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THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAL WEST

OCTOBER 1983/\$1.75



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NEVADA

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Photos, from top to bottom, by James M. LeGoy, Bob McKeever, and Chad B. Smith.

NEVADA



NEVADA MAGAZINE

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CAROLINE JOY HADLEY, Editor & Publisher
DAVID MOORE, Managing Editor
DALE SMITH, Art Director
ANN HENDERSON, Marketing & Entertainment
JIM CRANDALL, Associate Editor
MELISSA CRONIN, Events Editor
PATTY NOLL, Advertising Coordinator
BRENDA CRAIG, Subscription Manager
RENEE McMAHON, General Assistant
RICHARD MENZIES, Derelicts & Specials
HARRY E. WEBB, Cowboys & Indians
DAVID MUENCH, Showcase
JOHN BARDWELL, Special Effects
JULIAN STONE, At-Large
LEON MANDEL, In Grosse Pointe

RICHARD H. BRYAN, Governor

CONTRIBUTORS: Linda Dufurrena, Phillip Earl, Buddy Frank, Russell R. Goebel, Howard Hickson, A.D. Hopkins, William Jeanes, Anna Dean Kepper, Pam Krone, Las Vegas News Bureau, Warren Lerude, Carol Robinson, Jan Seagrave, Guy Shieler, Roger Smith, David W. Toll, Harry Upson, Bill Willard.

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Editorial

In 1909, when Colonel William F. Cody was visiting Cody, Wyoming, the town that he had built and named for himself, he saw a cowboy putting on an act in the middle of the main street. *Nevada Magazine* contributor Harry Webb was there, and he retells the tale of his first meeting with Buffalo Bill.

"Gaspie and I and a bunch of cowboys had taken a couple thousand head of cattle to ship at Cody from the Pitchfork Ranch. When they were all on the train, Gaspie said, 'Follow me and I'll lead you to the Holy Grail.' Of course he was talking about the saloon." The two cowboys rode up the street toward the Irma Hotel (named for Cody's daughter) when Harry's horse tangled his feet in some baling wire and started bucking.

"He bucked right across the street and I thought he would stop," Harry laughs. "I was fanning the air with my hat and whooping like a Comanche when the horse went right up on the sidewalk and crashed through the big window in Baldwin's Drug Store. That just about cut my head off and cut my arm off and they dragged me and my horse outside and everybody in town came running."

In the crowd was a distinguished looking gentleman wearing a blue serge suit and a white fedora. While the druggist was trying to stop the blood from pouring out of the cowboy, the gentleman said to Harry, "That wasn't a bad ride you made, young gobbler, as long as it lasted. Here's my card. Write to Johnny Baker in New York and he'll send you a contract for my show." When he asked what show, Harry was told, "Why, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, of course."

Cody's traveling companion suggested Harry be taken to the doctor, but Buffalo Bill

said, "Oh, pshaw, coddle these sagebrushers and you'll spoil 'em rotten. He'll get a dang sight more than this when he gets with my show."

Harry figured that if anything worse could happen, he didn't want to join the show, but Gaspie wrote for the contracts anyway, and the two brush cowboys were soon on their way to New York. Now, at age 96, Webb says that knowing the Colonel, as Cody's friends called him, and being in his show were two of the highlights of his life.

"There were more than 500 people with the show," Webb recalls, "One contract called for 1,100 meals a day at 21 cents a meal. The cowboys' contract called for 'No oggling girls,' 'No drinking,' and dozens of other rules, but we lived like kings, had the best steel Pullman cars in the world to travel in, and we were paid \$60 a month!"

In 1910 Harry arrived in New York and joined a crowd of bronc riders rehearsing for the show in Madison Square Garden. Buffalo Bill's assistant, Cy Compton, had Harry take the first two broncs. When Compton asked him to ride a third, Harry was getting sore. "Now listen, Cy," he said, "you have 37 bronc riders here. What are you trying to do—get rid of me before the show starts?"

"You came here with a reputation as long as the washer woman's clothesline," Compton retorted, "and that's why I want you to ride. There are two cameras outside the arena and we are taking pictures for some lithographs!"

After seeing the horses buck, most of the cowboys decided they didn't want to be bronc riders after all. "One fellow bragged that he had been world champion cowboy but he refused to ride the first two shows,"

(Continued on page 90)



The two VIPs: Harry Webb joined Buffalo Bill in 1910, Ben Marrowbone in 1911.

CAROLINE J. HADLEY

Letters

Great Scissor Bills!

Why and where in tarnation have you been keeping all those topnotch storytellers that have so suddenly surfaced (July/August 1983)? Was it simply to surprise us or was it lack of magazine space? Great Scissor Bills, what a whale of a magazine and what a bevy of authors!

Never laughed more in my life than in reading James McKimmey's "Travels With Happy." Equally enjoyable were "Elko Solitaire" by John Grissim, and lastly but not leastly by a batch of sourdough bread was that ever-current, magnificent article about the sack of flour by Lee Echols. One article led to another until my supper was delayed three hours!

Harry Webb
Tujunga, CA.

The Winnemucca Whodunit

The words "But unfortunately it is not a true story" appeared in the article entitled "Butch Cassidy & The Great Winnemucca Bank Robbery" (May/June 1983) and caused a personal trauma for us second only to learning that there is no Santa Claus.

The excitement of seeing "The picture" on the wall, the old scarred safe in the lobby, and talking to the present staff of the bank located at 352 Bridge Street in Winnemucca adorned the legend. Then, two years later, David W. Toll exposed the legend in the fifth paragraph of his article.

Although disillusioned, we will continue to visit the real West in Nevada (accomplished four times in 1982) and renew our subscriptions to *Nevada Magazine*, but we absolutely refuse to compromise and believe the truth about Santa Claus and Butch Cassidy.

Art & Dody Kuespert
Fort Myers, FL.

I found Toll's article very interesting as I was just finishing a book by Larry Pointer, "In Search of Butch Cassidy."

This book is based on a manuscript written by Butch Cassidy. There is a section where Butch describes his part in this robbery and tells of his giving the white horse to the boy.

Barb Chancellor
Ranchester, WY.

The author's reply: Correction. Larry Pointer's book is based on a manuscript written by someone claiming to be Butch Cassidy. But compare the section on the robbery in Winnemucca with the eyewitness accounts in the local papers, and there are discrepancies in almost every sentence. The manuscript has four bandits taking part, instead of three, and the details of the holdup itself inside the bank differ in several respects from the reports in the Silver State. Most

obviously mistaken, though, is this statement in the manuscript: "The Hold (sic) up being so thorough and quiet they were well out of town and heading for the hills before any one was aware of the hold up." Actually, of course, the whole town was in hysterics. There were guns going off everywhere and there was the furious



Did Butch (right) or Sundance (left) do it?

chase with the locomotive and the near-capture at Clover Valley. And the episode with Vic Button and the white horse doesn't actually appear in the manuscript at all, but instead has been inserted into the narrative by Mr. Pointer.

So whoever wrote that manuscript—and I'm very skeptical about it being Butch Cassidy—had only the haziest idea of how the Winnemucca robbery took place.—David W. Toll

Another Hold-up Controversy

You have a great mag, but shame on you for only offering one color suspenders.

Paul Reade
Chula Vista, CA.

The state colors are blue and silver, so that's it, Reade!—Ed.

Maiden's Grave Mystery Solved

Letters from your readers disputing Mr. Webb's story about the Maiden's Grave have been especially noted. Now it is my turn to inform you of another, which I believe to be nearer the truth.

My grandfather crossed the plains in 1861 and had told his family long before this controversy of the event of the maiden's death. Long before 1919 (his death year) and long before Mr. Webb came to Nevada, he told that his wagon train camped near the river below the bluff where the girl is buried and that she was accidentally shot, which resulted in death. As usual, the body

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was buried near the spot. In later years, his daughter (my aunt) said while she would travel by train she would look upon that hill and see the cross and know her father had actually witnessed the tragedy.

Just why Mr. Webb thinks he is qualified to write history is a puzzle; just why *Nevada Magazine* would print such garbage is another mystery.

Ellen Primeaux
Elko, NV

Thank you for such a great magazine! Best wishes to all of you.

Lyle Meyer
Sacramento, CA.

Recently I received a copy of *Nevada Magazine* and was so impressed with the variety of articles and lovely photos. Dr. Richard Barga sent the copy to me because of the article, "Medicine on the Barga Plan" (March/April 1983). We've a common cause, helping the ill and injured. I was most happy to read of his Morningstar operation, and the article will further communications between nurse-pilots, perhaps for future employment or membership in IFNA.

In June of 1984, the International Flying Nurses Association is planning for our annual convention in Reno.

Happily looking forward to Nevada in '84.

June Simpson, RN, MA
President, IFNA
Middletown, NY

Call for Postcards

I have to tell you how happy we are with the magazine. We have been going to Las Vegas for 20 years, twice a year, and call it our second home. We also have a collection of postcards and the only one missing is the Union Pacific Railroad Station where the Union Plaza Hotel stands now. Is there any way we can get a picture postcard of this? We would appreciate it.

William Eichhorn
Ridge, NY

Nevada Magazine has insufficient local news with too many glossy ads. Surely *Nevada Magazine* could be in closer touch with the people of the state and find out what their needs are. Sources are the Legislature, local newspapers, etc.

M. B. Parker (a former Nevadan)
Palo Alto, CA.

We were about to give up the magazine when you finally had a good article—the one on Snakes by Dave Moore (May/June 1983). So we'll try again for another year.

John E. Todd
Palo Alto, CA.

Reject Muench?

The *Nevada Magazine* has been terrific in the past. Why try to emulate *Arizona Highways* with David Muench? Don't we have some terrific photographers in Nevada?

Hope LaCombe
Carson City, NV

Sure, but David Muench has offered us photos we can't refuse. Most of the photos in the magazine are by Nevadans.—Ed.

First of all, I would like to thank you for an excellent magazine. There is always a good variety of history, humor, and travel articles. Not to mention some of the best and most original photography I've ever seen. Muench's Gallery is always a pleasure—a sight for sore eyes. Your magazine is really looked forward to as we don't have many dry, sunny, or warm days here on the hill at Sembach, West Germany.

Clyde Miller
APO, NY

The Right Mix

Your historical material is well researched, and your current articles are very good. The pictures are wonderful. The coverage of what Nevada's life is, is the only place I find a good picture of what Nevada is and has.

Adabel W. Wells
Reno, NV

I have traveled around the world many times in the last 25 years and there's no place like Nevada with its wide open spaces and the relaxed and casual life-style. Over the years I have crisscrossed your state and visited most every town and historical site. Now that I have retired we are going to leave the hustle and bustle of city life and settle in your beautiful state.

Gayle O. Trammel
Vista, CA.

Keep your "Free Trial Offer" (for new subscribers) and stop bugging me with this crap!

Andrew S. Horn
San Francisco, CA.

We love visiting the state of Nevada and do so as often as possible. Enjoy your magazine and look forward to its arrival. The photos are beautiful and stories of the people who live and have lived there are very interesting. Just finished reading about Ray Baker, "The Golden Boy from the Silver State" (July/August 1983). He must have been quite a man.

Howard & Anita Nichols
Renton, WA.

It's a Dog's Life

I enjoyed Harry Webb's story of Old Mose very much (July/August 1983) and can understand how hard it was for him to leave Old Mose. I had to give up a poodle one time. She was like a baby always at my heels. She was taken to a friend's house in the country. She cried and tried to follow us as we left the ranch.

Ra Britt
Glendale, CA.

The articles in the last issue were the most spellbinding I have ever read, all of them, from Dolly to Mose the dog. A really great job of selection.

HBS
Albuquerque, NM

We have missed Nevada more each of the six years we have had to live in other states. *Nevada Magazine* has helped us to keep in touch with the state and alleviate some of our homesickness. But I found the story

(Continued on page 55)

McCarran 2000



APPEARING SOON IN LAS VEGAS A Brand, Spanking New International Airport

For Dusty Mac, our pesky Nevada sourdough Miner, it's a dream come true. He's been tearing up the place for so long looking for his legendary "lost McCarran Mine," we had to practically build a new airport.

GOOD NEWS

And the good news is that Dusty Mac has "thrown in with us" to make McCarran International Airport bigger and better. He's advising people who use the airport where there might be some construction going on and

how to best use the facility (actually, we think Dusty is still diggin' around, but we don't want to call him out on that).

TREMENDOUS GROWTH

The new airport, when completed, will be the talk of the aviation industry. It is being remodeled, at no cost to local taxpayers, to handle Las Vegas' tremendous growth needs through the year 2000 and beyond. So bear with us and give yourself a little extra time to catch your airplane. It's worth waiting for.

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McCarran 2000

The Clark County Board of Commissioners

6th Annual Great Nevada Picture Hunt: The Winners

The geese seemed to have an early lock on it,
but then it all came out in the wash.

By Caroline J. Hadley

When three highly opinionated art critics gather in one room on a hot day in July, there's sure to be complaints. True to form, the judgment day for Nevada's 6th Annual Great Nevada Picture Hunt was an eloquent brawl.

Judge Cliff Segerblom, a Canadian artist now living in Boulder City, wanted to see more entries from the ranks of gifted amateurs and professionals in Southern Nevada. Howard Hickson, director of Elko's Northeastern Nevada Museum, although ecstatic about more creative cropping than in the past, had hoped for higher processing quality. I, of course, had no complaints. Well, maybe just one: Where were the shots with people *doing* things?

Overall, Hickson, Segerblom, and I agreed on the winning photos—although it was a bit of a battle as to the final order. They kept outvoting me. I loved William Pace's "Waiting, Sweetwater," which took fourth, and

there also was strong sentiment for "Laundry, Spencer's Hot Springs," the eventual first-place photo by Norma Giudici of Santa Clara, California.

The bickering even infected my art director, Dale Smith, who later sent a scathing, two-page, hand-written note in which he insisted that "The Geese, Humboldt County" by Susan Moore of Winnemucca, which took eighth, should have been the winner.

Indeed, there was such quality this year that we couldn't resist giving awards of merit to 22 other entries. Those photographers deserve credit, as do all who entered this year's contest.

Most folks concentrated on beautiful scenics (David Muench suggests well). And they *are* beautiful. But, next year I hope to see a lot more jazzy stuff with action shots of people out there *living* in all that beauty. So, come on Nevada lovers, keep snappin'



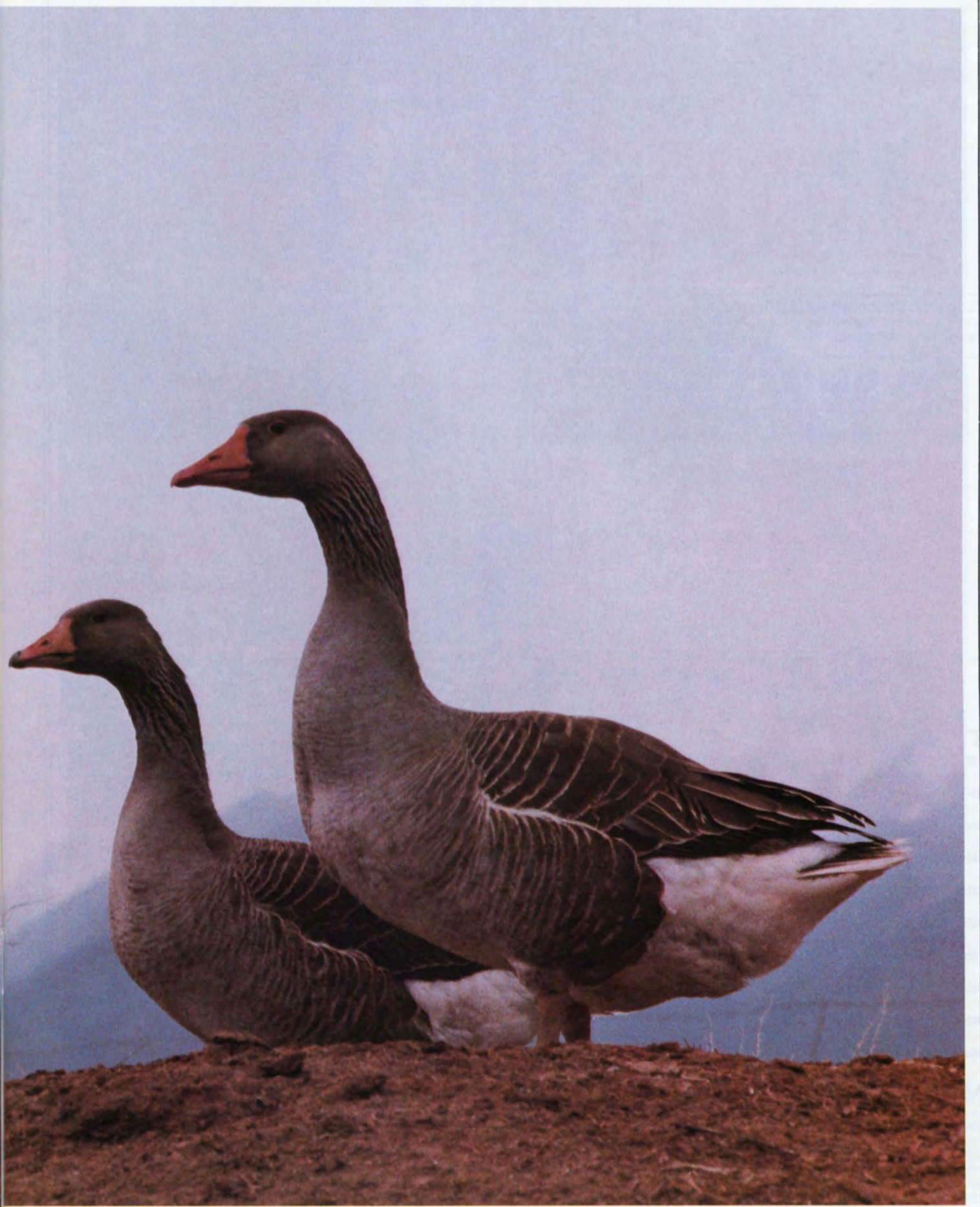
"Locked, Nye County"

Perry C. Rose, Hawthorne, NV.
2nd: 20 rolls Kodak color film

"The Geese, Humboldt County"

Susan Moore, Winnemucca, NV.
8th: Nevada Sun Visor







"Laundry, Spencer's Hot Springs"

Norma Giudici, Santa Clara, CA.
1st: Pentax ME Super



"Skinny Dip, Bonnie Claire"

Enid M. Reeves, Placerville, CA.
5th: Nevada Sun Visor



"Boy on the Fence, Monitor Valley"

Jean Hage, Tonopah, NV.
7th: Nevada Sun Visor

The Finalists

- 1st: **"Laundry, Spencer's Hot Springs"**
Norma Giudici, Santa Clara, CA., Pentax ME Super
- 2nd: **"Locked, Nye County"**
Perry C. Rose, Hawthorne, NV., 20 rolls Kodak color film
- 3rd: **"Silver State Marathon"**
Roy Herrick, Reno, NV., 20 rolls Kodak color film
- 4th: **"Waiting, Sweetwater"**
William Pace, Truckee, CA., 20 rolls Kodak b&w film
- 5th: **"Skinny Dip, Bonnie Claire"**
Enid M. Reeves, Placerville, CA., Nevada Sun Visor
- 6th: **"Hunter's Paradise, Reno"**
Richard B. Dwyer, Reno, NV., Nevada Sun Visor
- 7th: **"Boy on the Fence, Monitor Valley"**
Jean Hage, Tonopah, NV., Nevada Sun Visor
- 8th: **"The Geese, Humboldt County"**
Susan Moore, Winnemucca, NV., Nevada Sun Visor
- 9th: **"Snow Wave after the Storm, Tahoe"**
Bill Powell, Los Altos, CA., Nevada Sun Visor
- 10th: **"Reflections of Sand & Salt, Churchill County"**
Peggy Lear Bowen, Reno, NV., Nevada Sun Visor

Merit Awards

G. Anderson, Reno; Tracie Austin, Winnemucca; Dick Benoit, Reno; John T. Biale, Carson City; Larry C. Brown, Carson City; George Carnes, Ely; Ron de Giovanni, Sparks; Tony Diebold, Gerlach; L. A. Frantz, Reno; Kris Gibson, Sparks; Betty Held, Carson City; Robin Jahnke, Reno; Stephen Johns, Carson City; C. S. Kuffner, Virginia City; Nancy Lamb, Carson City; Jody Laxague, Gardnerville; Maureen Label, Carson City; Michael Michaelson, Winnemucca; C. Rene Traynor, Winnemucca; Jack O. Walther, Reno; Jenny Wattles, Carson City; Kat Wilkins, Carson City

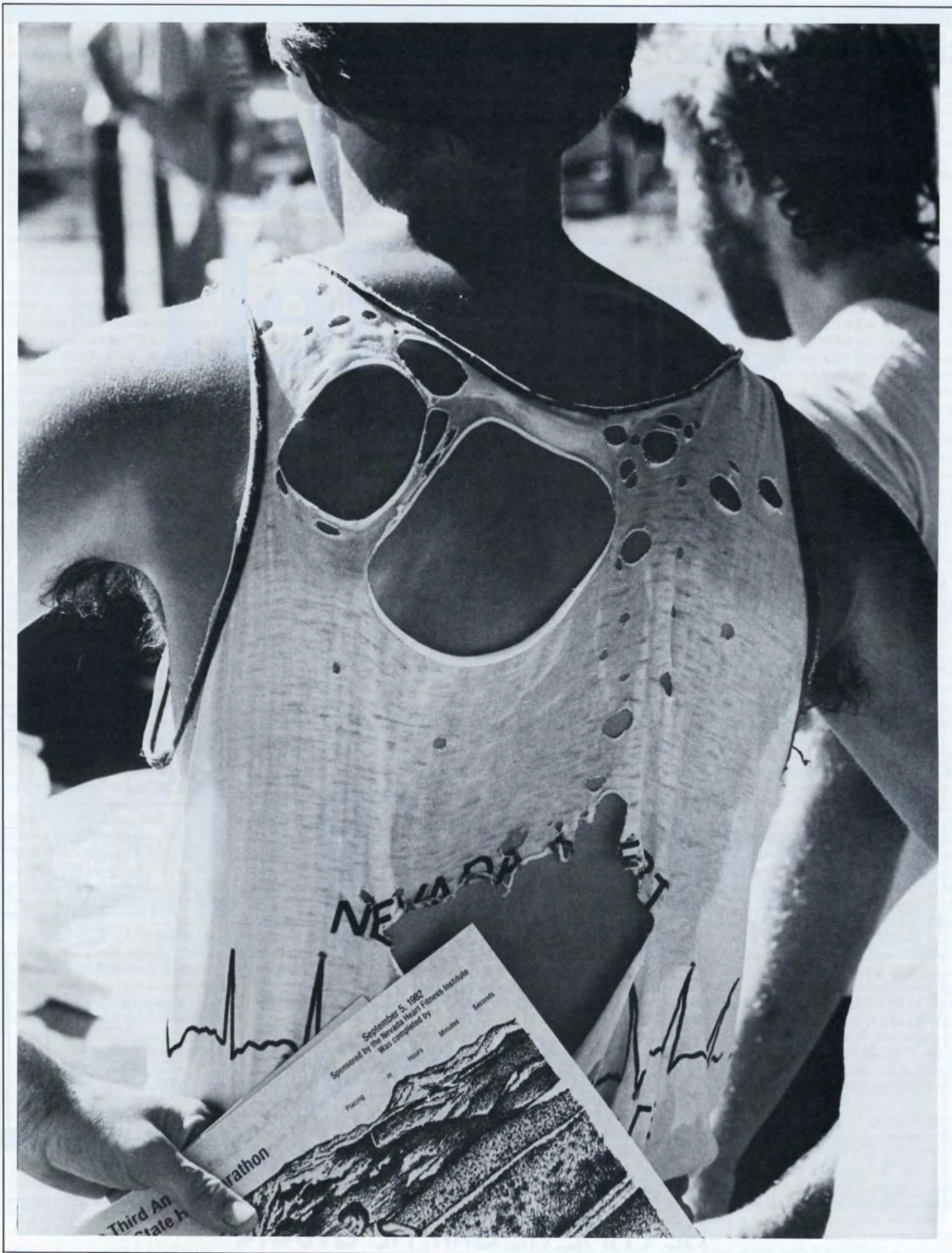


"Waiting, Sweetwater"

William Pace, Truckee, CA.
4th: 20 rolls Kodak b&w film

"Silver State Marathon"

Roy Herrick, Reno, NV.
3rd: 20 rolls Kodak color film



How to Sell Hell

From the start, Nevada citizens needed skillful scheming to overcome the state's dubious reputation as a 'purgatory on earth.'

By Susan Horton

In 1859, journalist Horace Greeley advised young men to go to the new territories of the West—with one exception. Writing about his journey in present-day Nevada along the Humboldt River, he saw a region worthless for agriculture. "Here, on the Humboldt," Greeley wrote, "famine sits enthroned, and waves his scepter over a dominion expressly made for

him." The author wondered "who would stay in such a region one moment longer than he must?" Greeley thought America would be vastly improved by the elimination of the land between the Sierra Nevada and the Rockies. Its only saving grace, he suggested, would be if it had rich mineral deposits.

Since the early days of the fur trappers

and westward emigrants, Nevada had been known as a place to get through in a hurry. Novelists, seeking the perfect adjectives to describe the godforsaken region, called it an "abomination of desolation," a land "lacquered with paltry, unimportant ugliness." Thus, from the start, the state's citizens clearly needed some inventive scheming to overcome its dubious reputation as a



HE CAME, HE SAW, HE STUCK

"purgatory on earth." Nevada promoters rose to the challenge, however, and since the days of the Comstock Lode their efforts have resulted in a host of brilliantly conceived attention-getters.

The gold and silver discoveries of the Comstock era focused worldwide attention upon the state, giving it free publicity in newspapers, periodicals, and cheap novels. The region's parched-desert image seemed to recede into the nation's memory. Thousands of fortune seekers, not to mention opportunistic swindlers, poured into Nevada, lured by promises of profits and a decadence that could have rivaled Rome in its wantonness.

Although Virginia City witnessed its share of mining swindles, the region did not have a corner on the market. According to historian Don Ashbaugh, the mining community of Austin "probably peddled more phony stock than any other nineteenth century western mining town." Perhaps the most notorious of the fraudulent schemes involved the Reese River Navigation Company. Future investors received a glowing prospectus which promised huge profits from the transportation of rich mineral ore via the Reese River to the railroad at Battle Mountain. Investors, most of whom resided outside the state, were stunned to learn that the "river" was a mere creek better suited to toy tugboats than lumbering barges.

Boosters were active in other parts of the state as well. In the mining district of Eureka, merchant Lambert Molinelli published a slightly exaggerated description of his town in the late 1870s. In an effort to lure investors to the area, Molinelli wrote of the nearly 900 upstanding miners residing in the town which boasted "neat" saloons, a "magnificent" courthouse, and a mine which, when reopened, would yield impressive profits as it had in the past. Molinelli's book, although overly optimistic, was but one example of the flamboyant publications that flourished in the state.

By the 1890s the mining boom had turned to bust. The state's population declined dramatically, and Nevada found itself wallowing in depression. A few looked to agriculture to end the economic slump, but the farming industry was also suffering from the effects of hard winters and the mining decline.

The notion of Nevada as a renegade among the states was not lost upon some of its more enterprising legislators. When the rest of America was consumed by Victorian morality, Nevada seized a golden opportunity to attract the tourist dollar.

By 1897 prizefighting had been virtually outlawed in the U.S. and Europe. A big fight was scheduled in San Francisco with heavyweight champion Jim Corbett defending his title against Bob Fitzsimmons. But when the Nevada legislature that year passed a law legalizing prizefights, the fight moved to Carson City. To exploit Corbett's Irish ancestry, the bout was set for St. Patrick's Day, 1897.

A writer in the 1850s had called Carson City a hell on earth whose shameless horror defied all description, but that frightening image was changed by the publicity gener-

ated by the Corbett-Fitzsimmons match. Carson was now touted as the "snowy mecca of the sports." More than 100 special trains carrying spectators and sportswriters from around the country rolled into the area. A *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter described the carnival atmosphere, "streets swarming with a picturesque mass of humanity." Attendance at the fight was estimated at 4,000 with seats going from \$5 to \$40. The promotion was a resounding financial success. Never had the state witnessed the congregation of so many people in one place at one time.

The lesson was not lost on promotion-minded Nevadans. Smaller prizefights were held regularly, but it was not until 1906 that a fight on the scale of the Corbett-Fitzsimmons bout was staged.

After a devastating 20-year depression, Nevada was enjoying a mining boom in the central part of the state as major gold and silver strikes at Tonopah and Goldfield recalled the early bonanza days.

During the summer of 1906, however, a group of men in Goldfield decided that Tonopah was getting all the publicity. To lure potential investors to the area, the Goldfielders formed a committee to decide how to promote their town and attract capital. The group nominated Tex Rickard to handle public relations, and word traveled quickly that the cowboy turned saloon-keeper aimed to put Goldfield on the map. Citizens eagerly volunteered ideas. One miner suggested that a balloon containing a cargo of gold be released over Goldfield, and whoever found the balloon when it landed would be \$5,000 richer. Another man proposed that a lake be excavated in the middle of town and filled with beer for all comers.

Tex Rickard had his own idea: a battle for the lightweight championship of the world. The contestants would be Joe Gans, a black man, and Battling Nelson, a white man. The challengers met, after 42 rounds Gans won the bout, and once again Nevada was thrown into the national spotlight.

Four years later, Rickard staged the most controversial of the early prizefights. The Jeffries-Johnson bout, held in Reno on July 4, 1910, drew nearly 16,000 money-spending spectators to the state. The national press thrived on the event. The fight itself was big news, but reporters were delighted to capitalize on the fact that Jack Johnson, the black challenger, had the audacity (or courage) to live openly with his white wife at his local training camp. The bout was the town's first and most lucrative advertising venture.

