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THE INCREDIBLE WINTER OF '89 • HAM ON THE HOOF

# NEVADA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAL WEST

FEBRUARY 1984 / \$1.75

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The Invasion of Gerlach,  
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# NEVADA

Volume 44, Number 1

January/February 1984

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Cover: Skier by Michael J. Nevins

# NEVADA

Capitol Complex  
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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  
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DAVID MUENCH, Showcase  
JOHN BARDWELL, Special Effects  
JULIAN STONE, At-Large  
LEON MANDEL, In Grosse Pointe

DICK 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 Shiplier, Roger Smith, David W. Toll, Harry Upton, Bill Willard.

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# Letters

## Lost in Laughlin?

Why is it you seemingly ignore Laughlin, Nevada. Under Rural Entertainment you only list five houses—we have seven houses. For your information our "Strip" is about one mile long. And we are one of the last areas to offer free RV parking for at least 1,000 RVs, many with full hookups. Rural Nevada maybe, but the business here is growing by leaps and bounds. A little consideration and a little more research would be greatly appreciated.

R. Stephen Sidler  
Laughlin, NV

*Ignore Laughlin? You must be joking! After our cover story on the town appeared in March/April '82, full features were written for the Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, and Reno Gazette-Journal and helped millions of people discover Laughlin.—Ed.*

## Anniversary at the Dump

The "Hot Plates" article by John S. Miller (November/December '83) was certainly right up my alley. My collection of over 15,000 license plates got its start in Box Canyon and Copper Canyon, near Battle Mountain, when I was two or three years old in the years just before World War II.

I haven't managed to obtain a complete run of Nevada plates as yet, but I'm working on it; in the process I've met quite a few interesting people. The plate John Miller is holding in the picture is one I traded him.

He mentioned the gold-on-green 1953 plates. I suspect that some copper company lobbyists got to the Nevada DMV that year, because the plates were definitely copper-colored on green, at least when they were new.

As do other license plate collectors, I lament the passing of the local dumps in Nevada. Nevada wrecking yards have been good for me too. There was the June day when I searched through a yard outside of Wells, with one eye on my screwdriver and pliers and one eye on the rooster with three-inch spurs that guarded the place along with his troop of surly hens. My wife sat waiting in the car in the hot sun and wondered how she had managed to get tied up with a guy who would let her spend her tenth anniversary in such a fashion.

Peter F. Madsen  
Port Orchard, WA.

## Biting the Hand That Feeds

Mr. Bagder's umbrage at Richard Menzies is well taken (Letters, November/December '83). Mr. Menzies' arrogance is clear in

his letter to you complaining of his problems with the states of Nevada and Utah. His propensity to bite the hands that feed him speaks ill of his IQ and exposes a grossly distended attitude of his worth to your readers. May I suggest you edit his material out of *Nevada Magazine* and do precisely as he suggests with his check?

Robert L. Clark  
Fallon, NV

Please disregard my earlier complaint regarding the whimsical payment policies of *Nevada Magazine*. Evidently casinomics is working in my favor for a change: I was not only paid for my last article, but paid twice! The state controller must be on a roll. Should I cash this second check or may I let it ride? Am I allowed to double down? Awaiting your advice, I am,

Gratefully yours,  
Richard Menzies  
Salt Lake City, UT

*Menzies, you're nuts, that's for your next story!—Ed.*

What can I say I'm hooked! Addicted even! Tonight I spent a miserable two hours looking for your magazine—*Nevada*. I'm hot, tired, but happy because I finally located one. Never again! Enclosed is my check for a year's subscription. The stories are terrific and the photography fantastic. Your magazine brings out the gypsy in me. I can't wait for the next issue. Hurry!

Carol Nutter  
Las Vegas, NV

## Just Add 6,000 Years

Regarding Muench's Gallery in September/October '83. Your mention of the bristlecone pines as being as much as 4,000 years old falls short of a much grander claim made by the Guinness Book of Records. They say that bristlecone pines located on Wheeler Peak in White Pine County are as old as 10,000 years, thereby giving Nevada claim to being the site of the oldest living thing on earth.

Michael D. Mims  
Las Vegas, NV

Each issue is a little better. Keep it up.

Robert E. Shannon  
Carson City, NV

## Tales of Tuscarora

Being one of the "Old Geezers" Roger Smith wrote about ("Schoolboy's Lament," September/October '83), I, too, am a "homesick" Nevadan. This is especially so when I recall my early years in Elko County, Nevada. I also recall the tales told me by the old-timer miner-eighty-niner

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# HAROLDS CLUB

from up near Tuscarora and the Bull Run Mining District, Gold Creek and a host of other places. It just so happened, I was in Elko when a few of the old Tuscarora prospectors were still alive. Their favorite hangout was Rupe's Pool Hall on Fourth Street, and after school us kids made a beeline for Rupe's to hear the old prospector stories. To say we had dollar signs for eyeballs would be a very mild statement—especially after hearing about the gold and silver those old boys grubbed out of the ground by hand!

After reading Mr. Smith's article I read "Cigarette George" by Harry E. Webb, and old Harry wrung a few more tears out of my aging peepers. Harry and my father used to cowboy together and broke broncs for my grandfather. It was Harry E. Webb who taught me to sit a saddle properly at about age four.

Donald E. Getz  
Salt Lake City, UT.

Damn. Do I miss Nevada! However, *Nevada Magazine* sure brings it back to me. Keep up the good work.

Lee G. Miller  
Sandy, UT.

## Buck Fever

Last fall, the Nevada Blackpowder Shooters Association held a competition between members, and established two records to shoot for.

The deer with the greatest width between antlers was shot by Richard Ives of Lemmon Valley. His deer measured 26 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches between antlers and was shot in the Tennessee Mountain Range in Elko County.

The deer with the largest antlers was shot by Joe Lightfoot of Reno. His deer field dressed at 200 pounds and was bagged west of Mountain City in Elko County.

Leo Silva  
Reno, NV

I want to write you and say that the *Nevada Magazine* is the finest magazine I have had in my hands, and I will be a lifetime subscriber. There are no words to express the love I have for the State of Nevada. The wife and myself are leaving soon, headed west to Las Vegas. The closer the time, the more excited we get. We are going to do a lot of sight-seeing and tours and see more of Nevada. We hope to get to see where the magazine is printed.

William F. McGill Sr.  
Fort Worth, TX.

"The Common Man's Gambler" by Guy Shipler in November/December '83 is bathed in nostalgia. Now I'm not opposed to Hollywood and New York's Old Broadway with ubiquitous lights shining to infinity, but I am pleased to see that those of us still around who played penny slots and 10-cent keno haven't gotten buried under all the glitter.

Willard E. Crawford  
Oroville, CA.

Yerington,  
Nevada



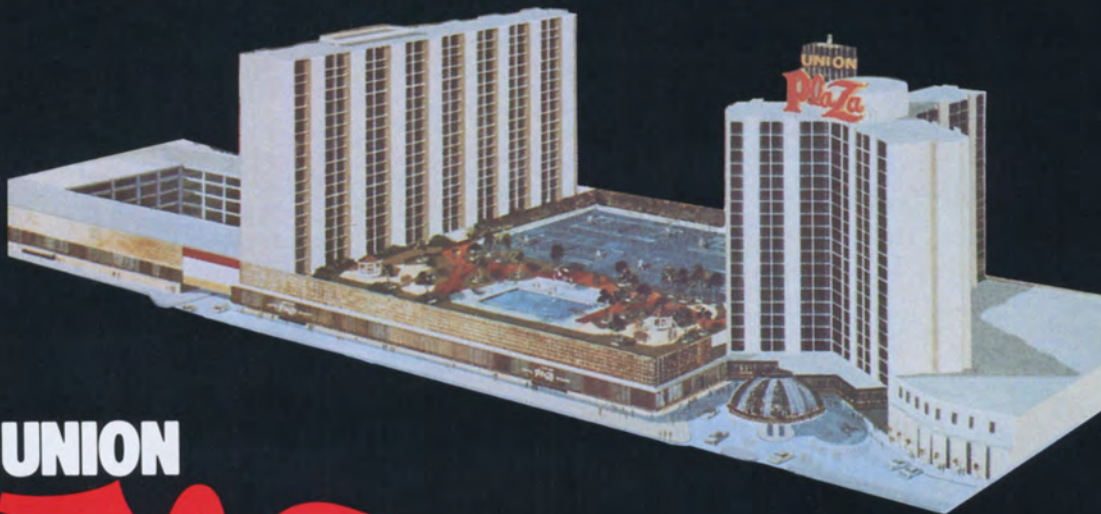
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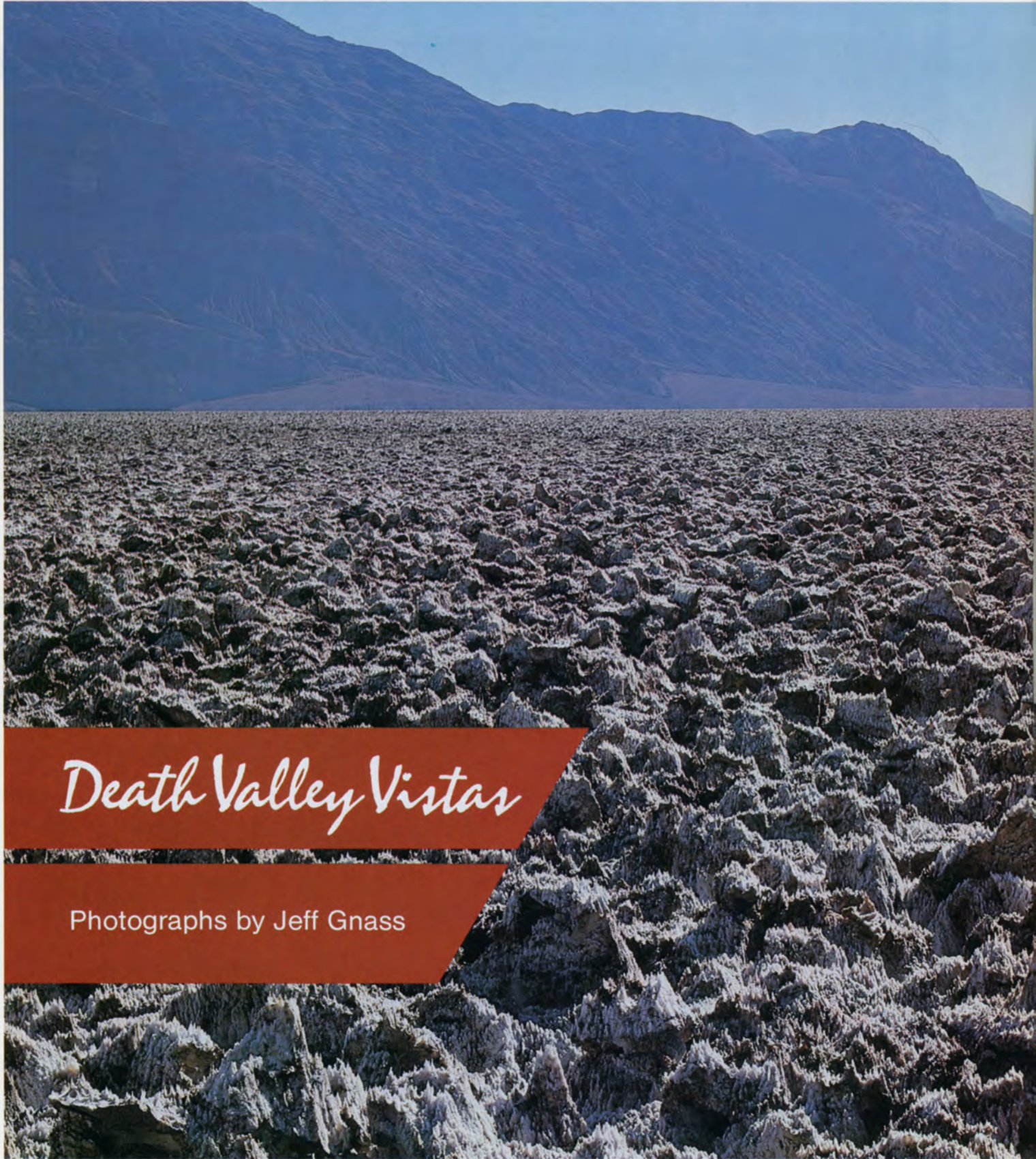


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A sea of jagged salt pinnacles welcomes visitors to the Devil's Golf Course in the heart of Death Valley. These ragged

fairways are just north of Badwater, which at 282 feet below sea level is the lowest spot in the United States.



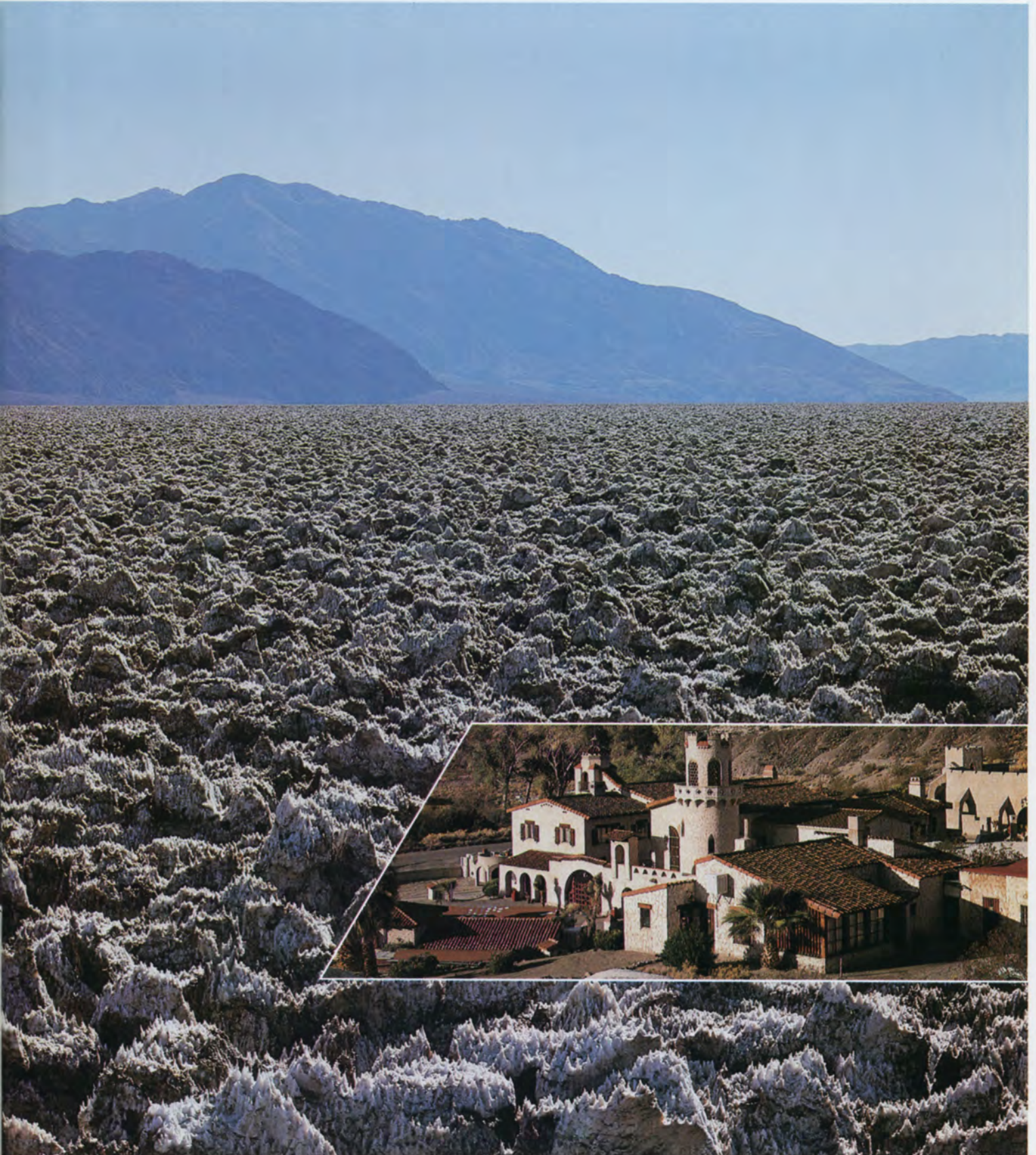
## *Death Valley Vistas*

Photographs by Jeff Gnass

Scotty's Castle is a cool oasis in the northern reaches of the national monument. The massive desert mansion was built by

Death Valley legend Walter Scott and his benefactor, Albert Johnson.

(Continued)





Winter and spring are good times to explore the rugged mountains of Death Valley, where miles of marked trails and vantage

points offer easy access to the otherwise forbidding terrain.

# The Man With the Golden Ear

What do Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, and Johnny Cash have in common? Stew Carnall, the friend and agent who helped them make the big time.

By Roberta McConnell

**T**he lean guy with the shock of white hair was sitting at a table in the J&T, a Basque bar and restaurant in Gardnerville, chuckling his head off because everyone who came in was certain that his table companion was Willie Nelson, the well-known country-western singer.

It wasn't Willie Nelson, of course. It was a stuffed, dressed, life-sized doll so precisely like Nelson that it was fooling even the most astute patrons. It was also a great joke for Stew Carnall, who happens to be one of Willie Nelson's agents and who lives in such an unlikely place for a top booking agent as a ranch in Carson Valley.

Carnall, affectionately called "Q-tip" by Nelson because of his 6-foot-1 frame and cotton-white hair, is a genial man

whose unflinching sense of humor shows as he sits in the bar, sipping a drink and guffawing over the deference lunch patrons are showing his stuffed toy. Carnall had the doll made for just such nonsense. He sometimes rides around with him (it) in the back seat of the car. He also loans it to people at places where Willie is performing so they, too, can have a chuckle.

Unassuming and usually dressed in T-shirt, jeans, and tennis shoes, Stew Carnall has probably discovered, introduced, promoted, and booked more of the current crop of country-western stars than any other agent. He seldom talks about it, but this man with the infallible intuition, or plain good music sense, has on his credit list such country greats as Glen Campbell, Roger Miller, Johnny

Cash, Merle Haggard, George Jones, Roy Clark, Waylon Jennings, and, of course, Willie Nelson, whom he introduced at Harrah's Tahoe.

There are many others, too, all close friends who frequently visit his ranch home for a change of pace and a lot of reminiscing about the old days before Carnall took them in tow and fame took them over.

How Stew Carnall got from being a promising young baseball pitcher to one of the country's major booking agents is somewhat akin to the frog-prince emerging from the obscurity of the pond. Carnall, who was born in Evanston, Illinois, in 1929, moved with his family to Southern California when he was three months old. His father, Pete Carnall, along with Fred Vollmer, had been



JAY ALDRICH



*The red-headed stranger with Q-tip may be Willie Nelson, but then it might be the likeness of the famous singer that Carnall sometimes entertains at lunch. Of the real Nelson the agent says, "He is caring to the point that he worries about people 'way too much."*

mining engineers in Nevada and had developed numerous mines in the Silver Peak area.

Growing up in the land of sun and orange trees, Stew Carnall was a self-described "incorrigible" during his school years, lettering in baseball but acquiring lousy grades in more academic areas. Then, when he was 20 and a student at Santa Monica State College, he suddenly found himself in the music business.

A record-company strike was in progress and causing headaches for juke-box companies, which couldn't get new records for their machines. Meeting Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys, the erstwhile baseball pitcher chanced on an idea. He suggested that Wills let him reproduce old Columbia records independently. Carnall would sell them to the music-hungry juke-box companies. Liking the idea, Wills agreed, and together they turned out about 20 records, which were then reproduced and sold up and down the West Coast, and in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

**T**he music business was lucrative and more interesting than a career pitching in the minor leagues with a 147-pound frame, so Carnall began booking Wills and other promising acts in various western cities and towns.

Partial to country-western music, Carnall began "buying" acts. When he heard

performers who sounded right, he found out what they charged for a single performance, "bought" them for 10-day stints, and "sold" them to hotels, casinos, and concert halls at a higher price. Everyone made money.

His instincts served him well. He booked the Maddox Brothers and Rose, Lefty Frizzel, Hank Snow, and Ray Price, all to become well known in the field.

Then one day in Phoenix while booking Bill Monroe he went to the bus depot to pick up luggage, dropped a dime in the juke box, and heard a singer he had never heard before. It was Johnny Cash, doing his first record, "Hey, Porter."

Knowing immediately that Cash was a great act, Carnall found out who was booking him and located him in Memphis, Tennessee. Carnall promptly bought 10 days on Cash at \$300 per day, taking him to one-night stands in California and Oregon. Soon, Cash had three records out, and the next time Carnall bought him, the price was \$600 a day. By then Cash had recorded "I Walk the Line" and was, shall we say, cashing in. Carnall later bought half of agent Bob Neal's contract and booked the "jailhouse" bass-baritone from 1957 to 1961.

Cash was with Carnall the first time he heard Lorrie and Larry Collins, a brother and sister singing and guitar-playing duo. True to his spontaneous form, Stew fell

head over heels in love with Lorrie. In 1959 they were married in Las Vegas; he was 29, she was 17. That his intuition had served him well again is proven by the couple's obvious devotion, their charming home, and their two beautiful daughters, Christy, 23, and Lynn, 20.

In the 1960s Carnall continued booking Glen Campbell, Roger Miller, and others, including Lorrie and Larry, whom he booked at Harrah's Tahoe intermittently for 15 years. Lorrie has since retired from the stage scene, but Larry is now writing hit songs like "Delta Dawn" and "God Made Oklahoma."

During the years they were in and out of Lake Tahoe regularly, Carnall admits to having become a compulsive gambler. At the same time, he discovered he loved the relaxed pace of Nevada life as opposed to the smoggy congestion of Los Angeles, where they then lived.

Vowing he would never roll dice again, Carnall began looking with Lorrie for a place to light and nest in. They found it in the old Crosby Ranch, now part of the Heritage Ranch in Carson Valley owned by Ed McGah, and its two-story brick house, which was built in 1912. Ten years ago they moved in and began painting and remodeling while Carnall continued booking Merle Haggard, Doug Kershaw, Asleep At The Wheel, and others.

In 1975, Lorrie, who is no slouch at intuition herself, asked her husband why he didn't expand his roster of performers. Lorrie told him the biggest rising star was Willie Nelson, whom Carnall had known 20 years earlier when Nelson was playing small-town honky tonks.

"He's an old friend," Lorrie said. "Call him." So Carnall phoned Nelson to say he was living in Carson Valley, Nevada, and thought he could get him into Harrah's Tahoe.

However, Carnall added that Harrah's executives would not buy any act they had not seen. He suggested bringing Holmes Hendricksen, Harrah's entertainment director, to Indianapolis, where Nelson was playing.

Carnall, Hendricksen, and Sharkey Begovich, the Gardnerville club owner, flew to Indianapolis and found the concert hall packed to the rafters. "They gotta be convinced before they book," Carnall told Willie as the singer went into his no-frills act, not caring whether Harrah's booked him or not.

After the show, Hendricksen's first response was, "Really great, but can this guy wear a tuxedo?" Carnall, knowing Nelson, answered, "No, it's the bandanna and levis or no go."

Willie was booked on a contingency basis, but all worried whether Bill Harrah would accept the down-home appearance of the country singer. On opening night, Carnall again brought along Sharkey, who had worked for Bill Harrah for many years. They found him totally delighted with Nelson's non-conforming act. Needless to say, Nelson was booked regularly at Harrah's thereafter.

Two people in Carnall's professional life who have meant much to him have been Bob Wills and Willie Nelson, both off-beat sorts. Once in Seattle, Carnall recalls, he found Wills at 8 a.m. riding an elevator up and down in the hotel, wearing just his shorts and a cowboy hat but thoroughly enjoying the ride.

Of Willie Nelson, Carnall says that contrary to possible first impressions, he is the most profound man he has ever known and the most gentle. "He is caring to the point that he worries about other people 'way too much, always wanting to know if they're getting along all right, if they need money, and if there is anything he can do to help." Nelson is just as hooked on Nevada as Carnall is, and together they own 160 acres on Kingsbury Grade, bought six years ago "to have a nice place for the kids."

Meanwhile, it's on the road for Nelson, who has many friends around the country. Carnall says, "When Willie gets an itch to go to a certain place, he calls whichever friend is there, gets the booking, and takes off to be with his friends."

But Nelson isn't just interested in

KATHLEEN KRIEGER/STEW CARNALL COLLECTION



Sharkey Begovich, Willie Nelson, the late Peter Sheridan, and Stew Carnall, at Tahoe with Willie and Friends. Sharkey flew with Stew to Indiana for Willie's "audition."

ROBERTA MCCONNELL



Carnall and his wife Lorrie, with two members of their menagerie. Here E.T. the pygmy goat begs for his favorite snack—fresh cigarettes.

