had traded his Nevada ranch for an apartment house in Hollywood, California, that writing was again seriously considered.

Calling upon his 25 years of experience and adventure on the Nevada mustang ranges, he wrote a book entitled "Nuthin." It is a story about a young boy who left home in the east to live with a bachelor uncle who owned a ranch in Nevada. The book was subsequently purchased by Walt Disney Productions and made into a full length movie.

Requests by publishers for more authentic western stories began to filter in, and Harry, then in his seventies, found himself occupied almost full time writing of his past adventures and relating the stories told him by others.

His articles appeared regularly in such publications as *Real West, Westerner, Frontier Times, The West,* and many other magazines which emphasized the publishing of factual western material: Stories such as "Old Spook," "The Secret Life of Will James," "The Mustang Trap," "Lame Charlie Speaks," and scores of others have brought the flavor of the real Nevada and the West to readers throughout the world.

In 1972 at the age of 84, Harry was flown to Seattle and awarded the Gold Spur Award by the Western Writers of America, for "Call of the Cow Country," a story of his adventures from the time he left his Colorado home until he got his first cowboying job in Wyoming.

Harry is the only surviving member of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. His comments on some of his friends and acquaintances from that period are interesting. On Annie Oakley, "No doubt one of the finest rifle and pistol shots of all time and I believe unparalleled with a shotgun. She was also a very down to earth, warm person; a very lovely woman."

On Charlie Russell, "A real fine fellow whose fame and talent never changed him from his down to earth cowboy ways. Eery bit an old time cow waddie."

About Buffalo Bill, "Tough, but fair The kind of man who would stand for no nonsense. He would threaten to send us down the railroad track 'counting ties' when he was trying to get our attention, but would go all the way to back his people up when they did get in trouble. He's been pictured as a braggart by some writers, but told me himself that most of the heroic deeds attributed to him were strictly bunk created by the dime novel publishers. He was always willing to help the less fortunate and was generous to a fault."

On his own writing career he says, "I've written one book and 116 short stories and have had only two rejects.* I guess that's not too bad for a guy with a fifth grade education."

Harry, 90 now, still lives in Southern California. The years have taken their toll and he no longer makes his annual trip to Elko and Pine Valley to see his friends but he's still tall, straight and alert. His penchant for historical accuracy during his writing career, and the exclusive quality of much of his information, such as his interview with Lame Charlie (see below), has prompted one museum and one university to collect his works. Recently, he's been busy supplying requests from those and other institutions.

Even though it's been years since he's stepped across some "wall eyed" bucking bronc and gone quirting and spurring down across the sagebrush, you don't have to talk to him long to realize that despite his many talents and achievements, he's still just an old time Nevada cowboy and mustanger at heart.

**One of Webb's two rejections came from Nevada Magazine several years ago. However, that story will be printed in an issue soon—Ed.*

Lame Charlie's Confession

Western writer Harry Webb has used his skills as an interviewer and listener to gather stories that span more than a century of frontier life in Nevada. He has spent years tracking down stories, and one, that of the Maiden's Grave near Beowawe, took him to Lame Charlie and a long dark night of confession.

When Webb and his friend Al Thatcher sought out Charlie in his camp in Pine Valley, the late afternoon sky was dark and frowning, with that promise of rain that never seems to materialize in Nevada's arid valleys.

Al Thatcher had been waiting for a day like this for some time. When the clouds appeared that morning, he told Harry, "If we go see Lame Charlie today, maybe we can get him to talk. I'm just enough Indian myself, that with the grub we're bringing him, plus what I know about his beliefs, we might get the information you want, after sundown."

They had driven up to Charlie's camp with a load of food and a generous supply of tobacco. They found the ancient Indian dragging his crippled,

PHOTOS COURTESY HARRY WEBB

Al Thatcher encourages Lame Charlie to speak.

twisted form through the sagebrush, stopping occasionally to pluck an unlucky wood tick or ant from among the desert foliage, which he promptly devoured.

Lame Charlie was an enigma, even to the other Indians. Crippled and unable to walk for over half a century, yet fiercely independent, asking for nothing from anyone except to be left alone, he was considered the "ancient one" even by the other elderly Indians and somewhat of an outcast. It was rumored among them that Charlie had been a member of the renegade band which had killed, burned, and looted among the early settlers. This led to many years of harsh oppression of all Indians in the area.

Harry Webb had been wanting to talk to Charlie ever since he had come upon that mysterious grave on a rock bluff overlooking the Humboldt River Known locally as the "maiden's grave," early day railroad builders had discovered the blond-haired remains of a girl or young woman and knew of no other suitable means to identify it. The circumstances of her death had been the subject of much speculation over the years, but the mystery remained.

For 15 years, Harry had run down every possible lead relating to the subject. A possible relative turned up in the person of Charles Kilpatrick whom he interviewed in the Old Folks Home in Elko, nothing sure, as Charles was in his nineties, and had not seen his blond-haired sister from the time he was a boy He did know that she disappeared with a small emigrant outfit several days after leaving Fort Ruby, but like so many others, she seemed to fade into the vast Nevada landscape.

Charles Kilpatrick was more positive about other early day incidents. He told Harry that he had been a swamper with the Guernin freight outfit when it was attacked by a band of renegade Paiutes north of Austin in 1863. Guernin and two Paiutes had been killed, and Charlie had shot another Indian off his horse, hitting him through the hips.

"I thought he was dead, or would soon die," said Charlie, "so I didn't follow his trail of blood where he crawled off, but got about gathering our scattered mules.

"Later on, I understand that Indian drug himself all the way to Mineral Hill where he was taken in by the Bruffy family He quit using his Indian name, took my first name as the man who almost killed him, and Bruffy for a last name. He still lives in a camp on the east side of Pine Valley, and is sometimes called Lame Charlie. He was middle-aged when I shot him and he's well over a hundred years old today "

Harry wanted to talk to the renegade Indian, but Lame Charlie wouldn't speak of his past even to other Indians, except when whisky was flowing. He hated most white people. Hopefully, tonight, his friend had the answer

Al Thatcher had a lengthy conversation, in Paiute, with Charlie, and when the Indian had been convinced of the forthcoming food and tobacco he begrudgingly consented to sit around the same campfire with a white man. They ate together, and afterwards Al asked Charlie if he would be willing to talk about those things that happened a long time ago, when the white people first came. Charlie's immediate reaction was to deny knowledge of any of those happenings and to "dummy up" completely It was at that point that Al pointed to the dark and threatening sunset that was beginning to spread over the western horizon.

In eloquent Paiute, he told Charlie, "The sky tells us the great spirit is angry " Charlie immediately showed signs of paying attention.

"The great spirit is angry " Al went on, "because you have many secrets in your heart that you won't tell. "

Al Thatcher preached until Charlie agreed to talk " after the sun goes down."