There were those, however, who sought a broader economic base for Nevada. Horace Greeley himself might have commended the resourcefulness of a 1911 *Sunset Magazine* publication. Filled with optimism inspired by the Newlands Reclamation Project, the booklet, *Agricultural Nevada*, heralded the state as a "great inland empire" destined for agricultural supremacy. Author C.A. Norcross believed Nevada's reputation for dryness was unjustly earned. He confidently asserted that the state's

(Continued on next page)

Striking It Rich

In the glory days of the Comstock Lode, mine crews were sometimes locked up underground to make the public think that a rich new strike had been made. As stock prices rose, the operators could reap a fortune by selling short before word of the scam got out.

A favorite tactic of mine promoters was the putting out of a story of the washing of the dogs of the camp and the assaying of the dirt—always high in gold. In Ruby Hill in Eureka County, a story circulated in January 1880 that a local barber had assayed the hair clippings and whiskery leavings of his customers. They were valued at \$75 a ton in gold, according to a "reliable" report, and the stock of the mine employing the men went sky high. The owners, of course, held on to their stock for a time, selling short and making a fortune off a worthless piece of property.

The residents of Ely went through a near-gold rush at Christmas time in 1906 when John Stemper, a local butcher, found two bean-sized gold nuggets in the gizzard of a chicken. A chef at the Famous Restaurant found another in the craw of a young rooster and checked into the source of the birds. Some had come from J. H. Simpson on High Street and the others had been furnished by farmers in nearby Steptoe Valley. Simpson, who refused several cash offers for his property, was finally forced to break out his shotgun to hold off people trying to stake claims in his chicken yard. The farmers of Steptoe Valley awoke on Christmas morning to find their fields staked out in placer claims. Few of the locators stayed, but several found rich ore in the nearby mountains.

When Tex Rickard left Goldfield for the new boom at Rawhide in the fall of 1907, he announced the fact by tacking a sign on a local church. "This church is closed," it read, "God has moved to Rawhide." Once in Rawhide, Rickard and George Graham Rice combined their promotional talents to boost their own worthless mines. In February 1908, they got out the story that a road crew blasting on the main street had blown a 150-pound chunk of gold ore through the front window of the Bank of Rawhide. So the story went, the cashier had the rock assayed, sold it and paid \$68.10 into the town treasury after deducting the assay cost, a fee for his trouble, and the price of a new window.

Promoters of the mines at the camp of National in northern Humboldt County once resorted to the staging of a "high-grade" robbery in June 1910 to get some publicity for their enterprise.

At Rhyolite, so the story goes, William Griffith, shortstop for the local baseball team, tripped and fell while running for first base. As he went down, his foot unearthed a large piece of rock. He had it assayed later in the day and learned that his accident had unearthed a ledge of free gold. He filed a claim and named the new enterprise the First Base Mine.—Phillip I. Earl

potential as a region of bountiful crops need only be "released to fruitfulness by the magic of irrigation."

Agriculture aside, 20 years later the Nevada legislature made a fruitful decision by passing two bills which, like the boxing law, captured the country's attention. On March 19, 1931, Governor Fred Balzar signed a bill making Nevada's easy divorce law even easier. On the same day gambling was legalized. Reporters from around the country poured into Reno, the only town prepared to take advantage of the new law. They recorded the activities of the nation's "Sodom and Gomorrah," and it wasn't long before national magazines leveled a barrage

of criticism at Nevada for sanctioning such evils. The publicity, however, lured hundreds of wealthy Easterners to the state to shed their marital ties and have fun in the process.

While promotional schemes flourished in the north, Southern Nevada also had its share of inventive boosterism. The city of Las Vegas had been born on May 15, 1905, when lots were auctioned off in one of the state's most creative land-sale schemes. California newspapers ran full-page ads promoting the sale of lots in the Las Vegas townsite. As an added inducement, the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad offered special rates to investors coming in

from Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. The clever promotion paid off handsomely for railroad owner and land magnate, Senator William A. Clark of Montana.

During the Great Depression, Las Vegas received another shot in the arm when newspaper publisher Charles P. Squires and other Las Vegans launched a rigorous campaign to bring the Hoover Dam project to Nevada. Squire's newspaper, *The Age*, became the successful advocate for his tireless promotion of the dam. Again, Nevada reaped the rewards of an energetic promotional scheme.

The technological achievements at
(Continued on page 45)



Dateline, Las Vegas

Newsman John Cahlan, who has witnessed more than half a century of Las Vegas history, knew how to make the news as well as report it.

By Bill Willard

When John Cahlan emerged from the University of Nevada in Reno with a journalism degree in 1926 and was hired as a news editor for the *Nevada State Journal*, a promising career seemed imminent. Within two years he rose to the rank of editor. Shortly thereafter, the paper changed hands. Cahlan was fired.

Undaunted, the 26-year-old newsman sharpened his pencils and set his sights on the sunny south. Cahlan's brother, Al, and

Frank Garside had just bought a newspaper in the little desert railroad town of Las Vegas. They hoped to turn the tri-weekly into a daily, and invited John to join them.

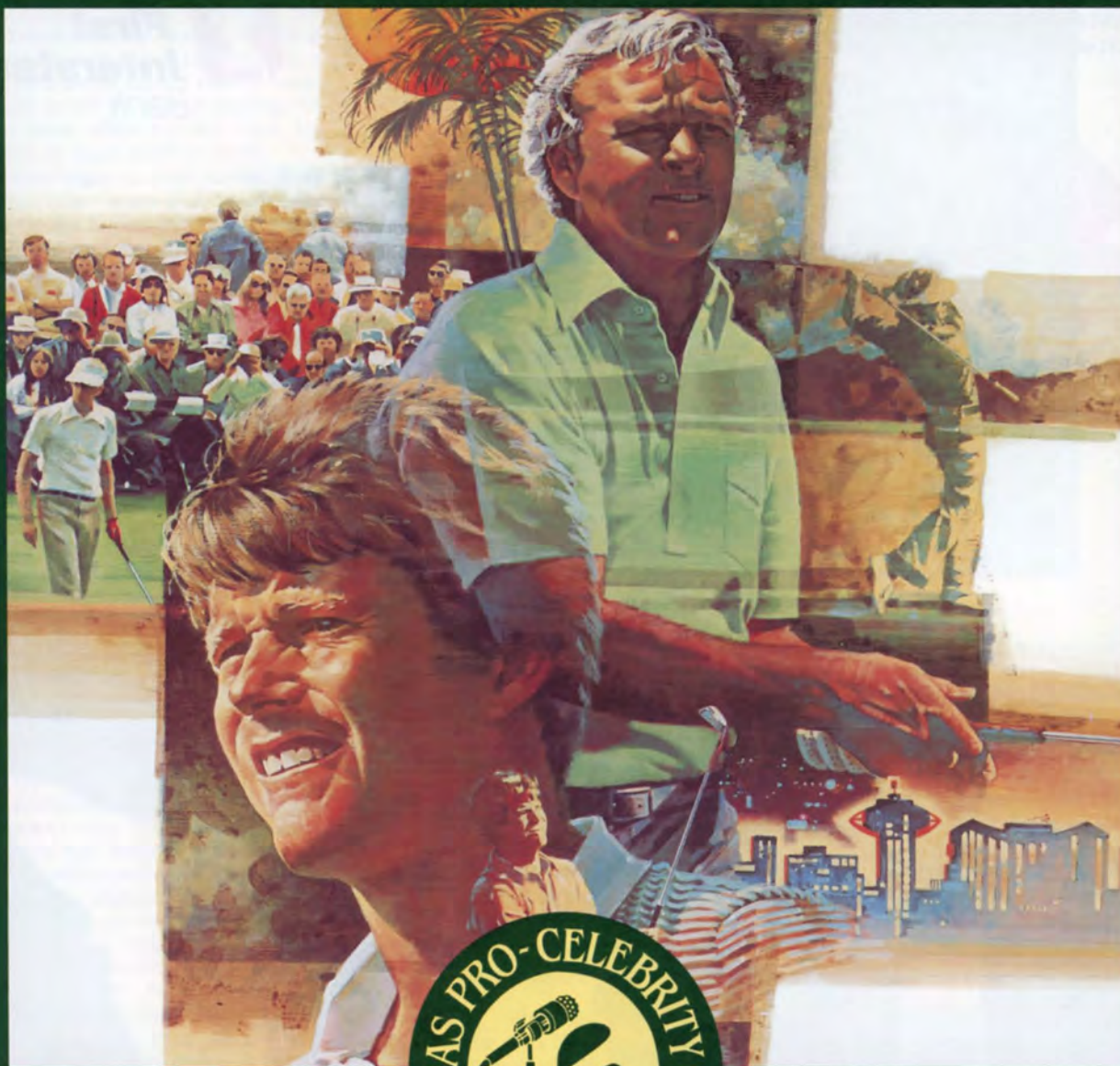
Cahlan arrived in Las Vegas in 1929 by plane, and while the move may have had its risks, he never looked back. As his town grew, Cahlan helped make "Las Vegas" a dateline known throughout the world. In the process he has witnessed and written about the people and goings-on of Southern

Nevada for more than half a century.

"I've had an opportunity to meet and become fairly well acquainted with a lot of people, from presidents to prostitutes," Cahlan says. "At first I was a one-man editor for the newspaper (the *Las Vegas Review*). My brother was more or less interested in the business end.

"The *Review* was competing with Charles 'Pop' Squires of the old *Las Vegas Age*," he recalls. "Just after I arrived, Jim Scrugham,

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who was former Governor of Nevada and U.S. Senator, came down and opened up the *Las Vegas Journal*, which lasted about a year. Garside and my brother bought the *Journal*, and that's how it became the *Review-Journal*."

Now 81 years of age and legally blind, John Cahlan is somewhat frustrated as he contemplates his accumulation of 54 years of notes and chapters on the rise of Las Vegas from watering hole to metropolis. His wife, Florence, recently retired from writing her weekly column, "Socially Speaking," for the *R-J*. Together they wrote the first volume of *Water: A History of Las Vegas* a few years ago. Because he cannot read or write anymore, she is left the task of putting the material in order while he calls upon his editing skills to build another book.

Their union began in 1940, seven years after Florence Lee Jones was hired as a proofreader at the *Review-Journal*. She was a well-known reporter by the time of their wedding day. "We were married on my birthday," Cahlan laughs, "so I wouldn't forget the anniversary."

Bob Brown, who followed Cahlan as *R-J* editor in 1961 and today is publisher of the *Valley Times*, describes the combination: "Together—you almost can't separate the two of them—I think they've contributed as much to the knowledge and history and preservation of how Las Vegas grew and who were the players, how it developed and what when on, as anyone living. They are the historians of Las Vegas when you put the two of them together."

Both had arrived in time to witness the project that launched "modern" Las Vegas history—the building of Hoover Dam. "The bill had been signed in Washington D.C. just before I came to town," John says. "I had an opportunity to watch the dam grow from bedrock, or the bed of the Colorado River, which was flowing when I came down, up through completion of the dam. That was probably the greatest thing that ever happened to Las Vegas. It set the stage for everything that happened afterward."

Cahlan himself helped make some history as one of the organizers of the first Helldorado celebration in 1935. He was top man then of the Elks Lodge, sponsor of the event, and the community was exerting every effort to gain national attention. Helldorado Days certainly worked. The annual spring hoopla attracted publicity around the West with its rodeo, a parade that grew in size and splendor each year, beard-growing contests, and the infamous kangaroo court.

He recalls how, during a Helldorado-connected event, some slot machines saved many people's lives and the town's reputation. "Roy Rogers and Dale Evans came up from Hollywood to make a movie, 'Heldorado,' for Universal. At that time movie censorship forbade usage of the word 'hell,' so we dropped an 'l.' The Elks had a dance hall down on Fifth Street north of the Bonanza. The Elks invited the entire community to come down there and enjoy Roy and Dale.

"The crowd went up to the mezzanine waiting for the stars to appear at 11 o'clock,"
(Continued on page 46)

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Reno's Wizard of Ads

Tom Wilson's courageous schemes changed the way the nation viewed Nevada gaming, and the way they got here, too.

By Warren Lerude

Tom Wilson put Harolds Club—and thus casino gambling—on the map. And the bright lights of Reno, Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, and Atlantic City followed his lead.

It happened because Raymond I. (Pappy) Smith, founder of Harolds Club, wanted to spread the word beyond Nevada about his little casino on Virginia Street in Reno. In the early 1940s he turned to Nevada's only advertising man, an ex-reporter named Tom Wilson. They analyzed ideas, including the slogan, "Harolds Club or Bust," and before they were through hundreds of their billboards lined the highways of America.

The campaign was the first national promotion of gambling as a legitimate enterprise for tourists. Casino gambling had been legal for a decade in Nevada. The problem was that the state's social structure—and more importantly the nation's—didn't equate legitimacy with legality. Gambling may have been legal in Nevada, but the casinos still had a Runyonesque atmosphere of smoky parlors and green eyeshades that

hinted, if not of evil, at least of back-street risk.

Tom Wilson's advertising insight for Pappy Smith changed all that. The gambler was given to stopping by Wilson's agency, a small office looking over the Truckee River in downtown Reno, to "scheme a few schemes." At these brainstorming sessions every morning, Pappy Smith would put his feet up on Wilson's wooden desk, lean back in a chair, and enthuse about how gambling might be turned into a volume business if only they could figure how to bring in the players.

The "Harolds Club or Bust" billboards were the answer. They caught the imagination of America's servicemen and women, legions of whom were traveling across the country on the old U.S. Highway 40 through Reno. The next thing Wilson knew, GIs were putting up Harolds signs everywhere from Iwo Jima to the Antarctic. And the club was sending "fun packages" of cards, dice, and casino decorations around the world. Players flocked to Reno.

The advertising man who gave the splash to gambling was, and is, no huckster. He is a Nevadan—by choice, by philosophy, and by instinct.

"People come to Nevada by accident and they fall in love with it and are stuck," says the 75-year-old Wilson. "You can still be an individual here. People come to escape, to get a divorce, to make some money, maybe they're one step ahead of the law. But people get along here—or else they leave. They are individuals. People are genuine. It's difficult to buy a lot of friends here."

Tom Wilson came to Reno from Phoenix at age eight when his father joined the faculty of the University of Nevada as an agriculture professor. Tom grew up in the sagebrush hills, hunting in the autumn and fishing in the summer. He worked his way through the University of Nevada in the late 1920s.

His wife Ina remembers their first date, which turned out to be their last for a long while. The daughter of the pioneer Winters family, she was home in Carson City the summer of 1927 after her freshman year at the fashionable Mills College of Oakland. A friend encouraged her to come along on a blind date.

Ina Winters and Tom Wilson drove with the other couple in an old jalopy to a Lake Tahoe retreat, danced through the evening, had car trouble, and didn't get home until 4:30 in the morning. Ina's rancher father grounded her for the summer, and it was three years before she saw Wilson again. Love stuck, however, and their marriage has lasted 50 years.

One of Wilson's early reporting jobs was with the *Las Vegas Age*, a fledgling newspaper in the city which had not yet met its destiny of world famous boomtown. Las Vegas had some rather low-level prohibition era gangsters in those days, and federal agents would come to town from time to time to bust up their business.

One time a gangster mistook the young reporter for an anti-booze agent and put a murder contract on Wilson. An editor learned that Wilson had become gangland quarry about the time the mobsters were getting ready for a rip-roaring New Year's Eve. The editor cleared up the confusion, and at the party the gangsters handed Wilson an apology and a glass of champagne, and everyone had a good time.

After a few years of newspapering in Nevada and California, Wilson decided to go into business for himself. So in 1937, he founded Thomas Wilson Advertising in Reno, against the advice of almost everyone. There had been but one advertising agency in Nevada, and it hadn't worked out well; the proprietor had gone to jail. Undaunted, Wilson built the agency into Nevada's premiere advertising business. He counseled powerful U.S. Senator Patrick McCarran and helped Democrats and Republicans alike, including governors Grant Sawyer, of the former party, and Charles Russell, of the latter.

Wilson set his style early. McCarran, an old foe of outspoken *Las Vegas Sun* publisher

(Continued on page 44)



RICHARD MENZIES PHOTOS

Hollywood & Pine

With copper in the doldrums, Ely citizens are trying some imaginative incentives to lure visitors, revive a train, and put White Pine County on every filmmaker's map.

By Richard Menzies

Nestled between juniper- and sage-speckled foothills at the bottom of Steptoe Valley, Ely presents a variegated face typical of the multi-ethnic, working-class mining community. Her compact business district offers a rich potpourri of storefronts with multifarious window displays of chewing tobacco, ammunition, wedding gowns, saddle tack, mineral samples, and jackalope postcards. Beyond the main street, narrow avenues and alleyways bordered with columbine and hollyhock lead to a lush city park where enormous poplars shade a pond occupied by swans. From open doorways waft exotic aromas of

sizzling chorizos, souvlaki, won tons, and broasted chicken.

The diverse architectural textures range from elaborate Italian stone work to K-Mart Z-Brick and are suggestive of a polymorphous population. Indeed, the White Pine County phone book reads like a United Nations directory, with names of second and third generation Basque, Greek, Chinese, Welsh, Italian, Slavic, Mexican, and Wasp immigrants. It is what White Pine Chamber of Commerce president Lyle Taylor describes as "a community of individuals. I doubt there are two people in this town who could sit down together and

agree it's morning."

Morning or not, the citizens of Ely are sitting down together a lot these days, and what they're talking about is how to get the county seat back on its feet again. Economically, Ely has been hurting as a result of a depressed copper market and the shutdown of Kennecott's smelter at McGill. It hasn't helped that hard times in Ely coincide with the worst national recession since World War II.

For a while there was talk of Ely becoming an energy boom town after Northwest Energy brought in 22 producing oil wells in nearby Railroad Valley—an event

unluckily followed by a worldwide oil glut. To add to the general malaise, the longest and wettest winter in modern memory all but froze out local ranchers and pinched off through traffic by turning U.S. 50 in western Utah into an ersatz lake.

"Basically," observes newly elected mayor Barlow White, "we get screwed every time we turn around."

Hollywood and Pine

Judging from the leading economic indicators, I had expected to find Ely a deserted ghost town, but what I found instead was an abundance of high spirits. At Broadbent Park a lively softball game was in progress, while in the bullpen a gathering of children took turns steering a golf cart cum electric cow in aimless circles. The adenoidal wail of country music filled the air as concessionaires sold beer and hotdogs and hawked secondhand merchandise at a balloon-bedecked bazaar. All were wearing white T-shirts and baseball caps bearing the slogan "Rent-A-Town." Unwittingly, I had just stumbled into one of innumerable fundraising events sponsored by the newly incorporated Bristlecone Film Committee.

The film committee is made up of unpaid

Dale of Incline Village and Jim Clark of the Nevada Film Agency, which supplied the antique cars used in the Clint Eastwood made-in-Nevada film, "Honky Tonk Man."

"I started running into people," recalls Barbara, "and the more I talked to people about films, the more I found other people who were interested in starting a film office in the state. And we had everybody running around and really pumping everybody up like we oughta make movies. We got everybody really excited."

If Burt Reynolds Calls . . .

From a nucleus of two, the committee soon grew to include 35 volunteers, many of them drawn from the ranks of the recently unemployed. The committee's lobbying efforts have been successful in winning three development grants and a lot of public support. Nevada First Thrift donated money for camera equipment and a typewriter; local merchants have sprung for refreshments and the Catholic priest volunteered the church hall for a fund-raising bazaar. Informal strategy sessions are routinely conducted over beer and chorizos at Harry's grocery store, better known as "the back porch."

One of the organization's most helpful if somewhat reluctant supporters is Barbara's husband, John, whose tire shop now does double duty as official headquarters for Bristlecone Films. What was formerly John's display room is papered with movie posters and layered with brochures and trade publications. A unique telephone system sorts out the regular customers from the Hollywood hot line, but if no one's in the office, movieland big wheels are automatically relayed to the tire department.

The bulk of the committee's operating funds go to pay for long distance calls and for advertisements in *Variety* and other trade papers. So far the results have been encouraging; a TV commercial for Maxim coffee was recently shot in the area, and members are hoping to land a Ford commercial as well. One film company has expressed interest in using the company town of McGill and its surrounding slag heaps as the backdrop for a Depression era epic, while actor Burt Reynolds is reported seriously considering accepting Ely's invitation to star as mayor for a day.

Other possibilities are not so glamorous. Committee president Pat Dory laughingly recalls scouting locations for a biker movie

'At its headquarters in the Big 8 tire shop, the Bristlecone Film Committee aims to make White Pine County the moviemaking capital of the West.'

citizen volunteers and headed by two women of remarkable energy, Barbara Forman and Pat Dory. At their headquarters in the Big 8 tire shop on Aultman Street, committee members work tirelessly to the accompaniment of impact wrenches toward one glorious goal—to make White Pine County the moviemaking capital of the West.

The Bristlecone Committee is the brainchild of West Hollywood transplant Barbara Forman, who came up with the idea last year after seeing an "Airport" movie on television that was filmed in and around the Wasatch Mountains of neighboring Utah. "And I thought, 'Well, if they can make movies in Utah, they can make movies in Ely.'"

The following morning Barbara invited her friend Pat Dory to discuss the idea over coffee, only to discover after getting the bill that she'd left her purse at home. That first meeting set the fiscal tone of events to come, she says, "and we've been on a constant roll ever since."

Barbara's first official act was to call the State Department of Economic Development, where she was put in touch with Bob Hirsch, an enthusiastic promoter of filmmaking in the state. She soon won other allies in film location consultant Shirley



Train experts Chris deWitt (left) and Bob Verkuyls pose with Old Number 40 in the East Ely maintenance shed. On previous page is Ely booster Heidi Forman.



Ely's moviemaking campaign was officially kicked off by Governor Richard Bryan, here slicing the inaugural cake at Bristlecone Films' showroom office.

with the working title, "The Cycle Sluts Vs. The Zombie Ghoul."

Getting on Track

While Pat ponders the wisdom of revitalizing Ely by turning zombie ghouls loose on the streets, other townfolk are busily seeking out other avenues to prosperity. Looking for ways and means to attract new industries and to develop the county's considerable tourist potential, the chamber of commerce last year formulated the White Pine County Overall Economic Development Plan. As part of the plan, the chamber formed a tourism committee headed by Joy Bybee, motel owner and relentless local booster.

Bybee is enthusiastic about White Pine's recreational potential, which includes hiking, camping, fishing, and cross-country and possibly alpine skiing. In particular, he's excited about a proposal to turn the old East Ely train depot into a museum and tourist center. The centerpiece of the exhibit would be "Old Number 40," a turn-of-the-century vintage Baldwin steam locomotive complete with passenger coaches, mail car, and a bright yellow caboose.

In its heyday Number 40 carried passengers and mail over the Nevada Northern Railway between Ruth and the Southern Pacific railhead at Cobre. In the decades since the locomotive was retired, it and the rolling stock have been quietly gathering



Members of the local tourism committee inspect the historic East Ely railroad yards with Jim Clark of the Carson City-based Nevada Film Agency. From left are Joy Bybee, Clark, Karen Rajala, Ed Spear, and Dave Tilford.

dust in a locked maintenance shed, like a giant Lionel train set in a box waiting to be opened on Christmas day.

That day might not be far off. Recently the tourism committee won permission to place the East Ely train depot, the steam locomotive, and passenger cars on the historic register, and now they're working with the train's owner, Kennecott, on an agreement to lease the train and tracks. In June, locomotive experts Bob Verkuyls and Chris deWitt of Carson City's Short Line Enterprises inspected the old engine and found it to be in remarkably good mechanical condition. If the red tape can be cut, Number 40 could soon be rolling again.

"You just can't mention this engine to people here without finding they've been dreaming about it for years," says Karen Rajala, who prepared the county's development plan. "Of all the ideas proposed by the OEDP, the train has sparked the most interest."

Though it's unlikely that Number 40 could ever be a moneymaking passenger train, Joy Bybee is convinced it could generate a lot of dollars in concessions and various spin-off benefits. Besides staying over to visit the railroad museum and historic district, tourists could climb aboard for excursion runs to Currie and Cherry Creek, or up to the mining camp of Ruth to peer into the depths of the unused copper pit, which is rapidly turning into a lake tinged a rich copper sulfate blue. If a ski resort is established in the nearby mountains, the train might also carry skiers to the slopes. And no doubt a working steam engine would prove a valuable asset to the burgeoning film industry.

"The consensus is to operate as often as we can afford," explains Bybee. "Our aim is not just to lure people here, but to give them something to do once they get here." He is convinced that with a little work Ely can turn her former limitations—isolation and quaintness—into future assets. And despite the current difficulties, the 30-year Kennecott veteran predicts that in the long run the depression in the copper industry might have a silver lining.

"For generations we've been known as a one-industry town. And it's true that copper made this county. We've all depended upon it, but maybe it's time we all got weaned."

The buzz phrase around Ely these days is "branching out for economic security." During a recent visit, Governor Richard Bryan offered encouragement and told residents their town is a role model for other rural communities that occupy the blank spaces on the map beyond Las Vegas and Reno known as "the other Nevada." Far from being caught in a backwater, White Pine County might find it is actually riding the crest of a new wave.

In any case, no one in Ely is about to roll over and die. As resident Dave Tilford puts it, "We can't go anywhere but up."

"If we don't do anything else," adds Barbara Forman, "we're gonna raise everybody's spirits." □

Richard Menzies, a freelance writer and photographer based in Salt Lake City, is a frequent Nevada contributor.



Just wait till
they walk through that door
and smell this roast beef cooking.

Mmmm. Mmmm.

Dad'll carve just what
everyone likes, juicy, medium rare
slices for Paul and Anne.

Thick medium slices for me and Dad.

And for the children,
those crispy, savory end pieces.

It's so good
to have the family together,
I wish Sunday
came seven days a week.

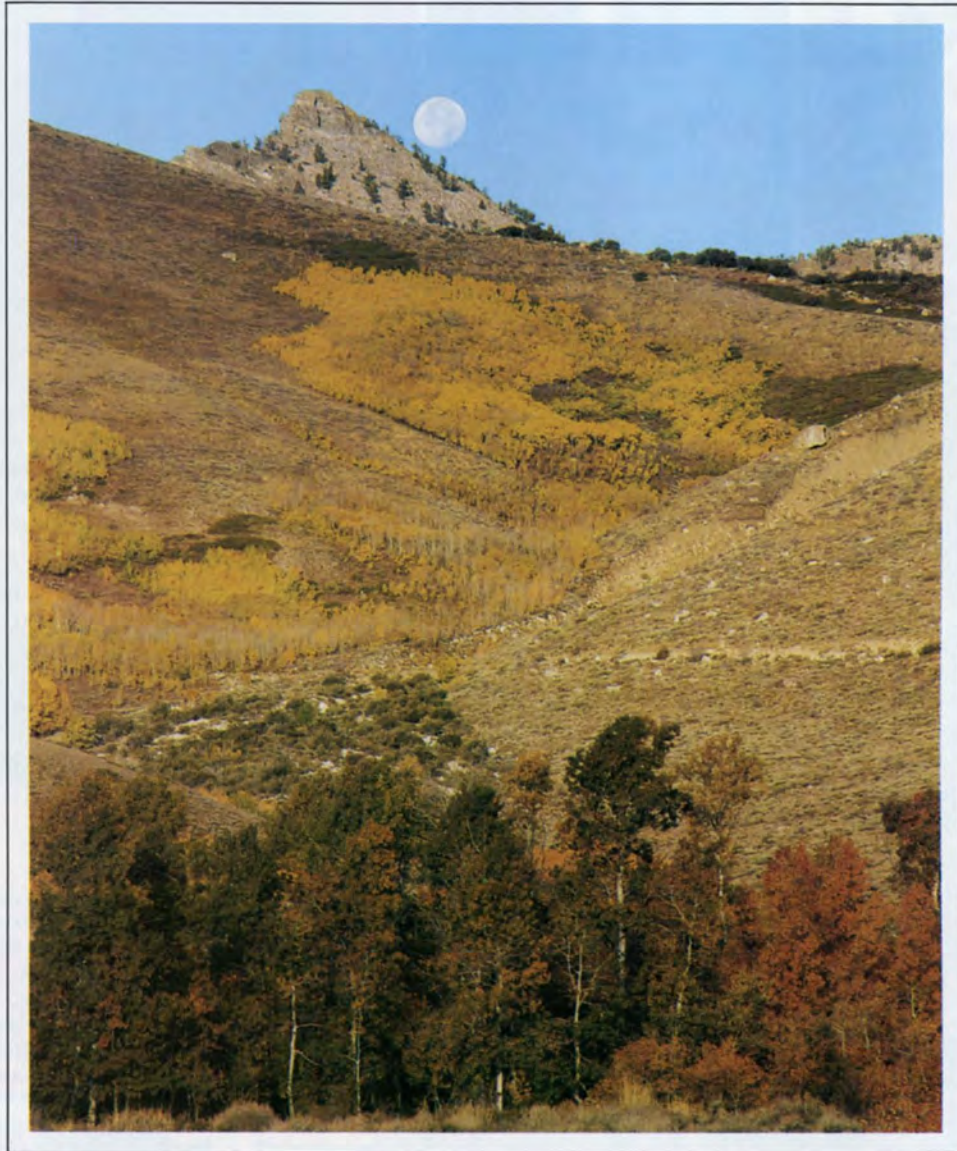


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Autumn Aspens

When autumn thrills Nevada with her chilling caress, the landscape swoons, blushing in a shimmering array of colors. Photographer Gary Gilardi shares a vision of this fall romance with a lazy moon, hovering above the Ruby Mountains near Elko, while Michael Powers offers a golden bouquet of quaking aspens to a cobalt-blue sky.—JC

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CIGARETTE GEORGE

It was a mystery where he came from, who he was, and where he'd got that endless supply of gold coins he'd plunk on the bar.

By Harry E. Webb

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

Cigarette George was an enigma from the moment he stepped off a Southern Pacific train until his death. In fact, the skein of his life became more tangled *after* his death.