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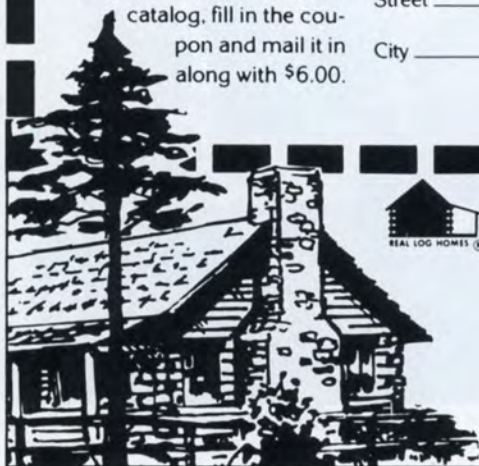
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PHOTOS: STEW CARNALL COLLECTION

Gene Autry and the Collins Kids during the filming of the television show "Town Hall Party" in Compton, California, in 1956.

playing the big clubs. A few years ago, after a Lake Tahoe performance and on his way to Carnall's ranch, Nelson stopped at the Genoa Saloon (the state's oldest) and between rounds gave an impromptu concert of his songs, to the delight of those customers who happened to be in the bar.

Sharkey Begovich, whom Carnall has known for 20 years, is another good friend. When Sharkey opened his club in Gardnerville in the early 1970s, Carnall booked Waylon Jennings to help his friend get off to a good start.

Carnall first met Merle Haggard at a Johnny Cash performance at San Quentin in 1958. Haggard, an inmate at the time, was assigned to carry the instruments. "He was also incorrigible," Carnall laughs, remembering his own younger days.

Four years later, when Haggard looked up the agent in Los Angeles, Carnall remembered him from the prison and began booking dates for him. "There wasn't much money in it for him then, but he worked hard, and now look, he's top of the heap."

**M**oving to Carson Valley, Carnall says, has added years of richness to his life because of the people he knows, like Cowboy Hall of Fame rancher Fred Dressler and his wife, Anna; cowboy By Clark, who has broken and trained so many horses he even walks like he's in a saddle; Jean Lekumberry, the jovial Basque owner of the J&T, where Carnall entertained his Willie Nelson doll; veteran rancher Scotchy Mack; and, of course, Sharkey, among many others.

Somehow, along with his booking business, at which he is now famous enough to handle by telephone, Carnall finds time to raise thoroughbred race horses. Daughters Christy and Lynn exercise the animals while Carnall prepares them for races and sales. Last year he sold a colt by Cannonade, a brother of



"Merle is an incorrigible like me but he possesses as pure a voice as I've ever heard," Carnall says of his friend.

the two-year-old, Caveat, who won the Belmont Stakes last year.

While the horses trot around the pastures and the four family dogs and pygmy goat, "E.T.," scamper in, out, and over the stream that flows through the back yard, Carnall watches appreciatively. "Nevada has a humanizing effect," he muses. "There is no tinsel, and even though Carson Valley is just down the hill from the South Shore casinos and Lake Tahoe, and even though Reno is less than an hour away, out here you are removed from all the bustle and pressure. It's a swell place to call home."

A tour of the Carnall home is as friendly and inviting as the flower-filled, tree-shaded yard, where E.T. climbs on your lap begging cigarettes (which he eats) and where the horses whinny over the back fence. Inside the house, the walls are lined with photographs of the horses, Lorrie, and the girls. There are also hundreds of autographed pictures of the entertainment greats Carnall knows and represents.

Take one look at the pictures on the walls, and you know he deals with all the best.

Spend one afternoon near Carnall's home phone and you know it, too. The phone rings off the hook. It might be Willie Nelson asking him to come to Texas for a game of golf, or Merle Haggard or Johnny Cash, just calling to say hello or that they'd be stopping by for the weekend.

It might also be Casey Tibbs, the world-champion rodeo rider and another friend. Asked his opinion of Carnall, Tibbs snorts and says, "Aagh (expletives deleted). If there were two of him, the world would come to an end." □

*Roberta McConnell of Genoa is a freelance writer, newspaper reporter, and well-known Douglas County historian.*

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The Clark County Board of Commissioners

# The Dreaded Winter of '89

After years of drought, the big snows hit Elko and other ranching areas with a fury, and in the process revolutionized Nevada's cattle industry

By James A. Young

**N**o cattle, no cowboys. There was a great stillness on the North-eastern Nevada ranges in the spring of 1890, a stillness broken only by the wagons and teams of the bone pickers. They built white mountains of animal bones along the rail sidings of Montello, Tana, and Wells. The remains of the investments of Nevada ranches, the bones were boiled for oil and fertilizer or cut into buttons. The cattle industry was nearly wiped out.

Rarely does a single spell of weather alter the plant and animal ecology of a geographical area and change its social and economic structure. But such an epochal event occurred in the winter of 1889-90 on the sagebrush ranges of Nevada. It was the most severe winter that Nevada has ever experienced, and it still serves as a warning of the environment's power to lay waste human plans.

Ranching started on Nevada ranges in the 1860s to feed the hordes of miners who flocked to the Silver State for the mining booms. In the 1870s the Central Pacific linked Nevada to outside markets, which encouraged a quiet, steady development of a livestock industry. Ranchers had discovered that the grasses native to the Nevada hills would cure naturally in the aridity of the Great Basin climate and remain available for winter grazing instead of rotting. When snow covered the forage on higher ranges, cattle drifted down to the arid valleys, where they browsed the native shrub "winter fat" that grew in extensive patches around the margins of salt deserts. Ranchers were able to graze their stock all year round.

For three decades this grazing system worked, although there were occasional problems—such as the winter of 1873-74, when snow lay on the ground for four months and some ranches suffered severe losses. After hard winters some ranchers gave up and left Nevada, but they were quickly replaced by others eager to capitalize on the livestock boom.

As the livestock industry expanded, excessive numbers of cattle on the range depleted the originally abundant grasses, allowing shrubs like sagebrush, which cattle could not eat, to flourish. As cattle numbers increased, range conditions declined, and the potential for disaster grew



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTOS

While blizzards disrupted travel, Nevada cattlemen watched their herds starve.

steadily greater. Yet cattlemen continued to overburden the range and failed to establish reserves of hay.

The spring and summer of 1888 were exceptionally dry in much of Northern Nevada. The winter of 1888-89 was mild, and little snow accumulated in the mountains. Cattle wintered with few losses but were in poor shape because of the drought-withered grass.

By the end of May 1889, ranchers in Elko County were reporting their concern about range conditions in the *Elko Independent*. Lack of spring rains caused the grass to dry, while streams shrank to intermittent pools and then dried completely. Sections of range became unusable. For the first time there was no snow visible on the Ruby Mountains.

Elko was facing a severe water shortage. Water was turned into the city mains for only a couple of hours daily. Dust, withered vegetation, and dried streams magnified the specter of the drought until the newspaper accounts approached hysteria.

On October 13, 1889, the first rain since March fell to break the drought and settle the dust. Through November the weather was close to ideal. Everyone prayed for one of those beautiful old-fashioned winters with snow.

On December 5 winter struck. It snowed at blizzard levels for seven

consecutive days in Northern Nevada. By Christmas Nevada had received more snow than had fallen in both of the previous winters. The townspeople rejoiced at the snow.

But the ranchers had serious problems. Feed supplies for an ordinary winter were exhausted by the holidays. With a shock the ranchers realized they were in for a big winter kill of livestock.

Just before Christmas the first snow-pow of the season passed through Elko, clearing the Central Pacific tracks. Elko had six inches of snow on the ground. Snow in the valleys north and south of Wells was reportedly "belly deep to horses." During the week before New Year's, it snowed 18 inches in Elko on one day and continued snowing for two days more. "It continues to snow, and we hail it as a bonanza for Nevada," the *Independent* complacently commented.

For the first time since 1862, when Ruby Valley was settled, the residents did not receive mail or paper deliveries. In early January the snow was two feet deep in the valleys and heavily crusted. On January 6 it was minus 40 degrees in Elko. Six days later it had warmed to minus 30. Houses squeaked in the night as contracting timbers pulled square-set nails. To the north the snow was three-and-a-half feet deep, and the Tuscarora stage was stranded in Elko.



By December 1889 runners had replaced buggy wheels for those who braved the cold.

On January 12 the *Independent* reported several ranchers were planning to ship cattle to California because the cattle could clearly not survive the snows. The plan fell apart when it was discovered that snow blocked the tracks both east and west of Elko. That same week the *Independent's* editor found a half inch of ice on the water in his well, and even townspeople were starting to grumble about the white winter.

On January 15 thermometers registered near 60 below zero. Low temperatures continued through February with minus 40 recorded on the first day and minus 41 on the last day of the month. On February 3 more snow fell. Nevada Land and Cattle Company estimated its winter losses had already reached 98 percent. The hay the company had stored could not be moved to the cattle because of the snow-covered roads. In Secret Valley rancher A. G. Dawley reported 15-foot drifts between his house and barn. He carried feed and water through a tunnel to save valuable stallions in the barn.

Rail communications and transportation broke down. On February 9 the first train reached Elko from San Francisco since January 15, when snow sheds in the Sierra had collapsed or had been swept away by snowslides. Cleanup crews in Elko used the rail cars to haul snow out of town.

On nights when it was minus 60 homesteaders took turns herding their animals around bonfires and carefully portioning out handfuls of native grass hay to the animals that appeared weakest. In these desperate times ranchers ripped down roofs of barns and sheds to obtain bundles of Great Basin wildrye that had been used for thatch.

In desperation cattle ate sagebrush, which led to more deaths. Oils in the

sagebrush kill micro-organisms in a cow's stomach that break down high-cellulose-content forage and produce. A cow with a full stomach can withstand bitter cold. An empty one means a cold cow, and the already weakened cows died.

Cattle occasionally went wild with hunger. In Ruby Valley a herd of 300 broke into a stockyard, and 117 were smothered in the crush to reach the hay. Horses would bunch up and chew each other's manes and tails until all the hair was gone and then die in a group.

Finally in March moderate temperatures came, and the heavy snows became slushy. The starving cattle that had survived the winter took to whatever snow-free range they could find in anticipation of the first regrowth of spring forage.

On March 17 the weather played another trick. Late in the afternoon a storm broke over Southern Idaho and Northern Nevada. It began with rain and sleet and then turned to snow. The remaining drifts of heavy slush refroze with an icy crust. The rain and sleet saturated the shaggy winter coats of the livestock that had survived. The temperature dropped, and the weakened animals were unable to shake the ice from their coats.

In April all of nature's horrors ended, and spring finally came to the ranges. The thaw created a sea of mud. Riders covered their noses with checkered bandannas because of the stench of cow and horse carcasses decomposing in the retreating snowdrifts. Cattle and deer carcasses were even found wedged in the top of juniper trees, where they had walked out on the top of snow drifts and fallen through while searching for branches sticking above the snow.

A rancher who rode to Elko from Ruby Valley said in the *Independent*, "I've just come in from four days of riding—counted 100 dead cattle along the roads, not including those that died in the

fields." Horses that survived the winter on the range had worn the hair and skin off their legs and noses from pawing and rooting for feed.

Spring flooding brought more problems. When the ice melted, streams were choked with carcasses. Dead cattle floated in the Humboldt River and jammed against the bridges. People who depended on the stream for domestic water had to sink wells quickly to avoid potential diseases.

Estimates published in the Elko papers reported that the large ranchers had lost 95 percent of their cattle and horses. The firm of Sparks-Tinnin, for example, branded 38,000 calves during the 1885 roundup. In 1890 on the same range they branded 68 calves. The cattle industry in Northeastern Nevada was devastated, and depression dogged the industry through the 1890s.

Although ranchers suffered greatly, the *Independent* considered the winter to be a blessing for the economy. On April 6 the editor wrote, "There are shrewd and sharp businessmen who think the severe ordeal through which Nevada has passed will eventually benefit the state. They contend that last winter was a great equalizer and prevented a few men from gobbling up all that is worth having, outside the mines, in Nevada. Although we can lay no claim to being either shrewd or sharp, and even last fall we held that while a hard winter would prove disastrous to the stock interests, it was necessary to the future welfare of the state; and notwithstanding the immense losses, we see no good reason for changing that opinion."

The winter of 1889-90 ended the year-long ranging of cattle on most Northern Nevada grasslands. Ranchers began to produce one ton of hay for each cow for winter forage. In 1889 Elko had 16,000 acres devoted to hay production, but by 1900 there were 239,000 acres of hay land in the county.

Raising hay quickly burgeoned into a major industry, requiring a large seasonal labor force for the harvest. The cowboy no longer was the only major type of ranch hand. At the same time, the failure of many small ranches opened the ranges and allowed the sheep industry to expand greatly in the 1890s. The sheepmen also challenged the domination of ranching and the cowboy.

The blizzards of that famous winter had been harsh, but they also had relieved the drought. "The earth is so completely saturated with moisture," an Elko writer stated, "that no fears are entertained of another dry summer." And so the cattlemen of Nevada entered the modern age with ample water for their hay fields. □

*James A. Young of Reno is a range scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture at UNR and frequently travels in the Elko area.*

# The Cussedness of the Elements

It was a wild winter in Western Nevada, too.

By Phillip I. Earl

The storms that began in December of 1889 were heartily welcomed in Western Nevada at first. Runners replaced wheels on carriages and wagons in Carson City, and harness bells jingled merrily at Christmastime. In Reno, every contrivance imaginable became a sled, and skaters thronged each frozen pond, the Truckee River, which was frozen from Laughton's to Vista, and Washoe Lake, where the ice was a foot thick.

As the snow continued to fall and the hard freeze held after New Year's Day, Western Nevada began to have second thoughts about Mother Nature's blessing. Eventually the 1889-90 winter became known simply as the "white winter" by those who suffered through it. In Reno, where the temperatures fell to 20 below zero on January 2, frozen pipes caused concern among the city officials responsible for fire protection, and ordinary citizens fretted about broken pipes and flooding. "Cuss words are the order of the day," a newspaper editor commented. "Even the ladies are licensed to swear a little as they paddle the miniature skating rink in the kitchen."

Virginia City householders feared an avalanche on Mt. Davidson, but the huge snow drifts that blocked wagon

roads and snarled railroad traffic created the most serious problems. On Geiger Grade, stranded cattle, driven mad by starvation, attacked travelers trying to reach Virginia City on snowshoes.

Feed and fuel shortages on the Comstock were becoming acute. Residents of Virginia City and Gold Hill stripped old buildings and abandoned mine shafts for firewood and joined the local Paiutes in killing quail trapped by the snow and gathering up rabbits frozen to death in the drifts. Merchants finally instituted a rationing system, but Dayton ranchers saved the day by using the Sutro Tunnel and the C & C mine shaft to transport eight tons of potatoes to Virginia City on January 28.

Among the major annoyances to Western Nevada communities were stranded railroad passengers: 600 of them accumulated in Reno alone. Most hung out at the depot growling about their misfortunes and holding indignation meetings. Others made the best of their situation. George T McCully, an Eastern editor, published one edition of *The Snowbound*, "A Souvenir of the Sierra Nevada Blockade, 1890," and world travelers among the stranded organized a series of lectures on foreign countries. A mining engi-

neer spoke about the deep mines of South Africa, an heiress lectured on the history of jewelry, and J. C. Stubbs, a railroad vice-president, gave a well-received talk on the "Cussedness of the Elements." Others recited poetry, read from Shakespeare, sang, whistled, or performed clog dances.

Railroad crews and giant snowplows finally opened the lines on January 30, and the weather warmed up a bit. Stranded travelers moved on, and food and fuel began to arrive. Post offices labored with the backlog of mail, Western Union put on more operators to handle the flood of telegrams, and Nevadans, connected to the world again, paused to reflect upon the experience. Among the thoughtful was Alf Doten, writing in the *Territorial Enterprise*. Noting that old-timers always exaggerated the severity of past winters, he predicted that "twenty years hence, the monumental liar will glory in telling about the snow of the present winter being forty or fifty feet deep and how everybody traveled over the tops of the houses in all directions on snowshoes." And so they did. □

*Phillip I. Earl of Reno is curator of exhibits at the Nevada Historical Society.*



Heavy snows in the Sierra Nevada left trains and stranded passengers steaming in Reno.

# The Nevada Calendar for January & February

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

Compiled by Melissa Cronin



## High-Stakes Tournament Showdowns

The gambling tournament season is about to open in Nevada as high-stakes poker players get ready for such big draws as Amarillo Slim's Super Bowl of Poker, at Del Webb's High Sierra at Lake Tahoe on January 27 to February 12. In last year's showdown Hans "Tuna" Lund (left) outlasted Jack "Treetop" Strauss and 53 other aces to win the \$275,000 first prize. Other events include the Stairway to the Stars Poker Tournament, January 9 to February 2 at the Stardust in Las Vegas, and Harrah's '84 Games extravaganza on February 26-29, held simultaneously in Vegas, Reno, Tahoe, and Atlantic City. In May is the World Series of Poker at Binion's Horseshoe in downtown Las Vegas. Many tournaments have low buy-in rounds, and for spectators, the watching is free.

## Las Vegas/South

### JANUARY

**New Year's Eve Fireworks**, 31 downtown, street dancing, Union Plaza, 386-2110

**Roping Events**, 4, 11, 18, 25 (every Wed.), open to public, free to spectators, 6:30pm, rodeo arena, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 1-800-621-0187 in Nevada 346-5232, Lee Staples

**Art Exhibit**, thru 6, prints from Arizona Fine Arts Presses, at Charleston Heights Arts Center and Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6384

**Tad Cheyenne Schutt Art Exhibit**, thru 13, photography and paintings, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

**Nevada 83**, thru 25, photo show, Las Vegas Library, 382-3493

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

**Art Exhibit**, 2-2/4, works by UNLV and Clark County Community College students and photo exhibit by Dennis Brooks, Las Vegas Art Museum, 647-4300

**Utah Jazz v. Houston Rockets**, 4, pro basketball, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 369-2255

**UNLV v. Long Beach**, 5, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**"Snoopy!"** 6-7 7pm, The Rainbow Company, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**UNLV v. New Mexico**, 7, basketball, noon, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**"Spiderman,"** 7 children's film, 10am at Charleston Heights Arts Center, 1pm at Flamingo Library, and 3:30pm at West Las Vegas Branch Library, 733-7810

**Art Exhibit**, 7-2/3, show by the Nevada Mothers Assn., free, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6211

**"You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown,"** 8, The Rainbow Company, 7pm, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**UNLV v. Irvine**, 9, basketball, 7pm, Thomas and

Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**"Spiderman,"** 9, children's film, 3:30pm at Las Vegas Library, 6:30pm, Sunrise Library, 382-3493  
**Stairway to the Stars Million Dollar Poker Tournament**, 9-2/2, 24 tournaments culminating in a \$5,000 buy-in, no-limit hold 'em championship, Stardust Hotel, 732-6514

**Western Art Exhibit**, 9-2/29, oils and watercolors by Max Bunnell, 8:30am-4:30pm daily, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

**Art Exhibit**, 9-3/3, poster paintings of Batiste Madalena depicting Hollywood stars and films of 1924-1928, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**Concert**, 10, includes Dvorak's "Symphony From the New World," Chopin's Concerto No. 2, and Igor Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite," Las Vegas Symphony, 8pm, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 739-3420

**Art Exhibit**, 12-3/9, fine woodwork by Christian Brisepierra, 3pm, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

**"The Absent Minded Professor,"** 14, film, 7pm, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

**Nevada Chamber Ensemble Concert**, 15, adults \$4, senior citizens, students, and handicapped \$3,

and \$2 for children under 12, 3pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**Pan Tournament,** 15-19, 2-7pm registration on Sun., noon play on Mon.-Tues., \$100 elimination at 1pm and \$200 elimination at 7pm on Wed., Union Plaza Hotel, 386-2110

**Art Exhibit,** 15-2/10, works in clay and photography by Greg Allred, 3pm, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

**"Gold Diggers of 1935,"** 16, Busby Berkeley musical, Classic Musical Film Series, \$1 Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**UNLV v. Pacific,** 19, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**"And I Ain't Finished Yet,"** 19-22, historical black musical by Eve Merriam, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 3pm Sun., Las Vegas Little Theater, 735-0167

**UNLV v. Fresno State,** 21, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Utah Jazz v. Dallas Mavericks,** 24, pro basketball, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 369-2255

**"The African Queen,"** 24, film, Flamingo Library, 7pm, 733-7810

**Trio Serenata,** 26, chamber music, free, 7pm, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

**"And I Ain't Finished Yet,"** 26-28, historical black musical written by Eve Merriam, 8pm, Las Vegas Little Theater, 735-0167

**Sahara World Cup Ultralight Championship,** 26-29, featuring single-seat flyers, 737-2111

**Own Your Own Business Expo,** 27-29, franchise exhibit booths, Sahara Hotel, 737-2111



## Star-Studded Slopes

Stars and celebrities gather this February 25-26 to swish down the slopes during the John Denver Celebrity Ski Classic at Heavenly Valley in South Lake Tahoe. Actors like Hal Linden join Denver in crowd-pleasing races, fireworks, a torchlight parade, and signing autographs during the weekend bash. NBC's SportsWorld will televise the event.



GORDON S. CAMPBELL

## Making a Splash in Wells and Ely

Each winter many Northeastern Nevada ranchers keep their horses (and themselves) in shape on the chariot-racing circuit. Wells has competitions throughout January and February at its local chariot track. The year's biggest gathering will be in Ely on February 18-19, when 75 teams from the western states compete in the Bristlecone Chariot Races at the White Pine County Fairgrounds.

**Concert,** 29, fortepiano recital by Susan Duer, adults \$4, senior citizens, students, and handicapped \$3, children under 12 \$2, 3pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**"Show Boat,"** 30, film based on the Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein musical, Classical Musical Film Series, \$1 7pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**Utah Jazz v. Seattle Supersonics,** 31, pro basketball, 7:30pm, Thomas & Mack Center, UNLV, 369-2255

**"Death Valley: Land of Contrast,"** 31, Audubon Wildlife film by Kent Durden, who will speak, 7:30pm, Wright Hall, UNLV, 739-3394

## FEBRUARY

**Roping Events,** 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (every Wed.), open to public, free to spectators, 6:30pm, rodeo arena, Peppermill's Western Village Mesquite, 1-800-621-0187 in Nevada 346-5232, Lee Staples

**Stairway to the Stars Million Dollar Poker Tournament,** thru 2, no-limit hold 'em championship, Stardust Hotel, 732-6514

**Sahara Gun Show,** 2-5, sale and show by antique arms collectors, Sahara Hotel, 737-2111

**"And I Ain't Finished Yet,"** 2-5, historical black musical by Eve Merriam, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 3pm Sun., Las Vegas Little Theater, 735-0167

**"Snow White,"** 4, children's film, 10am at Charleston Heights Arts Center, 1pm at Flamingo Library, 3:30pm at West Las Vegas Branch Library, 733-7810

**Caesars Palace Gymnastics Invitational,** 4, women gymnasts, \$6 reserved seats, \$3 for military, senior citizens, and children, 2pm, Caesars Palace, 731-7865

**Cantor String Quartet Concert,** 5, adults \$4, senior citizens, students, and handicapped \$3, and \$2 for children under 12, 3pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**Gin Tournament,** 5-9, 2-7pm registration on Sun., 10am play on Mon.-Tues., elimination and championships Wed., Union Plaza Hotel, 386-2110

**Art Exhibit,** 5-3/2, color xerox works by Pasha Rafat, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**Art Exhibit,** 5-3/9, works by Bennie Casselle, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6211

**"Snow White,"** 6, children's film, 3:30pm at Las Vegas Library, 6:30pm at Sunrise Library, 382-3493

**Art Exhibit,** 6-3/4, National Paperworks Show and oils, watercolors, and silk-screen works by Katie Aumun and Sharon Graff, Las Vegas Art Museum, 647-4300

**Utah Jazz v. San Diego Clippers,** 7, pro basketball, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, 369-2255

**UNLV v. Utah,** 9, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV 739-3207

**"And I Ain't Finished Yet,"** 9-11 historical black musical by Eve Merriam, 8pm, Las Vegas Little Theater, 735-0167

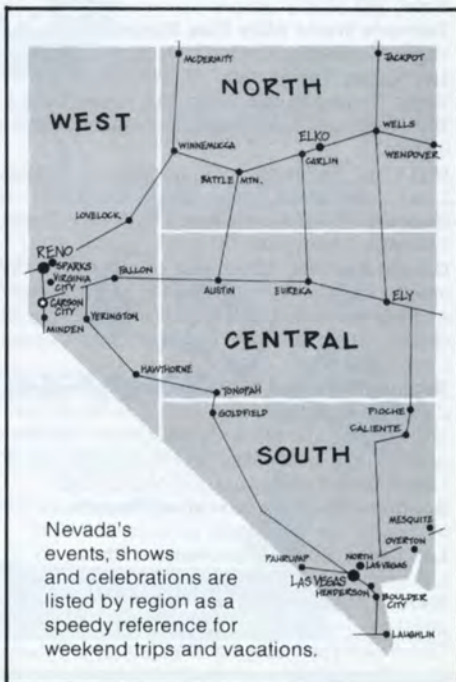
**Ballet,** 9-12, Nevada Dance Theatre, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2 and 9pm on Sun., Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 739-3801

**"The Aristocats,"** 11, children's film, 3pm, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

**UNLV v. San Jose State,** 12, basketball, 1pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Musical Arts Singers Concert,** 12, adults \$4, senior citizens and students \$3.50, children 12 and under \$2, 3pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 451-6672

(Continued)





MARVIN PALLITT

## Classic Concerts at Ham Hall

Under the direction of maestro Virko Baley, the Las Vegas Symphonic and Chamber Music Society begins the new year on January 10 with a program of Slavic-inspired music that includes works by Dvorak, Chopin, and Stravinsky at UNLV's Ham Concert Hall. The cultural arts organization also offers recitals throughout the year by members of the Las Vegas Chamber Players.