When the last rays of light had faded from the evening sky and the cloak of darkness completely shrouded the desert hills, Charlie raised up from where he had been reclining and began to speak. He talked without ceasing all night long, while Al interpreted, and Harry furiously scribbled sheet after sheet of notes.

He started by saying his real name was E-sha and followed with over an hour of Indian legends. He explained how the Indian was created by the great spirit and what brought him to this land west of the great mountains. He then told of early Indian history and finally, well after midnight, began to relate what they had come to hear Accounts in great detail of Indian raids on freight outfits, the Pony Express, emigrant trains and settlements, including an explanation for the pitiful remains in the "maiden's grave."

As daylight crept over the desert next morning, Charlie was still speaking, but suddenly his grisly renditions came to a halt. Al prompted him to finish his story, but Charlie responded by pointing to the eastern sky where the sun was rising.

"The sky is bright. The great spirit is not angry anymore," the Indian explained. "Charlie doesn't speak anymore."

Al and Harry left with an account of past events so accurate they were able afterward to locate three more unmarked graves on the Humboldt in the exact spot Charlie said they would be—and more than half a century after the terrifying death of those pioneers at the hands of Charlie's rebel band.

This incident was typical of Harry Webb's tenacious search for facts and exacting adherence to detail that later resulted in him being named one of the outstanding western authors in America.—*Bud Hage*

Show Guide

Behind the scenes, Hello Hollywood Hello. ALEX HONG

LAS VEGAS

Aladdin
736-0111

Loretta Lynn-Frank Welker thru 1/7
Bobbie Gentry, 1/8-21
Gabriel Kaplan, 1/22-2/5
Lola Falana, 2/6-26
Frankie Valli, 2/27-3/5

Caesars Palace
731-7431
Main Room Entertainment

California Hotel
385-1222
Gary Lemasters, nightly

Circus Circus
734-0410
Round the World Circus Acts,
11 a.m.—midnight

Desert Inn
733-4444
Shecky Green, 1/1
Wayne Newton, 1/2-22
Juliet Prowse-Anthony Newley,
1/23-2/19

Dunes
737-4110
Casino de Paris '79

Flamingo Hilton
733-3111
"Razzle Dazzle"

Four Queens
385-4011
Helen Long & the Long Shots,
thru 1/15

Frontier
734-0241
Roy Clark, 1/17
Sergio Franchi, 1/18-31

Golden Nugget
385-7111
Country Western Music

Hacienda
739-8911
Ice Fantasy
Lounge Entertainment

Holiday Casino
732-2411
Wild World of Burlesque

Las Vegas Hilton
734-7777
Paul Anka, 12/27-1/9
Liberace, 1/10-25
Lou Rawls-Tina Turner 1/26-2/12
Bill Cosby, 2/13-3/5
Steve Lawrence-Eydie Gorme, 3/6-26
John Davidson, 3/27-4/16

Marina
739-1500
Bare Touch of Vegas

MGM Grand, Las Vegas
739-4567
Halleluja Hollywood
Captain & Tennille-David Brenner
12/26-1/10
Dean Martin, 1/11-24

Riviera
734-5301
Shirley MacLaine-Fred Travalena,
12/22-1/7
Neil Sedaka, 1/8-24
Kenny Rogers-Debby Boone,
1/25-2/7
Bobby Vinton, 2/8-21
Ben Vereen, 2/22-3/7

Royal Inn
734-0711
Wholly Smoke, thru 1/17

Sahara
735-4242
Jerry Lewis-Diahann Carroll, dinner
1/4-19
Buddy Hackett-Jack Jones, midnight
1/4-10
Charo-Rip Taylor, 1/11-24

Sands
735-2916
Dionne Warwick, 1/3-16
Shecky Green, 1/17-30

Silver Slipper
734-1212
Boylesque & Morris as Elvis

Stardust
732-6325
Lido de Paris '79

Tropicana
739-2411
Folies Bergere '79

Union Plaza
386-2444
Musical: "Anything Goes"

LAKE TAHOE

Cal-Neva Lodge
831-1511
Sheryl Bentyne, 1/4-6
Gary & Sandy & Common Ground,
1/30-2/25

Harrah's Lake Tahoe
329-4422
Neil Sedaka, thru 1/4
Willie Nelson, 1/5-11
Loretta Lynn, 1/12-18
Don Rickles, 1/19-25
Sonny & Cher, 1/26-28
Mac Davis, 2/7-20
Merle Haggard, 2/23-3/1
Roy Clark, 3/2-9
Sammy Davis, Jr., 3/10-18, 3/22-29
Carpenters, 3/30-4/5

Harvey's
588-2411
Two of Clubs, 1/4-2/4
Ron Rose Sound, 2/5-3/11
Conte Four, 3/12-25
Lounge:
Freddie Power, thru 1/9
Harmonica Rascals, thru 1/6
Terry Dale, 1/4-17
Neil Miller, 1/8-15
Motifs, Helen Long & the Long Shots,
1/15-28

Park Tahoe
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Cathy O'Shea, 3/6-18
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Frankie Carr, 2/27-3/18
The Diamonds, 3/20-4/8

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Harrah's Reno
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Tony Bennett, thru 1/3
Bill Cosby, 1/4-9
Burt Bacharach, 1/10-16
Glen Campbell, 1/17-30
Steve Martin, 1/31-2/6
Roger Miller, 2/7-21
John Davidson, 2/22-3/7
Neil Sedaka, 3/8-21
Bobby Vinton, 3/22-4/4

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Continuous Entertainment

Mapes Money Tree
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Tree Top Showroom
Close Encounters Disco

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Jerry Sun, Gaylord & Holiday, Jesse Davis, thru 1/16

John Ascuaga's Nugget-Sparks
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Shields & Yarnell, 2/2-3, 2/9-11
Mel Tillis & George Lindsey, 2/14-18
Ray Price, 3/23-24, 3/30-31

Onslow
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Ron Rose, thru 2/3
Helen Long & the Long Shots, 2/6-3/3
Charlie Blackwell, 3/6-31

Ormsby House-Carson City
882-1890
Lounge Entertainment

Sahara Reno
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Pinups 2001 Revue, indef.
Pete Barbutti, 1/1-14

Shy Clown
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Country Western Music

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Nevada may be the last place where a whole train can somehow be seen and felt in its entirety. Story and photos by Bruce MacGregor

