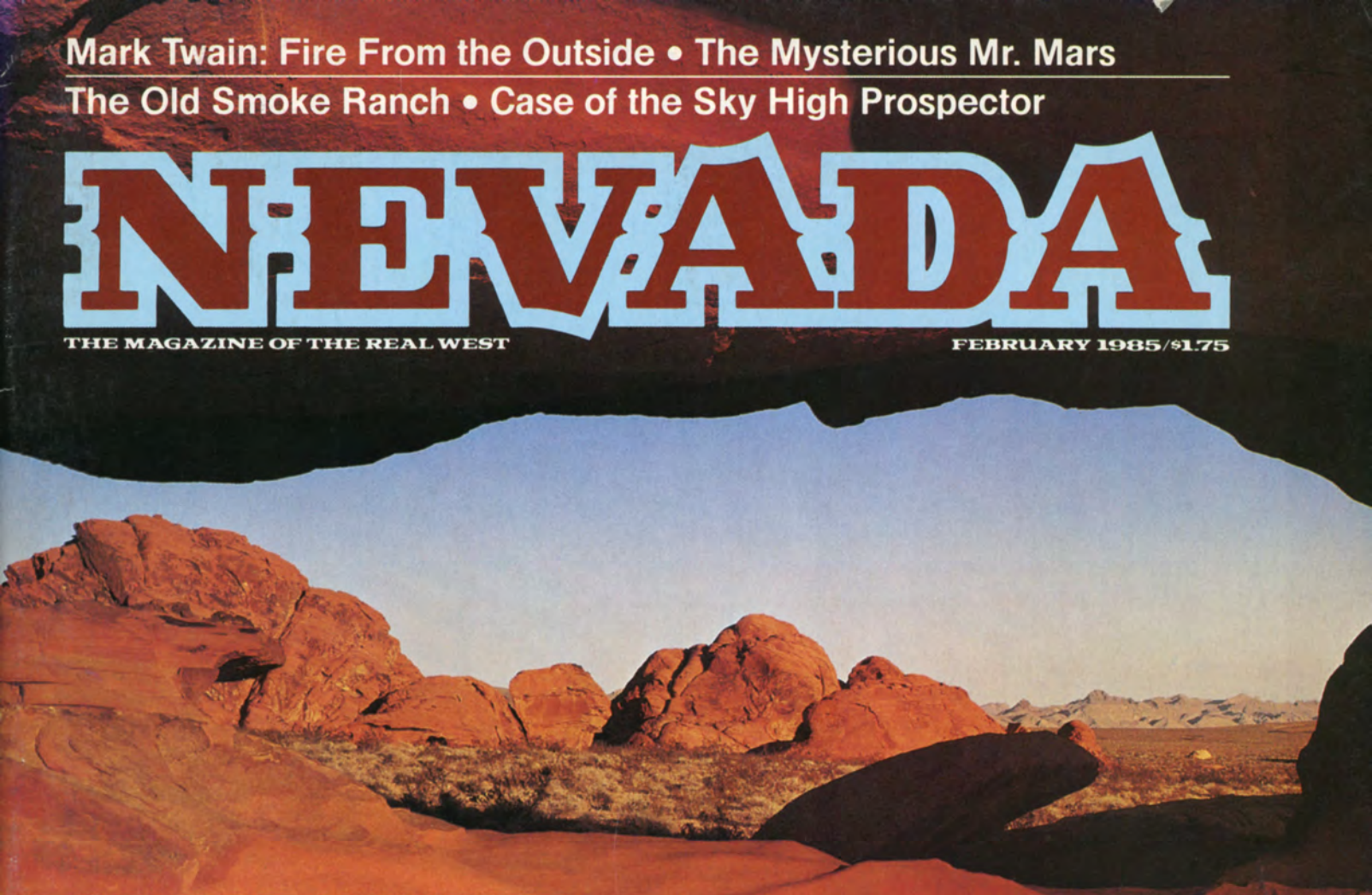
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THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAL WEST

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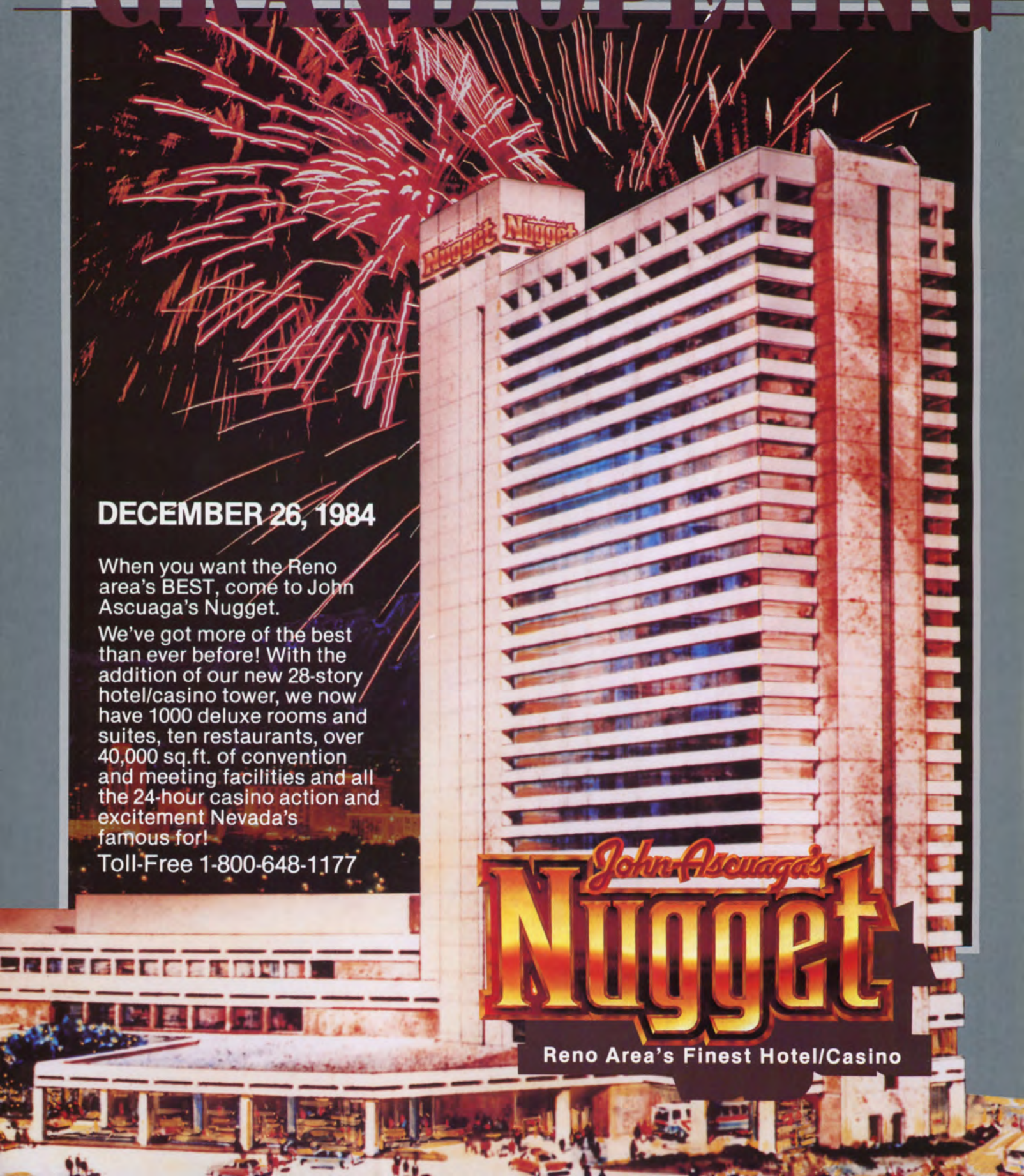
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Volume 45, Number 1 January/February 1985

Destination

Yerington: Cattle, Copper & Soul
By Roger Smith. This picturesque farming town has been a place of hope since the day some cowboys named it Pizen Switch. Page 18

Features

Faces of the Valley of Fire
By David Moore. The red-rock region became Nevada's first state park 50 years ago, and to some desert explorers it's still number one. Page 6

Case of the Sky High Prospector
By Richard Menzies. Al Lombardo came to Austin a century too late, but that didn't stop him from finding his own bonanza. Page 12

The Mysterious Mr. Mars
By Rob Powers. When it comes to privacy, candy king Forrest Mars is positively out of this world. Page 28

Muench's Gallery
Photographer David Muench focuses on one of the desert's most unusual plants. Page 48

Beautiful Preeners
Ring-necked pheasants pose for Tony Diebold. Page 56

Third Annual Spoil, Pamper, and Indulge Yourself Roundup
By Ann Henderson and Scott Shelley. With these great vacation deals at Nevada hotels, the only trick is knowing what to ask for. Page 68

True Grit
By Harry Chalekian. A novice dune-buggier finds out how Sand Mountain got its name. Page 80

Nevada Art and Artists
Jeff Nicholson finds inspiration and subjects by kicking around Nevada. Page 81

Keeping the Chill Out
Northern Nevada winters require thick coats and thick windows. Photos by Linda Dufurrena and James Ricks. Page 88



Blue bonanza in Austin. Page 12



Hog's eye view of Vegas. Page 59

A Capital Crowd
By Lee Adler. The Silver State is probably the only one where a legislator can straight-facedly propose a law change aimed at 'making Nevada as liberal as Utah.' Page 94

Yesterday

Horse Sense and Nonsense
By Harry E. Webb. At last, the true story of how Honest Abe got his nickname. Honest. Page 36

Mark Twain: Fire From the Outside
By Jean Cheney. Young Sam Clemens found more than a name and adventure in Nevada. He found his genius. Page 51

The Old Smoke Ranch
By I.E. Payne. My father and other early-day farmers in the Las Vegas Valley learned how to survive droughts, floods, and jackrabbits. Page 59

Outdoors

Lure of the Lunkers
By Terry Dove. As Nevada's title-holders know, there's a catch to every record fish story. Plus, the return of Corkey Samples. Page 32

Ski the High Country
By Christine Cendagorta. With off-track adventures, there are no pink ribbons to show you the way—just snow, trees, and (don't forget) a good topo map. Page 39

Tahoe: Downhill Getaways
An alpine skier's guide to prices and ski rentals in the Tahoe Basin and at Mount Charleston. Page 42

Ely: Making New Tracks
Cross-country skiers can find three snowy retreats in White Pine County. Page 43

Shows & Events

The Nevada Calendar
By Melissa Loomis. Events and celebrations you can enjoy in January and February. Page 74

Showguide
By Melissa Loomis. Where to see the stars and shows in Las Vegas, Reno, Tahoe, and the cow counties. Page 85

Departments

Up Front
Views from abroad. Page 4

Letters
Baby Face Nelson and the Real Nevada. Page 5

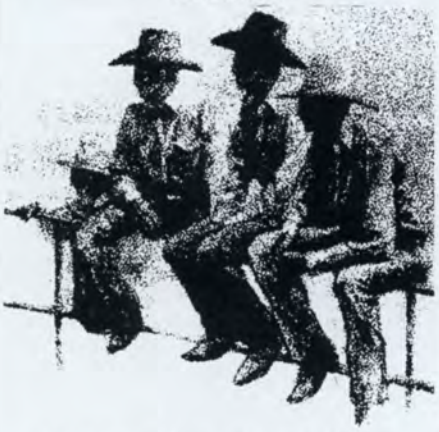
Nevada Notes
By Jim Crandall. Cars, bars, and stars of special note. Page 31

The Nevada Bookshelf
Saint Mary's, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, and other great bets. Page 64

Cover: The Valley of Fire is a photographer's paradise. On this month's cover, David Muench captures the essence and spirit of this Nevada treasure with 'Sandstone Window at Valley of Fire.'

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAL WEST

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Caroline Joy Hadley, Editor & Publisher
David E. Moore, Senior Editor
Dale Smith, Art Director
Ann Henderson, Marketing & Entertainment
Jim Crandall, Feature Editor
Melissa Cronin Loomis, Events Editor
Patty Noll, Advertising Coordinator
Brenda Craig, Marketing Assistant
Nancy Quinn, Electronics
Debi Frame, Subscriptions
Susie Bongers, Junior Help
Richard Menzies, Derelicts & Specials
David Muench, Showcase
Norm Nielson, On The Airways
Julian Stone, At-Large
Leon Mandel, In Grosse Pointe

DICK BRYAN, Governor

CONTRIBUTORS: John Bardwell, Linda Dufurrena, Phillip Earl, Buddy Frank, Russell R. Goebel, Howard Hickson, A.D. Hopkins, William Jeanes, Warren Lerude, Scott Shelley, Guy Shipler, Roger Smith, Harry Upson, Bill Willard.

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES:
Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City, Lake Tahoe:
Cynthia Kelley or Valerie Rose Glenn, Kelley-Rose Inc., P.O. Box 20158, Reno, NV. 89515. (702) 827-5551.

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Up Front

Breakfast should be private, don't you agree?

On a trip to London last summer, I paid a visit to the Gaming Board, overseer of all dice and cards in the realm. During that holiday I discovered that I felt like a foreigner in England, my native country, and, not surprisingly, that British gamers feel a little odd when they visit Nevada.

Lord Allen of Abbeydale, chairman of the Gaming Board, has visited America many times. "Nevada is a bit unlike anything else we're used to," he said. "The thing that obviously strikes one about gaming in Reno and Las Vegas is it's so ostentatious. In London, gaming is very discreet. You can't really just casually walk in and gamble, whereas I get the impression in your state that they rather like you to walk in."

Michael Hogan, secretary to the board, also has spent time in the Silver State. "What Nevada is wanting to do is stimulate as much gambling as possible," he said. "As far as we're concerned, we would like to prohibit it altogether."

In the early '60s Parliament banned gambling, but the legislation had a loophole allowing banker's games like roulette, the country's most popular game, and baccarat and blackjack in cafes. The Gaming Board, created in 1968, and local licensing authorities are supposed to supply only enough gaming facilities to meet an unstimulated demand. Advertising is illegal. Playing is discouraged. Credit is prohibited. Club membership is required, and if you want to join a club, you have to wait 48 hours before you can even fill out the application.

Another difference between gaming in London and Las Vegas, Hogan said, is the atmosphere. "The London market is very stylish, unobtrusive, designed for the very rich. We only allow two slot machines per establishment. There is no music, no dancing, and no drinks are allowed at the tables. But in Nevada you find the extrovert American on vacation. He's having a good time. He's exuberant and full of zest. There he is, with a dice game going, and everybody gathers around and they're laughing and shouting. You'd never see that in London, where everything is calm and orderly with just the click-clack of the plastic chips as they are collected."

Even though Hogan is well-traveled, he tends to be awed by American menus. "I don't regard myself as a particularly incompetent sort of chap," he said, "but the mere business of having this enormous array of things to choose from more or less paralyzed me. At times I thought I might let the side down if I were to go into the restaurant, so I went without."

Then there was breakfast: "It was very strange to have breakfast and have scantily-clad women serving me with keno tickets. That puts you off your breakfast, doesn't it? I mean, breakfast is really a very private occasion, don't you agree? You are trying to collect your thoughts on how you're going to cope with the day, and it's not conducive to orderly thinking to have these scantily-clad females around."

And dinner: "There's this extraordinary business of mixing meat and fish. Turf and surf. Each of them absolutely delicious. You couldn't get better beef than I had; you couldn't get better lobster. But why on earth serve them both together?"

And "puddings": "They were in a refrigerated display case and it was rather like going into the Tower of London and looking at the Crown Jewels. There they were, all crystalized for perpetuity."

Lord Allen said, "One feature about Nevada that appeals to us is that the legislature doesn't meet every year." He laughed. "We don't prescribe things by law nearly as much as you do, and it's very hard to find parliamentary time for gaming legislation because there are no votes in it. But we think yours is an example which could be more widely followed."

Hogan has fond memories of a reception he attended in a hotel penthouse during a Las Vegas gaming conference. At one point he stepped into a small room to escape the heat and masses of people. There he found a bartender mixing drinks. "Through the window was the most gorgeous sunset you have ever seen," Hogan recalled. "There were these marvelous hills and that red sun, and the desert. It was the sort of thing we see in cowboy films at the cinema. You would think that it can't be true, there are no colors like that in the world. And I said to this chap, 'Aren't those colors magnificent? Isn't it a wonderful place to come to?' And he said, 'Yes, sir, that's right. But you know, they change them every so often.'

"That's only by way of life's relief, I suppose. He was talking about the illuminations on the Strip."—*Caroline J. Hadley*

Letters

Baby Face Nelson and the Real Nevada.

Time to Change the Image

Your Nevada contrives a paradox: it portrays a vigorous present that is an organic extrapolation and recapitulation of the past I knew and lived. The world I thought was gone is alive and well in Nevada.

I shall not pretend that I embrace all that is in Nevada, but much that I would embrace is still to be found in Nevada—and nowhere else!

One of your stated aims is to edify the non-Nevadan. You, equally, put heart into those who were never anything else! You are changing the image of Nevada—and it's high time.

Brooking Tatum
Santa Rosa, CA.

Nevada Magazine certainly brings the message of what Nevada is all about besides the gambling. We have much to offer our visitors. Your magazine tells the story the way it should be told.

Alan Dunbar
Las Vegas, NV

Not Enough of Nuffer

The front cover of the Sept/Oct '84 issue by Linda Dufurrena is a terrific photo. It should be titled, "I'm not a real cowboy, I just found this hat."

J. Shelburne
Fresno, CA.

I would like to know what part of Nevada Brandon Nuffer (cover photo by Linda Dufurrena, Sept/Oct '84) lives in. I intend to frame this young buckaroo as I think this is the most delightful picture of peace and beauty I have ever received.

Jean B. Gregory
Irwin, PA.

He lives in Denio, just eight miles from the Dufurrena sheep ranch.—Ed.

I'm very proud to be a Nevadan, but your magazine always has articles on mostly Northern Nevada. I know there are plenty of stories about Southern Nevada and Las Vegas, and it's not just gambling. We took this magazine before and we were very disappointed there wasn't more about Las Vegas.

Daisy May Downer
Henderson, NV

Don't Promote, Educate

Just received my Nov/Dec '84 issue of *Nevada Magazine* and, as always, I enjoyed every bit of it. Most particularly though, your editorial, "The Nevada Myth, The Difference Between Image and Reality," is superb.

In my travels, I have encountered similar impressions from non-Nevadans and equal astonishment when they learn of our state's many wonders and beauties. It certainly emphasizes that we must "educate" along with our promotional efforts.

I wonder how many Nevadans know how many exciting and beautiful attractions there are in our state?

Michael Laine
Elko, NV

Only our subscribers!—Ed.

To Wit and Warmth

One of the joys of receiving *Nevada* is getting reacquainted with the world of John Bardwell, especially the latest issue (Nov/Dec '84). John and I go back donkey's years to when he was an art director and I a copywriter in California. I remember him most for his cartoons, dry wit, personal warmth, and a bunch of good times. It's good to see he's doing well and I see by the picture that he hasn't changed. Unless that's a retouched photo from an old yearbook.

Jim Weiser
Boise, ID.

To the Editor: Don't you have a picture that's more current? Who are you trying to kid?

Anonymous
Reno, NV

Only the ones who are too chicken to sign their name.—Ed

Baby Face and the Big Chase

In 1933 I worked as a delivery boy for the Reno Motor Supply Company, and one evening just before quitting time I had a rush delivery to a well-known garage for parts to two high-powered automobiles, unbeknown at the time for a gang of bank robbers. Melvin Purvis and J. Edgar Hoover arrived in Reno a few days later and arrested the garage owner, as I remember.

The gang was holed up in a cabin at Hawthorne while their cars were being worked on in Reno. A retired ex-state trooper has told me law enforcement people at the time knew that Baby Face Nelson and his gang were in the area, but waited for the FBI to come in and pursue them. The state and local police were too

(Continued on page 55)

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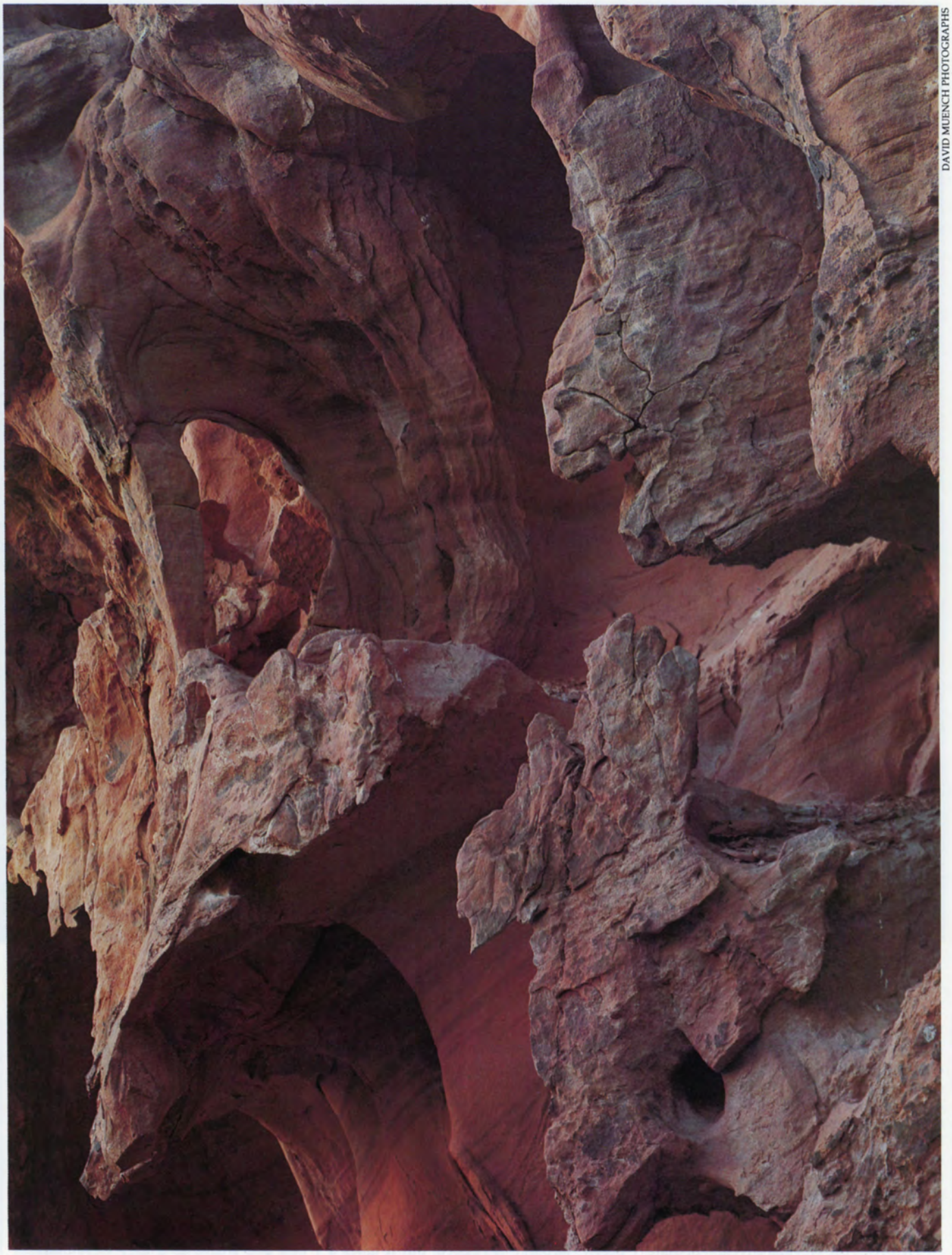
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Valley of Fire

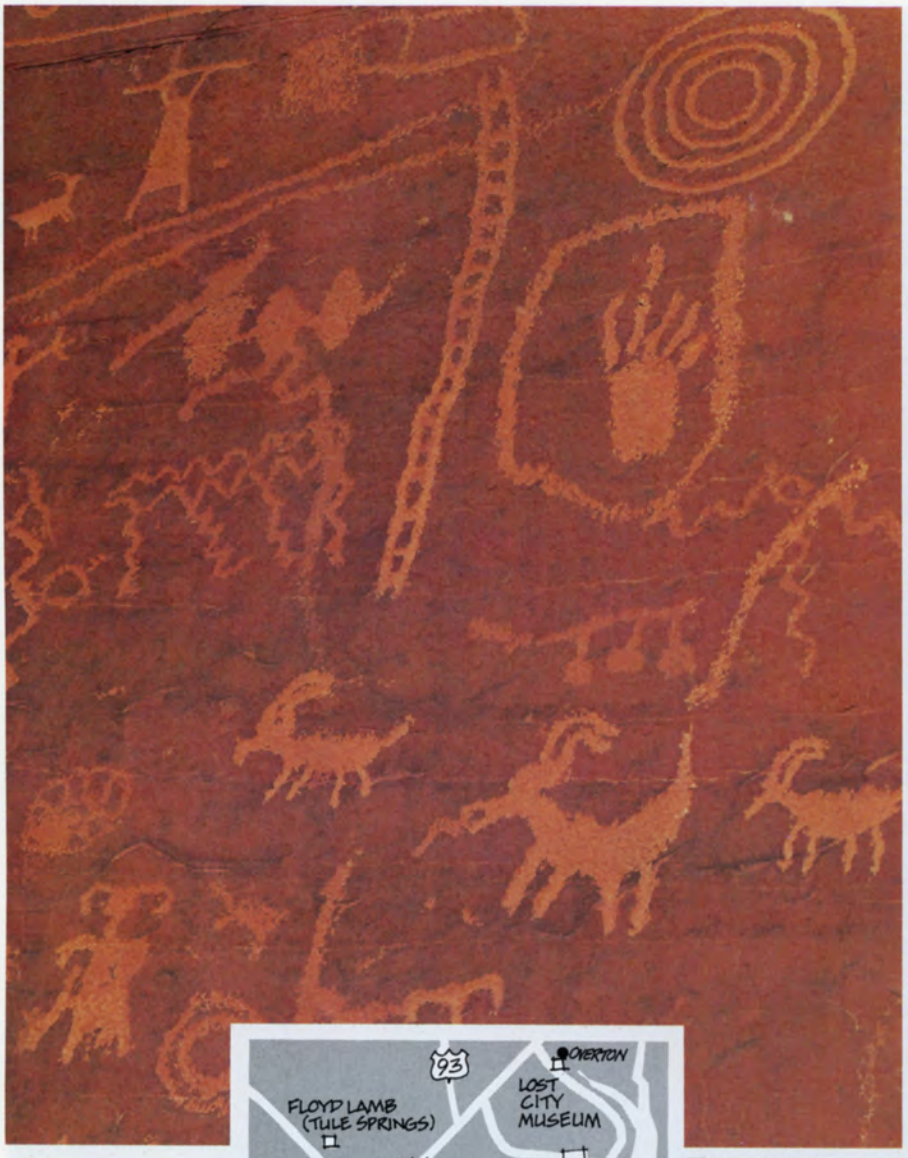
The red rocks looked down serenely at the picnic tables groaning with salads and roasts as several hundred people gathered on Easter Sunday, 1934, at the Cabins, a sort of sandstone motel built by the Civilian Conservation Corps 10 miles south of Overton. The picnickers were there to celebrate the final grading of a new dirt highway through the Valley of Fire. It was the grand inauguration of Nevada's first state park.

Everything was perfect—the food and drink, the weather, even the speeches by officials from Las Vegas and the Moapa Valley. The one thing wrong was

By David Moore



DAVID MUENCH PHOTOGRAPHS





These ancient petroglyphs include drawings of bighorn sheep the Indians hunted. At right is a dramatic view of the valley.

that the big party was a year too soon.

The Valley of Fire didn't officially become a park until 1935, exactly half a century ago. The legislature was winding down when it decreed that the valley and three spots near Caliente—Kershaw-Ryan, Beaver Dam, and Cathedral Gorge—were state parks. Because the valley got the initial funding—not because of the great picnic of '34—the red-rock region has always been considered the first state park.

This year, the Nevada Division of State Parks is celebrating its 50th birthday with a host of special programs in its 21 parks. Events will include hikes, tours, plays, and fishing derbies. Fittingly, the festivities begin this winter at the Valley of Fire.

What's especially nice is that the Valley of Fire, more than any other place in Nevada, deserved to be number one.

After all, few landmarks can compare with the valley in terms of visual excitement and real true-grit desert spirit. Lake Tahoe, for instance, is simply too pretty. Jarbidge is rugged, but it takes a dogsled to get there in the winter. The Black Rock Desert is O.K., except for the mirages. So for the explorer seeking real desert beauty, it's hardly a contest.

Not that the Valley of Fire represents the perfect outdoor life. There's the small matter of an annual heat wave that hovers from June to mid-September, sending the thermometer at the visitor center above 100 every day. Then there are the roads, which take a wicked pounding from summer cloudbursts and in some stretches bob and weave as if they were built for



wagons instead of Oldsmobiles.

In fact, many of the roads date back to pioneer days when travelers in wagons and Model Ts passed through on the old Arrowhead Trail, heading for Salt Lake City or Los Angeles.

Those travelers would have discovered some unusual things on their trips through the valley. It was desert, and there was no water, but the weather was mild from fall to spring. There were curious animals like the desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, and the ringtail cat that looked like a skinny raccoon. Petrified logs were scattered on the east and west ends of the valley like prehistoric logjams. Here and there were rocks covered with petroglyphs, left by the Basketmaker and Pueblo people who lived near Overton in a series of villages known as the Lost City. The rock writings appear to represent religious or clan symbols, and many drawings show bighorns, certainly the object of hunts.

Still, the most striking aspects of the valley, whether to the ancients, the pioneers, or us today, must be the sheer beauty and power of the place. The valley itself is about six miles long and four miles wide. Its beauty comes partly from its anarchic symmetry, which evolved as whole ranges tumbled over each other. The rearrangements have left a long gray limestone escarpment on the south, while dramatic red sandstone cliffs line the opposite side and then sweep north in a wild array of hues. Out in the valley are more sandstone outcrops, some close to the road.

As for power, just take a look at the



The most striking aspects of the Valley of Fire are its power and beauty, which you can find in dramatic vistas and the colorful bloom of a beavertail cactus.

rock writings and then glance around.

Luckily for us and the park system, the valley's moods inspire more than just awe. There can be no greater delight than to walk out on the valley floor in a warm spring rain past lizards, rabbit holes, and clumps of beavertail cacti with their new red flowers. Later the primroses bloom, filling canyons with evening perfume. The best time to camp in the valley is at full moon, when the odd shapes stare down at you in your bedroll and kangaroo rats hop out of the brush, looking for leftovers.

The area is as wild as it has always been, but visitors today will find just the right number of conveniences. There are paved roads, campgrounds, and five picnic areas, with fees charged for day use and camping. There are no phones—a storm wiped out the lines a few years ago—but you can write the park at Box 515, Overton, NV 89040. You'll also find interpretive trails and a visitor center with displays, film, and books that explain the area's development from an ocean bottom to a desert once covered with sand.

Ironically, the arresting scenery is responsible for two common hazards in the park. One is a cramping of the wrist and fingers that photographers experience while constantly loading and rewinding film. The second is the driver-photographer who stops right in the road and shoots away, hoping for a prize-winning print that he knows will be perfect if he can hold the camera steady.

But you can't really blame him, just as it's hard to fault those folks in 1934 for celebrating a year early. If any part of Nevada should be preserved and admired, it's the Valley of Fire. The place deserves it. □

Senior Editor David Moore worked for two years at the Valley of Fire and plans to retire there in a converted schoolbus. He hopes to attend the re-dedication ceremony that takes place at the valley this spring.

Tule Springs

Floyd Lamb State Park, which is known historically as Tule Springs, is a green, well-watered retreat with a rich and varied reputation. Archaeologists remember Tule ("Tu-lee") Springs for the site five miles away where evidence of ancient humans was found half a century ago. Historians know Tule Springs as a stop for the old auto stage to Rhyolite and then, in the 1940s and '50s, as a dude ranch where divorcees spent their six-week vacations swimming, riding, and enjoying the clean desert air.

To Las Vegans and visitors today, Tule Springs is a great place to have a picnic. Since it took over the park in 1977, the state has made vast improvements—four ponds that occasionally have pan-sized catfish and bluegill, for fishing by the kids; picnic areas, including two booked-solid group sites; paths for strolling and roller-skating; and many shady cottonwoods, eucalyptus, ash, and other trees in the developed 14 acres. Nearby is the Nevada Division of Forestry tree farm, and next to the old resort's stables is a trapshooting range.