**American College Theatre Festival**, 13-20, featuring the best theatrical productions from Southwestern colleges and universities; actors' scholarship competition is 8pm Sat., Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 739-3666

**"La Traviata,"** 14, opera by Verdi, Las Vegas Symphony, 8pm, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 739-3420

**"And I Ain't Finished Yet,"** 16-18, historical black musical by Eve Merriam, 8pm, Las Vegas Little Theater, 735-0167

**"True West,"** 17-18, comic drama based on play by Kathryn Sandy O'Brien, 8pm, Clark County Community College Theatre, 643-6060

**March of Dimes Gourmet Gala**, 18, gourmet dinner and dance fundraiser, 6:30pm, Frontier Hotel, 382-4000

**Tanner's World Wide Flea Market**, 18-19, Las Vegas Convention Center, 733-2323

**Las Vegas Travel Fair**, 19, sponsored by Las Vegas Review-Journal, travel film, prizes, booths, \$1 10am-5pm, Las Vegas Convention Center, 383-0437

**UNLV v. Fullerton**, 23, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Concert**, 23, violoncello concert by Trio Serenata, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

**Gospel Festival**, 23-25, part of a black history month program; films; L.D. Fraizer, singer, lecturer and composer, will give a talk on the origin of gospel music on Sat., Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6511

**Southern Nevada AAA Basketball Tournament**, 23-25, boys and girls high school divisional play-offs, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3761 or 885-4390 (AAA state championships are at Lawlor Events Center at UNR on 2/29-3/2)

**Southern Nevada A Basketball Playoffs**, 23-25, at various Las Vegas high schools, 885-4390

**Las Vegas Home Improvement Show**, 23-26, Las Vegas Convention Center, 871-3605

**Nevada Highland Games '84**, 24-26, Scottish athletic games at Cashman Field Center, with the Tartan Golf Tournament at the Tropicana Country Club. The Ceilidh, a celebration described as an

Irish Wake without the mourning, solo classical pipe (bagpipes) music, whiskey-tasting parties, and traditional Scottish dances at the Tropicana Hotel, 871-6065

**Las Vegas Sweet Adelines Annual Show**, 25, barbershop-style music, with the Gambleaires, 8pm, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 645-2929

**UNLV v. Santa Barbara**, 26, basketball, 1pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3207

**Concert**, 26, University Musical Society Orchestra, free, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**Harrah's '84 Games**, 26-29; winter tournaments in blackjack and craps are being held simultaneously at Harrah's Tahoe, Harrah's Reno, Holiday Hotel/Casino in Las Vegas, and Harrah's Marina in Atlantic City. There's \$3 million in cash and prizes, including a \$1 million bonus prize in this first in a series of 1984 tournaments; Harrah's and International Gaming Promotions, Inc., 1-800-443-0100

**"Till the Clouds Roll By,"** 27 Classical Musical Film Series, \$1 7pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6383

**"The Golden Sea of Cortez,"** 27 Audubon Wildlife film by Clint Denn, who will speak, Wright Hall, UNLV, 739-3394

**"Blithe Spirit,"** 28, film, 7pm, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

## Central

### JANUARY

**Art Show**, 3-7 works in all mediums depicting landscapes, noon-5pm, Central Nevada Museum, Tonopah, 482-9676

**Exhibit**, 31-2/4, needlecrafts, noon-5pm, Central Nevada Museum, Tonopah, 482-9676

### FEBRUARY

**Nevada 83**, 3-23, photo show, White Pine County Library, Ely, 289-3737

**Fourth Annual Jack Dempsey Boxing Festival**, 9, 7pm, high school gym, Tonopah, 482-3558

**Bristlecone Chariot Races**, 18-19, 25 three-team races each day beginning at 11am, team auctions, fairgrounds, Ely, 289-8877

**Elks Crab Crack**, 25, 6pm, Tonopah Convention Center, 482-6850 or 482-3558

## North

### JANUARY

**Art Exhibit**, thru 4, paintings by Carol Modlen, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

**Art Exhibit**, 5-2/5, photographs and poetry by Kirk Robertson, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

**Polar Bear Bowling Classic**, 13-3/10, each Fri-Sun., Rainbo Lanes, Elko, 738-6525

**Chariot Racing**, 14 & 28, 11am, Chariot Race Track, Wells, 752-3867

**Annual Wild Game and Fish Feed**, 23, free, honoring winners of annual fishing contest. All sportsmen are invited, and offers of game, waterfowl, and fish are accepted, Cactus Pete's Casino Convention Center, Jackpot, 755-2321

### FEBRUARY

**Chariot Racing**, 4, 11 and 25, 11am, Chariot Race Track, Wells, 752-3867

**Art Exhibit**, 6-3/6, paintings by Nick Nichols, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

**Mardi Gras Ball**, 25, New Orleans-style with authentic costumes, dinner, and dance, Elko Convention Center, 738-4091

**State A Basketball Championships**, 3/2-3, Centennial Gym, Elko High School, 885-4390



## The NBA in Las Vegas

This winter the Utah Jazz of the National Basketball Association is playing 11 of its 41 home games in Las Vegas, including a matchup with Ralph Sampson and the Houston Rockets on January 4. The Jazz, who play at UNLV's Thomas and Mack Center, are led by top scorers Adrian Dantley and Darrell Griffith (above).

# Reno/West

## JANUARY

**"Forgotten Flames,"** thru 9/1 featuring photographs and firefighting artifacts pertaining to the history of Carson fire departments, 8:30am-4:30pm Mon.-Sun., Nevada State Museum, Carson City, 885-4810

**Pack Rat Flea Market,** every weekend, State Fairgrounds, 785-4306

**Pederson Classic Bowling Tournament,** 1-7/30, singles, doubles, and three-man teams, \$2,000 prize money for each category, Town & Country Bowl, 825-1048

**UNR v. Regis College,** 3, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

**Antique Critique and Sale,** 6-7 open to the public, art or jewelry appraised for a small donation, 9:30am-4pm, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333

**"Tribute,"** 6-8, serious drama, 8:30pm Fri.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**"Quilts in Nevada,"** 6-4/29, exhibition of quilts dating from 1840, free, 10am-5pm Wed.-Sun., Nevada Historical Society, 789-0190

**Truckee Winter Nordic Carnival Race,** 7 2.5- and 10-km. cross-country ski races, registration 8-9am, race starts at 9am, Tahoe Donner Ski Touring Center, Truckee, 916-587-9821

**UNR v. Santa Clara,** 7, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

**Far West Freestyle,** 7-8, ballet events on Sat., mogul event on Sun., Boreal Ski Resort, 916-426-3666

**U.S. Ski Assn. "Ski Wars" Slalom Race,** 7-8, Heavenly Valley, South Lake Tahoe, 916-541-1330

**Kirkwood Klassic,** 8, 7.5- and 15-km races, 10am, touring center, Kirkwood, 209-258-8864

**Adidas/MGM Intercollegiate Tennis Classic,** 12-15, includes the top four ranked teams in the nation, Trinity, USC, Stanford, and Pepperdine, 9am-5pm, tennis pavilion, MGM Grand Hotel, 789-2000

**"Tribute,"** 12-15, serious drama, 8:30pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**Avalanche Seminar,** 13-15, Kirkwood Touring Center, Kirkwood, 209-258-8864

**Hidden Cave Tours,** 14, meet 9:45am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

**Telemark Races,** 14, Echo Summit Ski Area, South Lake Tahoe, 916-659-7154

**National Brotherhood of Skiers Celebration,** 14-15, parties and races honoring Martin Luther King, Alpine Meadows, North Lake Tahoe, 916-583-4232

**Historic Photography of the Great Basin,** 15-3/5, 19th-century photos by surveyors and explorers, free, 10am-4pm Tues.-Fri., noon-4pm Sat. and Sun., Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333

**Art Exhibit,** 15-3/30, Nevada photographs by Martin Stupich, Nevada Historical Society Downtown Gallery, 789-0190

**Harlem Globetrotters,** 18, basketball exhibition, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4417

**Concert,** 19, featuring Sevant, a contemporary Christian musical group, and Joe English, former drummer with Paul McCartney and Wings, groups of 10 or more \$6, \$7 in advance, \$8 at the door, 7pm, Pioneer Theater, 323-7255

**UNR v. Montana,** 19, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

**Art Showing,** 20-2/8, sculptures by Lee Sido in the North Gallery and environmental works by Polly Peacock in the Sheppard Gallery, 8am-5pm, Mon.-Fri., Church Fine Arts, UNR, 784-6658

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## Opera's Biggest Lather

The Nevada Opera Association presents Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" on February 24-25 at the Pioneer Theater in Reno. In this production Figaro, opera's most irresistibly dashing hero, uses his cunning and wit to rescue the vivacious Rosina from her scheming guardian.

**Winterskol**, 20-29, opening ceremonies and high school series race at Ski Incline, bluegrass concert at Incline Chateau on 20th; cross-country race, Winterskol Queen's Ball & Coronation & South of the Border Night at Chateau on 21st; Luggi race at Ski Incline on 22nd; Telemark race at Ski Incline the 23rd; high school dance at Chateau on 24th; Students Day, games, open competition ski races, ballet and aerial clinic, chili feed on 25th; Merchants Day, torchlight parade at Ski Incline

26th; freestyle ballet and skiing demo at Ski Incline, German dinner at Chateau on 27th; Peugeot Grand Prix at Ski Incline, Wild Western Nite at Hyatt on 28th; Merchants/MS Benefit Team Race at Ski Incline on 29th, with art and ice sculpture contests during the week, Incline Village, 831-1433

**UNR v. Montana State**, 21 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, 784-4697

**Nordic Race Clinic**, 21 skiers can cover the

**Tahoe World Championships** (1/29) course with top local racers, \$15, 9am-4pm, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-9858

**Reno Philharmonic Orchestra Concert**, 24, 8:15pm, Pioneer Theater, 329-1324

**South Lake Tahoe Winter Carnival**, 24-27, barrel races, snowshoe races with waitress trays and glasses, serious ski races, food, and music, with free entry to any race, event, or contest, Sierra Ski Ranch, South Lake Tahoe, 916-659-7519

**Super Bowl of Poker**, 27-2/12, Amarillo Slim hosts the sixth annual tournament, Del Webb's High Sierra, 588-6211

**Nordic Demo Day**, 28, all major Nordic ski and boot manufacturers will have equipment available for free demo use, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-9858

**Hidden Cave Tours**, 28, meet 9:45am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

**Dance Show**, 28-29, jazz dancing, Pioneer Theater, 323-7255

**Tahoe World Championships**, 29, 5- and 15-km, cross-country ski race; junior skiers enter for free and ski 5 km, everyone else skis 15 km with a \$10 entry fee; race starts at 10am, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-9858

**Concert**, 30, contemporary Christian musical group, 7pm, Pioneer Theater, 323-7255

## FEBRUARY

**Super Bowl of Poker**, thru 12, Amarillo Slim hosts the sixth annual tournament, Del Webb's High Sierra, 588-6211

**Philharmonica/Baroque Orchestra Concert**, 2, Performing Artists Series, 8pm, Church Fine Arts Theatre, UNR, 784-6505

**Rummage Sale**, 2-4, State Fairgrounds, 358-4474

**Concert**, 3, Washoe County School District Honor Band and Chorus, free, 7:30pm, Pioneer Theater, 786-5105

**Telemark Contest**, 4, Northstar, North Lake Tahoe, 916-562-1010

**UNR Winter Carnival**, 4, 6-12, Hawaiian luau on Sat., ski races, contests, and parties start on Mon., Reno and Lake Tahoe, 784-6589

**American Bowling Congress**, 4-5/25, with 8,400 teams, spectators \$2, children under 12 free, 7:30am-1:30am daily, Convention Center, 827-0131

**St. Olaf Choir Concert**, 8, 7:30pm, Pioneer Theater, 786-5105

**Nugget Bull Sale**, 9, Celebrity Room, John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 356-3438

**UNR v. Idaho State**, 9, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

**Art Show**, 10-3/7 drawings by Sherie Lamanet, 8am-5pm Mon.-Fri., Sheppard Gallery, Church Fine Arts Building, UNR, 784-6658

**Hidden Cave Tours**, 11 meet 9:45am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

**UNR v. Weber State**, 11 basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

**Sweet Adelines Show**, 11 barbershop music, adults \$3, senior citizens and children under 10 \$1.50, "afterglow" dinner following performance \$5, 7:30pm, Carson City Community Center, 887-2087

**Reno Philharmonic Concert**, 14, "Don Juan" and "Romeo and Juliet," 8:15pm, Pioneer Theater, 786-5105

**Valentine's Day Celebration**, 14, hand-in-hand ski races and piggy back races, Echo Summit Ski Area, South Lake Tahoe, 916-659-7154

**Valentine's Day Celebration**, 14, free carnations to the first 200 women skiers, kissing booth, Northstar, North Lake Tahoe, 916-562-1010

**State AAA & AA Wrestling Championships**, 18, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 885-4390

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**Torchlight Parade**, 18, night skiing with torches, Tahoe Donner, Truckee, 916-587-6028

**Nordic Race**, 19, 15 km., 10am, Incline Cross-Country Ski Area, 831-5190

**Washington's Birthday Boxing Festival**, 20, 7pm, Carson City Community Center, 882-5087

**Northern Nevada AAA Basketball Tournament**, 20-22, 24, boys and girls high school playoffs, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 885-4390

**Telemark Race**, 22, Echo Summit Ski Area, South Lake Tahoe, 916-659-7154

**UNR v. Idaho**, 23, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

**Northern Nevada A Basketball Divisional Playoffs**, 23-25, Lovelock High School, Lovelock, 885-4390

**State B Basketball Championships**, 23-25, Reed High School, 885-4390

**"The Barber of Seville,"** 24-25, Nevada Opera Assn., 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 786-4046

**"Tartuffe,"** 24-26, Moliere comedy, 8:30pm Fri-Sat., 2pm Sun., Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

**UNR v. Boise**, 25, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

**Hidden Cave Tours**, 25, meet 9:45am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

**John Denver Celebrity Ski Classic**, 25-26, Heavenly Valley, South Lake Tahoe, 916-541-1330

**Art Exhibit**, 25-4/15, featuring recent work by UNLV's Tom Holden, free, 10am-4pm Tues.-Fri., noon-4pm Sat.-Sun., Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333

**Harrah's '84 Games**, 26-29; winter tournaments in blackjack and craps are being held simultaneously at Harrah's Tahoe, Harrah's Reno, Holiday Hotel/Casino in Las Vegas, and Harrah's Marina in Atlantic City. There's \$3 million in cash and prizes, including a \$1 million bonus prize in this first of a series of tournaments in 1984; Harrah's and International Gaming Promotions, Inc., 1-800-443-0100

**State AAA Basketball Championships**, 29-2/2, boys and girls high school playoffs, Lawlor Events Center, UNR. (AA state championships at UNR gym on 3/1-3 and A state championships at Elko High School in Centennial Gym 3/2-3), 885-4390

**"Julia Bulette, Queen of the Comstock,"** either 3/3-4 or 3/10-11 musical about Virginia City's most famous prostitute; call Pioneer Theater for dates and details, 786-5105

## Coming Attractions

### MARCH

**Reno International Jazz Festival**  
**Snowfest**, North Lake Tahoe

### APRIL

**Henderson Industrial Days**  
**Mint 400 Desert Race**, Las Vegas

### MAY

**World Series of Poker**, Binion's Horseshoe, Las Vegas  
**Jim Butler Days**, Tonopah  
**Soaring Championships**, Minden

### JUNE

**Helldorado Rodeo & Celebration**, Las Vegas  
**Reno Rodeo**  
**Winnemucca Basque Festival** □

**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.

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# The Buck Stops Here

On the graveyard shift at the Frontier, Randy Brown is the man with the pen.

By Elliot S. Krane



LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

Brown reassesses a customer's credit line with the casino cage and credit manager, Pat Franks.

**T**he man had an air of importance about him as he rolled the dice across the green felt. It was 4 a.m., the casino was almost deserted, and the Frontier Hotel's dice pit was down to one table.

"Hey," he called to the floorman. "Who do I see about getting a marker okayed? I just need \$10,000." Randy Brown, young, curly-haired, and seemingly easygoing until you notice the alertness in his eyes, moved from the center of the pit. He asked the gambler if he could be of help.

"I just got into town the night before last," the gambler said. "Didn't have time to set up credit." He showed Brown, the casino shift boss on the graveyard shift, a card indicating that he was a bank executive and involved in the petroleum business.

"I'll be right with you," Brown said as he went to the pit clerk in the center of the dice area and asked her to call up the gambler's name. Less than 30 seconds

later, the man's full financial record was displayed on the screen—including the facts that the MGM was holding a bad check for \$2,000 from 1977 and Caesars had an unpaid marker for \$1,000 dated the same year.

"I don't like to be kept waiting," the gambler complained loudly.

"I'd like to help you," Brown replied, using a tactful approach that makes a player think nothing is amiss. "But at this time of night, it's difficult to okay credit, so there's nothing I can do for you now."

The gambler realized that his earlier "omissions" at other casinos had caught up with him. He turned away from the table, saying, "That's okay. I didn't feel like gambling anymore tonight anyhow."

Such encounters are part of the nightly routine of Randy Brown, guardian of both the take and reputation of the Frontier on the graveyard shift. When he walks in the door of the Strip hotel at 2 a.m., the full authority of its multi-million-dollar casino rests in his hands.

He has what is known as the power of the pen to approve or deny credit, complimentary rooms, and \$50,000 keno wins, not to mention removing ladies of the evening or suspected gambling cheats from the premises.

Brown is a Vietnam veteran and single, and at 34 is one of the youngest shift managers in a major Las Vegas casino. He comes to work when most of the working people of this upside-down city are either finishing their jobs or halfway through their night's sleep.

Except on weekends, when the tables may be full until dawn, there usually are two crap tables and four or five 21 tables in action when Brown comes to work. His first duty is to sign for the drop boxes, the black metal containers into which the cash and markers are dropped at each gaming table. Then he breaks out new dice for his shift. The cubes have to be measured by a micrometer, correct to two-thousandths of an inch, and then signed and marked to prevent "foreign"



*With a computer never far away, Brown can call up the record of a major gambler in seconds and know what his day's luck has been before he sits down to play. Occasionally Brown has to keep tabs on certain blackjack players not because of credit problems, but because they count cards too well.*

dice from being introduced into games.

"I check the credit of players giving us action," he said at the start of a recent shift, "and get the win-loss figures from the night before. Usually the action slows down around 5 a.m., and from then until 7 a.m., when the early gamblers get up, you can shoot a cannon through the casino on most nights."

At 2:30 a.m. in the hotel coffee shop Brown sat down to his main meal of the day, a hearty spread of steak, vegetables, and salad. He finished eating just as he received one of the dozens of calls on the

paging system that he would take during the early morning and then went out into the casino to approve a check. He pointed to a dice table, to the rhythm of the game, and said, "If there is something going on that's out of the ordinary, you can hear the change in the action. If someone is betting nickels [\$5] and suddenly shifts to blacks [\$100], there must be a reason."

Dennis Droste, pit boss for the shift, said that he is instructed to notify Brown if there are any unusual bets. "But even if I suspect something, I have to check inconspicuously so the game is not

disturbed," he said. "When a sharpie sees that a game is protected, he leaves and tries his scam elsewhere." Brown and Droste checked the new dice for the morning's play. Each die was scratched with Brown's signature and his mark on the opposite face.

Brown explained that a dice manipulator, known in the trade as a mechanic, is thwarted by a table limit that prevents the cheat from taking a big one-roll bet and running. "We look for a team, taking both ends of the table," he said. "These gamblers almost always come in with chips in their hands, usually place a one-roll bet in the field, and swing from a nickel to a \$1,000 bet."

He moved between the dice and 21 pits, approving credit, making a room change for a high roller, and following the progress of a major gambler who was shifting from one table to another.

"We pretty much know how a gambler is doing in town and we rarely get burned," he said. "Say someone wants a \$25,000 credit line. Naturally, at 4:30 in the morning we can't call his bank, so we do an Intransit, calling the local credit bureau, which is open 24 hours. They will tell us everything that he had bet in town to date. Possibly if he would lose big across the street at the Desert Inn and run over here, we would not know about it right away, but even then, by the time he had gone through three or four hands, we would have the information and cut him off."

Sometimes a computer isn't needed in questions of identification. "Recently a young man tried to use someone else's credit card. He had no ID and insisted that he was the man whose name was on the card. When I started to question him, he became indignant and told me that he'd have my job."

"I kept talking to him as calmly as I could, having signaled to call to Metro while we talked. Until the police put the handcuffs on him, he still insisted that the card was his. But he didn't know that a pit boss knew the owner of the card and that the young man didn't even look remotely like the owner. He was booked for defrauding an innkeeper and his gambling days were sharply curtailed."

**A**nother of Brown's security functions is to monitor the "eye in the sky," the network of two-way mirrors, TV cameras, and catwalks that give management a view of all gambling areas and places where the money is exchanged and counted.

He gestured to an unmarked door in a second-floor corridor and, after greeting the chief watcher, conducted a tour of the maze of electronic equipment that surveys the entire casino. When a suspected gambling scam is in progress, the TV equipment picks up the entire scene and tapes it, along with an indication of the time and date for later courtroom evi-

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dence. "That's kind of a lonely shift," Brown said, heading back to the noise of the casino floor. "But it's perfect if you are self-motivated and like to be by yourself."

Checking the computer display record of a player who was using black chips at the crap table, Brown said, "He's a good player. Has a \$40,000 credit line, plays an average of four hours a day and bets an average of \$75 per bet. He is 'comped' for room, food, and beverage, and we most likely will pick up his plane fare to San Francisco."

He said the casino keeps records of all its credit players and knows what they did their last trip here, their credit limits, what was issued this trip, and what they are winning or losing at any given time.

Some gamblers' records, he admitted, have suffered during recent economic downturns. "The number of credit problems with businessmen has increased, and we have to be twice as careful when we issue credit." At the same time, because of higher airfares and more casinos, the competition for customers is keen. Brown estimated that he extends about \$500,000 in comps, including room, food, and beverage (RFB), in the course of a year.

"However, the small bettor who gambles \$25 or \$50 a hand for a short time each day can't be extended the RFB and airfare that are given to a high roller," he said. "We consider a high

“

*'I learned to appreciate the material things in life during combat,' said Brown, a Vietnam veteran. 'I look at the fine gourmet dinners at our hotel and think back to the times when we considered eating the rats that were running around our foxholes.'*

”

roller someone who bets \$250 to \$300 a hand, and a thoroughbred is a high roller who bets \$500 to \$1,000 and keeps going until he wins or loses \$25,000. That's betting—a lot more than I'd ever do."

**M**any residents of Las Vegas came here on the way to another state and just decided to stay. In Brown's case, his father was moving the family to Arizona when Randy was in grade school. They stopped in Las Vegas, liked it, and stayed for a number of years before moving to California.

After high school, Brown joined the Marines and soon found himself in Vietnam as a front-line machine gunner on the DMZ. "I learned to appreciate the material things of life during combat," he said. "I look at the fine gourmet dinners at our hotel and think back to the times when we considered eating the rats that

were running around our foxholes."

Returning to Las Vegas after his discharge, Brown took a job as a warehouseman. But he saw that the best opportunities were in the casino business, so he learned how to deal 21. His first gaming job was at the Golden Gate, but before he settled into the job, he told his employers that he had one obligation to fulfill.

"A friend of mine, who joined the Marines the same time I did, said that if we both got out of the war alive, we'd take a motorcycle trip to Alaska. Well, my friend didn't make it, but I felt obligated—and I had a few more oats to sow.

"I made the trip, it was dirt road in 1972, and finally arrived at Whitehorse. There was an ad for dealers in Dawson Creek. The temperatures were 40 to 60 below zero, and everyone wore guns. I figured that if I were to deal for a living, it would be where the weather and the people are warmer."