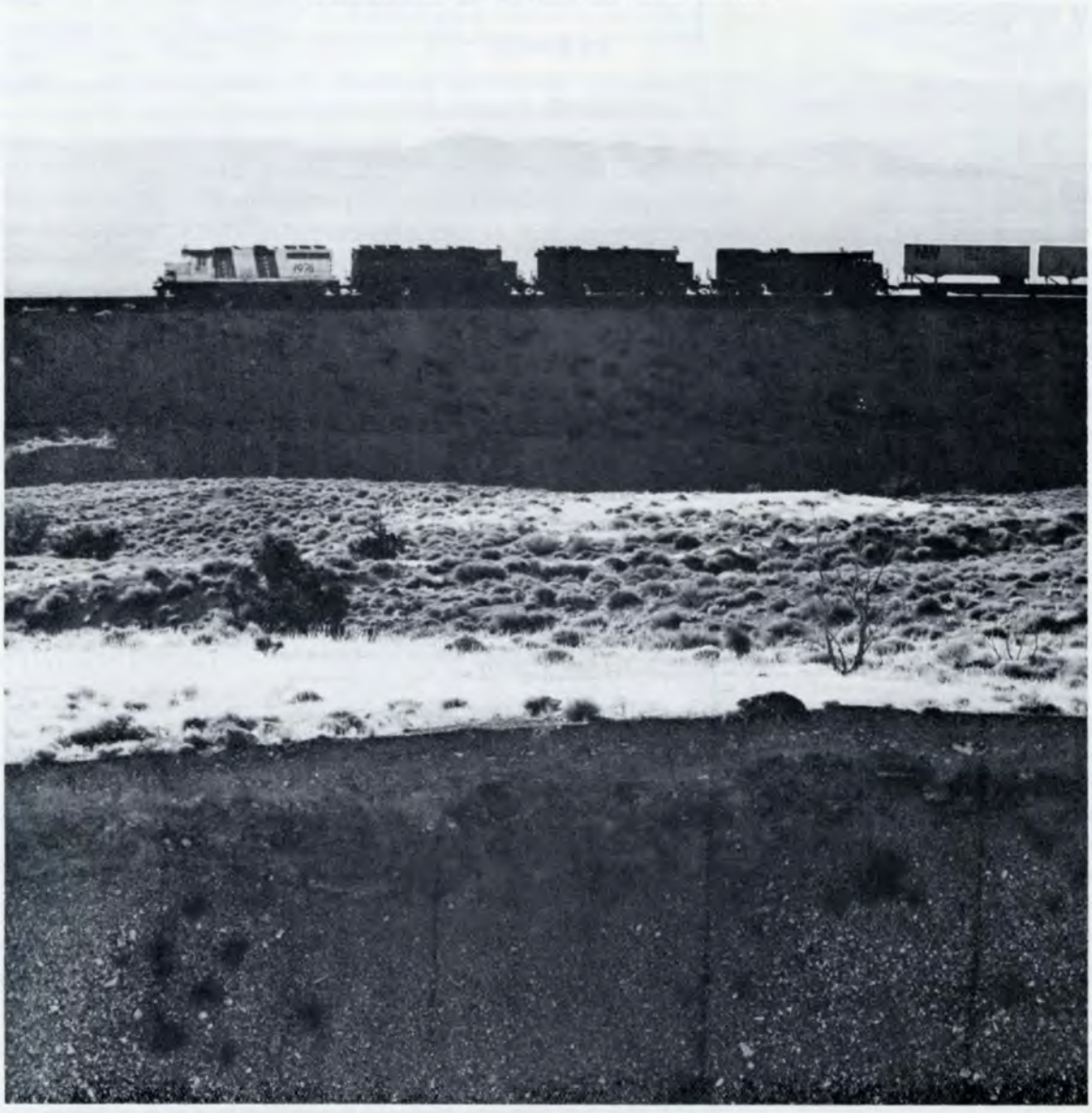
The Firewagon That Won The West

It is an unlikely place to look for trains for there are far fewer miles of track than there were in the 1890s. The famous gold and silver hauling short lines like the Virginia & Truckee, Tonopah & Tidewater and the Bullfrog & Goldfield are legends locked up in books. And the transcontinental railroad—the first and most spectacular achievement of the technological society over desert and distance—is like a jet practicing touch-and-go in the Nevada plateau.

The big crew dormitory at Imlay, where exhausted engine crews used to swing off the trains after 20 hour runs from Truckee or Roseville, is gone. The crews on the Reno to Ogden run push on further and faster in cabs of turbocharged diesels than they ever could in steam engines. The trains don't stop to guzzle boiler water at Sparks, Carlin and Elko. And the ragtime tread of railroaders on the business frontage in Wells is silent.

Still, the trains are there, rampaging over the landscape day and night like dinosaurs in single file. The Southern Pacific gets into Nevada from the west by climbing its steepest grades in the Sierra Nevada, braving snowstorms at Verdi in order to break into the cold, high Nevada desert. From the east, the

Western Pacific diesel traveling west from Wendover.



Beowawe Depot.

Three generations of Western Pacific women pose in an outfit car on a siding at Tobar.

trains of the Western Pacific must buck the jutting escarpment of the Toano Mountains in a curving, 20 mile per hour climb up Silver Zone Pass before the Utah Salt Flats are left behind. And from the South, the Union Pacific must squeeze through the flash-flood zones of the Meadow Valley Wash before reaching Las Vegas.

Between the Utah and California borders, the existing transcontinental railroads run the loneliest of long distance hauls. Their trackside workers are few in number, scattered like PG&E linemen. The phones in depots seldom ring. The crews kill time, sipping water from wet canvas bags, watching for the approach of a train on the horizon. First there is a ring in the steel rail—Nevada railroaders can hear it—a messenger of boxcars moving miles away Then the air begins to vibrate. And then from nowhere there is a swirl of hot diesel exhaust fumes and alkali dust kicked up, a blur of Detroit automobiles, bulk jet fuel, new tractors, empty refrigerator cars and coal, and then the desert is silent in the wake of the receding train.

The new trains are scarcely recognizable to old timers. Now trains are 150 cars long, weigh 10,000 or 12,000 tons and move faster than freeway traffic. They come and go like land-bound guided missiles, tracked by computer systems and displayed on big lighted boards a thousand miles away The fast trains stop only twice inside state borders, not for fuel, but to let their crew exercise the "hog law" on maximum hours of service. There is a sense of the continuity of all of Nevada's railroad history being broken by the advance of a new kind of railroad—one almost untouched by human hands.

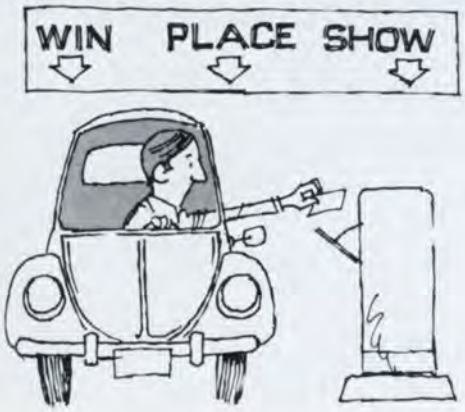
So why hunt for the railroad image in Nevada?