KATE BUTLER

For more information, write to Floyd Lamb State Park, 9200 Tule Springs Road, Las Vegas, NV 89131, or call 702-645-1998. The park is open daily and has an entrance fee; there is no overnight camping. Because of the trees and ponds, visitors in the summer tend to think it's cooler than Las Vegas, 10 miles south.


DENNIS BROOKS

Ranch views include lawns and Red Rock Canyon. At left, girl scouts invade Tule Springs.

Spring Mountain Ranch

Like a lot of places in Nevada, Spring Mountain Ranch was once owned by Howard Hughes, but other famous owners have left greater marks on this historic state park. Its first known resident was outlaw Bill Williams in the mid-1800s, and later it was ranched by the Wilson family. In 1944 radio star Chester Lauck, the Lum of Lum and Abner, took over. He began building the park's centerpiece, a New England-style ranch house. Then Vera Krupp of the German munitions family bought the ranch in '55. She finished the house in elegant fashion, and Hughes picked it up a dozen years later. There are no "Howard Hughes Slept Here" signs, though, since the billionaire preferred to live in secrecy at the Desert Inn.

The 520-acre oasis of trees, lawns, and white picket fences has been a state park for 10 years. There are other attractions besides its picturesque picnic grounds, like the musical shows and plays performed there in warm weather, and the scenic cliffs of Red Rock Canyon. It's also about 10 degrees cooler than in Las Vegas, 20 miles to the east. In summer, that's relief.

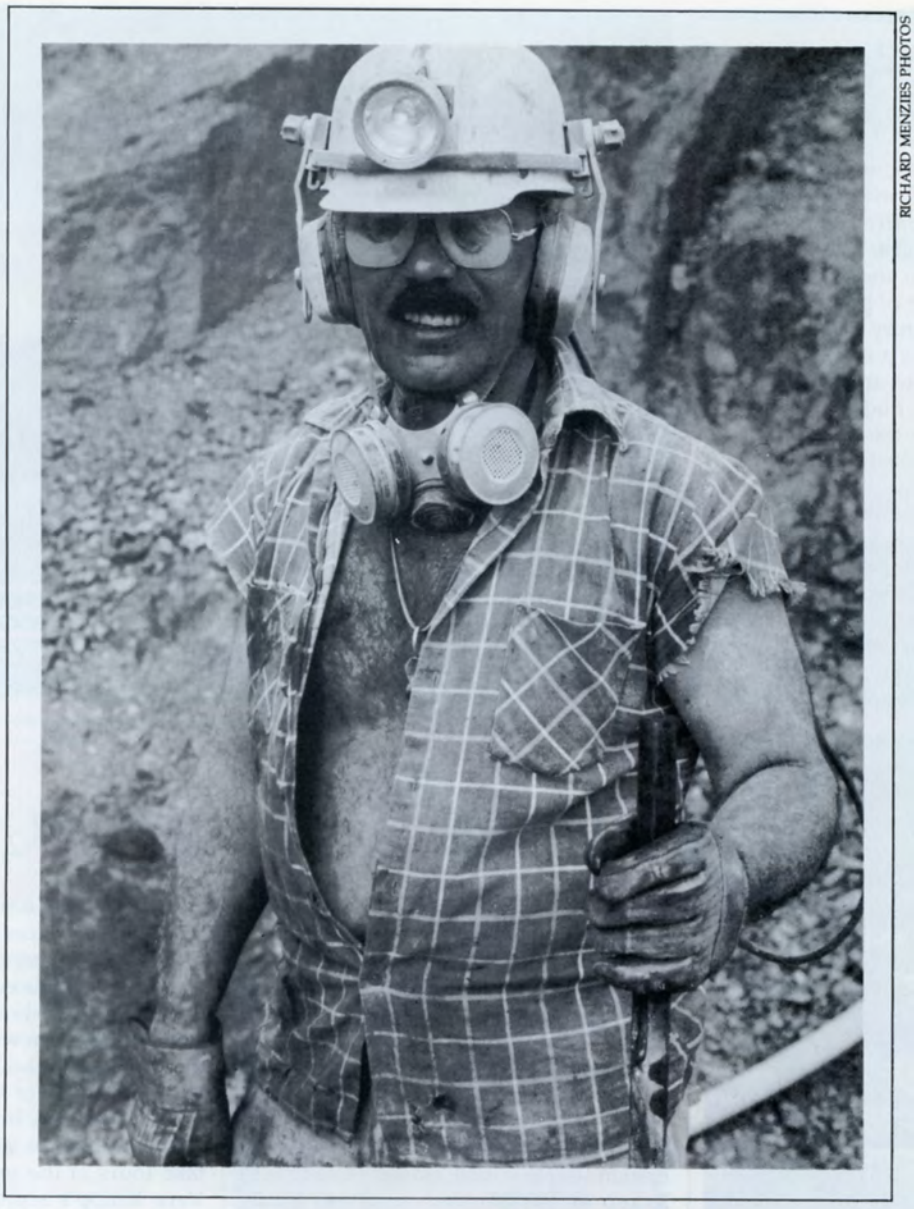
On weekends and holidays you can take tours of the main house (ask about Vera Krupp's secret bedroom) and the ranch buildings, some of which are more than 100 years old. For information write Spring Mountain Ranch, Box 124, Blue Diamond, NV 89004, or call 702-875-4141. There is an entrance fee, and the park closes daily at sunset.

State Parks' 50th Birthday

The Nevada Division of State Parks is celebrating its 50th birthday this year. The system began in 1935 when the legislature agreed to take over the Valley of Fire and and three parks near Caliente—Kershaw-Ryan, Beaver Dam, and Cathedral Gorge—because of their scenic and recreational importance.

"This year's celebration is going to include all the parks," says division chief John Richardson. The Valley of Fire is considered the oldest. Two other Southern Nevada parks, Spring Mountain Ranch and Floyd Lamb (Tule Springs), are featured in this issue, and all the state's parks will be featured in *Nevada Magazine* this year.

For more information on this winter's events, please check the Nevada Calendar, which starts on page 74. For details on the golden anniversary celebration, write to the Nevada Division of State Parks, Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV 89710, or call 702-885-4387 □



RICHARD MENZIES PHOTOS

The Case of the Sky High Prospector

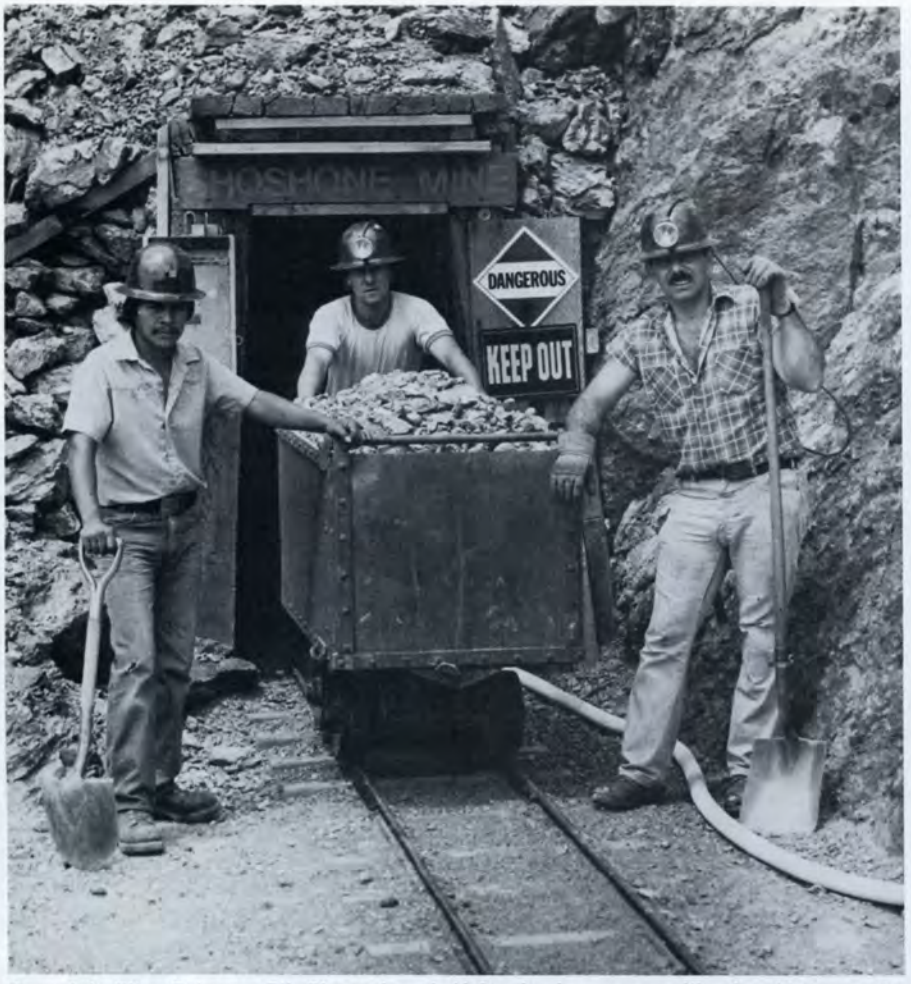
Al Lombardo came to Austin a century too late, but through luck and pluck he's proved that Nevada is still the land of opportunity.

By Richard Menzies

The question is, can a down-and-out Italian kid from the streets of New York come out West, stake his claim on the thoroughly picked-over mineral belt of Central Nevada, and live happily ever after in the almost ghost town of Austin?

Back in the territorial days when *New York Tribune* publisher Horace Greeley issued his famous injunction, "Go West, young man," the answer would likely have been yes. But that was more than a century ago, and the prospects didn't seem so bright in the summer of 1969 when Al Lombardo hit town with precious little mining experience under his belt and 17 cents in his





From left, Elias Paisano, Gib Bleazard, and Al Lombardo move ore like the old-timers. On preceding page, Lombardo found the design for his trestle in history books.

pocket. Fresh out of the Marine Corps, he had spent some time prospecting for gold in Alaska and was knocking around Nevada when his pickup truck broke down in Austin.

"I didn't have enough money to fix it," recalls the 37-year-old Lombardo. "But I guess when you're down and out of luck, when you hit bottom, you start pullin' rabbits out of hats. That's when you work best."

After looking for regular employment without much success, Al decided to strike out on his own as a self-employed prospector. Ed and Louise Vigus at the hardware store agreed to stake him with a pick and shovel, and for the most part he subsisted on a diet of spaghetti and beans while peddling his nuggets and rocks to passersby from a humble roadside shop.

"I remember my first building was from Montgomery Ward's. It was 28 feet long, eight feet wide, and I think five and a half feet high. That was my first shop; I couldn't afford any more than that. It blew away in the wind. Then I had my lapidary equipment all out in the open, but that following fall I scraped up enough money to put up a better one."

Fifteen years later, the Lombardo Milling and Mining Company appears to be in no danger of being carried off by the wind. Today the complex situated on Austin's main street includes a gemstone and jewelry showroom, a lapidary workshop and laboratory, and a three-bay maintenance garage—all painted the deep blue color of number one turquoise. Beside the front entrance stands an antique ore cart flanked by assorted cacti and prickly pear and a sign bearing the somewhat superfluous warning to keep out of the garden. In addition to the lethal shrubbery, the premises are protected by a nearsighted Doberman named Mutso and a duck by the name of Beatrice B. Blumberg.

"Beatrice is the eyes of our security system," explains the proprietor. "Mutso provides the teeth."

Lombardo, whose accent betrays his eastern urban upbringing, is only half kidding when he talks about security. People around Austin haven't exactly warmed to his brash manner and mile-a-minute pace, and some, he claims, are downright hostile. Lombardo was denied admission to the local chamber of commerce in 1976, and he's still smarting from the effects of a police raid on his laboratory two years ago.

"They're really paranoid here," says Lombardo. "They thought I was making drugs or something! But besides that, I've done very well here, in spite of the problems I've had."

What Lombardo makes in his laboratory is jewelry and rock clocks. He's also mastered a process for growing silver and gold crystals, which he markets in the form of pendants and earrings. But his main stock in trade is turquoise, which he mines, polishes, and fashions into bracelets, rings, and necklaces with help from his friend and apprentice Danielle Kohler. And while other retailers have complained of a slump in the turquoise market, Lombardo is typically bullish. The key to success lies in aggressive marketing, he says, citing DeBeers Consolidated Mines as an example.

"They did it with diamonds, an absolutely useless rock. The gem diamond's absolutely worthless, but they advertised and they created their own market, and became the richest, most powerful, most influential, and most successful mining company in the world. And if DeBeers can do it, I can do it."

The source of Lombardo's optimism is a rock ledge located 9,000 feet above sea level in a nearby mountain range. He proudly calls his claim the mother lode of Nevada turquoise, and over the past decade it's yielded over two million carats' worth of sky-blue gemstone.

Because of its elevation, the mine is inaccessible during the winter and spring except by snowcat. In warmer months it can be reached by four-wheel-drive truck, courage, and an unwavering faith in Ford brakes. As he drove up with a visitor one day last summer, crawling skyward along the barest outline of a road, Lombardo enjoyed a bird's eye view of falcons soaring over a convoluted landscape formed of dozens of neighboring mountaintops. Spectacular as the scene was, however, it proved to be just a prelude to the main event. Cresting a ridge, he and his passenger came suddenly upon a herd of at least a hundred wild horses, and watched transfixed as they galloped off in a thunder of hoofbeats down a distant cloudy draw. It was a breathtaking spectacle worthy of the big screen, wanting only a suitable soundtrack—perhaps a Vaughn Monroe rendition of "Ghost Riders in the Sky."

In the midst of all this alpine splendor, Lombardo's Shoshone Mine looks like a page torn from a book on the history of western mining. Emerging from the graceful portal, a narrow-gauge track runs out onto an old-fashioned wooden dump trestle overlooking the valley below. The mine's rolling stock consists of a single 18-gauge dump car and a tool cart loaded with dynamite. About all that is missing

from the picture is a cantankerous proprietor in a beard and slouch hat, ruminating on a plug of Mail Pouch chewing tobacco. Although Al Lombardo doesn't match the description, neither does he mind the comparison.

"The old-timers, they knew what they were doing," he says. "I have to admit it, I'm not a very good miner, but these old-timers who worked with that star drill, single jack, and stuff, it was an art in itself. Archaic as hell, but in a high-grade mining operation it's still the most efficient way to go."

Except for his pneumatic drill and dynamite, Lombardo admits he still mines "like they did 8,000 years ago. You gotta understand, I don't produce like these big mines. I produce handfuls a day of fine material, all hand sorted."

Lombardo is especially pleased with his wooden dump trestle, which he and assistant Gib Bleazard put together in the summer of 1979. Although such structures were common in Comstock days, he says it's impossible today even to find plans. Lombardo's trestle is patterned after pictures he found in historical journals.

Lombardo has also researched his claim's history and prehistory, which is written in rock shards and primitive tools, and has determined that the ledge was once worked by Indians who used the blue gemstone for ornamentation and barter. In the early 1900s the prospect was unofficially worked by one Jerry Jackson, a Shoshone who also went by the name of Sontag. In 1969 the claim was officially located and registered as the Sotang Lode by prospectors who evidently couldn't spell Sontag's name right.

In 1972 Lombardo bought a half interest in the ledge from a local prospector and founded Lombardo Turquoise Milling and Mining Company, Inc. After moving 15 feet of rock, he was encouraged, and with the help of a financial partner he drilled several exploratory holes to a depth of 150 feet. The results seemed to bear out his suspicion that he was sitting on top of a rare hypogene, or deep, turquoise deposit.

Over the next two years, Lombardo was able to enlarge the pit to a depth of 70 feet. With proceeds from the recovered turquoise, he built up his jewelry business and eventually was able to buy out his partners, thus becoming sole stockholder in the mine. Then in 1975 he decided to convert to an underground operation and named it the Shoshone Mine in honor of its aboriginal finders.

Because the turquoise occurs in vertical fractures sandwiched between hard waste rock, the drilling and blasting process has been painstakingly slow. After 10 years the mine consists of a single adit, the North Star Tunnel, extending just 105 feet

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Beatrice B. Blumberg is the brains and eyes of Lombardo's security system.

into the mountainside. Yet the mine remains profitable, owing as much to the resourcefulness of its owner as it does to the richness of the rock. Lombardo recently put himself through school and has become a registered gemologist. And even though he arrived on the scene a century after the big rush, he maintains that Nevada's underground wealth is far from played out.

"Nevada is probably more wealthy than Burma, Ceylon, Thailand—all the main gem producing centers of the world put together. People are sitting back in their armchairs wishing they could find a vein. But there's a lot of minerals left. All you gotta do is dig them out and produce them."

Al Lombardo has come a long way from the sidewalks of New York to a mountaintop in Nevada. Financially he's in the black, but one gets the impression he values his independence and self-sufficient life style more than money

"I think the mine itself is a symbol of what Nevada's about," he declares. "It's right in the middle of the state, and mining's what built this state. The miners came, they built their mines. The storekeepers and ranchers came to feed the miners, and gambling came later.

"I really love Nevada. I mean, I don't consider myself an Easterner. I couldn't survive in the city where you're just a number and they don't care who you are. Here, you're still somebody. I'm probably living in the last of America. It's the last frontier." □

Richard Menzies, who lives in Salt Lake City, grew up in a small western mining town but says he's glad he missed out on frontier days. His paternal grandparents were veterans of the 1900 Scofield Mine Disaster and his mom's dad was a hard-rock driller who perished of silicosis.

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JAY ALDRICH PHOTOS

Joe Domenici with his wife Gladys and brother Pete, on their ranch in Mason Valley.

Yerington:

CATTLE, COPPER, AND SOUL

This picturesque farming town has been a place of hope since the day some wild cowboys named it Pizen Switch. So while the copper hills are quiet now, the ranches and Main Street of the cattle kingdom are very much alive.

By Roger Smith

Eighty miles southeast of Reno, Mason Valley stretches almost 30 miles north to south. Its central and eastern margins, where the East Walker River flows, are checkerboarded in shades of green and brown—a colorful quilt created by fields of alfalfa, onions, garlic, rye, oats, and potatoes.

In the valley's center lies Yerington, seat of Lyon County and home for 2,300 of the valley's 6,000 residents. Since its settlement in the early 1870s, Yerington and the valley have depended on farming and ranching. That type of life has been the community's greatest strength. Families tend to grow large and stick close together. Basic values are generally undisputed, since everybody would prefer to keep the valley's developments—housing and cultural—small and controlled.

Drive into Yerington on a Saturday morning and you'll find that it wakes up early and clear-headed like most farming towns. As you go past the National Guard Armory, there's the white clapboard Baptist church on the left and the Mormon church on the right. Ahead is the high school, the VFW hall, and the town's single stoplight. When you get to the redbrick post office, you can park fender-first to the curb and not worry about the time—there are no meters. At the post office you'll usually find a small group in front, discussing politics, gossiping, telling jokes. The people have last names like Grulli, Snyder, Reyes, Freitas, Sam, Tibbals, Galantoumini, Cornmesser—even Smith.

Often found among the morning crowd is Dave Fulstone Jr. His family has been in the area since 1859, and his grandmother, Dr. Mary Fulstone, has practiced medicine there for more than 60 years. The family also is one of the largest garlic growers in the nation.

"It's been said if you've ever bought a pair of shoes here, you'll have the soul to come back," Fulstone says with a laugh.









At top, John Frank McGowan, left,and cousin Frank McGowan look for new industries. Below are reporter Marv Snow and Jim and Dave Sanford of the Mason Valley News.

Assemblyman Joe Dini joins his son Jay at a Lucky Club blackjack table. Below, ranchers Joe and Pete Domenici feed the cattle on their Mason Valley ranch with the quiet copper hills in the background.

"The beauty, the friendliness of people, the weather—they're all very attractive. Maybe it's the water that makes this town different from other communities. We've got that beautiful river and pure water in abundance."

You also might run into Pete and Joe Domenici, who raise hay and cattle south of town. Their parents came to the Mason Valley from Italy just after the turn of the century. "This is a good valley, mostly farming now," says Joe. "The crops are good, even though the price isn't there right now." Pete agrees, pointing out something he's proud of: "We've lived here all our lives."

Steve Aiazzi, a jeweler, might be coming out of the P.O. His grandparents came to Mason Valley to ranch, too. "Everybody who comes into the store, I seem to know them. They form a big family here. Everybody knows everybody else."

Across Main Street is the Lucky Club, one of the town's two casinos. Afternoon and evening, patrons line the bar, talking and gesturing, while owners Joe Dini and his son Jay wait on them from the other side. Joe is also third generation. A community leader most of his life, he's served 10 terms as a state assemblyman. "Right now the economy is a little stagnant," he says. "All the state's small communities are in the same box, but we're a little better. Eventually you'll see this town come to life again. I'm optimistic."

A few doors south is the newspaper office and the cluttered desk of editor Jim Sanford. His father Bob, the publisher, helped build the paper into a widely-respected weekly. If you asked Jim, "What's new?" you'd learn that it's not always what's new that counts. "This town's got a very relaxed life style," he says. "We see an awful lot of people in the evening biking or walking together to enjoy the air. I can only remember one serious crime in the last five years, and that was in the next valley. No wonder people like it here."

Outside, the streets are quiet except for







Once an economic bonanza, Anaconda's massive copper pit is now a lakebed. At top right, Johnnie Howard checks the news on Main Street, where there's ample elbowroom. Of course, Bryan Masini and his rancher-father Larry wouldn't mind a few more elbows at the tables.

the sound from a car passing or the occasional clackety-clang of slot machines as a casino door opens and then swings shut. Down a block, past Bryan Masini's brightly-marqueed Casino West, is a place every town should have—the Miner's Trail, a pool hall and cafe where kids like to go for hamburgers and a few games of snooker. The county courthouse, with its tall Doric columns and scrolled windows, is across the street and occupies the corner of a half-block park. On the lawn stands a water fountain, tall shade trees, stone tablets with the Ten Commandments engraved on them, and an American Legion monument honoring residents who died in the wars.

Still farther down the street is the county museum and beyond that the orange walls of Copeland's lumber yard, a blacksmith's foundry, homes, and offices. Then the long swaths of green fields begin.

A sign at the edge of town welcomes visitors to "The Cattle Kingdom in the Copper Hills." Once a boast, that motto now expresses a dilemma. On the slopes of the Singatse Range to the west you can spot the copper hills easily enough; vast slag mesas fan out from the Anaconda copper mine, which is now idle. It closed in 1978, laying off hundreds of workers, and the economy has been in



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Wovoka: A Valley Hero

In the early 1890s Mason Valley's first true celebrity emerged—Paiute priest-healer Jack Wilson. Raised as a foster child by whites on a Smith Valley ranch, Wilson still had plenty of opportunities to witness the poverty and degenerating traditions of his people. Most Paiute and Shoshone Indians, their traditional foraging and hunting areas taken from them, led precarious lives, supported by jobs in mines or by seasonal work on ranches. Those who stayed on reservations often had no work at all.

Wilson readopted his birth name, Wovoka, and led a movement to unite the Indian community through the Ghost Dance. He was so successful that white political and military leaders feared he might start a general Indian uprising in the West. Wovoka appears to have had no violent plans, but whites and some Indians were quick to misinterpret his message. The Ghost Dance movement, prohibited by law in some areas of the country, died out in the late 1890s, but Wilson was long regarded as a hero in Mason Valley.

suspended animation ever since, supported mainly by agriculture and county government. Few of the town's leaders are really pessimistic, however, because Yerington is no newcomer to a becalmed economy. The hope for one reliable additional source of income for the valley—something to supplement but never replace ranching and farming—has led the area through cycles of security and insecurity for more than 100 years.

The first cycle of hopes involved the town's name and a railroad.

Mason Valley honors the name of its first settler. In 1858 Arkansan Hock Mason herded cattle through the valley on his way to the California gold fields. He liked the lush pastures he found along the East Walker River so much that he set up a homestead the following year and became the first king of the Cattle Kingdom. More settlers followed.

According to local legend, a group of cavorting cowpokes created Yerington's first name. Near where the city hall now stands there was a small saloon built of willow boughs and called the Switch. One day early in the 1870s some cowboys, having liquored up on the bitter rye-and-tobacco-plug whiskey at the Switch, took to racing their horses up and down the town's only street. Overcome by thirst, one jasper suddenly reigned up and called out, "Oh, let's go to the Switch and get us some more pizen." All who heard thought his remark very witty, and afterwards the town was called Pizen Switch.

The cowboy tale sounds almost too pat to be true, but the name, whatever its source, stuck until 1879. The town was growing, and residents decided a more cultivated, descriptive name was needed. A group gathered on November 16 at the dance hall, where whiskey and hard cider flowed and a fiddle reeled. At the height of the party, as the *Lyon County News* reported the next day, "The place was re-christened 'Greenfield' and an organization was formed, to be known as the Committee of Vengeance, whose duty it shall be to murder and scalp any and every person who shall hereafter call it 'Pizen Switch.' "

Yerington: What's in Town

Yerington has an excellent variety of services for travelers, including motels, restaurants, casinos, supermarkets, and gas stations. Fishermen find good angling at Lahontan State Recreation Area and Topaz Lake, each about 30 miles away, and at Walker Lake, 40 miles east. Bird and deer hunting are popular in fall.

For details on Yerington's services and attractions, write the Mason Valley Chamber of Commerce, Box 327, Yerington, NV 89447, or call 702-463-3721.

Greenfield bloomed. Farmers irrigated the land and grew barley, hay, vegetables, and even tobacco. There were flour and barley mills. The Ludwig and Bluestone mines opened. The county established a school near the river, and by 1888 schoolmarm Kitty Blake had 21 pupils, ages four to 16. Able-bodied men organized a full company for the Nevada National Guard in 1885. Company I, the Greenfield Guard, later won prizes for marching but never had to perform its primary mission, the quelling of Indian uprisings.

For it to really prosper, Greenfield needed a railroad, and in 1890 town leaders tried to persuade Henry M. Yerington, general manager of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad, to bring a new rail line, the Carson and Colorado, to the town. He balked. So Greenfielders tried subtler pressure. In 1894 they changed the town's name to Yerington. Flattered, Henry Yerington presented his namesake town with an American flag, but he had already built his new rail line elsewhere. Thus ended the town's first cycle of hopes and reversals.

After the turn of the century, mining speculation increased in the area. Investment brokers predicted great developments, but residents were skeptical until a small boom in copper started in 1909. Yerington became a small tent city. Then electrical and telephone service extended



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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

With roots in rich Mason Valley soil, Yerington grew in 1910 while boomcamps withered. In 1911, Yerington wrested the county seat from Dayton, 60 miles north.

into the valley for the first time, the county established a high school, and by 1911 Yerington was the county seat. Newspapers moved to town. The *Lyon County Times* came from Dayton in 1907, and the *Mason Valley News*, now the county's leading paper, began publishing in town in 1914; it proudly calls itself "The only newspaper in the world that gives a damn about Yerington."

Yerington finally got its railroad, too. To serve the mines in the area, the Nevada Copper Belt Railroad operated from 1911 to 1947, hauling ore and freight to the Southern Pacific line through Wabuska.

In the 1920s and '30s mining became sporadic again, while improved irrigation, made possible by the Topaz and Bridgeport reservoirs in the Sierra foothills, increased agricultural production. Farmers diversified, raising Burbank potatoes, poultry, bees, hogs, and a variety of grain crops. Dairy farms started, and a creamery opened. But the valley again was relying mostly on agriculture as the second hope for diversification faded.

When Anaconda began operations in 1952 at Weed Heights, three miles west of Yerington, the town's hopes revived once more. The open-pit mine and ore-reduction plant employed more people and contributed more tax revenue than any other institution in Lyon County. Every day through three shifts, garage-size Dart and Euclid dumptrucks, capable of hauling nine cubic yards each, rumbled down the spiral road to the bottom of the pit, received loads of malachite ore from the gigantic shovels, wound back up the road, and dumped their loads for processing through rock crushers and acid leaching plants.

From Yerington at night you could see the trucks' headlights swerve and beam into the air; the pale radiance of the reduction plant shown like phosphor against the mountainside. Above the pit and plant, Weed Heights, the company town, had 250 houses for employees, baseball fields, a bowling alley, swimming pool, store, tennis courts, and a view of the broad alfalfa fields on the valley floor. It's no wonder that when Anaconda closed down the mine in 1978, laying off a work force of more than 500 men and women, the townsfolk believed they were seeing the end to yet another cycle of high hopes.

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was a tourist attraction for a while, but it is closed to the public now. A roof tile manufacturer is using the space to make his product, and the old plant remains an ideal industrial site, with power, equipment, water, roads, and housing waiting to be used.

The mine's closing didn't shut down the whole valley—not by a long shot—although it did affect the economy. "We've had a lot of businesses that have closed down or have modified the way they're doing business," says John Frank McGowan, chairman of the Mason Valley Industrial Committee.

The principal sources of revenue now are farming and ranching, county government, the Sierra Pacific coal-fueled generating plant, Casino West, Dini's Lucky Club, and Mainline, a plastics manufacturer at Wabuska.

"And retired people," adds George Fraser, president of the Mason Valley Chamber of Commerce. The two years after Anaconda closed saw a national housing boom. Many people were able to sell their homes at a profit and retire to places like Yerington, where land prices had fallen. Such newcomers eased the valley's economic pinch.

Economics aren't the only measure of a community, of course. Yerington has plenty of the liveliness that usually is meant by that vague word "culture."

The town has a number of amazing distinctions, for instance. Twenty years ago Yerington had the only tornado ever known to cause property damage in Nevada. Inside the post office is a mural by Adolph Gottlieb, one of the 20th century's preeminent abstract-expressionist painters. Perhaps most astonishing, Mason Valley's 1,000 to 1,500 acres of garlic is said to produce between five and 10 percent of the world's total crop yearly.

But the surest signs of culture are the town's everyday interests, evident throughout its streets: a large Catholic church as well as many other denominations, service clubs (Lions, Rotarians, Soroptimists, 20-30 Club), a hospital, and perhaps most important of all, schools.

"Most of our kids have a lot of fun going to school," says Mike Hagen, an English teacher at Yerington High. But the fun doesn't belong just to the students. Schools, and the high school especially, provide entertainment for the whole valley. The high school puts on plays, issues a literary magazine, hosts concerts, and fields the Y.H.S. Lions. Past class AA state champion in football and renowned for its wrestling squads, the high school and its teams are objects of town pride.

"Athletics, your children's recitals—these sort of things all draw big in Yerington," says Bryan Masini, who takes time from running his Casino West to work as a volunteer assistant varsity basketball coach. He grew up in Yerington, and his father Larry runs one of the biggest ranches in the valley.

Neither sports nor the arts are confined to the school, of course. A nine-hole golf course and country club lie a mile out of town. There are town baseball and basketball leagues, ranges for archery and trap shooting, and Lake Lahontan and Topaz Lake, each less than an hour's drive away, are good for boating, skiing, fishing, and swimming. The East Walker River has trout and catfish; the hills and marshes around town have deer, chukar, geese, and doves. Rockhounds have found jasper, agate, turquoise, petrified wood (now restricted), camel fossils, and arrowheads.

Valley residents like to turn their work into fun, too. Fairs, bees, and contests have been part of the valley's culture since the beginning, and a casual bet can start a tradition. An example: In 1910 a fellow ranch hand asked Harry Warren how far he could tote a sack of grain. All the way to Yerington, he replied. Impossible, others said; that would be 10 miles, and the bag weighed 120 pounds. Warren didn't back down, and soon wagers were made. Everyone agreed on a date, and as Warren went into training, news spread. Eventually $1,500 rode on Harry and his sack. When he carried the sack the 10 miles in three-and-one-quarter hours, he won $750 and the grudging admiration of all who had bet against him. Other sack toters have since bettered Warren's record in what has become known as the World Championship Sack Race, held "whenever we get enough money for prizes," according to George Fraser.

The Lyon County Fair and Rodeo is another valley tradition. Held in late August, the four-day event is a variety show of agri-*culture* with horse shows, horseshoe matches, poultry and rabbit judging, frog jumping, cow decorating, firemen's water fights, swine and beef show, full rodeo, littlest cowboy and cowgirl contest, sheep and goat show,

Cash and a Class Act

By its own estimation, Yerington is becoming the softball capital of Nevada. The town has had a softball league for decades, but when Yerington Championship Softball, a non-profit organization, was formed in 1984, the sport became big business in town.