Back in Las Vegas, Brown worked at the Castaways, Fremont, and Circus Circus. He was hired by the Gaming Control Board as an undercover agent, and spent the next 14 months going through casinos, looking for gaming cheats. Then the Frontier, which Brown said has more former GCB members on its staff than just about any hotel on the Strip, signed him on as a floorman. He moved to third man in the 21 pit, then pit boss, and finally his present job of shift manager.

Brown has seen many characters in his years in various casinos, but he likes to tell the story of a player he met at the Fremont Hotel.

"I was on swing shift and this player comes in, dressed in old trousers, scuffed shoes, and a torn undershirt. He had a \$20 bill. I wasn't allowed to ask him where he got it, but I could imagine. He got change for the bill and started to play 21. By the time I left the casino at the end of my shift, he had run up his stake to \$33,000.

"When I came back the next day, there at the same table was the dude, dressed in a bright yellow suit, two-toned shoes, and a bright red shirt. He was up to \$54,000. I suggested that he had had phenomenal luck and that if he quit now, he'd be way ahead. 'No, sir,' he said, 'I'm gonna run this up to a quarter of a million.'

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"The next night, I saw him at a nickel slot machine, wearing his torn shirt and old pants, trying to make enough to get out of town."

Brown told of another situation where a gambler won big, went out and bought a Rolls-Royce, and then lost it back to the casino. The only problem was that he bought it for \$50,000 and only got \$25,000 for the "used" car.

A group of players that casino executives are always on the lookout for are the blackjack counters. These players remember the contents of the deck as it is dealt, and, when the deck is rich in tens and face cards, they increase their bets many times their regular bet.

Brown recalled watching Ken Uston, a nationally-known counter who frequently wears disguises, play in the casino early one morning. "He was playing big, but I took no action, just watched what he was doing. Uston was acting the part of a drunken gambler and didn't even look at his hole card. Well, in a short time he was down \$14,000. He left the casino and I knew that he'd come back the next day at the same time to make a killing. But when he returned, I 86'd him, and the score read, Frontier \$14,000, Uston zero."

As the sun's first rays made patterns on the thick casino carpet near the front door, Brown explained how disputes are settled quickly and quietly at the gaming tables. If the dealer or floorman can't resolve a problem regarding a bet, a card, or a roll of the dice, then the shift boss is summoned. "In our business we can't adopt the attitude that the customer is always right or we'd be out of business. Players are not experts, but there is no hard and fast rule. Each case is decided on its merits. If a player doesn't like my decision, then I suggest that he discuss it with the casino manager when he comes in later in the morning."

As he walked around the nearly deserted casino at 6 a.m., Brown checked the various pits and found that the 21 games broke about even and the crap pit lost \$11,000. He said that in the previous 30 days there had been only five losing days on his shift, which would pay a lot of bills for the Frontier.

Brown was eager to try a few dirt roads on his motorcycle later in the morning and then ride out to a dry lake to enjoy his latest hobby, hang gliding. "There's nothing like soaring off a cliff with the complete silence all around you, just the wind, the earth below, and the sky above," he said.

And in the middle of the following night he would return to a myriad of sounds, the clicking dice and the clanging slots, that provide the background "music" as he directs the operation of his casino. □

*Elliot S. Krane, entertainment editor of the Las Vegas Sun, says the power of the pen is nice to have, but he prefers the power of the typewriter.*



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# The Good Life in Boulder City

The town by Lake Mead still holds fast to its virtues, but civic and artistic stirrings are giving Boulder City a new image. **By Sally Ann Denton**

A tree-shaded desert town sheltered by languid indigo mountains, Boulder City could prove to be Nevada's sleeper. The town has doubled in size in the past 10 years—its population now passing the 10,000 mark—and it has quietly prospered into one of the state's more intriguing communities. Every year millions of tourists drive through Boulder, heading to and from the nearby attractions of Lake Mead and Hoover Dam. Yet, miraculously, the main street has been spared the franchised roadside businesses that make nearly every town in America resemble each other. There's still no stoplight in town, and a proposed light has prompted town-folk to band together to fight such progress. Like a paradise in a parched and arid landscape, the small city takes pride in its parks and enormous old shade trees. Art galleries and studios are common. Subdivisions have sprung up in the parts of town once considered "way out in the desert." Pretentious houses now dot B Hill—the mountain on which Boulder City high school students used to paint a giant "BC" at homecoming time. Huge, sprawling, million-dollar homes overlooking Lake Mead are now commonplace, rather than the oddities they once were. People have flocked to Boulder City in search of a small

CLIFF SEGERBLOM PHOTOS



Strollers in downtown Boulder City pass one of its most famous landmarks, the Boulder Dam Hotel. At left is the lake the dam built.



CLIFF SEGERBLOM PHOTOS

The Boulder City Art Festival attracts thousands of buyers and browsers each year (from left, moving clockwise). Flag-raiser Angus Mac-Eachern, known as Colonel Mac, is also a fixture at the polls. An aerial view shows new home-sites that face Lake Mead. Darlene Burk's gallery features works by nationally-known artists, while a block away owner Fran Knauss pours a draft at Herb's Recreation Tavern, a well-known watering hole. Fishing at Lake Mead is another favorite recreation of locals.



town and the sunny promises of a simple life. They come to raise children or to retire, and they are fiercely protective of maintaining the quality of life in their new frontier.

Despite this rapid growth and the inevitable changes and problems it has brought, Boulder City is coping. More than coping—it is thriving. Not since its beginning has the town experienced more interesting, homogenizing, booming times.

Built to house Hoover Dam's construction workers in 1931, Boulder City was one of the first planned communities in the nation. S.R. DeBoer, an award-winning Denver architect, modeled the town after Washington, D.C. Perched atop a hill overlooking the city, the Bureau of Reclamation administration building remains the town's focal point. The first three streets fanned out from that Spanish-style structure, and they and their cross streets were named for the seven states drained by the Colorado River: Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and California.

An engineering marvel built at a desperate time in American history when 10 million people were out of work, Hoover Dam still provides the impetus for Boulder City's growth. The Department of the Interior, with more than 600 Bureau of Reclamation and National Park Service employees, remains the largest local employer. The dam and Lake Mead attract more than five million visitors to the area annually. Just as the dam attests to the strength of a nation's dream, Boulder City remains the embodiment of that vision for a better life.



I view Boulder City with a critical, subjective, and loving eye, for I am one of the fortunate people in the world who can claim it as my hometown. My family moved there in 1959 and bought a hilltop house with a magnificent view of azure Lake Mead. It was not until a year later, while I was in the first grade, that we were allowed to purchase the land on which our home was built.

In 1960, an Act of Congress established Boulder City as an independent municipality. Until then it had been a government town, owned and operated by federal agencies. The Bureau of Reclamation deeded 33 square miles to the newly-incorporated city. (So far only four have been developed.) The city charter prohibited gambling and the sale of intoxicating liquor, and Boulder City remains the only town in the state where gambling is outlawed. It was not until 1969 that Boulderites could take their first legal drink. Before that time, hard liquor could not be dispensed, and it was even technically illegal for residents to serve alcohol in their homes.

**B**ecause of its climate and upright civic character, Boulder City has been touted in several national publications as one of the 10 safest places in America. The town epitomizes the Sun Belt mecca fantasy, a fact not lost on the many casual visitors who remember "that clean, shady little town near Las Vegas." Dan De Luce, a renowned Associated Press reporter who retired to Boulder City, recalls, "I was driving up Route 93 from Lake Mead towards Boulder City. The sun was setting, and as I looked into my rearview mirror at the spectacular view, I thought to myself, 'I could spend a lot of time looking at that lake.'" Now he does. Many hear of the town through word-of-mouth, and in a short time entire clans move in.

"It's very easy to give people a picture of what their life would be like in Boulder City," says June Hansen, owner of Boulder Realty and a Boulder City native. "People from big cities suddenly feel significant when they move here."

Inhabitants share a common sense of identity, of community, of security. Neighborhoods spawn close friendships, as the entire town watches its native sons and daughters begin kindergarten together and later graduate from high school with the same classmates. "When you go through 12 years of school with the same individuals, you really care about those people," says Benny Cornett, a graduate of the class of 1973 who recently returned to Boulder City to attend his 10th high school reunion.

The camaraderie of the town's citizenry is strong. When its far-flung children return home to the annual Herb's Tavern Christmas party, or the Fourth of July celebration in the park, their exchanges seem to reflect genuine concern and

## Where To Go In Town

The Boulder City Chamber of Commerce, located on the main street, has brochures for an interesting 12-mile scenic drive and also for an art walk. The town has a number of thriving art shops and galleries. The largest and oldest is the Burk Gal'ry in Plaza Penasco on Nevada Highway across from Government Park. Fine Southwestern art is displayed and can be purchased at prices from \$10 to \$10,000. Work by nationally-known artists regularly hang on Darlene Burk's walls, and her gallery hosts an annual western art show and sale in September.

Less than a block away, Austine Wood displays and sells her internationally-acclaimed polages (polarized collages) in the Austine Wood Studio and Gallery. Wood, a pioneer in a new artistic medium, has created murals the world over, including one for Disney's EPCOT Center in Florida.

Professional painters, photographers, potters, and weavers sell their items in many galleries and specialty shops. Unique and luxury items can be found at Sally's Gifts in Plaza Penasco and at the Foxhaus Boutique on Buchanan Boulevard.

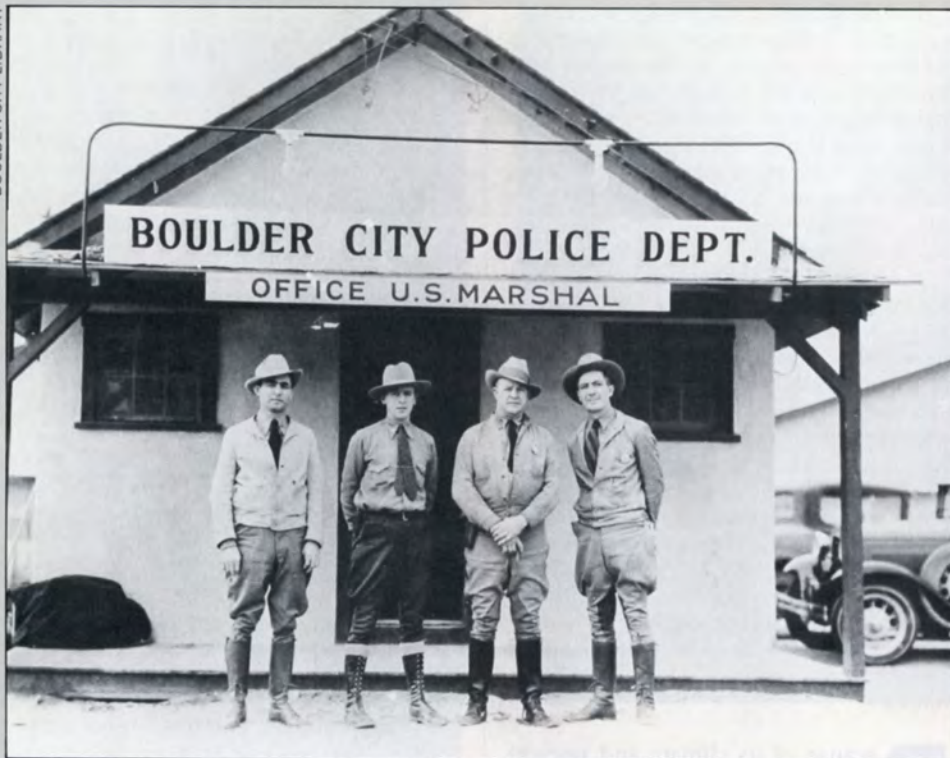
**Restaurants:** Boulder City has half-a-dozen good cafes and restaurants. One of the best is Two Gals, located on the highway on the west end of town, which serves excellent home-style food. Specialties include the Hungry Joe omelette and Belgian strawberry waffles. The Bottling Plant, with its 20-foot marble back bar, offers old-fashioned ice cream concoctions with a small winecellar attached.

**Saloons:** Herb's Recreation Tavern on Avenue B is pure Americana. Located in one of Boulder City's first buildings, its longstanding slogan promises a "free drink to everyone in town any day the sun doesn't shine." The bar, run by Herb's widow, Frannie Knauss, had to fulfill that promise one day in 1983, but normally the Tavern goes about 10 years without being forced to pay off.

**Sports:** A nine-hole municipal golf course, a new swimming complex, tennis courts, and baseball fields can be enjoyed at minimal expense.

**Visitor Information:** The Visitors Bureau on Arizona Street features the official film on the construction of Hoover Dam. This documentary is highly recommended for its historic and nostalgic value.

**Lodging:** Boulder City has a number of first-class motels. For information on lodging and RV parks, write the Boulder City Chamber of Commerce, 1497 Nevada Highway, Boulder City, NV 89005, or call 702-293-2034.



Boulder City's finest included U.S. marshals and federal rangers. In 1932 they threw more than 1,000 "undesirables" out of town.

## Best Town By A Dam Site

It's impossible to cite a single date for Boulder City's founding. Unlike most cities whose birth is noted by the day of the arrival of the first settlers, or the turn of the first spadeful of earth, there were settlers settling and buildings going up at Boulder before the townsite itself was officially established. Boulder's birth could be marked by the day the Bureau of Reclamation withdrew from public access the lands for construction of the dam and town—January 4, 1930; or the day Boulder's train station opened, which put the city on the map—February 1, 1931; or the day surveyors drove the first stake in the ground—March 16, 1931. A case could be made for April 15, 1931—the day the post office opened and the first letter was delivered to an address in Boulder City. But the nearest thing to an official birthday for Boulder City is 9:50 a.m., May 26, 1931—the day the government delivered to Nevada Governor Balzar a finished map of the new Boulder Canyon Project Federal Reservation and townsite.

—Dennis McBride

Dennis McBride's well-illustrated 92-page, soft-cover book, *In the Beginning: A History of Boulder City*, can be ordered for \$5.65 from the Boulder City Chamber of Commerce, 1497 Nevada Highway, Boulder City, NV. 89005.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION



This emporium offered dam workers and their families one-stop shopping with groceries, meats, hardware, appliances, drugs, school supplies, and electrical fixtures.



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BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Workers found pool and billiards but no gambling at the Six Companies Recreation Hall in 1932.



Downtown Boulder City in the early '30s, showing the sidewalk porticos that remain today, providing relief from the summer sun.



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

These men worked as "high-scalers" on the cliffs of Black Canyon, high above the Colorado River, during the dam's construction.

interest in each other. Such familiarity and recognition provides stability in a rootless era. The values of honesty, good humor, and frontier spirit are common traits of the local residents. The phrase repeated most often is, "It's a great place for raising kids." Mothers don't have to be chauffeurs, since schools, movies, parks, and arcades are within walking distance of nearly every point in town.

At the same time, Boulder City is only 24 miles from Las Vegas. Residents can thus enjoy a multitude of ethnic restaurants, floor shows, ballet, plays, music, university classes, and football and basketball games. McCarran International Airport, which handles more than 300 flights daily, is a 20-minute drive away. The positive aspects of a city are accessible without the traffic and crime—not to mention the gaudiness that often accompanies gambling.

Although its numbers are relatively small, Boulder City is remarkably diverse. What was once an insular, middle-class town, unmoving in its mediocrity just a few years ago, has evolved into a community of unique individuals with the common goal of finding the good life.

The town is comprised of government workers, airline pilots, millionaires, artists, inventors, retirees, laborers, lawyers, teachers, doctors, and merchants. Many make their livings in Boulder City, while a large number commute. They mix their various lives and backgrounds, unencumbered by social or class divisions. They cross paths at the grocery store, the post office, city hall, the art festival. Parents greet teachers by first name and on a downtown street corner discuss their children's academic problems. City councilors mingle with their constituents—many of whom regularly attend council meetings. Residents are more civic-minded than in larger cities, viewing every proposed ordinance as a personal issue.

Like every Nevada town, Boulder City has its fixtures—the characters upon whom we all rely. Like Colonel Mac, who announces in his booming voice the opening of the polls every election day; and Mr. Rua, the dog catcher, who rounds up wayward pets by calling them to his truck by their names; and Bill and Teddy, who are the *Boulder City News*, regardless of actual ownership; or Dr. Carol, the local veterinarian, who knows every pet's lifelong medical history; and Willard, the proprietor of the Men's Store, who knows the shirt size of most men in town and the colors that look the best on them. Central Market cashes checks without identification, and Valley Bank will call to remind you to put money in your account lest you end up with overdraft charges. Neighbors watch each other's homes. Police respond within minutes to an emergency call, and there is no such thing as a parking ticket.

Violent crime is virtually nonexistent,



The Kines today and on the front steps of their Six Companies home in 1932.

## Two Boulder Pioneers

Joe and Mildred Kine are two of Boulder City's original '31ers, having lived there since the early days of Hoover Dam when most residents lived in tents and then in small houses provided by the Six Companies, the consortium that built the dam.

The Kines' first home was a one-bedroom company house on Seventh Street. Their two oldest children, Joe, Jr., and Dorothy, were born there.

"We didn't even have a swamp cooler," Mildred says. "We slept in wet sheets. There were vines growing around the screened-in sleeping porch, and we kept them wet. With a fan we created our own cooling system."

There wasn't an icebox in their tiny home, either. Joe fixed a container in a window to use as a swamp cooler and refrigerator. "This was better than letting the milk and other food sit on the kitchen table," Mildred remembers.

Driving to Nevada from Missouri in a Model-T that he purchased for \$10 and later sold for \$2.50, Joe Kine arrived in Boulder City on July 12, 1931. He went right to work for the Six Companies, transferring in 1936 to the Bureau of Reclamation. He retired from his mechanic supervisor position in October 1968.

"I came out to marry Joe in October '31," Mildred recalls. "I wasn't worried

about coming west, but my father surely hated it. We were married in Las Vegas, spending one night there and then coming out to our tent-home, which was located just north of the Boulder City Airport near the highway.

"It was a pretty classy tent compared to most. It was an army tent and had a wooden floor and boards halfway up the walls. Of course, when it rained the only dry spots were under the bed and table. Several times it nearly collapsed during terrible sand storms. Many of our neighbors' tents did, and their clothes blew away.

"We only had to stay in the tent until May of 1932 when we got our Six Companies one-bedroom deluxe house. This was our home until the Six Companies pulled out in 1936, and we bought the home we live in today on Avenue C for only \$250. Our son Dean was born here."

Joe recalls that several years ago he had to buy a meter box to bring the house's wiring up to code. "Mildred asked me how much it cost. I remember saying over and over, 'I'm afraid to tell you.' She insisted. I had to confess it cost \$260—\$10 more than the original house had cost."

Today four generations of Kines live in Boulder City.

—Gene Segerblom

although residents have recently started locking their doors. A typical review of the police log shows complaints about teenagers drinking beer at the city dump or a call for police assistance to remove a disoriented bat from a resident's front porch. One or two disorderly-conduct charges are routinely filed.

The townspeople have built just about everything they want or need: a library and hospital, an airport, a senior citizen center, a municipal golf course, a year-round swimming and racquetball complex, and baseball fields and tennis courts where you don't have to stand in line. The city's recreation department offers continuous classes in subjects ranging from aerobic dance to photography.

**B**ut Boulder City has not been spared its dilemmas and growing pains. The 1970s were tumultuous years for the town. Should it capitalize on the hordes of immigrants and encourage

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A typical review of the police log shows complaints about teenagers drinking beer at the city dump, or a call for help to remove a disoriented bat from a resident's front porch.”

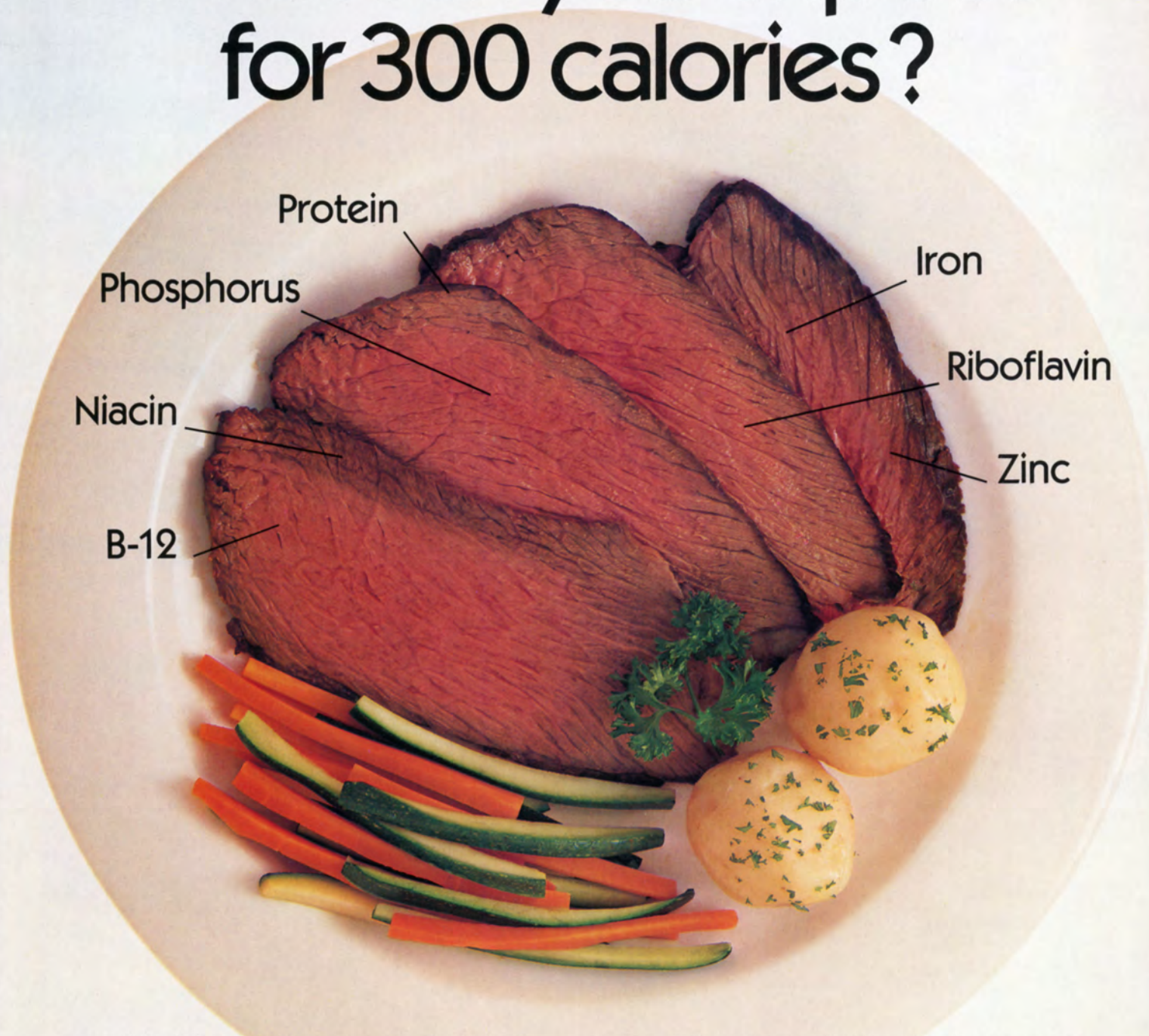
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industrial and residential development? Or should it maintain its boundaries to the “clean, green” little city it has always been? The battle was bitterly fought. A proposed growth ordinance—written by my father, Ralph Denton, and patterned after that of Petaluma, California—quickly divided the residents along highly emotional lines. The stated purpose of the ordinance was to preserve the quality of life and to “insure the balanced development” of the town. The allotment of construction permits was to be strictly limited, and architectural design and quality required to harmonize with the natural landscape. Many people charged it was an elitist attempt to maintain a higher class of residents. Others viewed it as an example of the displaced Easterner mentality: “close the gates after I get in.”

Several public hearings, at which hundreds of citizens voiced their heated opinions, were held at City Hall. On July 3, 1979, the people of Boulder City overwhelmingly demonstrated they want to control their environment. The growth-control plan was voted into law, and ironically, realtors who at first opposed the ordinance now contend controlled growth is one of the town's most attractive features.

Efforts also are being made to restore many historic downtown sites. But perhaps the town's single most important landmark is faced with extinction: the

(Continued on page 42)

# What can you expect for 300 calories?



Right off, you probably never expected to get beef. But four ounces of delicious top sirloin has just 235 calories. The vegetables add just 64 calories. For a total of 299.