Look at it this way There is no other place where railroading can so easily be reduced to the force and magnitude of a train moving flat-out on open desert track. Nevada may be the first and last place where a train—a whole train—can somehow be seen and felt in its entirety, where the railroad becomes such a powerful, simple image of movement that it is both wagon train and super tanker rolled into one. Nevada tells us what railroads were, and are. Here it is, the fire wagon that won the West, dominating for an instant a landscape it could never quite do away with. □

Nevada Notes

DRIVE IN GAMBLERS

Gamblers in Nevada no longer have to brave the elements to place their bets. A drive up window is a modern convenience of the new Winners Circle Race and Sports Book in Sparks.



The window is the same type that banks use, and has proven to be so popular that Assistant Manager Dick Barnes says many of his regular customers have never set foot inside the building.

To keep the traffic moving swiftly, betting cards, like the bank's deposit slips, should be completed before approaching window.

—Harvey Usher

BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

They were mortal enemies during World War II. In fact, former Japanese fighter pilot "Mike" Kowato even claims to be the one who shot down American squadron leader "Pappy" Boyington.

No trace of animosity was visible at the Reno Championship Air Races as the two sat a few yards from each other, each selling and autographing his book on the war Kowato's "My Flight to Conquest" and Boyington's "Baa Baa Blacksheep" enjoyed brisk sales.

One would be hard pressed to find a crowd more interested in air warfare of that era. Most of the planes entered in the air races are of World War II vintage and this year's event included a recreation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor

—Harvey Usher

SWORDS, SHEEP & TRAIN ROBBERS

Antiquated state laws are being rudely roused from their slumber in Nevada. Voters have taken the first step to repeal a section of the state constitution that prohibits anyone who has participated in a duel from holding public office.

Outgoing Governor Mike O'Callaghan has suggested the state legislature repeal the law prohibiting the wearing of ceremonial swords by fraternal groups. He would also like to see his authority of quarantining sheep given over to the Department of Agriculture and his responsibility of posting rewards for train robbers eliminated completely

—Harvey Usher

FARES

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FLYING ON CHICKEN FEED

It's not unusual to see people in Nevada carrying small brown paper bags in strange places—it's a convenient way to keep slot change handy

But the small paper bags folks were carrying at the Continental Airlines counter at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas last September were not filled with change. They were sacks of chicken feed. Yes, chicken feed, because Continental was offering round trip tickets to Miami for two bits' worth of chicken feed.

This really was not too surprising in Las Vegas, where an epidemic of unbelievable fares had started earlier in the month when Delta Airlines inaugurated Las Vegas to Reno flights and sold 3,200 one-way seats for one silver dollar each.

Braniff International one-upped Delta a few days later with a $1 round trip to Reno.

And 88 Texans from Dallas and Houston flew into Las Vegas for round trip fares of 39¢ and 49¢, respectively, when Texas International Airlines celebrated inaugural flights September 28 with a crazy qualifying scavenger hunt in which items included everything from peanut pizzas to rabbits' feet.

—Judy Casey

HADLEY PHOTOS

Ruby Mountain High

The snowmobile versus the horse.

By Julian Stone

Near the eastern reaches of the State of Nevada, 450 car miles from Las Vegas and 300 from Reno, stand the magnificent Ruby Mountains. A range 100 miles long from north to south and 10 miles wide, the Rubies were a fearful barrier for the emigrants heading west to California in the mid-1800s. Even until the last decade, few people ventured into this beautiful wilderness during the winter months.

The Rubies are rugged. All year long there is snow sitting on its rocky peaks, some of which stand more than 11,000 feet above sea level.

Elko County, and in particular the lower reaches of the Ruby Mountains, is cowboy country Enormous cattle ranches and sheep outfits dot the valleys, and domestic livestock share the range with mule deer, mountain lions, bobcats and coyotes. Hunters pursue gamebirds like the exotic Himalayan snow partridge, blue grouse, sage hen, chukar partridge and quail.

At the base of the range's eastern slopes are the Ruby Marshes, a 37,630-acre national wildlife refuge and one of the most important nesting areas for

The Rubies in winter; peaks, dips and ridges and beautiful snow.

Dick Wright and Jack Hull take a break at their cabin at Lamoille.

canvasback and redhead ducks in the nation. Nearly 200 species of birds—including coots, grebes, sandhill cranes, great blue heron, white-faced ibis, snowy egrets and trumpeter swans as well as Canada geese and mallards—regularly nest, rest or feed in the marshes

In summer, trekking by foot or horseback is the best way to see this part of Nevada. Climbers like the challenge of the Rubies, and many consider the rock better than any found in the Cascades or the Canadian Rockies. Backpackers also have discovered the range and often spot bald or golden eagles, hawks, turkey vultures and sometimes the endangered peregrine falcon soaring through the canyons. Sport anglers walk in or ride horseback to fish for trout in the high country's lakes and streams, or they stay at the base of the mountains to cast for largemouth bass in Ruby Lake.

But all that's mostly in summertime. In the winter, the land is beautifully deserted.

Snowshoes were once the only option during the cold season, but now the Rubies are visited by a handful of mountaineers, heli-skiers and snowmobilers.

It's a perfect place for winter sports—downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, tobogganing and snowmobiling. Even though the Rubies' slopes would be perfect for downhill skiing, there are not yet enough visitors to support more ski resorts between the great slopes of Utah and the Sierra Nevada.

So the Rubies are practically untouched. With a thousand square miles of virgin wilderness, the Rubies' variety of view and terrain for snowmobiling is enormous.

There are long, gently sloping valleys; precipitous cliffs; lakes, frozen thick through early summer; and rocky ridges where the snow stays for only a moment before being blown away by the inevitable winter wind. Even during drought years there is snow in the Rubies, and during good snow years a 10 to 20 foot base is not uncommon.

If you are looking for new places to snowmobile, think of Nevada—and the Ruby Mountains. Remember, this is high country The air is so thin that your sled should be jetted to suit the altitude. And try not to get stuck. The physical effort needed to pull a sled out of a hole at 10,000 feet is more than you'll want to expend. You can lose your breath from the lack of air as well as from the stunning scenery

And always take a local guide. When the weather socks in, it's easy to get lost in these mountains.

Baird Davies is a Nevada cowboy from the central part of the state. He is a hunter and fisherman and has spent many days in the Rubies. When he was asked by some friends to go snowmobiling to the top of the mountains, he laughed. "I know the Rubies," he said. "I've walked them, ridden horseback over them many times in my life, but no one can get to the tops of those peaks. That's absurd!"