Ed McCourt was hired to direct the programs. An ex-Marine reconnaissance warrant officer and Silver Star winner in Vietnam, McCourt decided that the right thing to do was to do everything big. He started by asking town organizations and businesses for help, and soon many had pledged materials or money to improve the fields, stands, parking, and picnic areas. Next, McCourt scheduled 11 two-day tournaments and a tournament of champions and advertised for men's and women's class C slow-pitch and men's class B fast-pitch teams. The entry fee varied between $75 and $150, depending on the tournament, with some discounts for teams traveling long distances.

The response astonished even McCourt. "In our first year people have told us this is the best-run tournament softball program in the state of Nevada. We've had 12 events, and 109 teams have come."

Yerington felt the benefits immediately as the teams pumped a lot of money into local businesses—between $50 and $250 per player by various estimates.

"Here's an example of what can happen," McCourt says. "One night out at the Log Cabin, softball players alone ordered 73 pitchers of beer. The owner figured he did about $700 over his usual gross. There's enough business for everybody, if they keep their heads. We estimate we brought in something like $320,000 for the summer."



Softball boss McCourt holds court.

To open the first tournament, McCourt brought in a Marine Corps band and the King and His Court, an exhibition team. "We try to put on a class act here," he says.

"You should have seen that opener," Casino West operator Bryan Masini says. "The Marines were out there playing the national anthem, and I mean it was baseball, hot dogs, and apple pie. Everybody felt good. It was a great day for Yerington.

"By the way," he adds, "if a team beats the Casino West team in a tournament, they all get free buffets that night."



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Parade day brings the community together the most. The Future Farmers of America start serving pancakes, bacon, ham, juice, and coffee at 6 a.m. At 10 the first entries head up Main Street. There's the Marine Corps color guard; politicians and beauty queens smiling in convertibles; firetrucks with firemen tossing candy to kids; antique cars; local weekend warriors with machine guns sputtering blanks and scattering cartridges on the asphalt; Kerak clowns marching, Kerak clowns riding go-carts, Kerak clowns making music; Lyon County Search and Rescue; club floats, Indian floats, political floats; high school marching bands; tractors; horses; and dented entrants in the demolition derby. It's a grand sight, the parade, full of grand sounds, the sidewalks lined with cheering people, kids scrambling for treats.

Many of those who stand cheering are no longer residents, however. "It's a great place to come back to. I come back every year for the parade," Donna Clark says. She was student body vice president at Y.H.S. during her senior year in 1971, but she has settled in Carson City. Mark Crawford, who graduated a year before her, nods agreement but says, "It's really a modern ghost town. After the mine closed the town changed character." Both refer indirectly to the town's greatest problem, keeping its young people.

"The saddest thing I see," says Bryan Masini, "is that only those of us whose dads own businesses can find jobs after high school."

As a remedy, some community leaders want to attract tourists and advertise the town to developers and chain stores and restaurants. Yerington is not on a major highway, but Masini says the town's location is really an advantage. "We're in the middle of every rural community in this part of the state—Fallon, Hawthorne, Silver Springs, Gardnerville. We could have been the hub of activity." Others hesitantly agree, including members of the chamber of commerce. They're considering holding a "mid-state" fair to attract entrants and spectators from all of Western Nevada. One tourist venture that has proven unexpectedly profitable is Yerington Championship Softball, a series of tournaments that draws teams to the town from California as well as Nevada (see page 24).

Jim Sanford sees another advantage to Yerington's location. "Because we're off the beaten path, the people here are friendlier and make others feel more welcome." Still, many local business people probably would agree with Sanford when he says, "Tourism—yes, it does help a little, but a long-term industrial base is what we need, three or four small businesses employing about 50 people each."

Yerington has great advantages for small industry that complement the state's business-friendly tax structure. According to city manager Frank McGowan, a cousin of industrial chairman John Frank McGowan, some residents are so eager to see companies come into the valley that they will sell land cheaply or even give it away to attract serious industrialists. Beyond such generosity, says McGowan, "We think we've got a very attractive industrial atmosphere. We have a good supply of pure ground water; we pump from only 100 feet, which no other community in the area can say. Another asset is the weather. Being far from the Sierra, we have a better year-round climate."

However, attracting new industry is a long process, says John Frank McGowan. "We have to talk to at least 10 companies all the time to get one good prospect. Then from three good prospects you maybe land one."

A large work force awaits any new jobs, and that's not counting only people in the valley. "It's amazing the people who want to move back here, people who worked at Anaconda, then had to move away," Sanford says. "They write and ask if there are any jobs, because they want to raise their families here."

And so the valley falls back again on its greatest strength, its peacefulness—a place where growth is slow and pondered thoroughly beforehand, where Democrats and Republicans quietly preserve their balance (51 to 42 percent in the 1984 election), where people prize common neighborliness.

"We have a lot of advantages here," says Joe Dini. "It's really a good place to raise a family." And Sanford points out, "This community has survived better than most people thought it would after Anaconda closed."

Will it continue to survive? Asked that question, chamber of commerce president Fraser laughs. He has just built a new office for his State Farm Insurance agency. "I think the community's going to grow. There are new homes. The Buckskin Mine, they're paying good money. The airport is expanding. Look, would I build a new office if the economy was depressed in this place?"

At the very least, the residents' basic optimism in life, the quality that binds families and keeps Yerington's tree-lined avenues green and peaceful—that optimism continues to flourish. □

Roger Smith, who now lives in Reno, went to Yerington High School and played tackle on the Lions' football team.

THEY HOLD DOWN MORE THAN ONE JOB.

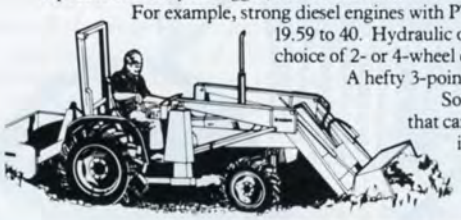


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ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN BARDWELL

The Mysterious Mr. Mars

When it comes to privacy, candy king Forrest Mars is positively out of this world.

By Rob Powers

He lives, according to those who think they know, in a distinctly inconspicuous penthouse above the Ethel M candy factory, a neat-as-a-pin plant on the fringes of Henderson that employs about 100 white-clad people and boasts a meticulously maintained botanical garden and cactus display.

Ask visitors who have taken the self-guided tour of the $6 million building if they've ever gotten a glimpse of him, and they'll probably say no. But then, they wouldn't know Forrest Mars if he walked right up and offered them a bag of M&Ms.

As mysteries go, the King of Creamy Confections is roughly on a par with the great pyramids of Egypt and the Grand Canyon. The 80-year-old Mars is one of the 10 richest men in the world—a conservative estimate of his worth is a sweet $1 billion—but he's not at all like many of his wealthy counterparts in the Las Vegas Valley, the land of conspicuous consumption.

He doesn't drive down the Strip in a chocolate-colored Mercedes with a personalized license plate proclaiming his wonderfulness. You'll never find him hobnobbing with Nevada's rich and famous (among whom he ranks first in the former category and last in the latter). He doesn't show up for ribbon cuttings, doesn't plug the opening of new Ethel M retail outlets—there are five in Southern Nevada, four in Northern Nevada, and others in California and Arizona—and doesn't like to see pictures of himself in the paper shaking hands with the governor.

For that matter, he doesn't like to see his picture in the paper, period.

Mars' first and only interview took place in 1966 with a reporter named Don Gussow. Gussow was writing a story for a candy industry journal, *Candy and Snack*. He had spent five years trying to get Mars to talk with him. The fact he did gained him a certain amount of notoriety among his peers, although Gussow maintained he had had better interviews. He once reminisced to another writer that he found Mars to be, surprisingly, a "compulsive talker."

The sole published photo of the candy magnate, taken of him fox hunting on his sprawling Virginia estate some years ago, ran in *Fortune* magazine last spring.

Only the blurriest of images of Mars can be formed today, based on skimpy information pried out of loyal employees who would rather not have their names divulged. Although Mars' reclusive nature has prompted comparisons to Howard Hughes, "He doesn't have long fingernails, long hair, and tennis shoes," said one person who has seen him in recent months. "He's not very tall," the person said, adding that, Mars is "not frail at all" despite his age.

"If you saw him walking down the street, there'd be nothing to indicate that he was anything other than an ordinary person. Nothing to indicate he was number seven in the wealth chain."

A cheerful woman who passes out free candy samples at the Ethel M factory, when asked if she sees Mars often, smiled sweetly and said, "We're not allowed to say anything." Asked if she had *ever* seen him, she wavered for a millisecond. Her glance shifted to a fellow worker nearby, whose stone-faced look sealed it. End of an interview that never was.

Mars, it's clear, is positively out of this world when it comes to privacy.

A few oft-told stories document the eccentricity of the man, his fanaticism for cleanliness, his passion for perfection. Once, years ago, he found an improperly wrapped bunch of candy bars and hurled all of them, one at a time, at a glass panel in the boardroom. Others see Forrest Mars as down to earth. "He's probably one of the nicest individuals you'd ever want to meet," said Tim Carlson of Las Vegas, former executive director of the Nevada Development Authority. "You could listen to his experiences for hours and never be bored. He's extremely knowledgeable and very sharp."

Dean Musser, an Ethel M executive—"we haven't been very formal about titles in this office"—and longtime Mars confidant, is as adept at handling questions about his boss as a major-league shortstop is at routine grounders. You see, every once in a while reporters still call to ask for interviews. Why they bother anymore is something to ponder. Perhaps it's in the hope that Mars, in his old age, will forget he's so private and grant an audience. Or maybe they dream that he will have awakened one morning and impetuously pledged to spill his life story to someone.

Sad to say, no such miraculous turn of events has taken place.

"There's nothing I can tell you about Mr. Mars," Musser politely said during a recent interview, his voice firm in tone and silky in resonance. "It's just that, from a private standpoint, he prefers to remain private. It's been that way for many, many years." Is it true Mars keeps a home in a penthouse above the factory? "We don't comment on where he or his family live." Since it has been written before—and probably *only* because it has been written before—the Mars lieutenant did say that his boss is married and has three children. Talking to them, or finding out where they are, was another matter.

Musser, who came to work for Ethel M upon its opening three years ago, hasn't failed to learn the lessons in privacy taught by his leader. Asked about his pre-

vious company assignments, he paused, choosing his words carefully. "I came here from Mars Inc.," he said slowly. "That's probably the best way to leave it."

When the questions about Mars come, say, at a cocktail party instead of from a reporter, is Musser any more generous with his information? (You knew the answer anyway.) But still the curious inquire.

"I suppose you develop ways to be responsive without divulging any private matters," said the professional kill-joy.

Okay. No more questions about Mars. By the way, what's it like to work for him?

Musser chuckled softly. "After 30 some years you wouldn't expect me to have anything but good things to say, would you?"

Of course not.

If Mars' own story remains cloaked in a shroud of mystery as thick as a coat of milk chocolate, that of the Mars empire is a matter of public record. The tale begins in 1911 in Tacoma, Washington, when Frank Mars started selling confections he concocted in the family kitchen.

That led to a factory, which in turn led to a larger one in Minneapolis nine years later. In the 1920s Frank Mars introduced the Snickers bar—one of the biggest-selling candy bars in the world today—as well as the Milky Way. He opened a plant in Chicago in 1929, which continued to show a profit throughout the Depression.

Forrest Mars was largely responsible for taking a prosperous company and, by diversifying its interests, turning it into an international empire, a conglomerate with tentacles reaching across several countries. Among the company's interests are Unisabi and Mars of France, Master Foods of Austria, Mars Italia, and Effen of Belgium.

Mars formed the hugely successful M&M Candies in 1940; the company then acquired Uncle Ben's a few years later and Kal Kan pet foods about 20 years after that.

Mars Inc., the privately-held company founded by Frank Mars, today boasts annual sales of about $3 billion. Forrest relinquished control of the corporation about 11 years ago to his sons, Forrest Jr. and John, who, like their father, have never been accused of being publicity hounds. But as the story goes, Mars, after five years on his Virginia estate, realized he just hadn't gotten the chocolate out of his blood.

He retired to Las Vegas in the late 1970s with his mother Ethel. "He had a tremendous amount of love for her," Carlson recalled. "He took care of her just like the old times. He's a very traditional individual."

After three years in Southern Nevada, Mars began putting together what Carlson called "a project he'd always had in the back of his mind." At Mars' request the legislature changed state law to allow booze candy. (Kentucky is the only other state that permits it.) He formed Ethel M—named after his mother, who died a few months before the plant opened—and brought trustworthy, reticent Dean Musser out to Las Vegas to help him run it.

Why did a billionaire septuagenarian candy tycoon with absolutely nothing to prove in this world come to the parched Nevada desert and build a $6 million chocolate oasis?

The question is open to myriad answers. But perhaps the most plausible, considering the man in question, comes from Jim Echeandia, one of the chocolate industry's top analysts. Shortly after the plant opened, Echeandia told a reporter, "Forrest Mars has, for his whole life, sought excellence, and I think he is trying one last time to show the candy world what excellence is. In an operation as small as Ethel M, he can monitor everything and get it dead right."

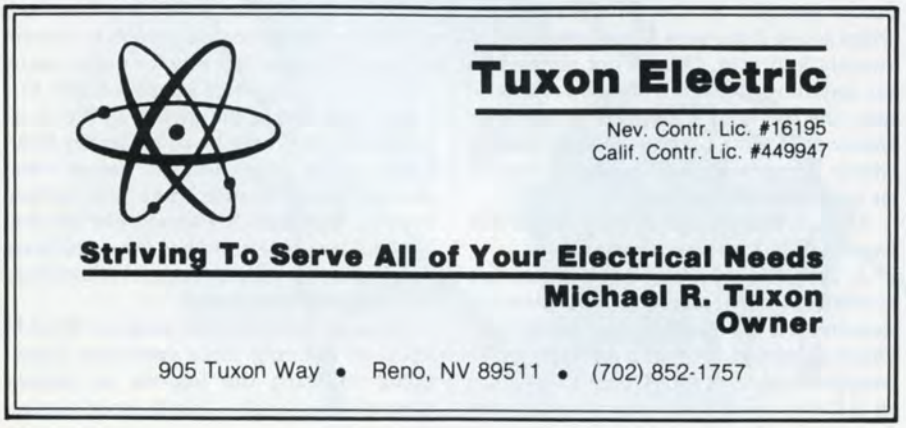
He can do that right from his penthouse above the buzz of activity in the factory, where workers busy themselves making raspberry truffles, honey almond nougats, macadamia nut clusters, and those liqueur-filled delights.

If he really does live there, that is. □

Rob Powers is Living Editor of the Las Vegas Review-Journal.







Nevada Notes

Special reports on cars, bars, and stars.

Compiled by Jim Crandall

Star Struck in Vegas

It looked like a major military maneuver: Helicopters and troop carriers lined Interstate 15 at Apex, 20 miles northeast of Las Vegas, while the Nevada National Guard stood by, armed to the teeth. Suddenly, the governor's motorcade sped toward the troops with TV and radio newshounds in hot pursuit. Deadly serious highway patrolmen manned a roadblock. "Just keep movin', please," the men in blue told awestruck motorists. "They're makin' a movie."

The Las Vegas filming of *Starman,* Columbia's new movie, tied up the I-15 location for three days and parts of downtown for six. Jeff *(Against All Odds)* Bridges was starring as an alien attempting to rendezvous with his celestial shipmates. Bridges assumed the form of a dead man whose widow was Karen *(Raiders of the Lost Ark)* Allen. The two engaged in an *It Happened One Night*-style cross-country trek with authorities on their trail.

Director John *(Christine, Halloween)* Carpenter called for take after take of the high-speed chase scene on I-15. During breaks Bridges and Allen conferred with Carpenter, smiled for photographers, and drank coffee with the crew.

The downtown filming on Fremont Street outside the Horseshoe Casino surprised tourists, who lined the sidewalks for the all-night shooting takes. Placards inside the casino warned gamblers that they might be recorded on film, but the patrons never paused in their play. Outside, spectators called out to Bridges for autographs; one time he signed a beer bottle after wiping the label clean with his sleeve. Some kids knew him from *Tron,* and one little old lady told him, "I just love your daddy." The two stars blended easily into the crowd. But when the camera was on them, they came alive, they glowed.

One night they found a souvenir shop open late, and Bridges left with some T-shirts while Allen bought a pen with invisible ink. Of course, they weren't exactly big spenders compared to Columbia. The movie company was said to have spent $720,000 during its stay in Southern Nevada.

—Beth Weinberger

Everything Must Go

Some observers mourned it as the passing of an era. Others saw it as the chance of a lifetime. Few walked an emotional middle ground during the two-day auction last fall at Harrah's Automobile Collection.

At the megabuck marathon 335 vintage autos were sold for more than $10 million, and Jack Nethercutt's $800,000 bid for a 1936 Duesenberg convertible set a world bidding record. Nethercutt's purchase was at least partly an act of sentiment. In 1961 he had sold the same car to Bill Harrah for $5,000 to raise capital for a cosmetics business. Now Nethercutt's Merle Norman Cosmetics is worldwide, and he spent a total of $2 million on 19 cars over the weekend.



MARILYN NEWTON

The auction was the first in a series that will dismantle the collection, which is the world's largest. When Holiday Inns took over Harrah's in 1978 and announced plans to sell all the cars, local buffs scrambled to save the collection and formed the non-profit William F. Harrah Automobile Foundation. Holiday Inns has donated 100 cars to the foundation, including a rare 1931 Bugatti Royale, the 1907 Thomas Flyer that won the New York to Paris race in 1908, and an 1892 Panhard & Levassor with a V-2 engine.

Another 200 of the best cars have been promised if the foundation can build a $30-million museum. The foundation has raised less than $3 million, but there are hopes that Reno will donate some land.

Bill Harrah collected cars privately for 14 years before opening his Sparks showrooms in 1962. The collection had reached a total of 1,443 cars when the casino czar died in 1978. Now only about 750 cars remain, and those not earmarked for the foundation will be sold at future auctions.

—JC

The Oldest, Bar None

The Genoa Bar and Saloon, said to have opened its doors in 1863, seems to have withstood a challenge to its status as Nevada's oldest thirst parlor.

The challenge was raised last fall by the Delta Saloon in Virginia City. Hugh Gallagher, who keeps the books there, contended the Delta has operated at its current location since 1862.

In response, Genoa Bar owner Bob Carver said that Gallagher was all wet. Carver, who bought his place in 1963, said the roof may have burned down a few times over the years, but the bar never moved and never has been anything else, even during Prohibition.

For years Carver has based his claim to having the state's oldest continuously operating bar on word-of-mouth information from old-timers in Genoa and on research done by John Riggs Sr., archivist for the Snowshoe Thompson Chapter of E Clampus Vitus. Riggs said he reviewed old business directories and newspaper clips and concluded the saloon was built by Al Livingston in late 1863.

The Clamper historian is partially supported by Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society. Earl said he couldn't find any 1863 or 1864 references to Livingston's Exchange, the first name for the Genoa Bar, in early newspapers. But the files show that the Delta was operating in 1862 at a different location and that the saloon also had to be rebuilt at least once.



JAY ALDRICH

Therefore, Earl said, the Genoa Bar appears to have an edge over the Delta in bragging rights to the oldest continuous bar title.

He also noted that the Delta's location and building apparently have gone unchanged since 1875, when much of the city was rebuilt after a fire.

And that clouds the claim of the Santa Fe bar in Goldfield, dating to 1905, that it's the second oldest continuously operating bar in Nevada. Santa Fe owner Jim Marsh, who lives in Las Vegas, said it was easy to avoid controversy by claiming second place instead of first. Now that the record check has brought that claim into question, he isn't worried.

"Maybe we're the oldest place in Central Nevada," he said.*—Brendan Riley*

Lure of the Lunkers

As Nevada's title-holders know, there's a catch to every record fish story.

By Terry Dove

A flick of the wrist sends line and bait zinging out into the water. Suddenly the pole jerks, shivers, and bends, and line peels off the reel like kite string in a hurricane.

First thought: "Got one!"

Next thought: "This one is *real* big!"

Who knows? It could be a record-breaker. Since the Nevada Department of Wildlife began keeping trophy tallies in 1968, an array of stuffable lunkers has been hauled in from Nevada waters. Some of the big ones have been caught by serious anglers who specifically aim to break records. Other marks are set by novices on Sunday picnics. Also, there's always the chance to set the year's record for a lake or backcountry stream.

But whether by design, luck, or persistence, it's no small feat to land a state-record fish. Of the 28 current title-holders, four weighed in at more than 30 pounds, and one, Vernon Wells' striped bass from the Colorado River near Laughlin, was more than 53 pounds.

Wells, a veteran fisherman from Henderson, is clearly one of the serious record-holders. "I set out to break that record," he says. "I wanted to beat my buddy, James Thompson [who held the previous record of 48 pounds, 12 ounces]. I fished that river all five weeks of my vacation and nearly every day I had off work."

An electric furnace operator for a Las Vegas metals firm, Wells has been pursuing big fish for most of his 52 years, and he's not timid about his tackle or his techniques. "I use a 10-foot surf rod and 30-pound test line," he says, "and I do most of my fishing at night. That's when the bass run the shorelines to feed."

Wells hooked his huge striper around nine o'clock on a warm June night in 1978, using a sardine for bait. He was fishing alone in the swirling water downstream from Davis Dam. "It's a well-known spot," he admits. "I was about half-a-mile below the big gas line that crosses the river near Bullhead."

Surprisingly, what should have been a spectacular fight was over in about 15 minutes. The fish ran upstream with the bait and defeated itself in the heavy current. Still, the record was extremely important to Wells. "I would have won the Bullhead City Striper Derby if I had registered the fish in Arizona, but it wouldn't have been a state record over there." The Arizona record was and is 59 pounds, 12 ounces, and was caught in the same area. Wells says, "I passed up about $2,000 in cash and prizes."

Jerry Baker of Las Vegas takes his fishing seriously, too. The 39-year-old drywall installer endured a frigid fall night at Cave Lake near Ely to break the state's brown trout record. "I've always caught my biggest browns at night," he says.

> "Jean Bianchi caught her record white catfish in the Humboldt River while on a picnic. It was the first year she'd bought a fishing license. "Not many of the men in town would talk to me after that," she says with a laugh."

Baker fooled the 17-pound, hook-jawed bruiser with a Flatfish lure while casting from shore around midnight near the Cave Creek inlet. "He was huge," recalls Baker. "Seemed like he was as deep as he was long. I was sure I had the record. Bob Price, a good friend of mine with the Department of Wildlife, weighed it for me the next day in Ely. It was so big it hung over the scales."

Although Baker enjoys the notoriety of holding the record, he's not one to rest on his laurels. "Personally, I feel there are some browns in there over 20 pounds," he says eagerly. "If I can find the time, I'll try for another one this year."

Jerry Baker and Vernon Wells are serious, intense, and willing to put in many hours of fishing to find the big ones—unlike Jean Bianchi of Battle Mountain. In 1981 Bianchi caught her record white catfish in the Humboldt River, about 10 miles upstream from town while on a family picnic. It was the first year she'd bought a fishing license. "Not many of the men in town would talk to me after that," laughs the 55-year-old bookkeeper. "I guess they felt women weren't supposed to do such things."

Bianchi and her husband Ron had spotted the big catfish a few days earlier in a deep pool. Then they returned to the spot for a picnic and a little fishing, but even after the fish swallowed the bait of chicken liver, Bianchi had no idea she was fighting the same lunker. In fact, she thought she had a carp. "I was having a lot of fun just playing it," she chuckles. "I guess I just wore it out. I was lucky."

Nearly three feet long and almost 17 pounds, the huge catfish now decorates

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN BARDWELL



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McCarran 2000

The Clark County Board of Commissioners

the wall behind the counter at Battle Mountain Auto Supply, where Jean Bianchi works. "Next time you're in Battle Mountain, stop by and see it," she says. "I have a lot of fun showing it off."

Funny thing about record catfish—no one seems to try very hard to catch them. Harry Stephens, an occasional angler from Reno, caught his record channel catfish in June 1980 after fishing only half an hour at Lahontan Reservoir. "I was only in about four feet of water," says the 74-year-old angler. His bait was unspectacular, too—a piece of sucker meat on the bottom. But unlike Jean Bianchi, Stephens didn't get very excited about his 31-pound catch. He gave the fish to Wildlife's Fallon office. "They wanted to study it," he says.

The agency also was highly curious about what is perhaps Nevada's most unusual record fish, caught by 27-year-old Ron Iovinelli of Reno. While fishing with his younger brother in October 1983, Iovinelli caught a five-pound rainbow trout on the Truckee River near Verdi. Big rainbows are nothing new to the Truckee, but big *white* rainbows are rare anywhere. This trout was an albino.

When he first saw its unusual yellow back, white sides, and pink eyes, Iovinelli thought he had hooked a carp. Closer inspection revealed that the fish had all the features of a trout except color. "That's when I thought it might be an albino," he says. Later Marvin Burgoyne, a biologist with the Department of Wildlife, made the official identification. Burgoyne says, "I'm certain that's a fish we planted in the river in August 1983. We were surprised that it had survived in the wild."

> "Harry Stephens caught his record channel catfish in only four feet of water."

Like other record-holders, Iovinelli had his catch weighed, witnessed, and entered in the Nevada Trophy Program. Applications with the program's rules are available at large tackle shops and Wildlife's offices around the state, including Reno, 702-789-0500, and Las Vegas, 702-385-0285. Mailed reports are often accepted for yearly stream or lake marks, but a lunker that threatens a state record should be weighed by a Wildlife agent.

Iovinelli, meanwhile, is having his fish mounted. He also is thrilled about the agency's decision to create a record category for albino trout. "How could I lose?" he beams. "I've got the only one." □

Terry Dove of Reno is a freelance writer who enjoys stalking semi-record browns in the Truckee River.



Samples shows off a Pyramid monster. It's not his record fish—that one was eaten.

Corkey Samples and the Big Fish Story

Did he or didn't he? Only the fisherman knows for sure.

This is the amazing story of Corkey Samples, a Sparks man who said he would catch a world record trout—and did. At least, Corkey says he did. And two of Corkey's friends say he did. Even *Field and Stream* says he did. But some people swear he didn't. Now, 14 years later, Corkey Samples is back, fully expecting to catch a new world record and, hopefully, write the final chapter of one of Nevada's most bizarre fish stories.

It began in October 1970, when Corkey Samples announced to whomever cared at the time that he would catch a world record, fly-caught cutthroat trout in Pyramid Lake. It was a lofty goal. The existing record was a 15-pounder taken from Pyramid by Reno angler Roger Iveson the previous year. But Samples was a determined man. So determined, in fact, that he began an incredible fly-fishing vigil at the lake.

"I fished every day, dawn to dusk, from October 1st to April 11th," Samples says. "I never missed a day." Naturally, people asked him why. "Didn't have nothin' else to do," he explains today. "I'm too old to chase women. Besides, I broke my back not long before that, so I was out of work. I fished the first few weeks with a cane in one hand and a fly-rod in the other."

According to Samples, October through April is the time to catch big cutthroat on a fly at Pyramid Lake. Most anglers say the lake's prime fishing is January through March, but Samples says his long season paid off.

"I caught lots of big fish that winter," he recalls. "A lot of 'em were over 10 pounds. But there were times when I couldn't get a bite. Then it would change, and I couldn't keep 'em off the hook."

On the evening of April 11, 1971, while fishing at Dago Bay near the mouth of the Truckee, Corkey finally hooked the record fish. It smacked a black woolly worm imitation and peeled off 100 yards of line before he could slow it down.

His world record Lahontan cutthroat weighed 17 pounds, 14 ounces and measured 37.5 inches, destroying the old record. But then other factors surfaced to cast doubt on Samples' story and his fish. Only one poor-quality photo, which later was lost, was taken of the fish. His brother-in-law in Sacramento, who was supposed to have it mounted, ate the fish during a party, and only two other people, respected local anglers Mid Lipera and Ray Mudge, saw it.

A clique of Pyramid Lake fly-fishermen, including previous record holder Roger Iveson, has disputed the story from the start. Among other things, Iveson points to Samples' claim of catching the fish just before dark, then sending it to Sacramento early the next morning. "Now you tell me how they got a picture of that fish in broad daylight," he says.

"That's all crazy stuff," Samples counters. "We took the picture that morning. The only reason he says all that is because I beat him."

In the years following his big catch the fishing turned poor at Pyramid, Samples says, and he moved to Las Vegas and then Oklahoma in search of striped bass. But in the last two years the lake's fishing has improved dramatically, and Corkey Samples has returned to Sparks.

"I'm gonna catch a new world record this year. I want a 20-pounder, and I'll get it," he promises.

So if you happen to be at Pyramid Lake this winter, look for Corkey Samples. He'll be there, dawn to dusk, seven days a week. "I'm determined," he says. "And this time, no one will doubt my record."

—*Terry Dove*

Honest Abe

At last, the true story of how the man who gave Nevada statehood got his nickname. Honest.

By Harry E. Webb



ILLUSTRATION BY KATIE GROTEGUT

As a kid my history book had much to say about Abe Lincoln, who, through his integrity, was dubbed "Honest Abe." I had also heard many anecdotes about Lincoln, but the one I like best was told to me in 1903 by old Doc Mugrage, who claimed to have had a joking acquaintance with him. So, let's see just how "honest" Abe really was.

Abe, who later was to give Nevada its statehood, and another budding lawyer, James Hull, had rented a little two-cubicle place at $10 a month, but when the month was nearly spent and not a client was in sight, they were at their wits' end as to how to pay the rent. Then Abe hit on an idea.

Later he was painting a shingle to hang out, "Lincoln and Hull, Law Specialists," and was showing it to Hull when they heard a knock at the door. Hastily going to his own cubicle, Abe scattered legal-looking papers on his desk, assumed the stance of a busy lawyer, and called a cheery, "Come in."

"Mr. Lincoln," the caller began, "my name's Sims, Tobias Sims, and I need some advice so I "

"You've come to the right place, Mr Sims," Abe said. "Have a chair."

"Well," said Sims, "here's my problem. A neighbor of mine, Peter Jackson, let his hogs get in my cabbage patch and root things up pretty bad. I talked to him about paying me maybe $5 but he said he'd see me in hell before he'd pay a red cent. Now what can be done about it?"

"We'll slap him with a hefty lawsuit," Abe replied, getting pencil and paper for notes. "That's what can be done about it." When he had all the needed information, he reminded Sims there would be a retainer fee of $5.

"Sounds sort of high," Sims said as he handed over the money "I ain't got much so I hope this suit won't run to a big expense."

"I'll keep costs to a shin-plaster minimum," Abe assured him. "I'll get to work on the brief at once, Mr. Sims, so you drop into my office tomorrow as we need your signature to the complaint."

The moment Sims left, Abe rushed into his partner's cubicle. "Jim," he said, waving the money, "we're in business! But now you've got to hurry over to Peter Jackson's and slyly get around to telling him you overheard a conversation in Lincoln's office and his neighbor Sims is bringing a damage suit against him. Naturally, don't let him know we're partners."

"I get it," Hull replied and was on his way to the Jackson farm.

"Why that old rascal!" Jackson exploded. "I didn't think he'd do a dirty trick like that over a few cabbages!"

"Well, from what I overheard he's slapping you with a big damage suit," Abe's partner said, "so I'll be watching how it comes out. Better get yourself a good lawyer or you're stuck. I'd like to represent you myself and show Lincoln a few things about *law* but I'm pretty well tied down with a big case right now, so "

"Can't you find time to take my case?"

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An Editor on the Comstock Lode

by Wells Drury

Wells Drury was a newspaperman on the Comstock Lode during the 1870s when it was considered one of the liveliest mining camps in the world. He witnessed the excitement of rich mining strikes and the violent activities of cutthroats and desperadoes. His association with leading citizens as well as the less esteemed barflies of the town enabled him to present a true cross-section of life on the Comstock.

First published in 1936, the book went through several editions and received laudatory reviews. This reprint edition preserves the original text and photographs and includes a new foreword.



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Jackson cut in. "But dammit, what could you do? My hogs et up a few cabbages all right, so I'd lose the case anyway."

"Not if we hit him with a big counter suit," lawyer Hull replied. "If I *should* take your case we'll prove you saw him twice deliberately and with malice aforethought sneak over and entice your hogs over to his patch for the express purpose of getting a few dollars out of you for his worthless crop."

"But," Jackson demurred, "I didn't see him coax my hogs over there. They simply got out and "

"Makes no difference what you saw or didn't see! That's what counter suits are for—to confuse a judge or jury until they usually find in favor of the best looking party."

"We-e-ll," Jackson finally said, so confused he didn't know what he had or hadn't seen, "I reckon you know more about law than I do, but what's this go'nta cost me?"