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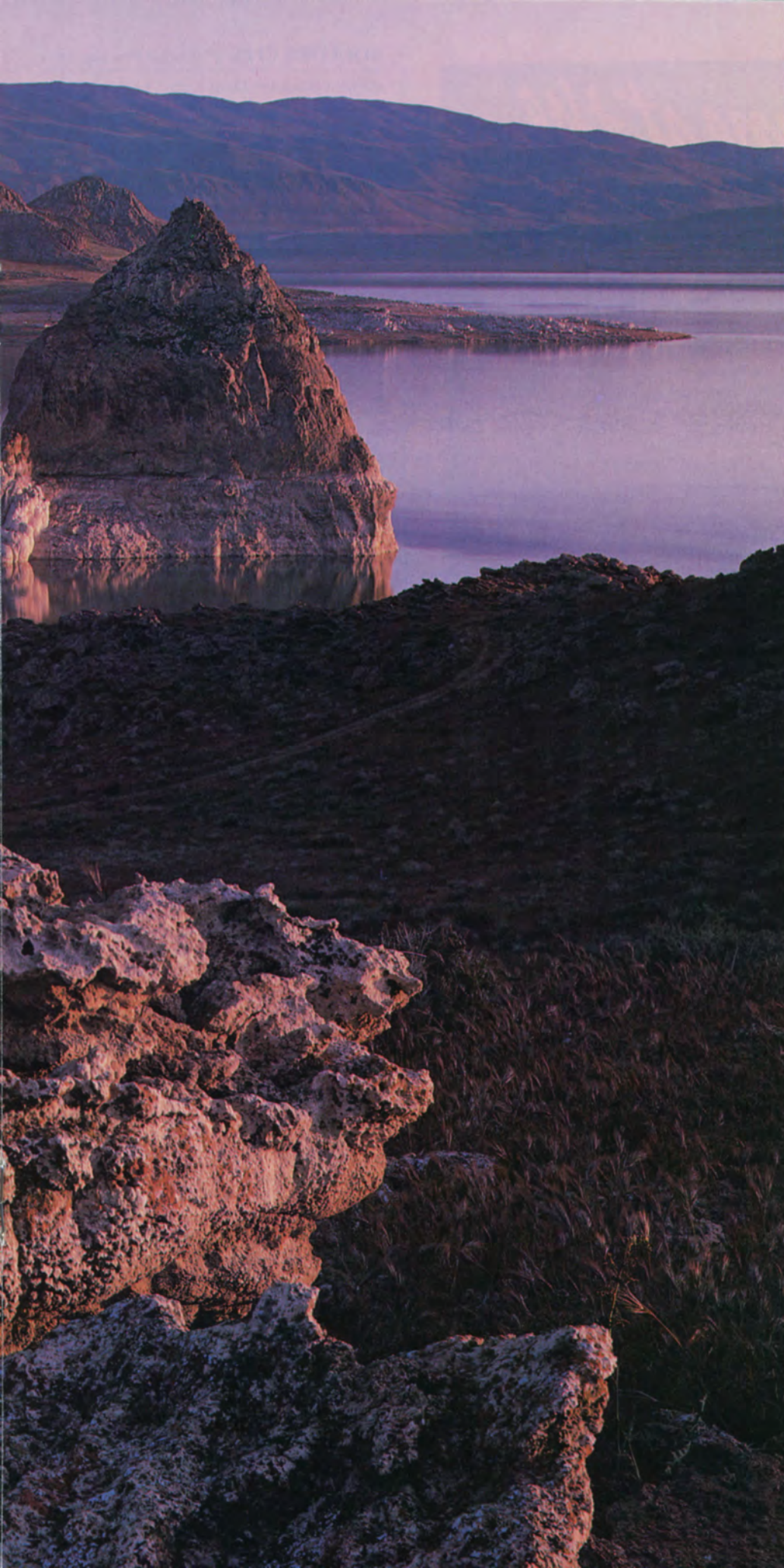
That everyone will be home for dinner.

## BEEF GIVES STRENGTH.

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# Muench's Gallery

Ancient and mysterious, Pyramid Lake attests to the unyielding forces of earth and sky, sun and water. In the foreground, tufa formations remember higher water. And the pyramid, which reached the sunlight when the waters of Lake Lahontan subsided, has greeted Indians and explorers, settlers and sunbathers with the same pointed expression.

*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.*

elegant Boulder Dam Hotel, built in 1933, recently was closed for major repairs. Once one of the most graceful and famous hotels in Nevada, it is now vacant. There is much discussion in town about turning the hotel into a museum with several shops and a restaurant. But so far, nothing has materialized.

In recent years Boulder City has acquired a reputation as a center for Southwestern art. Many accomplished painters and sculptors have moved to the town because of its year-round comfortable climate, the uncontaminated air, and, especially, the awesome desert scenery. Austine Wood, an artist with a national reputation, says she searched for a town like Boulder City for a long time. "It's turned out to be the perfect place for my studio and gallery," she says. Last fall, more than 300 artists entered the Boulder City Art Festival, attracting 50,000 browsers and buyers. My mother, Sara Denton, was one of the founders of the show, which has become enormously successful as a benefit for the city hospital.

Boulderites are innately appreciative of their beautiful environment. Solar-heated homes and swimming pools are everywhere. Homes are landscaped with cactus gardens and desert artifacts. Many living rooms display Lake Mead watercolors by Cliff Segerblom, Boulder City's unofficial painter laureate.

During my childhood my family was considered odd since my father commuted to his Las Vegas law practice. Most everyone else worked at "the Bureau," and their lives were like clockwork. Most families ate supper promptly at six, and the Dentons' late-night dinners were a topic of much discussion amongst my peers. Now, Boulder City is becoming more of a bedroom community to Las Vegas than the independent town it was when I was growing up. But perhaps as a retreat from the city, it is more appreciated by its inhabitants.

There are a few things missing in Boulder City, like a high-quality gourmet foods shop and book store, and the town could always use a bigger variety of restaurants. But all in all, Boulder City is blossoming into a truly special Nevada town.

I am perhaps overly protective of Boulder City. I don't want to see it turn into another faceless Sun Belt boomtown. It is growing and maturing, yet it is pacing itself. And it is learning along the way. Change can be unsettling and even frightening, but there is something exciting about coming of age. □

*Sally Ann Denton has been an investigative reporter for the Rio Grande Sun in New Mexico, Jack Anderson's Washington Merry-Go-Round, and WKYT-TV in Lexington, Kentucky. She recently returned to Nevada and between reporting assignments is completing her first novel.*



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# Hot Deals This Winter

Where to find bargain vacation rates, special services, and all the coupons you can clip at Nevada resorts this year.

By Ann Henderson

**I**t's time for the Second Annual Pamper, Spoil, and Generally Indulge Yourself roundup of hot winter vacation packages offered by casino-hotels. Last year these one-price-gets-it-all rates were so enticing that I made a reservation, removed the word "moderation" from my vocabulary, and sneaked across town to play tourist for three days and two nights. It was wonderful.

For my \$49.95 I was given a room without a guilt-provoking view of my house and its two-day accumulation of dirty dishes. The package price did not include breakfast, which was fine because I made up for it with the buffet lunch and prime rib dinner. The free cocktails and gaming coupons were saved for the second

day, but a video poker machine and I went steady until it was time for the midnight show. In all, I discovered that it's possible to survive on two hours' sleep and still play very mediocre tennis, that afternoon naps make you feel very smug, and that Nevada's a great place for a vacation—even if you live here.

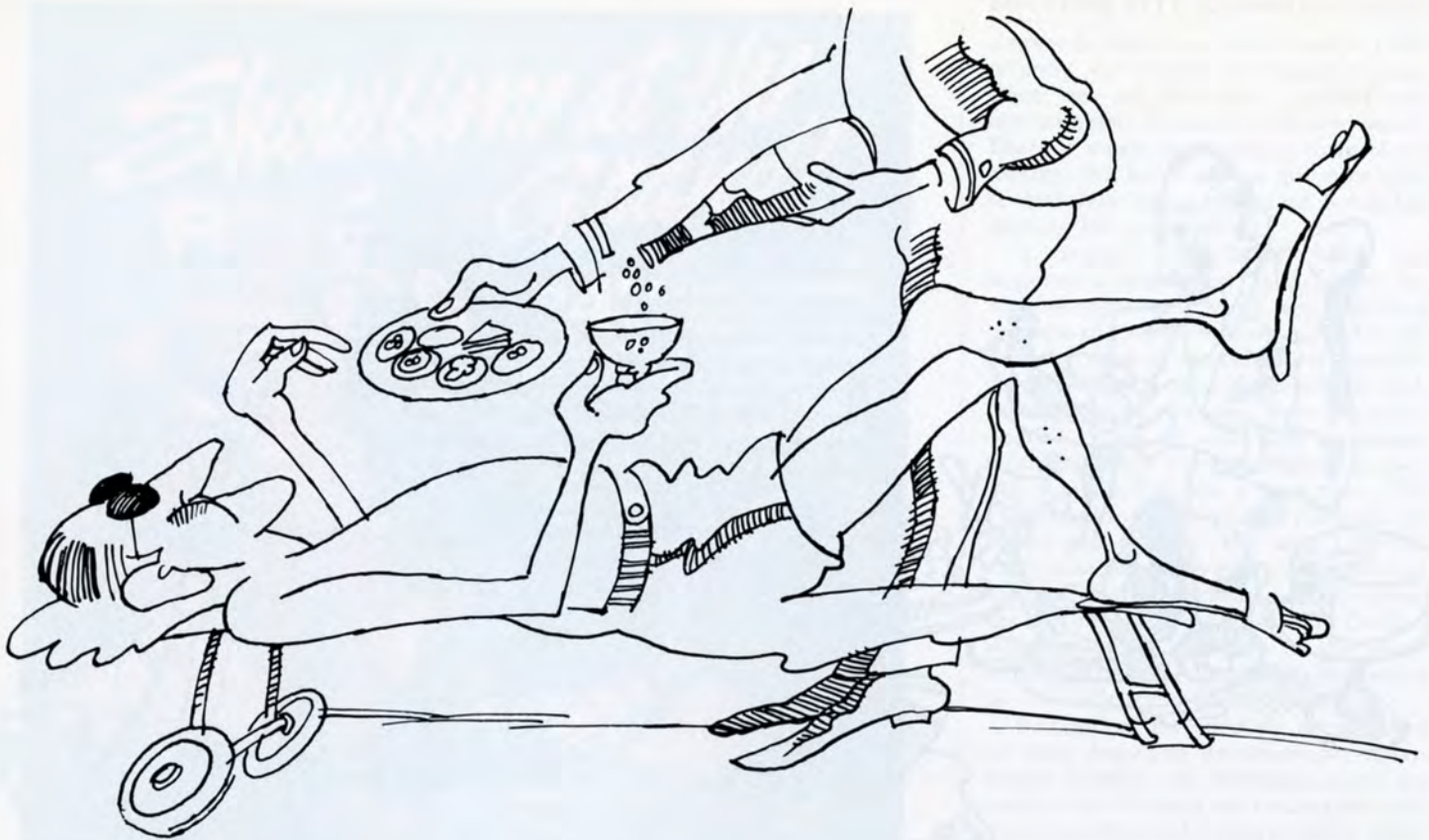
If you are in the mood to escape, the chart that follows on page 45 will tell you the prices you can expect this year. (Note: some rates are per *couple*, not per person.) It also indicates whether you'll get breakfast (B), lunch (L), or dinner (D); which show you'll see: dinner (D), cocktail (C), or lounge (L); and the days of the week that special rates are available in the hotels' vacation packages.

## Knowing the Rules

When you make your reservation, ask if there are any restrictions. For example, at some hotels these prices are not available to anyone under 21 years of age. About half don't offer the rate on holidays or may limit their good deals to a certain number of rooms.

With a few exceptions, single occupancy is usually more expensive, but remember, the more people in the room, the less cost per person. Extra nights are usually available at a lower rate, and most packages are available on weekends for a few dollars more. Also, hotels vary on whether they pay any or all taxes, tips, and baggage handling, so be sure to ask.

(Continued)



### Ski Deals in Snow Country

Because of the abundance of snow and alpine resorts at Lake Tahoe, you can easily have a Nevada-style vacation while skiing some of the best slopes in the world. These hotels in the Reno-Tahoe area offer bargain packages just for skiers:

**Caesars Tahoe** has an arrangement with nearby Heavenly Valley by which you can stay four nights and ski four days for \$269 per person (double occupancy) on the lake's south shore. The package includes transportation to and from Heavenly, a buffet dinner, cocktails, ski storage, and a day's use of Caesars' health club and racquet center. You must be 21 or older and arrive on a day other than Saturday. The deal is good from New Year's to April 30 except February 17-25. Also, stays of up to seven nights are available at vacation rates.

**Harrah's Reno** has two good deals: a night's stay at the downtown Reno high-rise plus a day's skiing at Mount Rose for \$34 per person or at Northstar for \$39.50. They're available Sunday through Thurs-

day, although not on holidays or, in Northstar's case, on February 13. Also, you must be 21 or older. Both packages also include a cabaret show, a buffet breakfast, and discount car rental.

**John Ascuaga's Nugget** offers a three-day, two-night stay at the Sparks hotel with one roundtrip ride to Squaw Valley or Alpine Meadows. The deal includes two breakfasts, two dinners, tips, and a ski cap. Available until April 1, except New Year's, the cost is \$99.50 per person (dbl. occ.); for minors with an adult, it's \$84.50. First-time skiers can pay an extra \$30 and get four hours of lessons, a lift ticket, skis, boots, and poles at Squaw.

**Peppermill** in Reno has a three-day, two-night deal that includes a lift ticket to your choice of four ski resorts as well as a buffet dinner, continental breakfast, and gaming coupons for \$55 per person (dbl. occ.). It's good Sunday through Thursday except holidays till April 15.

**Ramada Inn** in Reno also has a three-day, two-night ski vacation with a Mount Rose lift ticket for \$43.67 per person (dbl.

occ.). The package is available Sunday through Thursday except holidays until April 30.

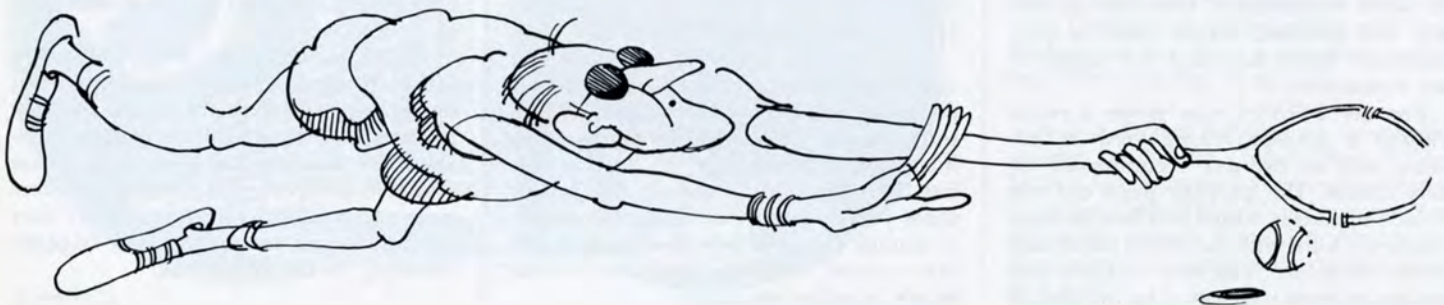
**Reno Hilton** has a nightly skier's rate of \$39.50 per person (dbl. occ.) that includes a lift ticket to Northstar (not Saturdays) or Mount Rose, a night's stay in Reno, and a \$5 food credit. The rate is good through April 27, and you can ski at other areas for an extra charge.

When making reservations, ask about other options that might be available. Remember, too, that all Tahoe ski areas rent equipment, in case you don't want to bring your own.

### A Free Call

Almost all hotels have toll-free numbers that vary according to the region where you live. Call 1-800-555-1212 to get the toll-free phone numbers of Nevada hotels. □

*Entertainment Editor Ann Henderson is Nevada's resident casino bargain hunter and has an extensive collection of two-for-one gaming coupons.*



# 1984 Nevada Vacation Guide

| Vacation                  | Phone (702)                | Price Per Person (Dbl. Occ.) | Stay Days & Nights | Days of Week Available | Effective Through | Meals Incl. | Shows Incl. | Drinks | Gaming Coupons | Extras (per person)  |                 |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|----------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>LAS VEGAS</b>          |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Caesars Palace            | "Roman Holiday"            | 731-7222                     | \$135.95           | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | C           | ✓      |                | Omnimax Theatre ticket   |                 |
| California Hotel          | "California Fun Time"      | 385-1222                     | \$49.95            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | 2B-L-D      | ✓      |                |  |                 |
| Circus Circus             | "Circus Caravan"           | 734-0410                     | \$44.95            | 3D/2N                  | Su-We             | 1984        | 2B-L-D      |        |                |  |                 |
| Desert Inn                | "D.I. Pleasure Map"        | 733-4444                     | \$139.00           | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | C           | ✓      |                | \$18/day food credit   |                 |
| Flamingo Hilton           | "Flamingo Fling"           | 733-3111                     | \$63.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | B-D         | C      |                |  |                 |
| Four Queens               | "Southern Elegance"        | 385-4011                     | \$56.60            | 3D/2N                  | Su-We             | 1984        | B-D         | L      |                |  |                 |
| Frontier                  | "Frontier Fantasy"         | 734-0110                     | \$59.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | B           | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Golden Nugget             | "Step Back in History"     | 385-7111                     | \$60.80            | 3D/2N                  | Su-We             | 1984        | 2B-D        |        |                |  |                 |
| Hacienda                  | "Champagne Fiesta '84"     | 739-8911                     | \$64.84            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | L-D         | C      | ✓              | Tennis   |                 |
| Holiday Inn               | "Casino Package #3"        | 369-5000                     | \$49.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | B-D         | C      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Imperial Palace           | "Imperial Holiday 1984"    | 731-3311                     | \$39.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | C-L         | ✓      |                | Auto collection tour, gaming lessons, \$5 food coupon                                      |                 |
| Landmark                  | "Grand Siam"               | 733-1110                     | \$49.77            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | 2B-L-D      | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Las Vegas Hilton          | "Winter's Holiday"         | 732-5111                     | \$39.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | TFN         | C           | ✓      |                |  |                 |
| Las Vegas Inn             | "Lido Package"             | 731-3222                     | \$54.95            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 8/15        | C           | ✓      |                |  |                 |
| Marina                    | "Marina Voyage"            | 739-1500                     | \$65.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | 2B-D        | ✓      |                |  |                 |
| Maxim                     | "Maxim Continental"        | 731-4300                     | \$60.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | 2B          | C      | ✓              | ✓  |                 |
| MGM Grand                 | "Grand Choice Package"     | 739-4111                     | \$110.00           | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | C-L         |        |                | Ticket to MGM movie classic  |                 |
| Riviera                   | "Riviera Holiday Package"  | 734-5110                     | \$69.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | B           | C-L    |                |  |                 |
| Sahara                    | "Sahara Safari Package"    | 737-2111                     | \$69.00            | 3D/2N                  | Su-We             | 1984        | B-D         | C-L    | ✓              |  |                 |
| Sam's Town                | "Blue Jean Special"        | 456-7777                     | \$53.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | 2L-D        | ✓      |                | Pair of designer jeans   |                 |
| Sands                     | "Winter Wonder Getaway"    | 733-5000                     |                    |                        | Su-We             | 1984        |             |        |                | 25% off 1 or 2 nights; third night free  |                 |
| Showboat                  | "Super Sport"              | 385-9123                     | \$59.95            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | L-D         | ✓      |                | Golf & cart, tennis, bowling   |                 |
| Sundance                  | "Sundance Super Holiday"   | 382-6111                     | \$49.95            | 3D/2N                  | Su-We             | 1984        | 2B-D        | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Tropicana                 | "Midweek at the Oasis"     | 739-2222                     | \$54.00            | 3D/2N                  | Su-Th             | 1984        | B           | C      | ✓              | Discounts on golf, indoor tennis, racquetball  |                 |
| Union Plaza               | "Plaza Playtime Package"   | 386-2110                     | \$69.95            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | L           | D-L    | ✓              | ✓  | Shrimp cocktail |
| <b>RENO-SPARKS-CARSON</b> |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Boomtown                  | "Bed and Breakfast"        | 345-6000                     | \$24.95/C          | 2D/1N                  | Su-Th             | TFN         | B           | ✓      |                | Single rate, \$19.95   |                 |
| Circus Circus             | "Winter Getaway"           | 329-0711                     | \$16.00/C          | Special                | Su-Th             | 1/31        |             |        |                | In Feb., \$18/C Su-Th, \$24/C Fr-Sa  |                 |
| Comstock                  | "Wild West Winter Package" | 329-1880                     | \$29.00            | 3D/2N                  | Su-Th             | 1/1-4/30    | B-D         | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Eldorado                  | "\$20 Midweek"             | 786-5700                     | \$20.00            | Special                | Su-Th             | 1/1-1/31    |             | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Fitzgerald's              | "Reno Spree"               | 786-3663                     | \$63.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | TFN         | B-D         | L      | ✓              | 10% car rental discount  |                 |
| Harrah's Reno             | "Great Escape-A"           | 786-3232                     | \$37.50            | 2D/1N                  | Su-Th             | 1984        |             | C      |                | Slightly higher July-Oct.  |                 |
| Holiday Hotel             | "Holiday for Two"          | 329-0411                     | \$58.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | TFN         | B-D         | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| John Ascuaga's Nugget     | "Nugget Ski Holiday"       | 356-3300                     | \$99.50            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 4/1         | 2B-2D       | L      | ✓              | ✓  | See "Ski Deals" |
| Karl's Silver Club        | "Jackpot Jubilee"          | 358-4771                     | \$39.00            | 3D/2N                  | Su-Fr             | 10/31       | 2B-2D       | ✓      | ✓              | Harrah's Auto Collection tour, wine  |                 |
| MGM-Reno                  | "Showtime at the Grand"    | 789-2000                     | \$29.00            | 2D/1N                  | All               | 4/26        |             | C      |                | 3D/2N option, \$47/person  |                 |
| Onslow                    | "Onslow Fun Spree"         | 786-7310                     | \$49.50            | 3D/2N                  | Su-Th             | 3/31        | 2B-L-D      | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Ormsby House              | "Get Out of Town"          | 882-1890                     | \$19.00            | 1N                     | Su-Fr             | 3/30        | D           | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Peppermill                | "Bustin' Loose Holiday"    | 826-2121                     | \$39.50            | 3D/2N                  | Su-Th             | 5/31        | L           | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Pioneer Inn               | "Playtime Package"         | 329-9781                     | \$49.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | 2B-L-D      | ✓      | ✓              |  |                 |
| Reno Hilton               | "Progressive Rate"         | 785-7000                     | See Note           | Nightly                | All               | 2/16        |             |        |                | 1 room \$20/night, 3 rooms at \$15/night   |                 |
| Reno Ramada               | "Special Room Rate"        | 788-2000                     | \$24.00/C          | Nightly                | All               | 5/31        |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Sands                     | "Reno Super Tour"          | 786-3311                     | \$55.00            | 3D/2N                  | Su-Fr             | 1984        | 2B-2D       | ✓      | ✓              | \$10 in gaming chips   |                 |
| Sierra Sid's              | "\$49 Fun Run"             | 331-1069                     | \$49.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | TFN         | 2B-D        | ✓      |                | \$12 cash, \$105 casino pack   |                 |
| <b>LAKE TAHOE</b>         |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Caesars Tahoe             | "Majestic Holiday"         | 588-3515                     | \$139.00           | 3D/2N                  | Su-We             | 1984        | D           | ✓      |                | Summer slightly higher; health club  |                 |
| Webb's High Sierra        | "High Sierra Roundup"      | 588-6211                     | \$66.00            | 3D/2N                  | All               | 1984        | D           | L      | ✓              | Off-season Su-Th arrivals get \$15 cash back   |                 |
| Harrah's Tahoe            | "Lake Tahoe Adventure"     | 588-6611                     | \$99.00            | 3D/2N                  | Su-Th             | 1984        | B           | C      | ✓              | Breakfast in bed, health club  |                 |
| Harvey's Resort           | "Tahoe Rendezvous"         | 588-2411                     | fr \$32.00         | 3D/2N                  | Su-Th             | 6/14        |             | ✓      |                | At Harvey's Inn, from \$21/P dbl. occ.   |                 |
| <b>RURAL</b>              |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Elko:                     |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Red Lion Inn              | "Casino Fun Package"       | 738-2111                     | \$29.00/C          | Nightly                | Su-Th             | 5/25        |             | ✓      |                |  |                 |
| Stockmen's                | "Fun Package"              | 738-5141                     | \$36.10/C          | Nightly                | All               | 5/31        | B           | ✓      | ✓              | Single Price \$33.10   |                 |
| Laughlin:                 |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Edgewater                 | "Rollin' on the River"     | 298-2453                     | \$175/C*           | 3D/2N                  | Su-Th             | 1984        |             | ✓      |                | Includes all room, food and beverages  |                 |
| Mesquite:                 |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Western Village           | "Grand Opening Rate"       | 346-5232                     | \$16/C             | Nightly                | All               | 3/1-TFN     |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Winnemucca:               |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Winners Inn               | "Midweek Special"          | 623-2511                     | \$24.95/C          | Nightly                | Su-Th             | TFN         | B           |        |                | Weekend price same but no breakfast  |                 |
| Wendover:                 |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Nevada Crossing           | "Suites for Two"           | 664-4400                     | \$19.95/C          | Nightly                | Su-Th             | TFN         |             | ✓      |                |  |                 |
| Yerington:                |                            |                              |                    |                        |                   |             |             |        |                |  |                 |
| Casino West               | "Pheasant Hunt"            | 463-3144                     | \$85/C*            | One night              | All               | 3/15        |             |        |                | One hunter/one non-hunter, ground transportation to hunt, guarantee two Ringneck Pheasants |                 |

Note: Meals indicated are breakfast (B), lunch (L), and dinner (D). Shows include cocktail (C), lounge (L), and dinner (D).

