

# NEVADA

M A G A Z I N E

INSIDE:

The State's Most  
Complete Guide  
to **Events**  
& **Shows**

April 2005

## Red Rock Rambles

Spring arrives in the national parkland

## 13 Brew Pubs That Hop

## Ghost Town Lawmakers

## Elton John Plays Vegas

## Inside Historic Carson City

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Rainwater forms a pool in Red Rock Canyon





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*"You may have caught the idea  
that we have nothing to do. Doing  
nothing and having nothing to  
do are different propositions."*

—1893 Assembly Speaker Thomas  
Jefferson Bell to fellow lawmakers



## On the Cover

Clouds are reflected in  
a pool of rainwater at  
Red Rock Canyon.

Photo by Jim K. Decker

## Features

16

### Whale Tale

Las Vegas casino superhost  
Steve Cyr hunts and hosts the biggest  
bettors in the gambling universe.

By Deke Castleman

20

### Ghost Town Lawmakers

Many notable Nevada legislators  
hailed from Hamilton, Tybo, and other  
towns that no longer exist.

By Robert E. Erickson



Dudes and Dogies: Page 24

24

### Red Rock Reverie

Springtime brings wildflowers and waterfalls  
to this national refuge near Las Vegas.

Photos and Words by Jim K. Decker

28

### Q&A: The Golden Years

John Ascuaga reflects on half a century  
at the Nugget in Sparks.

By Joyce Hollister

30

### Showdown in the Big Smoky

My stampede string secure, I rode a  
mustang with a reputation on a spring  
cattle drive in the Toquimas.

Story and Photos by Ruth Anne Kocour

Plus, a roundup of Nevada dude  
ranches by Wilma LaRocca

## Departments

5 Contributors Meet Jim K. Decker and Robert E. Erickson.

6 Letters A bogus burial, dime spooks, and coyotes.

8 Gallery Reno photographer Marla Carr explores the wilds of Nevada.

10 People An author, a neon artist, a kids' advocate, and a man on a mission.

12 Roadside Attractions Penguins in Las Vegas and a Yerington locomotive.

34 Casinoland The Riviera, the Strip's first high-rise resort, celebrates 50 years.

36 Dining Out At Nevada's brew pubs, it's not just about the beer. By Bob Barnes

42 Nevada Almanac Wild horses, Nevada Trivia, and a new contest.



Pubs That Hop: Page 36

## Events & Shows



"Red Piano" Man: Page 43

45 From Sir With Love Elton John stars in a visual showcase at Caesars. By Mike Weatherford

48 Events and Shows in the Las Vegas Area

62 Nevada Insider: A Capital Idea Carson City, Nevada's historic capital, has great museums,  
events, and recreation. By Richard Moreno

68 Centennial City Sparks celebrates its first 100 years in historic style. By Joyce Hollister

70 Events and Shows in the Reno-Tahoe Area

77 Do It in the Dirt Racers show no fear in rural off-road events. By Ann Henderson

78 Events and Shows in Rural Nevada

84 Resort Watch The Forum Shops, poker fever, and a new megaresort.

86 Attractions Hiking Sandstone Canyon at Spring Mountain Ranch. By Roxanna Brock

88 Last Word Lance Burton says Las Vegas is magical, but please watch for the tourists.



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# NEVADA MAGAZINE

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# Springtime Explorers

**R**ed Rock Canyon is one of **Jim Decker's** favorite places to hike. "My front door is only 15 minutes from the park entrance," says the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* photographer, whose images of the park appear on the cover and in "Red Rock Reverie." "It's therapy for me. I love to be there when the gate opens at six and no one else is out there."

Jim was introduced to Red Rock in 1978 after he moved to Las Vegas from Virginia Commonwealth University, where he studied art and photography. "My parents had moved here, and they said, 'Come west, young man.'" He soon joined the *Review-Journal's* marketing department, also working as a photographer's assistant for *Sports Illustrated* and for *Playboy* contributor Robert Scott Hooper.