"I always get $5 as a retainer fee," Hull replied, "but if our threat of a counter suit bluffs Sims and Lincoln out, which I think it may, the five will cover it."

"Fine," said Jackson. "See if you can scare that old buzzard out of suing me. We was always good friends 'til my hogs et his cabbage."

When Sims came in to sign his complaint, Abe dolefully said, "Mr. Sims, I've just uncovered some disconcerting news. Jackson has retained counsel and they're filing a counter suit. You may not know it but it will mean quite an expensive trial."

"Holy gee!" Sims exclaimed. "Now what do we do?"

"I have an idea," Lincoln said thoughtfully. "I can convince Jackson's lawyer it would be in the best interest of his client to nip such frivolous suits in the bud. Both parties usually come out losers. Suits and counter suits make enemies out of friendly neighbors and are costly. Most lawyers encourage such suits because it fattens their pocketbooks, but I dislike to see anyone get into costly lawsuits, so I'm going to try hard to impress this logic on Jackson's attorney."

"Mr. Lincoln," Sims beamed, "you're an honest man and I know you'll do what you think is best."

"Leave everything to me, Mr. Sims," Lincoln counseled.

A few hours later Lincoln had the litigants shaking hands, and the rent was assured. From that day on the appellation "Honest Abe" was pinned on Lincoln and the sign, "Lincoln and Hull, Law Specialists," was displayed over their door as clients beat a path to their new and sumptuous quarters. □

The late Harry E. Webb was a trapper, cowboy, actor, novelist, and for three decades a Nevada rancher.



LARRY PROSOR

Ski the High Country

With off-track adventures, there's no ski patrol or pink ribbon to show you the way — just the snow, the trees, and (don't forget!) a good topo map.

By Christine Cendagorta

During a weekend skiing trip a few years ago, my husband Joe saw something he says he'll never forget. He and a friend had bushwacked four miles up a creek to a secluded lake high above Tahoe. They were tired and sweaty by the time they skied across the frozen lake, so they tossed down insulated pads to rest on before setting up camp. Then, as they watched, a field mouse ran across the snow 50 yards in front of them.

"Suddenly from out of nowhere a pine marten came chasing the mouse," Joe recalls. "We watched the marten stalk it, but before he could catch his dinner, a Clark's nutcracker screeched real loud and zoomed in to snatch the



ALVIN McLANE



LARRY PROSOR

At top, a cross-country skier carves a single track on the crest of the Toiyabes near Austin. To get started in the sport, all it takes is a good car, good friends, some skis, and a thirst for adventure. At right, a skier glides among the clouds near Lake Tahoe.

mouse away. Three more birds came in and they all fought over it, flapping and squawking. It was right out of Marlin Perkins, except it was real."

While the mouse may have had other ideas, such scenes help make fanatics out of Nevada's off-track skiers. They tend to crave the challenge, for there are dangers in the sport, and also the solitude. Both are plentiful in Nevada's snow-covered mountains.

Miles from any road or resort, you can feel alone even in a noisy group. You sometimes start resenting your own tracks because they leave a path for others to follow, and often the solitude is hard to relinquish at the end of the day. I remember the end of a long ski trip when we were late coming out of a canyon. We had to ski the last half-mile in the dark through an eerie fog, each closely watching the skiers in front and behind. Finally we could see the highway. Just as we got there, a car passed, loaded with drunks who were shouting wildly. It took a few moments before we figured out they were telling us who had won the Super Bowl.

If you know great places to go in Nevada—places like the Rubies, Charleston, the Schell Creek or Carson ranges—off-track skiing offers beautiful vistas. But it also means no ski patrol to rescue stranded skiers, no warm lodges, no repair hut where you can fix a broken ski, and no pink ribbons hanging in trees to mark your path. Self-reliance is paramount, and it can be misadventure for the unprepared.

To avoid big problems in the mountains, you need to do several things right—plan a good route, use the right equipment, and be sure you're prepared for emergencies.

Some of the most popular off-track routes are what skiers call "in and outs." You ski up a canyon or follow a creek bed, then return on your tracks. Such a route is simple to plan, there is less chance of getting lost, and it's easy—you have to break trail for only half the trip. Good routes are roads closed by snow and old logging and mining roads, all of which are usually shown on topographic maps.

Taking a loop tour provides new scenery as well as the satisfaction of skiing right back to the car and a thermos of steaming coffee. Some of the best loops you can take are those that circle peaks and lakes.

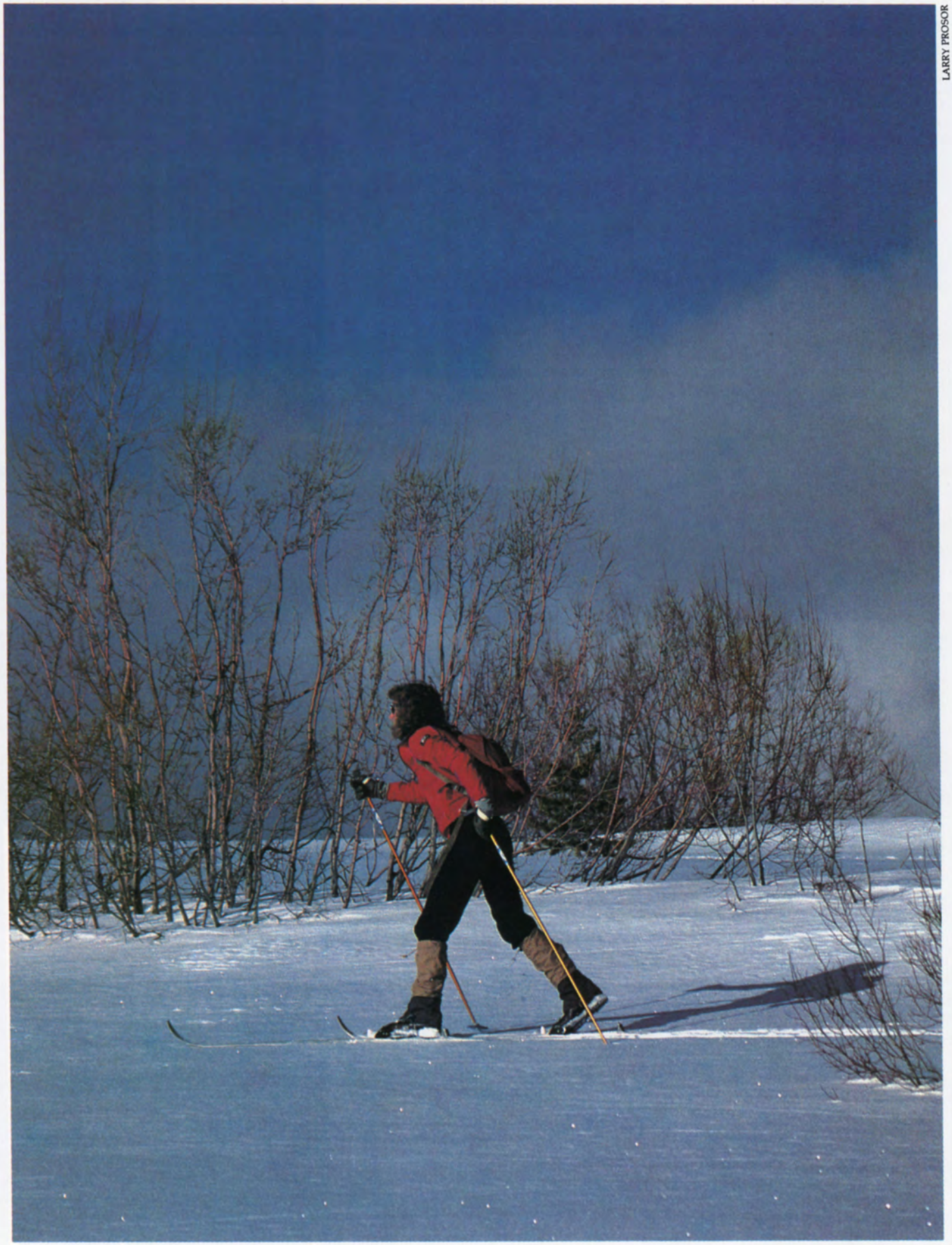
Of course, if you decide on a one-way trip, you'll need two cars or a volunteer driver.

Then there's that long, serene glide down a mountain—the run-out. Adventure skiers don't mind the sweat and strain of climbing a few thousand feet if they know that a half-mile of powder skiing will be their reward. After finding an open bowl or mountain face, purists will avoid tramping up the slope; they'd rather decorate it with perfect S-curves on the way down.

Some skiers also prefer to stay overnight in the snow. Sleeping in a warm bag, snug in a tent or snow shelter, winter camping can be delightful—no bugs, dust, or noisy neighbors, only an almost tangible quiet and sparkling views.

You want flexibility in a ski trip because there's always the chance of your plan backfiring: the road gets plowed, the powder hardens into Sierra cement, the storm predicted for Monday comes on Saturday. Dennis Ghiglieri, a Reno skier, says he remembers that lesson from a trip in the Toiyabes south of Austin. "Our three-day, one-way trip was supposed to end near the car we'd parked at Kingston Canyon," he says, "but an incredible fog moved in, and we couldn't see where we were going. We came out at Birch Canyon and then skied a lot of miles back to the car. It was still a good trip, but not the kind you do alone."

Ghiglieri says he and his friends aren't obsessed with finding perfect ski condi-



LARRY PROSOR



CHACO MOHLER

Tahoe: Downhill Getaways

This winter, from Heavenly Valley on the south shore to Ski Incline on the north, skiers at Lake Tahoe's 18 alpine resorts have been enjoying not only fine skiing but also a bundle of new runs, lifts, and restaurants. Another attraction is the lively schedule of races and parties that keeps the ski crowd jumping both on and off the slopes.

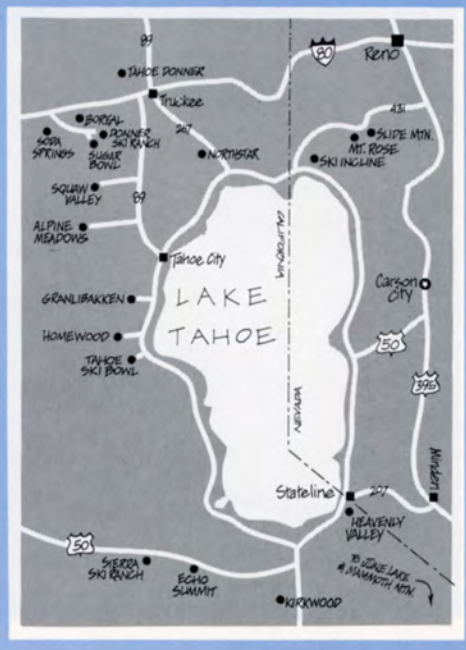
The resorts and Reno-Tahoe hotels are offering a variety of vacation packages, too. Most include lodging and lift tickets, and they range from two-day to week-long stays. You can get information on vacation deals from three agencies in the daytime: the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority, 702-785-4843; the South Lake Tahoe Visitors Bureau, 916-544-5050 or toll-free 800-822-5922; and the North Tahoe Visitors and Convention Bureau, 916-583-3494, toll-free in California 800-822-5959, and toll-free elsewhere 800-824-8557

A number of hotels in the Reno-Lake Tahoe area have their own ski package deals; see page 69 for details on those and other winter vacation specials.

1985 Alpine Skier's Guide to Sierra Resorts

Area	Phone	Top Elevation	Vertical	Lifts	Rating Bg-Int-Adv	Day Lift Price* Adult/Child	Day Rental* Adult/Child
Alpine Meadows	916-583-4232	8,637	1,800	13	25-40-35	$24/$11	$14.50/$10.50
Boreal	916-426-3666	7,800	600	9	20-60-20	$14/$8	$12.75/$10
Donner Ski Ranch	916-426-3635	7,835	800	4	25-50-25	$15/$7	$11/$8
Echo Summit	916-659-7154	7,950	550	3	40-40-20	$13.75/$9	$13/$9
Granlibakken	916-583-4242	6,480	280	2	50-50-0	$8/$5	$8/$7
Heavenly	916-541-1330	10,100	3,600	26	25-50-25	$24/$13	$14/$9
Homewood	916-525-7256	7,990	1,650	9	20-50-30	$16/$10/$5**	$11/$10
Kirkwood	209-258-6000	9,800	2,000	10	25-50-25	$22/$10	$15/$9
Mt. Rose	702-849-0704	9,700	1,440	5	30-40-30	$16/$9	$13.50/$9.50
Northstar	916-562-1010	8,600	2,200	11	25-50-25	$22/$12	$15/$9
Sierra Ski Ranch	916-659-7475	8,852	2,212	9	25-55-20	$17/$12	$12.50
Ski Incline	702-832-1177	7,600	900	7	30-40-30	$18/$12	$14/$10
Slide Mountain	702-849-0303	9,700	1,450	6	30-30-40	$14/$8	$10/$7
Soda Springs	916-426-3666	7,350	650	3	30-50-20	$12/$7	$12.75/$10
Squaw Valley	916-583-6985	8,900	2,700	26	30-40-30	$24/$5	$14/$9
Sugar Bowl	916-426-3651	8,383	1,500	9	20-30-50	$21/$12	$12.50/$8.50
Tahoe Donner	916-587-6046	7,350	600	3	50-50-0	$12/$8	$12.50/$10
Tahoe Ski Bowl	916-525-5224	7,800	1,630	5	30-40-30	$15/$10	$12/$9
Mount Charleston							
Lee Canyon	702-872-5462	9,430/8,510	1,000	3	15-80-5	$14/$9	$11/$10

*Prices subject to change. **Includes juniors, ages 13-16. † Night skiing only at Boreal, Squaw Valley, Sugar Bowl.



tions. "Adventure skiers aren't in it for the snow. They're looking for the new experience." That's why a trip out to Central Nevada, where good snow is not guaranteed, is always worth the trip. "The sights are unbelievable," he says. "You think you're in Alaska's Brooks Range. There's miles of open space and then you can see all the peaks of the next range."

Backcountry skiing has moved from simple beginnings—wooden skis, homemade waxes, and wool clothing—into the synthetic age. Skiers today wear layers of polypropylene, Thinsulate, and Gore-tex and spray their ski bases with silicone. However, wool is still the chosen fiber for sweaters and knickers,

> "Resorts can dynamite potential slides, but in the backcountry, skiers themselves must know avalanche dangers."

and many off-trackers carry wax kits reminiscent of the early days, when secret concoctions of whale oil, burgundy pitch, balsam, turpentine, and other ingredients would be cooked together and then applied to skis warmed in the sun. Today, however, most of us use silicone spray cans marked "Do not incinerate." They're duller but more efficient.

Equipment, too, has changed from the long, heavy boards and single pole that skiers used in the late 1800s. Today's fiberglass skis come with waxable and waxless bases. Some of the latter have "fish scales" or "steps" that, like a good wax job, allow you both to climb without slipping and to glide smoothly forward.

Old skis also have their virtues. Reno resident Bruce Burkham, who has skied extensively in the Sierra and the Ruby Mountains, has a closet full to choose from, depending on the trip. He says he once packed his bushwackers, which are short and fat and turn like downhill skis, to the top of a peak in the Rubies and then skied back down on them. Burkham also likes to do what he calls "a little boonie-crashing" with an old pair of skis that can survive running in and out of trees and over rocks.

Spoiled by the easy access of the Mount Rose area, Burkham says he found it a challenge to reach the powder bowls of the Rubies. "I ended up taking a snowmobile up the canyon, then climbing up to the bowls for a day of telemarking." Eliminating the eight-mile ski-in gave him a full day of quality skiing. But as much as



Ely: Making New Tracks

About three years ago Burrell Bybee, who owns the Copper Queen Motel in Ely, began seeing a different brand of winter traveler—cross-country skiers.

They'd stop for the night, load up in the morning, and head for Idaho and states east. Bybee would stare at the retreating California license plates, then up at the towering, snow-covered mountains around town, and scratch his head in wonder. Finally, he mentioned the passing plates at a town council meeting.

This winter the town is inviting the world at large to Ski Ely. White Pine County has published a cross-country ski brochure, a ski club has formed, and the community college is offering Nordic classes. A sports shop in nearby McGill is expanding its cross-country line, and even the mayor of Ely is out on the slopes.

"I started about two years ago," says Mayor Barlow White, a 20-year Ely resident. "It's a lot better than jogging in winter. I can leave my house and be on a mountain in five minutes. And once I get there, I can take off in about 55 different directions."

White, who usually goes with his wife and daughter, says, "I've been in those mountains in the summer, and now in winter, and winter's the best. You can see for about 300 miles. There's no dust, no mosquitoes or bugs—just a beautiful blanket of dry powdery snow. And it's so quiet. There is no quiet in the world like the stillness of those mountains."

Karen Rajala, who is White Pine County's tourism diversification coordinator, says the cross-country ski potential around Ely is unlimited. "Ely's elevation is about 6,350 feet, and the Schell Creek and Egan ranges have summits over 11,000 feet. It takes twice as much snow here to make one inch of water than it does from the Sierra. That means we've got dry powder and lots of it."

The county's brochure provides basic maps of three areas within 20 miles of Ely, each with paved-road access from highways: Duck Creek Basin to the north, Murry Summit to the southwest, and Cave Lake to the southeast, where skiers also can ice fish on the frozen alpine reservoir. From each entry point, scores of old mining roads crisscross the mountains, providing ideal cross-country trails through the wilderness.

"We don't know if we'll become the cross-country ski destination of the world," says Rajala, "but that's O.K. The people of Ely are eager to share the beauty and solitude of the area with others. After all, there's so much of it here to share."

For more information on skiing in the mountains around Ely, write the White Pine County Chamber of Commerce, Box 239, Ely, NV 89301, or call 702-289-8877

—*JC*

> "'In the mountains you can see for about 300 miles. There's no dust, no bugs—just a beautiful blanket of dry powdery snow And there's no quiet in the world like the stillness of those mountains.'"

Cross-Country Trails and Rentals

Name	Phone	Groomed Trails	Trail Fee Adult/Child	Rentals Adult/Child	Lessons Adult/Child	Day Lodge
Tahoe Basin						
Big Chief Guides	916-587-4723	**	*	$9/$6.50	n/a	✓
Echo Summit Ski Area	916-659-7154	15.5	$5/$4	$10/$7	$9	✓
Incline	702-831-5190	9.3	$3/$2	$8/$5	$10	✓
Kirkwood	209-258-8864	45	$7/$3	$9/$5	$16/$12	✓
Northstar	916-562-1010	20	$6/$4	$10/$7	$12/$8	✓
Royal Gorge	916-426-3871	140	$8.50/$4.50	$9.50/$6	$10	✓
Spooner Meadows (St. Park)	702-831-0494	**	no	no	no	
Squaw Valley	916-583-8951	18.6	$5/$3	$10/$6	$10	✓
Sugar Pine Point	916-525-7232	**	no	no	no	
Tahoe Donner	916-587-9821	36	$5/NC***	$10/$6	$11	✓
Tahoe Nordic Ski Center	916-583-9858	18	$5	$8.50/$4.25	$10/$8	✓
Telemark Country Sports	916-577-6811	5	$2	$8/$5	$9	
Sierra Ski Touring	619-934-4495	**	NC	$9/$7	$20	✓
Around the State						
Lee Canyon (Las Vegas)	702-871-7999	Edelweiss Ski Geschaft rents x-c skis for Lee Canyon.				
Ruby Mountains (Elko)	702-753-6867	Ruby Mt. Heli-Ski in Lamoille offers helicopter lifts and tours.				
Spring Valley (Eureka)	702-237-5280	Ron Carrion at the Owl Club provides ride and map ($2.50).				
White Pine (Ely)	702-289-8877	Chamber has maps for skiing at three local areas.				

* donation ** marked trails *** senior citizens also free



he enjoys a little risk in his forays, he says, "The farther away I am from the trail, the more conservatively I ski."

Like Burkham, experienced off-track skiers respect winter's punch, especially in avalanche country. Resorts can pack their slopes and dynamite potential slides, but in the backcountry the skier is responsible for knowing about avalanche dangers.

Safety also means being resourceful. Consider a problem Burkham encountered during an all-day trip above Ski Incline last spring: one of his fiberglass poles shattered, leaving him more than five miles of ridge and a steep, tree-covered downhill to negotiate with only one pole. The solution was a pine bough about the diameter of the inside of his pole. He cut the bough to size and inserted it into both ends of the hollow pole. Then he bound it all with duct tape, which for an emergency he had wrapped around the handles. The new pole got him home.

While skill and cunning are important, probably the best thing to have on a wilderness ski trip is a spirit of adventure. And in Nevada's mountains that spirit will bring many rewards—breathtaking scenery, high climbs, and joyous descents. There's also unlimited solitude, if you don't count a few noisy birds.

There are many mountain areas in the state that offer excellent off-track tours, but the following six are especially scenic. Be sure to study guides or topographic maps before taking any trips. Good sources of maps and advice are the U.S. Forest Service offices in Las Vegas, Sparks, Tahoe, Elko, Ely, and Austin.

Mount Rose: Once a skier leaves the open meadows of Sheepherder Flat, just west of the 7,800-foot summit on State Route 431, the snowmobiles are fewer and the backcountry opens up. There are incredible views of Lake Tahoe and Washoe Lake from the ridges, and prepared skiers can do a three-mile, one-way trip to Tyrolian Village near Ski Incline. Roadside parking is available on the lake side of Mount Rose Summit, about 25 miles south of Reno.

Spooner Meadows: The in-and-out trip to Marlette Lake, a challenge to expert skiers, can be shortened for beginners. The road is easily followed and water is nearby; the round trip is 10 miles. There's also a 1.6-mile trail around Spooner Lake. You can park for a fee at Spooner Meadows, part of the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, on State Route 28 just west of its junction with U.S. 50. Call 702-831-0494 for information. Spooner is 13 miles west of Carson City.

Ruby Mountains, Elko and Wells: Access is a problem in the Rubies, but Lamoille Canyon, 20 miles south of Elko, offers a long in-and-out trip. Snowmo-

bilers are common at lower elevations. You can use a snowmobile to go eight miles to the back of the canyon and then spend the day skiing powder bowls. Angel Lake, 13 miles southwest of Wells, is steep and avalanche prone, but it has a reputation as a great overnight destination for expert skiers. Sometimes the road to the lake is blocked by snowdrifts.

Wheeler Peak, Ely: State Route 488 from Baker to Lehman Caves National Monument remains open during the winter, providing backcountry skiers with access to the Wheeler Peak area. Also, White Pine County has designated prime cross-country routes along roads at Cave Lake, Murry Summit, and Duck Creek Basin (see page 43).

> "You want flexibility in a ski trip because there's always the chance your plan will backfire."

Toiyabe Range, Austin: There may be a problem with access here since the good skiing is up high. In a good snow year the Toiyabes offer decent touring at the lower elevations. Kingston Canyon, 30 miles south of Austin on Route 376, provides the best backcountry skiing, but steep canyons signal high avalanche danger.

Mount Charleston: Lee Canyon offers an unplowed road for easy touring and at higher elevations provides good telemarking country. Lee is also a good bet for winter campouts. Skiers take U.S. 95 out of Las Vegas and then choose either Route 156 or 157 into the Mount Charleston area. Lee Canyon is only about 45 miles northwest of Las Vegas.

For some backcountry skiers half the fun is the challenge of outsmarting the wilderness. They study first aid, weather patterns, and avalanche dangers, and are constantly refitting their backpacks with the latest in lightweight survival gear. After all, taking the right precautions can be a lifesaving matter. Here are some important safety tips that Silver State skiers practice in the backcountry.

Staying Warm: Nevada skiers take the weather seriously, dressing in layers and peeling down as they warm up. Wool stays warm even when wet, and the new Gore-tex garments will keep any skier dry. Unless it's snowing or raining or there's a serious wind chill, hats and heavy parkas belong in the day pack. But remember the rule, "If your feet are cold, put on a hat."

Hypothermia: Exposure and exhaustion can lead to hypothermia, a dangerous

ABOVE ALL THE REST



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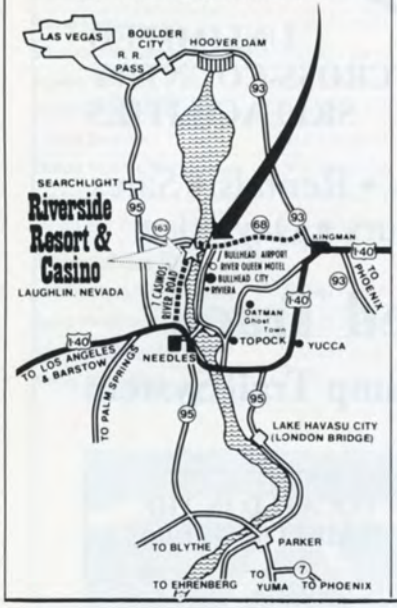
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lowering of the body temperature. You prevent hypothermia by staying dry, being aware of wind, and keeping your energy level up. Watch for shivering, confusion, loss of coordination, and drowsiness. Treat by finding shelter and creating body heat with warm nonalcoholic drinks, clothing, or shared heat from other bodies.

Bivouac: If you get lost or hurt and have to bivouac overnight, keep your head. Unless you can backtrack, it's best to stay put and think about a shelter. Experts recommend building a fire and marking your shelter so it can be seen from the air. Don't abandon your equipment because you may need it to get out in the morning. To reduce the risk, always let someone know where you're going, when to expect you, and whom to call if you're not back.

Avalanches: All backcountry skiers should have a good understanding of avalanche hazards. A few basics are:

(1) The safest routes are on ridges, away from cornices and to the windward side; (2) most avalanches occur during or right after a storm; (3) avalanches like to come down in the same places, so look for

> "In snow country remember the rule, 'If your feet are cold, put on a hat.'"

old slide paths or avalanche debris; and (4) avalanches are most common on steep, bare slopes. Experts advise skiers caught in an avalanche to discard their equipment, try to swim with the force to stay on top, and use the hands to make a breathing space before stopping.

Emergency Kits: A good model is the one carried by Incline skier Larry Borino. His first-aid kit holds bandages, medicated soap, triangular bandages, and aspirin. The emergency kit is weightier: shoelaces, wire, a plastic garbage bag, space blanket, Boy Scout knife, plastic ski tip, flare, topo maps, water cups, waterproof matches, compass, candle, plastic tape, insulated fanny pad, and a tea bag. You can add sunglasses, sunscreen, extra hats, gloves, and maybe a whistle.

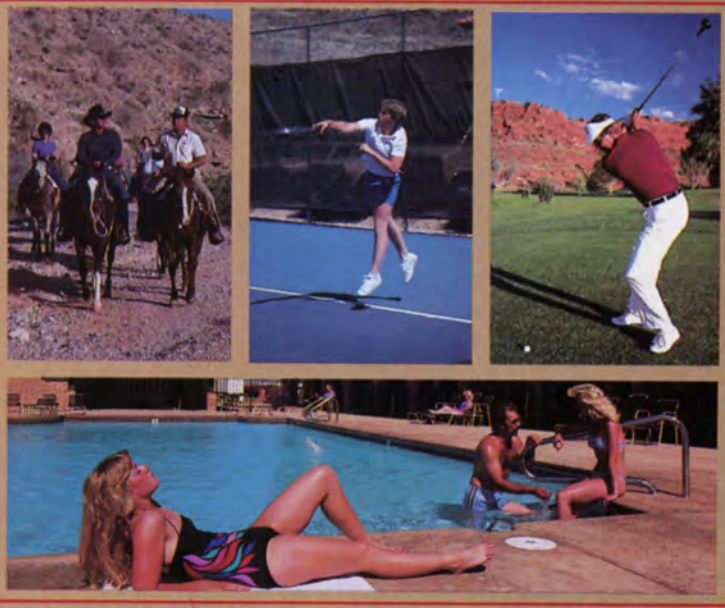
A garbage bag? "If you cut holes in the top corners and center of the garbage bag, you have an emergency poncho," Borino says. "The tape will hold a bamboo pole together, and I can fix a ski binding temporarily with the wire." Borino figures the insulated fanny pad is good not only for lunch breaks but also as a small emergency windbreak.

Having Fun: The best survival rule of all is to stay within your abilities and have a great time. □

Christine Cendagorta of Reno is a freelance writer and avid snow explorer.

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Muench's Gallery

Photographer David Muench visits Mohave Yucca Country.

The hairy fingers of a young Mohave yucca plant reach for the sky below the peaks of Red Rock Canyon. Twenty miles west of Las Vegas, the valley is a colorful springtime attraction when the yuccas bloom with clusters of waxy yellow flowers. Indians of the region used almost every part of the plant—the leaf fibers for rope and baskets; the buds, flowers, and pulpy fruit for food; and the roots, which have saponifying properties, for soap.

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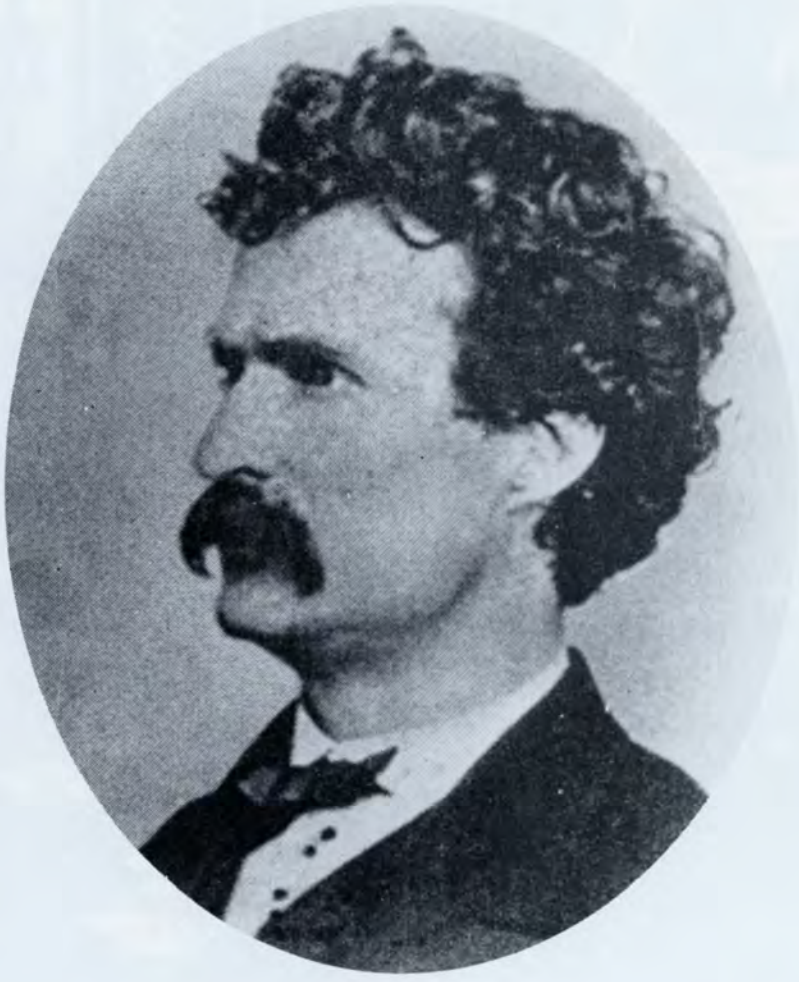
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Fire From the Outside

Young Mark Twain found more than a name and adventure in Nevada. He found his genius.

By Jean Cheney

In 1861 when Samuel Clemens climbed aboard the Overland Stage that went from St. Louis to Carson City, he was 25 years old and a literary nobody. He had failed in all his undertakings, or so he claimed. Actually, one by one, he had abandoned them. A former printer, newspaper writer, riverboat pilot, and soldier, at 25 he was still anxious for adventure, still uncommitted to work. He felt sure he would find adventure out West and was heading there with his older brother Orion, recently appointed secretary to the governor of Nevada Territory.

Sam carried the sum of his wealth that day, $800 in silver coin. With loud misgivings, he also brought on board an unabridged dictionary. "Ruinous expense," he said. "They charged freight by the ounce Orion's salary was eighteen hundred dollars a year and he couldn't even support his dictionary on it." Clemens was tagging along with his brother as "secretary to the secretary," a job without responsibility or pay. From all accounts he expected the trip to be a two- or three-month pleasure excursion. In fact, he stayed West for half a decade.

Clemens found more than adventure in the West. He found his genius. When he boarded the stage, his writings consisted mainly of a few crude sketches for New Orleans papers. By the time he returned to the East, his work had gained a national reputation. "A man's brain is stored powder," he wrote in his notebook years later. "It cannot touch itself off; the fire must come from the outside." For Samuel Clemens, the spark came from a world as far from the Mississippi as he might find: frontier Nevada, which by his estimate was "the damndest country under the sun."