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# C R O S S • C O U N T R Y • C H I C T A H O E T O U R S F O R E V E R Y T A S T E

Whether your style is mild or madcap, Lake Tahoe has the trails to fit your mood and wardrobe.

By Chaco Mohler

**F**or new family adventures or a welcome break from cabin fever, cross-country skiing at Lake Tahoe offers exciting and inexpensive winter tours. With lightweight Nordic skis afoot, you can explore miles of snowy wilder-

ness, glide smoothly over prepared tracks, or carve long arcs down mountains of virgin powder. In winter, it's simply the best way to see the Sierra.

The Tahoe area has ski-touring sites for every taste and temperament. Natur-

ally, it's wise to avoid disaster: always travel with at least one companion; check weather reports; and be aware of dangerous conditions like avalanche-prone slopes. But the real trick is to orchestrate excursions to suit yourself and your

*The cross-country trails that wind through the Sierra are perfect for skiers who like to savor the outdoors.*





*Lake Tahoe has Nordic trails for every taste and ability, including a few that skirt the lakeshore.*

company. Here are some selected cross-country tours that will get you on the right track.

### **The Family Plan**

Company's up for the weekend, and all the kids are bored and driving you bonkers. Nordic skiing? Although the thought may have certain appeal, you really don't want to lose half your family somewhere out in the snowy wasteland.

Northstar could have the solution. The Nordic center is only 500 feet above the resort's base area, and the lodge itself is a great place to relax and have a drink while the youngsters prowl the deck. For \$5 a head (\$4 for children) your crew can ride the transport lift all day and practice Nordic downhill techniques on the gentle slope. Or you can follow the 30 kilometers of tracks leading into the surrounding woods. The trails are evenly

divided among beginner, intermediate, and advanced terrain. This combination, plus a warm place to hide during inclement weather, should entertain the entire clan all day and, with any luck, have them sleeping quietly on the drive home.

### **Nordic Chic**

Hills, forests, meadows—none of them really matter. What is important is that everybody gets a look at the fantastic multi-colored Nordic skin suit you picked up on sale last summer.

Royal Gorge, on Donner Summit off Interstate 80, is the spot for your coming-out. There you can test the beginner, intermediate, or advanced terrain or hang around the two warming huts and bask in the "ohs" and "ahs" of admiration for the way you fill out those racing stripes. If you also picked up a new suit for your mate, book into Royal Gorge's main

lodge for a night's stay, complete with French chef, hot tub, and sauna. You can even take a sleigh ride the three miles to the lodge and never touch a ski.

If, heaven forbid, you happen to run into someone who bought the same suit, Royal Gorge has 225 kilometers of groomed trails where you can get away from each other. But beware: don't let your look of speed overwhelm your survival instincts and lead you down expert runs like Murkwood or Killy's Cruise.

### **Jaunts for Jocks**

If putting on the miles, clearing out the lungs, and reaching a meditative state of half exhaustion appeals to you, try the Tahoe Nordic Center in Dollar Point Highlands, two miles east of Tahoe City.

Nearly 50 kilometers of groomed trails follow old logging roads on this high plateau above Lake Tahoe. If you're the



MICHAEL J. NEVINS

goal-oriented type, head to Antone Meadow, but take short breaks to enjoy the views. Or just put in the laps right near the base parking lot and lodge.

### Coaster's Special

You're ready to take a day off, but there's nothing on TV, and your bridge partners have forced you to go cross-country skiing with them.

Don't despair; you still may be able to avoid unnecessary exertion. All you need is a constant, smooth, effortless downhill run, like the one you'll find on Brockway Summit. Five kilometers of snow-covered road lead down from the summit on California 267 to Carnelian Bay on the lake. Two vehicles are required so that you can leave one in Carnelian and shuttle back up the hill.

The route is easy to find on the west

# ALL RUNS LEAD TO ELKO

Heli-skiing lets you fly up the slopes as well as down.



JACK O. WALTHER

Where powder nuts and eagles dare: heli-skiing in the Ruby Mountains.

**D**ressed in an ultramodern ski outfit, you feel like an alien amid the clapboard buildings of the frontier town of Lamoille, just south of Elko. The chill morning stillness is broken only by the steamy snorts of horses and the woeful moans of pregnant cows. Before you, the vast Ruby Mountains leap to 11,000 foot summits, where they don a cloak of gleaming white satin.

The silent scene is soon shattered by the scream of a jet-powered helicopter. Pointing to the highest peak, you climb inside, glance at your skis, and feel your heart plunge to meet your breakfast as the supersonic chair lift springs skyward.

Minutes later, you, your companions, and a guide unload the equipment and are soon left to ponder an eerie stillness. You're perched on a mountaintop, miles from civilization. Thousands of feet below, the Great Basin floats in rippling brown and green waves to vanish on the horizon.

Then, someone moves, and you follow. Beneath your skis is an entire mountain range, with 4,000 vertical feet of unblemished fields and frosted bowls of deep, dry powder. You grin at your friends and they grin back. The mountain is all yours.—JC

---

*Heli-skiing in the Rubies is available through Ruby Mt. Heli-Ski. The season runs from the end of January through May. Seasoned pilots and ski guides offer both Nordic and alpine excursions for all abilities. For more information contact them at P.O. Box 1192, Lamoille, NV 89828.*



side of the road at the summit. The incline is gentle most of the way, but beginners should be able to execute a basic snowplow. There are great views of Lake Tahoe for picture-taking, just to prove to the folks at the office that you really did go skiing. At the bottom in Carnelian Bay is a place that sells hot wine and cold beer. There you can toast the end of a rough day and pray that the car heater works.

### Romantic Roundabouts

Nowadays romance has a tough time surviving without runny noses, bruised rears, and cold feet. Then again, with a little planning and the right person, things could turn magical on a cross-country outing.

For such a tryst, try Sugar Pine Point State Park, which has a series of flat, uncrowded, scenic trails. Some head up General Creek to nice picnic spots, and others wind along the lake's west shore. Both areas are chronically romantic, especially when the sun streams through the icicles. But of equal importance are the heated restrooms in the campground area, with enough hot water to thaw out any cold shoulders.

### Steep Thrills

Nordic skiing can be the perfect sport for someone with a death wish. With little urging, those skinny skis can go every direction at once, especially at high speeds or on steep terrain.

A great place to go thrill-seeking is the Five Lakes area between Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley. It has everything: super-steep hills, cornices to jump, avalanches to outrun, and even slopes full of madcap downhillers to dodge. But it also has some great powder skiing.

Five Lakes is not an area for beginners, however, and even experienced skiers should go with someone who knows the area well.

There are two main ways to reach Five Lakes. The easiest is a trail that starts two-thirds up the Alpine Meadows road and climbs 1,000 feet to the lakes. On the Squaw side, you can slog up the mountain next to the downhill trails and then over KT-22 Saddle and down to the lakes. Or just take the KT-22 chairlift and avoid the arduous hike.

The area around the lakes is flat, wooded, and gorgeous. A number of trails lead out, ranging from a loop around the backside of Squaw along Whisky Creek to multiple-day excursions into Desolation Wilderness. Most people ski back over to Squaw Valley and down the resort's runs or back down to the Alpine Meadows road. Whatever the route, the true thrill seeker can rest comfortably knowing there's no easy way out. □

*Chaco Mohler is a writer, photographer, skier, and world traveler who lives in Tahoe City.*

## CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAILS & RENTALS

|                                     | Phone        | Groomed Trails | Trail Fee Adult/Child | Rentals Adult/Child | Lessons Adult/Child | Day Lodge |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| <b>Tahoe Basin</b>                  |              |                |                       |                     |                     |           |
| Big Chief Guides                    |              | 15 mi.         | *                     | n/a                 | n/a                 | ✓         |
| Echo Summit Ski Area                | 916-659-7154 | 21.7           | \$3.50/\$2            | \$9.50/\$7          | \$9                 | ✓         |
| Incline                             | 702-831-5190 | 9.3            | \$3/\$2               | \$8/\$5             | \$10                | ✓         |
| Kirkwood                            | 209-258-8864 | 31             | \$5/\$3               | \$9/\$5             | \$14/\$12           | ✓         |
| Northstar-at-Tahoe                  | 916-562-1010 | 18.6           | \$5/\$4               | \$10/\$7            | \$17/\$11           | ✓         |
| Royal Gorge                         | 916-426-3871 | 140            | \$7.50/\$5.50         | \$8.50/\$5.50       | \$10                | ✓         |
| Spooner Meadows (Nevada State Park) | 702-831-0494 | 0              | no                    | no                  | no                  |           |
| Squaw Valley                        | 916-583-8951 | 18.6           | \$5/\$3               | \$9/\$5             | \$9                 | ✓         |
| Sugar Pine Point                    | 916-525-7232 | 7.75           | no                    | no                  | no                  |           |
| Tahoe Donner                        | 916-587-9821 | 36             | \$5/NC***             | \$9/\$6             | \$9                 | ✓         |
| Tahoe Nordic Ski Center             | 916-583-9858 | 18             | **                    | \$8/\$4             | \$10/\$8            | ✓         |
| Telemark Country Sports             | 916-577-6811 | 3              | \$2                   | \$8/\$5             | \$7                 | ✓         |
| Sierra Ski Touring                  | 619-934-4495 | 5              | NC                    | \$9/\$7             | \$20                |           |
| <b>Mt. Charleston (Las Vegas)</b>   |              |                |                       |                     |                     |           |
| Lee Canyon Meadows                  | 702-876-7766 | 0              | NC                    | \$8                 | \$8/\$12            |           |

\* \$2 donation

\*\* donations are accepted

\*\*\* senior citizens also free

# BREAKING TRAILS IN VEGAS

Ski-touring instructor Bill Bradley leads his followers on Mount Charleston's snowy winter trails.

By Jason Rubinsteen

Las Vegas ski-touring instructor Bill Bradley likes the outdoors open and wild, and each winter he introduces many Southern Nevadans and visitors to the beauty of snow country. Nevertheless, he says, "People here just don't understand that if you can walk, you can learn to cross country ski, and that it's fun."

Bradley, Southern Nevada's resident cross-country mogul, has been offering tours and lessons on the snowy trails of Mount Charleston for the past five winters. Despite Nordic skiing's low profile, he has watched the number of converts grow in this region where most sporting types look to the water or desert for their weekend fun.

Bradley has been cross-country skiing since the early 1970s, when the sport began to come out of the woods. Backpacking had become popular in the 1960s, and enthusiasts discovered their favorite summer haunts looked even more spectacular in white. Then came the 1976 Winter Olympics, when Bill Koch finished second in the 30-kilometer race to become the first American ever to win an Olympic medal in a cross-country event. That captured the imagination of sports fans, and a whole new industry developed, resulting in better equipment and comfortable winter clothing.

"Backpackers and Koch got ski touring going in this country, all right, but they also limited it," Bradley says. "People

got the wrong impression. They still believe you have to be some superman to enjoy it. Even downhillers think Nordic skiing is too strenuous for them. That's just not true.

"I teach all ages, youngsters to grandparents. I've taught handicapped children to enjoy cross-country skiing. The beautiful thing about it is you can set your own limits. You can go as far as you want, as fast as you want, go for the thrills, or just enjoy the serenity of winter." Accordingly, he has devoted his efforts to converting summer Nevadans into winter doers. "Hibernation is for bears. Nevadans love our state with its open horizons. A lot of old timers moan it isn't like it used to be, but in winter, it's still open country, just waiting to be experienced."

Bradley has felt a special attachment for Nevada since he came here from California in 1963 at age 16. Although he has moved around a bit, Las Vegas has become his permanent address. "I love the open country of Nevada, the breathing room. And I love cross-country skiing. I decided in 1980 to put the two together in a business and help people enjoy Nevada in winter."

Bradley is a certified ski instructor with PSIA-W, the Professional Ski Instructors of America, Western Division, and works out of Edelweiss Ski Geschäft, a Las Vegas ski and tennis outfitter that rents cross-country equipment. He holds lessons at Lee Canyon Meadows on

Charleston, 44 miles northwest of town.

Most newcomers to the sport are families, he says, but mid-week he occasionally picks up celebrities working Vegas and showgirls "who want to stay in shape and have a little fun at the same time." Some take lessons, and others take half-day tours into the mountain country.

"A nice thing about cross-country skiing is it's comparatively safe. Unless you're into the heavy downhill aspect, there's no great speed, and ski bindings are designed to allow flexibility when falling. Broken legs are rare. Show people like that, obviously."

A typical beginner's tour follows an unplowed road into Lee Canyon. Roads are easy to ski on, never steep, and with plenty of room to negotiate coming down. They also take you away from the madding crowd. Bradley breaks trail, and everyone follows in his track.

As his fan club increases, so does the scope of his programs. In addition to holding lessons and day trips, Bradley maintains a primitive cabin for weekend outings at Lady of the Snows in Lee Canyon. "For all its solitude, ski touring is also a social experience. It's a good way to meet people on an informal, down-to-earth basis," he says. "We're not into the 'chic atmosphere' at the cabin. It's just not set up that way. We're back to basics."

From the cabin he leads moonlight ski tours, Special Olympics programs, snow-camping survival courses, and telemarking clinics for advanced skiers. Future plans include long weekends at Bryce Canyon National Park and Brian Head in Southern Utah and a week-long trip to the Ruby Mountains near Elko. And because Las Vegas is an international destination, he hopes to introduce the beauty of Nevada's backcountry to the area's increasing number of vacationing skiers.

He points out that cross-country skiing isn't a huge investment given the lifetime of enjoyment the sport offers. Equipment sells for an average of one-third less than downhill basics, with a new set of skis, boots, and poles averaging \$135.

But the big pay-off is still the pleasure. Snow exhilarates. It wipes the world clean with a fantasy of freshness and frees the mind of cares. Seeing a forest caked with generous frosting, listening to the silence, filling your mind with distant spectacles of mountain peaks framed by immaculate blue sky—that's what cross-country skiing is all about.

And it's what keeps Bill Bradley and his converts going every winter. □



Bradley (right) leads tours by day and moonlight in Lee Canyon. "A lot of old timers moan that the state isn't like it used to be," he says, "but in winter it's still open country."

Jason Rubinsteen is a freelance writer and photographer and cross-country skier based in Los Angeles. For more information on Mount Charleston ski touring, contact Bill Bradley at Edelweiss Ski Geschäft, 2800 W. Sahara, Ste. 2-B, Las Vegas, NV. 89102, or call 702-876-7766.



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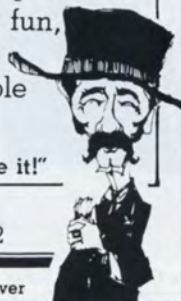


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## The Right Crunch

Our trio of Sunday brunch experts offer some delicious and downright decadent answers to that old question, "What's for breakfast?"

In Nevada, Sunday brunch means variety, value, and, naturally, an abundance of good food. On a chilly Sunday morning, it can be just the enticement you need to roll out of bed and treat yourself to a meal more opulent than you'd ever produce on the old family stove. Following are some downright decadent answers to the question, "What's for breakfast?" Unless otherwise noted, major credit cards are accepted at each establishment. And please note that times and prices are subject to change.

### Reno-Tahoe By Andrea Michelsen

Brunches in the Reno-Tahoe-Carson City area run the gamut from fancy views to bargain-priced finds. Any of these Sunday delights would be twice the price in Los Angeles or New York, where in any case you'd have to suffer the sight of freeways and subways instead of the Sierra and Lake Tahoe.

The **MGM Grand-Reno's** Sunday brunch is served in the enormous Ziegfeld Room, which boasts the biggest stage in the world. Massive tables filled with a variety of victuals take the place of "Hello Hollywood, Hello's" topless dancers and magic acts. Every Sunday the folks here serve hundreds of pounds of meat, pour an average of 360 bottles of champagne, 100 gallons of coffee, and 80 gallons of orange juice, and deliver 4,000 made-on-the-premises pastries to upwards of 1,000 brunchers. Don't be intimidated by the line that snakes through the casino to the Ziegfeld Room—the wait is

short, thanks to the efficient staff. The **MGM** brunch is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and priced at \$5.95 for adults and \$3.95 for children under 12.

The **Top of the Hilton** gets the Best Urban View Award, hands down. Its 21st-floor vantage point offers scenes of the Sierra and of the Truckee River winding its frigid way through Reno.

The elegant buffet offers special goodies not found in other brunches—lox, cream cheese, and bagels—as well as an ornate ice sculpture centerpiece to gaze at if you tire of the surrounding view. Watch out for scurrying waiters—we've been christened with more champagne here than the Queen Mary on her maiden voyage. Brunch hours are 9 to 2. The price is \$6.95 per person.

**Harrah's Reno** offers Sunday brunch in its Skyway Buffet, located at the east end of the enclosed "bridge" between the two hotel/casino buildings. This brunch features fresh baked breads, gooey fruit salads, and one of the most extensive and delicious pastry spreads around. The decor is casino tasteful—tones of beige darkening to brown, with rich bronze accents all over the spacious dining room. Service here always makes you feel like a valued customer, and is one reason people patronize this place so regularly. Priced at \$4.95, \$3.95 for kids ages 3 to 10, and free for kids under 3, it's open for brunch from 8 to 3 on Sunday.

The **Eldorado** has a reputation for great food, and the Sunday brunch is no exception. Walk your way along the buffet and try dishes like eggs Florentine, baked ham,

homemade corned beef hash, and fried potatoes. Pick out a pastry or two, and don't forget the fresh fruit. It has a bargain price of \$2.99 and runs on Sunday from 8 to 2.

Take the escalator up to the second floor of **Fitzgerald's** and in the Emerald Room Buffet try some juicy smoked pork chops, sausage, and scrambled eggs. Then take another trip around the table and dig into a homemade chicken pot pie, a specialty here. Priced at \$3.75, the brunch is open from 9 to 2:30.

The **Peppermill** takes honors in Southwest Reno for a great Sunday offering. Dish up some steaming Italian sausage and peppers for a spicy start to breakfast, and don't pass on the generous variety of fresh fruit. The pastry buffet, in the middle of the room, will tempt you with things like New York-style cheesecake, chocolate mousse cake, and fresh croissants. Price is \$7.95, and hours are 9 to 3.

A new brunch spot is **Rapsallion Seafood House**. Its expertise in the fish department can now be tested on Sunday, with menu items (no buffet line here) like Eggs Rapsallion, a team of poached eggs topping crab meat and English muffins, all floating in a rich champagne sauce. Prices range from \$4.25 to \$8.95. Rapsallion is open on Sundays from 10 to 2 and is located at 1555 South Wells.

The **Board of Trade** sheds its usual fast-paced-singles-bar identity on Sundays when it offers a five-course brunch, with a choice of entrees like eggs Benedict and quiche. Enjoy the inside view here—solid mahogany paneling, custom-made stained glass, and original art work on the walls (take a gander at the LeRoy Nieman lithograph in the bar area). Then wander back to the restaurant and order a made-from-scratch Ramos Fizz or indulge your caffeine addiction with fresh-ground Colombian coffee. Find it in the Valley Bank Building at 425 South Virginia. The price is \$7.95. It's open from 10 to 2.

**John Ascuaga's Nugget** in Sparks deserves its reputation for great food. Every Sunday the Rooster Room turns its buffet into brunch, offering homemade breads and pastries, a complete salad bar, and old favorites like scrambled eggs and bacon. Rumor has it that movers and shakers from other large gaming establishments abandon their own brunches in favor of the Nugget's. Brunch is from 9 to 2 and priced at \$4.50, \$2.95 for kids under 12.

The **Carson Nugget**, in the center of the capital, turns its buffet room into a lavish champagne brunch on Sunday from 9 to 2. Western and cheese omelettes are made to order, and from the buffet line you may gather ham or roast beef, apple or peach crepes, fresh fruit, and an assortment of the Nugget's excellent pastries. It's \$5.50 for adults, and children under 10 are charged 20 cents per year.

The **Ormsby House** in Carson City draws crowds of brunchers to its second-floor Curry Street Buffet each Sunday. Join an enthusiastic mix of loyal locals and hungry out-of-towners and indulge a taste for breakfast steak, creamed chipped beef, ham, or salad, then go back for a round at the

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## It's All You Can Eat Where to find all the extras.

One of the pleasures of Sunday brunch is its simplicity: you pay the admission, pick up a plate, and fill 'er up. There are a few things, however, to remember. You may want to ask whether the price includes a beverage since a 75-cent cup of coffee or \$1 soda in some cases will almost double

the bill. If you help yourself to coffee or tea, it may eliminate the need for table service and thus a tip. Finally, doggie bags are rarely provided at brunches, but there is no mincing on the promise that you can have "all you can eat."

dessert bar. Brunch hours are from 9 to 2, and it's priced at \$5.50 for adults, \$2.75 for kids under 10, and \$4.95 for seniors who ask for the 10 percent discount.

At the other end of town is **Stanley's**, a new entry on the Carson brunch scene. Entrees, rather than a buffet, are offered at this relaxed restaurant. If you haven't had fresh-ground corned beef hash since mom quit fixing you breakfast, you can get it here. If your taste runs to the exotic, dial in a king crab omelette. Stanley's address is 4239 North Carson Street. Prices range from \$6.25 to \$9.50, and hours are 10:30 to 2:30.

**Walley's Hot Springs** in Genoa offers the chance to indulge yourself and then work off some of the calories. Entrees vary here, from eggs Florentine or Benedict to hearty sandwiches, as well as off-the-menu specials like quiche. Along with the main course you get a complimentary fruit platter and hot blueberry and bran muffins. Try for seating in the glassed-in porch, which gives the sense of al fresco dining even in the dead of winter with a lovely view of the Carson Valley and mountains beyond. For an extra \$7 you can buy day-long use of the weight room, steam room, sauna, swimming pool, and hot mineral pools. Walley's is located on Foothill Road in Genoa (look for the signs on U.S. 395), and the brunch runs from 9 to 3. Entree prices range from \$4.95 to \$7.95.

**Harrah's Tahoe** wins the Best Mountain View Award. Mosey up to the 18th-floor Forest Restaurant and put your name on the list early. While you wait—there's seating along the windows and in the adjacent Forest Lounge—take a look at the snow-covered Sierra and chillingly beautiful Lake Tahoe. Once your name's called (the wait is sometimes an hour or more) you'll find the management has taken special care to provide you with separate hot and cold plates, and the number of items demands a couple of trips through the line. Melt-in-your-mouth biscuits and apple fritters are favorites, and don't miss the lady carving an enormous ham in the center of the buffet. Look for the pastry tables in the center of the restaurant, away from the main brunch line. Its rich array of tarts and cakes will tempt the most confirmed weight watcher. Harrah's, at Stateline, is open from 8:30 to 2:30. Price is \$7.75, while children under 12 are \$4.35.

Across the street at **Harvey's**, you'll find brunch in the Eldorado Room on the second floor. Popular with Tahoe locals because of its friendly, down-to-earth service and food,

this buffet is known for consistency and value. All pastries are baked in Harvey's kitchens, and an assortment of lunch entrees are available in addition to breakfast dishes like sausage and scrambled eggs. Look for fresh seasonal fruits at the salad bar. Harvey's brunch is priced at \$4.50, with \$1 off for seniors. It runs from 9 to 2.

**Las Vegas**  
By Elliot S. Krane

There are more than a dozen brunches served in Las Vegas hotels, with superstar champagne feasts leading the pack.

**Caesars Palace** opens the doors of its Circus Maximus showroom at 9:30 Sunday morning for its champagne brunch. Although the lines are long, the 1,000 seats make the wait shorter than it appears. And when you descend the stairs, the delightful aroma of exotic foods makes the wait worthwhile. Ten serving islands brim with delicious hot and cold foods. Lox, whitefish, eggs Benedict, chicken livers and blintzes with sour cream or blueberry sauce are all available in unlimited quantity. A lavish Roman galley offers crisp salads and international cheeses, and champagne and other refreshments are included in Caesars' version of a Roman orgy. The brunch is \$8.50 for adults and \$7.50 for children under 10, and runs until 2 p.m.

The **Celebrity Room of the MGM Grand** has Saturday and Sunday champagne brunches. Sixteen hot dishes are included, with stuffed squab, trout, and pork chops just a few of the succulent selections. Lox, cream cheese, and bagels are prominently displayed in the center section, along with herring and other smoked fish. On the hot table, the eggs, bacon, sausage, and ham burden one end of the display, with the vegetables, fried chicken, and a carved-to-order baron of beef at the other. Dessert, for those who still have room, includes a baker's pride of pies, jello creations, and puddings, all tastefully arranged on yet another groaning table. The MGM's champagne brunch opens at 10 a.m. Saturday and 9:30 a.m. Sunday, closing at 2 p.m. both days. The price is \$5.95 for adults and \$4.95 for children under 10.