But it wasn't. Elko snowmobile dealer Dick Wright and lawyer Jack Hull, along with son Rick and friend Mimi, took Davies sledding and gave him a view from the top and an experience no amateur snowmobiler would

ever forget.

It was April 1978 and the snow had set, so the group took off from Elko in the morning dark toward Lamoille and the gravel road that winds into the Rubies. The sun was rising when the party reached the end of the road. The snow was mushy where they untrailered their sleds, but not more than a mile up the canyon the snow's surface was crisp and white. Mountains loomed high to the east, and canyons and more peaks with blocks of aspen and pine trailed off to the west.

The day was good, with wind and sun and a few great clouds hinting a storm that never came. Winds gusted to 40 miles an hour, and wisps of snow were whipped from the awesome peaks. The sun came and went behind the clouds, and the riders' feeling of thickheadedness at dawn had turned to joy and exhilaration as they headed for Liberty Pass.

The snowmobilers traveled up Lamoille Creek several miles to Lamoille Lake, which is set in a dip, sometimes still frozen in July, with mountain walls rising steeply all around it. They were able to run up the steep, tough Lamoille Lake chute by starting at the opposite end of the lake and heading downhill, flat out across the snow-covered ice. Building speed and racing up the 1,000-foot chute, they then hooked around the top to Liberty Pass and the most spectacular view in all the Rubies.

When the clouds uncovered the sun, the air was sparkling and bright as any that can be breathed on this planet. The sledders rode the ridges, slopes and dips for hours, watching the weather carefully

They had snowmobiled from about 6,000 feet above sea level to almost 11,000. It had been hard going at times, but all the riders were experienced sledders except for the cowboy novice from Lovelock.

"The Rockies are lovely," says Davies, who has ridden many other areas of the West since his adventure in the Rubies. "The Sierra Nevada I thought unbeatable. But there's no comparison when you discover the Ruby Mountains. You can stand at the top of Liberty Pass, look west at Ruby Dome, south to Lake Peak and the rest of the rugged tops and feel as if you could orchestrate the world.

"The feeling of power and strength and health you get just by being up there in winter—it's something you just don't get from a horse." □

Leaving tracks on the mountain.

Travel Guide

Travel Guide

Emporium

Bob Beckmann, with the help of an army of young painters, has completed 24 murals in Southern Nevada. His people's art is an upper. By Jane Ann Morrison

NEXT, HOOVER DAM

Ever since someone proposed the idea in jest, muralist Bob Beckmann has been casting speculative glances at Hoover Dam, considering its artistic potential.

After completing 23 murals in Southern Nevada, with two more in the works and a handful of others planned, Beckmann still sees possibility after possibility For instance, if he could get his paints on Hoover Dam, he'd like to realistically portray a drill on one side and, on the other, a trickle of water working a colorful path to the river below

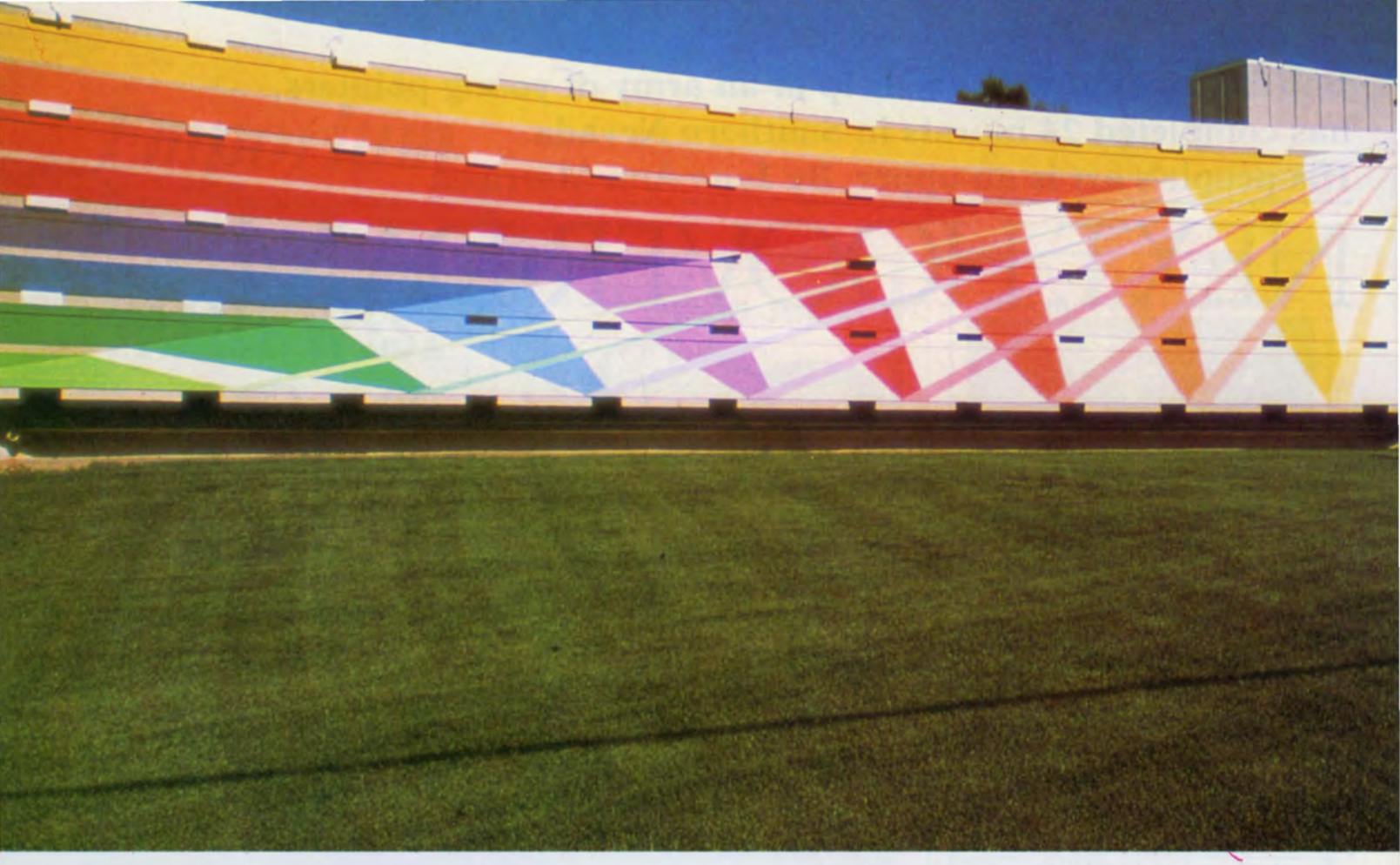
A quiet brand of humor characterizes Beckmann's art. "The murals were designed as 'uppers' for people, to make people feel good, to be fun," he said.