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

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

There being no such commodity in this town where the Eureka-Nevada Narrow

Gauge was the chief succor for the town's few citizens, George paid \$10 for an old "popcorn wagon." Then with the help of a few of his new-found friends, a heavy trunk and the wagon were deposited near a pint-sized spring that furnished the Narrow Gauge and half the town's folks their water supply. The Southern Pacific owned every odd-numbered section 20 miles each side of its tracks from "here to there," and since Palisade was on an odd section, anyone and everyone had built a home, store, or saloon where they pleased.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the door Cigarette called back, "I make 'em, Bill. But my old Pappy always said, 'Never teach another man your trade, son, or he'll put you out of business.'" Cackling over this he rolled and lit a cigarette then got under his bulging tick and left us to wonder further.

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

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

Weeks later several of us ranchers were

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Three days after starting, the cattle, now weak, had made the 20 miles to Palisade where Goodfellow received bad news from the S.P. agent. "Not a chance, George, to get stock cars here for at least three days."

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

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

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

"You're the biggest damn fool this side of

hell!" George was told as he bought hot-toddies for the crowd.

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

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

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

Had it not been for killing a raccoon one fall day as I rode in to Palisade for mail, it is doubtful if I would have ever learned one whit more of Cigarette George's past than had any other of his friends. He lived but a few yards from two members of the Hawkins family and was largely dependent on them for little favors.

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

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

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

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

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

"She still have it, I reckon," he replied.

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

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

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

A year later I had been north of the Humboldt looking for a horse of mine that had gotten away with a saddle on him. I had sold the bronc and saddle to a young fellow who promised to pay me the \$50 "in a few days." But the kid was sparking a neighbor Mormon girl and in the interim had gone over one afternoon to the Pace homestead to visit her.

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

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

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

"What happened?" I asked.

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

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

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

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

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

An exclamation from the coroner brought our attention and we saw him untying a large tobacco sack. "Had this pinned inside an undershirt," he told us. "He had two undershirts on." At the table he began counting bills as our eyes bugged out further with each counted hundred. "Seventeen hundred and fifty dollars!" the coroner said. "Have you any way," he asked Nat, "to keep this money until your district attorney gets here?" He was told the money could be kept in the safe at the Narrow Gauge office, so Nat signed a form and George's earthly remains was on its way with the undertaker.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Harry E. Webb, who once rode with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, has been a cowboy, trapper, actor and author. His Nevada stories are presented in each issue.



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THE NEVADA CALENDAR

September & October 1983

BY MELISSA CRONIN

A Ballooning Celebration

In celebration of the first balloon flight 200 years ago, the skies over Reno will be filled with a rainbow of colors September 9-11 when 100 hot-air balloons float over the city in the Great Reno Balloon Race.

Competing for \$10,000 in prize money, the balloonists lift off each day in the early morning hours from Rancho San Rafael (right) north of town, or from an alternate southern site depending on wind conditions. The balloons will be visible from all over the Reno/Sparks area as they float above the Truckee Meadows.

The race also features a "key grab" on the final two days, challenging the participants to swoop down and pick up a set of car keys to win a 1984 Chrysler G-24 Laser sports car. The public is invited—there's no admission charge—and souvenirs and refreshments will be available at the launch site.

The Great Reno Balloon Race is the first of three Nevada celebrations of the 200th anniversary of flight. On the following week, the Reno National Championship Air Races take place at the Stead airfield, and on October 28-30 balloonists soar above the Las Vegas Valley in the North Las Vegas Fairshow.



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Las Vegas/South

PGA

SEPTEMBER

Frontier 500, 8/31-9/2, 500-mile off-road auto race from Las Vegas to Reno. Registration and tech inspection in Frontier Hotel parking lot on Wed. & Thurs., on Fri. morning the race starts at Sloan (15 miles south of Las Vegas) and ends in Reno with an all-night celebration at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center; for info. call the Frontier, 734-0110

Art Exhibit, thru 9/16, featuring work by instructors and students, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, Las Vegas, 386-6211

Art Exhibit, thru 9/16, pencil portraits by Toni Mazzola, Charleston Heights Arts Center, Las Vegas, 386-6384

Reflectives II, thru 9/23, paintings by Minnie Dobbins, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Indian Basket Weavings, thru 9/31 also history of gambling in Nevada prior to 1931 with antique gaming devices and early photographs, 8:30am-4:30pm Wed.-Sun., Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas, 385-0115

Art Exhibit, 1-30, yarn and wood art plus Ojo Dias creations by Bill Sanner, Henderson Library, 565-9247

Labor Day Wild West Wheelie Show, 2-3, Wheelstanders competition involving quarter-mile drag races of up to 120mph and jet dragsters (powered by jet engines) racing up to 275mph; 8pm, Las Vegas Speedrome, 644-1482

Picche Labor Day Celebration, 2-5, on Fri. night street dance; on Sat. kids games, bazaar, wrist wrestling, demolition derby; on Sun. soapbox derby, cake walk, mud wrestling, firemen's dinner, softball and fireworks; on Mon. pancake breakfast, 10am parade, mining contest, booths, baseball tournaments, rockhound and black powder club exhibitions continuously, Picche, 962-5170

UNLV v. UNR, 3, football, 7:30pm, Silver Bowl, Las Vegas, 739-3267

"The Shaggy Dog," 3, Disney movie, free, 10am at Charleston Heights Arts Center, 1pm at Flamingo Library, 3:30pm at West Las Vegas Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon, 4-5, fundraiser for the Muscular Dystrophy Assn., Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, 731-7110

Art Show, 4-28, oils by Dan Rice and Francis Cortney; watercolors by Joyce Burke, Las Vegas Art Museum, 647-4300

Photography Exhibit, 4-30, by Keith Grove, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

"Bambi," 5, children's film, free, 3:30pm at Las Vegas Library, 6:30pm at Sunrise Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Poetry Reading and Discussion, 6, 7pm, Las Vegas Poetry Group, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

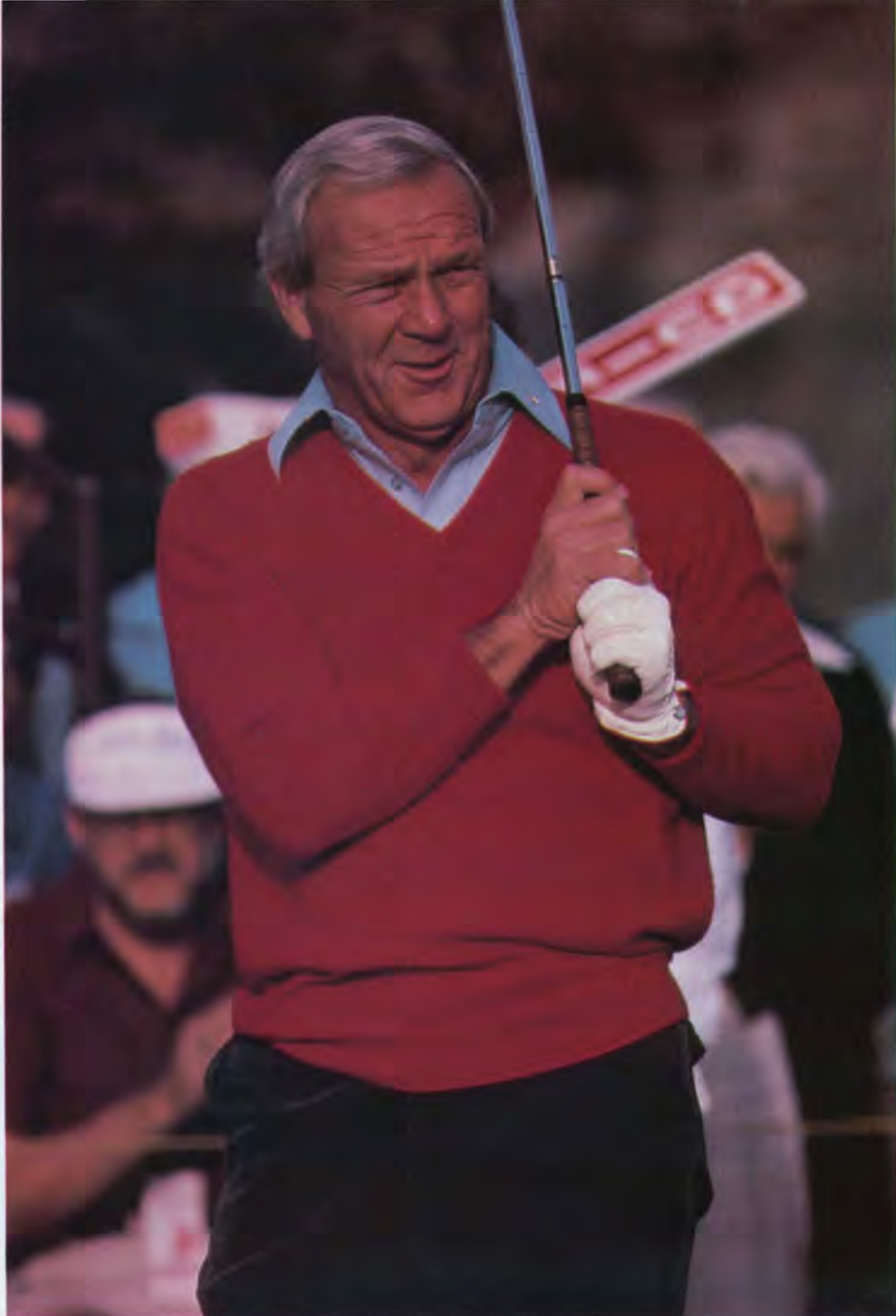
Alexis Arguello v. Aaron Pryor, 9, two famous boxers fight for the WBA junior welterweight title, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, 731-7110

Evening Starwatch Walk, 10, 6:30-9:30pm, meet at Atlatl Rock, Valley of Fire State Park, 385-0264

Night Motorcycle Motocross, 10, 5pm, Las Vegas Speedrome, 644-1482

Las Vegas Boat & Ski Club 50- & 75-Mile Ski Races, 10-11 8am, Boulder Beach, Lake Mead, 293-2034

Clark County Basque Festival, 10-11 dancing, wood chopping, weight lifting, bota bag contest, Basque yell, food, and drink both days with Mass on Sun., starts at 5:30pm on Sat., 11am on Sun., Silk Purse Ranch & Equine Center at Tule Springs, 10 miles north of Las Vegas off U.S. 95, 385-5147



Las Vegas' Million-Dollar Classic

Back in the '50s, '60s, and early '70s the top swingers of the men's pro golf tour gathered in Las Vegas for the Desert Inn's Tournament of Champions and the Sahara Invitational. The 24-hour action and star entertainment were pleasing distractions, and those golfers who got to bed at a reasonable hour had a chance on the final day to be photographed scooping up thousands of silver dollars from the traditional Vegas victory cup.

This September 14-18 the men's tour returns to Southern Nevada with the Las Vegas Pro-Celebrity Classic, which brings together perhaps the best purse and field since the game was imported from the misty hills of Scotland. The purse is golf's richest, \$1,052,000, with the winner taking home \$135,000. (The next richest is the Tournament Players Championship, which has \$700,000 in total money and a \$126,000 first-place prize.) All the PGA's high rollers will be in town—famous

pros like Tom Watson, Jack Nicklaus, Craig Stadler, Johnny Miller, Lee Trevino, and, of course, Arnold Palmer. Among the celebrity duffers will be Glen Campbell, Dean Martin, Mac Davis, and Robert Goulet.

In all, 208 pros and 832 amateurs (at \$2,500 a pop) will play the four-day pro-am on the championship links of the Desert Inn, Dunes, Showboat, and Las Vegas country clubs. The pros will play the final round of their 90-hole tournament on Sunday at the Las Vegas Country Club.

Although the purse is the sport's biggest, you'll find the spectator tickets are bargains. Daily gallery badges are \$10 each and weekly badges \$30. For \$40 you can watch the play all week and have clubhouse privileges, too. Ticket proceeds go to an array of Southern Nevada charities. For information call the tournament office at 382-6616 or, toll free, 800-722-GOLF.

Sidewalk Art Show, 10-11 free, 10am-6pm, handmade pottery, jewelry & paintings, Jaycee Park, Las Vegas, 386-6511

Hoedown, 11 Las Vegas Civic Symphony, \$5, 2-5pm, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, Las Vegas, 386-6211

"The Shaggy Dog," 13, Disney film, free, 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Las Vegas Pro-Celebrity Classic, 14-18, inaugural of golf's richest tournament (with a \$1,052,000 purse). For first four days 832 amateurs and celebrities tee off with 208 pros from the PGA Tour and PGA Senior Tour on the Dunes, Desert Inn, Showboat, and Las Vegas country clubs. Pros shoot for the \$135,000 first-prize check on the fifth day at the Las Vegas Country Club; for info. and tickets call 382-6616

Paite Portraits, 15-12/1 photo exhibit by Harry Simpson, 8:30am-4:30pm daily, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

Hispanic Festival, 16-18, booths, Latin American dishes, exhibit hall, Cashman Field, Las Vegas, 385-7367

UNLV v. Univ. of the Pacific, 17 football, 7:30pm, Silver Bowl, Las Vegas, 739-3267

Drags, 17 timed trials at 5pm, elimination at 8pm, Las Vegas Speedrome, 644-1482

Pahrump Harvest Festival Fair and Rodeo, 17-18, on Sat. parade at 9am, PRCA rodeo, horseshoe and golf tournament, rodeo queen crowning, beard judging, dance, with rodeo finals held on Sun., midway and barbecues both days, Pahrump, 727-5800

Las Vegas Civic Symphony Concert, 18, Masatoshi Mitsumoto, conductor, 3pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, Las Vegas, 386-6383

Fall Film Festival, 18, "Spring in Iceland," "A Touch of Finland," and Scandinavia A Place Apart," 2pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810



CAROLINE J. HADLEY

Put Your Bet on Elko

The Elko County Fair and Livestock Show on September 2-5 keeps locals and visitors hopping with 4-H shows, stock horse events, a crash derby, and heavy-duty partying. But the highlights of the fair are the fast-paced horse races (there are at least 10 each day) that have been held in Elko for the past 61 years. There is pari-mutuel betting on all races. The competitions at the fairgrounds' track include the Intermountain Quarter Horse Futurity, the Elko County Derby, and the Elko County Thoroughbred Futurity.

Las Vegas Basque Fest

The second annual Clark County Basque Festival on September 10-11 brings the Old World festivities made famous in northern ranching towns to Southern Nevada. All the zesty ingredients are here, from contests of strength and traditional dances to hearty food and lots of red wine. The Silk Purse Ranch and Equine Center at Tule Springs, 10 miles north of Las Vegas off U.S. 95, is the site of this year's shindig.

Gin Rummy Tournament, 18-22, Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas, 739-2222

Meadow Valley Days, 18-24, talent show, rodeo, horseshoe tournament, music, overnight hay ride, girl's softball tournament, Caliente, 726-3129

Japanese Performing Arts Posters, 18-10/14, Charleston Heights Arts Center, Las Vegas, 386-6384

Desert Readings, 22, poetry readings and discussions, 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

The Gambler Nationals, 22-24, National Hot Rod Assn./Winston World Championship, division points meeting open to all, 10am, Las Vegas Speedrome, 644-1482

George Benson, 23, outdoor concert, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, 731-7865

"Don Pasquale," 23-25, Donizetti opera, 8pm Fri-Sat., 2pm on Sun., Las Vegas Chamber Players and Opera Theatre of Southern Nevada, Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 739-3420

"Frederick Douglas, One Man Show," 24, play, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, Las Vegas, 386-6211

Salute to Singles Country Western Jamboree & Oldtime Country Fair, 24, singles only, music by Charlie Straight & the Allstars, booths, games, arts and crafts, \$4, 7pm-midnight, Lorenzi Park, Las Vegas, 386-6511

Flute/Cello Duo, 25, concert by Jo Marcune and Barbara Gurley, 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Pan Tournament, 25-27 Union Plaza Hotel, Las Vegas, 386-2110

Three Mediums by David Donovan, 25-10/21 art display, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

"That's Entertainment," 27 film, 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Tropicana Sports Car Olympics, 29-10/2, rally, autocross, funkhana, and concours d'elegance open to the public. Entry fee \$30 plus \$10 per event entered. Free for spectators, Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas, 873-1926

Amarillo Slim's Craps Shoot Out, 30-10/3, \$70,000 in cash and prizes, open to public, Sahara, Las Vegas, 588-6211

OCTOBER

Kenny Loggins, 1 outdoor concert, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, 731-7865

Art in the Park Festival, 1-2, arts and crafts, re-



CAROLINE J. HADLEY

Taking a Whirl

For the 31st year the Nevada State Fair opens in Reno on September 7-11 with its annual array of rides, shows, contests, and general old-fashioned fun. There's music with country stars Boxcar Willie, Reba McEntire, and Garry Morris. Other headliners include Alvin and the Chipmunks, racing camels under the direction of the International Order of Camel Jockeys, and the Nevada ranch animals that wait patiently for livestock judges to pass around the ribbons. Besides commercial exhibits and countless agricultural and homemaking shows, fairgoers also can enjoy carnival rides and games. The five-day event takes place at the State Fairgrounds.

freshments, 10am-5pm, Government and Bicentennial parks, Boulder City, 293-2034

Fiber Art Guild Exhibit, 1-30, Henderson Library, 565-9247

Art Show, 2-11/2, work in encaustic by Suzanne Bloomfield; watercolors by Dave and Kay Robins; Las Vegas Art Museum, 647-4300

Urban Images, 2-11/4, art by Dennis Gershick, 3pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Caesars Palace Grand Prix, 6-9, Indy Car and Trans-Am racing featuring top drivers like A.J. Foyt, Al Unser, Rick Mears, and Mario Andretti. Practice and qualifying take place Thurs. and Fri., with Indy Car and Trans-Am races on Sat. afternoon and NASCAR West qualifying and racing on Sun., all at the track at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, 731-7865, 800-634-6681 or in Southern Cal. 213-436-9953

Concert, 8, Maestro Mstislav Rostropovich and the National Symphony Orchestra, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 871-2114

Johnny Cash/Glen Campbell, 8, outdoor concert, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, 731-7865

BMX Gold Cup Race, 8-9, bicycle motocross championship, includes winners from 17 qualifying races throughout the U.S. on Sat. gates open at 8am and pre-race starts at noon; on Sun. gates open at 7am and championship race starts at 10am, free, Cashman Sports Complex, Las Vegas, call Scott Sackett, 602-961-1903

"Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger," 11 film, 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Desert Readings, 13, poetry reading with Lucille Clifton, 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Henderson Expo '83, 14-16, booths, exhibits, carnival, food, bazaar, 6-10pm on Fri., 10am-10pm on Sat., noon-6pm on Sun., Henderson Convention Center, 565-8951

UNLV v. Hawaii, 15, football, 1pm, Silver Bowl, Las Vegas, 739-3267

Fall Film Festival, 16, "Lovely, Lively Bavaria," "The Munich Seasons," and "Treasures of Germany," 2pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Dyed Images, 16-11/11 exhibit of photographs using dye transfer, Charleston Heights Arts Center, Las Vegas, 386-6384

Stravinsky, Mozart, and Craft, 18, Las Vegas Chamber Players, 7pm, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 739-3420

Trio Serenata Concert, 20, 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Caliente Street Sale, 21-22, sidewalk sale throughout town, Caliente, 726-3129

UNLV v. Utah State, 22, football, 1pm, Silver Bowl, Las Vegas, 739-3267

J&B Gold Putter Award, 22-23, LPGA tournament, women pros putt for a \$100,000 purse, Desert Inn Country Club, Las Vegas, 733-4444

Frozen in Silver, 22-9/30/84, P.E. Larson's photographic essay of Goldfield circa 1905-07 8:30am-4:30pm Wed.-Sun., Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas, 385-0115

History of the Valley of Fire, 23, slide program at visitor center followed by car caravan to see petroglyphs at Atlati Rock and the park's petrified wood and sandstone cabins areas, 1-4pm, Valley of Fire State Park, 385-0264

Nevada Day Photo Exhibit, 24-30, show of photographs taken in Nevada, free, Meadows Mall, Las Vegas, 733-3812

"The Getaway," 25, film, 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

Nevada Day Luncheon, 26, western music, no-host cocktails at 11:30am, luncheon at 12:15pm, Holiday Inn, Center Strip, Las Vegas, 457-4664

Trio Serenata Concert, 27 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas, 733-7810

KNPR Craftworks Market, 28-30, booths, music, children's craft activities, 5-9pm preview sale on



Hot Air in North Las Vegas

The fifth annual North Las Vegas Fairshow and Nevada Championship Balloon Races lift off October 28-30 on the campus of Clark County Community College in North Las Vegas. The event's theme, "200 Years of Chasing Rainbows," salutes the bicentennial of hot-air ballooning.

Friday is Kids' Day, with balloon demonstrations and special events scheduled for school groups and organizations. Starting at sunup on both Saturday and Sunday, 75 to 100 balloonists compete in aerial games. The "striker grab" at 3 p.m. Saturday has an appropriate prize—a \$10,000 hot-air balloon.

The weekend festivities, which are hosted by the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, also feature a prince and princess contest, competition in bubblegum blowing and Halloween costumes, the Miss North Las Vegas Pageant, a western hat contest, and, for men only, the battle for the coveted Mr. Macho Nevada title.

Other events include a carnival, softball tournament, food fair, and arts and crafts. Admission, parking, and entertainment are all free.



MARK CROSSE

Give Him a Cigar

Showing that whistling isn't always for the birds, puckered-up whistlers compete in categories from classical to country during the World's 6th International Whistle-Off, September 24-25, at the Legislative Mall in Carson City. Shown above is Simon Argevitch of Oakland, California, who won second place in last year's solo novelty competition by whistling with his mouth stuffed with cigars.

Fri., 10am-dusk on Sat. & Sun., Reed Whipple Field, Las Vegas, 456-6695

North Las Vegas Fairshow and Nevada Championship Balloon Races, 28-30, 75 to 100 hot-air balloonists compete in races, with demonstrations. Contests include Halloween costumes, Miss North Las Vegas pageant, western hats, Mr. Macho Nevada 1983, and softball, plus a carnival, food fair, arts and crafts, all free, at Clark County Community College, North Las Vegas, 642-1944

Caesars Palace Rodeo, 28-30, PRCA rodeo in the outdoor stadium at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, 736-7333

UNLV v. San Diego, 29, football, 1pm, Silver Bowl, Las Vegas, 739-3267

Musical Arts Singers, 30, 3pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, Las Vegas, 451-6692

Central

SEPTEMBER

Hesselgesser's Doll Collection Preview, thru 10/30, lifelong collection of Baker resident, 9am-4pm Mon.-Fri., White Pine Public Museum, Ely, 289-4710

Museum Exhibits, thru 11/1 displays on the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad and on funerals at turn of the century in central Nevada; noon-6pm Tues.-Sat., Central Nevada Museum, 482-9676

Geology Slide Show, 2, 8:15pm, Lehman Caves National Monument, Baker, 69 miles east of Ely, 234-7311

Nature Walk, 3-4, Lehman Caves National Monument, Baker, 69 miles east of Ely, 234-7311

Nevada State Four-Man Team Golf Championship, 24-25, open to public, White Pine Golf



JAY ALDRICH

Dancing the Night Away in Genoa

Arthur Murray scouts will be hiding in the shadows on Saturday night, September 24, when folks turn out for the Genoa Candy Dance, a yearly tradition begun in 1919 by Genoa residents to pay for their street lights. There's also arts and crafts, a barbecue, and a huge candy sale during the weekend festivities in Nevada's oldest town.

Course, Ely, 289-4095

White Pine High School Rodeo, 24-25, fairgrounds, Ely, 289-8877

OCTOBER

Nevada 83, 12-26, photo show, Central Nevada Museum, Tonopah, 482-9676

Mizpah Hotel's 75th Birthday Celebration, 15, in honor of the Tonopah hotel's opening October 8, 1908. Saturday festivities include parade at 2:30pm with cars from the Vintage and Model A automobile clubs of Las Vegas, area high school bands, and military personnel with ultralight aircraft buzzing overhead, followed by a barbecue, outdoor dance, and champagne; on Fri. morning the parade cars will be on display at the Union Plaza in Las Vegas; Tonopah, 386-2110

North

SEPTEMBER

Photo Show, thru 10/1, photographs from 1900 to 1980 covering the history of Duck Valley Indian Reservation, 9am-5pm Mon.-Sat., 1-5pm Sun., Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418



JIM CRANDALL

Camel Crowd in Virginia City

For the 25th year, riders race madly-galloping camels in the Virginia City Camel Races on September 10-11. A public party Friday night has music and prizes for Arabic and 1870s costumes, and on weekend race days there are camel rides and 1 p.m. parades. You also can get a \$2 button for bleacher seats.

Fly-In, 2-4, Icarian Flying Club of Burbank, CA. flies to Cactus Pete's, Jackpot, 755-2321

Elko County Fair, 2-5, exhibits, horse racing with pari-mutuel betting, crash derby, fairgrounds, Elko, 738-5141

Winnemucca Rodeo and Tri County Fair, 3-5, on Sat. 3pm parade, 10pm street dance; on Sat. & Sun. 8pm rodeo; fair with 4-H livestock show and sale ongoing, 623-2225

Capriola Days, 8-14, roping exhibitions and contests, fairgrounds, Elko, 738-5816

Festival of Planes, 10-11 displays of various planes, aviation movies, seminars, Elko Airport, 738-7157

Cactus Pete's \$20,000 Pro-Am Golf Tournament, 13-17 Jackpot Golf Course, 755-2264

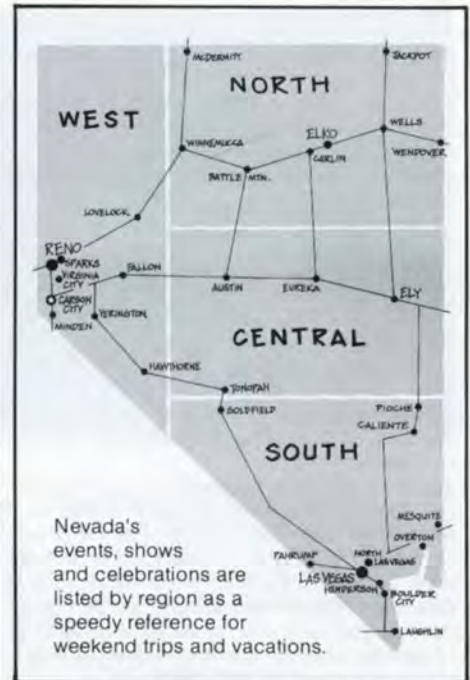
Butch Cassidy Days, 17 melodrama, hay ride, staged holdup and shoot-out, barbecue, stock car races at fairgrounds, Winnemucca, 623-5445

Five-State Horseshoe Tournament, 24-25, players from Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Washington and Montana, trophies and cash awards, Guide & Tackle Shop, Jackpot, 755-2321

Annual Wally Byam Airstream Trailer Rally, 30-11/2, Cactus Pete's, Jackpot, 755-2321

OCTOBER

Cactus Pete's Air Race, 1 from Great Falls, MT. to Jackpot, 755-2321



Pro-Am Mixed Open, 2-4, golf tournament, Ruby View Golf Course, Elko, 738-6212

Feedlot Ropers Competition, 3-7 Spring Creek Horse Palace, Elko, 738-5816

Photo Show, 4-19, work by Ansel Adams and Edward Weston, 9am-5pm Mon.-Sat., 1-5pm Sun., Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

Condor Productions Antique Show, 7-9, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

Man-Mule Race, 9, race between humans, horses, and a mule from Elko to Lamoille, 20 miles, Elko, 738-7225

Elko Auto Dealers Auto Show, 14-15, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

Northwest Pigeon Racing Combine Convention, 29-30, pigeon show, awards banquet, forums, Cactus Pete's, Jackpot, 755-2321

Reno/West

SEPTEMBER

A Contemporary Exhibit of Native Nevadan Land and People, thru 9/3, mixed media by Shoshone artist Jack Malotte, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 322-2751

Frozen in Silver, thru 9/7 P.E. Larson's photographic essay of Goldfield circa 1905-07 8:30am-4:30pm Wed.-Sun., Nevada State Museum, Carson City, 885-4810

Nevada 83, thru 9/14, photo show, Lyon County Library, Yerington, 463-2387

Art Show, thru 9/21 Fort Mason Printmakers and Student Drawings, 8am-5pm Mon.-Fri., Sheppard Gallery Church Fine Arts Building, UNR, Reno, 784-6658

Carson Valley Photography Show, thru 9/30, 10am-4:30pm daily, Genoa Courthouse Museum, 265-2905

Palute Indian Exhibit, thru 10/30, art and artifacts, 10am-4pm Sat., 1-4pm Sun., Lyon County Museum, Yerington

Western U.S. Diamond Belt Amateur Boxing Tournament, 2-4, 7pm, State Fairgrounds, Reno, 882-3514

Nevada Dirt Track Championship, 3, open-wheel modifieds, super stocks, stocks, and crash-and-bang jalopies, Lovelock Raceway, 273-2289

Frontier 500 Off-Road Race Reception, 3, Convention Center, Reno, 785-4800

Nevada Landmarks Society Antiques Sale, 3, 8am-5pm, Roberts House, Carson City, 882-5950

Lions' Junior Rodeo and Parade, 3-5, on Sat. rodeo; on Sun. afternoon rodeo finals; on Mon. parade at 10:30am, fairgrounds, Fallon, 423-6811

Silver State Marathon and Half Marathon, 4, races of 26.2 and 13.1 miles, 6:30am, entry fee \$12, Davis Creek Park, Washoe Valley, 789-4658

Tanner's World Wide Flea Market, 4, Convention Center, Reno, 785-4800

Pacific Crest Canoe and Portage Race, 4, nine miles of canoeing with one mile portage, from Hyatt Beach at Carnelian Bay to Pacific Crest Complex in Incline Village, open to all classes, U.S. Canoe Assn. sanctioned, Lake Tahoe, 831-4105

Holiday Steam-Up, 4-5, V&T engine No. 25, second of two restored locomotives, steams up for holiday visitors, 8:30am-4:30pm, Virginia & Truckee Railroad Museum, Carson City, 885-4810

Labor Day Parade, 5, festivities on Maine St., Fallon, 423-6655

Nevada State Fair, 7-11, carnival, midway, livestock and agricultural exhibits, demolition derby, entertainment, and camel races, 4-11pm Wed.-Thurs., 4pm-midnight Fri., 10am-midnight Sat., adults \$3 per day, children 6-12 \$1.50, children under 6 and disabled persons free, State Fairgrounds, Reno, 785-4306

Great Reno Balloon Race, 9-11, competition with 100 hot-air balloons flying over Reno, \$10,000 prize money, lift off daily from Rancho San Rafael (or from alternate site depending on wind conditions), Reno, 788-3025

Hidden Cave Tours, 10, 10am, Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

World's Toughest Triathlon, 10, 2.4-mile swim, 120-mile bicycle race, and 26.2-mile (marathon) run with most of the course above 6,000 feet. Begins with the swim near Tahoe Keys and ends at Stateline; \$25,000 purse; South Lake Tahoe, 916-541-1660

Trophy Regatta, 10, Reno Hobie Fleet 203, east end Donner Lake, 322-4853

Virginia City Camel Races, 10-11, on Sat. & Sun. 9am races and 1pm parade through town; on Fri. night public is invited to pre-race party with costume contest and music, Virginia City, 847-0311

Carson City Second Unrated Novice Chess Tournament, 11, entry-level chess competition, 9am registration, Edith W. Fritch Elementary School, Carson City, 883-6597

Planetarium Show, 13-11/7 "Getting Ready for Halley's Comet," 1, 3, & 7:30pm Mon.-Sun. with additional program on Sat. at 11am, Fleischmann Planetarium, UNR, Reno, 784-4812

Chinese Youth Festival, 14, Pioneer Theater, Reno, 784-6874

Reno National Championship Air Races, 15-18, with more than \$300,000 in prize money for the 20th anniversary event, the air races feature five classes of pylon racing, skydiving, stunt flying, and demonstrations by the Snowbirds and the Blue Angels. All events take place at Stead Air Field, 10 miles north of Reno; for information and tickets call 826-7500

Kustom Kemps of America Car Show, 16-18, State Fairgrounds, Reno, 785-4306

Reno Promenaders' Jackpot Jambo-Reno, 17, square dancing, \$5 per couple, 7:30-11pm, Senior Citizens Service Center, Reno, 972-7878

Ferrari Hill Climb, 17-18, Silver City to Virginia City, 847-0177

100-Mile Horse Endurance Race, 17-18, Virginia City, 847-0177

Fort Churchill Battle, 17-18, Nevada Civil War Volunteers stage a mock battle at the fort. Also,



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PHILLIP M. PADELLFORD

Big Battle for Fort Churchill

Recreating history as it might have been, elements of the Confederate Army plan to attack and capture Fort Churchill on Sunday, September 18, with all the sound and fury of the war that gave Nevada statehood. The battle will be fierce, and the authentically-dressed soldiers (particularly the Rebs) will be shouting above the noise of rifles and cannons. The overall confusion will be tremendous, and by mid-morning the explosions will leave a smoke screen hanging over the visitor center of the state park located eight miles south of Silver Springs.