There are another baker's dozen of mouthwatering Sunday brunches in and around Las Vegas, each with its own unique flavors and settings and an unending supply of main breakfast and lunch dishes. First, the ones on the Strip.

The **Aladdin's** brunch, open 10 to 3, costs \$4.18 and is a dessert lover's paradise with fancy baked goods like Boston cream pies and Black Forest cakes.

The **Flamingo Hilton**, at \$5.75 for adults and \$3.75 for children under 12, displays its salads among beautiful ice sculptures and features a cold seafood table of salmon, sardines, and herring, to name a few items. The brunch runs from 9 to 2.

The **Landmark** offers bagels, blintzes, and baron of beef with a super view from the 27th-floor dining room. Brunch is between 9 and 2:30 and costs \$5.95, or \$3.50 for children under 10.

The lavish buffet at the **Las Vegas Hilton** has excellent pastries at brunch time, which is 9 to 2. Cost is \$6.95 for adults and \$3.48 for children under 12.

The **Maxim** offers its bountiful main dishes and excellent vegetable creations within the relaxed, quiet atmosphere of the hotel showroom from 9 to 3. Cost is \$5.95 for adults, \$2.98 for children under 12.

The specialty of the house at the **Sahara's** Sunday brunch is international cuisine, which is looked over by Jesse Azzis, the head carver, who has been at the hotel since coffee was five cents a cup. Priced at \$5.23 for adults and \$2.75 for children under 6, including tax, the buffet is open from 9 to 2.

The **Tropicana** offers its Buffet Parisian for \$6.95 in the lovely Fountain Room, where the "Folies Bergere" originally performed. The fare is *tres bien*, with a special salad health bar. It is open from 8 to 2, and kids under 12 eat for \$4.

Downtown, the **Mint's** brunch buffet, which is \$2.90, is arranged with two serving lines to speed eager eaters on their way. The brunch runs from 9 to 2.

At \$3.95 for adults and \$2.25 for children under 12, the **Showboat** offers home-baked bread and rolls, self-serve ice cream, and eggs to order from 8:30 to 2:30. The room also offers a special section for wheelchair guests. The Showboat is on the Boulder Highway, two miles from downtown.

After a tour of Hoover Dam, you can drive three miles back toward Boulder City to catch Sunday brunch at the **Gold Strike Inn**. From 7 to 2 you can have traditional breakfast dishes or two hot-lunch entrees which vary from week to week. Also offered are fruits, salads, and champagne. Cost is \$3.75 for adults, \$2.49 for children under 12, and free for children under 5.

#### Rural Nevada By Don Franks

In rural Nevada, there are plenty of places to tempt your palate on Sunday mornings, and at prices you wouldn't believe. Following is a roundup of rural brunches, from south to north.

In Laughlin, brunch at the **Riverside** is just \$1.99. From 7 to 11 you can help yourself to all the scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits and gravy, cottage fries, and mixed fruits you can manage. Champagne is also served. No credit cards.

The **Colorado Belle** serves Sunday brunch from 8 to 1:30 in the coffee shop, which



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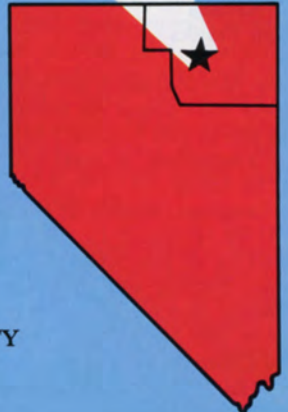




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offers a view of the Colorado River to those lucky enough to get one of the few window seats. You can fill up on bacon and eggs, biscuits and gravy, and fruit salads, with blueberry blintzes for dessert. Champagne is served with the meal. Cost is \$3.95.

Downriver at **Del Webb's Nevada Club**, you can have brunch with a view on Saturdays and Sundays from 7 to 12:30. You can watch the ferries shuttling across the river while feasting on crepes, French toast, scrambled eggs, muffins, and various pastries set out on a 32-foot buffet. Located on the lower level of the casino, the brunch is \$2.49.

For brunch in Tonopah, stop at the **Station House**. From 11 to 3 you can have the chef make your own omelette from the many ingredients laid out; fill up on sausage, bacon, rolls and doughnuts; or head to the large table full of fruits and melons. Champagne is served with brunch, which is held downstairs in the banquet room. Cost is \$4.95 for adults and \$3.95 for children under 12. On your way in, check out the display of antique slot machines in the downstairs foyer.

In Hawthorne, the **El Capitan** holds Sunday brunch from 8:30 to 1 in the Shamrock Room, where eggs, biscuits and gravy, sirloin tips, and coffee cake are a few of the dishes offered. Cost is \$2.95 for adults and free for children under 5.

In Yerington, stop at **Dini's Lucky Club** for Sunday brunch from 9 to 1. Held in the main dining area, the brunch features eggs, bacon, ham, hash browns, and apple pancakes, plus various specials from week to week, including roast beef, crepes, and souffles. Cost is \$3.95 for adults and \$1.95 for children 10 and under. Visa and MasterCard are accepted.

The **Red Lion** in Elko features a big selection of fresh croissants, jams, cheeses, fresh fruits, salads, and cakes and pastries. Specials like veal Moskvite are served, as well as eggs rancheros, eggs Benedict, bacon, sausage, and ham. Held in the main show lounge from 9 to 2, the brunch is \$7.25 for adults and \$5.50 for kids under 12.

In Wendover, the **State Line Casino** has brunch Saturday and Sunday from 9 to noon, featuring eggs, hash browns, ham, biscuits and gravy, and link sausage, as well as fresh fruits and juices. After filling your plate at the buffet-style food bar, you can go to the grill, where crepes and omelettes are made to order. Cost is \$4.

The **Goldrush** in Wendover also offers a brunch on Sundays from 10 to 2. In the casino restaurant you can laden your platter with all the eggs, bacon, pork roast, homemade cobbler, and fresh fruits you can eat. Champagne is also served. Cost is \$6.95 for adults and 35 cents times their age for children 12 and under.

For brunch in Jackpot, **Cactus Pete's** offers a Sunday breakfast buffet from 8 to noon. Here you can enjoy ham, bacon, sausage, eggs, red potatoes, and salads in what is said to be the "largest cabaret-type dining-room-showroom in Nevada." You can also have champagne with your meal. Cost is \$3.50 for adults and \$2.25 for kids under 12. □

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Noble and crew celebrate after setting a new world land speed record in the jet-powered "Thrust 2."



LANCE IVERSEN PHOTOS



# The British At Black Rock

When Richard Noble and his racing team invaded Gerlach last summer, it was just like home — and for the town's residents, even better.

By Doug McMillan

**“W**here the Pavement Ends and the West Begins,” declares the hand-lettered sign on the side of Gerlach's only grocery store. But for a month last fall, a British flag flew proudly over this dusty little desert town 105 miles north of Reno, and banners above its three bars exalted, “The British Are Coming!”

They not only came, they conquered. On October 4, 1983, the British racing team Project Thrust captured the world land speed record on the Black Rock Desert, a wilderness of dry lake beds, or

playas, that stretch flat as pancakes from the edge of Gerlach to the Oregon border, 100 miles beyond the horizon. And in the process, they captured the hearts of Gerlach.

It was an unlikely cultural mix—this band of 50 British racers, technicians, reporters, and assorted hangers-on, plopped in the middle of 350 Nevada desert dwellers. But it worked. Gerlach residents waved the Union Jack and shouted louder than their British visitors when driver Richard Noble guided his jet-propelled car across the playa at 633.606 miles per

hour. They cheered even though it was an American record—Gary Gabelich's 622.407 mph, set 13 years ago on Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats—that Noble was breaking.

That's where the British first pointed their car, too, in 1981, only to find that an abnormally wet winter had left the famous salt flats under several feet of water. They cast about for a substitute, and found the Black Rock Desert. It was the same stark scene that movie director John Huston had used 20 years earlier for Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable in the last movie either of them made, “The Misfits.” Thrust, looking more like a rocket ship with wheels than a car, reached a peak speed of 615 mph on the same playa where Clark Gable tried to catch mustangs by roping tires to them. Last year's early winter sent the British packing without breaking the American record, but they returned last fall—much to the delight of Gerlach.

“This has meant a lot to Gerlach,” said 85-year-old Helen Thrasher, the town's retired postmistress. She said it was easily the most exciting thing that happened in her 54 years in the town. “You know,” she confided, “things may be a little monotonous here.”

But school children played hokey and townspeople left their jobs to go out to the flat to watch the plume of dust rise hundreds of feet behind the speeding “Thrust 2.” Sometimes they would sit for hours only to have a test run scrubbed due to bad weather or mechanical difficulties. Townspeople trying to raise funds to revive Gerlach's hot springs—the only thing the town was known for before Project Thrust—sold beer and soft drinks in the middle of the mud flat, after receiving the first liquor license ever issued on the Black Rock Desert. It was a bizarre but festive scene.

At night, after team members finished a hard day of test trials on the flat and hours “debriefing” each other about the car's performance, townspeople often threw impromptu parties for their foreign guests at the Miner's Club or Bruno's. Bruno Selmi, owner of Bruno's Country Club, a barn-sized casino, cafe and bar that is the social hub of the small town, doubled the size of his 20-unit motel—the only overnight accommodations in the 6,000 square miles between Pyramid Lake and the Oregon border—in hopes of the British invasion.

And Norman “Frenchy” Cormier opened Gerlach's first grocery store in 17 years, partly in anticipation that the British would come. He noticed an upsurge in the demand for fresh fruits, vegetables, and juices, as opposed to the soft drinks and beer his regular customers ask for. “They didn't realize what an ice cream bar is,” he chuckled. “They were amazed to find it was ice cream on a stick.” And they call a bathroom a “lou,” Norm informed. But maybe that isn't so strange, he reasoned, “since we call it a john.”

Speaking of johns: to show that they

could poke fun at their esoteric goal, team members towed a portable outhouse behind a pickup truck at 70 mph. "The purpose was to set the world speed record for portable toilets," said Ron Benton, the Briton who held the precarious perch inside.

"All my life, I was under the impression that the British were real reserved people," said a pleasantly surprised Sonny Schatz, personnel assistant at the big U.S. Gypsum Mine in Empire, six miles south of Gerlach. "They're not at all. And no matter how bad their day was, they didn't get dejected.

"These people spent a lot of money and did a lot of nice things for the town," she added. "They attended our potlucks for the volunteer fire department. They gave lectures to the school kids with a model of the car. It's cemented relations between us and the British, when you get right down to it."

The British were just as enthralled with Gerlach as Gerlach was with them. "It's been just like home," Gordon Biles said in a clipped British accent as he adjusted the pressure on Thrust's hydraulic brakes. "They make you feel like you're part of the town."

"When we came back, it was practically the same as we'd left it," said Glynne Bowsher, who designed the car's braking system. "We had been gone almost 12 months, but we found a rope coiled up right where we left it, and parts and other things just as we'd left them. And we saw all the old faces and recognized everyone. I can't say we've been anywhere in the world where the people have been so nice to us."

Not 10 minutes after they arrived, said Project Thrust spokesman David Tremayne, Washoe County Sheriff's Gerlach deputy Dick West was offering Tremayne and his wife, Trish, the full use of his home. "They all leave their houses open and unlocked," Trish said with surprise. "It's not at all like England, where everybody locks their doors and windows every time they go out."

Bruno's employees got up at 3 a.m. daily to start breakfast for the early-rising British, who liked to be on the desert by 6 a.m., and Bruno had "a special for us every day," said Tremayne. Selmi also gave the 30 mechanics and technicians laboring over the car the full use of his Texaco service station, the last building you see in Gerlach before hitting the cracked mud surface of the playa.

"Believe it or not, we are the foundation of a boomtown," laughed Gordon "Gordy" Flux, the man in charge of the parachutes that slowed Project Thrust from its hurtling 600-mph runs. Thanks to Project Thrust, Gerlach's Black Rock Desert will usurp Bonneville's salt flats as the world's fastest turf, said Flux, predicting many more world speed record attempts for Gerlach. "Pretty soon, it will be the world's fastest truck, then the world's fastest motorcycle, the world's fastest car,

DOUG McMILLAN



Norman "Frenchy" Cormier opened the town's first grocery store in 17 years. His biggest novelty item last summer: ice-cream bars.

again. They're all waiting in the wings. It's the only place that's right," Flux explained. The vast space swallowed the 11-mile course with room to spare. Had Thrust's parachute failed, Noble still could have coasted to a safe stop in a 10-mile overrun, Flux said.

"The size of the landscape is mind-boggling to us," said Robb Widdows, a race car writer covering the record attempt for British commercial TV "You could drop Britain in Nevada and not even notice it. The distance across the Black Rock Desert is more than going from London to Brighton (a small town on the English Channel). And it's got cowboys, and wild horses, and miners and deserts and mountains—everything I'd always imagined the West to be."

Gerlach probably will become more famous in Great Britain than it is in the United States, said Bowsher, noting that the record-breaking received more media attention in the homeland than it did in the United States.

The British found their way to Gerlach with the help of Peter Moore, a British racing fan whose idea of fun is to see how far he can ride his motorcycle across Northern Nevada without touching pavement. He was sitting in the State Line Casino at Wendover last year when the team members were despairing of ever having a dry place to race. They were ready to give up and scout the deserts of Australia, South Africa, and even Iran for dry playas when Moore thought of Gerlach. (Continued)

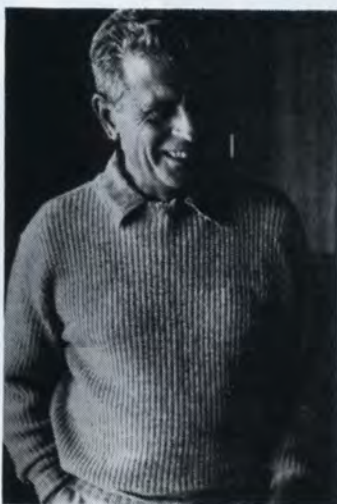
DOUG McMILLAN



Helen Thrasher, a Gerlach resident for 54 years, admitted, "Things may be a little monotonous here," but the British invasion, she said, certainly perked up the town.

# Walter Van Tilburg Clark: Critiques

Edited by Charlton Laird



Walter Van Tilburg Clark, author of such highly acclaimed novels as *The Ox-Bow Incident*, *The Track of the Cat*, and *City of Trembling Leaves*, is known as a writer of national and international distinction. In this collection of essays, Clark's colleagues, his son Robert, and editor Charlton Laird discuss the late author's writing methods, the major influences on his work, his relationship with Nevada, the contributions he made to his students during his teaching career, and his vast creative abilities. The literary critiques examine Clark's novels, as well as his short stories and poetry. Other highlights of the volume include Clark's credo as a writer and his only known autobiographical statement. Previously unpublished, Clark's frank statements about himself are spiced with the same insights that made him Nevada's consummate literary artist.

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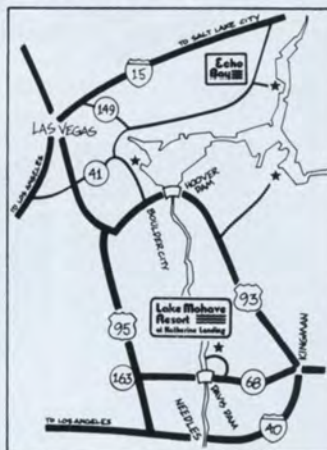
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"I had been camping in the Black Rock Desert," he said. "I asked Ken Norris [the team manager], 'What do you need?' Ken said he needed 11 miles of straight, flat, dry surface with no vegetation, so I suggested the Black Rock Desert, not knowing what kind of surface to expect." Norris and John Ackroyd, designer of the car, scouted the Nevada desert and found it to their liking. The team moved their \$2 million enterprise in just six days.

"The drive to the desert was memorable," team member John Griffiths chronicled for the *London Financial Times*, "desolate but beautiful country, the landscape dotted with hot springs and always, small whirlwinds—and infested with black widows, tarantulas and rattlesnakes. Was it prophetic that across the 120 square mile 'playa,' the dried lake bed itself frowned over by the Black Rock mountains, wound the old California emigrants route—the Noble Trail?" The Noble Trail was a branch of the Applegate-Lassen Trail that carried pioneers through the forbidding desert more than a century earlier.

The British had to overcome another adversary before they could pit their machine against those elements. Nevada conservationist Charles Watson protested their initial arrival last year. Predicting that they would turn the Black Rock into "another Bonneville," Watson warned that could damage the vestiges of the pioneer trails that criss-crossed the huge landscape, endanger desert fossils, and spoil proposed wilderness areas nearby. But Gerlach, angered at the thought of losing their new notoriety, sent a 30-member delegation to Reno to help convince the Bureau of Land Management, which has jurisdiction over the vast terrain, to issue the racing permit.

After receiving assurances from the BLM that the racing would not affect decisions on adjacent wilderness area proposals, Watson deferred his protests this fall. "I'm not trying to tell them they can't use the Black Rock Desert," he said. If the racers do not permanently scar the desert, "there's a possibility we can all have what we want."

"If you get any static from anyone this time, you come to us," Gerlach resident Vic Lucas told the British team members at Bruno's Texaco. "That's our desert," he said pointing to the white expanse. The winter rains will soon erase the tracks of Project Thrust, just as they obliterate the ruts left by the four-wheel drives and dirt bikes, year after year.

"Where the Pavement Ends and the West Begins," is a good slogan for Gerlach, but the town advisory board is debating whether to erect a new sign. Something like, "Gerlach—Home of the World's Land Speed Record." And you can be sure, somewhere on that proud boast will be a British flag. □

Doug McMillan is state editor of the Reno Gazette-Journal and noted rock 'n' roll critic.



# Ham on the Hoof

The day everyone in Palisade went hog wild.

By Harry E. Webb

**M**aking a hurry-up trip to Palisade, I was on the grade just yards from the Bill Blair ranch house when horrible screams halted me. Bill had emphysema so bad he had near smothered a couple times, and thinking his wife Mabel was doing the screaming, I started to back up.

A horn blasted, and Jim Buckskin demanded to know why I was blocking the road. I intended to hold my ground had not more awful wails up ahead attracted our attention. As we rounded the corner to investigate, the ear-splitting sounds intensified, and we found ourselves in the thick of an unforgettable chaos.

A mass of squealing hogs was running in terror from a mob of shouting people. Emma Hawkins had a pig by its hind leg and was yelling for help as the 200-pound red squaller skidded her down the road. When I ran to take over the job, Silver Biglieri and another red hog came tumbling down the hillside, and Silver cursed in three languages while yelling for a piece of rope.

No one had so much as a piece of twine, and Ross Plummer had pulled up behind Buckskin and was raving because pigs and people blocked his way into town. But he dug some baling wire out of Buckskin's fancy Studebaker, and wholesale hog-tying took place. And for those who have never suffered through a bunch of noisy pigs, I'm here to tell you a hog can reach a couple octaves above high C without trying!

We headed for the stockyards with a batch of hogs only to find an even bigger roundup taking place down by the river

with folks of every size and gender hanging onto hind legs and yelling for help. Jim Buckskin growled, "By God I'll help tie pigs but I'll be damned if they'll use my car for an ambulance."

Then the Western Pacific agent arrived and began rushing about asking if we could give him the numbers of injured and unscarred swine. He got a lively cussing all around, although we knew it was an order from the head office. It was a well known fact that freight cars had been burglarized in Carlin and Elko stops lately, so the agent surmised someone had broken the seal on a hog car and failed to replace the pin in the hasp. "But why," wailed the agent, "did this have to happen to me?"

The bulk of the scatterment had occurred almost on top of the agent's home and office, and there being a bridge close by, any hog able to drag himself was now across the Humboldt River. Ross Plummer and I were headed with our second load of hogs for the stockyards when C.B. Sexton came along, all out of breath. He asked us to find his train crew and to tell the so-and-sos to get back to running the train. "Train's been sitting there ready to leave for Eureka, and the crew's off running hogs! Passengers are sitting there wondering what kind of a railroad we're running!"

That's when the agent re-appeared with the best news of the day: "Drop everything, folks. The latest orders are for the section crew to destroy all hogs, well and crippled, and bury them. It's willful waste of food and crazy, but it's orders." This edict brought a chorus of approval, but we still had C.B. Sexton to hear from: "The S.P. is calling its section crews in to help dig pits and I've called our crew in

because we've got to guard against an epidemic of cholera, you know." (The Narrow Gauge crew for 20 of its 80 miles of track consisted of John Mendez.)

"Well," vowed Jim Buckskin, "I ain't givin' a hoot whether the high muckmucks like it or not, I'm takin' a pig or two home for winter use!" Pigs for free slanted a different light on the situation, and with two hog-tied hogs in his new Studebaker with its onyx ball radiator ornaments and flower vased interior, he headed out of town.

Everybody began dragging hogs home. Even those ranchers who claimed to be hog haters were departing with pork on the hoof in their cars. Sexton repeated his assurance that we would all be cholera victims within a month if all the mangled animals weren't fast under sod. "Nat," he said to Town Marshal Nat Hawkins, "you and Webb get up to the roundhouse and get those hogs out of the shop as quick as possible, then I'll fumigate it."

Ever chase pigs 'round and 'round among benches, boiler-flue pipes, and slack tubs? It ain't easy. But as Nat reminded me, a platter of chops on a cold, winter morning would be lickin' good. I later left for home with a pair of red-haired hog-tied chop-makin's.

As it happened, nobody wound up with cholera that winter, and not too many went hungry either. □

*Harry E. Webb, the award-winning Western writer, has been an actor, trapper, and cowboy and lived for many years in Pine Valley in Northeastern Nevada. Webb, who once rode in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, this spring will be inducted in the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.*





# Morning Mist

*"But when the storm began to sound,  
I lost no time in pushing out into the  
woods to enjoy it. For on such  
occasions, nature has always  
something rare to show us. "*

*—John Muir,  
"A Sierra Wind Storm," 1878.*

Carson Valley pastureland provides the backdrop for a swift and sudden late winter storm in this scene captured by Jay Aldrich of Genoa. Clouds camouflage Job's Peak, a common occurrence during a Western Nevada winter as the winds sweep down the majestic Sierra to the valley floor. Stoic cottonwoods, branches bared by wind and rain, withstand still another winter assault while the frozen earth sleeps, waiting for warmer, gentler spring. These frequent interruptions serve to remind farmer, rancher, or passer-by of the fury, power, and awesome beauty that is Nevada nature.—*Sheila Gardner*

JAY ALDRICH

# The Nevada Bookshelf

Long letters and a short railroad. By Roger Smith

**The Silver Short Line: A History of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad**, by Ted Wurm and Harre Demoro. *Trans-Anglo Books, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale, CA. 91205. \$39.95, 260 pages, hard cover.*

I know of no book that has recounted the Virginia & Truckee Railroad's 80-year career with more loving detail than *The Silver Short Line*. The 390 historical photographs alone constitute a history of the "world's richest short line." But there are also maps, drawings, lithographs, reproductions of doc-

uments, and cartoons to accompany the carefully researched text. For even the most casual reader, this table book vividly recovers the elegance of the V&T's heyday during Virginia City's Big Bonanza in the 1870s and the poignancy of the train's long decline in the 20th century. It is a book that will fire the boilers of any armchair railroader.

**Report of Explorations across the Great Basin in 1859**, by James H. Simpson, intro-

duction by Steven D. Zink. Reprint, *University of Nevada Press, Reno, NV. 89557. \$13.25, 518 pages, paperback.*

In 1859 Captain James Simpson of the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers and 64 scientists, guides, and soldiers set out to survey a new route across Nevada for the increasing private and commercial traffic to the West Coast. Soon after the expedition, Simpson turned in his detailed journal and scientific reports concerning the route, which roughly corresponds to today's U.S. 50, but because of the Civil War the Army delayed publishing his findings until 1876. By then, reports by more famous surveyors like Clarence King had superseded Simpson's work. His book has remained obscure, but this Vintage Nevada reprint, with a 3'x2' scale map of the route, provides amateur historians and scholars a good opportunity to reevaluate Simpson's explorations and his influence on later trail-blazers.

**The Tennessee Letters: From Carson Valley, 1857-1860**, compiled by David Thompson. *Grace Dangberg Foundation, P.O. Box 9621, Reno, NV. 89507-0621. \$15.50, 191 pages, hard cover.*

Lawyer Richard N. Allen, writing as "Tennessee," reported the news of Western Nevada to the *San Francisco Herald* from 1857 to 1860, and *The Tennessee Letters* collects Allen's observations for the first time for modern readers. The letters, sent from Genoa, are curious documents—colorful, opinionated, newsy, and sarcastic—and contain much valuable information about men, mining, and murders, Allen's favorite topics.