Jim, who sometimes is joined on outings by his 17-year-old son, Jon, says he developed a passion for landscape photography in 2001 while contributing to the *RJ's* magazine, *Cerca*. "I bought a 4x5 camera and began looking at the work of nationally known landscape shooters like Tom Till and Gary Ladd." Now Jim hopes to develop a coffee-table book on Red Rock Canyon, full of images he's taken when no one else is out there.



Decker



Erickson

**R**obert E. Erickson once convinced a buddy it was possible to drive north on dirt roads from U.S. 50 to Winnemucca, in a regular car, via Dixie Valley. "We made it, but just barely," recalls Bob, an avid Nevada explorer who has B.A. and M.A. degrees in geography from Fresno State. "We got stuck several times in a 10-mile-long no-man's land between the two most outlying ranches. We realized the ranchers in the north traveled into

Winnemucca for supplies while those in the south went to Fallon."

Bob's love of geography and firsthand research led to his story, "Ghost Town Lawmakers," in this issue. Last year Bob retired after 20 years as research director and resident historian of the Nevada Legislature. "A number of times I was asked to research obscure old-time legislators, and I found it interesting that quite a few of them hailed from places that no longer exist. I grew really impressed by those people. They were tough and farsighted."

Today, Bob and his wife, Joy, divide time between homes in Carson City and Las Vegas, which gives him an excuse to drive lots of rural Nevada roads. Bob notes, "I tell folks that I might not remember everyone's name, but I never forget a road I've been on."

## NEVADA MAGAZINE

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# Letters

A bogus burial, **dime spooks**, and coyotes.

## Setting the Record Straight

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Robin Flinchum's colorful article, "Murder in the Red-Light District," in the Jan/Feb issue. Robin told a great story while unraveling a mystery surrounding the shooting of prostitute Isabel Heskett in Rhyolite in 1908 and the location of her final resting place.

Yes, Robin, too much of what passes for history in Nevada "is a lot of hooey" invented to dupe tourists and newcomers in the name of entertainment. Because of Robin's detective instincts and fine research work, we now know that Heskett is buried in Ballard, Washington, and not in a grave by the Rhyolite depot. We can regrettably thank Mrs. Hershel Heisler—who owned much of Rhyolite when I was a teenager growing up in Las Vegas in the 1960s and visiting the ghost town and Mrs. Heisler—for creating the graves as a tourist attraction and playing tricks on the living and the dead. We can gratefully acknowledge Robin Flinchum for setting the record straight and *Nevada Magazine* for publishing the story.

One small correction in the story: John K. Chambers, who was slugged by Isabel Heskett's boyfriend, Fred Skinner, was the Manhattan justice of the peace and not a district judge.

**Guy Louis Rocha**

Assistant Administrator for Archives and Records, Nevada State Library and Archives, Carson City

## Dime Spook Days

I have been reading *Nevada Magazine* for many years, since being turned on to it by a native Nevadan back in the '80s. I don't think I have ever enjoyed an issue more than that of Jan/Feb '05. The articles "Murder in the Red-Light District" by Robin Flinchum and "Dime Spooks" by Bill Kroger both spoke to so many of my interests that I can't enumerate them all.

I was a "dime spook" after I moved to Reno in 1981, playing at the Mapes, Money Tree, and Riverside, moving on to be a "quarter spook" after those establishments closed. I don't play much craps anymore, the table limits and house advantage having taken their toll over the



Coyotes: intelligent, inquisitive, and vocal.

years. Today I am a pharmacist at Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services and the host of *Take Names Later Blues* on KUNR-Public Radio, but I think of those years fondly, and this article brought them back for me.

**Roger Slugg**  
Reno

## A Howling Welcome

I read with great interest Linda Hiller's article, "The Wily Coyote," in the last issue. As city slickers from California, my wife and I spent more than 40 years vacationing in Nevada. We fell in love with the state and its desert landscape. The first time we saw a coyote, I stopped the car on the road. The coyote gave us a rather intelligent, inquisitive look before sauntering off.

Even though we were camping in a tent, the howling of coyotes at night did not provoke any fear but rather gave us a sense of comfort. We were in their realm, and they were letting us know. Coyotes became one of my favorite desert critters. I soon realized there was also a mystique about them.