The second annual sagebrush battle staged by the Nevada Civil War Volunteers is the main but not the only feature of the "living history" day at Fort Churchill. Camel riders, also in period uniforms, will demonstrate the work of the desert camel corps of the same era. Along the historic Pony Express Trail, which runs by the park, members of the Pony Express Association will show how riders changed mounts when carrying the mail along the Carson River route in 1860-61. And between the mock battles the National Muzzle Loaders Association will conduct black powder shooting contests.

The scene of all this firepower, Fort Churchill, was built in 1860 but didn't see a battle until last year's skirmish. "There are no reported incidents of Confederate soldiers being in Nevada," says Jim Prida, park supervisor.

The Nevada Civil War Volunteers, who gave their first demonstrations at the park in 1980, were organized by Chuck Tinder, general manager of the Comstock Hotel in Reno. An Illinois native and descendant of both Yankees and

Rebs, Tinder got the Civil War bug after visiting a battle re-enactment in Illinois 10 years ago. Then, in 1979, he ran newspaper ads asking to meet people with similar interests. He says he ended up "hanging around the back of saloons in downtown Reno looking foolish, dressed in a full Civil War uniform, waiting for someone to answer the ads and show up for a meeting."

Eventually a few people did, although Tinder recalls it was a difficult task to recruit troops who were serious about history. "We literally marched down residential streets and yelled, 'You guys in there reading your books, get out here in the sunshine, get a uniform on and join us.'" Today the volunteers, most of whom are from the Reno-Sparks area, number about 40. They give programs to schools, scout groups, and public gatherings around the state. Tinder, currently Chief of Staff, says his group would be happy to help start branches in other parts of Nevada.

Meanwhile, the volunteers will be mustering for the mock battle at Fort Churchill, which is free and open to the public. Although the action will be close and noisy, the events' planners say spectators will be safe from harm.

The event is the culmination of the "living history" programs staged by the Fort Churchill staff each weekend from Memorial Day through September, when rangers describe life at the fort during its operation in the 1860s.

The state park features 20 campsites with barbecues, tables, and plenty of shade trees along the Carson River. Be there early September 18 if you want to see a bit of history in the remaking.—Phillip M. Padellford

black powder shooting competitions, demonstrations by Pony Express Assn., camel riders, and park rangers, Fort Churchill State Monument, 8 miles south of Silver Springs, 577-2345

Snaffle Bit Futurity, 17-25, horse competition, Convention Center, Reno, 916-655-3274

Aaron Rosand, 18, violinist, 2pm, Piper's Opera House, Virginia City, 847-0433

St. Mary's Hospital Guild Golf Exhibition, 19, pros Craig Stadler and Gary Koch play 18 holes, 1pm, \$10 general and \$5 students; \$50 patron tickets also include 10am brunch followed by a clinic, Washoe County Golf Course, Reno, 786-8825

Nevada 83, 21-10/3, photo show, Walker Wassuk Arts Center, Hawthorne, 945-3030

Dean Parker Quarterhorse Show and Sale, 22-24, State Fairgrounds, Reno, 801-752-7701

Psychic Fair, 22-10/2, private readings available from more than 25 psychic readers, astrologers, tarot card readers, palmists, psychometry, past-life readers, and numerologists; Shoppers Square, Reno, 322-8770

Northern Nevada Open State Chess Championship, 23-25, chess, \$24 entry fee prior to 9/18, \$30 thereafter. 9-10am registration, Sands Hotel, Reno, 358-2557

Art Showing, 23-10/18, paintings by Cherie Raciti and Mike Diven and photos by Leslie Damschroder, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri., South Gallery, Church Fine Arts Building, UNR, Reno, 784-6658

Flames of History, 23-8/31/84, brief history of firefighting in Carson City with equipment and graphics loaned by Warren Engine Co. No. 1 8:30am-4:30pm daily, Nevada State Museum, Carson City

Johnny Nava v. Nicky Walker, 24, middle-weight boxing, 8pm, Sahara Tahoe, 588-6211

Hidden Cave Tours, 24, 10am, Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

UNR v. Boise State, 24, football, 1pm, Mackay Stadium, UNR, Reno, 784-4697

World's 6th International Whistle-Off, 24-25, whistlers compete in musical categories from classical to country, 9am, Legislative Mall, Carson City, 882-1565

Genoa Candy Dance Arts & Crafts Fair, 24-25, candy sale, arts & crafts, 10am-5pm, barbecue noon-5pm, both days; on Sat. candy dance 8pm-midnight; dance tickets \$8 singles and \$15 couples, Mormon Station State Park, Firehouse, and Town Hall, Genoa, 782-2340

Folk Fair, 25, music and crafts, 10am-5pm, Nevada Historical Society, Reno, 789-0190

Sierra Symphony Concerto, 25, Pioneer Theater, Reno, 784-6830

Septembre Affaire, 28, no-host cocktails at 6pm, dinner at 7pm followed by fashion show and auction, reservations suggested, Nevada Opera Assn., Reno Hilton, 786-4046

Talent Show, 30, Washoe County Republican Party, Reno Little Theater, 786-3146

OCTOBER

UNR v. Idaho State, 1, football, 1pm, Mackay Stadium, UNR, Reno, 784-4697

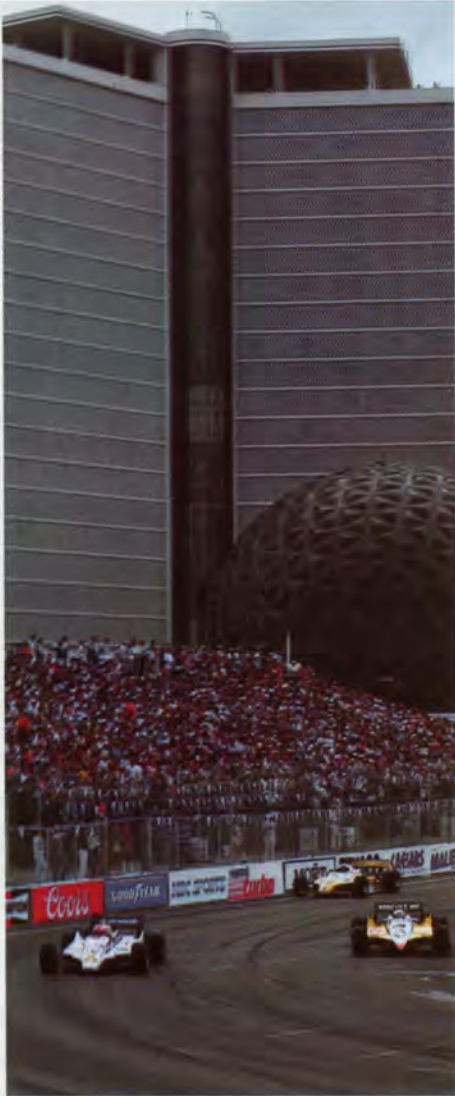
Great High Sierra Chili Cook-Off, 1-2, cash prizes, country-western music, Ormsby House, Carson City, 882-1890

Fun Day, 2, horseshoes, trapshoot, gymkhana, cutting horse event, barbecue, 9am, at the baseball field & roping arena, Wellington, 465-2224

Reno Philharmonic Concert, 4, 8:15pm, Pioneer Theater, Reno, 329-1324

Winter Show, 6-9, sale and show of winter sports equipment, clothing, and home improvements; crafts show, acrobatic ski jump demonstration, fashion show, ice skating demonstration, Northern

(Continued on page 43)



Formula One cars roared in '82 (left) while Indy cars will please the crowds in '83. In the photo at the bottom of the page are Mario Andretti and Paul Newman.



Indy Comes to Las Vegas

Every Memorial Day Weekend in Indianapolis 400,000 people, America's largest sports crowd, gather to hear the most thrilling chorus in motor racing: Indy cars in full song.

And this fall they'll be in Las Vegas at the Caesars Palace Grand Prix, roaring through the 1.25-mile track erected in the big strip hotel's parking lot. The dates are October 6-9 for practice, qualifying, and racing for competitors in Trans-Am and NASCAR West classes besides the CART/PPG Indy Car World Series. Last year's Formula One cars won't be returning; the Indy cars will be the stars this time.

Indy calls them "the greatest spectacle in racing." No question their drivers are the greatest names: A.J. Foyt, Al Unser, Sr. and Jr. ("Little Al"), Mario Andretti, Johnny Rutherford, brothers Rick and Roger Mears, '83 Indy winner Tom Sneva, and the new guys who make up the brightest crop to come along in years. There's Bobby Rahal, 1982's rookie of the year. Teo Fabi, champion ski racer turned grand prix racer turned Indy car racer, who blasted the establishment at Indy by taking the pole in a record 207-plus, and Derek Daly, another "rookie," but also a veteran of Formula One, an Irishman with a bright wit and a heavy foot.

Mainly though, it's an all-American show, and it's a wonder. Sixteen one-hundredths of a second separated first and second places after 500 miles at Indianapolis last year. The cars leap into the pits at 110 mph for fuel (alcohol-based) and tires. There is *lots* of passing and even more slipstreaming. And not the least interesting of the participants are the team owners.

Take Roger Penske. Gray-haired, distinguished,

formidable, he turns out cars named for him that are always preceded by the modifier "immaculate." His drivers are Mears, Rick, and Unser, Al, Sr. He's an ex-road racing champion who now owns half of Hertz Truck Leasing and a megaglomerate that includes, for all anyone knows, ITT, AT&T, and GM.

The Forsythe Brothers rent portable boilers to motels gone temporarily cold. They also sponsor Fabi.

U.E. "Pat" Patrick is your basic, average oil billionaire.

When you watch the Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART) show in action, you are watching the best, the very, absolutely, totally, utterly unquestionably best in professional racing.

And the fastest. And the meanest. And the slickest. And the best performed.



Wrapping around Saturday's CART race are a pair of even more blatantly American events: a National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) event for American sedans, and a round in the Trans-American Sedan Championship (Trans-Am—and now you know where the Pontiac model got its name). The first is a familiar sight on the West Coast, since NASCAR races from California to Nevada to Oregon and Washington. The second is making its first appearance in Nevada.

Briefly, an explanation of the Trans-Am, both car and circuit. The series started as a showcase for manufacturers. Great names (Parnelli Jones, Dan Gurney, Peter Revson) drove in the Trans-Am during its formative years for full-on factory teams from Mustang, Camaro, Javelin, and Challenger as well as that early Pontiac Firebird, which went into production as the TransAm.

For a while, the series languished. But recently it has revived, again with help from the factories. At Las Vegas, Paul Newman will likely be driving for Datsun while English endurance champion and television colorcaster David Hobbs drives for Camaro. Mazda will have a manufacturer's team. Ford will be there in force. Ford is really serious about reviving its performance image (the company won at LeMans in 1967), and the company has decided that entering a full-bore team in the Trans-Am is one of the best ways to do it.

So any racing fan within 500 miles will either be in Las Vegas come October 6-9 or be flat out of his mind.

There's no racing like CART racing. Missing A.J. alone is like going to New York and missing the Statue of Liberty.—Dutch Mandel

Flying High in Reno



Bill Stead's revival of air racing gave the sport its biggest lift.
By Buddy Frank

Two hundred years ago, when man finally got off the ground, the propeller was still a century away. It was in Jardin de la Muette, France, that aeronauts Jean-Francois Pilatre Rozier and Francois Laurent accomplished the flight dangling in a straw gondola under a paper bag filled with hot air. The date was November 21, 1783. You could win your share of trivia contests with those facts.

In fact, aviation history between Charles Lindbergh and Neil Armstrong is spotty for most of us. Who knows about the Montgolfier brothers' balloons or the rockets of Robert Goodard? Or why the Air and Space Bicentennial celebration this year spotlights Reno instead of Cape Canaveral or Kitty Hawk?

Most of the answers are in the public library, but less is generally known about Reno aviation history—how a Palomino Valley rancher revived air racing, and why Reno developed it into the premiere aviation event in the world.

Bill Stead was the rancher, and of course he was also a pilot. By the late 1950s he was one of the country's best, a distinction gained from piloting hydroplanes, however, not airplanes. Stead was one of that small group of daredevils who raced the "thunderboats" on the Gold Cup circuit across America. Showing an early talent for promotion, Stead convinced casino baron Bill Harrah to finance a local boat, the *Tahoe Miss*. Soon he was also organizing races on Lake Tahoe to give Harrah's Stateline operation a publicity boost.

Stead and Harrah split company in the early '60s but not before the rancher learned an important lesson about gaming and race promotion.

Unlike their Las Vegas counterparts, Western Nevada resorts in the 1960s were virtually deserted after the Labor Day weekend. Showrooms were closed, employees furloughed, and everyone bit the bullet until the snowplows punched through the Sierra sometime around Memorial Day. Since the weather in Reno was usually ideal from September through mid-November, Stead theorized that all the tourists really needed was an excuse to come back after the summer vacation boom.

With Harrah out of hydros and Reno's lack of a lake, Stead looked to his second love: airplanes. At the same time, aviation was returning to the spotlight. Alan Shepard had ridden the Mercury capsule into sub-orbit, and America was finally becoming a contender in the space race. The mood was right.

Airplane racing had been put into mothballs back in 1949 when a competitor plowed into a housing subdivision in Cleveland. It had become too dangerous to fly fast in urban areas. To Stead, the mix of circumstances was almost too good to be true: Reno needed a September drawing card, Nevada was the epitome of wide open spaces, and he personally knew enough hot-dog pilots to field a true national championship.

He convinced local casinos to put up the front money during those first years, appointed a committee of local leaders to serve as the board of directors, and recruited hundreds of volunteers. The first race was set for September 1964 at Sky Ranch, an abandoned roadhouse and airstrip north of town.

JAMES M. LeGOY PHOTOS





The results surprised even the optimistic Stead. The Harolds Club Transcontinental Trophy Race from St. Petersburg, Florida, to Reno drew national press attention, and the local pylon racing sessions were sellouts. Almost 100,000 people attended the nine-day inaugural. Mira Slovak became the first air champion in over a decade, and racing was back for a 20-year engagement.

The post-race accounting brought even more surprises. It had been a tourism bonanza. Pilots flocked to the area, jamming the airport with private planes and booking hotels solid. Within two years the event outgrew Sky Ranch and found a permanent home at the former Stead Air Force Base (named after Bill's brother, Croston, who was killed while flying a P-51 for the Nevada Air National Guard in Stead). And non-pilots were also coming to Reno, drawn by the chance to see the thundering World War II fighters in action.

From that first year the National Championships have been much more than a competitive sport. Here was an aviation museum alive with the sights and sounds of flying. The Smithsonian has the Wright Brothers' plane and Lindbergh's *Spirit of St. Louis*, but only Reno can produce the roar of a P-38 cranking her twin engines around a straightaway pylon or generate the goosebumps that come from watching a wing walker violate the rules of common sense. A static display of the Apollo lunar lander is memorable, but nothing like hearing a P-51 Mustang light off her Rolls-Royce V-12. You can watch "Twelve O'clock High" a dozen times and never appreciate a B-17 the way you do when you see one making a low-level pass in front of the Reno grandstand.

It's that combination of speed and mystique that's made the Nevada event click. For the price of admission you can see the fastest propeller machines in the world. (A record set at Reno in 1981 was 450.085 mph by Skip Holm in a P-51.) But you can also collect "Pappy" Boyington's autograph behind the grandstands or see an F-18 Navy fighter sitting next to a 1914 Army Air Corps Jenny. In the pits, you can marvel at mechanics struggling to change pistons between heats while your kids crawl into the bombardier's seat of a Flying Fortress. And of course there's always something overhead, whether it's the homebuilt Ultra Lights or the Blue Angel jets.

Thus the Reno National Championship Air Races, which take place September 15-18 and

are kicked off a week earlier with the Great Reno Balloon Race, have been named the centerpiece of the country's Air and Space Bicentennial celebration. When President Reagan made the official declaration, he said 1983 would "give America an opportunity to honor our country's achievements." Bill Stead died while racing his plane in Florida in 1966, but not before beginning the 20-year tradition in Reno that has been doing exactly what the President suggested. □

Buddy Frank of Reno is a freelance writer and regular contributor to Nevada on collectibles, antiques, people, and the sporting life. He has attended the Reno National Championship Air Races since they began in 1964.

DON DONDERO



Bill Stead, who raced planes and powerboats, got the Reno races off the ground.

Air Race Tips

The Reno Air races are exciting from almost any perspective, but we offer the following tips to increase your enjoyment:

- If you can possibly afford it, a pit pass is worth the money. It lets you get right next to the planes and provides an excellent view of everything.
- If you can't afford a pit pass on racing days (\$10 Thursday, \$15 Friday, \$20 Saturday and Sunday), visit the pit area on Wednesday. There's no admission charge.
- Bring a portable chair. A general admission ticket does not guarantee a bleacher seat, and there are *no* seats in the pits.
- Bring an aircraft radio. The pilot-to-tower chatter is fascinating. If you don't own one, stand next to someone who does.
- Take all your aviation books to the races. More than likely you'll find the authors (or the subjects) to autograph them.
- Dress for extremes. The weather is never fair. It's too hot, or too cold, or too rainy.
- Leave your standard camera lens at home. Air photography requires a long telephoto. Pit shots call for medium wide-angles. Do not shoot the racing with your Instamatic. The planes will look like dust particles on the front lens.
- Sunglasses are a must. So is sunscreen lotion. A Nevada sun visor is a handy item.
- Concession food is good, so don't bother bringing your own. Besides, the money raised goes to local charities. No food or drinks are allowed in the pits.
- Buy one of those books on World War II combat aircraft that are always on the discount tables in bookstores. You can use it as an excellent spotter's guide.
- Don't be in a hurry to leave after the last race. This is an excellent time to read a book or re-examine the aircraft. Exit traffic clears out in about 30 minutes, so save yourself the frustration.—BF



Where the Action Is!

CAESARS PALACE GRAND PRIX

Presented by NISSAN — Oct. 6-9, 1983

It's all happening at Caesars Palace — the 200-MPH Indy Cars are coming — October 6-9, 1983.
See stars of the racing world — Andretti, Mears, Unser, Cogan, Sneva
All racing at Caesars Palace in the CART/PPG World Series event.

**For ticket information . . . contact: Sports Consultants International
110 West Ocean Blvd., Suite A, Long Beach, CA 90802. Phone: (213) 432-7947.**

CALENDAR (Continued from page 38)

Nevada Powerlift and Bodybuilding Competition, \$2.50, Convention Center, Reno, 786-0163

"She Stoops to Conquer," 7-8, 18th century comedy by Oliver Goldsmith, 8pm, Nevada Repertory Company, Church Fine Arts Theater, UNR, Reno, 784-6505

UNR v. Cal. State Fullerton, 8, football, 1pm, Mackay Stadium, UNR, Reno, 784-4697

Hidden Cave Tours, 8, 10am, Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

Doll and Miniatures Show and Sale, 8-9, Convention Center, Reno, 345-0577

Journal Jog, 9, five-mile race starting and finishing at YMCA, 9am, Reno, 788-6200

"Swan Lake" and "I Pagliacci," 14-15, tickets from \$6.50, 8pm, Nevada Opera Assn., Pioneer Theater, Reno, 786-5105

"She Stoops to Conquer," 14-16, 18th century comedy by Oliver Goldsmith, 8pm Fri.-Sat., 2pm on Sun., Nevada Repertory Company, Church Fine Arts Theater, UNR, Reno, 784-6505

Electronics Expo '83, 14-16, open to public, Convention Center, Reno, 785-4800

High Sierra Culinary Arts Salon & Exhibit, 16, professional culinary artistic creations competition, plus food preparation and decoration demonstrations by area executive chefs, 1:30-5:30pm, John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 786-3232

Denver Nuggets v. San Diego Clippers, 17, basketball, NBA exhibition game, 7:30pm, Convention Center, Reno, 329-1311

Fun Fair, 19-23, carnival rides, giant vegetable contest, Shoppers Square, Reno, 323-0430

Great American Craft Fair, 21-23, pre-holiday fair with handmade goods, demonstrations on cake decorating, ice cream and candy making, sewing, and hobby-crafts, general admission \$2.50, senior citizens over 60 and students \$2, noon-9pm Fri., 10am-9pm Sat., 10am-5pm Sun., Convention Center, Reno, 825-7258

Crystal Hill Antique Show, 21-23, Convention Center, Reno, 785-4800

Art Showing, 21-11/15, annual alumni exhibition featuring a retrospective of Joanne deLongchamps and an exhibit by Ed Martinez, 8am-5pm Mon.-Fri., South Gallery, Church Fine Arts Building, UNR, Reno, 784-6658

UNR v. Weber State, 22, football, homecoming, 1pm, Mackay Stadium, UNR, Reno, 784-4697

Hidden Cave Tours, 22, 10am, Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

Harvest Farm Sale & Auction, 23, Mexican food, homemade goods, "junque boutique," music by the Jacks & Jennys, auction of farm produce and antiques, Smith Valley Community Hall, Wellington, 465-2304

Harrah's Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Futurity, 27-11/6, horse competition, State Fairgrounds, Reno, 788-3465

Nevada Day 1864 Ball, 28, Ormsby House, Carson City, 882-1890

Holiday Steam-Up, 29-31 V&T engine No. 22, the Inyo, steams up for holiday visitors, 8:30am-4:30pm, Virginia & Truckee Railroad Museum, Carson City, 885-4810

Nevada Day Boxing Festival, 30, 7pm, Community Center, Carson City, 882-5087

Nevada Day Parade and Celebration, 31 Monday morning pancake breakfast followed at 10am by the annual Admission Day parade, firemen's waterfights, the World Championship Rock Drilling Contest, and general partying, Carson City, 882-2600 □

A Reminder: To confirm dates and times, use the phone numbers listed with each event. For out-of-state callers, the area code is 702 throughout Nevada.

This soapstone stove holds heat better than any cast iron stove.



Soapstone holds heat nearly three times as long as metal. It also radiates a more even, comfortable warmth. Our Hearthstone II combines 190 lbs. of soapstone with the latest heating technology in a beautiful stove that will heat all day or night on one loading. Scaled to a compact size that fits easily into most fireplace openings, its handsome, classic lines will grace your hearth.

A true wood/coal heater

The Hearthstone II is designed to burn wood or coal with equal efficiency — and easy changeover. Airtight and thermostatically-controlled, it has a uniquely effective secondary burn system that greatly reduces creosote buildup.

Superior quality at a sensible price

Painstakingly hand-built of the finest materials to last for generations, this "super heater" is still priced with stoves it easily outperforms.

HEARTHSTONE

AMERICA'S QUALITY SOAPSTONE STOVE



GLASS MOUNTAIN BLOCK

**355 GREG STREET
SPARKS
358-1200**



NEVADA STATE MUSEUM, P.E. LARSON COLLECTION

1984 Nevada Historic Calendar!

Just \$4.25 retail, only \$3.75 to you. Send your checks to Nevada Magazine Calendar, Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV 89710.

Please send me _____ 1984 Calendars. My check is enclosed for \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Hank Greenspun, called Wilson to complain about advertising Wilson had placed in the *Sun* for other clients. "If I'd given that guy (McCarran) an inch he would have been telling me where the hell to place all my clients' business. I liked him. I thought he was a hell of a guy. But no way could I ever let him start running me or my business. I thought that was the end of a beautiful friendship, but about two weeks later when I ran into him he apparently had thought the thing through and never mentioned it again."

On another occasion, Wilson took on Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel's hotel in Las Vegas as a client. "I didn't know Benjamin Siegel was a hood," says Wilson. "So I went along with it and realized pretty quick what the hell was going on. He was fine to deal with. Very formal relationship. But the guy was straight out of Murder Incorporated. I just couldn't handle the volume of business and resigned and backed away from it—six months before Siegel was killed." Wilson preferred and sought clients who would help build Nevada.

Harolds Club was one. But the worldwide promotion of gambling wasn't the only brainstorm of advertising man Wilson and gambler Smith. They also got a highway built.

Today, Wilson takes pride as thousands of motorists zip easily across the Sierra Nevada from California on six-lane Inter-



The billboard campaign was one of Tom Wilson's most successful promotions for Harolds Club. At one time more than 2,300 signs were on U.S. highways. Another sign series helped build four-lane U.S. 40 over the Sierra.

state 80. He should. When he and Pappy Smith were "scheming schemes" one day, they decided the gambling business could be considerably enhanced if old two-lane U.S. 40, which wound its way narrowly and dangerously over the Sierra, were expanded to at least four lanes and straightened out a bit. It was the late 1940s, but the West Coast continued to fear attack from the Pacific, if

not by Japan perhaps one day by Russia. Consequently, there was talk about evacuation to the hinterlands away from the coast. That meant Nevada.

Wilson, awakening in the middle of the night with an idea, which was his custom, went from the bedroom of his Southwest Reno home to a small den where he typed out ideas while they were fresh. The idea: put a patriotic speaker into the major service clubs of California cities urging development of an improved highway to carry the potential West Coast evacuees to safety—and to Reno where Harolds Club would be waiting for them.

Wilson set up a lobbying effort in the California Legislature, and a resolution was adopted urging federal construction of what would become today's superhighway. The modern days of volume gambling in Reno followed as California tourists fled the Golden State not in evacuation but simply to gamble in the Silver State.

Love for Nevada has been a prime motivator for Tom Wilson not only as an advertising wizard but also as a family man. His daughter, Liz, a television news producer in Las Vegas, remembers her girlhood as a combination of Jeep rides through the dusty but serene deserts and dinner table discussions that ranged from the state's lusty politics to advertising campaigns on how to build the state's future out of its colorful past.

"I remember when Dad would be in his little study at home writing the Harolds Club historical ads, just like a newspaperman," she recalls. The advertisements told the stories of Nevada's pioneer era. They ranged from "Reprieve at Ragtown," a story of survivors of the Forty Mile Desert washing their dusty clothes in the Carson River, to "Breakthrough in the Comstock," an epic of Virginia City's Big Bonanza. The ads were bound into volumes which became prized items for collectors.

But first, recalls long-time Hawthorne editor Jack McCloskey, the ads were placed

We're blooming in Southern Nevada.



BEST PRODUCTS
SMITH INTERNATIONAL/TCM
GTE
LEVI STRAUSS
LETICA
MERILLAT
DICK BLICK
LILY TULIP
SUPERIOR CABLE
ETHEL M CHOCOLATES



NEVADA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

McCARRAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

P.O. Box 11128 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89111

Area Code (702) 739-8222 • Toll Free: 1-800-634-6858

Nevada Day and Admiral Halsey

Reno advertising man Thomas Wilson has been creator, founder, and instigator of special programs ranging from Nevada Day to the Washoe Jeep Squadron. The Wilson legacy:

- **Nevada Day:** In 1938, the Carson City Rotary Club discussed having a celebration on the state's birthday, October 31. Tom Wilson was named a committee of one to explore and develop Admission Day. First-year crowd: 15,000 persons.