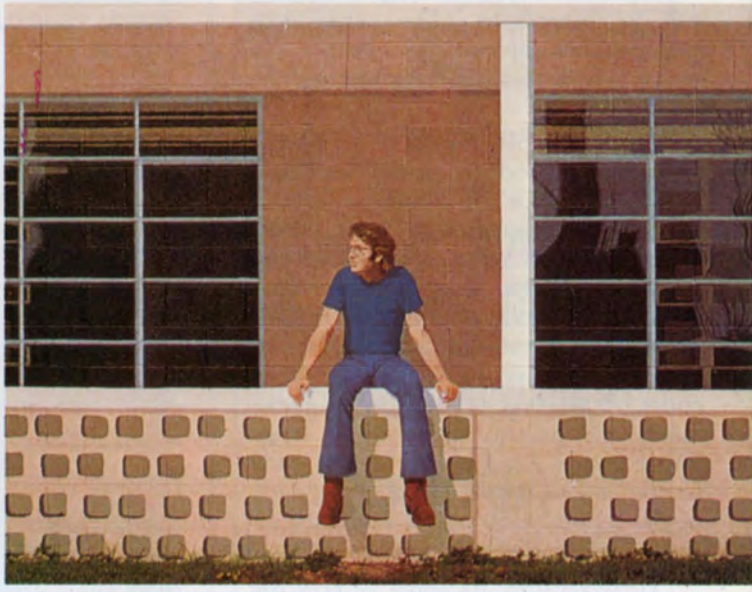
Muralists in other areas of the nation frequently produce more political work, but Beckmann claims no interest in "artist's propaganda." Designed for the public, Beckmann's murals come to life with the help of young people, usually high school students. But for his next—and largest—project, he plans to enlist youths from the local juvenile court. With this unique crew, Beckmann will portray an Iroquois longhouse inside Kit Carson Sixth Grade Center in Las Vegas. In addition, each of the school's 650 pupils will play an active roll in the redecoration.

"Through this, we hope to give the little people a sense of community," he says. "Using that basic theme of the Indian longhouse throughout the entire school, we are going to help each pupil design a totem, giving each one a sense of responsibility for his own totem. They will be voting on which colors to use in the different rooms, giving them the same sense of politics and community input as they would have if they were building or city commissioners."

Beckmann is well aware of politics and community input in Las Vegas. A

Students of Bonanza High School redecorating their quad.





Mirabelli Teen Center (top), Downtown Fire Alarm Station (left), Engineering Design Center (right). Design by Beckmann, execution by Western High School students.

BECKMANN PHOTOS

total of 16 different funding agencies have been involved in the Southern Nevada projects since he first moved there in January, 1977, after being selected to work on Las Vegas' first public mural program. It had been instigated by Mayor Bill Briare following a visit to Seattle, where he saw what that city was doing to brighten its buildings.

Beckmann has contracted with a variety of state, county and city agencies since then, and the Clark County School District has proved particularly supportive of the work, which sometimes involves students who weren't receptive to formal schooling but found Beckmann's methods of involvement to be appealing.

His general ideas for the murals combine elements that suggest the purpose of the building and involve the people who use it. A utilitarian streak has, in a couple of cases, led to color-coding supplementing the work, as at the Henderson City Hall Annex where the young artists used 18 colors to help the befuddled find their way around the city offices. The same idea was used at Basic High School to help orient new students.

The murals are designed on a grand scale, to compete with the grand scale of Las Vegas' other public art works—those exotic neon signs. But Beckmann sees the murals' real purpose as being about education. "There's a real value for the kids in the process. They are learning about geometry, math, astronomy—the way the sun's movement changes angles and shadows—plus architecture, how buildings work together and with landscapes, a sense of cooperation and collaboration.

"And of course, they have an aesthetic value, and they're fun," he adds.

Possibly the best indication of the effect the murals have had on the community is the fact they haven't been defaced in any way Yet Beckmann isn't particularly concerned with the actual permanence of the murals. They aren't meant to be as lasting as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In fact, he hopes that when they begin to show wear and tear, new murals will take their place.

"Maybe people will look at walls in Las Vegas as an ongoing museum with changing exhibits," he smiles. □

Dula Recreation Center, Beckmann design, WHS students and Beckmann execution (top), and Western High School Gym, design and execution by WHS Students and Beckmann (bottom).

NEVADA MAGAZINE CONTEST!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Win a trip for two by authentic covered wagon along western Nevada pioneer trails!

What was *your* First Impression of Nevada?

Write all about it in 500 words or less and send your story to Nevada Magazine Contest Editor, Capitol Complex, Carson City NV 89710 before April 15, 1979. The winning entry will be published in Nevada Magazine, and the winning writer will be awarded a trip for two by authentic covered wagon along western Nevada pioneer trails.

Enter now!

In 1863 Alf Doten had been keeping his famous diary for 14 years. On the night of June 23 he recorded his first impression of the stretch between Carson City and Dayton on the final leg of his journey to Como, Nevada:

"Soon passed through Spring Valley, where I saw the first of the silver diggins—lots of prospecting holes &c—whole country, hills and plains, barren, bleak & desolate—no vegetation except sagebrush & in one or two localities a stunted bush or two

All along close to the winding Carson River was green meadows and occasionally a few short cottonwood trees, but the whole country away from the river was sterile, sandy, rocky & parched

"This place (Dayton) is created and kept up by the mining, which is all this territory is good for—not worth living in "

Alf Doten lived in Nevada for the rest of his life.

UP THE DOWN MOUNTAIN

(Continued from page 10)

attempt the summit.

By daylight we were already hiking up the big ridge between Wheeler and Baldy Peaks, the snow hard, wind packed, affording effortless hiking. As if to make up for the gloom she had created on Charleston, nature gave us a spectacular sunrise and a clear crisp day Within three hours we were at the top and we signed the log book, changed boots, and took some pictures in the warm sunshine.

"Our backpacks weighed from 25 to 35 pounds," said Ungar, "because we had to carry ski boots, a down jacket, a bottle of water and some gorp—like peanuts, raisins and chocolate. If you eat too much on trips like this you'll get an upset stomach; you should just eat a mouthful or two when you're hiking. I would get very tired sometimes, but I could energize if I had a little bit of honey "

From the top the view was spectacular and there were six inches of new snow on the mountain. As soon as everyone was ready we skied off the south face for about 500 vertical feet then traversed left to catch a long north facing chute.

"There were no options on Boundary," said Mike, "no options on Charleston, but Wheeler had plenty There is so much fantastic stuff to ski you have your choice and we had a hard time making up our minds."

Mike went first and I watched him weave out of sight in a series of rhythmic turns. I dropped in and started following his tracks and at the bottom we counted more than 180 turns. We had skied about 2,000 vertical feet down a chute with perfect snow When the others came down we turned west to ski through an ancient bristlecone grove to our camp.