We retired to rural Southern Nevada eight years ago. The first day we got settled in, I drove alone to the top of a mesa. The road ended at a cliff overlooking a river valley with mountains in the background. I got out to admire the view.



As I approached the edge, the silence was broken by the “yip, yip, yeooow” of a single, unseen coyote. It was one of those magical moments. Clearly the coyote was welcoming me to Nevada.

**John Yells**  
Overton

### Bar Bills

I couldn't help but read every word in the Jan/Feb article about Bonnie Springs Old Nevada, “High Noon” by Kristine McKenzie in “Roadside Attractions.” My husband and I discovered Bonnie Springs several years ago on one of our trips to Las Vegas, where we spent days traveling around to see the many things Nevada has to offer.

Bonnie Springs was one of our greatest discoveries, but the picture of the saloon is nothing like what we saw. We had signed and placed several \$1 bills on the wall and the ceiling. So had several thousand other people. Have they changed the saloon to give it a more modern-day look?

Each time we come to Vegas we visit Bonnie Springs for a bit of history and a cold drink. So, if they have changed our favorite place to get away, it won't be the same.

**George and Tonya Poling**  
Laurelville, OH

*George and Tonya, not to worry. There are two 'hirst parlors at Bonnie Springs Old Nevada. We pictured the saloon, while you visited the BS bar, where the \$1 bills remain on display.—Ed.*

### Here's to Clean Air

We are longtime subscribers and come to Las Vegas several times a year, usually staying at Treasure Island or the Mirage. We think it is wonderful to have casinos and restaurants that don't allow smoking, as noted in “Smoking or Non?” by Wilma LaRocca in May/June '04. Smoking is a nasty habit that kills people, and no one wants secondhand smoke to kill them.

We live in Florida, where no smoking is allowed in restaurants, and think it would be wonderful if every state had this rule. It is wonderful to have a meal and not to smell that awful smoke.

Here's to a smoke-free environment. We could all be a lot healthier.

**Sylvia Linscott**  
Jacksonville, FL

### How to Submit Letters

*Readers are encouraged to comment on stories and photos in the magazine. Write “Letters to the Editor,” Nevada Magazine, 401 N. Carson St., Suite 100, Carson City, NV 89701-4291; fax 775-687-6159; e-mail editor@nevadamagazine.com.*

# NEVADA MAGAZINE

*Presents*

## Best of Nevada

**2005 Official Ballot**

*Seventh Annual Nevada Magazine*  
**Readers' Poll**

# Cast Your Ballot!

Attached to this page is your 2005 *Nevada Magazine* “Best of Nevada” ballot. We want to know what you think are Nevada's best places and attractions—so please fill out the form and mail to Ballot Headquarters before **March 23, 2005**. The results will appear in the July/August 2005 issue (Best of the North) and September/October 2005 issue (Best of the South).