If we can trust his account in *Roughing It*, Clemens' first order of business after arriving in Carson City was to turn in his coat and vest for a "damaged slouch hat, blue woolen shirt and pants crammed into boot tops." Feeling "rowdyish and bully," Sam took a few days to get acquainted with Carson. The sagebrush desert took some getting used to. In a letter home, he told his family what he thought of Nevada: "It never rains here, and the dew never falls. No flowers grow here, and no green thing gladdens the eye. The birds that fly over the land carry their provisions with them. Only the crow and the raven tarry with us. Our city lies in the midst of the purest—most unadulterated and compromising—sand, in which infernal soil nothing but the fag end of vegetable creation, 'sage brush,' ventures to grow."

Soon restless, Clemens embarked on the first of many attempts to strike it rich. He persuaded John Kinney, a young man from Cincinnati, to stake a timber claim with him on Lake Tahoe (called Lake Bigler at the time). The men walked the 11 miles from Carson City to the lake.

From his first view of Tahoe, Clemens was captivated. All his life he wrote of the lake as a magical place, "a paradise," "supernaturally beautiful," "an enchanted mirror the viewless spirits of the air use to make their toilet by." In a letter home soon after this first trip, he admitted his feeling for Tahoe came close to being a passion: "I had better stop about the lake though—for whenever I think of it I want to go there and die, the place is so beautiful."

Their timber claim didn't amount to much—the trees were destroyed by an accidental fire. But the visit to Tahoe was a turning point in Clemens' career. Before the trip, he gave no indication of wanting to stay West; after it, he gave no indication of wanting to leave. He had seen the "fag end of creation's" opposite pole. The letters home began to change. "I never



Virginia City's Territorial Enterprise *in 1895 looked much as it did three decades earlier when reporter Sam Clemens began writing as Mark Twain.*

once thought of returning home to the river again," wrote Clemens to his sister Pamela. "This country suits me." And, "I'll build a county seat there (on the timber claim) one of these days that will make the Devil's mouth water if he ever visits the earth." In another letter, he wrote, "You folks don't believe in Nevada and I am glad you don't. Just keep on thinking so." The region was beginning to claim him.

Like most other young men in town, Clemens eventually became infected with silver fever. For about a year, he roamed the Nevada-California countryside hoping for the strike that would send him home rich. But his claims never produced much, and his poor mining luck eventually discouraged him. Desperate for money, he began sending letters to Virginia City's *Territorial Enterprise* signed "Josh." The letters were crude burlesques of frontier life that appealed to the miners on the Comstock. They also struck the fancy of Joseph Goodman, the young owner and editor of the *Enterprise,* who offered Clemens a job on the paper.

According to local legend, Clemens walked the 130 miles from Aurora, where he had been mining, to the *Enterprise* office. As the story goes, he stepped into the office on a hot August day in 1862, weatherworn, beard covered with alkali dust, and a blanket roll strapped on his back. To the first man he saw he said, "My starboard leg seems to be unshipped. I'd like about 100 yards of line; I think I'm falling to pieces My name is Clemens, and I've come to write for the paper." As his biographer and friend Albert Bigelow Paine wrote later, "It was the master of the world's widest estate come to claim his kingdom."

When Clemens arrived, the Comstock Lode was in its early years of operation. He would be on hand for the first flush year, 1863, but even then the camp was run on a smaller scale than in the days of the Big Bonanza, 10 years later. Still a frontier town, Virginia City in 1862 was famous for its gunfighters, adventurers, and swindlers. For Samuel Clemens, the town proved to be a laboratory; on the pages of the *Enterprise,* Mark Twain would be born.

The *Enterprise* fraternity consisted of men who enjoyed rough humor but who could also write biting satire on matters they considered worthy. From these men, especially from Dan DeQuille and Joe Goodman, Clemens learned how to write with assurance. Early in their friendship, Goodman advised the young writer, "Never say we learn so and so, or it is rumored or we understand so and so; but go to headquarters and get the absolute facts; then speak out and say it *is* so and so. In the one case you are likely to be shot, and in the other you are pretty certain to be, but you will preserve the public confidence."

Frontier life on the Comstock gave Clemens ample chance to cover murderers and thieves and to witness the miserable side of western existence. One



night while writing a letter home, he heard pistol shots; he added a P.S.: "I have just heard five pistol shots down the street—as such things are in my line, I will go and see about it." After investigating, he added P.S. No. 2: "5 a.m. The pistol did its work well—one man, a Jackson County Missourian, shot two of my friends (police officers) through the heart—both died within three minutes. Murderer's name is John Campbell."

Clemens' stories in the *Enterprise* soon became popular items. Miners always loved a humorous story more than hard news. Their tastes gave Clemens free rein to develop his skill at the tall tale and his first real opportunity to express himself against sham, hypocrisy, humbug—the themes of his career—with the humor that came easily to him.

Not long after joining the *Enterprise,* he wrote the first of the hoax stories that brought him notoriety throughout the West. The story grew out of an apparent gripe he had with a Humboldt County coroner. In "The Petrified Man," the coroner holds an inquest on a calcified human body found in the hills. After meticulous examination, the man pompously concludes that the victim "came to his death from protracted exposure." Miners loved it. The item became widely reprinted and brought Clemens the reputation of a writer who could make the absurd sound possible and the serious sound absurd.

Clemens was mining the same journalistic territory as a hundred contemporaries, but he was doing it with a difference. He was able to see—and dramatize—the satire in the absurd: The jury wants to give the petrified man a decent burial but discovers he could be dislodged only by blasting. The Humboldt coroner, "with that delicacy so characteristic of him, forbade, observing that it would be little less than sacrilege." And there, before all these pious, earnest people, sat the little hardened man, his stone hands set against his face in an unmistakable gesture of derision. "The Petrified Man" was more than tall tale. In its irreverence lay the hint of the Clemens to come.

Even when reporting news, Sam had fun. He rarely saw catastrophe, or anything else, the way most people did. Reporting a violent Nevada dust storm, he wrote, "At sunset yesterday, the wind commenced blowing after a fashion to which a typhoon is mere nonsense, and in a short time the face of heaven was obscured by vast clouds of dust all spangled over with lumber, and shingles, and dogs and things. There was no particular harm in that, but the breeze soon began to work damage of a serious nature. Thomas Moore's house on the east side of C street above the Court House was blown down."

More than once, however, this rich imagination got Clemens in trouble. His "Empire City Massacre" was noticeably lacking in taste. A sensational sketch, violently bloody, the piece attracted more attention than any he wrote while on the Comstock. "Massacre" tells how a California man is driven insane by the stock-rigging practices of the California mining company in which he owns shares. The man murders his wife and seven of his nine children, then severs his wife's head and rides into Carson City carrying her head on his saddle. He dies in front of a saloon, the head of his wife beside him.

The excuse for writing such a grisly, blatantly false tale is unclear. One theory holds that Clemens wanted to trick San Francisco papers into publishing the story, which he'd written to criticize the California company. The story was widely published but, to Clemens' chagrin, readers "never got down to where the satire began."

In fact, many on the Comstock took the tale seriously, and Clemens offered to resign from the *Enterprise* to avoid bringing the paper embarrassment. Characteristically, Goodman would have none of it. He claimed the newspaper had an obligation to publish the news but not to furnish readers the good sense to detect a hoax. Goodman's belief in Clemens, in his talent and worth to the paper, gave the impulsive young writer the opportunity he needed most: the chance to make and learn from mistakes.

In January of 1863, Goodman sent Clemens to cover the legislature in Carson City. A year before, the reporter had been another frustrated miner on Carson City streets; now he was returning to the capital as correspondent for one of the most influential journals in the West. It was a role he relished. His letters from Carson to the *Enterprise* displayed his wit and insight into problems



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTOS

In 1863 Twain, second from left, joined the Third House in roasting legislators.

LOLA
BY ANGIE



LOLA MONTEZ BRONZE 25" — EDITION 25

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT LOLA BUILT A FAR GREATER REPUTATION OFF THE STAGE, THAN ON IT. SHE CROSSED EUROPE LEAVING BEHIND EMPEROR LUDWIG I, THREE HUSBANDS AND SCORES OF LOVERS. TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER ATTRIBUTES, SHE CAME TO CALIFORNIA TO ENJOY THE REWARDS OF THE GOLD RUSH.

SHE LOVED THE LATEST FASHIONS, CIGARS, ANIMALS AND EXOTIC BIRDS. AT ONE TIME SHE EVEN OWNED A BEAR. ASIDE FROM HER PERSONAL LIFE, WHICH KEPT HER IN REASONABLE LUXURY; THE STAGE WAS THE ONLY PROFESSION SHE KNEW. SHE WAS A FAILURE AS AN ACTRESS AND DANCER: ALTHOUGH HER "SPIDER DANCE" THRILLED MANY. IN THE TWILIGHT OF HER CAREER SHE INTRODUCED DRAMATIC READINGS. THE CRITICS REPORTS WERE SO BAD — SHE FINALLY RETIRED TO GRASS VALLEY CALIFORNIA.

HOWEVER, SHE AGAIN BECAME RESTLESS, AND SAILED AWAY TO AUSTRALIA, ANOTHER GOLD RUSH, AND ANOTHER MAN.

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of the day. As the letters were quoted and copied in other papers, his reputation began to grow.

For reasons that remain unclear, Clemens began in February to sign his dispatches from Carson "Mark Twain." The term, signifying two fathoms, meant safe water in riverboat talk. According to Clemens, the name had been used by an old Mississippi River pilot with literary ambitions whom Clemens had cruelly satirized in a New Orleans paper some years ago, although no such writer has been identified. It's possible Clemens chose the pseudonym partly to relieve his own conscience for having written the piece. And he may have adopted it because he felt himself entering his own "safe water" at last—his newspaper stories and humorous fiction were becoming popular and giving him a sense of purpose. In any case, the name took hold immediately and helped to shape the writer into a public personality. As Paine commented in his biography, "It has proven the greatest *nom de plume* ever chosen—a name exactly in accord with the man, his work, and his career."

Then, just as Twain's career appeared to be underway, it ran abruptly aground. The trouble began when Goodman asked Twain to take over the editor's chair while he was away. Twain had had little experience on the editorial page but this didn't stop him from jumping in with full force. He enraged the editor of a rival Virginia City newspaper, *The Daily Union,* with an editorial censuring employees of the *Union* for not contributing to the Sanitary Fund, a Red Cross-like charity for the relief of Union soldiers.

Stung, James Laird of the *Union* slapped Twain back in an editorial calling him a "vulgar liar whose instincts are all toward falsehood; whose thought is falsification; whose aim is vilification." In the same issue, another piece from J.W. Wilmington of the printers of the paper heaped more criticism on Twain: "He has endeavored to misinterpret the generous, patriotic promptings of laboring men who gave their little mite willingly; and in so doing he has proved himself an unmitigated *liar, a poltroon, and a puppy.*"

A round of notes between Twain and Laird followed. In these, the men lavished on each other any insults they had left. With the encouragement of friends, the two finally agreed to duel. The duel, however, was called off at the last minute.

To make matters worse, another editorial of Twain's soon afterwards aroused the ire of Carson City women. Again, the subject concerned the Sanitary Fund—in this case money collected at a ball to benefit the fund. Twain implied the money would be going to a miscegenation society instead of to wounded soldiers. The women were outraged by the insinuation and demanded an apology.

And so, in about a week's time, Twain managed to make himself despised in Carson City and the target of a duel in Virginia City. He was also in danger of being arrested, since it was illegal to send or accept a challenge to a duel in Nevada. Since he had spoken as an editor, he knew he must be held accountable for his hasty accusations. In May 1864, he left the Comstock on a stage bound for San Francisco.

Little can be said in Twain's defense except that he'd never developed the restraint required of a newspaper editor. The *Enterprise* staff must have been sorry to see Twain go. He had helped establish a wide audience for the paper and had made friends in Virginia City that he would keep all his life. In spite of the enemies he made, there is reason to believe most people on the Comstock were sorry to see him leave. Later, in his *Autobiography* he hid any pain he may have felt about his ungraceful exit by treating the experience as just another lark: "Laird was not the only person whom I had tried to reform during my occupancy of the editorial chair. I had looked around and selected several other people and delivered a new zest of life into them through warm criticism and disapproval—so that when I laid down my editorial pen, I had four horsewhippings and two duels owing to me."

Although he left Nevada a fugitive, the time may have been right for Twain to be moving on. He'd had a free rein on the *Enterprise*—perhaps too free considering his impulsive nature—but his interests were beginning to broaden and his reading public was no longer limited to the miners in Virginia City. His sketches had been reprinted in papers on both coasts. In some ways, he had outgrown the newspaper and the Nevada town that had given him his apprenticeship. Even so, Virginia City remained a fond memory for him all his life. Of his days spent there he said, "Those were the days!—those old ones. They will come no more They were so full to the brim with the wine of life; there have been no others like them."

Across the mountains from Nevada he would write, within the year, the story that first brought him national acclaim, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." Within five years, he would travel around the world and gather his tales together in the national best seller, *The Innocents Abroad.* In spite of his unpleasant departure, when Mark Twain left the Comstock, he was ready. The powder had been touched off, the fire begun. □

Jean Cheney of Incline Village is a freelance writer with a special interest in literature.

LETTERS *(Continued from page 5)*

thin and could not match the fire power (Tommy guns) the gang had with them.

Guilio Robert "Dutch" Questa
Atlanta, GA.

More for Harry

Dear Editor: Whenever Harry spoke of you, it was with a tone of sincere gratitude for your ever willing, and generous help, enabling him to enjoy his well-earned honorary recognition in Cody, Wyoming and at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, as well as the great amount of exposure for his writings made possible through your publication. I shall continue to enjoy *Nevada Magazine* even though Harry's regular contribution will be sorely missed. Also, do you ever intend to show Harry's Hall of Fame bronze award in Nevada?

Rick Montgomery
Arleta, CA.

Harry gave his bronze to me, with the blessing of the Hall of Fame. This was with the understanding that it would be donated to the Northeastern Nevada Museum in Elko if ever I get tired of it. Elko should be very patient.—Ed.

Just in Time

I'm going to renew my subscription for one year. Why don't you tell people about the different hotels in Las Vegas and prices of the rooms in your magazine? I'm gonna see if you improve.

Jeff Kaplen
Houston, TX.

Kaplen, you had the same thought we did. See page 68.—Ed.

Thank you so very much for the story about the "Nellis Fly Boys" by Michael Skinner in Nov/Dec '84. I really enjoyed this story—every word of it—and am very proud of these young men.

Libby Riat
Hendersonville, TN.

Cowboys and Catalogs

If William Smith (Nov/Dec Letters) gets his kicks out of a catalog, he should give his subscription to some real broken-down cowboy that doesn't have a catalog. I think the *Nevada Magazine* is as good as they come.

Fred N. Haney
An ex-Montana cowboy
Las Vegas, NV

Letter Back Home

Enclosed find a check for $6 for the purchase of your Nevada sun visor with the Nevada logo. Still proud of my state, as I know you are. If I didn't know better I would almost believe I recognize the lady dancing with Jean Lekumberry (July/August '84). Tell her "hello" for me.

My very best to all of my friends and foes, and my best to you.

Floyd Lamb
Lompoc, CA.

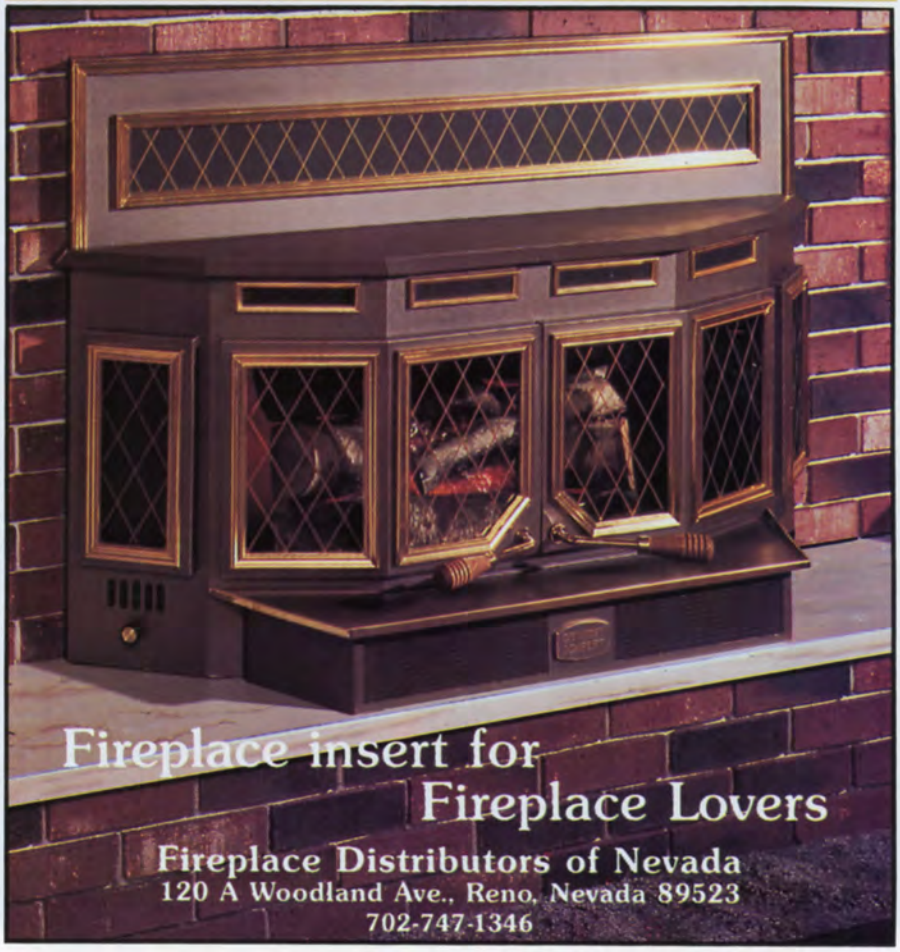
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Beautiful Preeners

One of Nevada's most alluring game birds is the ring-necked pheasant, which is found in farming areas where grain and corn fields provide food and protection. These two beautiful preeners were photographed by Tony Diebold of Gerlach; at left is a female, and above is a male. The ring-neck is called the Chinese pheasant in some parts of the U.S.; to scientists it is known as *Phasianus colchicus.* Gourmets in Europe and Asia, its original home, consider the bird excellent table fare, as do our state's coyotes, bobcats, hawks, and owls. The bird also makes for an exciting fall hunt. The pheasant has the habit of hiding until the hunter is right upon it and then exploding skyward in a noisy shower of feathers. Some hunters are so startled that they don't get off a shot.

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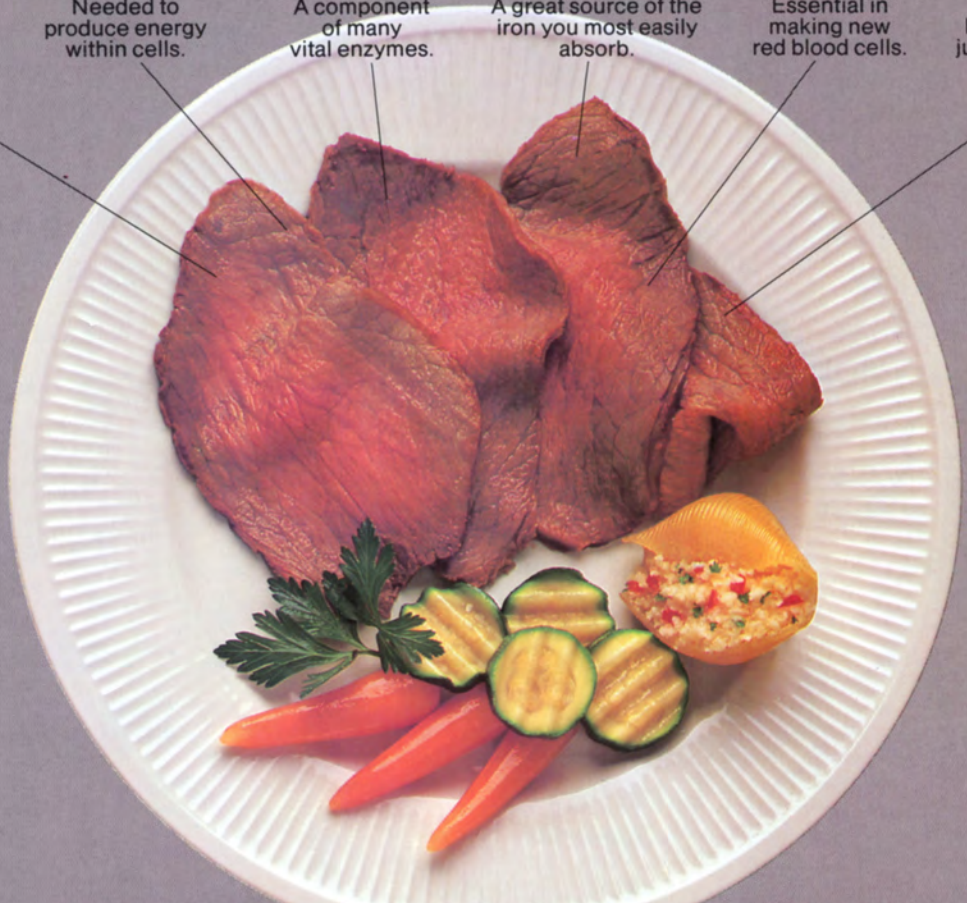
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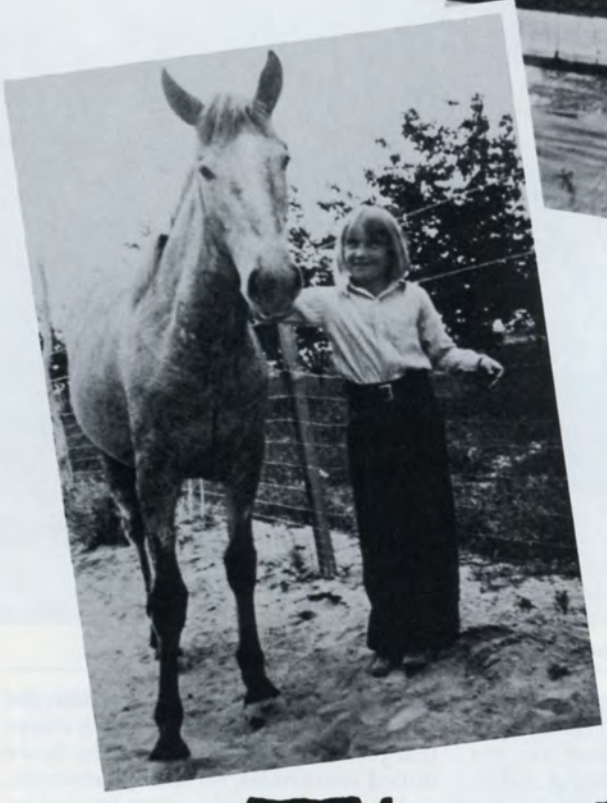
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**All percentages are based on a 4 oz. serving and recommended dietary allowances, women 23 to 50 years.

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I.E. PAYNE COLLECTION



The author and a colt stand near the ranch's hay field and orchard at left. Above is Archie Smoke, the author's father, about 1923 with his free-flowing well.

The Old Smoke Ranch

My father and other early-day farmers in the Las Vegas Valley had to learn how to survive droughts, floods, and jackrabbits.

I. E. Payne

If you wanted to farm the desert in Las Vegas Valley in the 1930s, your resolve and resourcefulness had to be deeper than the soil. The old Smoke Ranch, where I grew up, survives as a road name today, which is more than can be said for most other Las Vegas Valley ranches. The Mormons tried farming there in the 1850s and soon gave up. Most of the ranches of the '20s and '30s have long since disappeared. But for all that we had a lively time, full of hard work and unlooked-for entertainments.

At our place Archie and Charlie Smoke, my father and grandfather, mostly grew hay and vegetables, but diversity was important. We had chickens. We had an apricot orchard whose crop found a market after construction of Hoover Dam began. Our vineyard produced table grapes that usually went to the local Italians for home wine production. At the height of Prohibition both the orchard and the vineyard were



As late as the 1930s horse teams were favored for cutting and hauling hay. Above, a haystack awaits bailing.

used for less-than-legal purposes, as attested by the false back on the equipment shed and the many underground vaults on our ranch.

To produce any crop at all meant facing some unusual challenges. First of all, water—it could be very hard to find. The original, free-flowing artesian wells were vital, but everyone had to drill other wells to supplement the dwindling flow as the water table dropped. The usual depth necessary was 200 to 300 feet, but the desert could make things difficult. While digging, my father found that under our two or three feet of topsoil was solid limestone, locally called caliche. It is spongy, porous rock, and removing it can be a trying experience. The logical solution seemed to be blasting with dynamite, the time-honored method of removing matter that gets in the way of human plans. So we drilled some holes, set the dynamite off, and looked for easy shoveling. Instead we found only a two-foot-by-one-inch section shattered off.

But you learn to be resourceful on a farm. We discovered that the rock would soak up water and slowly dissolve, so we filled our hole with water, waited, and used a pick to dig out the softened rock.

After our well was finally done, we rigged an old automobile engine to a pump by a long belt with pulleys, and ran it 14 hours a day for our water. If the engine broke down, as it periodically did, and our reservoir ran out, we had two choices—hike two miles to the nearest well or spit cotton.

The beginning of the mechanized farm era took place in the 1930s. The tractor of that age was big, awkward, and tricky to handle, having heavy-cleated steel wheels. Ours was a Fordson, and we used it for the heavy work, like gang plowing and discing, or jacked it up to run a pulley off the wheel in order to run a baler or other stationary equipment that required a lot of sustained power. For most farm work a team of horses was still the power source.

The first cutting of hay came off in April, and the last cutting was in Novem-

Ranches Revisited

With a series of newly-drilled artesian wells in the Las Vegas Valley, the 1920s saw an influx of enthusiastic would-be farmers. Most of the new places had an orchard and a vineyard. However, the only farmer who was primarily dedicated to fruit-growing was McGriff; for the others fruit was more or less an incidental crop.

Tomiyasu, in the tradition of many of the early Japanese immigrants, had an extensive truck farm operation. The Gilcreases grew hay, grain, chickens, and turkeys and at one time even had a small herd of sheep.

The Morgans grew a little hay for their livestock. There were others who tilled a few acres. The Old Ranch, also known as the Old Stewart Ranch, which had been



the original farming venture around the big Las Vegas Springs, still grew hay but was gradually being swallowed up as Las Vegas grew outward.—*IEP*



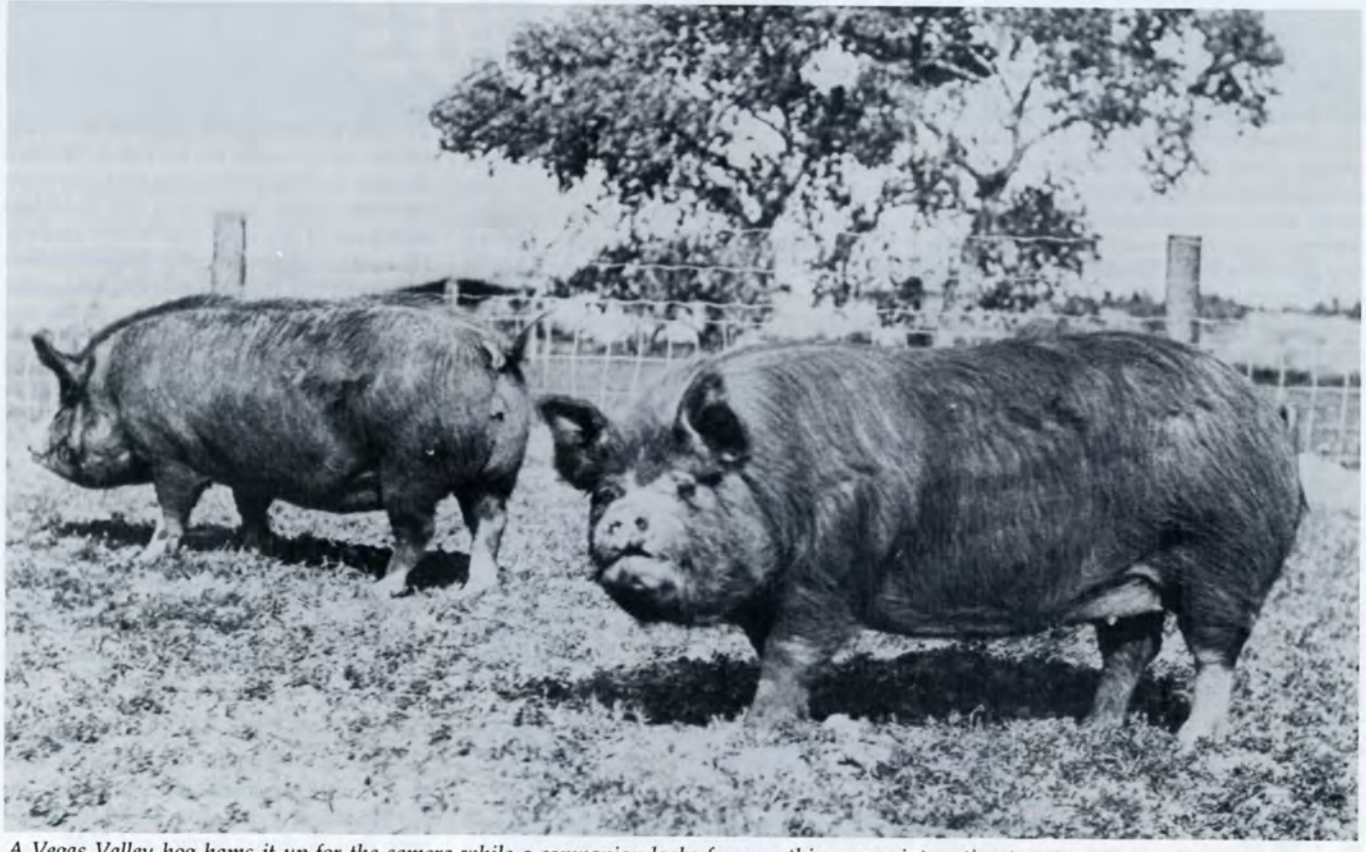
ber, with an average of one per month. With a team you could mow six or seven acres of hay in a long day. Raking hay with horses had a rhythm that made it beautiful to watch. The team stepped out briskly, and the tines of the rake raised and dropped, raised and dropped, leaving long windrows of fragrant hay across the field. By the time the last shock was finished, it was time to haul it in and bale it. Normally one man rode on the wagon, stacking, while two men pitched up the hay, with one of them driving the team when it was necessary to move. It was a colorful proceeding, especially when the stacker saw a snake flying out of the loose hay toward him. No one ever waited to see if it was only a harmless bull snake or red racer. It did no good to tell the hired hands that the ranch seldom had rattlers unless there had been a flood recently

Floods were regular late summer events. As a precaution hay was always grown at the outfall of a wash. The theory was that hay might be flattened by the force of the water and be a mess for the next cutting, but it would hold the precious soil and even capture a little additional loam. If the flood swung and went through the chicken houses, you just hoped it wasn't deep enough to reach the roosts.

Any cloudburst in the western hills could produce a flood. Nevertheless, a cloudburst was a late afternoon event that you came to look forward to. Thunderstorms cooled the air and brought fireworks and excitement in the long, monotonous summer days. You could sit on the front step and see quite a show—lightning strikes and burning Joshua and yucca.

You could see a flood coming miles away If water appeared to be breaking over the red rocks in the foothills, it would reach the ranch in three or four hours. The last couple miles a flood sounded like a freight train, rumbling louder as it approached. Usually the water got to the ranch after dark. You didn't try to fight a flood. You just watched it and hoped it wouldn't be bigger than you could handle.

The wind also continually challenged the Vegas farmer. It was the dust bowl era, and in the Vegas Valley the winds seemed to blow from one direction for three days coming and then turn around and blow from the opposite direction for three days going, especially in the winter. Gusting at 80 mph, they could blow a child down, and an adult had to walk bent over to make headway In one storm our 120-foot-long chicken house blew down. For three days the surviving chickens huddled under the wreckage out of the continuing wind. If they came out, they blew away. There was nothing anyone could do except throw some grain under to them. As the years passed, the winds seemed to blow with less emphasis. At least those



A Vegas Valley hog hams it up for the camera while a companion looks for something more interesting to eat.