- **The Halsey Saddle:** In the closing days of World War II, Admiral William F. (Bull) Halsey admonished American pilots not to destroy the Japanese Royal Palace because he planned to ride the emperor's white horse down Tokyo's main street. According to legend, Wilson turned to a Nevada saddlemaker, and after getting Halsey's measurements and learning from a family member the admiral was scared to death of horses, had a saddle sent to the U.S.S. *Missouri* for the admiral's use. The saddle is in the Naval Museum at Annapolis.

- **Nevada Air National Guard:** About 1947 Senator Pat McCarran asked Tom Wilson to serve as a committee of one to establish a Nevada Air National Guard in Reno. Local pilots were rounded up with help of Reno's Bob McDonald, and the Guard was founded in 1948.

- **Washoe Jeep Squadron:** After his son, Spike, was lost as a boy while deer hunting in the Dog Valley area near Verdi, Wilson organized the Washoe Jeep Squadron in 1950 as a wing of the Civil Air Patrol, in which Wilson served during World War II as executive officer. A heart murmur kept

him out of the war even though he was a commissioned ROTC officer.

- **Nevada Centennial:** A Nevada history buff who had named 55 Nevada mountains, valleys, canyons, peaks, and other landmarks in travels for the U.S. Geological Survey, Wilson was named to head the state's 100th birthday celebration in 1964. He raised enough funds to turn \$49,000 back over to the state's general fund.

- **Fremont Cannon:** Wilson created in about 1970 the reconstruction of John C. Fremont's original (1833) mountain artillery howitzer as a trophy for Nevada's Reno and Las Vegas universities to exchange at football games. He also got arrested in the process of testing the great gun off Southwest Reno's Skyline Boulevard. The gun worked. Wilson was not held.

Thomas C. Wilson also has organized "The Big Night in Reno," a campaign that flew by air charter 41,000 persons to Reno in its first year, helped get started the UNR Medical School, founded the Reno Advertising Club before World War II and reorganized it afterward, helped develop the Slide Mountain Ski Resort, chaired and reorganized the Nevada State Museum, formed a committee which would delegate all effort but do no work to organize the Mark Twain Centennial in Nevada in 1962. The committee spent no money of its own, gave no speeches, held no meetings (other than occasional get-togethers in a saloon), and turned over all work to serious Nevada historians who put on a successful program. —WL

in every newspaper in Nevada. Another editor, Walter Cox of Yerington, remembers, "Tom Wilson saved every small paper in the state with those Harolds Club ads. They brought in \$100 a week and that paid for a printer."

Representing his client, not saving newspapers, was Tom Wilson's goal. In the process, there's no question that his client, Harolds Club, was well regarded by the state's press, a powerful friend to have in sparsely populated Nevada. And that could be important when casino legislation was being weighed in the capital, Carson City. But, Cox says, Wilson never lobbied a client's interest in the legislature, unlike some of today's most successful advertising people. "He was strictly a pro in advertising."

As a pro, Wilson has had many opportunities to leave Nevada and develop advertising agencies in America's metropolitan areas. Studying the lifestyles of big city colleagues, he has declined in favor of home and work in Nevada. "What they were doing, really, was trying to pile up enough money so that they could retire or semi-

retire to do what I was doing already. I was living in a small town and having a lot of freedom and could pretty well do what I chose. I wasn't getting rich but I had a comfortable living, a good place for me to do the things I like to do. Why the hell should I want to go to Indianapolis or someplace?"

Daughter Liz, the Las Vegas journalist, and son Thomas (Spike), a state senator, are glad he didn't go to Indianapolis or anyplace. Raised in Nevada, banging around in the Wilson Jeep over the state's back roads, they achieved a sense of place.

"Even today," says Liz, "I can't stand the city. I need the serenity of the back country. Dad taught us not to fear the desert but to enjoy the solitude. It's helpful to our spirit."

A granddaughter, Ina Marie, says, "We go for hikes, he tells about history, of early-morning quail tracks, of shore lines on a dried lake, of an Indian's life, and his eyes really shine." □

Warren Lerude of Reno, a writer and publishing consultant, is former publisher of the Reno Gazette-Journal and is the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing.

Hoover Dam failed to completely charm the national press, which continued to give Nevada a scourging. For several years, Nevada casinos continued to operate on a secretive, peephole basis reminiscent of the days of illegal gambling. The prevailing notion was that advertising might attract conservative "long-haired reformers" eager to shut down Nevada's two most lucrative sources of revenue.

One casino operator, however, ignored those imaginary restrictions. Harold Smith had opened Harolds Club in Reno in 1935 with a penny roulette game and a couple of second-hand slot machines. His father, Raymond "Pappy" Smith, happened to stop by the club one day with a couple of white mice in his pockets. Pappy suggested that Harold live up his roulette game by replacing the white ball with mice. They tried it. The rodents hopped around the numbers until they found a winner by dropping from exhaustion. Mouse roulette attracted curiosity seekers from miles around. The novelty wore off quickly, however, and besides, the game proved impractical since the mice tended to eat one another.

The Smiths and advertising man Tom Wilson (see page 19) soon devised a more reliable marketing program, one which revolutionized casino advertising in Nevada. With billboards reading, "Harolds Club, Reno or Bust!" the Smiths capitalized on Nevada's wild and woolly frontier image and drew attention to the state's natural beauty. At the turn of the century, author George Wharton James extolled the scenic virtues of Lake Tahoe, but like his contemporaries, he portrayed it as a California lake. The Harolds Club campaigns led the way in reclaiming the lake as Nevadan.

Nevada took advantage of the perfect opportunity to exploit its scenic marvels in 1960 when the Winter Olympics came to Squaw Valley. Reno, the closest major city, became a hub of activity, and athletes, sportscasters, and spectators landed there and enjoyed its casinos. It was no coincidence that the *Nevada State Journal* ran a 28-page supplement entitled, "Nevada Looks Ahead," which portrayed Nevada as one of the wealthiest and most progressive of states. Horace Greeley's harsh description of Nevada was in direct contrast to the paper's contention that the state offered "unlimited opportunities in a land of limitless resources."

Prizefights and far-reaching advertising campaigns continue to draw national attention. Las Vegas, for example, has served as a magnet for such spectacles as heavyweight boxing bouts—the Holmes-Ali and Holmes-Cooney battles are only two of many—to Grand Prix racing. Nevada, still thought of by some people as a place of unbridled self-indulgence, has won a reputation as a place of beauty and considerable potential. Promotional schemes have taken Nevada a long way. □

Susan Horton of Reno is a freelance writer and recently earned her masters in history at UNR, with concentrations in Nevada and medieval history.

and by 10 p.m. the joint was jammed, everyone squeezed in as close as they could get. Just before Roy and Dale and the Sons of the Pioneers came in, the stringers that held the mezzanine on the south side began to crack. We tried to get the people out, but you couldn't get out or in. The mezzanine finally collapsed, and the only reason there weren't more people hurt was because the stringers landed on a bank of slot machines built up on stands. They held the balcony off the ground so that no one was squashed underneath and nobody had a great fall. At the time I was Exalted Ruler and it scared the hell out of me."

Cahlan, for whom club activities were as important as daily deadlines, was also a founding member of the Junior Chamber of Commerce when it formed in 1935. The Jaycees invaded San Diego with the purpose of inviting the group's regional convention to Las Vegas. The gathering would include members from all over California. But in the mid-'30s, there were only two commercial hotels of any size in town, the Apache and the Sal Sagev (that's "Las Vegas" backwards), with others of smaller dimensions such as the Overland, McDonald, and Golden.

"I guess we got about 1,500 delegates here, and you can imagine the trouble we had when the Apache had about 75 rooms, the Sal Sagev about 50. But fortunately we parked their special trains at the Union Pacific yards, and they slept in the Pullman cars." The mob of Jaycees inspired another example of old-time Las Vegas ingenuity. "We didn't have any place to have a banquet except the old War Memorial Building, which is where City Hall is now," Cahlan recalls. "Bob Kaltborn catered the banquet and carted the food from his restaurant down to the War Memorial Building and served it there. That was the first big convention held in Las Vegas."

Not only was John Cahlan becoming a wheel in growing Las Vegas, he was also right in the middle of all the projects to boost the railroad town that dreamed of being a resort center.

It was tough reporting in the beginning, building the newspaper as well as the town. "I devoted most of my time the first two years to doing just that," he says. "We were the first ones to have the United Press service in Las Vegas, and that used to come in on what we called 'old ponies,' which were stories written in cable-eze, a telegrapher's shorthand. We had no telephone connection to the outside, and the telegraph facility was through the Union Pacific. I had to compose the stories from this cable-eze."

"As news editor I used to cover the whole town, what there was of the city hall, county courthouse, and anything else that went on around the community. I attended most of the meetings of the Rotary Club and other clubs just to be able to get stories. In that way I became well acquainted with the old-timers, who are now *really* old-timers."

To gain attention from the outside world, Cahlan one time made up a story and milked it dry. This was the notorious tale of



The first Helldorado in 1935 drew this crowd to the Apache Bar, located where the Horseshoe now stands. A bearded John Cahlan, one of the organizers, is kneeling in front. From left are bartender Berto Testolin, U.S. Deputy Marshal Pat Gallagher (in coonskin hat), former Boulder City police chief Bud Bodell, Helldorado queen Louise DeFlour, local burro trader Bert Chesley, and a tourist at extreme right.

a nude woman running around Paradise Valley south of town, concocted after a press agent asked Cahlan for some unusual slants for the film, "All About Eve." Cahlan kept plugging the story until the deadline came to find the girl for a screen test. The intrepid editor/hypester stumbled upon a way out when the sheriff found a couple suntanning nude on a sand dune, precipitating Cahlan's wrap-up that the two nudists were perpetrators of the Eve hoax.

Meanwhile, there were communications from all over the world desiring to know more about this nubile Eve flitting around her Mojave Desert paradise. Las Vegas finally broached the outside but good, thanks to John Cahlan's insouciance.

He was equally adept at presenting straight news derived from such events as the building of the dam and the 1931 state laws that legalized gambling and the six-weeks divorce. The latter brought not only bebies of famous divorcees to the Las Vegas hotels and dude ranches, but also many celebrities anxious to get married. Cahlan boasts that he was best man for more movie people than anyone in the country, recalling ceremonies with Frederick March, Andy Devine, and Bill "Hopalong Cassidy" Boyd and brides among the legions. It happened, he says, because he would regularly check at the courthouse to find out about marriage registration "and wind up best man."

The sound of sirens would send him into action, for the wailing usually meant a good story. One who has vivid memories of that particular foible is Don Digilio, now public relations chief for the Aladdin Hotel, who joined the *R-J* in the late '50s when Cahlan was managing editor. "The town was very small," Digilio remembers. "I'm talking about 1960. You could hear a siren all over town. Every time you heard an ambulance you could almost count on the hotline ringing on the desk."

"Pick up the night phone and say, 'Newsroom,' and all you'd hear on the other

end was John Cahlan: 'I hear sirens.' Then he'd hang up, never said another word. He knew at that time it would be a story."

Another former *R-J* staffer, Colin McKinlay, now public relations consultant for Sunworld International Airways, says of his onetime boss, "When John was running that paper, I had to admire the man for the drive that he had. I believe John was the first one to work every day, and it took me a long time to figure out what time he came to work, because I never got to work ahead of him. Never."

A joiner and most gregarious fellow, those traits are shown in the John Cahlan journey since that August day in 1902 when he made a squalling entry in Reno. He displays the family escutcheon proudly. He is the son of the late Albert and Marion Cahlan, both native Nevadans, and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. John Cahlan of Reno and later of Susanville and of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Edmunds of Virginia City and later Reno.

At the University of Nevada he was the first sports announcer of football games to use a megaphone. His affinity for sports showed in 1929 when he became basketball and football referee for Las Vegas High School. And when he finished blowing that whistle, the Cahlan stentorian voice announced the school's football games until 1945. He had the distinction in 1930 of being the first news announcer on the town's first radio station, KGIX. He also was the first AAU basketball official in Las Vegas and for five years in the mid-'50s was a member of the Heisman Trophy Selection Committee.

The honors associated with John Cahlan's name are long and distinguished—member of University of Nevada Board of Regents; assistant municipal judge; director of the Nevada Centennial Celebration; and chairman of the Las Vegas Diamond Jubilee in 1980.

When he was most active, he belonged to

a host of organizations, but his heart was with the Rotary Club, where for 10 years he was editor of the *Wheel*, a weekly bulletin. Bob Brown remembers some of the Cahlan columns of that publication. "The Rotary Club generally stays away from partisan politics or controversial things like that, but John's old newspaper blood would boil up in him and into this civic club bulletin would appear columns frequently taking strong stands on the most conservative, outrageous positions. And he did it for years."

That conservatism was never far beneath the surface in his editorials and columns. Cahlan during his editor years never forgot his Nevada roots and reminded readers both openly and subliminally of the good old days and the old-timers who controlled the town.

Although he worked at the *Review-Journal* through the days of the mob influence during the '30s, '40s, '50s, and even the '60s, there were few exposes. Cahlan is inclined to hand the early mobsters compliments, reasoning that their putting Las Vegas on the map far overrode the negative side.

"Everybody thinks that the mob coming in here was the worst thing that ever happened to Las Vegas," he asserts with tough insistence. "I don't agree with them, because in the first place Bugsy Siegel was able to give the community international publicity.

"While the mobsters were in here I don't know of anything that they did like murder or anything of that sort. They kept out the so-called underworld riffraff. They controlled the hotels pretty good. The thing of it was, gambling was so new in the city of Las Vegas that they had to get someone in here who knew how to operate the games, and the only place to get them was from the illegal ranks."

About the future, John Cahlan turns to the past. "We've got to get the same understanding and the same cooperation that was available then. I mean in those days when they built the floats for Helldorado, they rivaled those of the Tournament of Roses parade. Downtown casinos and hotels on the Strip were spending anywhere from \$10,000 to \$50,000 for those floats."

While he recalls wistfully the camaraderie of the '30s, '40s, and '50s, it was fitting that Cahlan was named chairman of the city's diamond jubilee—its 75th birthday celebration—in 1980. The jubilee was replete with a few ceremonies and a great deal of merry-making, all broadcast, of course, on national TV.

This celebration of his town's growth and prosperity brought a lifetime of memories to the surface for Cahlan, memories he set down in print in a supplement for TWA and Frontier Airlines. In it, he spoke of what he's lived and known—of G-men and mobsters, divorcees and debutantes, showgirls and stars.

And, surely, as he wrote and reminisced, he must have wondered at the lucky chance that sent him to an unknown, dusty railroad town that was about to grow up. □

Bill Willard of Las Vegas is a sculptor, actor, columnist, and frequent Nevada contributor.



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Muench's Gallery

Gnarled monuments to the struggle for survival, bristlecone pines are among the oldest living organisms, as much as 4,000 years old. These trees at the crest of 10,745-foot Mt. Hamilton in the White Pine Range west of Ely saw the arrival of Shoshone Indians into the area and later of white men who dug for silver on Mt. Hamilton's slopes. Now protected in the Humboldt National Forest, the bristlecones sit above a desert-and-forest landscape that has changed little since the trees were seedlings.

David Muench enjoys showing what he calls "a spirit of place" in his work. Muench, one of the West's great landscape photographers, presents selections from his Nevada portfolio in each issue.



JOHN CURTIS

Virginia City Jazz Man

When Dixielander Merle Koch bought a small-town joint, friends like Al Hirt and Pete Fountain couldn't stay away.

By Guy Sipler

Back in the late 1960s the Sharon House had an old upright piano standing at the end of the bar. It seemed appropriate that the noted Chinese restaurant, located in the heart of Virginia City, would have such a relic to sit there and look historic.

But when there was a lull between orders for martinis and mai-tais, the restaurant's slightly built, soft-spoken bartender would wander over, sit down, and bring the old upright back to life. First-time visitors assumed that they were about to hear the honky-tonk pounding of a typical Old West barroom. What they heard was some jazz that even the tone-deaf among them would swear was coming from the hands of a Bourbon Street veteran.

They would be right. Merle Koch (he pronounces it "Cook") only a few years before had played with Pete Fountain's famous Dixieland group in New Orleans. Fountain, one of the era's top jazz clarinetists, was so impressed with his keyboard man that Koch might still be playing with him today if he had his way. Instead, Koch elected to call Virginia City his home and, in the process, brought Dixieland to the old mining town.

When Fountain agreed to come to the Comstock this June at Merle's invitation for a two-day jazz festival, much attention centered on the clarinetist's concerts at Piper's Opera House. But the real musical nucleus was Merle's own place, a well-worn little joint on C Street called Michele's Silver Stope Bar & Restaurant. Merle and his wife, Michele, bought the Stope in 1969. It gave them a business (Michele's department) and presented Merle with a better chance to use his talents than the Sharon House upright offered.

From the start Merle and his music brought in the customers. He began holding jazz sessions to which Dixieland lovers from Reno, Carson City, Lake Tahoe, and points east and west converged on week-ends. Today the sessions are an institution, and on Sunday the maximum number of 80 customers regularly jam the bar, cocktail tables, and back-room restaurant to hear Merle's pickup group of two to six other musicians. Most are local players who hold rather mundane jobs but have a lot of professional experience. A good many, however, are among the country's top jazz musicians. They are members of bands playing at casinos—and need a break to have some fun. They show up to start the 5 p.m. festivities and play for a couple of hours before they have to be back at their paying jobs.

Many are known best by their fellow musicians, but others' names are recognized by the general public—trumpeter Al Hirt, who has his own band; trombonist Bob Havens, who played for years with Lawrence Welk; Eddie Miller, the great saxophonist who played with several of the major swing bands; and drummer Nick Fatool, who had played with most of the Big Bands, are among those celebrities.

All respect Koch as a jazz master. "Merle is a natural and you can't say anything better than that," says Pete Fountain. "When I first asked him about playing with me he

said 'I can't read music.' I told him that in my band that didn't matter."

Eddie Miller says, "Merle Koch has great musical heart. He is one of my favorite piano players. He's so flexible and musical in every way."

And trumpeter Al Hirt says simply, "He's the best goddamn piano player I ever heard."

Koch, in turn, respects these jazz greats not so much for their fame, but for the high quality of Dixieland, jazz, and swing they play. And Koch insists on professionalism in his joint. A gentle person with a ready smile, he is clearly no taskmaster who loudly demands perfection from those who play with him. Instead, he allows only the best players on the Stope's small bandstand. He does it for fun and so do they, but all understand and agree that the satisfaction comes from achieving a standard as high and rarified as the air at Virginia City's 6,200-foot altitude. Over the years that standard has resulted in 12 record albums, including three with Pete Fountain.

About 55 years of experience have gone into Merle Koch's achievement of that standard. He was born in Lexington, Nebraska, on November 12, 1914, the son of a non-musical carpenter, a trade Merle has engaged in himself off and on. Although he recalls starting to play piano at the age of four, he took few formal lessons; he just played.

How did he get interested in jazz? "I heard it and I liked it," he says simply. "All through school in this little town where I lived there was a dance every Friday night. There would be a different band each week. They were called 'territory bands' in those days. I'd go down and listen to those guys on Friday, and I liked what I heard."

Meanwhile, Merle was doing more than listening. Between those Friday night visits he played piano in school bands at dances. Later he moved into the bigger time with those territory bands. "I was about 15 years old when they first asked me to sit in," Merle recalls. He left Lexington after high school. "I graduated on Friday and was with a band full-time on Monday," he says. "I haven't been back since. I was destined to be a musician, and that was the real start."

Playing one-nighters, Merle continued to be based in Nebraska between 1933 and 1936. "We went all through the Midwest—anywhere from Minnesota to Texas, from Illinois to Colorado." In 1936, he and his family decided to move to Los Angeles, one reason being that a musician he had worked with had been there and it sounded like a good idea. "My parents, my brother, and I all went out together. We drove out in an old Whippet, pulling a trailer, at 35 miles an hour."

Even though the Depression was still on, Merle had little trouble finding club jobs. "The Depression was really the heyday for jazz," he says. "That's when its popularity was growing, because people explored their artistic talents. There was little work and not much else people could afford to do. So I was playing pretty consistently in L.A. Mostly we had four-piece bands playing at small clubs—we called them joints—throughout the Los Angeles area. There was a joint on every corner and they did well. We

didn't play too much Dixieland because swing was popular then."

That first L.A. stint lasted almost 25 years. It was around 1958 that Merle met Pete Fountain, at a houseparty jam session. Fountain was then playing with Lawrence Welk, but "he was tired of that job," says Koch, "and was getting ready to go back to New Orleans. After the party we got acquainted and he heard me play some more, and he asked me to go back to New Orleans with him. So I went."

Merle recalls his two years with Fountain—1959 and '60—as "great ones," but he found that the climate didn't agree with him. "After a couple of years I felt I had to leave. I liked the town, of course, but I wouldn't like to live there because I just didn't feel good."

So it was back to L.A. "I joined a group there and hadn't been playing long when another musician told me he was planning to move up to Northern Nevada. The idea had always intrigued me, and I had it in the back of my mind to come up here anyway. This was a chance for me to get here and still be working." Merle stayed with the group for nearly three years playing the lounges—usually at Harrah's in Reno and at Lake Tahoe, at the Cal-Neva at the North Shore, and occasionally in Las Vegas hotels.

While playing in Reno, Merle discovered Virginia City. "Michele had been there when she was a young girl, and we first drove up there together because she wanted to see if she could find what she called the saloon with the swinging doors that sold ice cream cones. I don't think she ever did find it, but we both fell in love with the place and began going up there on all our days off. We got acquainted with the people, and I said, 'This is the end of the road. I'm not going any farther.'"

The Kochs moved to town because Merle was building a fourplex there. He figured that carpentry would be his basic income and he would commute to the casino lounges.

"I never did get back into music as a livelihood," Merle recalls today. "I got into the bar and restaurant business instead."

"But I like it the way it is. It gives me a chance to play the kind of music the way I like whenever I like, and on my own terms. You don't have to go out and play something that somebody else wants you to play and get paid for it. The commercial aspect is gone for me."

In other words, playing jazz has become a delightful hobby for a man who is hobby-oriented anyway. At home he has an elaborate HO-model railroad layout in a special room, for which he has built all the buildings and created the landscaping ("I use real dirt for it"). There's his photography, his amateur radio setup, and fishing. To him, these are all pleasures, not work. The pleasure spills over to the fans who invariably crowd into the Stope. They clearly agree with Merle Koch's simple definition of jazz: "It's happy music." □

Guy Shieler of Carson City is a newspaper columnist, radio commentator, Time/Life correspondent, and longtime jazz buff.

as they are cooked, then add them to the platter. Cook the eggs in the bacon grease and serve immediately. Remember to bring syrup for the hotcakes.

Soup-erb Lunches

Lunch is easy. You can have any favorite cold sandwich or put on the grill and broil some hamburgers. If it's chilly out, serve hot soup from a can or prepared from scratch. If you're going to stay around camp, soup can be started in the morning in a 10-quart covered pot with just a few chunks of lean beef cut up in small pieces. Fry in a little bacon grease or butter until browned. Add eight cups of water and half a dozen bouillon cubes. Simmer for two or three hours. One hour before serving add your favorite vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, celery, and beans. Have cookies or fruit dessert, or use leftover pancakes lightly buttered and sprinkled with sugar or spread with jelly.

Savory Suppers

Dinner should be hot, nutritious, satisfying, and simple. Broiled steak, baked potatoes, and a salad is simple yet elegant. Wrap potatoes in heavy foil, place on the coals, and cook for about an hour. Turn occasionally. For the salad, cut tomatoes and celery in the bottom of a bowl and add lettuce on top. Don't toss until ready to eat because the tomatoes will make the salad soggy. Take ready-made dressing. Cook steaks depending on thickness; most will take from 10 to 15 minutes from raw to ready. A medium steak should be cooked on one side until the juices start through the top, then turned for approximately five more minutes. Time will vary depending on taste. Dessert can be previously-prepared cake and coffee.

For a one-pot dinner, short ribs are ideal. Brown short ribs (or pot roast) on all sides in a very hot 10-quart covered pot. Reduce heat to low and simmer in ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce, 1 tablespoon prepared mustard, and 2 or 3 cups of beer for 2 hours. Salt and pepper to taste and add water as necessary to keep from drying. Add potatoes, carrots, celery, or other vegetable and simmer for one hour more. Remove vegetables and meat. For gravy, mix 3 tablespoons flour in ¾ cup cold water and add to the remaining liquid. Bring to a swift boil, scraping the sides of the pot often. Serve this gravy over the meat and vegetables. If you have a stove, this can be simmered all afternoon, leaving you much free time.

The Basque Underground

If you don't have a stove and expect to be gone all day, cook Basque style, underground in a Dutch oven. You'll need a large 15-quart (at least) iron pot with lid, which will work for all kinds of terrific meals. It is ideal for sage hen, chukar, or any other fowl, and also for pot roast and ribs.

Dig a hole close to camp two-and-a-half feet deep and at least 12 inches larger than the diameter of your pot. Stack up enough wood to burn for at least an hour and start the fire burning in the morning. Keep adding fuel to keep it burning very hot. Prepare your ribs, fowl, or pot roast, place in the Dutch oven, and salt and pepper lightly. Then add potatoes, celery, carrots,

and any other vegetable you like (go lightly on the onions and garlic as your taste buds will be more sensitive outdoors). Add ¼ cup of water to the pot. When the coals are glowing red, remove a few shovels full, insert your Dutch oven, and spread the coals you removed over the top of the pot. Cover completely with dirt and attach a wire to the pot handle so you'll be able to locate your dinner when you return to camp.

The pot should stay in the ground for at least five hours, but it can stay in as long as two days with no ill effects. When you dig it up, you'll have a perfect meal. This method of cooking entirely seals in flavor, and as a result very little spicing is required. None is

recommended except salt and pepper. If you like gravy with your meal, make it from the drippings in the pot.

Serve It With Style

All this is quite a surprise to my camping friends who are used to our former diet. I love to see their grizzled faces when they return from a hard day's hunt to find a table set with linen napkins, real plates, fine cutlery, and a gourmet meal. To add to their astonishment, I sometimes include a bottle of Almaden Cabernet Sauvignon or Mountain Chablis. It's a lot better than whiskey and beans. □

B.L.T. Davis, the well-known cowboy cook, is said to have the best sourdough starter in Lovelock.



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about Old Mose a great disappointment. Harry Webb showed himself to be a callous and cruel man in his mistreatment of the old dog.

Dick and Gabee Renshaw
Petersburg, AK.

Keeping in Touch

When we go to Lake Tahoe, Reno or Carson City we go with a group, and in between groups we go by Greyhound. I can't say enough about how we feel about the State of Nevada. Between our trips your *Nevada Magazine* keeps us in touch with your great state.

Vivian M. Kersten
Oakdale, CA.

I like your magazine very much. My husband and I have been to either Las Vegas or Lake Tahoe at least once a year for the last several years, and on our last trip to Tahoe we visited a lot of places from there to Reno. We enjoy your magazine because it covers the whole state.

Evelyn M. Given
Mount Vernon, OH.

We love Nevada. We've been there four times and plan to come back some day. I think your magazine is just great. We used it a lot when we were planning our trips.

Kathy Keeling
St. Paul Park, MN.

I love the beauty of Nevada's mountains and the historical nature of Nevada. It's sort of a state with the last of the Old West still hanging on a bit. I feel the magazine has too much of the gambling aspect. I love the photography and would like much more of that, more about the beauty and undiscovered areas of Nevada. There are many around Ely alone.

Karen & Mike Haynes
Ashland, OR.

Nevada looks like a winner. Best magazine I've seen yet. Best of luck in the future.

Bill Hearn
Gardnerville, NV

The *Nevada Magazine* is terrific! The spirit behind it is typically Nevadan—even though the editor may be British!

Eva Scarselli
Gardnerville, NV

I used to subscribe to *Nevada Magazine* 20 years ago and it was a very good magazine, on the order of *Arizona Highways*. Now the *Nevada Magazine* seems more like an advertisement for the various gambling palaces—and a cheap story line such as for the New Frontier or New West or whatever.

Eve Hilard
Lodi, CA.

I like *Nevada Magazine* very much and hope you keep it going forever. We visit your state as often as possible and I think your magazine helps to keep us coming back.

The Lowry Family
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The styles and mediums are different, but the results are striking for both these Las Vegas artists.

Cyrus Afsary speaks from 25 years as a professional, but his English is thick with the syrup of his native tongue. Born in Persia in 1940, he began painting at age seven, inspired by the historical and biblical legacy of the Middle East. He attended a high school of art, and later earned two Bachelor of Arts degrees, in fine art and interior design. After serving a three-year apprenticeship with a Russian artist, he became an assistant professor at an art college in the Middle East.

"The best art blends the storytelling qualities of good composition and content," says Afsary. "Each piece has to express the mood and convey the feeling of the scenes and/or faces therein."

When Afsary moved to Las Vegas 10 years ago, his artwork broached any language difficulties. His first job was as resident artist in the MGM's Grand Gallery, a job he held for seven years. He was later commissioned by the MGM to execute the meticulous murals and paintings for the MGM's re-opening in 1981. His work is on display locally at Graphic Encounter in the Las Vegas Hilton and at Gallery Las Vegas, and in private and public collections in the U.S., Canada, and the Middle East.

Afsary works mainly with oils for landscapes, seascapes, wildlife, architecture, and his first love: portraiture. He's painted the stars—Sinatra, Wayne, Martin, Presley—among others. Sylvester Stallone and Susan Anton commissioned him for their portraits, as did Wayne Newton when he wanted to immortalize his prized Arabian horse, Aramis.

His proficiency at portraiture is a talent Afsary derived in an unusual but effective manner. He spent 10 years as a make-up artist in his native land. "I loved that work," says Afsary. "It was almost spiritual for me, to paint the faces of actors who portrayed the biblical heroes and villains of the Middle East."