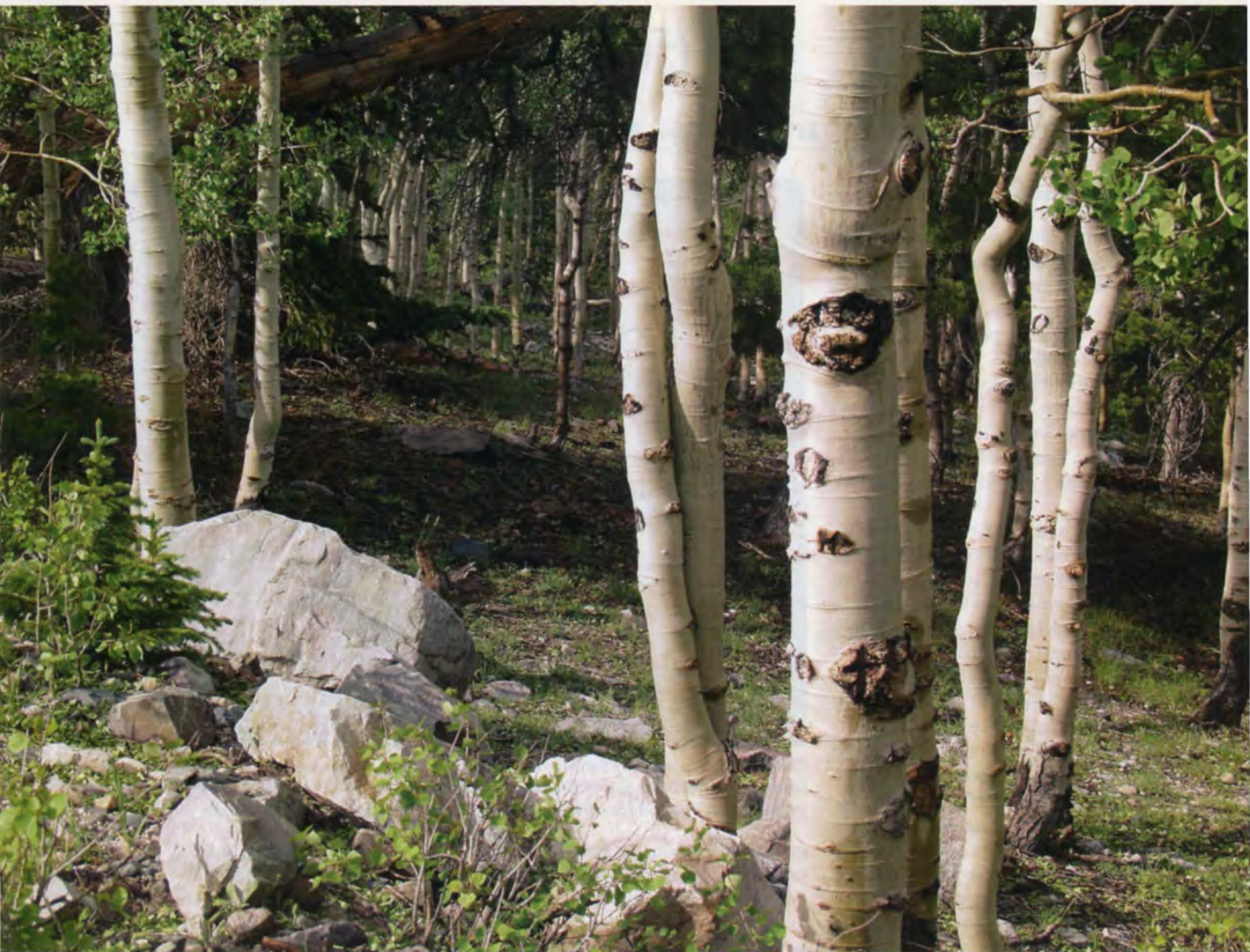


# Wild Light

**Marla Carr** explores the far corners of Nevada.







**R**eno photographer Marla Carr sees more of the Silver State than the average tourist. "I've been to all the corners of Nevada where normal people don't go and stay at places where people don't stay," Carr says. She is a volunteer driver for the crew of *Wild Nevada*, a public-television adventure series produced by KNPB in Reno, and her husband, Jack Kelly, is executive producer of the show. "We moved to Nevada six years ago from the Midwest, and I just fell in love. This country has so many textures and lights and shadows."

Carr photographed the Stone Mother at **Pyramid Lake** (opposite page) from a unique angle—she was riding in a

boat with the TV cameraman. "It was a different perspective than you usually see because we were on the water," she says. One spring when *Wild Nevada* visited Great Basin National Park, Carr photographed a grove of aspen on **Wheeler Peak** (above). A thunderstorm had confined the members of the crew to their car, but when the rain finally stopped, Carr was able to shoot the trees as shafts of sunlight darted among the trunks.

Although Carr doesn't make any money on the road with *Wild Nevada*, she likes to tag along. "My love is the rural areas, whether it's shooting old houses or bits and pieces of found art. That's what I love."—Joyce Hollister



# People

An **author**, a neon **artist**, a kids' **advocate**, and a man on a **mission**.

## Publisher for Kids

Teachers often would ask children's book author **Ellen Hopkins** if she could recommend Nevada history books for kids. Few such books existed, so Hopkins proposed writing a history series on the Silver State. Her publisher turned it down.

"They thought it was too regional," says Hopkins, who wrote *Tarnished Legacy*, a history of the Comstock for children. "So three years ago I started my own publishing company."