MAURINE AND FRED WILSON COLLECTION, UNLV LIBRARY PHOTOS

Beyond the archway to the 1923 Southern Nevada Fair were displays of beans, squash, and melons, all hard-earned desert crops that could withstand summer heat.

great winds with 140 mph gusts that leveled fences and scooped off roofs finally disappeared, although not before Las Vegas lost all its chinaberry trees in one windstorm.

Where the wind left the soil on the ground and water got to it, things grew, and some things grew exceedingly well. Sandburs and cockleburs, for instance, did fine and discouraged going barefoot. Dill and cosmos escaped from the garden and spread along the ditch banks to become weeds. Summer squash had to be picked every day in mass quantities. The first watermelons were ready for the Fourth of July. Those melons tasted best first thing in the morning when they were still cool. You could pick up a ripe one, let it drop, and then before you would be the heart, begging to be tasted.

Some food plants didn't do so well, though, like potatoes. Tomatoes were sunburned, and blackberries dried up before they ripened, although boysenberries flourished. Peas had it rough in the heat.

Beans, however, loved the desert. Hand threshing a few was fun. You gathered the dry pods and put them in a washtub. Then you stomped on them to break up the pods. The wind, always present, helped you thin. You simply tossed the mess into the air, and the wind cleaned away the chaff.

Growing and thrashing beans in commercial quantities wasn't quite so pleasant. The bean thrasher was stationary, and the bean bushes had to be pulled and hauled to it. In those days you didn't sell beans with imperfect ones included, and every harvest was hand-sorted. The desert farmer didn't watch TV or listen to the radio in the winter; he sorted beans. It must have been an eerie sight—the flickering lamplight, the group of people huddled around the sheet of plywood placed on sawhorses in the unheated brooder house, everyone's hands weaving over the pile of beans heaped in the center of the board.

Some crops grew too well. A neighbor once planted a large field with African higari corn, advertised as reaching a height of four feet. It grew at least double that height and proved a real problem to harvest.

Vegas Valley ranching families learned to live closely with the native fauna. The collared lizards were everywhere, including the vines that grew over our house. Having one drop off and land inside your collar was exciting and gave you lots of exercise until you found out it wasn't something lethal.

Horned toads, king snakes, red racers, bull snakes, desert tortoises—they all paid us visits. Rattlers and sidewinders were more common in the high reaches of the valley and usually appeared only after a flood. We never killed them when we met them out on the desert on the theory that if they could make a living there they were entitled to it.

Jackrabbits flourished in the valley, and so did the coyotes and desert wolves (as they were called by locals) until a bounty was put on them. There were a few kit foxes and cottontails, but you seldom saw either. The wolves, besides their rabbit hunting, did cleanup duty on the deceased chickens thrown over the lower fence. You sometimes saw them early in the morning trotting home, minding their own business. They were big, burly, gray fellows who sang a lot while gathering for their nightly hunt.

The jackrabbits had a dancing ground on an unfarmed area just inside our lower fence. No one knew why they congregated there on moonlit nights and stomped their feet till they had a huge circle of ground pounded hard. They didn't spend all their time there, however. Mostly they helped mow the hay. In fact, they kept it mowed in for about 20 or 30 feet along the outside edge. Trying to save the hay crop from the jacks was another Vegas Valley challenge, and farmers and their dogs often went hunting several evenings a week.

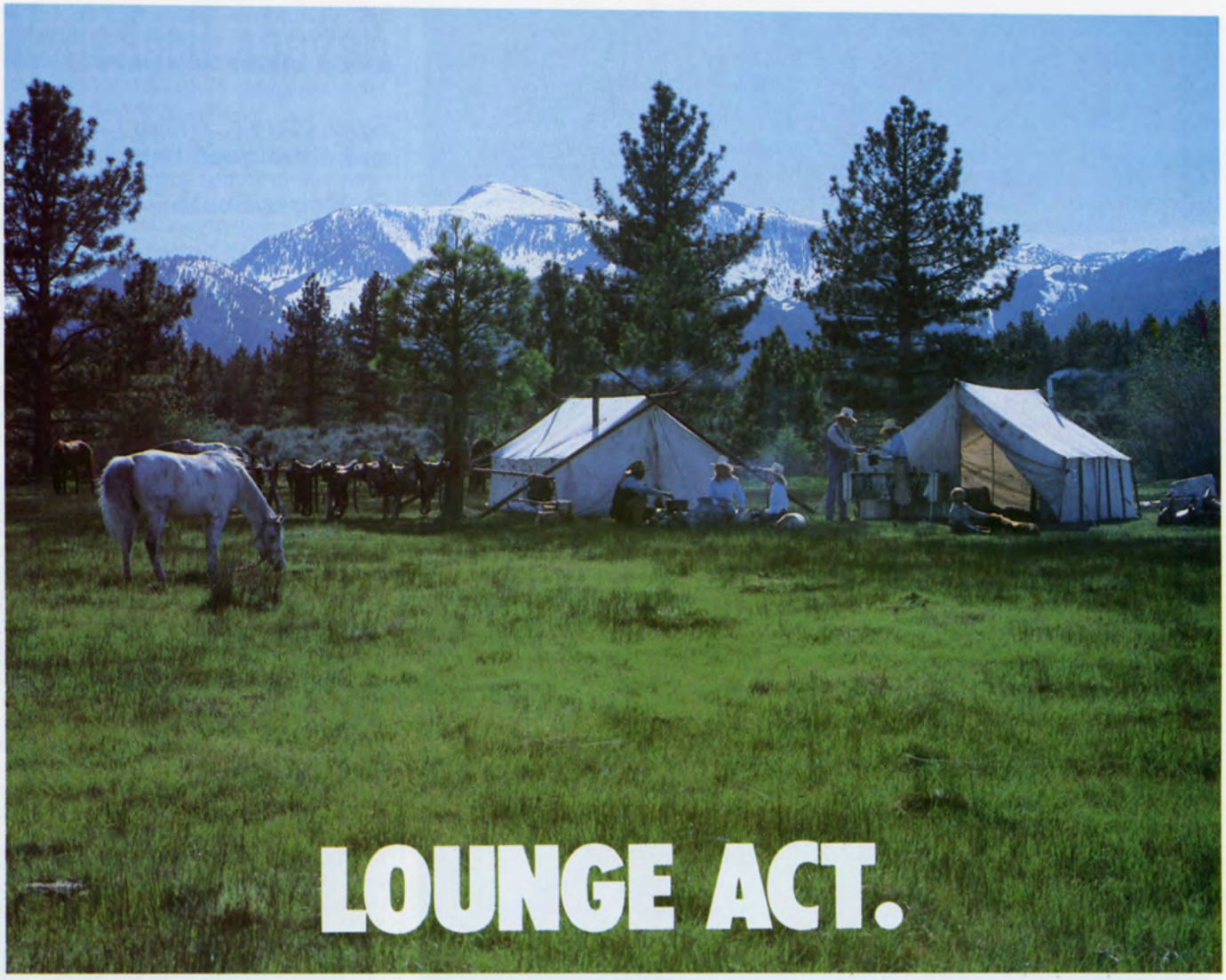
No dog can catch a jackrabbit on the straightaway, so our German shepherd learned to chase them into a fence and catch them on the bounce. While the dog handled one flank of the battlefield, my father would take his .22 rifle to the other. From a seat in an irrigation ditch, partially hidden, he could pick them off as they came through the fence. As many as 20 jacks could be an evening's bag for a good shot. The casualties went over the fence for the wolves and buzzards. Nothing was wasted.

Despite such victories, the harsh realities of nature and economics made survival increasingly hard for local ranchers. By 1930 Bill Morgan had given up trying to run range cattle in the valley All that remained of his herds were the trails worn between water holes and the bleached skeletons of the ones that didn't make it. He continued to run cattle in the foothills and lived on into the period when the Taylor Grazing Act came into being and the feds began regulating the range.

As cattle ranching faded, farming wasn't far behind. The weather had become drier and the water table ever lower in the '40s. By the '50s only two outfits, Gilcrease and Tomiyasu, were making a go of it. And the desert valley began to support a tall crop of casinos.

The ranches, of course, couldn't touch the growing success of the casinos and hotels. But the men and women who raised crops and cattle in the Las Vegas Valley were the toughest and perhaps the truest gamblers I ever knew □

I.E. Payne now lives in Olympia, Washington. She was born in Las Vegas and lived there several different times over the years. She recently retired after working a total of 30 years with the U.S. Forest Service and BLM.



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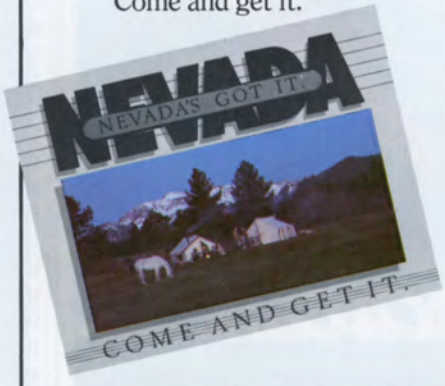
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Nevada Bookshelf

Saint Mary's, Walter Clark, and other good bets.

By Roger Smith

Degikup: Washoe Fancy Basketry 1895-1935, *by Marvin Cohodas. The Fine Arts Gallery of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6T1Y3. $15.95, 114 pages, softcover.*

An expert on Washoe Indian art, Marvin Cohodas has specialized in studying the great variety of designs and shapes of the



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

tribe's basketry, especially that of Dat So La Lee. This handsome booklet is a descriptive history and catalogue for a gallery exhibition of Washoe baskets at the University of British Columbia in 1979. The text alone makes Cohodas' study necessary reading for connoisseurs of Indian art, but because of its 350 historical photographs of basket weavers and their products, this catalogue can also serve as a dictionary of motifs and styles. For casual readers *Degikup* is a well-illustrated table book.

Commitment to Caring: A History of Saint Mary's Hospital, *by David W. Toll. Nevada Academic Press, Box 60134, Reno, NV. 89506. 160 pages. $15.95 hardcover, $8.95 softcover.*

This is the story of the remarkable perseverence of a succession of Dominican sisters and the building of Saint Mary's Hospital in Reno. Beginning with Mother Delores in 1877, the sisters worked tirelessly to raise funds for a school and an infirmary, where the first patients were treated in 1908. The book chronicles the hospital's growth and development to a state-of-the-art medical center. With dozens of black-and-white photographs, *Commitment to Caring* is not simply the history of an institution; its entertaining, vivid narration also reflects upon the charitable spirit of Reno during its emergence as a city.

Sports Betting with Sonny Reizner, *by Sonny Reizner and Martin Mendelsohn. GBC Press, 630 South 11th St., Box 4115, Las Vegas, NV. 89127 $9.95, 166 pages, softcover.*

As the sports book director at the Castaways in Las Vegas, Sonny Reizner is an expert bettor, and this book is an anecdotal account of his experience and a guide to betting, with an emphasis on baseball, football, and basketball. The authors survey how betting lines are established and review percentages, record-keeping systems, Las Vegas sports books, sports services, and gambling terminology—along with "Sonny's 30-rule credo for successful gambling." Conversational in style, the book contains much useful information for Las Vegas gambling; it may prove more inspirational than helpful, however, since the authors' discussions of gambling techniques often are not illustrated clearly with examples.

Walter Van Tilburg Clark: Critiques, *ed. by Charlton Laird. University of Nevada Press, Reno, NV. 89557 $16, 296 pages, hardcover.*

This collection of essays is a tribute to Walter Clark, Nevada's best-known novelist. After Clark died in 1971, Charlton Laird, his close friend and colleague at the University of Nevada, Reno, organized a lecture series to honor him. Most of the book's 19 essays are edited lectures from the series, which featured such famous writers and critics as Wallace Stegner, Laird, and Robert B. Heilman. Among the selections are five excerpts from Clark's letters and lectures, never before published, in which he discusses his fiction. Although critics analyse his major works—*The Ox-Bow Incident, The City of Trembling Leaves, The Track of the Cat, The Watchful Gods and Others Stories*—the contributors devote equal attention to mysteries in Clark's career, especially to what was called his "silence" after 1950. *Critiques* surveys Clark's accomplishments and interests with all the respect due to one of the West's most philosophical fiction writers.



UNR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Trees of the Great Basin: A Natural History, *by Ronald Lanner; drawings by Christine Rasmuss. University of Nevada Press, Reno, NV. 89557. $19.50, 256 pages, 50 drawings, 2 maps, 51 color photographs, hardcover.*

The first title in a planned series of books on Great Basin natural history, *Trees* is an important Nevada reference work. The book describes the appearance, physical properties, seasonal cycles, taxonomy, and locations of 47 species. With tips on when nuts and fruit are ripe and when a species is most colorful and the like, the descriptions serve as a useful guidebook for the amateur tree watcher; the maps, illustrations, and color photos make identification of trees easy. The author is a dendrologist (tree scholar) at Utah State University and has studied Great Basin trees for 20 years. His knowledge extends to the influence of trees on Nevada's desert ecology, a subject he frequently discusses in *Trees.*

A River Flows: The Life of Robert Lardin Fulton, *by Barbara Richnak. Comstock Nevada Publishing Co., P.O. Box 3177, Incline Village, NV. 89450. $9.95, 188 pages, 35 photographs and illustrations, softcover.*

Robert Fulton, a Reno journalist, crusaded for the development of Nevada's natural resources and against gambling. He came to Reno when he was 10 years old and worked a remarkable variety of jobs that taught him how the Nevada economy worked. At about the turn of the century he put his knowledge to use writing for the *Reno Weekly Gazette.* As author Barbara Richnak shows, Fulton's forthright manner made him enemies but also brought considerable political support for his dreams for Nevada, among them the Truckee-fed irrigation system that was part of the Newlands Project. Richnak's biography introduces readers to a type of westerner who greatly influenced the growth of frontier states but who has too often remained obscure, the newspaper editor.

Roger Smith of Reno is a former Nevada *associate editor and teaches English at UNR.*

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Pamper, Spoil, and Generally



Indulge Yourself



Roundup

With these great vacation deals at Nevada hotels, the only trick is knowing what to ask for.

By Ann Henderson and Scott Shelley

Say the magic words and get breakfast in bed. Be the guest of honor at a champagne party, or step into a money booth and grab for the dollar bills as they whirl around you. Those special pleasures and many more are available in Nevada vacation deals—just for the asking.

Since knowing exactly what to ask for is important, presented here is the Third Annual Spoil, Pamper, and Generally Indulge Yourself Roundup. It is your guide to the vacation bargains that hotels and casinos in the Silver State are offering this year.

Some of the deals are extraordinary; imagine finding a good $20 room in L.A. or San Francisco, not to mention all the extras. And if you prefer to pay more, the $100-a-night bargains are there, too. Naturally, the casinos are looking for a return at the slots and tables, but if you pace the action wisely, the result will be a memorable and money-saving holiday.

When making reservations, be sure to name the package—that saves money on the extras you desire. The packages have names like "Champagne Fiesta," "Wagon Train Special," "All For Fun Fling," and "Strike It Rich." Most feature a room for two midweek nights and enticements of food, drinks, shows, and gaming coupons. For other sporting fans there are low rates for skiing, bowling, golf, and health spa privileges.

Some casinos offer more than one package, so travel agents can offer welcomed expertise. To do your own shopping, find out the hotel's toll-free number by calling 800-555-1212.

All deals have some limitations. Holidays, weekends, and conventions can affect the number of available rooms, and packages usually require pre-payment.

The prices listed here are based on double occupancy for nightly or three-day/two-night (3D/2N) stays. Weekends are slightly higher, as are peak seasons, and holidays are often excluded. Most hotels have options for singles, triples, and extra nights.

Inquire about casino fun books. They usually have gaming and cocktail coupons, food credits, merchant discounts, and souvenirs. Some prices include taxes and tips, so ask ahead.

Then relax, and let yourself be pampered.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN BARDWELL

Reno-Tahoe Ski Deals

You'll find good ski vacation deals at the following five hotels in Reno and Sparks and two hotels at Lake Tahoe.

Caesars Tahoe—588-3515, "Ski Spectacular," 4D/3N with two days skiing at Heavenly Valley (longer stays also available), through April except Feb. 15-23, Sun.-Fri., buffet dinner, cocktails, health spa, ski storage, $199/person.

Eldorado—786-5700, "Eldorado's Ski Spree," 4D/3N with two days skiing (longer stays also available), buffet breakfast two days, two $5 food credits, half-carafe of wine, cocktails, interchangeable lift tickets, $120/person.

Harrah's Reno—329-4422, "Ski Connection," 3D/2N, three days skiing, to March 27, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, lounge show with cocktail, buffet breakfast, cocktails, fun book, choice of nine North Shore ski areas, unused lift tickets redeemable for food credit, $112/person.

Hyatt Tahoe—831-1111, "High Sierra Holiday," 3D/2N, with lift ticket discounts, through May, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, $20 food and beverage credit, cocktails, fun book, rides, $59.95/person.

John Ascuaga's Nugget—356-3300, "Ski Holiday," 3D/2N with one day skiing, through April 29, lounge show with cocktails, breakfast two days, steak, prime rib, or Polynesian dinner two days, cocktails, gaming coupons, ski shuttle or $10 car-rental discount, ski cap, $114.50-$124.50/person depending on choice of ski resort.

MGM Grand—789-2000, "Winter Ski Package," 4D/3N with three days skiing (longer stays also available), through April, choice of nine ski areas, lift ticket can be used as credit towards "Hello Hollywood, Hello!" or dinner at an area restaurant, shuttle, $125/person.

Peppermill—826-2121, "Ski 'n Stay With Us," nightly rate with lift ticket discounts, through April 15 except holidays, lounge show with cocktails, $8 food credit, ski shuttle, wax and cap, $25/person.

Las Vegas

Caesars Palace—731-7110, "Roman Holiday," 3D/2N, through 1985, cocktails, lounge show, gaming coupons, Omnimax Theatre ticket, $135.95/person.

California Hotel—385-1212, "Where the Winners Play," 3D/2N, through 1985, breakfast two days, lunch, prime rib dinner, cocktails, $49.95/person.

Castaways—731-5252, "Vacation Sports Book Package," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Wed., cocktail show, lunch, dinner, cocktails, gaming coupons, $66.58/person.

Circus Circus—734-0410, "Circus Caravan," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, buffet breakfast two days, buffet brunch and dinner, $48.95/person.

Desert Inn 733-4444, "Desert Inn Pleasure M.A.P.," 3D/2N, through 1985, cocktail show, $18/day food credit, cocktails, $139/person.

El Cortez—385-5200, "Special," 3D/2N, through 1985, breakfast and dinner two days, $29.95/person.

El Rancho—796-2222, "Best in the West Holiday," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, lounge show with cocktails, breakfast or lunch, cocktail, fun book, $31.50/person except June-Aug. $35.50/person.

> "The packages have names like 'Champagne Fiesta' and 'Strike It Rich' and feature rooms for two nights with enticements of food, drink, and shows. But usually you don't have to head for the tables because there are low rates for skiing, bowling, health spas, and golf included in many deals."

Flamingo Hilton—733-3111, "Winter Holiday," 2D/1N, through Feb. 14, cocktail show, buffet or Food Fantasy Restaurant dinner, cocktails, $19/person.

Four Queens — 385-4011, "Southern Elegance," 3D/2N, Sun.-Wed. on availability, lounge show with cocktail, continental breakfast, dinner, keno ticket, $56.50/person.

Fremont—385-3232, "Fortune Hunter," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Fri., breakfast two days, lunch, cocktails, gaming coupons, $49/person.

Golden Nugget—385-7111, "Golden Getaway," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Wed. except holidays, lounge show, continental breakfast, buffet dinner, health spa visit, $74.50/person.

Hacienda—739-8911, "Champagne Fiesta Package," 3D/2N, through Nov. 30, cocktail show, cocktails, fun book, tennis, champagne parties, $38.85/person.

Imperial Palace—731-3311, "Imperial Holiday," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, cocktail show, $5 dinner discount, cocktails, auto collection admission, gaming lessons, $39/person.

Lady Luck—384-4680, "Lady Luck Package," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, choice of buffet breakfast, lunch, or dinner each day, cocktails, gaming coupons, $22.95/person.

Landmark—733-1110, "Grand Slam," 3D/2N, through 1985, cocktail show, buffet breakfast two days, cocktails, $49.77/person.

Las Vegas Hilton—732-5111, "Winter's Holiday," 3D/2N, through Aug. 31, cocktail show, cocktails, gaming coupons, $49/person.

Las Vegas Inn—731-3222, "Lido Frolic," 3D/2N, through 1985 except holidays, cocktail show, breakfast, cocktails, gaming coupons, $39.95/person.

Marina—739-1500, "Free Casino Play Package," nightly through Jan. 31, fun book, $25 in non-negotiable chips, $25/room.

Maxim—731-4300, "Toast of the Town," 3D/2N, through 1985, lounge show with cocktails, breakfast, prime rib dinner, cocktail, $76/person.

MGM Grand — 739-4111, "Grand Choice Entertainment Package," 3D/2N, through 1985 except holidays, lounge show with cocktails, cocktail show, gaming coupons, movie theater admission, $109/person.

Mint—385-7440, "Holiday Special," 3D/2N, through Feb. 14, Sun.-Wed. except holidays, continental breakfast, lunch or dinner, cocktails, $27.95/person.

Riviera—734-5110, "Celebration Package," 3D/2N, through 1985, lounge show with cocktail, cocktail show, buffet breakfast two days, fun book, $77/person.

Sahara—737-2111, "Safari," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Wed., lounge show, buffet, dinner, $48/person.

Sam's Town—456-7777, "Wagon Train Special," 3D/2N, through 1985, breakfast two days, lunch, steak dinner, cocktails, $49.95/person.

Sands—733-5000, "Fun Break," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, breakfast, spa, $62/person.

Showboat — 385-9123, "Paddlewheel Package," 3D/2N, through 1985, lunch, dinner, cocktail, bingo, bowling, $42/person. Also "Super Sports Package" with golf (cart included), bowling, tennis, $59.95/person.

Stardust — 732-6111, "Dine Around Package," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs., two breakfasts, two dinners, tennis, $45.50/person.

Sundance Hotel—382-6111, "Super Holiday," 3D/2N, through June, Sun.-Wed., buffet breakfast two days, steak dinner, cocktail, coupons, $49.95/person.

Tropicana—739-2222, "Dream Holiday," 3D/2N, through 1985, cocktail show, two buffets (breakfast or lunch), outdoor tennis, special rates on indoor tennis,

racquetball, and golf, from $63/person March 30-Sept. 27 and Nov. 16-Dec. 27, other dates $79/person.

Union Plaza—386-2110, "Plaza Playtime," 3D/2N, through 1985, lounge show, dinner show, lunch, cocktails, gaming coupons, shrimp cocktail, $69.95/person.

Rural Nevada

Riverside Resort, Laughlin—298-2535, nightly rate, Jan. 2-31, Sun.-Thurs., free boat ride across the Colorado River qualifies guest for a fun book, $18/couple.

Gold Strike, four miles northeast of Boulder City — 293-5000, nightly rate through 1985, buffet at Pioneer Club in Las Vegas, cocktail, gaming coupons, keno ticket, $19/single or double.

Station House, Tonopah—482-9777, "Station House Special," nightly rate through 1985, cocktails, gaming coupons, $32/couple.

Red Lion, Elko—738-2111, "Drive-Out Casino Package," through Feb., three nights maximum, Sun.-Fri., continental breakfast, cocktail, gaming coupons, $28/room first night, $30 each additional night.

Stockmen's, Elko—738-5141, "Drive Up," nightly rate through May, continental breakfast, cocktails, gaming coupons, $28/couple.

Cactus Pete's, Jackpot—755-2321, "All For Fun Fling," 3D/2N, through Jan., Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, prime rib dinner and show, breakfast two days, fun book, $79/person.

Goldrush, Wendover — 664-2255, "The Goldrush Special," nightly rate through summer, $6/person food credit, cocktails, fun book, $24.95/couple.

> The key to some deals is knowing what to say. At the Reno Hilton, it's 'I ski like a million,' even though you don't really have to.

Reno/Sparks

Comstock 329-1880, "Wild West Package," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs., breakfast, New York steak dinner, cocktails, gaming coupons, $29/person Nov.-April, $39/person May-Oct.

Eldorado — 786-5700, "Reno $58," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, buffet breakfast two days, $5 food credit, cocktails, fun book, $58/person.

Fitzgerald's—786-3663, "Reno Spree," 3D/2N, through 1985 except holidays, lounge show with cocktails, buffet dinner show, breakfast, cocktails, roll of nickels, 10 percent car-rental discount, $63/person.

Harrah's Reno — 329-4422, "Great Escape No. 2," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, cocktail or dinner show, buffet breakfast, fun book, Harrah's Auto Collection admission, use of health club, $89/person.

Holiday—329-0411, "Holiday For Two," 3D/2N, through 1985, breakfast, dinner, cocktails, coupons, $58/person.

John Ascuaga's Nugget — 356-3300, "Nugget Jackpot Package," 3D/2N, through 1985 except holidays, lounge show with cocktails, breakfast, dinner, $44.50/person.

Karl's Silver Club—358-4771, "Jackpot Jubilee," 3D/2N, through Oct. except holidays and Saturdays, buffet breakfast and dinner two days, fun book, bottle of wine, $39/person.

MGM Grand—789-2000, "Grand Getaway," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except New Year's holiday, cocktail show, $60/person.

Mother Lode, Carson City—883-0900, "Strike It Rich," 2D/1N, through March, Sun.-Fri. except holidays, breakfast, prime rib dinner, cocktails, gaming coupons, $16/person.

Onslow — 786-7310, "Fun Spree," 3D/2N, through 1985 except holidays, breakfast two days, lunch, prime rib dinner, gaming coupons, $59/person.





Ormsby House, Carson City—882-1890, "Get Out of Town," 2D/1N, through March, Sun.-Fri. except holidays, prime rib dinner, cocktails, coupons, $19/person.

Peppermill—826-2121, "Bustin' Loose Holiday," 3D/2N, through May except holidays, buffet lunch, fun book, $39.50/person.

Pioneer Inn—329-9781, "Playtime '85," 3D/2N, through 1985 except holidays, buffet breakfast two days, lunch and dinner, cocktail, gaming coupons, $51/person.

Reno Hilton—785-7000, "Million Dollar Plus," special nightly rate, through Feb. 14, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, $15/person. Also "Ski Like a Million," nightly rate through March 28, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, you qualify for half-price ticket for "Razzle Dazzle" and car-rental discount by saying "I ski like a million," $15/person.

Sands—348-2200, "Reno Super Tour," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, breakfast two days, dinner two days (one selected menu, one buffet), cocktails, gaming coupons, $10 in gaming chips, $59/person.

Sundowner—786-7050, "Showdown," 3D/2N, through 1985, $5 coffee shop and $15 steak house food credits, cocktails, fun book, complementary champagne delivered to room on arrival, $41.60/person.

Western Village—331-1069, "We've Got the Fun," 3D/2N, through April, Sun.-Thurs. except New Year's, lounge show with cocktails, $5 food credit, fun book, $29/person.

Lake Tahoe

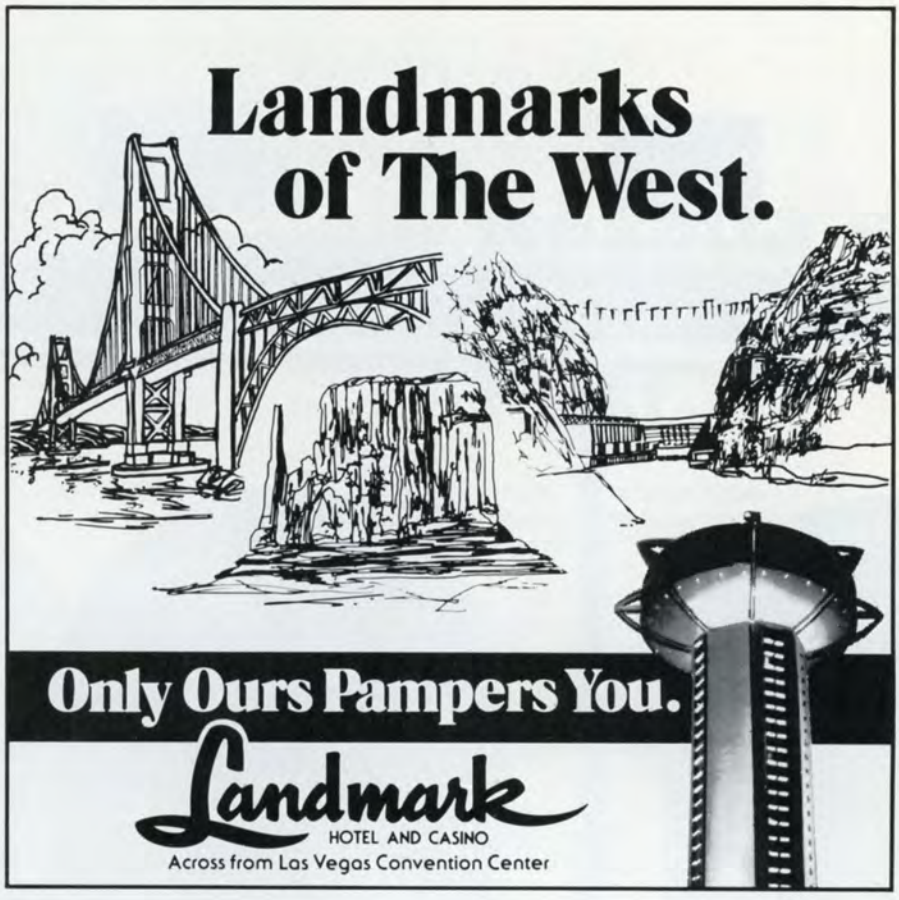
Caesars Tahoe—588-3515, "Majestic Holiday," 3D/2N, through 1985 except Feb. 15-24 and Dec. 13-Jan. 1, Sun.-Wed., buffet dinner, cocktails, use of health spa, $139/person except $155/person June 16-Sept. 14.

Harrah's Tahoe—329-4422, "Tahoe Adventure," 3D/2N, through 1985, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, lounge show with cocktails, complete breakfast served in room, fun book, health club, $119/person Jan.-June and Sept.-Dec., $144/person July-Aug.

Harvey's—588-2411, "Holiday At Harvey's," 3D/2N, through May, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, buffet dinner, cocktails, gaming coupons, $78/person.

High Sierra — 588-6211, "Roundup Package," 3D/2N, through June 27, Sun.-Thurs. except holidays, breakfast and dinner two days, cocktails, gaming coupons, Lake Tahoe cruise, cocktail party on arrival, chance to grab cash in whirlwind of money, souvenirs, $149/person.

Entertainment Editor Ann Henderson is preparing her collection of rare gaming coupons for donation to the Smithsonian. Meanwhile, Editorial Assistant Scott Shelley is looking for a hotel room with a helicopter pad.






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Caliente's brass band appeared in the Rose Bowl Parade in 1930. Frank Scott Collection

THE NEVADA CALENDAR

January & February 1985

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



Here's the Beef

The heaviest chorus line anywhere—about 20 preened, pruned, and shampooed bulls—goes on stage February 14 in the 16th annual Nugget Bull Sale in Sparks. Last year 16 bulls, each weighing about 1,200 pounds, sold for an average of $4,933. Buyers, breeders, ranchers, and other bull fans are expected to fill John Ascuaga's 900-seat Celebrity Room to watch this year's show. At times the stars also stop in the casino; here a big bettor joins the Osmond Brothers from Provo and the Compston Sisters from Wellington at the blackjack table.