"I've skied in Europe, Chili, Argentina," said Evan, "but Wheeler Peak was the most fantastic thing I've ever skied."

The climb and descent had taken about five hours. That evening as we watched the sunset we felt a real inner peace and satisfaction. The mountain had soothed us and put us in good standing with the earth.

NORTH SCHELL PEAK: This area of Nevada is particularly unspoiled. We camped in the quakies beside a little creek. Bright light from a full moon filtered through the trees. We got up at dawn; it was cold and we soon got the fire going and breakfast on. The hike to the summit proved easier than expected and in two hours we were standing in the early morning sun on top of North Schell Peak.

This area was a series of bowls and chutes on a big west facing ridge between North and South Schell Peaks. We each took a different route. The chute I skied was still pretty firm but it was easy to set my edges. Every turn sent up a spray of crystal powder, and I even got a little air off a lip at the bottom.

I watched Mike and Evan come down, and with the sun behind them shining through their roostertails it was a beautiful sight. When they reached me, we all took off down the face, laughing and yelling, skiing through small saplings as if they were gates in a race course. Some pretty thick stands of trees had to be negotiated but we managed to ski right to camp. "At that time we were getting to be in really good shape," said Evan. "We just smoked that mountain up."

RUBY DOME: After hearing Mike and me talk about the most spectacular range in Nevada, Evan expected something akin to the Himalayas. And he wasn't disappointed. The day was so clear we could see a huge amount of snow on them even from 20 miles away and all along the eastern side we saw limitless ski possibilities. We drove as far up Lamoille Canyon as we could, then watched a brilliant sunset while setting up camp. We had decided to do some warm-up climbing for a day in the upper Lamoille basin prior to the Ruby Dome ascent and the next morning after a hasty breakfast we were off before sunup.

A hike of three hours brought us well up in the basin and exposed some excellent ski areas, but there was a problem. We had been so absorbed in the climb, we had failed to notice an ominous storm front moving in on us from the west. We immediately strapped on our skis and headed for camp and it was snowing hard by the time we reached it. We loaded the car and drove to a friend's house in Jiggs to wait out the storm in comfort. But after three more days, it was still cold and stormy, our morale was gone, we were broke and tired, so we decided to finish right there.

Our trip was really over And even though we did not conquer Mt. Charleston or Ruby Dome, the important thing was that we were pleased with our accomplishments. We had done what we set out to do." □

HELI-SKIING

(Continued from page 10)

of their many trips between Utah and California. Driving past the Rubies, they saw the mountains appeared skiable—not too rocky not too windswept. Their winter snow covering seemed to remain at lower elevations long into late spring; and the immense surrounding desert meant that winter mountain snow should be deep dry powder

Carl, an ex heli-ski guide at Alta, Utah, flew over the region and convinced himself that skiable areas of powder snow existed within flying minutes of civilization. The only problem was that the Rubies, like most Nevada mountaintops, are the property of the U.S. Forest Service (the state is 87% federally-owned). Fortunately, the sophisticated studies of snow stratography and avalanche forecasting have attracted a new breed of expert ski guides to whom the forest service is willing to grant special ski use permits, thus opening some public domain to an entirely new use.

In 1976, the Fischers received a temporary Humboldt National Forest Service permit for exploratory work—to discover safe helicopter landing and pickup sites combined with skiable slopes. They hired Joe Royer an avalanche control consultant (and skier since age three) to hike the country in the summer and perform snow studies in the winter He worked from a base camp in Lamoille, which foots the Rubies 23 miles from Elko.

In late 1977 Ruby Mountain Heli-Ski Guides was incorporated and ready to airlift and guide its first wilderness skiers, with the only forest service warning being, "Stay clear of the mountain goats and snowmobilers."

Within two years, more than 40 Elko County ski runs on both federal and adjoining private land have been staked and ski-tested by the Fischers, Royer and other snow safety experts. Nine ski weeks between January 27 and March 31 are slated for the '79 season.

Besides guiding and area transportation, the weekly fee for the heli-ski adventure of $925 includes up to 100,000 vertical feet of skiing, breakfast and lunch, and a room at the Stockmen's Hotel in Elko. Guests are bused to Lamoille from where a four-passenger helicopter ferries groups of 14 plus two guides to the chosen slopes of the day Guides explain helicopter and backcountry safety rules, assign

(Continued on page 61)

Travel Guide

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(Continued from page 59)
special deep powder skis and probe-poles along with electronic receiver-transmitter devices enabling a skier in trouble to be found quickly

Then it's 3,000 vertical feet down, across terrain visited by few humans. With the craggy rocks of summer safely and deeply snowed over, trees coated with fairyland frosting, only the soft sound of "making tracks" breaks the stillness. At the slope's base, skiers again board the chopper for another run, until about 16,000 vertical feet have been skied.

Because of the enormity of the 1500-square-mile Ruby terrain, ski conditions in one area are by no means those of another. This means bad weather is not often a deterrent, nor is frequent fresh snow necessary on the entire range to provide good skiing from day to day

When asked his opinion of the Ruby Mountains' newest sport, one skier waxed poetic, eyes glistening with emotion: "Surfing through that fabulous untouched snow, my wake is a quiet shower of soft, feathery flakes, my tracks a monologue to the mountain. It's outrageous, simply outrageous." □

LETTERS

(Continued from page 6)

Imagine my surprise to pick up our magazine and find the beautiful pictures and article on Lake Tahoe with Grandfather's words written on it. (Spring issue, 1978) He was George Wharton James and he loved the lake and the whole area.

I'm now trying to find more information on my Grandfather and hope you will put this letter in your magazine asking for information from any readers on George Wharton James.

Miriam James Otten
Folsom, CA.

I started coming to Nevada 11 years ago and fell in love with it. I keep a home in Austin but work extensively in other parts of the country. Every time I read a new issue I become homesick.

Loren Little
Runnells, IA.

I'm from Northwest Washington which is truly a beautiful part of our country but for health reasons I moved to Nevada. Where else? Your magazine is great: informative—many of the stories written with a little humor Nevada is very intriguing to me.

Bob Ballard
Zephyr Cove, NV

(Continued from page 23)

information—in the middle of the night, too."

Such things as that plus his own high standards of performance make O'Callaghan a tough boss ("I wouldn't want to work for me," he says). One reason is that he has been a master at chewing out—in best military fashion—those who work for him. He would pick up the phone, get an agency head on the other end of the line, and land on him or her with both feet. Sometimes he would have the person come to his office for direct confrontation, which could be even more blistering. Some of the favorite nicknames for him whispered among state workers in such trying moments were "Godzilla," "Attilla the Hun," "Ghengis Kahn." And although a man of quick, super-boiling-point temper, he is also one who cools quickly One of his most disarming and sometimes maddening chacteristics is that he can verbally tear the shirt off somebody and a few minutes later convince that person that he or she has the soul of a saint.