Hopkins' Juniper Creek Publishing plans a spring issue of *Kaixo Amerika* (Hello America), by Carson City author Heidi Ayarbe. The story follows Pierre, a Basque immigrant modeled after Ayarbe's grandfather, who came to Nevada to herd sheep. Forthcoming are *Explorers of the Silver State* by Bill Schley of Reno and *Nevada Rocks!* by Emily de Giovanni of Sparks.

"I hope I can show kids more about Nevada than they see outside their windows," Hopkins says. Her free bimonthly newspaper, *Three Leaping Frogs*, goes to 30,000 Northern Nevada schoolchildren. The kids read about the state's wildlife, famous people, history, and places. (Visit [www.junipercreekpubs.com](http://www.junipercreekpubs.com) for information on the newsletter.)

The parents of four, Hopkins and her husband, John, moved to Nevada from California in 1985. Five years later they moved from Lake Tahoe to Washoe Valley, where they are raising their seven-year-old



Children's book author Ellen Hopkins and her grandson Orion often visit the Carson City Library. She holds a copy of *Crank*, her latest young adult book. Hopkins started a publishing company to produce children's books about Nevada history and culture.

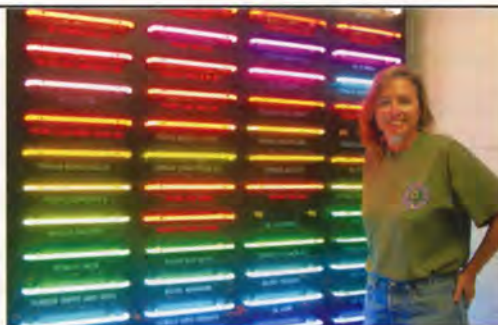
grandchild, Orion, the son of their daughter Crista. Hopkins' latest young-adult book, *Crank*, is based on Crista's addiction to methamphetamine. Published by Simon & Schuster, *Crank* was placed on the top-10 lists for Amazon young adult books for 2004 and the American Booksellers Book Sense Pick for winter 2004-2005. Hopkins also writes for newspapers, magazines, and a video production company.

Hopkins teaches writing as an artist in residence for Nevada schools. At the start of each session she asks, "How many of you want to be writers?" A couple of students usually raise their hands. By the end of her weeklong course, half the class will answer "yes," Hopkins says. "If I can excite one or two kids about poetry, playwriting, journalism, or writing books, I've done my job." —Krista Benjamin

## Neon Crafter

The next time you see the neon-guitar marquee at the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas, think of **Sheila Donnelly**. A glass-bending artist at Young Electric Sign Company, Donnelly is one of the craftspeople who created the Hard Rock guitar and other neon landmarks.

Twelve years ago, Donnelly was studying dentistry and working in sales when she met a man who bent neon glass. "He let me run the pumps, which create the necessary vacuum inside the neon tubes," recalls the 38-year-old Las Vegas resident. "I just fell in love with neon. I always loved art, and with neon I discovered a way to express my artistic side in



Sheila Donnelly fell in love with the colors of neon and turned from dentistry to glass-bending.

the glass and the vibrant colors of neon." Donnelly quit dental school and became a neon journeyman.

Over the past decade, Donnelly has honed her craft, bending delicate glass tubes into brightly colored shapes. "It takes passion and patience," she explains. "You learn by getting your hands on the glass."

Donnelly collects classic neon business and beer signs, restores old Route 66 neon, and teaches neon glass-bending. If you've

ever wanted to try creating neon art, visit Donnelly at the Hot Glass Works, where she teaches, across from the Luxor.

Donnelly's work is visible nightly at Boulder Station, Sunset Station, and Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville. Her creations will soon light the Silverton and Wynn Las Vegas. —Gregory A. Kompes



## Irish Scribe

**P**atrick Mulreany owns the Carson Valley Inn in Minden, but the 60-year-old entrepreneur has a passion that has nothing to do with gaming. He's on a mission to save the dying 2,500-year-old Irish language.

Mulreany says the language is still being taught as an elective in universities but is disappearing due to the influx of English-speaking people to Ireland in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. At one time it was illegal to speak the country's three dialects.