LAS VEGAS TERRITORY

January

Firefighting Equipment Exhibit, thru 10/11/85, equipment used in Las Vegas, Goldfield, and other towns from 1900 to 1940s, Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, 385-0115

Museum Exhibit, thru 1/13, Christmas scenes from 1920s and 1930s are re-created, Clark County Southern Nevada Museum, Henderson, 565-0907

Watercolor Show, thru 1/18, Flamingo Library, 733-7810

Grand Opening, thru 1/19, celebrates expansion of Sam Boyd's California Hotel, ribbon cutting at 11:30am on 1/18 with fireworks at 10pm, California Hotel, 454-8048

New Year's Eve Fireworks, 31 Union Plaza, 386-2110

AT&T Tennis Challenge of Champions, 1-5, top pro tennis players and celebrities compete, $200,000 first prize, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3900

Union Pacific Locomotive Display, 1-2/28, the turn-of-the-century, coal-fired U.P. yard engine No. 4442 will be undergoing restoration and on display, Clark County Southern Nevada Museum, Henderson, 565-0907

Stairway to the Stars Million Dollar Poker Tournament, 2-22, has 23 tournaments with buy-ins ranging from $500 to $5,000, Stardust Hotel, 732-6587 or 732-6514

Art Showcase, 2-31 artwork by Max Bunnell, Joyce Jones, and Phyllis Carpenter, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

Jackpot Team Roping, 5, sign-up 9am, roping events 10am, free to spectators, rodeo arena, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

Utah Jazz v. Houston Rockets, 6, professional basketball, 8pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 369-2255

"Bewitched by Love," 6, fully staged Spanish ballet, 2pm, Las Vegas Symphony Orchestra, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 739-3420

Art Exhibit, 6-30, works by Lou Ray, Mary Digles, and Las Vegas High School students, Las Vegas Art Museum, 647-4300

Las Vegas Americans v. Kansas City Comets, 8, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Cutting Horse Spectacular, 8-18, Sports Complex, Tropicana Hotel, 739-2676

UNLV v. University of the Pacific, 10, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Valley of Fire Hike, 12, ranger-guided day-long hike in the backcountry, covers about seven miles of rugged terrain, 10am, meet at the Visitor Center, Valley of Fire State Park, 385-0264

UNLV v. Fresno State, 12, basketball, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Professional Bowlers Assn. Tournament, 14-20, Showboat Hotel, 385-9123

Las Vegas Americans v. Baltimore Blast, 15, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Jackpot Team Roping, 19, sign-up 9am, roping events 10am, free to spectators, rodeo arena, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

UNLV v. Maryland, 19, basketball, noon, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

UNLV v. Cal. State Fullerton, 21 basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267



DAVID BROWN

All That Jazz

The Utah Jazz isn't from Las Vegas, but the NBA team calls the resort capital home for four more games this season at UNLV's Thomas and Mack Center. The Jazz takes on the Houston Rockets on January 6, the Los Angeles Lakers on March 13, the Chicago Bulls on March 24, and the Los Angeles Clippers on April 9. Call 702-369-2255 for ticket information and the chance to see moves like those of Adrian Dantley (he's number 4) and cheerleader Julie Wade.

Tropicana Archery Championships, 23-27 Sports Complex, Tropicana Hotel, 739-2581

U.S. Shuffleboard Tournament, 24-28, Showboat Hotel, 385-9123

ESPN Boxing, 24, $15 ringside, $10 general, 6pm, Showboat Hotel, 385-9196

Winter Concert, 25-26, "Cinderella," "The Little Match Girl," and "Chariots of Fire," Nevada Youth Ballet Company, 8pm Fri., 2pm and 8pm Sat., Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 458-7575

Las Vegas Americans v. Cleveland Force, 26, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Introduction to Desert Wildlife, 26, slide show and guided hike, 9am-noon, Visitor Center, Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, 875-4141

Choreographers Showcase, 26-27 juried presentation of new choreography, Allied Arts Council Dance Division, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 731-5419

Pan Tournament, 27-31 Union Plaza Hotel, 386-2110

Blackjack Bonanza, 28-30, Tropicana Hotel, 739-2105

Super Shoot I, 28-2/3, trapshoot with $250,000 in prizes and an additional $100,000 added by the Landmark Hotel, Bob Taylor's Landmark Gun Club, Las Vegas, 871-8114

Las Vegas Americans v. Pittsburgh Spirit, 29, Major Indoor Soccer league, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Sahara Gun Show, 30-2/4, sale and show by antique arms collectors, Sahara Hotel, 737-2111

UNLV v. San Jose State, 31, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, 739-3267

"Message From the Grass Roots," 31-2/3, drama based on the career of Malcolm X, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6211

February

Navajo Weaving Exhibit, 1-28, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

UNLV v. Utah State, 2, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Jackpot Team Roping, 2, sign-up 9am, roping events 10am, free to spectators, rodeo arena, Peppermill's Western Village Mesquite, 346-5232

Las Vegas Americans v. Tacoma Stars, 3, Major Indoor Soccer League, 6:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Royal Poker Challenge, 3-5, $10,000 grand prize, $40 entry fee, Four Queens Hotel, 385-4011

Art Show, 3-27, paintings by the Nevada Mothers Organization, Las Vegas Art Museum, 647-4300

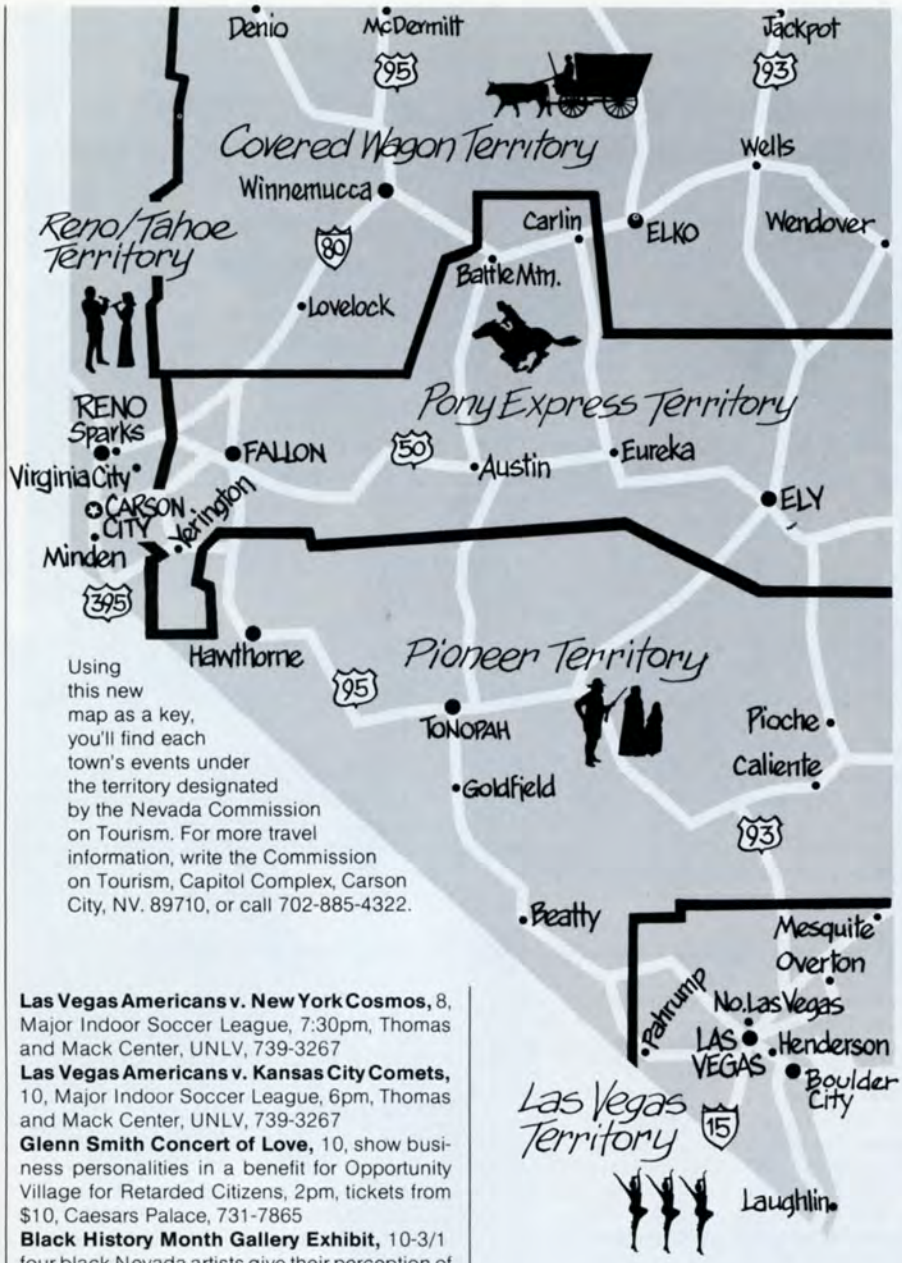
Quilt Exhibit, 3-28, works by Afro-American quilt makers, part of Black History Month at Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

Military Bowling Tournament, 4-8, Showboat Hotel, 385-9123

"The Merry Widow," 5, operetta, 8pm, Las Vegas Symphony Orchestra, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 739-3420

Photography Exhibit, 5-3/1 works by Bob Brown, David Brown, and Alan Platzer, Fine Arts Gallery, UNLV, 739-3237

"Message From the Grass Roots," 7-10, drama based on the career of Malcolm X, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6211



Using this new map as a key, you'll find each town's events under the territory designated by the Nevada Commission on Tourism. For more travel information, write the Commission on Tourism, Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV. 89710, or call 702-885-4322.

Las Vegas Americans v. New York Cosmos, 8, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Las Vegas Americans v. Kansas City Comets, 10, Major Indoor Soccer League, 6pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Glenn Smith Concert of Love, 10, show business personalities in a benefit for Opportunity Village for Retarded Citizens, 2pm, tickets from $10, Caesars Palace, 731-7865

Black History Month Gallery Exhibit, 10-3/1 four black Nevada artists give their perception of the black experience, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6211

Gin Tournament, 10-14, Union Plaza, 386-2110

Las Vegas Americans v. Dallas Sidekicks, 14, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Ballet, 14-17 "Symphonic Variations," "A La Hitchcock," "Fresh Aire," and an original ballet, 8pm nightly with 2pm matinee on Sun., Nevada Dance Theatre, Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 739-3838

California TELCO Bowler Assn. Tournament, 15-18, Showboat Hotel, 385-9123

Bighorn Sheep Presentation, 16, slide show and hike, 9:30-11:30am, Visitor Center, Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, 875-4141

Las Vegas Americans v. Los Angeles Lazers, 16, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:30pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Jackpot Team Roping, 16, sign-up 9am, roping events 10am, free to spectators, rodeo arena, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

Las Vegas Bottle Club Show and Sale, 16-17 Hacienda Hotel, 452-4480

Winter Craps Tournament, 18-20, Tropicana Hotel, 739-2105

Concert, 20, Bucharest Philharmonic from Romania, 8pm, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 739-3535

AAA Division II Basketball Playoffs, 20-23, boys and girls high school basketball, Las Vegas Convention Center, 733-2323 or 885-4390

UNLV v. New Mexico State, 21 basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

A Division II Basketball Playoffs, 21-23, boys and girls high school basketball, Las Vegas Convention Center, 733-2323 or 885-4390

"Aladdin," 22-3/10, 7pm Fri., 2pm Sat. with 7pm performances also on 3/2 and 3/9, 2pm Sun., Rainbow Company Children's Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

UNLV v. UC Santa Barbara, 23, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

Five-Mile Run, 23, in conjunction with Las Vegas Track Club, 9am, Floyd Lamb State Park, 645-1998

Desert Safety Program, 24, park rangers discuss desert survival, first aid, building shelters and solar stills, and how to find your way when lost, 1pm, Visitor Center, Valley of Fire State Park, 385-0264

Concert, 24, Handel's "Dixit Dominus" and "Psalm 110" plus Bach's "Mass in F Major," 3pm, free, Musical Arts Singers and Orchestra, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 451-6672

Golden Blackjack Classic, 24-26, $50,000 in gold first prize, $175 entry fee, $300 buy-in, Four Queens Hotel, 385-4011 ext. 2100

Ballet, 25, comic and satirical versions of ballets such as "Swan Lake" and "Giselle" by the all-male ballet company, Les Ballets Trocadero de Monte Carlo, 8pm, Ham Concert Hall, UNLV, 739-3838

UNLV v. Irvine, 27 basketball, 7pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

AA & AAA State Basketball Championships, 27-28 and 3/1 boys and girls on Wed. at Clark and Valley high schools, on Thurs.-Fri. at Las Vegas Convention Center, 733-2323 or 885-4390

ESPN Boxing, 28, 6pm, $15 ringside, $10 general, Showboat Hotel, 385-9196

PIONEER TERRITORY

January

Nevada 84, thru 1/9, photo show, Lincoln County Courthouse, Pioche, 726-3333

El Capitan Cutthroat Derby, thru 4/26, prize for biggest cutthroat trout caught on Walker Lake, El Capitan Club, Hawthorne, 945-3321

Rhyolite's 80th Anniversary, 12-13, mining contests, barbecue, and dance, Rhyolite, call Rhyolite Number 2

February

Liberty Park Dedication, 2, memorial park built by U.S. veterans, 3pm, Rhyolite, call Rhyolite Number 2

Elks Crab Crack, 23, 6pm feed followed by 9pm dance, Tonopah Convention Center, 482-6850

Hell 100 Motocross-Enduro, 23-24, 100-mile motorcycle race, starts 10am Sat., Rhyolite, call Rhyolite Number 2

Calendar Specials:

Some events of note you won't want to miss this winter:

- **New Year's Eve** is celebrated at townwide dances in both Austin and Eureka while crowds gather in downtown Las Vegas for fireworks at 9 p.m. to accommodate east coast tube watchers.
- **Southpaw Art Show** runs through January 16 at the Elko museum as Northeastern Nevada's left-handed artists show how to do it right.
- **Drama Competition** at Reno Little Theater on February 8-9 is open to rookie playwrights.
- **Las Vegas Bottle Show** brings together collectors, browsers, and a sea of glass at the Hacienda February 16-17
- **Wild Game and Fish Feed** on February 25 is Jackpot sportsmen's annual ode to field and stream.

PONY EXPRESS TERRITORY

January

New Year's Eve Dance, 31 live music, 9pm, Eureka, 237-5565

Austin VFD New Year's Eve Dance, 31 9pm, Firehouse, Austin, 964-2440

Hidden Cave Tours, 12, meet 9:45am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

Cribbage Tournament, 20, play begins at noon, early registration suggested, $10 entry fee, prizes, Hazen Bar, on U.S. 50-A in Hazen

Hidden Cave Tours, 26, meet 9:45am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

February

Hidden Cave Tours, 9 and 23, meet 9:45am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677

Photography Exhibit, 9-10, Nevada scenes by Sandra Dore, Hazen Bar, on U.S. 50-A in Hazen

Bristlecone Chariot Races and Cross-Country Ski Run, 16-17 chariot races both days at the fairgrounds; on Sat. 5- and 10-km ski races at Murry Summit, meet at campground five miles southwest of Ely on U.S. 6, open to all skiers; Ely, 289-8877

COVERED WAGON TERRITORY

January

New Year's Eve Celebration, 31, Cactus Pete's and Horseshu, Jackpot, 755-2259

Southpaw Art Show, thru1/16, works by left-handed artists, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

Elko High School Band Concert, 22, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

White Weather Ball, 25-26, square and round dancing, Jackpot High School, 755-2259

Cowboy Poetry Gathering, 31-2/2, more than 100 working cowboys and ranch hands from 15 western states meet in a celebration of the authentic poetry, song, and folklore of their profession. The four-day meeting will include concerts, exhibits of folk art, films, workshops, and seminars, Elko, 702-738-3651 or 208-622-9373

February

Mardi Gras Ball, 8-9, New Orleans-style with authentic costumes, dinner, and dance, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

Elko High School Winter Play, 13-14, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

Jr. High School Band Concert, 19, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

A Division I Basketball Playoffs, 21-23, boys and girls, Elko High School, 738-7281 or 885-4390

High School Choral Concert, 22, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

Annual Wild Game and Fish Feed, 25, free, all sportsmen are invited and offers of game, waterfowl, and fish are accepted, Jackpot's Sportsmen's Assn., Cactus Pete's, Jackpot, 755-2321

Elko High School Band Concert, 26, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091



STEVE TIMKO

Buckaroo Ben Hurs Race in Ely

It's a hootin', hollerin', and mud-splashin' good time in Ely on February 16-17 when the sixth annual Bristlecone Chariot Races are held at the fairgrounds. More than 60 teams are expected for the buckaroo's version of Ben Hur, in which the racers stand in boxes mounted on wheels and hang on as their two-horse teams thunder down the track.

John Strong Circus, 28, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091



Rhymers of the Range

A cowboy's poems usually are heard only by his partners in the bunkhouse and a few cows on the range, but for three days this winter crowds of devotees will get an earful at the Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, January 31-February 2. Cowboy poets from around the West will be the honored guests and speakers; host will be the Institute of the American West, which is based in Sun Valley, Idaho. By special arrangement, spectators can travel to the rhyme fest in Cowboy Express Cars that leave Reno and Salt Lake City on January 30. For reservations, tickets, and information on the gathering, call the institute at 208-622-9373. Among the poets will be Baxter Black (above), who has three books of verse to his credit, including *The Cowboy and His Dog, or Go Git in the Pick-Up.*

RENO/TAHOE TERRITORY

January

Paper Wall Sculptures, thru 7 works by Ingrid Evans, Manville Gallery, School of Medicine, UNR, 784-6001

Reno Reflections, thru 3/31 historic and contemporary photographs of the Reno area, Nevada Historical Society's Downtown Gallery, in Reno-Tahoe Visitor Center, 789-0190

New Year's Eve Party and Torchlight Parade, 31 Tahoe Donner, Truckee, 916-598-6046

Ladies Invitational Slot Marathon, 29-1/1 Reno Ramada Hotel, 788-2000

Full Moon Ski Tour, 5, guided cross-country ski tour, hot wine and cider served, 7pm, $6, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-0484

Far West Assn. Freestyle Competition Ballet and Moguls, 5-6, Boreal Ski Area, Truckee, 916-426-3666

Collegiate Ski Races, 5-6, qualifying for NCAA Championships, Alpine Meadows, Tahoe City, 916-583-4232

Art Exhibit, 5-3/2, oils, watercolors, pastels, and mixed media by Bob Pepper, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 882-9723

Art Show, 7-2/1 works by Paul Mylnic, Manville Gallery, School of Medicine, UNR, 784-6001

UNR v. Weber State, 10, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

Auto '85, 11-13, showing of new 1985 cars, free, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 785-4800

UNR v. Idaho State, 12, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

Concert, 13, works by Beethoven, Saint-Saens, and Hayden, guest artist violinist Ida Kavafian, 3pm, $10 general, $8 students and senior citizens, Reno Chamber Orchestra, Reno Little Theater, 826-8742

Kirkwood Classic, 13, 7.5- and 15-km races, Kirkwood Cross-Country Ski Area, 209-258-8864

Concert, 13, 3pm, Concerto Symphony of the Sierra, Pioneer Theatre, 329-1324



A Stitch in Time

Before the dawn of polyester, the Navajo and Pueblo Indians of the Southwest were perhaps the world's finest fashion designers. For centuries the women have worked at their looms, weaving ornate patterns and brilliant colors into clothing, blankets, and rugs. Over the years the styles have changed, each marking the eclipse of an era—early Pueblo, Spanish colonial, U.S. troop containment in the 1860s, and white traders of the 1890s. From January 14 to February 24, the Sierra Nevada Museum of Art in Reno presents the Durango Collection of Navajo weaving, which features three centuries of Southwestern American textiles. It's one of the largest such collections in the world and has never been shown before west of the Rockies.

"The Space Shuttle: An American Adventure," 13-4/13, Cinema-360 film on space flight, plus "Stars for a Winter Night," Fleischmann Planetarium, UNR, 784-4811

Navajo Weaving Exhibit, 14-2/24, the Durango Collection of garments, rugs, and blankets from three centuries of Navajo weaving, also a lecture series, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333

Casino Challenge, 15, ski races for Reno-Tahoe area casino employees, Alpine Meadows, Tahoe City, 916-583-4232

Sammy Hagar Concert, 15, rock 'n roll, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4444

Annual Mid-Winter Gala, 18, party and new exhibit, "Frontiers of Culture: The Story of the Nevada Historical Society," 6-9pm, exhibit is thru 6/16, Nevada Historical Society, 789-0190

"Wait Until Dark," 18-19, mystery-thriller, 8:30pm, Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

Art Show, 18-2/13, photography by Peter Goin, weaving by Chelsea Miller, and sculptures and paintings by Ted March, Sheppard Gallery, Church Fine Arts Building, UNR, 784-6682

Harlem Globetrotters, 21 Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4444

Concert, 22, Mozart's "Cosi Fan Tutte" Overture and Weigl's Symphony No. 1, 8:15pm, Reno Philharmonic, Pioneer Theater, 329-1324

South Lake Tahoe Winter Carnival, 22-25, four days of serious and zany ski races, food, and music, free entry to any event, Sierra Ski Ranch, South Lake Tahoe, 916-659-7519

UNR v. Boise State, 24, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

"Wait Until Dark," 25-26, mystery-thriller, 8:30pm, Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

Flips International Jr. Invitational Gymnastic Meet, 25-26, top 14-and-under female gymnasts from the U.S., Canada, England, France, Germany, and Japan compete, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 331-2200

Washoe County Car Dealers Assn. Car Show, 25-27, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 322-8181

Ladies Invitational Slot Marathon, 25-27, Reno Ramada Hotel, 788-2000

Super Bowl of Poker, 25-3/10, Amarillo Slim hosts seventh annual tournament, Del Webb's High Sierra, Stateline, 588-6211

UNR v. Boise State, 26, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4607

***Sacramento Bee* Silver Skis Slalom and Novice Races,** 26-27 Heavenly Valley, South Lake Tahoe, 916-541-1330

***Tahoe World* Championships,** 27 15-km citizens' cross-country race starts at 10am, $10 entry, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-0484

UNR Winter Carnival, 28-2/2, Hawaiian luau, ski races, contests, and parties in Reno and Lake Tahoe, 784-6589

Historical Marker Dedication, 31, commemorating 100-year-old State Printing Building; State Archives on bottom floor celebrates its 20th anniversary; first records of government in Carson Valley, Utah Territory, 1851-1855, will be presented at 4pm dedication; 101 South Fall Street, Carson City, 885-5210

February

Winterskol, 1-10, ski races, concerts, dances, games, ballet, and aerial clinics, torchlight parade, contest, movies, and fashion show, Incline Village, 831-5508 or 831-1436

"Wait Until Dark," 1-2, mystery-thriller, 8:30pm, Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

UNR v. Northern Arizona, 2, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

U.S. Ski Assn. Sierra Grand Prix Race, 2-3, Boreal Ski Area, Truckee, 916-426-3666

Tanner's Worldwide Flea Market, 3, 9am-6pm, adults, $1.50, children 12 and under free, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 785-4800

Kirkwood Klassic, 3, 15- and 30-km races, $8 pre-registration, $10 race day, Kirkwood Cross-Country Ski Area, 209-258-8864

Full Moon Ski tour, 3, guided cross-country tour, hot wine and cider served, 7pm, $6, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-0484

Police Winter Olympics, 3-7 downhill and cross-country ski races for policemen, Alpine Meadows, Tahoe City, 916-583-4232

Art Show, 4-3/1 works by Kim Benesh, Manville Gallery, School of Medicine, UNR, 784-6001

Drama Competition, 8-9, one-act plays, open to anyone, no experience necessary and original scripts welcome, hosted by Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

World's Toughest Rodeo, 8-10, rodeo held by Pro Rodeo Enterprises of Iowa, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4659

Carson Capers and Red Stocking Review, 8-10, parody of local happenings and people, Community Center, Carson City, 883-1976

"Thurber I," 9, William Windom (starred in TV's "My World and Welcome to It") in a one-man show based on James Thurber's stories and fables, 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 784-4569

Historical Lecture, 12, on the Nevada Historical Society's founder, Jeanne Elizabeth Wier, by

New Life at Rhyolite

At its peak of excitement, Rhyolite had about 6,000 residents and a railroad. Today only a handful of people live there, but the town's new owner, Jim Spencer, is putting some life in the old camp this winter. On January 12-13 there will be a celebration with mining contests, barbecue, and dance to celebrate the town's 80th anniversary. On February 2 veterans will dedicate Liberty Park, and on February 23-24 motorcycle riders can compete in the Hell 100 Motocross-Enduro. "Only the best riders will survive," Spencer promises. For more information, call him at Rhyolite Number 2.

Festival Time at Tahoe

When snow people gather to ski, eat, and compete at Tahoe festivals, the events vary from the believable to the bizarre. At this winter's Big Three you'll find a Snowshoe Thompson ski race, a German dinner-dance and pastry contest, beer slaloms, chili feeds, races with cardboard boxes and beds, an Hawaiian luau, torchlight parades, and many other events. The South Lake Tahoe Winter Carnival hosted by Sierra Ski Ranch takes place January 22-25; the UNR Winter Carnival is January 28-February 2; and Winterskol is February 1-10 at Incline Village.

ED OSIOS



Slidin' with the Stars

Going to the Annual All-Celebrity Ski Classic at Heavenly Valley Ski Resort is like attending tryouts for a multi-million-dollar alpine remake of the *Greatest Story Ever Told.* The gods and goddesses of the silver screen and blue tube flock to the slopes for the annual bash to smile, hobnob, pose for photographers, and ski for glory while fans cheer and wince at their daring favorites. This year's party at Tahoe's south shore is February 23-24 and features pro ski races, a torchlight parade, music, fireworks, and national TV coverage. The perennial host, John Denver, is shown here conferring with regular Bruce Jenner.

Curator of Exhibits Phillip I. Earl, 7pm, Nevada Historical Society, 789-0190

Northern Nevada Band Festival, 12-13, Pioneer Theater, 784-6525

UNR v. Montana State, 14, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

Nugget Bull Sale, 14, Celebrity Room, John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 356-3438

Art Exhibit, 15-3/6, paintings by Robert Griffin and Katrina Lasko, Sheppard Gallery, Church Fine Arts Building, UNR, 784-6682

Molson Fun Race, 16, obstacle ski course, Alpine Meadows, Tahoe City, 916-583-4232

UNR v. Montana, 16, basketball, 7:30pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4697

Torchlight Parade, 16, Tahoe Donner Ski Area, Truckee, 916-587-6046

A Russian Fortnight, 17-3/9, recalling the Czarist era with performances of Tchaikovsky's opera, "Eugene Onegin," ballets, an all-Russian concert, Russian Avant Garde 1910-1930 exhibit, and Grand Imperial Ball; for dates and locations call 329-1324 or 786-4046

President's Day Race, 18, 10-km ski race, 10am, Incline Cross-Country Ski Area, 831-5190

AAA Division I Basketball Playoffs, 20-23, play at a local high school TBA on Wed., at UNR Gym Thurs.-Sat., 885-4390

Reno Boat and Sports Show, 20-24, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 323-6055

"Amadeus," 22-24, 28, and 3/1-3, drama, 8:30pm, 2pm on Sun., for mature audiences, Reno Little Theater, 329-0661

Ladies Invitational Slot Marathon, 22-24, Reno Ramada Hotel, 788-2000

Annual All-Celebrity Ski Classic, 23-24, celebrities, ski races, torchlight parade, music, and fireworks, Heavenly Valley, South Lake Tahoe, 916-541-1330

Lecture, 26, on the role of an historical society by Director Peter L. Bandurraga, Nevada Historical Society, 789-0190

"You Can't Take It With You," 28, 3/1-2 and 3/6-9, comedy, 8:30pm, Collegiate Theatre, Lake Tahoe Community College, 916-541-4660 or 916-541-7597



History in the Marking

This handsome two-story building was built with prison sandstone 100 years ago in Carson City. It housed the State Printing Office and was the government's second structure after the Capitol (no doubt to print all the laws that issued forth from the latter). The old building will be the scene of an historical marker dedication on January 31 at 4 p.m., and all history buffs and dignitaries (including legislators meeting across the street) are invited to attend. The Division of Archives, which inhabits the ground floor, will hold an open house and celebrate its own 20th anniversary. Visitors also are welcome at the palatial second-floor offices of *Nevada Magazine,* which next year will be celebrating its 50th. Upstairs, depending on how the old steam heating system is working, you should bring either an ice pack or an extra sweater.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

March

Pavarotti Concert, 1 Reno, 788-3028

Snowfest, 1-10, winter carnival, North Lake Tahoe, 916-583-7625

Panasonic Las Vegas Invitational, 20-24, PGA golf tournament, 382-6616

April

Boulder City Spring Jamboree, 6, 293-2034

Las Vegas Stars Season Opener, 11, 386-7200

Reno Padres Season Opener, TBA, 825-0678

J&B Scotch LPGA Pro-Am Golf Tournament, 15-21 Desert Inn, Las Vegas, 733-4444

Henderson Industrial Days, 16-21 565-8951

Reno Intnl. Jazz Festival, 18-20, 323-5672

May

Silver State Square Dance Festival, 3-5, Reno, 789-4270

Armed Forces Day, 17-19, Hawthorne, 945-5896

Jim Butler Days, 23-27 Tonopah, 482-3859

A Reminder: to confirm dates and times, use the phone numbers listed with each event. For out-of-state callers, the area code is 702 throughout Nevada. For toll-free phone numbers, call 800-555-1212. □

True Grit

So that's why they call it Sand Mountain.

By Harry Chalekian

When we were invited to go dune buggy riding at Sand Mountain, I thought the invitation was intriguing. In my native Midwest, the equivalent activity was snowmobiling. The tradeoff would be cold, which could be resolved with a shot of brandy, or the dust, which could be resolved with a shower.

Driving east beyond Fallon, the reality of rural, high-desert Nevada emerged. The natural beauty of the sagebrush and desert gave way to broad expanses of alkali flats. With the temperature in the 90s, the gusty winds hardly enhanced our appreciation of the landscape. But off in the distance, we saw the faint outline of Sand Mountain.

As we left the highway and approached the base of the mountain, we saw a wagon train of pickup campers and motor homes. We drove into the circle and quickly located our hosts.

My first step out of the car set the stage for what was to come. I was caught by a gust of wind that filled my eyes, ears, nose, throat, and hair with sand. I coughed and rendered my first greeting to Sand Mountain: "Ptui!"

Our hosts were pleased to see us. Being introduced to the assembled group of campers involved facing both into and away from the wind, but there seemed to be no escape. We were being inducted into the subculture of hardy souls who have found the real meaning of "true grit."

Finally an invitation to imbibe rescued us from the gusting sand. Our entry into our hosts' motor home revealed an interior coated with dust. The wine we drank had body—that is, physical particles that quickly settled to the bottom of the glass. I wiped my eyes, blew my nose, and avidly listened to the recap of events that included hill rides, campfires, libations, and songfests.

With pleasantries out of the way, it was time to address the purpose of our visit, a dune buggy ride up Sand Mountain. We left the protection of the motor home and were instantly engulfed by the gusting, sandy winds. Half blinded and covered with dust, we discussed the wind and conditions on the hill; it was reluctantly agreed that we should wait awhile for the wind to subside.

Our wait gave us a chance to meet more of the sand-dusted people at the outing. Each was pleasant, expressing warm and friendly greetings, but it was strange—everyone we met wore glasses. In one vehicle, a jam session of guitar and banjo provided entertainment.

After an hour or so, the outing coordinators met and decided the wind was too harsh to conduct the scheduled races and rides up the hill. A few diehards chose to ride informally and left with a roar to speed up, around, and over the big dune.

Our disappointment was easily concealed as we decided to forego our promised dune buggy rides. We bid quick farewells to our crusted friends and sought refuge in our now sand-filled car.

Leaving the campout, I enjoyed the awesome and raw beauty of Sand Mountain. The mountain of Indian gods had prevailed once again. We came, we saw, it conquered. □

Harry Chalekian of Carson City is frequently on the road in Nevada.

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"Landrum's Cafe," Watercolor 13x18"
"I grew up with Landrum's—I had to paint it."

NEVADA ART & ARTISTS

Jeff Nicholson

When Carson City artist Jeff Nicholson began painting seriously in Reno 14 years ago, it was more of a relief than an act of labor. "I needed to express myself creatively with my hands," Nicholson says. "Painting was, and is, just something I had to do."

And with Nevada as a subject, he has a great deal of work on his hands. "I spend a lot of time kicking around old Nevada towns, looking for scenes that move me. I'll never get half of my ideas down because there's an endless supply of subject matter out there."

The 36-year-old artist uses watercolors and oils to capture certain moods. "I favor watercolors for architecture because I tend to be more hard-edged with them. I'm also more spontaneous with them because I can just throw them in a box with a tablet and take off." But with oils, it's a different matter. "I don't take oils into the field. When I work with oils, I do a lot more planning and study."

Nicholson works mainly from photographs to bring his oil subjects home from the field. He may shoot several rolls of film on one subject and then blend components of each slide into one idea. "Of course, you can't rely exclusively on pho-

"Little Woman, Plaza Hotel," Oil, 39x30"
"I used to take my camera to all the old haunts."





Jeff Nicholson

tography. The lens tends to distort things a little. The colors aren't always true, and they usually don't capture the essence of the moods I want to portray. But they're an indispensable tool for me."