Today, the 42-year-old Las Vegan says he's most influenced by the flavor of the southwest, and by contemporary American artists, "Especially western artists. It's just fantastic what is happening today." He says his work is mainly western, and "somewhere between realistic expression, I can't say exactly. But it's the individual challenge of trying to capture the feeling of a person, and put myself in it too, to show me in the work."—JC

'Violinist' by Cyrus Afsary

Cyrus Afsary & Tad Cheyenne Schutt

“Watercolor painting is traditionally sort of loose,” says Las Vegas artist Tad Cheyenne Schutt, “and photo-realism in watercolors is unusual. But, my work is photo-realistic western art, strictly in watercolors, and I love it.”

For Schutt, that statement is both her truth for the present and fulfillment of years of dabbling in various art forms. Born in Cheyenne, Wyoming, she lived a transient life as the daughter of an Air Force dentist. Alone in unfamiliar neighborhoods—Colorado, Massachusetts, California, Germany—she filled her time with creative musings.

Later, she attended the California College of Arts & Crafts in San Francisco, Evergreen State College in Washington, and Washington State University. Besides honing her creative talents, she earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in photography and interior design.

It wasn't until she moved to Las Vegas to accept a photography and graphics job with Clark County three years ago that she “picked up a brush and started my western stuff.” She had only tried watercolor painting once before, in an interior design class. “The instructor handed each of us a color photo of the interior of a modern house and said, ‘Paint this.’ My painting turned out okay, but I was unimpressed. Interiors can be pretty boring.”

But in Las Vegas, inspired by the western flavor and desert light, her next attempt at watercolor cinched her career in western art. “I fell in love with watercolors—the simplicity, colors, and the transparency. I’m 31 years old, and I finally know what I want to be when I grow up.”

Schutt’s method is to photograph her subjects, especially rodeo (“I shot 11 rolls at the Reno Rodeo this year”) and then trans-

late them into watercolors. To date she has done 25 paintings, sold half, and kept some favorites. Her work is on display in Newsum’s Art Gallery and Nevada Frame and Gallery in Las Vegas. She has won local awards for both artwork and photography, and took four statewide awards for her photography in the Nevada 83 contest, including Best of Show in black and white prints and in color slides.

She enjoys her job with the county, but complains that “work really gets in the way of my free time.” Time she’d like to devote to following rodeos, snapping photos, and painting. She hopes soon to have her artwork pay the bills, and speculates on where she would call home. “Maybe Vermont, maybe Washington state. But I love the desert. What I need is a summer and winter home—and a Lear jet.”—JC



‘Rockabilly’ by Tad Cheyenne Schutt



Larson, third from left in the car, took this photo in front of his studio at Main and Miner Streets. At right is the way Main Street looked in 1905.

Gold Rush Photographer

In Goldfield's early days P.E. Larson focused his cameras on everyday boomtown life.

By Jim Crandall

When frontier photographer Per Edward Larson heard of the fantastic gold strike in Goldfield in 1905, he quit his studio job in Los Angeles, packed his equipment in a wagon, and set out with his new bride Hilda for the mining camp in the central Nevada desert.

Larson, who staked his claim on a town lot at 440 Main Street and began construction of the Palm Studio, brought with him both photographic expertise and first-hand knowledge of gold camp life. The 42-year-old Swedish immigrant had traveled the West with his cameras for 15 years. He was a veteran of the Klondike gold rush, both as photographer and miner. In Alaska, Larson worked for E. A. Hegg, who in 1967

was featured in *One Man's Gold Rush: A Klondike Album*, published by the University of Washington Press.

But the Goldfield rush was Larson's exclusive, packed each day with excitement as vast ore bodies were tapped and a metropolis flowered in the desert. What had begun in 1902 with the discovery of a trace of gold at Rabbit Springs grew in six years to a city of 20,000 with five banks, five newspapers, three railroads, four schools, and scores of saloons. The young city hosted countless celebrations. Masses would swarm to witness rock-drilling contests, where men with iron muscles pounded steel spikes into solid granite. The Gans-Nelson world lightweight championship





HOTEL GROTON

SECOND HAND FUR
AND S...

GOLDFIELD, NEV

In his journal Larson recorded tests with flash powders, which coincided with numerous visits to a doctor for treatment of burns.



In his studio Larson processed film, took portraits, and made postcards. Below, a holiday crowd watches miners compete in a rock-drilling contest.



fight in 1906 brought thousands of boxing fans to ringside on Main Street. In 1907 Goldfield boosters won the Esmeralda County seat from Hawthorne and built a massive stone courthouse to mark the occasion.

Larson was there, with camera, to capture it all. In the field, when shooting mine sites or panoramas, he used a portable 8x10" Gundlach camera. For sporting events and crowd shots, he'd use either the Gundlach or one of the first hand-held cameras, an Ansco Junior Model A, which used a 3x4" negative. For studio work, he had an E.&H.T. Anthony & Company 8x10" camera, whose hardwood body was appointed with brass and mounted on a wrought-iron rolling base.

Larson also experimented with a hemispheric camera which required a negative 34 inches long and 10 inches wide. The lens was turned by hand with a crank, and produced some striking panoramas.

Not all of Larson's experiments worked so well. In a journal he kept prior to his Goldfield days, he recorded a series of tests with flash powders. These writings coincided with numerous visits to a doctor for treatment of burns.

But Larson was master of his work in Goldfield, and his business prospered. Besides photography, the Palm Studio processed the new Kodak film, sold stationery, and offered postcards that Larson made from his photographs and hand-colored.

He flavored his work with humor and love of the offbeat, evident in captions scrawled on some of his negatives. Like the photo of his son, Edward, just a toddler, sitting on a dilapidated buckboard hooked up to their mule, Jack, on which he inscribed, "Goldfield Express." Or a photo of two horse-drawn coaches heading south through a narrow ravine, in which the horses of the rear coach are out of control. The caption reads, "U.S. Mail coach No. 1 en route to Bull Frog, passenger coach No. 2 going south, horses going north." A popular Larson postcard featured a two-headed burro.

Larson did his finest work in Goldfield and then put his camera to rest. In 1908, when the boom had simmered to business as usual, Larson left. He took a few more photographs but eventually stored his equipment and settled in Allegany, Oregon, as proprietor of a hotel and general store. In 1920 he moved to San Pedro, California, where he lived out his days as a grocer.

In 1973 Larson's three children, Edward, Florence, and Adeline, opened trunks and packing boxes stored untouched for 50 years in the San Pedro home. They discovered photographs, negatives, cameras, and postcards from his Palm Studio, and presented them to the Nevada State Museum. Larson's Goldfield photography and studio memorabilia, including his cameras, are on display in the show "Frozen in Silver" at the museum in Carson City through September 7. The show will open at the museum's Las Vegas branch in Lorenzi Park on October 22, and run through September 1984.—Jim Crandall



Some early Goldfielders staked their claims on more than mining, as did these settlers with their tidy home and garden.

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THE LAST MADMAN OF ROCK 'N ROLL

Paul Revere has been up, down, and all around the Nevada lounge scene, but now he's ready for the big time again.

By Guy Richardson



GUY RICHARDSON

Teenyboppers made big stars of Paul Revere and his tricorny-hatted Raiders back in the '60s, but even then, says Revere, "I foresaw the day we'd work Nevada clubs. I knew teenagers grow up, and then we'd be performing for fans in places where adults go to play."

Revere and his Raiders have been big stuff in Nevada lounges since 1971. In fact, he says, "If it weren't for Nevada, Paul Revere and the Raiders wouldn't be around today."

For the past two years, Revere has won the *Nevada State Journal* readers' poll as best lounge act in Reno, and the man who recorded such songs as "Kicks" and "Louie, Louie" has his followings in Las Vegas and Tahoe, too. "Nevada's been fantastic to me—especially Reno. Nevada took a used rock and roll band and accepted us for years and years without having to have a current hit record."

"The rest of the country isn't that way. Nevada accepted my craziness for 10 years—when we weren't recording," he says. "We're now hotter'n a pistol, but Nevada kept our name alive."

Ironically, Revere found that he could again work big rooms—3,000-seat auditoriums—in the Midwest, but he was still a lounge act in the Silver State. Until recently.

Now he's moving to the main room, first in Vegas at the Riviera, then Atlantic City at Harrah's.

"There's something magic about a Nevada main room," Revere says. "When we play a

3,000-seat theater in, say, Akron, I don't feel half the pressure that I would in a room half that size here. In Vegas, Tahoe, or Reno the cream of entertainment is all around you. In Akron you're the only thing in town that night."

In 1971, on the Raiders' first trip to Las Vegas, that wasn't the case. "Elvis was at the Hilton and Tom Jones was across the street at Caesars. Town was packed with over-sexed and overweight women, which I have nothing against because I am now over-sexed and overweight," Revere says with a barking laugh. "If they couldn't get into Elvis' or Jones' show, they would come down to the Flamingo lounge and throw their bras and panties at us. Most nights there were a lot of soft pink and blue things lying up on stage."

Even though Revere kids on stage about "working cheap," he's at the top of Harrah's Reno lounge salary. Now that he's headed for the main room, a natural question is: Why are casinos taking you into big rooms, other than you work cheap? Without a pause, Revere says, "That's the answer," and laughs wickedly. "Plus the Wayne Newton syndrome—if you keep banging away in lounges long enough, somebody will notice."

Ah, but will success turn his head? "That's more apt to happen to a classy act," he says. "As long as I'm a low-class act people will treat me just as I treat them. Ego is almost a dirty word to me, probably because in our early years I dealt with so

many young musicians with an ego problem. And I've seen major stars so surrounded by yes-people that no one has the guts to tell them they've turned into a pain.

"What I get out of being on stage is different from an ego-boost. I see a whole bunch of people having more fun than they thought they would, and that tickles me.

"And what I like about going into main rooms is that it gives me the chance to do bigger, more bizarre things. Whatever I dream of, we can do. If I want to fly across the stage accompanied by three goats, I can do it. And if I want 20 violin players all dressed in ET masks, I can have 'em. I'm not sure if the main room is ready for me, but I'm ready for them."

Revere, the last madman of rock and roll, turned loose? The mind boggles.

For all of Revere's on-stage zaniness, his off-stage life is quiet, or as he puts it, "We are two of the most boring people in Boise, which isn't easy." Revere and his wife Sydney—whom he met when she was doing an impression of Marilyn Monroe in an otherwise all-male drag show in a Reno lounge—live in Revere's boyhood hometown because he says, "My folks are old, and I want to spend as much time with them

If they couldn't get into Elvis' or Tom Jones' show, the women would come down to the Flamingo lounge and throw their bras and panties at us.

as I can. Down the line, I plan to move to Nevada."

Home life in Boise is low-key. "We live as recluses, sitting on the back porch and reading and being boring. If we do get a spurt of energy we might go out and ride dirt bikes or go to the movies—if there are no people. I can't stand crowds, which is another reason I like Nevada's wide-open spaces.

"I highly recommend driving across the desert for therapy. The price of gas is more expensive than weaving baskets, but where else can you watch the kamikaze rabbits lined up alongside the road, looking over which tire they want to fling themselves under?

"The first time a rabbit picked which tread he wanted and ran in front of the car, Syd was in tears. After the 2,000th rabbit she was laughing hysterically."

Revere has a daughter, 21, and a son, 17, from a previous marriage. "My son is following my footsteps—he has a rock band that sounds so terrible I'm sure they'll be superstars."

Whether or not Revere *pere* climbs back up the superstar ladder, he's sure success won't spoil him. "I'm humble," he says, "humble as can be, considering I'm this handsome and rich." □

Guy Richardson is a writer for the Reno News-papers and a longtime late-night observer of the entertainment scene.

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The Casino Cowboy



When John Ascuaga isn't making money or checking one of his eight restaurants in Sparks, he's out with his cows.

By Caroline J. Hadley

At six o'clock in the morning, as the sun was easing its way slowly over the mountains, John Ascuaga drove into the Simpson Ranch. He was wearing denims, boots, wool shirt, down vest, and a parka. It was a freezing Sunday morning in late September, and a thousand head of cattle had to be moved from the high summer grazing country at Bridgeport to his hay ranch in Smith Valley, Nevada. His cow boss, Dave Bilbao, had been up for hours, getting ready for the four-day drive. Dave's wife, Pat, had a breakfast of eggs, hotcakes, bacon, and coffee ready for the hands.

Ascuaga headed straight for the barn and corrals to curry and saddle a good looking bay. It was tall and handsome, and John looked good in the saddle, as comfortable there as he is behind his enormous desk at his casino in downtown Sparks.

For the owner of John Ascuaga's Nugget and overseer of 2,000 employees, the cattle drive is the best way to unwind from the tensions of the gaming business. Sitting on the back of the big bay, ambling across frozen meadows and dirt roads, alongside angry creeks flowing out of the mountains, he helps four other cowboys move his herd 46 miles east to their winter home. To the west is the Sierra Nevada, an awesome view of rock and snow and trees that is always surprising. To the east, snow-covered hills roll gently toward Nevada. "Can you believe this?" he asks as he waves his arm over hill and brush and the butts of cows that by now stretch for over a mile.

Each year Ascuaga, who owns four ranches in three Sierra counties, looks forward to this trip through the mountains. "It's the greatest," he says. "You're out there, and there's no way you are going to communicate with the outside world. You can see those jet trails going between San Francisco and New York, and you're just ambling down the trail. The first day you hit some highway but the second and third days are better. Oh my God, we're out there, going through the hills. The pleasure is smelling that good air. The last day is a letdown only because you know it's over with."

Why is Ascuaga in the cattle business when his casino is more than successful? "It's an outlet," he says. "Because of being raised in that environment, it's kind of inherited."

He was born in Idaho, the son of a Basque sheepman turned farmer. "After my dad got married, he homesteaded some brush near Notus. He took the brush off and started farming it. That's where my brother, two sisters, and I were raised."

Ascuaga wanted a college degree, believing it the only way minorities can advance themselves—by education. In summer he worked as a bellman at the Shore Lodge in McCall until he received his accounting degree. Then he attended a hotel and restaurant school in Washington, and after finishing returned to Idaho to work for Dick Graves in five of his Idaho restaurants. After 18 months Ascuaga moved to Nevada to supervise the food operation for Graves in his Reno, Carson City, and Yerington

casinos. When Graves acquired the Sparks Nugget, Ascuaga became his general manager there, and in 1958 he bought the place from Graves.

Food has always been the Nugget's best drawing card. "Dick Graves and I had a knack. Either one of us could walk through the dining room and know if a steak was too long on the fire, if the order was slow, if the service wasn't good," Ascuaga says. "I think we can put the Nugget food operation up against any place else in the world."

At the Nugget, Ascuaga's employees cater each month to thousands of visitors and serve 8,000 people in his eight restaurants each day. He sits on the executive board of the Reno/Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority and is a member of numerous clubs.

When during a labor dispute at the Nugget a union official called him a "commie" in a newspaper article, Ascuaga was mortified. He cares about people, and his casino, ranches, and home all show the best in taste and talent. But he doesn't put on airs. He has coffee each morning in the Nugget's employee lounge, and although he's sole owner of Spark's largest casino, he has no designated parking space. He starts work at eight and quits at five "no matter who's waiting." He is organized, works hard, and gives back most of what he takes.

"I realize I'm spread a little thin sometimes. You know no matter how heavy people come down on you, you've just got to ride along. In the casino business, people just love to see you stumble. But the ranch is terrific." He laughs: "When I come home sometimes I go to my garden and just hoe like hell out there."

Ascuaga began in the cattle business with 100 acres in Sparks. He and Graves bought the property as an investment, and when they subdivided and sold it, Ascuaga's portion was parlayed into buying Jack's Valley Ranch near Genoa.

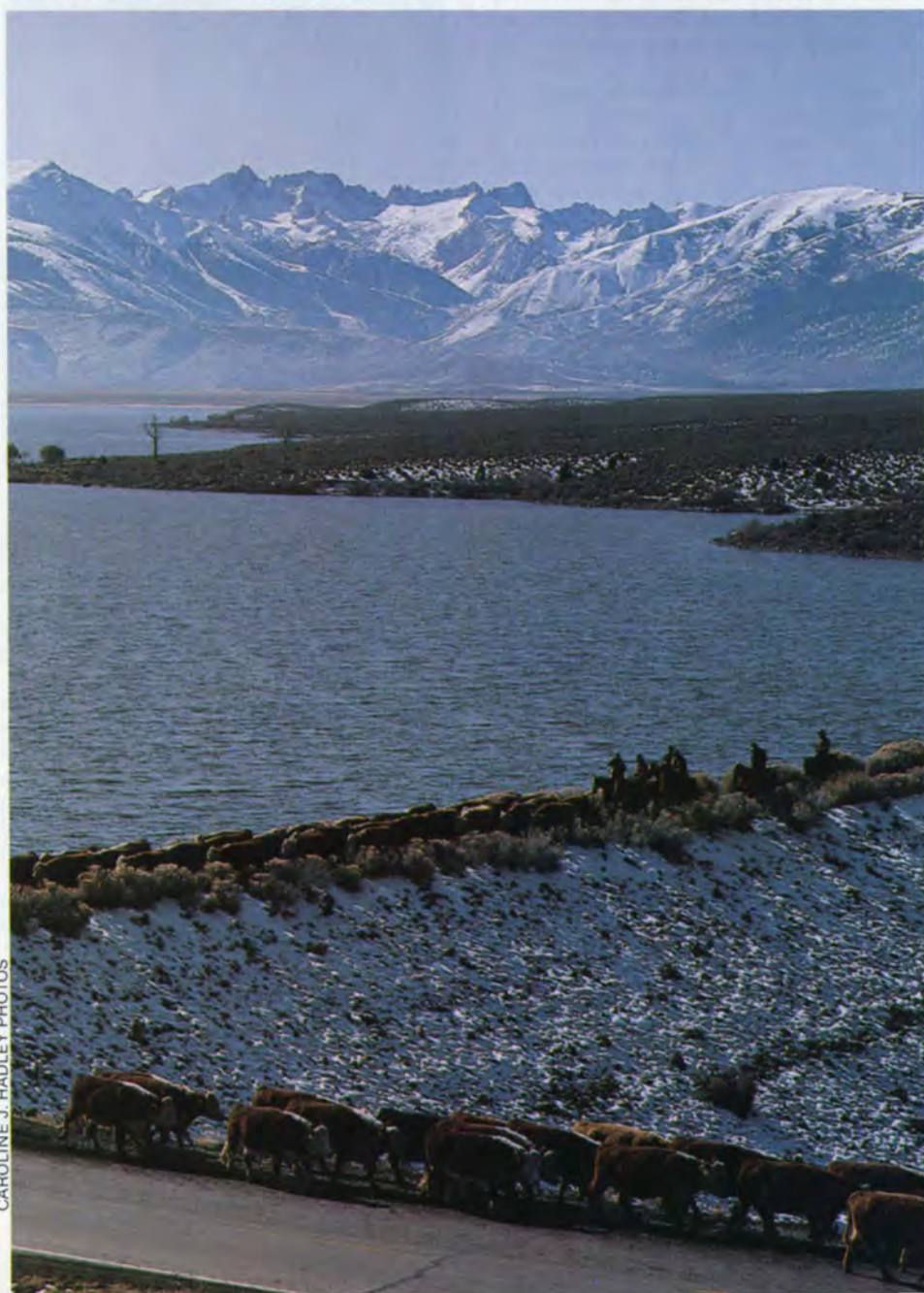
Jack's Valley Ranch is where John and wife Rose call home, where they brought up their four children. It is a lush place with 1,600 acres of irrigated grassland. "At first I didn't have a good commercial herd so I tried to develop good cows, good bulls, good replacement heifers. You have to have a good program. If you do, your steers will be ready in 15 to 16 months. That means they'll be 1,200 pounds plus with a good long frame. They'll gain well each day and their dressed weight will be about 700 pounds. You always figure about 62 percent yield."

Ascuaga has to know about beef because he also owns Nugget Meat Packers in Reno. He sells beef and lamb to most hotels in town even though he doesn't raise enough meat to fulfill even the needs of his own place.

Soon after he started building his Hereford herd at Jack's Valley, he bought a hay ranch in Smith Valley. "I had to have hay for the wintertime. I needed it for feed," he says. "Then I heard about another ranch in Smith. It was Fred Dressler's and he wanted to get rid of it, so I bought it." Soon after that he bought the 2,200-acre Simpson Ranch in Bridgeport.



The casino and ranch boss hits the trail, briefly on pavement, on first day of the annual 46-mile, four-day cattle drive. Below, cows and cowboys pass Bridgeport Reservoir on way from Simpson Ranch, the level spread in background, down to Smith.



CAROLINE J. HADLEY PHOTOS

With the four ranches, Ascuaga's cattle operation pays for itself. He has a man running each ranch, but Ascuaga calls them all a couple of times a week to keep in touch.

Even though he likes the Simpson place, he admits it wasn't the best investment he ever made. "I could have made more money doing other things, but what the heck are you going to do? It's always been my philosophy, if you're going to do a job, do it well. Much like with our restaurants. Either do it right or don't do it."

His cattle operation flows over into his casino business. The Nugget is the only gambling establishment to have a Hereford bull sale in the main room, center stage. Ascuaga started the show to promote the breed 14 years ago.

"At the time I didn't have a good enough bloodline," he says. "We were raising bulls and George Collins from Ace Hereford Ranch bought some. Once day we were sitting around and said, 'How about having a bull sale on stage?' Everybody was sober even though George kept a bottle underneath the haystack every once in a while."

Over the years he has added two other livestock shows. A production sale is held at Jack's Valley Ranch each February, and a Suffolk sheep sale follows in early summer. Ascuaga has 80 Suffolks at the ranch, raised strictly for lamb for the meat plant. "I can't be a Basque and not have any sheep," he laughs.

Then in September Ascuaga, his brother Frank, and crew make the cattle drive down from the high country. It's a time for work, reflection, and a lot of company as friends join the drive on the last day, sometimes swelling the entourage to a dozen hands or more. The drive is fun, but it's based on good business sense, too.

"We don't do it that way because it's the way it used to be," he says. "We do it because it's the most economical way of getting to Smith. It's quite a task to ship 1,000 head by truck. It's hard on the cows because you have to hotshot them into the trucks. On the drive they stay in good shape. They are on good feed. They are pregnant and their feet get a little sore about the fourth day, but if any get weak we pick them up with a truck and trailer." The cows and calves are trucked back in the spring, however. "We have to because we'd lose all the calves."

During last year's drive, the temperatures hovered between zero and 30 degrees. The year before, it rained all the way. Does weather affect the boss' participation? "Absolutely not," he says.

Later, while sitting on the deck of his home thinking about his casino and cattle, Ascuaga looks across Jack's Valley and the herd of purebred cattle grazing on green grass, over the corral rails past his prize bull, Laddie. He waves his arm towards the orchards and the enormous barn that houses an arena and bleachers for use at his auctions and says, "I don't have any desire to go to Palm Springs. Nevada is my Palm Springs." □

Caroline J. Hadley, Nevada editor and publisher, has a Douglas County ranch with two cows.

LOCK, STOCK & BARREL

This mystery collector aims for one-of-a-kind antique firearms that helped make American history.

By James McKimney

The owner of one of the state's most notable gun collections never left the hustle and bustle of Manhattan until he was 44 years old and came west to Reno to get a divorce. But when he did, he discovered two things: that he loved western history and, in fact, he could collect, sell, and trade it for a living.

Now, after 13 years in Nevada, he owns a gun collection that contains such early-West weapons as a Henry repeating rifle used by the Nevada Volunteers during the Civil War, a gun presented to Buffalo Bill in 1887, and many other antique firearms. His collection today is worth half a million dollars.

The collector, who prefers anonymity because of the high value of the museum-quality pieces he has assembled, says, "After I got out here, I found I could make money buying and selling guns. It was a source of income. But then, because they were such tangible evidence of times in our history, my interest became deeper."

He began collecting rare guns that could be traced to notable periods of conflict in American history, including the Revolutionary War, the Spanish-American War, and the Indian Wars. He has restricted the collection to guns made in the United States.

Because he knows what he wants, the collector's method of acquiring new firearms is relatively simple. Over the years he has discovered key people who have the merchandise he is seeking, a group to which he constantly adds new names. Also, he answers gun-periodical advertisements for the kind of weapons he finds most attractive historically.

"During the Civil War, for example, Nevada's gold and silver were paying for the Union's fighting efforts. Mule trains out of Virginia City carried bullion to smelters in Dayton and the Carson City area," he says. "Soldiers, such as the one carrying the 1864 Henry repeating rifle in the Nevada cavalry, were protecting the gold and silver. That's why that gun means so much to me.



The collector with a single-action Colt favored by Old West gunfighters.



Case contains a Manhattan Navy pistol presented to Wade Hampton, Jr., of the South Carolina Volunteers during the Civil War.

Because it's the only Henry rifle known to exist today that was used by a member of the single Nevada military unit involved in that war, it's one of a kind."

And guns that are one of a kind are those that he wants most. His biggest thrill would be to acquire yet another Henry rifle.

"It was the one presented to Abe Lincoln by the Henry Repeating Rifle Company, an outfit that went out of business in 1866. It was a bribe, really, to get Lincoln to endorse Henry guns for the Union military. That would truly be one of a kind that I would like to own. It says so much about that period of our history and wars in general."

All of the guns in this collection say a great deal about men and history, each in its individual way. □

James McKimney of South Lake Tahoe is a widely-published author and photographer and frequent Nevada contributor.

For public gun collections, see the colorful firearm exhibits at Harold's Club in Reno and Sierra Sid's in Sparks. Harold's has many 17th and 18th century weapons as well as Old West models, while Sierra Sid's has an extensive collection of Colt commemoratives.

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Long famous as a cow town and mining center, this northeastern Nevada city gives you a look at the West's beginnings, and then some.

By John Grissim



CHAD B. SMITH PHOTOS

It was a pretty waitress at the Stockmen's hotel-casino coffee shop who provided the first clue to the character of Elko. Asked what most residents do for excitement, she replied "Oh, quite a bit.

"For instance," she explained, "my boyfriend is a mountain lion bounty hunter for the government and sometimes I go with him. A track-down can be a lot of work but he's got good dogs. It gets pretty exciting." She smiled and served a plate of steak and eggs and poured more coffee. There wasn't so much as a scratch on her nail polish.

Like that young woman, Elko is possessed of a good deal more than meets the eye. From Interstate 80 on a warm spring day the town first appears as a welcome oasis, contrasting sharply with the vast desert to the west and the snow-capped Ruby Mountains to the south. This same oasis is also

home to 12,000 people, the chief service and trade center for an area as large as New Jersey, Connecticut, and Rhode Island combined, and a point of entry for one of the greatest wilderness areas in America. Elko has been called variously the Queen of the Humboldt Valley, the last real western cow town (as Lowell Thomas once observed), the City of Festivals, and now, according to the winning entry of a Chamber of Commerce slogan contest, the Star of Nevada.

For many thousands of travelers over the years Elko has also been "that town off the freeway that has the casino with the giant polar bear standing on its roof." Everyone in the West, it seems, has at one time in his or her lives stopped in Elko, eaten a meal here, or had a car repaired, or stayed overnight, or won a few jackpots, or all of the above. And just as assuredly, those people who

depart in a hurry have missed the boom and good-life gusto of a town and environs that is truly a rising star in the Nevada firmament.

When I returned to Elko recently, the famous polar bear still stood atop the Commercial hotel-casino, and I found other things unchanged since my last visit. The older residential section still has tree-lined streets while stray road dirt and rocks litter the sides of the busier intersections (evidence of the hard winter). Pickup trucks still rumble over the tracks at Fifth and Railroad, passing casino-bound buckaroos in their wide-brimmed John B's, wildrag kerchiefs, sheepskin coats, and Levis. And the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific freight trains still roll through the center of town accompanied by a chorus of crossing bells and air horns and the throaty roar of diesel-electric engines. The sound of their passing still echoes off the bricks of the imposing post office building, the flashing casino marquees, and the Crystal movie theatre with its portrait of a dashing John Wayne painted on one side. High above the freeway waves a king-sized Old Glory from a huge flag pole, a nice civic touch for a solid American grassroots western town.

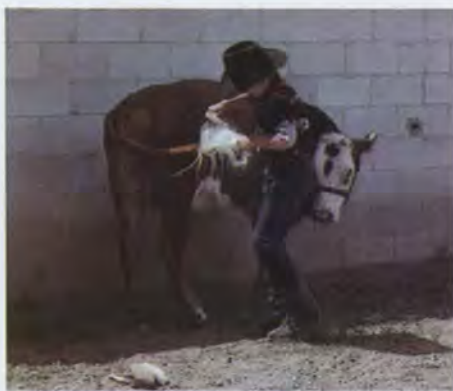
A more leisurely exploration reveals some surprises. For example, along the east end of Idaho Street, Elko's main thoroughfare, you'll find an elaborate city park, two swimming pools, the county fairgrounds, a convention center, the Northeastern Nevada Museum, a new shopping mall, and the just-opened Red Lion Inn, a splashy gambling and entertainment palace. To the north of town is Northridge, an ambitious subdivision built by Freeport Gold to house its growing work force. Elsewhere, along the Humboldt River which meanders along Elko's southern flank, is a nearly-completed \$42 million railroad bypass and switching yard.

Clearly these developments suggest growth, which is indeed the case, but unless there is a festival or fair in the immediate offing, you won't see bustling throngs of locals. For one reason, 12,000 residents is hardly enough to go around. And two, many of them are out in the surrounding country-

Elko was first a railroad town, established when the Central Pacific arrived in 1868. Above, quilt experts take up needles at the Pioneer Arts in the Park festival.



NORTHEASTERN NEVADA MUSEUM



Elko's Rising Star

side earning a living. Consider that Elko is headquarters for 22 mining and drilling companies with operations widely scattered within the county's 17,128 square miles (the state's second largest). Chief among these enterprises is the Freeport Gold millsite in the Tuscarora Mountains, the largest gold mine in the U.S. Within this same territory are more than 60 cattle and sheep ranches, the combined output of which has made Elko the third largest cattle producing region in the nation.