"The vast majority of the people in Ireland speak English as their first language," Mulreany says. "There are small pockets of native speakers in isolated areas, but their numbers are decreasing rapidly."

During the past 23 years, Mulreany has created an electronic dictionary he calls "Gleacht," or "Gaelic Language Dictionary with Expedient Access to a Comprehensive List of Headwords and Translations." From his home in Smith Valley, 35 miles south of Minden, he began with the existing 50,000 words in the Irish dictionary and added such linguistic bits as synonyms and

antonyms, which so far number about 300,000.

He notes several words that can be used on St. Patrick's Day. One of the Irish words for luck is *adh*, pronounced "ah." Want a bit of luck? Try "*Fraisín den adh*." Or better yet, a stroke of luck—"Beangán den adh."

Mulreany, who immigrated to America from Ireland when he was 15, cofounded a computer company before moving to Nevada. He takes his success as a hotel-casino operator in stride. The Carson Valley Inn celebrated its 20th anniversary last August.

"I'm not involved in the day-to-day running of the inn," Mulreany says. "My wife, Jeane, goes there twice a week to make sure things are running smoothly."

As for the dictionary, it is currently being reviewed by the Irish government for accuracy and may be available commercially in 2006. "There was never any intention to publish the material in book form," he says. Part of his agreement with Irish officials bars him from publishing it in print form. Eventually his work can be visited at [www.gleacht.com](http://www.gleacht.com), which he esti-



Patrick Mulreany works on his electronic Gaelic dictionary at his Smith Valley home.

mates will be available sometime this year.

"The satisfaction I get," Mulreany says, "comes from giving something back to the Irish language and culture."

—Ann Henderson

## An Ardent Advocate

**W**hen Elizabeth Muto visits her family in Reno, she puts on her athletic shoes. "I like to run, hike, catch bugs, and look for lizards with my dog," says the reigning Miss Nevada.

The outdoor activities give Muto a break from her fast-paced life in Las Vegas, where after work she volunteers up to 20 hours a week with children's programs. Muto, 24, who was crowned Miss Nevada last July, has an affinity for abused and neglected kids. As a 10-day-old infant Muto was abandoned at the Reno airport and adopted 18 months later by Tom and Catherine Muto.

It's not surprising that Muto's platform at the Miss Nevada pageant focused on kids. Muto developed and copyrighted HELP (Heal, Evaluate, Love, and Progress), a program to aid children with troubled pasts. "I want to encourage children and tell them they're not alone and that their dreams can come true despite adversity," she says.

A former Miss Las Vegas and Miss Black USA, Muto is the first African-American Miss Nevada. She gained national attention for her extraordinary family back-

ground and has appeared in *Jet* and *Star* and on television worldwide.

Although her year representing the Silver State is drawing to a close, Muto continues to work with programs such as the Children's Cabinet in Reno, St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Boulder City, and Project Cuddle, a national program that finds homes for abandoned babies. In February, Muto began serving as the director of development for Boys and Girls Town USA in Las Vegas, which she calls her "dream job."

The scholarships Muto earned from the Miss Nevada pageant will allow her to pay off her student loans. She graduated from UNLV with a bachelor's degree in international business. She also speaks Japanese, French, Spanish, and sign language.

"You've got to go where your strengths are," Muto says with a laugh. "I can't do math, so I did languages."

Muto, who is eyeing graduate school, loves the city life in Las Vegas. "But I do enjoy going home," she says. "Northern Nevada is where my memories are. My tomboy tendencies can come out, and I can play." —Joyce Hollister



Miss Nevada 2003 Christina O'Neil crowns Elizabeth Muto as Miss Nevada 2004.



# Roadside Attractions

**Penguins** in Las Vegas, Tahoe **clowns**, and a Yerington **locomotive**.

## Teaming with Adventure

**RENO**—Competitors will be carbo loading and maxing the cardio in preparation for **Nevada Passage**, a made-for-TV adventure to be held May 19-24 in rural Nevada. Two-person teams, each made up of one man and one woman, will compete for points in six events that will be taped for broadcast on national television beginning in August.