Over the years he's won numerous awards and commissions, among them a painting of the Eureka County courthouse, designing a seal for Esmeralda County, and a series of 10 oil paintings for the Nevada State Council on the Arts. He is currently exhibiting at the Tavelli Gallery in Aspen, Colorado, the Lake Gallery in Incline Village, and the Five Dog Book and Art Gallery in Reno.—*Jim Crandall*



"John Walker: Painter in the Field"
Oil, 34x42"
"John Walker was a painter and photographer from Ely in the '20s and '30s. He also hand-painted billboards. I ran across a photo of him, and it struck my fancy."



When the Sims stormed Reno's gambling palaces, luck was not a lady.

Reno Gambler

As an expert, I knew I'd break the bank, but I didn't find out whose bank until I hit the tables.

By Diane Sims

I had it in my mind to win. I had never won in a casino before, always hoping just to get lucky. So with our annual Reno weekend at hand, I decided to draw upon my own resources.

After buying six gambling guides from a used-book store in Albany, Oregon, I set about memorizing the rules, facts, and odds for craps, blackjack, roulette, slots, keno, and bingo. By the weekend, I was an expert.

It was a 10-hour drive down from our home in Oregon, so I brought the books along to read to my husband. As we zoomed through Oregon and parts of California, he nodded whenever I paused to see if he was listening. At Susanville, we stopped for lunch. "Why so quiet?" I inquired. "Haven't slept well lately," he said, staring at me over a cheeseburger. "You've been talking in your sleep. Something about a hard six being a sucker bet and sticking with the pass line."

"Sound advice," I said, scooping the last French fry off his plate.

We rolled into Reno with the setting sun and quickly checked into the hotel. We flipped a coin for the first shower. I won but paused a moment at our eighth-story window to take in the view. The distant Sierra Nevada seemed to march tier upon tier into infinity. The air was still, and the lingering sunset soothed my road-weary nerves. Plans for the Big Win were pushed aside, lost in the sounds of the Truckee River below. But the sound of rushing water from behind ended my euphoria. He had beaten me to the shower.

A short time later we were in the elevator. I said, "Stay away from the slot machines. Play the games that require skill and cunning." He just smiled.

On the casino floor we separated. He headed for the slot machines while I scanned the area for a craps table with a lot of action. It didn't take long. Like a fox in a hen house, I elbowed through the crowd, placing myself squarely between two burly men. I handed the dealer a $10 bill and suddenly was holding a $10 chip. Stunned, I said, "But sir, I wanted 10 of them." Not a good beginning.

Soon I was in the swing of things, placing two dollars on the pass line and backing it with the correct odds. Then the dealer shoved the dice in my direction. "Care to take a turn?" Confidently, I picked up the dice and promptly threw them off the end of the table. Somebody groaned. "A second chance?" smiled the dealer, showing new dice. I was prepared to decline when I saw my right hand pick up the dice and heard my mouth holler, "Snake eyes!" I didn't see the shock written on the faces of the other players, but I did manage to throw a deuce, eliminating all the pass line players. Then, amid the mumbling and angry stares, I briskly walked away from what might have been a spectacular run of good luck.

My husband was at a nickel machine, his tray overflowing with coins. "How's Bret Maverick doing?" he quipped, pulling off yet another $5 jackpot. "I've had better days," I replied.

Leaving my husband, I went in search of a roulette wheel. This would be easy. What is there to forget? Odd, even, black, red. And I was the only player.

Securing forty 25-cent chips, I proceeded to play like an expert, losing consistently, but well. When down to a single chip, I went for one number and hit it. The croupier stacked 35 chips on number seven, and I gleefully scooped them up. I sought out my husband, hoping to dazzle him. He met me in the aisle, brandishing a crisp $50 bill. "Hit three bars, honey. Only invested five."

I went to the cashier's cage, converted the 36 chips into 180 nickels, and, in ignorant bliss, fed them into a nickel machine until they were all gone.

With drooping shoulders, I consented to dinner. We had an excellent prime-rib feast at the hotel, a luxury not affordable back home. Over dessert we agreed to form a corporation, each investing $20

(Continued on page 86)

Travel Guide

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Showguide

Where the stars and shows are playing this winter

By Melissa Loomis



Shows & Stars

Following is a muster of the stars, revues, and extravaganzas you can see in Nevada showrooms in January and February. Schedules can change, so it's wise to call ahead for times, dates, and reservations. For out-of-state callers, Nevada's area code is 702. For the hotels' toll-free phone numbers, call 800-555-1212.

Las Vegas

Aladdin, 736-0111 Entertainment TBA

Barbary Coast, 737-7111 Irish Showband, 9pm, 11pm & 1am; Royal Dixie Jazz Band, 2pm-8pm; no cover, no minimum

Caesars Palace, 731-7333: George Burns/Diahann Carroll, 12/27-1/1 Joan Rivers, 2/2-8; Rodney Dangerfield, 1/16-21 & 1/23-24; Dorothy Hamill, 1/25-2/4; Joan Rivers, 2/6-12; Diana Ross, 2/13-18 & 2/20-25

Circus Circus, 734-0410: Circus acts, free

Desert Inn, 733-4566: Wayland Flowers & Madame star in One of a Kind, musical variety show, indf.; 7:30pm & 11pm cocktail show: $15, includes 2 drinks

Dunes, 737-4110: Latino Royalle '85, stage production, 12/27-3/28

El Rancho, 796-2222: Lounge entertainment

Flamingo Hilton, 733-3333: City Lites, revue, indf., 7:45pm dinner show from $15.95, 11pm cocktail show $10.95, includes 2 drinks

Four Queens, 385-4011 Mongo Santamaria, 1/1-13; Frank Sinatra Jr., 2/12-17· Monday Nite Jazz, indf.; Dondino, indf.

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

Golden Nugget, 385-7111 Entertainment Thurs.-Tues.

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

Holiday, 369-5000: Wild World of Burlesque, indf.; 10pm & 12:30am Mon.-Fri., 8pm, 10pm & 12:30am Sat.; dark Sun., $6.95, includes 2 drinks

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

Landmark, 733-1110: Mickey Finn Show, indf.; 8pm & 10:30pm cocktail shows Mon.-Sat., dark Sun., $7.95, includes 2 drinks

Las Vegas Hilton, 732-5755: Bal du Moulin Rouge, indf., starring Juliet Prouse thru 1/15; starring Suzanne Somers 1/16-3/12; 8pm dinner show from $18.50, midnight cocktail show $15

MGM Grand Hotel, 739-4567· Jubilee! indf.; 7:30pm & 11pm, dark Wed., $23.50

Marina, 739-1500: Breakdance Fever, revue

Maxim, 731-4300: Marty Allen/Steve Rossi, thru 4/25; 8pm & 10:15pm, dark Tues., $9.95, includes 2 drinks

Mint, 385-7440: Sandy Hackett's Talent Showcase, 8pm Sun., indf., Russ Gary Orchestra, 8pm Mon., indf.; live entertainment throughout week

Palace Station, 367-2411 Lounge entertainment daily, 11am-5am

Riviera, 737-1755: Solid Gold, indf.; Smothers Brothers, 1/3-16 & 1/24-2/13; Robert Guillaume, 2/14-3/13

Royal Casino, 733-4000: Annie Ample Burlesque, revue, indf., Wed.-Mon.

Sahara, 737-2424: Star entertainment TBA

Sam Boyd's California, 385-1222: Jim Blaine, Mainstream, Gary LeMaster, each indf.

Sam's Town, 456-7777· Alternates indf. with Danny Byrd & David St. David

Sands, 733-5453: Jerry Tiffe, thru 1/13; Jawbone, thru 1/15

Silver Slipper, 734-1212: Boylesque, revue, indf., 8pm, 10pm, midnight, dark Thurs., Branded, revue, indf., 9pm & 11pm with additional 7pm show on Sat., dark Sun., $6.95

Stardust, 732-6325: Lido de Paris, indf.; 7pm & 11pm nightly; $17.50, includes 2 drinks

Sundance, 382-6111 Alternates indf. with Basin Street, Carlos & Jackie, Richard Yusco, Kathy Dahl, & Woody Neel

Tropicana, 739-2411 Folies Bergere, indf., 8pm & 11pm cocktail shows; dark Sun., $13.95

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

Lake Tahoe

Caesars Tahoe, 588-3515: Joan Rivers/Garry Shandling/Dennis Blair, 12/26-1/1

Crystal Bay Club, 831-0512: Network, 1/1-13

Del Webb's High Sierra, 588-6211 Jackie Vernon/Pinkard & Bowden, thru 1/6

Harrah's Lake Tahoe, 588-6611 *South Shore Room:* Crystal Gayle, 12/28-1/1 Fantasy on Ice/Dorothy Hamill, 1/4-24; Sammy Davis Jr./Bill Cosby, 1/25-31 Oak Ridge Boys, 2/1-7; Mel Tillis, 2/8-14; Engelbert Humperdinck, 2/23-3/1 *Stateline Cabaret;* Breakin' Loose, revue, indf.; Psychic Dayle Schear, indf., Tower of Power, 12/25-1/6; Papa Doo Run Run, 1/8-13



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Harvey's, 588-2411 *Top of the Wheel:* Ron Rose Sound, indf., Al Sebay & Diamonhead, thru 1/13; *Casino Theatre Lounge;* Michael Darrin's Les Vamps, indf., Body Heat, revue, indf.; Sonny Turner, thru 1/13; Ernie Menehune, thru 1/13

Hyatt Tahoe, 831-1111 Garfin Gathering/Abbey Road, thru 1/6; Penny Lane/Two's Company, 1/8-13; Jay Ramsey Band/Two's Company, 1/15-27· Louis Prima's Witnesses/Pat Gatti, 1/29-2/10; Liz Damon Show with Edda and Laura Bright, 2/12-24; Don Lewis/J.W. Moon Orchestra, 2/26-3/10

Nevada Lodge, 831-0660: Hot Lava, thru 1/6; Stan Stahl, 1/6; Fortune, 1/8-27· Cathy O'Shea, 1/29-2/17· Four Tunes, 2/19-3/10

Reno, Sparks & Carson City

Carson City Nugget, 882-1626: Motifs, thru 1/6

Circus Circus, 329-0711 Circus acts, free

Eldorado, 786-5700: Nightly entertainment, Tues.-Sun.

Fitzgerald's, 786-3663: Winchester Cathedral/Silverwing, thru 1/6; Ink Spots, thru 1/13; Hot Lava, 1/7-27· Coasters, 1/28-2/17· Cathy O'Shea, 2/18-3/10

Harrah's Reno, 329-4422: *Headliner Room:* Rich Little, 12/27-1/9; Alan King, 1/10-16; Roy Clark, 1/17-23; Mac Davis, 1/24-2/6; Don Rickles, 2/7-13; Debbie Reynolds, 2/14-27· *Casino Cabaret:* Bustin' Out, revue, indf.; B.B. King, 12/25-1/6; Boots Randolph, 1/15-27

John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 356-3300: Muglestons, thru 1/1 Liz Damon's Orient Express, thru 1/1

MGM Grand Hotel, 789-2285: *Ziegfeld Theatre:* Hello Hollywood, Hello, indf.; 8pm dinner show from $22; midnight cocktail show $18.50; *Lion's Den:* Gary Raffanelli & Sandy Selby/Santa Fe, thru 1/8; Danny Marona/Mark & Clark, 1/9-2/5; Miss Pat Collins, The Hip Hypnotist, 2/6-3/5

Mother Lode, Carson City, 883-0900: Lounge entertainment

Ormsby House, Carson City, 882-1890: Four Tunes Plus One, 1/8-27· Band O Matic, 1/29-

2/10; Sundance, 2/12-3/3

Peppermill, 826-2121: Mainstream, 1/1-6 & 1/28-2/3; Wizards of Coz/The Lelands, 1/1-27; Mischief, 1/28-2/10; Connection, 2/4-3/1 Lucky, 2/11-3/1

Peppermill's Western Village, Sparks, 331-1069: Tommy Bell, thru 1/13 & 2/11-3/1 Roy Clayborne, thru 1/6; Clayton Claxton, 1/8-2/3; Victoria Harned, 1/14-2/10; Yogi & Friends, 2/4-3/1

Reno Hilton, 785-7100: *Opera House Theatre:* Razzle Dazzle, indf., starring Vikki Carr 12/27-2/6; *Cabaret:* Reycards, thru 1/14; Sonny Turner, 1/15-2/11 Frenz, 2/12-3/11

Reno Ramada, 788-2000: Entertainment TBA

Riverside, 786-4400: Nightly entertainment

The Cow Counties

Elko: Commercial Hotel, 738-3181; 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 Horseshu Casino, 755-2331

Laughlin: Riverside Resort, 298-2535; Del Webb's Nevada Club, 298-2512; Regency Casino, 298-2439; Edgewater, 298-2453

Mesquite: Peppermill's Western Village, 346-5232

Minden: Carson Valley Inn, 782-9711

Pahrump: Saddle West Casino, 727-5953

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

Topaz Lake: Li Brandi's, 266-3321 Topaz Lodge, 266-3339

Wendover: Goldrush Casino, 664-2255; Nevada Crossing, 664-4400; State Line Casino, 664-2221 Red Garter Casino, 664-2111

Winnemucca: Star Hotel & Casino and Winners Hotel-Casino, 623-2511

Yerington: Casino West, 463-2481 Lucky Club, 463-2868 □

GAMBLER *(Continued from page 83)*

and splitting the winnings. Twice we hit $20 on a dollar machine, but with dim-witted determination we played it all back until we were flat broke.

He decided to stay with it for three more pulls, using his own money, while I implored him not to waste his time. He then lined up three bars and won $100. And adding insult to injury, he reached out and gave me a big hug. Our relationship was on the verge of becoming delicate.

I retired to the room to re-read the gaming guides. He joined me a little later with an offer to split the hundred dollars. I declined. He then fell asleep with the money, while I lay awake, staring at the ceiling with my pride.

At first light I was up and planning the day's strategy. After plugging in the coffee pot and curling iron, I tiptoed to the open window. The September air was crisp and invigorating, and life seemed to be moving in slow motion on the streets below. I leaned forward and watched a jogger make his way steadily across the bridge. I watched a taxi maneuver south on Virginia Street at a snail's pace. In hushed silence, I watched the ducks on the river bask in the morning sun and saw my husband's tennis shoe fall eight stories to the street below. I was thunderstruck. It was his first pair of Nikes, and we had waited until the children were grown to buy them.

I picked the remaining shoe off the sill and shook my husband into a state of semi-consciousness. Holding the survivor in his face, I demanded, "What was *this* doing on the windowsill?" He moaned, "I was airing them out, and there used to be two." With that, he fell back to sleep.

We do what we must do. I threw on some clothes, checked my disheveled appearance in the mirror, and bolted for the elevator. On the main floor, I grabbed a *Showtime* from the desk and sprinted for the door leading to the side street. There, just seconds ahead of a garbage truck, I grabbed the tennis shoe, wrapped it in the paper, and quickly returned to the room. It was 6:10 a.m. I had no key. Gently, I rapped on the door—for a long time. Then I pounded. At last, he opened the door a crack. I tossed the shoe inside and said, "Hi, ready for breakfast?"

We devoured the 99-cent special at the hotel, and spent the morning browsing through the many downtown gift shops. In one I found a beautiful crystal bud vase with roses etched on it. Price, $59. Since my stake for the day was only $40, I decided it would be reckless to squander it so early. "That leaves two alternatives," I told my husband. "VISA or part of your winnings from last night." He bought a package of gum and feigned deafness.

That afternoon I decided to test my skill at blackjack. Finding a table with only three players, I walked over, feeling especially sharp. There, perched on a stool, I faced a live dealer for the first time in my life. I turned to jelly, and with the brains God gave geese, used my fingers to count on, took a hit on 20 (for a grand total of 30 points), doubled down on a six, and tried to split deuces. Unlimited opportunities went by the wayside as I destroyed yet another myth. Finally, throwing in the towel, I walked away, but not alone. With me, my left leg firmly entrenched in the rung, came the stool I had been sitting on moments before. Until then I had only suspected that I was becoming dangerous. Now I was convinced.

The afternoon was spent following my husband in and out of casinos. We played side by side at the slot machines. He won. I lost. We tried another corporation at a quarter machine. We both lost. I tried an outlaw strategy. I played on *his* money. When that was gone, I returned to the room.

Evening came. Armed with a credit card, we splurged and dined in relative splendor. By the time the flaming dessert arrived, my spirits had lifted considerably. At midnight, following a fast-paced cabaret show, I was reaching for a lucky star and rabid for one last chance at riches and fame.

We moved to the keno parlor, where I patiently explained the rules to my husband. This was an easy game, one I had won a few dollars on in the past. Together we played a five spot, winning a dollar back now and again. After a while he changed to a four spot, using different numbers. I told him that only an imbecile would change his numbers. He ignored my practical advice and neatly hit four out of four to win $113.

With wild abandon, I dropped my five numbers (ones that had been with me for years) and scribbled a ticket using his four. What happened next will haunt me for the rest of my life. All five of my original numbers appeared on the next game, an $820 error in judgment. Words cannot describe the agony, shock, and desperation I felt sitting there with my eyes riveted to the board.

My husband led me to the nearest bar. A drink didn't help. He patted my hand. "Cheer up, honey. There's always bingo."

Somehow I knew that riches were not to be had in a bingo parlor. So I retreated to our room and crawled under the covers, feeling like an endangered species.

I awoke in the morning to the sound of clinking coins. "Diamond Jim" was sitting on the edge of the bed, counting his winnings. It was hard not to be impressed.

I sat up. In my lap he placed a package wrapped in a *Showtime* paper. Ripping off the wrap, I found the lovely crystal vase, and tucked inside was a brand-new $100 bill.

From a lofty position on my pillow, I watched the morning sun reflect off etched glass. Crystal rainbows danced around the room like desert lilies in the wind.

"Next year," I stammered, "I'll buy you something with my winnings." □

Diane Sims of Albany, Oregon, says that this year she's going to switch to sports betting.

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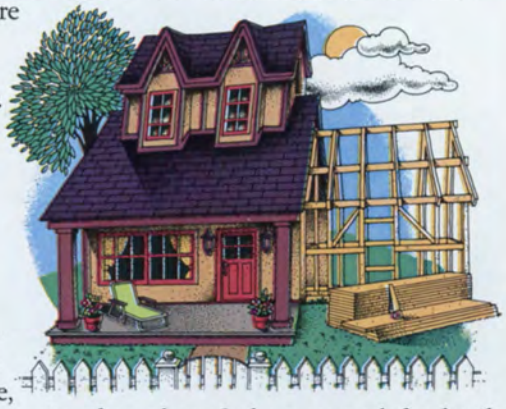
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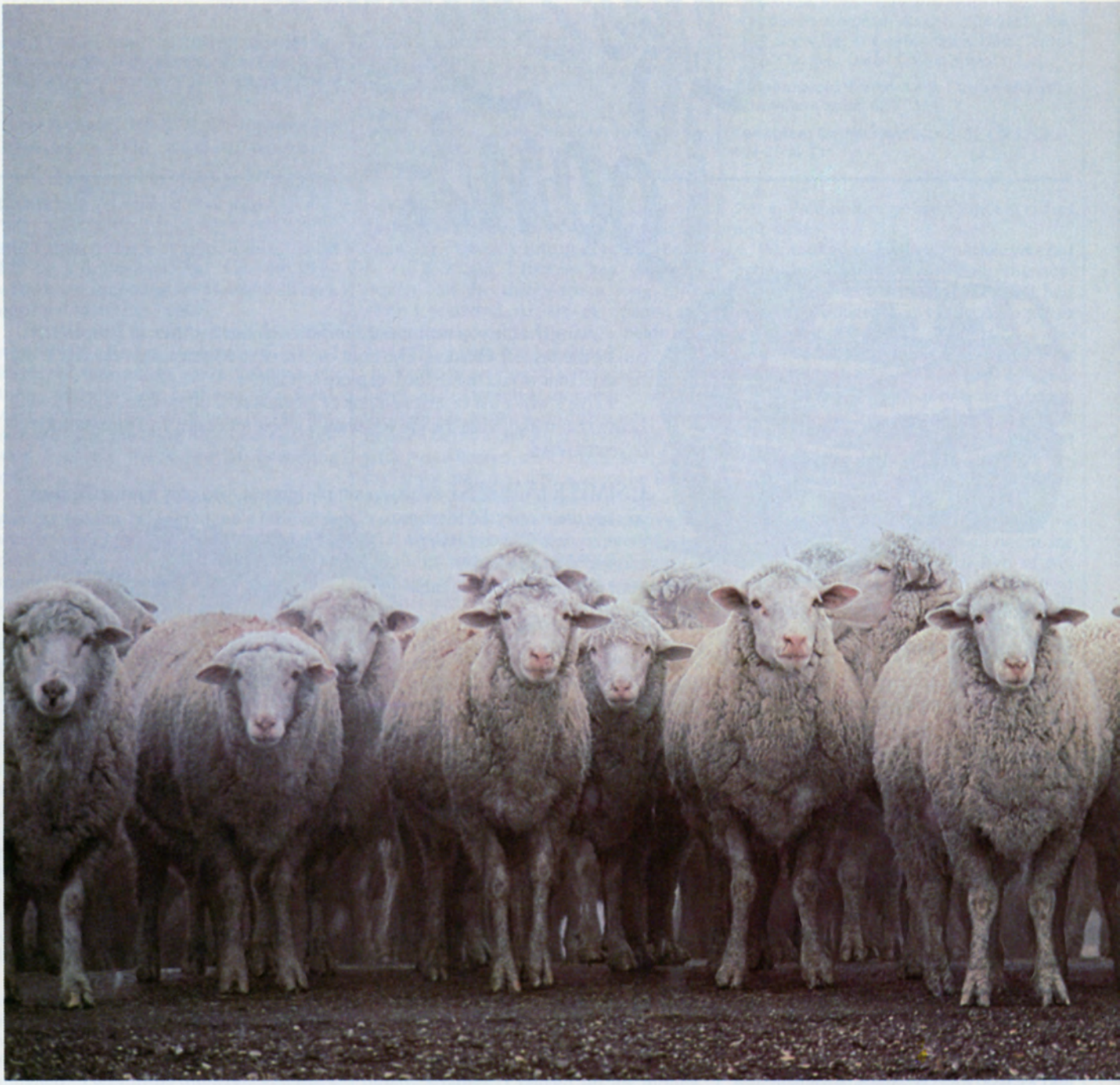
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Keeping the Chill Out

Nevada winters call for thick coats and thick windows. At left, rancher Linda Dufurrena freezes a band of woolly ewes as they cross State Route 140. The sheep were on their way from winter pasture on the Desert Range near Sulfur to spring grazing on the Dufurrena Sheep Ranch near Denio in northern Humboldt County. Above, James Ricks, who works as a photographer at Fallon's Naval Air Station, couldn't resist picking up his camera when he spotted the dew filming over his living room window on a chilly winter morning.—*JC*

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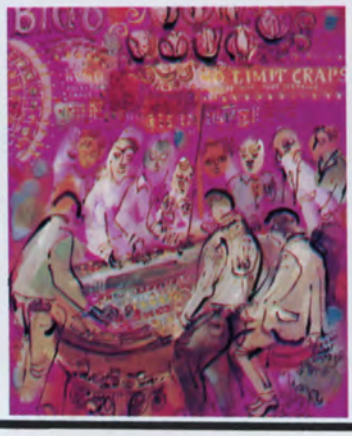
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Index to Advertisers



American Investors	65
Aspen Sports	47
Boomtown/Winners/Star	37
Boulder City Chamber of Commerce	84
Bowser Realty & Associates	93
Cabat Collectibles	90
Cactus Pete's	23
Caesars Tahoe	16
Carson City Chamber of Commerce	84
Casino West	25
Cattlemen's	66
Classified/Marketplace	91-93
Comstock Hotel	67
Del Webb's Nevada Club	70
Desert Mountain Realty	93
Dunes Hotel & Country Club	67
Eldorado Hotel	17
Fireplace Distributors	55
First Interstate Bank	87
Fitzgerald's	64
Four Queen's Hotel	15
Golden Fleece of Nevada	55
Hagar's Gallery	54
Harolds Club	22
Harvey's Resort Hotel	96
Hilton	16
Holiday Casino	95
Hyde & Associates	93
Jeremiah's Restaurants	67
Karl's Silver Club	70
Kirkwood Cross-Country	45
Landmark Hotel & Casino	71
Louis' Basque Corner	66
McCarran International Airport	34
MGM Grand Hotel	15
Martin Hotel	66
Maxim Hotel	37
Motel Scott Shady Court	84
Mountain View Management	93
Nevada Beef Council	58
Nevada First Thrift	5
Nevada Metallurgical, Inc.	80
John Ascuaga's Nugget	2
Pahrump Chamber of Commerce	84
Peppermill's Western Village	47
Play Mate Resort Marinas	45
Real Log Homes	17
Riverside Casino, Laughlin	46
Security National Bank	38
Showboat	50
Star Hotel, Elko	67
Station House, Tonopah	30
Stockmen's Motor Hotel, Elko	71
Travel Nevada	63
Tuxon Electric	30
University of Nevada Press	38
Valley Road Mini Storage	30
Waseca Kubota Tractors	27
Wendover Associates	80
Wildhorse Ranch & Resort	84
Winnemucca Convention Center	84
Yerington Travel	26

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Capital Crowd

The legislature is one place where you learn that high-kicking Nevada wears a chastity belt beneath its scarlet robes.

By Lee Adler

A desperately eager though flinty spinster was once advised, "You gotta get a man the way a man gets got."

Possibly with this strategy in mind, a restaurant opposite the Nevada Legislature anticipated the arrival of lawmakers in Carson City by changing its name from the Gourmet Table to the Cuckoo's Nest.

Legislators sometimes are indeed odd birds. And birdwatching becomes a major spectator sport in January of each odd-numbered year when delegates to one of the smallest governing bodies in the nation set up shop in one of the nation's smallest state capitals.

Nevadans seem to have a common inclination to keep their humble servants humble for as long as possible. To that end, the men and women considered the best and brightest by voters in November are magically denigrated to the status of boobs and pickpockets as soon as the session is gaveled into order.

Senators and assemblymen are barely aboard the Ship of State before it becomes the Ship of Fools—a titanic blunder destined to run aground and sink at the hands of what a newspaper editorial once called a "misguided, ill-formed, and avaricious" crew.

"The lawmakers worked four days, attended two parties, and then went home to enjoy a three-day weekend," reads one account of the opening week of the 1975 session.

For those with an incurable legislative itch, each session is a great, engrossing flea market, a 100-day-or-so swirl of interests, egos, philosophies, and horse-trading.

Issues range from the visceral to the frivolous to the trendy: abortion; the death penalty; cattle rustling; designating the official state fossil (usually good for a few irreverent suggestions); and such inspiring foreign policy initiatives as the up-your-nose-Ayatollah gambit of 1981. The latter involved retaliating for the embassy hostage-taking by giving failing grades to all Iranian students attending the University of Nevada and shipping them home in academic disgrace.

The third consecutive defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment left one angry senator vowing to introduce a bill fully legalizing prostitution. "If you're going to treat women like whores," he reasoned, "we ought to let them make a living at it."

The legislature is one place where you learn that high-kicking Nevada wears a chastity belt beneath its scarlet robes. If the dilemma is moral or philosophical, you can almost be sure its resolution will be conservative.

In one instance, there was an attempt to shame the solons into reducing the penalty for marijuana possession by pointing out that it was harsher than that for conspiracy to commit murder. A committee took this seeming incongruity to heart, decided something indeed needed to be done, and did it: They recommended increasing the penalty for conspiracy to commit murder.

> "The Silver State is probably the only one where a legislator can straight-facedly propose a law change aimed at 'making Nevada as liberal as Utah.'"

The Silver State is probably the only one where someone can straight-facedly propose a law change aimed at "making Nevada as liberal as Utah."

Every session brings its turmoil and its tensions. Legislators resolve them by occasionally slugging reporters, or one another, or by taking their ease in a century-old nearby bar where the light is spare, the drink is strong, and the painted ladies—on canvas, that is—are as naked as ambition.

If you're an abstainer, or hypoglycemic, the tendency is to grasp at straws and strawberry sundaes at an adjoining ice-cream parlor.

Reporters covering this biennial extravaganza work out their frustrations by staging the "Third House," a traditional burlesque—or "roast"—of legislative foibles and personalities that's a strange mixture of good-humored ribbing and an almost pathological attempt to wriggle free of the corset of conventional news coverage and tell what they think is really going on.

But, generally, the action is mild as a summer breeze compared to what went on during Nevada's early days, when legislators were quick to take umbrage—or anything else not nailed down.

To *Sacramento Sun* correspondent Andrew Marsh, Nevada Territory in 1862 was an exotic land of "silver and gold mines, of dust, of loose six-shooters and bad whiskey, of dirty brown hills teeming with wealth and energy."

He recalled a bill being debated in chambers while, outside, Carson City was as volatile as glycerine, with "vast quantities of barrels and boxes of gunpowder, fire crackers, champagne, whiskey, brandy and other combustibles [being] consumed, and the brass band adding to the universal din."

Told to ignore the "noisy rabble," one legislator was said by Marsh to have replied: "The rabble is it? Great God, Mr. Chairman, it is the glad shout of a free people!"

Communities with imperial yearnings, such as Reno, Goldfield and Tonopah, have tried unsuccessfully over the years to take the capital and the legislature away from tiny Carson City.

In 1909, one such bill was referred to the obscurity of the Fish and Game Committee—possibly for conversion to fertilizer.

What if Carson had but one really first-class hotel at the time? How many really first-class people are there after all?

The threat to shift the legislative bag-and-baggage to Las Vegas is still heard on some relentlessly cold and gloomy February mornings, or when Carson officials get too uppity. But most residents aren't intimidated. "You wouldn't want to do that," one legislative leader was told. "That would mean you'd never be able to get out of town."

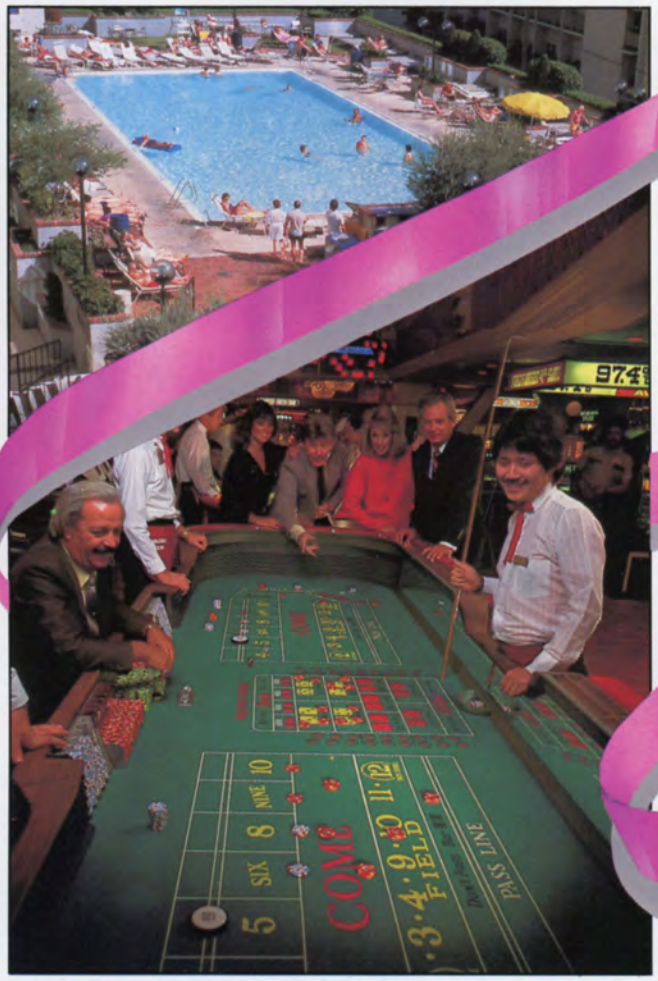
Carson endured quietly for years as the seam on the state's political britches, its dreams of glory and traffic congestion dormant until just recently when it emerged as a world-famous center for esoteric folk festivals and fast food.

Add a spicy touch of legislative razzmatazz, cornball, invective, and some truly stirring and productive moments, and you've got a hearty, bubbling stew calculated to warm anyone's innards on a cold winter's day. □

Lee Adler of Carson City is a reporter for the Reno Gazette-Journal. *He will be covering his sixth legislative session this winter.*

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