As befits its location along a major interstate, Elko enjoys up-to-date amenities such as touch-tone dialing and a satellite-based community antenna that pulls in ESPN, HBO, and Turner broadcasting. But an electronic window to the wider world fails to disguise the town's proximity to the wilderness. At 5,000 feet elevation, this is high desert country where winter temperatures can reach a man-killing 30° below zero and where you keep your car or truck as well maintained as Elko's marshal did his .45 a century earlier—and for the same reason. This is where a welcome sign at Spring Creek Mobile Estates a few minutes outside of town advises "No Shooting or Trapping." Put another way, a mountain lion passing within pistol shot of the Red Lion Casino would hardly be news. And one would be hard pressed to find an Elko resident who doesn't prefer it that way. They may like their blackjack and their brandy, but they dearly *love* their outdoors.

"Years ago when I was aboard ship in the Navy, people would ask me where I was from," mused Dutch Stenovich, Elko's amiable former mayor as he lit his pipe over coffee. "And I'd say I'm from a little town in the northeastern part of Nevada where you can do whatever you want, whenever you want, and for as long as you want, as long as no one gets hurt."

He flashes a sly, crinkly grin. Now in his late sixties, Stenovich is a well-liked town elder who as mayor used to ride astride a white jackass in the annual Independence Day parade, bantering with the spectators and fielding the inevitable wisecracks. For

decades he has owned a successful car dealership located two blocks from Elko's discreet brothels. He used to invite prospective customers to visit his showroom "near the railroad tracks on the friendly side of town." Stenovich Motors is still at that location, "but don't look for me on weekends," he cautions, "since I'll be gone fishing."

For avid Elko anglers, a category that encompasses probably half the population, the year-round possibilities are almost without number given the many lakes, rivers, and streams teeming with fish. The region has produced many trophy trout and black bass. A similar smorgasbord of wildlife awaits the hunter. Seasonal offerings include mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and elk as well as pheasant, sagehens, and ducks. Altogether, the fish and game around

Elko are a modern-day resource as highly prized as the mineral wealth and prime pastureland that nurtured the town in its infancy.

Like many western towns, Elko was the planned offspring of an expanding railroad. In this instance it was the Central Pacific Railroad, whose crews laid track through the area during the heady months of 1868 on their way to meet the Union Pacific Railroad at Promontory, Utah. The origin of the name Elko is disputed but one early account describes a railroad surveyor telling a party of local Indians that on the new site would grow a city the size of San Francisco. "Elko!" one Indian listener cried. The word was allegedly a term of disgust, whereupon the boss of the survey crew (doubtless a fellow with a perverse humor) declared the word as good as any for the town-to-be and

There's ranching country in all directions in Elko County, the fourth largest county in the continental U.S. Above, a future rancher has the world by the tail.



GORDON S. CAMPBELL



CHAD B. SMITH PHOTOS

A spirited local sport is chariot racing, which began a few winters ago as a cowboy's cure for cabin fever. Elko has hosted the world championships.

printed it on his map. A more plausible explanation is that the CPRR's Charles Crocker, who had a great fondness for naming stations after animals, (a list of which he carried with him), simply added an "o" to Elk for ease of pronunciation. While initially a tent city railroad stop for coal and water, Elko quickly became an ore-shipping point for local mines as well as a supply depot for the cattle and sheep ranches that proliferated after the Civil War.

From the outset the town was as lively as the yells of freighters turning their oxen-drawn wagons and the whoop and hoorah of boisterous cowboys and boomcamp miners. Though colorful, Elko was law-abiding and grew quickly. The farms in the lush Lamoille, Pleasant, and Ruby Valleys to the south prospered with the new access to eastern markets while trains arriving daily from both directions brought canned salmon, champagne, machinery, Basque sheepherders, schoolmarms, young lawyers, prospectors and dreamers. There was room for everyone. During the 1870s the mining camp of Tuscarora in the Independence Valley 50 miles north of Elko was itself on a roll, for a while producing more than \$1 million annually in gold and silver. It boasted the largest Chinese community outside of San Francisco and was noted for its steam-driven stamp mills whose boilers were fueled solely by sagebrush. By the mid-1880s, however, Tuscarora's streak began to run out. Its population proceeded to do the same, bringing to an end one of Nevada's most celebrated boomtowns.

Although the dreadful winters of 1888-1890 nearly devastated the herds of the once free-spending cattle ranchers, and mining activity in the area slowed, Elko survived as the principal hub of commerce

between Salt Lake City and Reno. It was in Elko that the first campus of the University of Nevada was established in 1874 (it was moved to Reno in 1889). By the turn of the century the cattle and sheep industries had largely recovered while additional prosperity arrived in 1907 when the Western Pacific Railroad completed a rail link and established a division point here. Finally, with the legalization of gambling in 1931, tourism became a source of income that has since become as important as mining and ranching. Today Elko boasts an astonishing 1,500 hotel and motel rooms, a total one would expect for a town more than twice its size.

In the 1950s Elko County's rugged beauty attracted Hollywood celebrities, among them Bing Crosby, Joel McCrea and Jimmy Stewart, all of whom bought cattle ranches which prospered along with a growing beef and sheep industry. By the mid-'70s there were 650,000 head of cattle and 171,000 sheep in Elko County owned and cared for by some very sophisticated ranchers. Here in the 1980s Elko retains the look of cow country, and proudly so, for ranching, both as a western tradition and as a business, is ingrained in the northeastern Nevada soul. One need only amble over to the fairgrounds on this spring weekend to glimpse the face of that heritage. During the course of an afternoon 200 cattlemen and their wives (many from other western states) gathered over lunch, howdy'ed, and talked shop, following which famed auctioneer Pat Buchen commenced to auction off 100 prime Longhorn futurity heifers and bulls. By cocktail time over a quarter-million dollars had changed hands, after which the well-dressed and amiable throng drove away, many in expensive cars and trucks,



At Wild Horse you'll find hefty trout, and the winter ice-fishing is great.

some enroute to Elko airport where their planes awaited. Left behind was the impression that these were bright, hardworking people whose lives and livelihoods embodied a deep love of the land and a code of



Heli-skiing high in the Rubies offers the adventuresome skier miles of powder.



At the National Basque Festival in July, local Basques invite their kinsmen and the world at large to celebrate their heritage. Above is Stephanie Yanci of Elko.

decent conduct that doesn't need a whole lot of talking about.

"You won't find a lot of bumpkin in Elko," observed one impressed visitor from Carson City. "It's always struck me as an



CHACO MOHLER

intelligent, well-run town whose people know what they've got going for them."

Among Elko's civic assets is its suitability for grand get-togethers for groups anywhere from 20 to 20,000. Aside from its elegant new convention center with its 900 seat Festival Theatre, the town and its fairgrounds are annually given over to the National Basque Festival, a traveling circus, horseshows, rodeos, and, biggest of all, the Elko County Fair and Livestock Show on Labor Day weekend. Not only do these celebrations de-populate the surrounding 1,500 square miles, but in the case of the rodeo and county fair, they provide the opportunity for working cowmen and women to show off their considerable skills at roping, riding and branding. Parenthetically, many punchers (both competing and spectating) are proud owners of custom saddles, spurs and bits made by Elko's J.M. Capriola Company which for decades has had an international reputation as the world's foremost saddlemaker.

"It's really the family ranches that give the area its personality," remarked Wendy Ispisua who, together with her husband Hank, host the popular Jack Creek Guest Ranch 60 miles north of Elko.

A case in point is the Mori Ranch just down the road from Jack Creek. Nelo Mori, together with his sons Pete and Sam, personify Elko ranching at its best, running cattle on their own 500 acres (as well as grazeland leased from the Bureau of Land Management), often spending 12-14 hours a day in the saddle (or on a hay mower harvesting winter feed). The Capriola folks even named one of their saddles after Nelo Mori while his two sons, both of whom recently became proud fathers, are first rate ropers. At the Elko County Fair a few years

back they won one of the toughest team roping and branding events anywhere in the country.

It was Elko's authenticity that drew singer Kenny Rogers to this area to film scenes for his 1979 TV movie "The Gambler" which used local cowboys as extras, many from the IL Ranches (the last spread in the country to use a horse-drawn chuck wagon). Rogers even dropped in one night to Jack Creek and sat on the corner stool, trying out a few new tunes on an acoustic guitar. "He gave an impromptu private concert for all of 10 people," remembers Hank Ispisua. "He's an easy-going, regular guy."

Rogers later filmed a scene around the craps table at the venerable Commercial. The location was fitting for in 1941 Ted Lewis and his orchestra opened the era of big time Nevada entertainment by playing the Commercial, the first hotel in the state to feature big name attractions. Together with the Stockmen's just across the street, the Commercial has long been a favorite watering hole for locals who prefer the relaxed, folksy demeanor of the bartenders, dealers and staff. Both casinos, as well as the newly opened Red Lion, have recently launched aggressive chartered bus services (featuring catered food and libation at no charge) to bring in customers from as far away as Salt Lake City and Boise. The Commercial alone brings in 80-90 buses a month. For its part the Stockmen's just completed a stylish million dollar face lift which owner Dan Bilbao Jr. says is part of a pace-setting program to attract new customers.

In fact, Elko's spate of casino expansion and promotion is partly a response to the burgeoning casinos at Wendover and Wells (and to a lesser extent at Jackpot to the



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north) which have begun to siphon off some of the Elko-bound fun-seekers. The dip in business has caused some concern, but, according to Mel Steninger, editor and co-publisher (with wife Mae) of the *Elko Daily Free Press*, Elko will benefit in the long run.

"There is a great deal more for visitors to do here," Steninger says. "Both indoors and outdoors. And with the steady growth we're experiencing, Elko will continue to attract more and more people who have a diversity of interests."

Steninger guides the century-old *Free Press* (cir. 4,000) from his 4th and Court Street offices equipped with the latest in word-processing and typesetting equipment. A lean, bespectacled newsman in a plaid western shirt, he often as not leaves his cold stogie between his teeth as he delivers an opinion edged with a wit as dry as desert sage. Personally, Steninger would like to see much of the town-owned land around the outskirts transferred to the private sector to facilitate orderly growth, and he's pushing for the old switching yard on the west side to be developed into a light industrial park. But in general he feels Elko is on track—a solid economic base, good people, and very little crime. "Of course," he deadpans, "every now and then a preacher wants to shut down the brothels, but it doesn't take long for us to straighten him out."

Actually, the brothels did come up during discussions last year regarding the planned 3.7-mile railroad bypass alongside the Humboldt River four blocks south of downtown. Officially, the relocation will benefit Elko by eliminating 17 grade crossings and allowing more commercial development. Unofficially, the bypass will also end the danger of pedestrian accidents since clients headed for Sue's Place or the Club Mona Lisa, for example, will no longer have to cross the tracks to get there from downtown. When the plans were first made public, however, officials conceded that at least one *maison de joi* would have to be relocated south of the new tracks, placing that establishment at a competitive disadvantage. It was either that or change the path of the tracks. Town fathers huddled with the railroad and quietly resolved the issue. Decision: track route changed, brothel unmolested. The resolution of this delicate matter was accomplished almost without publicity, the sole exception being a front page story and photo in the *Los Angeles Times*. Most residents agreed that the coverage, while perhaps regrettable, would probably not discourage out-of-state visitor interest. When the bypass is completed, Elko's brothels will all remain on the same (if not the right) side of the tracks.

With Elko and the railroads getting a divorce, and the resulting absence of train horns and crossing bells several times each night, local wags are predicting a decline in the town's birthrate. In the meantime, so much of the character and gritty charm of Elko remain. One can still enjoy a superb Basque-style meal at the Nevada House or the Star Hotel, the latter hosted by Joe Sarasua who still mixes his famed (and

Elko Travel Guide

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potent) picon punch. And meet and talk with Tuscarora historians like Tony Primeaux with his tales of gold and gumption. And perhaps drop in to the Horseshoe Bar for gossip and a game of pool with Shoshone Indians Doug and

Hodo. Or relax at the longbar with a cool one at the Stockmen's or the Commercial and watch a fascinating procession of cowboys, sheep men, geologists, prospectors, construction workers, outdoorsmen, and businessmen and women—people for whom

Elko is not only home but also one of the great places to work and play in the west. □

John Grissim has written for Sports Illustrated, Rolling Stone, Playboy, and many other publications. He also is the author of five books.

The Elko Traveler

Trains, towns, sights, and outdoor sports.

Few train rides anywhere in the U.S. can equal Amtrak's California Zephyr for the beauty and diversity of terrain encountered, especially the California and Nevada portions of its route. Departing at midday from San Francisco, the Chicago-bound train meanders along the Sacramento River, then north through the Sierra foothills towards Truckee. By sunset one can be in the dining car enjoying roast breast of chicken and white wine while gazing upon Donner Lake and the surrounding snow-capped peaks. By nightfall the Zephyr is east of Reno heading for Winnemucca and Carlin, then Elko at midnight. For \$148 coach round-trip (\$98 one way), Amtrak to Elko is a good value and, because of cushy and comfortable new rolling stock, thoroughly relaxing. The fare from Salt Lake City is \$43 (twice that round trip).

While Elko-bound travelers from California may expect to arrive no more than 20 minutes late, Amtrak's record of on-time arrivals from points east of Elko is something of a joke among Elko residents—"Sometimes it's Ain'trak." Expect delays averaging 45-90 minutes later than the listed 2:24 a.m. arrival time. At present the tiny SP station house and waiting room for westbound passengers is locked and empty. Although a new facility will open when the new rail bypass goes into operation, this news provided scant comfort to the eight westbound travelers huddled one recent night in a light snowfall waiting for a train which, due to washed out tracks on the Great Salt Lake, was seven hours late. Fortunately a kindly Elko Police Department allowed the stranded passengers refuge in its offices across the street. Amtrak deserves no blame for acts of God that caused delays, however, the resulting confusion and erroneous information provided by its 800 number operators suggests a management system that could use a little streamlining. Still, travel is adventure and if one allows for a little slack in one's timetable, Amtrak to Elko has a lot going for it.

Outdoor Life

Fishing: Wild Horse Reservoir 60 miles north of Elko is famous for its hefty trout in the 1-2 lb. range (and often larger) and is an

ideal spot for ice fishing in winter. Other prime spots north of town are the Sheep Creek and Wilson reservoirs (trout and black bass). To the south the action is at the Jiggs Reservoir and the Ruby Marshes, the latter offering tackle-busting bass of trophy caliber. Elsewhere virtually all streams and creeks (as well as the Humboldt River) contain native (and caged) trout. Plans are afoot to dam the south fork of the Humboldt 12 miles south of Elko. The resulting lake will be excellent for fishing and boating. While some spots may be considered remote, people here think nothing of driving 150-200 miles round trip to get in a few hours fishing.

Hunting: Mule deer are the most sought-after prey, particularly by bow hunters. Season dates and a lottery-based permit process are rigorously regulated by Nevada Department of Wildlife. Check with them in Reno at 789-0500 for current rules and regs for all hunting. Deer, antelope, elk and wild fowl such as ring-neck pheasants and ducks abound in the Elko region. Note: Folks around Elko think kindly of hunters who respect private property and no trespassing signs and who refrain from using livestock for target practice. Conversely, property owners are increasingly prone to vigorously prosecuting offenders.

Camping & Backpacking: Endless possibilities. Check with the headquarters office of the Humboldt National Forest for area conditions (Elko: 738-5171).

Campgrounds, RV Parks, Guest Ranches

In Elko: Elko KOA - Rydon Interchange, Elko. 738-6898.

Shangri-La Trailer Court & RV Park - Mountain City Hwy. 738-8733.

Panorama Trailer Court - Garcia Ln. 738-3974.

Elko Area: Jack Creek Guest Ranch - 60 mi. N. on Hwy 226. Bar, dining room, motel. Tuscarora toll sta. 6556.

O'Carroll's - Lamoille. 753-9451. Silver Peak - Ruby Valley. 779-2275.

Wild Horse Ranch and Resort - North Fork TS. Toll sta. 6471.

Side Trips

Lamoille

Drive a mere 30 minutes on Hwy. 227 south of Elko and you will encounter one of the most startlingly beautiful areas in the west. Lush green pastureland, sylvan creeks, cottonwoods and aspen trees, and in the near distance the majestic Ruby Mountains. In the tiny achingly picturesque village of Lamoille, sample the food and libation at the Pine Lodge, O'Carroll's (a great saloon) or the Breitenstein Dinner Lodge. Take time to amble further into the mountains, then

consider heading back and over to Jiggs by way of the Te-Moak Indian Reservation.

Tuscarora

The legendary boom and bust town 45 minutes north on Hwy. 226. Once a community of 10,000 in the 1870s, now down to 50 or so in the summer. Currently home of the esteemed Tuscarora Pottery School founded in 1966 by potter Dennis Parks. Read the gravestones in the cemetery not far from the towering brick chimney of an old stamp mill. Drop in on the Tuscarora Tavern (if it's open). On the way back to town, be sure to stop in at the Taylor Canyon tavern, a fine and friendly cow country saloon.

Ruby Mountain Heli-Ski

This adventure package could be the best kept secret in the world of skiing. Helicopter skiing in the Ruby Mountains rivals that pursued in the Caribos and the Bugaboo mountains. Partners Joe Royer and Andy Bowers have teamed up with the new Red Lion Inn to offer the most discriminating skier first rate lodging and helicopter access to 500 square miles of the driest powder in the west. The next season starts in February, 1984. For further info: Ruby Mountain Heli-Ski. P.O. Box 1192, Lamoille, NV 89828. Phone: (702) 753-6867

In Elko

Restaurants. The Star Hotel and the Nevada Dinner House, both renowned Basque establishments offering excellent family-style food, remain Elko's best bet for dining out. Both are on Silver Street just south of the Stockmen's Casino.

Saloons. The Commercial, the Stockmen's and the RanchInn are popular casino watering holes. But drop in to the Palm Saloon at 407 Railroad for untouched old western flavor and one of the region's longest running uninterrupted back room poker games.

The Northeastern Nevada Museum. Don't miss. Nationally acclaimed, first rate and fascinating. An hour spent here provides a terrific perspective on Elko and its rugged heritage.

Golf. Elko has two surprisingly good public courses: the Ruby View Golf Course (738-6212) and the Spring Creek Course (753-6331).

The J.M. Capriola Company. 500 Commercial Street. Western wear and arguably the world's finest custom saddles, spurs and bits. Preserving the legacy of the legendary saddle-maker S.S. Garcia, the Capriola Company features a large retail showroom and a mind-boggling display of finery. Its hefty catalog (\$3.50) is both a souvenir and a treasure trove of information. When a group of California ranchers recently had a saddle made for President Reagan, the Capriola Company was given the job.—/G

Showguide

Casino showroom entertainment gets a dose of fresh desert air this summer and fall as Caesars Palace in Las Vegas holds outdoor shows in a 9,000-seat arena. The nighttime concerts, which are a first for Caesars, feature George Benson, Kenny Loggins, Johnny Cash, and Glen Campbell during September and October. Tickets are available three weeks prior to the show. The highest prices for earlier concerts were \$25 for Kenny Rogers and \$17.50 for the Beach Boys. Cheaper seats are available if you aren't picky about location. For information call 702-731-7865.—AH



Kenny Loggins



Glen Campbell



George Benson

Shows & Stars

Following is a muster of the stars, revues, and extravaganzas you can see in Nevada showrooms in September and October. Schedules can change, so it's wise to call ahead for times, dates, and reservations. For out-of-state callers, Nevada's area code is 702.

Las Vegas

Aladdin, 736-0111 Entertainment TBA

Barbary Coast, 737-7111 Irish Showband, 9:30pm, midnight & 2am; Royal Dixie Jazz Band, noon-6pm; no cover, no minimum

Bingo Palace, 386-2677 Hired Hands, indf., 8pm-2am Tues.-Sun., Rose & Pike, indf., 8pm-2am Mon.

Caesars Palace, 731-7333: "42nd Street," Broadway musical, thru 12/10, 9pm & 12:30am; George Benson, 9/23; Kenny Loggins, 10/1, Johnny Cash/Glen Campbell, 10/8

Circus Circus, 734-0410: Circus acts, 11am-midnight, free

Desert Inn, 733-4566: Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Ladies," Broadway musical, indf., cocktail shows 7 & 11pm, \$15 Tues.-Fri. & Sun., 7 & 11pm, \$18 on Sat., includes 2 drinks; dark Mon.

Dunes, 737-4110: *Casino Theatre*: Entertainment TBA

El Rancho, 796-2222: Lounge entertainment nightly, 1 drink minimum

Flamingo Hilton, 733-3333: City Lites, revue, indf.; 8pm dinner show from \$14.50, midnight cocktail show \$10.95, includes 2 drinks

Four Queens, 385-4011 (800-634-6035): Don-

dino, indf., 1-5pm Tues.-Sun., Sunspots, thru 10/23, 5:30-9:30pm Tues.-Sat.; DeCastro Sisters, indf., 3-8pm on Mon. & 5-9pm on Sun.

Frontier, 734-0240: Siegfried and Roy in Beyond Belief, thru 11/28; 7pm & 11pm on Tues.-Sun., family show on 9/2 & 10/7 at 6pm; dark Mon., \$26.50

Fremont, 385-3232: Lavender Follies '83, indf., 8pm & 10pm Mon.-Thurs., 8pm, 10pm & midnight Fri.-Sat., dark Sun., \$8.95, includes 2 drinks

Hacienda, 798-0571 Fire & Ice, ice spectacular, indf.; 8pm optional dinner show from \$13.95, 8pm & midnight cocktail show \$10.95, includes 2 drinks; Redd Foxx, indf.; 10pm Tues.-Sun., 1:30am Fri.-Sat.; \$14.95, includes 2 drinks

Holiday, 369-5000: Wild World of Burlesque, indf.; 10pm & 12:30am Mon.-Fri., 8pm, 10pm & 12:30am Sat., dark Sun., \$6.95, includes 2 drinks

Imperial Palace, 733-0234: Mickey Finn Show, 9/13-indf.; 2pm & 4pm; dark Sun., \$8.95, includes 2 drinks; Legends in Concert, indf., 8pm & 11pm; dark Sun., \$9.95, includes 2 drinks

Landmark, 733-1110: Nightly entertainment

Las Vegas Hilton, 732-5755: Bal du Moulin Rouge starring Charo, indf., 8pm dinner show from \$16.50, midnight cocktail show \$12.50

Las Vegas Inn & Casino, 731-3222: Entertainment Tues.-Sun.

MGM Grand Hotel, 739-4567: *Ziegfeld Theatre*: Jubilee! indf., 8:15pm & 11:45pm, \$23.50; *Celebrity Room*: Andy Gibb/David Brenner, 9/1-7; Dean Martin & The Goldiggers, 9/8-14; Liberace, 9/15-28; Mac Davis, 9/29-10/12; Melissa Manchester, 10/13-19; Dean Martin, 10/20-26; Julio Inglesias, 10/27-11/2

Marina, 739-1500: The Four Lads, 9/1-12; Jan and Dean, 9/14-10/3; The Coasters, 10/5-31 8pm and 10pm Sun.-Mon. & Wed.-Thurs., 8pm, 10pm & midnight Fri.-Sat. cocktail shows; dark Tues., no cover, 2 drink minimum

Maxim, 731-4300: Shameless! starring Bobby Duck and the Shameless Hussies, indf., 8pm, & 10pm Tues.-Thurs., 8pm, 10pm & midnight Mon., Fri., & Sat., dark Sun., \$6.95, includes 2 drinks; Talent Showcase on Sun., 8:30pm-2am

Mint, 385-7440: Entertainment TBA

Riviera, 734-5110: Neil Sedaka, 9/1-7; Joan Rivers/The Smothers Brothers/Jim Stafford, 9/8-14; Shirley MacLaine/David Brenner, 9/15-28; Paul Anka, 9/29-10/12; Ronnie Milsap, 10/20-11/2; 8pm & midnight

Royal Casino, 733-4000: Grin & Bare It, indf.; 8pm, 10pm & midnight, \$3.95 for show only, \$9.95 dinner & show

Sahara, 737-2424: Headliner entertainment, 8pm & midnight

Sam's Town, 456-7777: 24-hour entertainment

Sands, 733-5453: Helen Reddy, thru 9/4; Sandler & Young, 9/6-25; Gallagher, 10/4-23; 8pm & midnight cocktail shows

Showboat, 385-9123: Entertainment and dancing nightly

Silver Slipper, 734-1212: Boy-Lesque, revue, indf.; 8pm, 10pm & midnight; dark Thurs., Branded, revue, indf.; 9pm & 11pm Mon.-Thurs., 7pm, 9pm & 11pm Fri. & Sat., dark Sun., \$5.95

Stardust, 732-6325: Lido de Paris, indf., 7pm & 11pm Sun.-Fri., 6:15pm, 9:15pm & midnight Sat., \$17.50, includes 2 drinks

Sundance, 382-6111 Entertainment nightly

Tropicana, 739-2411: Folies Bergere, indf.; 8pm dinner show, 11:30pm cocktail show

Union Plaza, 386-2444: Broadway entertainment nightly; 8pm dinner show from \$9.95, 11:45pm cocktail show \$5.95, includes 2 drinks

Lake Tahoe

Caesars Tahoe, 588-3515 (800-648-7469): Lena Horne, thru 9/4; Kansas, 9/22-24

Cloud's Cal-Neva, 832-4000 (800-648-7200): *Showroom*: TNT, dance revue, thru 9/17: 8pm & 11pm; dark Mon., *Cabaret Lounge*: RC & The Runaways, thru 9/11: Destiny in Time, 9/13-10/9; 9pm, 10:30pm & midnight, no cover

Harrah's Lake Tahoe, 588-6611 *South Shore Room*: Roger Whittaker, thru 9/1: Melissa Manchester/Billy Crystal, 9/2-8; Bill Cosby/George Kirby, 9/9-22; Roy Clark/Woody Herman, 9/23-29; Tony Orlando, 9/30-10/13; Mickey Gilley, 10/14-20; Anne Murray, 10/21-27; Wayne Newton, 10/28-11/17: *Stateline Cabaret*: Grass Roots featuring Rob Grill, 9/5-11: Elvin Bishop, 9/13-25 (except Mon.); The Association, 9/27-10/9 (except Mon.); Rain: A Tribute to The Beatles, 10/11-23 (except Mon.); Paul Revere & The Raiders, 10/25-11/6 (except Mon.)

Harvey's, 588-2411 *Top Of The Wheel*: Ron Rose Sound, indf.; Jan Tanner, thru 9/18; Tamra Steele Band, 10/18-23; Garfin Gathering, 10/25-11/13; *Casino Theatre Lounge*: Edell Anglin, indf.; Rich Rossi Trio, 9/1-4; Kenny Laursen/Hot Lava/The Entertainment Co., 9/1-11: Eddie & Nancy, 9/1-18; Tunes Plus One, 9/6-25; Ernie Menehune, 9/12-30; Marilyn Johnson, 9/12-10/9; Jamie, 9/26-10/16; Lelands, 9/27-10/16; Muggins, 10/3-23; Sun Spots, 10/24-11/13

Hyatt Lake Tahoe, 831-1111 Westport Junction/Abbey Road thru 9/11: Garfin Gathering/Susan

Mazer, 9/13-10/2; Bach/Susan Mazer, 10/4-23; T.K.O./Susan Mazer, 10/25-11/6

Nevada Lodge, 831-0660: Nightly entertainment

Sahara Tahoe, 588-6211 (800-648-3322): Lou Rawls/Debbie Allen & The Fame Dancers, thru 9/5; Sheena Easton, 9/6-11 Gordon Lightfoot/Gary Mule Deer, 9/16-18

Reno, Sparks & Carson City

Carson City Nugget, 882-1626: The Lelands, thru 9/25; Ottice Yawn, 9/27-10/30

Circus Circus, 329-0711 Circus acts, 11am-midnight, free

Fitzgerald's, 786-3663: *Cabaret*: Cheryl Cotton, thru 9/18; Jamie, thru 9/19; Rhythm & Rouge, 9/20-10/9; Hot Lava, 9/21-10/10; Calamity Jayne, 10/11-31, *Emerald Room*: Dan Miller, thru 9/11, Speedy Garfin, 10/4-23; Westport Junction, 10/25-11/13

Harrah's Reno, 329-4422: *Headliner Room*: Captain & Tennille, 9/1-7; John Davidson, 9/8-21; Neil Sedaka, 9/22-10/5; Loretta Lynn, 10/6-19; Alan King, 10/20-26; Don Rickles, 10/27-11/2; *Casino Cabaret*: The Mickey Finn Show, thru 9/11 (except Mon.); The Association, 9/13-25 (except Mon.); The Mamas and The Papas, 9/27-10/9 (except Mon.); Glenn Yarbrough, 10/11-16; Tower of Power, 10/18-23; Rain: A Tribute to The Beatles, 10/25-11/6 (except Mon.)