Some old-time macho state employees used to mutter derogatory remarks about O'Callaghan's appointing several women to high-level state jobs. Those appointments were daring moves, never made before in such numbers or at such exalted levels of government. But the mutterings were kept low, so they could not be overheard, because the appointments came largely in his second term and by then he was too popular to risk any serious criticism.

Actually, Mike O'Callaghan boasted with considerable justification that he made appointments in his administration primarily on the basis of ability, not because of sex, race, creed, color or, above all, political affiliation. To the continuing dismay of some Democrats, this Democratic governor persisted in putting Republicans in key jobs. The party devotees would admit that perhaps a token GOP appointment or two was acceptable—as long as it was a job that looked good but meant little. But a man who could ignore the importance of absolute party loyalty was going too far

It wasn't too far in the eyes of the general populace. Polls taken by the gubernatorial candidates midway through O'Callaghan's last year in office showed him to have a 72% popularity rating throughout the state. Even his enemies (who seem to be few) grudgingly admit that it was quite an achievement for anyone to retain that kind of popularity after nearly eight years as governor

What's the secret? Actually, there's nothing mysterious about it. A key is the fact that O'Callaghan takes pride in being a highly trained, professional bureaucrat. Unlike most of us, he is not confounded by the confusing labyrinth of big government, and with some unknown alchemy can cut through the red tape and gobbledygook and come up with a positive, clear and workable result. This enables him to anticipate trouble before it happens and either to avert it or keep it from falling into his lap.

He structured his administration in such a way as to make this work with remarkable sureness. When he has appointed his heads of agencies, he has advised them that it is up to them to run those agencies, to rely on him only for general backup. That has the double advantage of giving these employees a certain amount of freedom while at the same time putting the responsibility for success or failure, praise or blame, on their shoulders.

The other major factor in O'Callaghan's success as governor relates to the same instinct that took him on that flight to Fish Lake Valley It is not only children but people as separate and distinct individuals who preoccupy him. He showed that in his first campaign, which was technically so haphazard, under-financed and ill-organized that he, his family and a few friends were the only ones left who could do the job. The fact that he was at ease in a bowling alley as in a bar, at a banquet for the President as in a schoolyard, in a hospital room as in an exclusive club, was a key quality in a state where it is important for its leaders to be more human than political.

It is because most people regard O'Callaghan's virtues and weaknesses to be as human as theirs, an unusual view of a person who holds high office, that his job as governor has received such high marks from the public. The most remarkable thing of all about this acceptance is that he was able to develop it—just by being approachable by anyone—in a time of deep cynicism. As Reno news executive Rollan Melton put it in introducing O'Callaghan to a newspaper meeting in 1974: "He is believable in a day when the public questions nearly anything an elected official says." □

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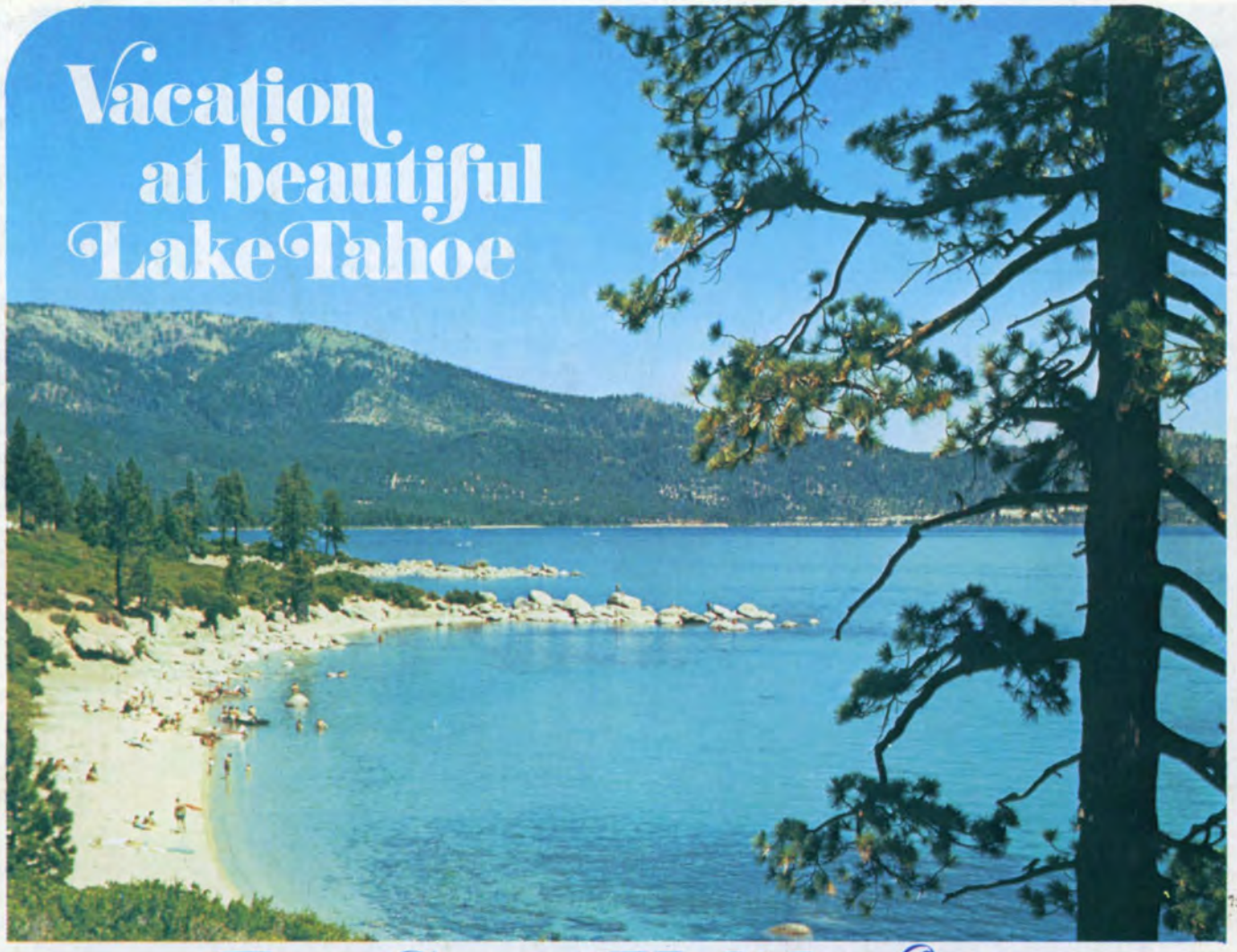

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