But Allen is not to be trusted. He often exaggerates the mineral and agricultural potential of Carson Valley and slanders his enemies. Why he did so is not known, but he clearly wanted to attract new settlers, particularly farmers, and to drive out Mormons, whom he held in "utter detestation."

Still, Allen is well worth reading. He wrote his letters while miners were first discovering the rich silver ore near Virginia City, and his dispatches are charged with excitement. He foresaw wealth in the near future, and his irascible outbursts against local politicians, vigilance committees, bad weather, high prices, Indian raids, loafers, and "strychnine whiskey," because all these were hindering the reaping of the region's fruits, are most understandable.

About the "Indian war" and numerous shoot-outs he witnessed, Allen maintained some objectivity and produced his most astonishing dispatches. In these he describes deaths and maimings with tortuous detail and occasional grisly humor.

The "Tennessee" letters and Richard Allen must be taken as products of a time in Nevada when hunger galled men into atrocities, law enforcement was sporadic, and prejudices were continually aggravated into hostility. Neither wholly honest nor wholly biased, Allen reflects his frontier society faithfully, despite himself, and entertainingly. For today's readers, the value of his letters lies more in their general tone than in their facts. □



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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.

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1091 S. Virginia at Bagel Alley  
Reno. 322-9458

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### CATLEMEN'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 \$6.45, this dinner includes a baked potato, salad, bread, ranch-style beans, sirloin steak and a glass of wine. Other entrees range from a simple hamburger steak to a filet mignon and lobster. The Alaska king crab is delicious! Open seven days a week for dinner from 5 p.m. No reservations. AE, MC, VISA.

### 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.

### SAM'S TOWN

5111 Boulder Highway  
Las Vegas, 456-7777

Don't let the Sam's Town ambiance fool you. In **Diamond Lil's**, you may crave a skilletful of ribs (and the "secret sauce" will enslave you forever), but you can also order Beef en Brochette with all the trimmings, topped with Sauce Bordelaise and 'most anything in between. Luscious appetizers, side "delectables" plus a mouth-watering selection of desserts and beverages. Sun.-Thurs. 5-11 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 5-12 p.m. Sunday Champagne Brunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. **Willy and Jose's Cantina** offers traditional Margaritas to the highly-imaginative Chimichangas and Sam's Gone Bananas and a taste-tingling array of Mexican food specialties. Every night's a winner. Sun.-Thurs. 5-11 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 5-12 p.m. Sunday Brunch from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. The **Stagecoach Restaurant** is a 24-hour, full menu family eating spot, with a special menu for the youngsters. There are "graveyard specials" from 11 p.m. to 11 a.m. as well as special breakfast combinations to please everyone's palate and pocketbook. AE, Carte Blanche, Diners, MC, VISA.

**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 p.m. Closed Sundays. No reservations. No credit cards.



**VERDI INN**

Second and Bridge Streets  
Verdi, 345-0288

The famous old Verdi Inn, owned and operated by the Engel family for the past 22 years, is situated in Verdi, Nevada, eight miles west of Reno, and has an antique bar 120 years old. The Inn is a dinner house with a Gay '90s atmosphere and serves such delicacies as frog legs, Coquille St. Jacques, prime rib, lamb, and steaks, just to name a few. Open seven days a week; Sun.-Thurs. 5:30-10 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 5:30-11 p.m. AE, Diners, MC, VISA. Reservations accepted. □

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# Travel Guide

## JACKPOT



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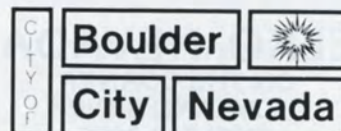
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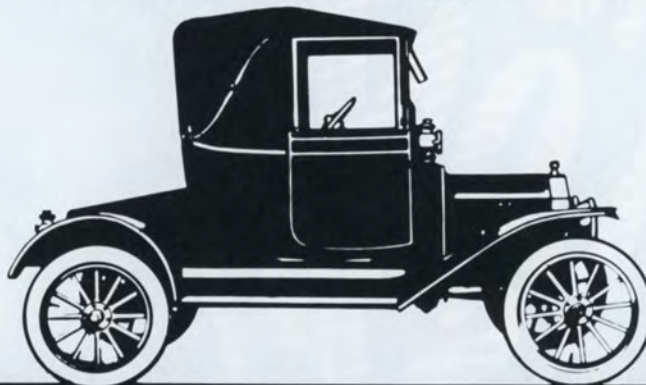
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# Showguide

By Ann Henderson & Melissa Cronin

Where the stars and shows are playing this winter.



Ice shows, which have long been crowd pleasers in spacious arenas, are just as thrilling in the more intimate settings of Nevada's casino theaters. In shows like the Reno Hilton's "Razzle Dazzle" and the Hacienda's "Fire and Ice" the unseasonably-clad performers skate with grace and daring through complicated routines. In "Razzle Dazzle," which had a three-year run in Las Vegas before moving to Reno last year, anywhere from two to 32 skaters are onstage at one time, gliding, spinning, and leaping across the stage. You can appreciate the choreography from any seat in the house, but the view is truly dazzling from rinkside.—AH

## Las Vegas

**Aladdin**, 736-0111 Paul Anka, thru 1/23

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

**Caesars Palace**, 731-7333: Wayne Newton, thru 1/18

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

**Desert Inn**, 733-4566: Entertainment TBA

**Dunes**, 737-4110: 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 \$6.95, includes 2 drinks; *Casino Lounge*: Frenz, thru 1/2; Sonny Turner/Frenz, 1/3-23; Jonas/Sonny Turner, 1/24-30; Reycards/Jonas, 1/31-2/14; Dae Han Sisters/Reycards, 2/14-27; Jerry Sun's Fantasy/Dae Han Sisters, 2/28-3/12

**Four Queens**, 385-4011 Ink Spots, thru 1/8; Sam Butera, 1/10-3/11 10pm-2am Tues.-Sun.

**Frontier**, 734-0240: Siegfried and Roy in Beyond Belief, indf.; 7pm & 11pm Tues.-Sun., dark Mon., \$26.50

**Fremont**, 385-3232: Skin Tight, revue, indf., 8pm & 10pm Sun-Wed., 8pm, 10pm & midnight Fri.-Sat., dark Thurs.; \$9.95, includes 2 drinks

**Hacienda**, 798-0571 Fire & Ice, ice spectacular, indf.; 8pm optional dinner show from \$13.95, 8pm & midnight cocktail show \$9.95

**Holiday**, 369-5222: 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: Legends in Concert, indf., 8pm cocktail show \$9.95, 11pm cocktail show \$6.95

**Landmark**, 733-1110: Nightly entertainment

**Las Vegas Hilton**, 732-5661 Bal du Moulin Rouge starring Suzanne Somers, 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*: George Benson, thru 1/1 & 1/3-8

**Marina**, 739-1500: Entertainment TBA

**Maxim**, 731-4300: Old Tyme Burlesque, indf., 8pm, 10:15pm & midnight; dark Thurs., \$9.75, includes 2 drinks; Jones, thru 1/28, J.T.O. & Bobby Duck, indf. (except Sun.-Mon.)

**Mint**, 385-7440: Entertainment TBA

**Riviera**, 737-1755: Shirley MacLaine, thru 1/12; 8pm dinner show from \$25, midnight cocktail show from \$20

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

**Sahara**, 737-2424: Nightly entertainment

**Sam's Town**, 456-7777: Nightly entertainment

**Sands**, 733-5453: Robert Goulet/Four Aces, thru 1/8; Gallagher, 1/9-15

**Showboat**, 385-9123: Nightly entertainment

**Silver Slipper**, 734-1212: Boy-Lesque, revue, indf.; 8pm, 10pm & midnight; dark Thurs., Branded, revue, indf.; 9pm & 11pm Mon.-Thurs., 7pm, 9pm &

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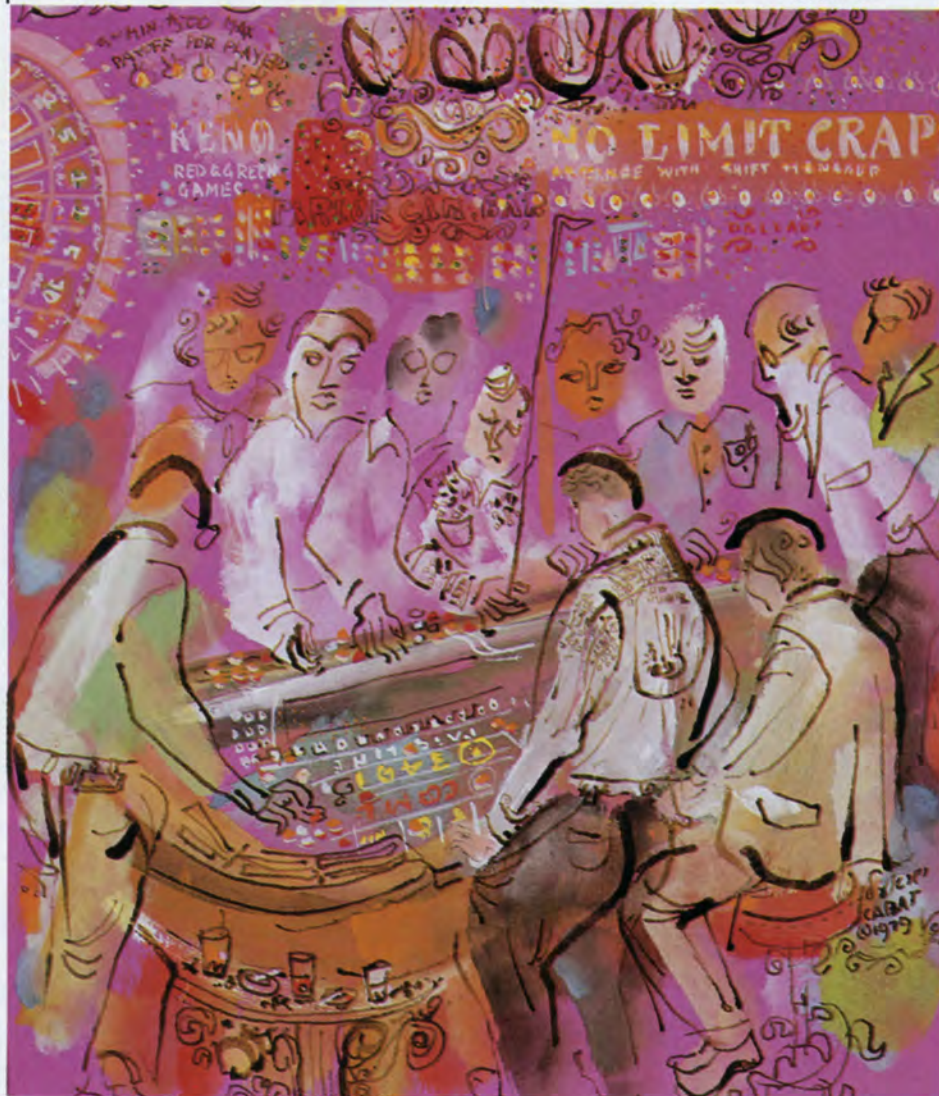
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**Sundance**, 382-6111: Nightly entertainment

**Tropicana**, 739-2411 Folies Bergere, indf.; 8pm dinner show from \$16.95, 11:30pm cocktail show \$13.95

**Union Plaza**, 386-2444: Broadway entertainment nightly; 8pm dinner show from \$11.95, 11:45pm cocktail show from \$7.50; Talent Showcase on Tues., 9pm-3am

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**Caesars Tahoe**, 588-3515 (800-648-7469): George Burns, thru 1/1; Lee Greenwood, 1/5-7; Lou Rawls, 1/13-15; Heart, 1/19-21 Gallagher, 2/2-4

**Del Webb's High Sierra**, 588-6211 Entertainment TBA

**Harrah's Lake Tahoe**, 588-6611 *South Shore Room*: Mac Davis/Lonnie Shorr, thru 1/1 Bill Cosby, 1/27-2/9; John Denver, 2/15-24; *Stateline Cabaret*: Paul Revere & The Raiders, thru 1/1 Rob Hanna Salutes Rod Stewart, 1/3-8; John Kay & Steppenwolf, 1/10-22 (except Mon.); War, 1/24-2/5 (except Mon.); Elvin Bishop, 2/7-19 (except Mon.); Gary Puckett, 2/21-26; Tower of Power, 2/28-3/4

**Harvey's**, 588-2411: Saddle Tramps, revue, thru 1/1 9pm & midnight cocktail shows; dark Thurs.

**Hyatt Lake Tahoe**, 831-1111: Penny Lane, 1/3-8; Bach, 1/10-22; Jay Ramsey Band, 1/31-2/12; Winchester Cathedral, 2/28-3/11

**Nevada Lodge**, 831-0660: Nightly entertainment

## Reno, Sparks & Carson City

**Carson City Nugget**, 882-1626: Motiffs, thru 1/1 The Muggins, 1/3-15; Cheryl Cotten, 1/17-29; Otlice Yawn, 1/31-2/26

**Circus Circus**, 329-0711 Circus acts, 11am-midnight, free

**Fitzgerald's**, 786-3663: Nightly entertainment

**Harrah's Reno**, 329-4422: *Headliner Room*: Charo, thru 1/4; Sammy Davis Jr., 1/5-10; Billy Crystal/John Sebastian, 1/11-12; Sammy Davis Jr., 1/13-18; Melissa Manchester, 1/19-25; Alan King, 1/26-2/1 Bobby Vinton, 2/2-8; Don Rickles, 2/9-15; Captain & Tennille, 2/16-22; Tony Orlando, 2/23-3/7 *Casino Cabaret*: Peaches & Herb, thru 1/8 (except Mon.); John Kay and Steppenwolf, 1/24-2/5 (except Mon.); The Association, 2/7-12; Gary Puckett, 2/14-19; The Platters, 2/21-3/4 (except Mon.)

**MGM Grand Hotel**, 789-2285 (800-648-3568): *Ziegfeld Theatre*: Hello Hollywood Hello, indf., 8pm dinner show from \$22; midnight cocktail show \$18.50, includes 3 drinks; winter midnight cocktail show thru 2/16, Sun-Wed., \$12.50, includes 3 drinks; *Lion's Den*: Gary Raffanelli & Sandy Selby/Santa Fe, thru 1/10; Miss Pat Collins, The Hip Hypnotist, 1/11-2/7; Gary Raffanelli & Sandy Selby, 2/8-3/6; *Leo's Lair*: Vince Cardell, thru 1/3; Garlin Gathering, 1/4-24; One Plus One/ Karen Cavanagh, 2/15-3/6

**John Ascuaga's Nugget**, Sparks, 358-2233 (800-648-1177): *Celebrity Room*: Osmond Brothers, 2/2-11 & 2/17-19; *Casino Cabaret*: Mike Vax and His Great American Jazz Band, 1/1-15

(Continued on page 77)

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## SHOWGUIDE (Continued from page 72)

**Ormsby House**, Carson City, 882-1890: *Mark Twain Bar*: Beckwith, thru 1/1 Two of Clubs, 1/3-22; *Garlin Gathering*, 1/24-2/12; *Glenna Allen & Fortune*, 2/14-3/4

**Peppermill**, 826-2121 *Buckboard*, thru 1/22; *The Lelands*, 1/2-29; *Two of Clubs*, 1/23-2/19; *Tommy Bell*, 1/30-2/26

**Reno Hilton**, 785-7100: *Opera House Theatre*: *Razzle Dazzle*, indf.; 8pm & 11:30pm cocktail shows; *Rainbow Cabaret*: *Reycards*, thru 1/2

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

**Riverside**, 786-4400: Dancing to records of the '40s, '50s & '60s, Tues.-Sun., no minimum

**Shy Clown**, 358-6632: Nightly entertainment

## Rural

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

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

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

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**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 January and February bookings, so we recommend calling ahead to confirm entertainment schedules. □

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# BETRAYED BY LOUIS L'AMOUR

It was everything I dreamed a ranch should be —  
until I got there.

By Richard Menzies

Since graduating from Harvard, class of '46, Arthur Kenneth Donoghue has pursued a checkered career as foreign correspondent, university lecturer, pathologist, publisher, medical translator, bookkeeper, wine taster, and assistant groundskeeper for the Nevada State Museum. Yet in spite of his eclectic resume, I was surprised when news came that my downwardly mobile Bostonian friend had landed a position as cook on a remote Northern Nevada cattle ranch.

A few days later I found myself driving along a dusty corduroyed road, navigating my way across a sagebrush sea by means of a handmade map that had arrived postmarked Deeth. The landscape that stretched before me appeared unpopulated except for jackrabbits that darted suicidally into my path and the magpies that looked on from roadside fence posts in anticipation of a free lunch. Ahead loomed a vision of my friend, Ken, tending the chuck wagon, dishing out generous helpings of beans and sourdough biscuits to a passel of grizzled, cantankerous buckaroos. As I plugged in a Slim Whitman tape, I daydreamed of swapping tall tales around the campfire, later stretching out on my bedroll beneath the stars to be serenaded to sleep by a chorus of coyotes accompanied by a plaintive harmonica.

The vision began to get fuzzy, however, when at last the ranch came into view. As I drew nearer, the green spot on the horizon resolved itself into a compound of substantial stone buildings shaded by large cottonwoods and poplars and surrounded by a vast lawn aspattered with automatic sprinklers. It looked more like a Southern plantation than the Ponderosa, I thought; all that was needed to complete the effect was Miss Scarlet in a hoop skirt fanning herself on the veranda.

My expectations were further dashed when I walked into the cook shack, which turned out to be a commodious dining room with all the ambience of a school cafeteria. It was nearly lunchtime, and I found Ken fussing at the controls of an industrial-sized gas range—not exactly the open range I had envisioned. On a top burner a pressure cooker hissed violently, transforming its contents of beef stew into preternatural tenderness. My host explained that all meat on the ranch is served very well done, in deference to a widely-held fear of contamination and germs. The meat of the

day was short ribs, he said, pointing to a wall poster featuring an exploded diagram of a butchered steer.

"I put that up," he explained, "because some of the boys expressed curiosity about what part of the beef they were eating."

Leaving me to ponder the chart, Ken stepped onto the porch and rang the dinner bell. Not the traditional triangle, but a salvaged school bell mounted in an eye-level belfry, it sounded a dolorous "gong gong gong."

Presently a melancholy Mexican appeared, hat in hand. "In my country," he said, "that is how we toll for the dead."

More ranch hands filed in, and I was



Ken Donoghue at home on the (gas) range.

immediately struck by their attire, which bore no semblance whatever to my notion of authentic Western garb. Instead of Stetsons, the crew was uniformly topped with baseball caps bearing trade names of various heavy equipment manufacturers. In place of faded denim jeans and boots they wore Sta-Prest polyester pants, canvas sneakers, and, needless to add, no spurs. Instead of woolen and chambray shirts with pearl buttons, they wore T-shirts embossed with the names of various universities and prep schools. Gathered around the table were representatives from Stanford, Oxford, Berkeley, and Andover.

Given their august academic creden-

tials, I half expected them to launch into an animated discussion of Newton's binomial theorem or Russian-Afghan politics. But dinner proceeded in monastic silence, broken only by the clatter of plastic dinnerware and an occasional grunt. Ken, meanwhile, sat quietly in a chair beside the stove leafing through a copy of the *Wall Street Journal*. I was informed that tradition dictates the cook doesn't eat with the hired hands.

Another tradition on the ranch, and one completely at odds with the Hollywood-style bantering between Wishbone and Rowdy Yates, is that the hands don't complain about the fare. The reason, I was told, is that at \$450 a month, cooks are hard to come by and not easily replaced. The prudent buckaroo will suppress a disparaging word to the chef rather than take the gastronomical risk of breaking in a new one.

Still another peculiar thing I noticed was that none of the buckaroos drank coffee; instead, they passed around a pitcher of strawberry-flavored Kool Aid, downing cup after cup of the reddish punch. Even the normally stoical Donoghue had to make a face. "It's no place for a diabetic," he observed. "Jams, jellies, cakes, sweets—these boys are going to have to answer to the tooth fairy one of these days."

Lunch done, the hands rose and filed out wordlessly to resume their various chores. I followed and watched in dismay as they climbed aboard an olive-drab motor pool of government surplus jeeps and trucks and rumbled off like banana republic troops on war maneuvers.

"What, no horses either?" I asked Ken.

"Oh, those are just guys who dig postholes," he answered. "They don't ride a horse, they never see a horse, they don't have anything to do with a horse. They dig trenches and they fix fences and build things and repair cars. Ranch hands. The cowboys call them rosin jaws."

Rosin jaws? Ken didn't know the morphology of the term, but he guessed it derives from the fact the hands are always "jawin' away, talkin' Whereas the cowboy is supposed to be more laconic and not talk so much."

It was hard for me to imagine a more laconic outfit this side of the graveyard, but Ken insisted it was so. The real cowboys, he said, were somewhere up north in the hills looking after the herd. If I cared to stick around, I might get a chance to meet some of them later.

But at that point, I'd had about all the lively conversation I could handle. I decided to pack my things and drive back to the city. If I hurried, I might get home in time to watch "Gunsmoke." □

*Richard Menzies returned to his Salt Lake home to find "Gunsmoke" had been cancelled. Ken Donoghue's most recent missive came postmarked Spain.*

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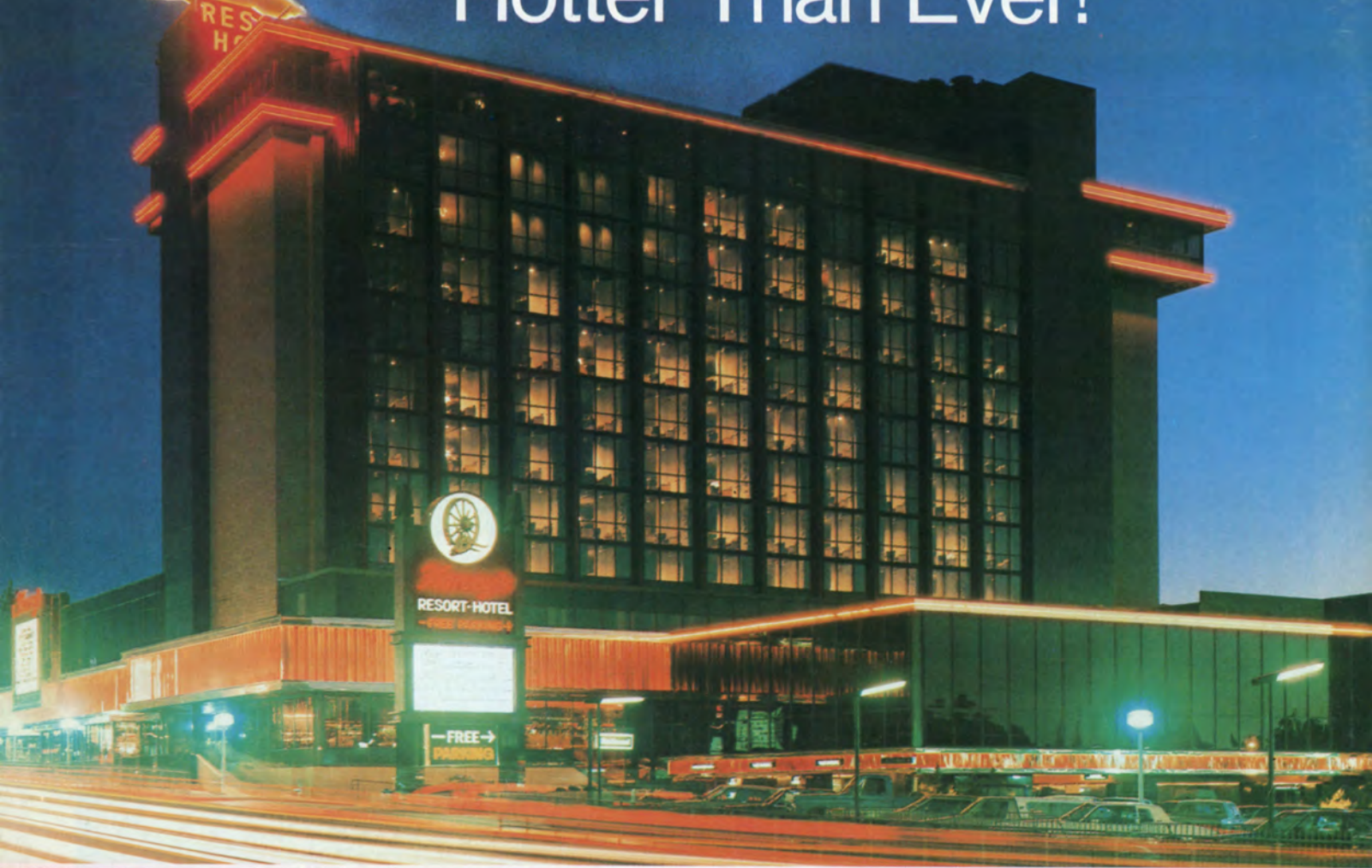
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