MGM Grand Hotel, 789-2000 (800-648-3568): *Ziegfeld Theatre*: Hello Hollywood Hello, indf.;

Lion's Den: Sandra Welch, thru 9/13; Sidro's Armada, 9/14-10/11 Super Gold, 10/12-11/8; *Leo's Lair*: Jelsa Palao, thru 9/13; Vince Cardell, thru 1/3/84; Tony Saxon, 9/14-10/4

John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 358-2233 (800-648-1177): *Celebrity Room*: Entertainment TBA; *Cabaret*: Jay Ramsey Band/Zella Lehr thru 9/4; Gary Raffanelli & Sandy Selby, 9/6-25; Liz Damon's Orient Express, 9/13-25; Sam Butera & The Wildest/The Johnsons, 9/27-10/16; Tennyson, 10/18-30

Onslow, 786-7310: Nightly entertainment

Ormsby House, Carson City, 882-1890: *Mark Twain Bar*: Dave & Diana, thru 9/4; Two of Clubs, thru 9/25; *Supper Club*: The Muglestons, thru 9/11 Kenny Laursen Show, 9/13-25; 8pm dinner show from \$10 on Tues.-Sun., cocktail shows 10:30pm on Tues.-Thurs., 12:30am Fri.-Sat.; \$4, includes 2 drinks

Peppermill, 826-2121: Tony Saxon/Marilyn Johnson, thru 9/11 Michael John & Kimberly, thru 9/4; Diamonds, 9/6-10/2; Wizard of Coz, 9/12-10/2; Buckboard, 9/12-10/25; Chris David, 9/26-10/2

Pioneer Inn, 329-9781 Ricky Santos, indf., 8pm-2am Wed.-Sat., no cover

Reno Hilton, 785-7100: *Opera House Theatre*: Razzle Dazzle, indf.; 8pm & 11:30pm Tues.-Sat., 4:30pm & 8pm Sun., dark Mon., *Rainbow Cabaret*: Frenz, thru 9/5; Bach/Dr. Maynard, 9/6-19; Reycards, 9/20-10/17; Dae Han Sisters, 10/11-11/7; Angel Fever, 10/18-11/14

Riverside, 786-4400: Dancing to records of the '40s, '50s & '60s, Tues.-Sun., no minimum

Shy Clown, 358-6632: Nightly entertainment

Sierra Sid's, Sparks, 359-0550: Nightly entertainment

Sundowner, 786-7050: Carlos Avalon Explosion; Tues.-Thurs. & Sun, 9pm & 11pm; Fri.-Sat. 9pm, 11pm & 1am, 2 drink minimum

Rural

Elko: Commercial Hotel, 738-3181, and Stockmen's Hotel, 738-5141; Red Lion Inn & Casino, 738-2111

Ely: Hotel Nevada, 289-4414

Fallon: Fallon Nugget, 423-3111

Gardnerville: Sharkey's, 782-3133

Hawthorne: El Capitan, 945-3322

Jackpot: Cactus Pete's, 755-2321 and Horse-shu Casino, 755-2331

Laughlin: Riverside Resort, 298-2535; Del Webb's Nevada Club, 298-2512; Regency Casino, 298-2439; Edgewater Hotel & Casino, 298-2453; The Colorado Belle, 298-2425

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

Topaz Lake: Li Brandi's, 266-3321 and Topaz Lodge, 266-3339

Wendover: Goldrush Casino, 664-2255; Nevada Crossing, 664-4000; Stalene Casino, 664-2221 Red Garter Casino, 664-2111

Winnemucca: Star Hotel & Casino and Winners Hotel-Casino, 623-2511

Yerington: Casino West, 463-2481 and Lucky Club, 463-2868

All dates, performers and prices are subject to change. At press time, some casinos had not completed September and October bookings, so we recommend calling ahead to confirm entertainment schedules. □

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CHARLESTON TRAILS

Our late-season hike to the top of Southern Nevada's highest peak was smooth and exciting, but we didn't make it as fast as that track team. By Janice Ott

The Spring Mountains rise out of the barren landscape northwest of Las Vegas like a garden island surrounded by a desert sea. Towering over the scene is Charleston Peak, 11,912 feet above sea level and the highest point in Southern Nevada.

Charleston holds a magical attraction for desert dwellers and visitors, who take to the mountain to find cool breezes in summer and snowy ski slopes in winter. And above the campgrounds and play areas you can follow the rugged but beautiful trails that lead to the top.

That was my ambition last October when I coaxed two friends, Roxane LaCombe and Michele Sherbert, to join me in a late-season assault on Charleston's summit. The trip was the result of a personal challenge. The year before I had stood shivering on top of Telescope Peak in the Panamint Mountains and absorbed the views of Death Valley. Eighty-five miles to the east, the faint profile of Charleston glimmered through the haze. I pledged then and there I would climb

Mount Charleston someday and reverse that view.

The Charleston hiking season begins after the spring thaw and ends when the mountain gets its first coat of white. But we discovered that an early storm had already dusted the higher ledges with snow, so by waiting until October we were almost too late for our trek.

Two maintained trails lead to the peak. Our plan was to hike the 20-mile loop that circles the U-shaped ridge above Kyle Canyon, beginning on the southern route and completing the journey by the northern trail. Most backpackers aim for the ridge for the first night, but since we did not hit the trail until late afternoon, we had only a couple of hours to walk before dark. The next day we would hike to the summit, an elevation gain of more than 4,300 feet, and spend the second night on the peak.

We found the marked trailhead in Cathedral Rock Picnic Area in Kyle Canyon. The trail immediately took us up a steep ravine. Ponderosa pine, white fir, and aspen

lined the path. The aspens were in their autumn glory, and the patches of gold framed by green pines acted as optical magnets.

At Echo Cliffs we shouted and listened to our words bounce against the stone walls as they reverberated down the gorge, the last echo unexpectedly louder than the first two. Higher up, we heard running water, and a side trip brought us to a creek where the water miraculously appeared out of the ground, splashing down the ravine in a series of small cascades. Surface water is a rare sight in the mountains except during spring runoff because the porous limestone usually gobbles up the moisture and spits it out for animal and human use in only a few areas. It is the number of springs at the base of the range that gives the Spring Mountains their name.

Large blocks of ice at the edge of the water reminded us that this was October. The brook danced over the moss-covered rocks about 100 feet and then disappeared. We camped on a nearby ledge, and the



JANICE OTT PHOTOS

have lived there 4,000 years. The trail passed through meadows brown in the late season but renowned for their summertime displays of grasses and myriads of wildflowers. Botanists have identified 27 endemic plants, which are isolated in the Spring Mountains because of the barrier created by the surrounding desert.

Then patches of snow appeared as the trail began to climb. We bypassed a lateral route to Peak Springs, the last water source before the summit. Water would be no problem with snow dotting the upper slopes.

Above timberline, the trail hugged the shale slopes on the west side of the mountain. On a barren saddle we spotted the wreckage of a plane. Although the accident happened more than 25 years ago, it piqued my interest because Murdell Earl, a friend and longtime Las Vegas pharmacist, had told me how he and members of the sheriff's posse search and rescue team had ridden horses through belly-deep snow to find the plane and its 15 passengers. There had been no survivors.

The altitude and long day had taken their toll on my teenage companions. When the peak was in sight and the trail obvious, I went ahead. Once on top, I changed to a dry shirt to avoid freezing in my own sweat and busied myself collecting snow to heat on our portable stove.

When Roxane arrived, a boiling cup of hot chocolate revived her quickly. Finally Michele stumbled up to us, her face pale, with tears joining the sweat on her cheeks. She was exhausted. After a dry shirt, a cup of chocolate, and a few minutes rest, Michele responded.

"I made it!" she marveled.

We examined our temporary home on top of Southern Nevada. The most conspicuous sight was of the Forest Service's radio antennas and equipment. Kyle Canyon stretched out below, already in shadow. Clumps of snow clung to the upper limestone cliffs, outlining their ancient deposits.

Ancient bristlecones line the path on the way down from the summit.



bubbling noise of the brook, articulate for being so small, was just enough to soothe the senses for sleep.

The switchbacks the next morning were not too steep, although they seemed to stretch endlessly. The day was glorious, with made-to-order fall weather, brisk but sunny, pleasant for hiking and cool on rest breaks.

After reaching the ridge we shared a lunch break with Rob Remley and Mary Flannery, day hikers from Las Vegas and the only other people we saw on the trail. A hawk soared above, searching for its own meal while we ate. Someone had built a wooden windbreak around some trees nearby and decorated it with an old metal hand plow. "We're fortunate not to need the shelter today," Rob said. "Usually it's real windy here on the ridge."

Walking, however, was much easier on the ridge, and we enjoyed extended views of Las Vegas and the desert floor to the south. At 10,000 feet the dominant trees were the bristlecone pines, some of which

From the peak we could see parts of three other states. Looking southeast, Utah and Arizona were difficult to separate from Nevada, but off to the west we could clearly see snow-covered Telescope Peak, the Death Valley landmark. The sight was as exciting as I had imagined.

We camped on a small flat area on the exposed crest. Although the temperature was dropping rapidly as the sun lost its vigor, the air was calm, and we had brought down bags, jackets, thermal underwear, gloves, and a tent in anticipation of a frigid night on top.

After the sun set, the show began. Row after row of mountains, clear to the Sierra Nevada, were silhouetted against a brilliant red-orange background. In the opposite direction the lights of Las Vegas twinkled, vying with the western glow for attention. Instead of detracting from the wilderness scene, the lights seemed to emphasize our solitude.

It was too cold to remain outside, so we grabbed the two register books from their metal container at the summit and scrambled into the tent.

After snuggling into our sleeping bags, we were startled when the wind suddenly swooped up Kyle Canyon and nearly flattened our tent. The wind roared and shook the tent all night, occasionally letting up for a few hopeful seconds and then noisily engulfing us again.

Reading the comments in the register gave us small encouragement. The most frequent ones were "I made it" and "It is cold and windy on top." Only a few other foolhardies indicated their intention of sleeping on the peak—and certainly not in October. No one had signed the register for four days.

The wind was still strong at dawn, so we stayed inside until well past sunrise. Again we resorted to the register for entertainment and found that certain themes wove through the comments. The thrill of victory, the panoramic views, and the weather had made the greatest impressions. A Las Vegas track team, we read, had made the climb into a footrace, registering hard-to-believe times of four to six hours to conquer the summit. Those times prompted another, less athletic spirit to scribble, "It only took me four days to get to the top!"

Our descent by the northern route took us through country that was more rugged and spectacular than the southern trail's. It was not the kind of terrain you would want to attempt in a storm; in many places the path ran along the edge of steep drop-offs and avalanche chutes.

The trail dramatically cut across talus fields, and soon the resilient bristlecone pines appeared, clinging tenaciously to the sparse rocky soil. The harsh climate had etched character and strength on the trees, and many of their twisted, gnarled trunks were bent parallel to the windy slopes.

Like the gallant bristlecones, we felt a little stronger and prouder after our encounter with the mountain. □

Janice Ott of Southern California is a freelance writer and photographer who frequently visits Southern Nevada during her world travels.

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Nevada Notes

A breath mint puts the scent on Goldfield while a poker game goes overtime.



Mystery artifact found near Overton.

Rock With a Face on It

Five-year-old Jim Bond of Panaca was playing in a stream near Overton last spring when he discovered an oddly-shaped rock in the sand. His parents, Ed and Linda Bond, who were gathering wood nearby, then heard him yell, "Look, this rock's got a face on it!"

The rock turned out to be an Oriental artifact that weighed 55 pounds (nearly as much as its discoverer) and had characters etched on its back. The statue has the Bonds and local communities wondering about its history. An official from the Los Angeles County Museum has placed it in the Edo period of Japan. Mrs. Gue Gim Wah, a resident of Casleton in Lincoln County, says it is from the Lao Bia dynasty in central China.

Jim's treasure has been a star attraction at community gatherings in Lincoln County, but so far no one has been able to pinpoint how and why the statue found its way to the Southern Nevada desert. —Ann Henderson

Missile Over Montello

One day last spring, an Air Force cruise missile launched from a B-52 fighter bomber soared low over the northeastern Nevada town of Montello, banked, and slammed into Pilot Peak just south of town. The missile was unarmored, and no one was injured in the test.

Montello school teacher Paul Adams says the old railroad town's 100 residents didn't take much notice. Montello is located within military airspace, and he says "almost

any day of the year you can hear sonic booms" as jet fighters play high-speed war games 200 feet overhead. "We're just going to hope the next one hits the town, so we can sue the government for 50 million," laughs Adams. He says he doubts the town will fire back. —Jim Crandall

In Certs of Goldfield

On a cold, blustery day last spring in the near ghost town of Goldfield, three strangers met Sheriff Ed Penson on the steps of the Esmeralda County Courthouse. The men talked briefly with Penson, and then slipped him a sealed envelope. They told the lawmen to place the packet in his safe—and to forget the meeting ever happened.

As the men left, the sheriff sniffed the envelope and detected a faint, peppermint odor—retsin, the miracle breath purifier. Going straight to the vault, he mused on whether the scent was from a candy mint or a breath mint.

It was both. The mysterious men worked for Warner-Lambert, manufacturers of Certs. The packet represented \$50,000 in gold and silver ingots—the prize in Certs' nationwide treasure hunt promotion. And Penson was the only man in the country besides the promo people who knew where the treasure was hidden.

All was quiet in the historic town of 500 residents until April 17, when every phone line in the sheriff's office lit up. That was the day the second half of Certs' treasure hunt map and poem of clues broke in the Sunday comics section of newspapers across the country, with the exception of Nevada.

One hundred and fifty thousand Americans had purchased the four rolls of Certs required to enter the contest, and the map and poem were filled with clues pointing to Goldfield and the sheriff's office. The last six lines read:

*Not every verse will help, but just a few,
And don't abide with those that speak untrue.
A place of bars and stars is what you seek,
Of woman's name and lore of ore we speak.
Let all who seek their fortunes take a seat,
May all now Lady Luck's sweet help entreat.*

The first letter of the first three words of the first, second, fifth, and sixth lines spells, "Nevada lawman." The "bars" indicate the sheriff's office, and "stars" the flag that flies atop the courthouse. "Woman's name" is for Esmeralda County, and "seat" is for county seat. "Lore of ore" refers to Goldfield's turn-of-the-century gold rush beginnings.

Sheriff Penson chuckled to himself as his bewildered staff was bombarded with phone calls day and night. "Some people would ask to talk to me," says Penson, "and I'd just tell 'em I didn't know anything about anything, but that they might be getting close."

Penson also had to field an onslaught of questions from townsfolk who had deduced the sheriff to be at the crux of the calls. But, as agreed, he kept the word mum.

Down the street at Gloryhole Antiques an even more bewildered Virginia Ridgeway, who acts as the town's chamber of commerce, couldn't understand the nation's sudden interest in her town. "They wouldn't tell me why they were calling," says Ridgeway. "I guess they were afraid I'd beat them to the treasure." But, taking her chamber duties seriously, she tried to answer all questions and sent brochures to the curious callers.

Finally, last May, Warner-Lambert's manager of consumer communications, Walter Weglein, along with the treasure hunt's mastermind, Joe Strickland of Westport Marketing Group, announced that the hunt was off, and that 889 people had determined the exact location of the treasure. The duo paid a visit to Goldfield, revealing the scheme at a county commissioner's meeting and thanking the townsfolk for their patience.

They said Strickland would determine the Big Winner by an essay contest, and that the winner would be named in Goldfield at a huge town celebration in which Certs would foot the bill. Suddenly the town was alive with preparation for a Big Party, sending invitations to dignitaries across Nevada and sprucing up the town.

And on August 19-20, Goldfield was once again the focus of national attention, as reporters and tourists from across the country flocked to the celebration in the lonely desert hamlet.

Certs' Walter Weglein reports that the promotional scheme did well for his breath lozenge. And, indeed, with 150,000 people investing a minimum of \$1 for the four rolls required as proof of purchase, the company probably did all right.

But Goldfield, basking in the national publicity, is most assuredly the overall winner in the treasure hunt. The whole thing turned out to be a sweet deal all around.—JC

Guinness Kiss-off

The urge to set new world records for Guinness' book has inspired some extraordinary human efforts in Nevada recently.

In Las Vegas, California college students Brad Spacy and Patricia Haugan took seats in a storefront window at the Fly Away Club and embraced in the longest kiss in the history of mankind—16 days and 22 hours—while sucking up two-strawed milkshakes and smearing on countless tubes of Chapstick.

Chris Long and Mark Humes of Reno courted a different kind of record when they played tennis for 111 hours straight at the Plumas Street Courts. They set a new world record and raised pledge money for a junior tennis program.

And in Laughlin's Nevada Club, poker dealer Joe Marquis shuffled off to a world record by dealing cards for 109 hours straight. Not only did Marquis glory in the record—he also collected overtime pay for every hour over eight.—JC

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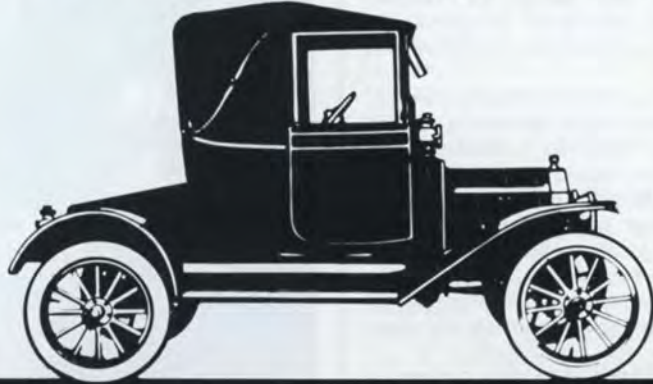
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Sagebrush Gourmet

A diner's guide to the Silver State.

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

BAGEL DELI

1091 S. Virginia at Bagel Alley
Reno. 322-9458

"Home of the Stuffed Bagel" and Reno's only Bagel Factory and Kosher Style Delicatessen. As the winner of Nevada State Journal's award, "Best Oddball Food Treat," this restaurant features 16 different varieties of bagels (sesame, onion, onion-garlic, cinnamon apple, cheese, etc.) baked fresh daily. Bagel Deli offers 14 different varieties of homemade cream cheeses, including avocado, date-walnut, strawberry and jalapeno pepper. Kosher style meats include hot pastrami, corned beef and turkey. The combinations for sandwiches are endless and all of the above may be combined to form an omelette of your dreams! Best homemade spicy chili in the West. Cafeteria style or counter service. Eat a little or eat a lot for a little. Don't miss this treat. Open Tues.-Fri., 8-4:30; Sat., 8:30-4:30. DELIVERY PROVIDED.

CATTLEMEN'S

Hwy. 395, Washoe Valley

Between Reno and Carson City. 849-1500

A ranch-style restaurant, the cozy Cattlemen's offers excellent meals at a moderate price. The special sirloin steak dinner is a popular and good buy. Currently \$6.65, this dinner includes a baked potato, salad, bread, ranch-style beans, sirloin steak and a glass of wine. Other entrees range from a simple hamburger steak to a filet mignon and lobster. The Alaska King crab is delicious! Open seven days a week for dinner from 5 p.m. No reservations. AE, MC, VISA.

DESERT INN & COUNTRY CLUB

3145 Las Vegas Boulevard South
Las Vegas. 733-4444

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LOUIS' BASQUE CORNER

301 E. 4th Street
Reno. 323-7203

Louis' restaurant offers a warm, unhurried atmos-

phere that hints of yesterday. Master chefs prepare genuine Basque cuisine such as Tripes Callos, Poulet a la Basquaise, Paella, Boeuf Bourguignon, and entrees including Coq au Vin (chicken in red wine sauce), Lapin Chasseur (hunter's rabbit), and Ris de Veau (sweetbreads) as well as many other delicious French and Spanish Basque dishes all served family style with complimentary wine. You can enjoy a famous picon punch, cafe royal or perhaps an Izarra or choose from Louis' extensive wine list. Basque culture is reflected in the pottery, artifacts and pictures from the Pyrenees which grace the walls of the two traditional dining rooms. Louis and Lorraine Erreguible host many special dinners and parties in this authentic Basque restaurant. Ample free parking. Lunch: Mon.-Fri., 11:30-1:30; Dinner nightly at 6 p.m. All major credit cards accepted.

MINER'S CAFE AND SPECIALTY HOUSE

Comstock Hotel and Casino
Second and West Street
Reno. 329-1880

The decor of this 24-hour cafe is a colorful and faithful reproduction of the Virginia City of the 1800s when silver was pouring out of her mines. Photos of the Comstock diggings cover the souvenir-type menu, and the bill of fare is literally a page from the past with tasty entrees honoring bygone mining pioneers. Located on the mezzanine is the Specialty House Restaurant featuring Chicken Cordon Bleu, Idaho Rainbow Trout and the Comstock's famous 1-lb. New York Steak dinner with all the trimmings for \$5.99. The Miner's Cafe and Specialty House is open 24 hours daily. AE, MC, VISA.

JOHN ASCUAGA'S NUGGET

1-80 at Nugget Avenue
Sparks. 358-2233.

Eight unique restaurants—the most under one roof in Northern Nevada—offer award-winning cuisine at moderate prices. Each has a distinct decor and specialty menu, from the Polynesian treats of Trader Dick's to the tender cuts at the Steak House. The General Store and Farm House Coffee Shop are famous for their fresh baked desserts and breakfast specialties as well as daily specials for lunch and dinner. John's Oyster Bar features freshly steamed shellfish and a variety of seafood specialties. The Golden Rooster Room offers sumptuous buffets, while the Dutch Pantry is perfect for a quick but delicious meal. And for the ultimate treat, the Celebrity Room features superstar entertainment and a menu to match. Reservations not necessary. AE, Diners, MC, VISA.

RAPSCALLION SEAFOOD HOUSE & BAR

1555 S. Wells Avenue
Reno. 323-1211

This Rapsallion is unique and different and possibly will remind you of the tradition of excellence that existed long ago in the restaurants of the San Francisco waterfront. The bar is lively, mostly because it is one of the favorite watering holes for locals. The antique gas lamp, the colorful stained glass, and the whiskey boxes create an atmosphere that draws you in for a cocktail. The Rapsallion; which has earned a reputation for being Reno's official seafood house, offers 20 to 30 choices of fresh food dishes. Old-fashioned attention to detail by the service people is something not found much today and will be appreciated. Lunch: Tues.-Fri., 11:30-2:30; Dinner: Nightly at 5:30 p.m. MC, VISA. Reservations suggested.

STAR HOTEL

245 Silver (at Third)
Elko. 738-9925

Built in 1909 as a boardinghouse for Basque shepherders and ranchers, today the Star Hotel still houses shepherders. But now it also offers an extraordinary family-style restaurant specializing in hearty meals, European style. Joe and Anita Sarasua offer entrees including steak, seafood, chicken, oxtails, and roasted bits of lamb prepared with onion and red pimientos. Try a picon punch and the Friday chef's special of lobster, bacalao or rice and clams (in season). Dinner includes an ample supply of soup, salad, entree, vegetables, beans, spaghetti and french fries followed by ice cream or sherbet. Fine and plentiful fare. Dinners only: 5-9:30 p.m. Closed Sundays. No reservations. No credit cards. □

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Art Contest, Caesars Palace '79

LENS BY ED OPSITOS

City Moods

"I try to add a different angle, to highlight the dramatic aspects of my subjects," says Las Vegas photographer Ed Opsitos. "Each day my work is different. My talent seems to link my emotions with my eyes. It's like a disc jockey who combines his mood each day with what he perceives the mood of his city to be, and takes it from there."

Opsitos, a Las Vegas for 20 years, has worked as a bartender at seven Strip hotels and has pursued graduate studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He currently works as a photographer for the Environmental Protection Agency, but he doesn't limit himself to photography. "I have a 50/50, symbiotic relationship between photography and communications as a whole. I like photographic design, like for album covers, but I'm also getting into video electronic images. That seems to be the way of the future. If I ever get on my own, I'd like to be a producer of visual communications, not with a megaphone and director's chair, more of the artist in control."—JC



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"SLOTS"

"BACCARAT"



EDITORIAL (Continued from page 4)

Harry recalls. "The Colonel told Cy, 'By Godfrey, I want him on a horse tonight or he'll be counting ties.'

"That was the Colonel's favorite saying. 'Counting ties' meant the guy would be fired, afoot, broke, walking down the railroad tracks." Harry rode the horse that night.

The Colonel was said to always have a glass of whiskey and egg nog handy, write letters all night long, and never miss a show. During each performance he joined the grand entry, then watched the sharp shooters, bronc riders, and specialty acts that included Boomerang Bill and trick riders and ropers. There was also a cowboys and Indians football match, played from horseback and using a five-foot high ball. "We could hardly ever beat the Indians," Harry admits, "because they wouldn't stop at anything. That football game kept two or three of us cowboys crippled up all the time."

Harry Webb stayed with the show only one season. He was about to be married and had been offered a better contract by the Lubin Picture Company in Philadelphia to train movie horses. He has worked as a miner, cowboy, actor, trapper, rancher, and writer. He won the Gold Spur for Western Literature for his story, *Call of the Cow Country*, and his book, *Nuthin'*, was made into a movie by Walt Disney in 1957. He is still writing true western stories about Nevada for this magazine. He would prefer to move back to Nevada, where he spent the years 1915 through 1942 (he left because of his wife's poor health), but says he's too old and what he calls "snake-bellied" to move.

Harry, who was born on November 6, 1887, is the last surviving bronc rider from the show of 1910. He was honored in Cody last summer at the centennial celebration re-enactment of Buffalo Bill's first show. Indian Ben Marrowbone from Pine Ridge, South Dakota, who was with the Colonel in 1911, was also honored.

The show was produced by the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, one of the finest museums in the country. At the end, the Indian dancers circled the old cowboy and Indian in the arena and performed an honoring song. As the dancers wove their way around them, Harry waved his hat and beamed at the standing crowd while Ben danced to the beat of the drum. At that point my photos get dim, for there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

"It was sure a wonderful show," Harry said after the final performance, eyes bright and shining and looking 20 years younger than he did when he left Burbank Airport four days before. "That museum curator, Paul Fees, should be really proud of himself. The Colonel would have been pleased."—Caroline J. Hadley

NOTE: Harry Webb offers special thanks to Paul and Nancy Fees, Sarah and Randy Clark, the Blairs, Taggarts, Herb and Mary Paul and everyone else he met in Cody. I was Webb's chaperone for this lovely affair and I want to thank sharpshooter Bob Edgar for punching a hole in my Wild West card with his .44 while looking over his shoulder with a mirror. Harry was scared he'd shoot off my hand!—CJH



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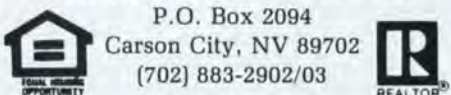
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Schoolboy's Lament

A homesick Nevadan longs for brisk winds, long drives, and old geezers.

By Roger Smith

When you live in Nevada, you come to think that it is just like any other state. It isn't, though. You have to move away to understand how very odd Nevada life is. The differences—the differences that count—lie in things so big or so small that it is easy not to pay much attention to them.

Take the small things, for instance. I've just moved to the Bay Area from Reno, and the first time I went out for an evening on the town the scenery seemed wrong. It was quitting time, stores closing up, people walking to their cars, then driving home. But incredibly, nobody was wearing black and white. Nobody was roaming the sidewalks carrying a "Checks Cashed" placard. No jaywalkers!

I went into a restaurant. There were no four-cornered glass ashtrays with "Harrah's," "Harolds," or "Harvey's" written in them. The waitress did not try to give me a "fun book" after dinner. By the time I left, night had fallen—and it was *dark* outside, right there in the middle of town.

Eerie, but I managed.

Naturally, the paraphernalia of Nevada's entertainment-based economy are the first things you notice missing when you move away. The big neon marques, the always-open look, the 99-cent breakfasts, the courtesy buses. And the names of lounge shows: "Pardon My French," "The Moosehead Jug Boys," "The Rudie Valley Girls," "Dick Spitz and His Drooling Banjos," and so on. But those things are not important. There are bigger things to miss. It has taken longer to realize that the big things are gone, and they can make me homesick.

For instance, the change of climate worries me. I don't often think about Nevada's too-bright summer sky, the big cold drops of thundershowers and the pungent ozone after-smell, or the snow that is so airy and dry it seems to float rather than fall. I miss the wind the most. There are winds where I live now, but they are not the kind that come looking for you every day around noon, wrap around you, reaching into your pockets and under your coat, urge you along, and turn you at a corner when you want to go straight. Nevada winds can even make the birds fly backwards. For a while I feared I would go bald walking to work in springtime zephyrs. Winds became part of my thinking. I never exactly liked their embraces, but I can't help expecting them. I tell that to my neighbors now and they think I'm kidding.

They think I'm kidding them when I talk about Nevada distances, too. They don't understand what distance can mean. In Nevada it is nothing to drive 150 miles or more to play golf or shop or watch a high school basketball game. Along the way you tell jokes to friends, listen to an entire symphony on the tapedeck, have sing-alongs with your kids, or solve the world's problems. You get excited when you finally reach a mountain summit because from some, it is said, you can look across the marginless desert into the day after tomorrow. You feel friendly curiosity for a passing car or a small town, because they do not come often on some highways.

If you stay alert, you see marvels. Silvery lakes that vanish as you approach. Little specks and glints in the desert that turn out to be rusted 1932 Cords or tin-and-tarpaper tumbled-down shacks or windmills, the gray daisies of the desert. I miss those kinds of discoveries. And I miss seeing the aprons of slag below hillside mine tunnels and billboards that have outlived their products or that the winds have edited into jokes: "old Beer," "Last Chance Saloon, 00 Miles," "Eat Here. .Get Gas."

Distance in Nevada is not just what separates where you are from where you want to be. Distance, because there is so much of it, contributes to the fun.

An unusual breed of men used to work among these distances, the kind of men Harry Webb has written about. They were sourdoughs, dam builders, cowhands, or, sometimes, range bums. But I prefer to call them geezers, because they are all old now, the few who are left. The genuine Nevada geezer came to the state before the advent of off-road vehicles, federal grazing legislation, and industrialized gambling. He is likely to wear a hat indoors and too many clothes. He squints permanently. He won't have much patience with an inquisitive stranger, but if you can get him talking

I don't often think about Nevada's too-bright summer sky, the big cold drops of thundershowers and the pungent ozone after-smell, or the snow that is so airy it seems to float rather than fall

about the past—oh, the stories he will tell are better than anything you can get out of a book. He'll take desert history away from the analyzers and romancers and make it dusty and smelly again, racy and mean, grasping and, since the past cannot be relived, saddening. Then he'll tell you to get lost.

I miss most of all that sense of lingering obsolescence that is more visible in Nevada (and more important to Nevadans) than in any other state I've lived in. There may be something equivalent where I live now, but if so I haven't lived here long enough to feel its influence.

None of these Nevada characteristics is absolutely necessary to living, and frankly I don't mind leaving some of the flashy, gimicky things behind. But still in the largest sense Nevada is a state of feeling that has had a lot to do with how I think. Maybe that feeling is what social scientists mean by cultural identity or localization. I call it feeling at home, whichever way the winds blow. □

Roger Smith, former Nevada associate editor, has spent most of his life in northern and western Nevada. Last year he and his family moved to the Bay Area, where he's pursuing graduate work at Stanford.

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