The events comprise a statewide recreational marathon. Participants will rock climb in Red Rock Canyon, pilot personal watercraft on Lake Mead, and go on a four-wheel-drive treasure hunt near Ely. They will bike and hike Lamoille Canyon, sandboard on Sand Mountain near Fallon, and kayak the Truckee River from Verdi to Reno, finishing at the Truckee River Whitewater Park.

"Viewers will see Nevada as we have never shown it before: a rugged adventure landscape that's also very beautiful," says Bruce Bommarito, executive director of



Two-person teams will bike, hike, kayak, and sandboard during Nevada Passage.

the Nevada Commission on Tourism, the event's sponsor. Nevada Passage is coordinated by TEAM Unlimited, producer of the Nissan XTERRA USA Championship Race held each fall at Lake Tahoe, and

R&R Partners, a public relations and marketing firm. At [www.nevadapassage.com](http://www.nevadapassage.com) you can see course maps, photos, television schedules, and trailers. The site also has links for Nevada outdoor recreation.

## Teatro Nights

**LAS VEGAS**—Red leather and polished stainless steel set a sophisticated tone for MGM Grand's new nightclub, the **Teatro Euro Bar** on the Studio Walk. The December 2004 grand opening celebration was hosted by R&B star Usher, who welcomed celebrities such as Paris Hilton, the band Maroon 5, and Nick Lachey of MTV's *Newlyweds*.

The night spot presents live electronic music early in the evening and a DJ (right) until closing. The champagne bar becomes a stage for gyrating dancers every half hour beginning at 11:30 p.m. Guests may order classic cocktails at the bar or be served table-side.

Teatro ("theater" in Italian) is open daily except Wednesday from 6 p.m. until the wee morning hours. Call 702-891-3695 for table reservations.



## After-Ski Scene at Squaw Valley



**SQUAW VALLEY**—Tahoe visitors looking for a hip après-ski vibe will find it at the **PlumpJack Balboa Cafe** on the plaza across from Squaw Valley USA's main ticket portal. The cafe is a sister restaurant to the PlumpJack Cafes in San Francisco and at the PlumpJack Inn in Olympic Valley. For skiers used to a quick burger and a beer, the cafe offers upscale bistro-style food and a relaxing atmosphere.

You can order duck confit quesadillas from the bar menu or dine on steak with garlic fries and chicken cordon bleu in the dining room. The cafe has a long wine list, and bartenders concoct after-dinner drinks like the Nutty Professor (Frangelico and Kahlua in coffee with whipped cream). The Balboa Deli serves breakfast and lunch, and skiers and boarders often eat on the patio on sunny days. Located at the base of KT-22, PlumpJack Balboa Cafe is open daily. Call 530-583-5850 or visit [www.plumpjack.com](http://www.plumpjack.com) for information.



# Travel Briefs

## Sake Bonanza

Sake lovers can drink a new sake a day for two months and not taste the same one at **Shibuya**, a Japanese restaurant at MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Shibuya stocks 60 of the world's finest sakes and serves Japanese-influenced cocktails such as the Kah Pah, a cucumber sorbet shaken with sake and vodka. The menu includes sushi, teppan, and a la carte items. Shibuya is open daily for dinner. Call 702-891-3001 for information.

## Bark Park at Reno Airport

Dogs can take a break at the new Gate K-9 Bark Park at the **Reno-Tahoe International Airport**. The landscaped park provides fresh water to dogs, "mutt mitts" to owners for cleaning up after their pets, and a fire hydrant. To reach the Gate K-9 Bark Park, dog owners follow painted paw prints on the sidewalk at the north end of baggage claim.

## Blooming Desert

Although heavy rains last summer caused damage to roads into **Death Valley National Park**, the deluge has set the stage for the park's best show of wildflowers in eight years, with the bloom peaking in early March. California State Route 190 between Furnace Creek and Death Valley Junction is expected to reopen soon. Meanwhile access from the east is via California SR 178 and Nevada SR 374 and 267. Call 760-786-3200 or visit [www.nps.gov/deva](http://www.nps.gov/deva) for updates.

## Exhibition News

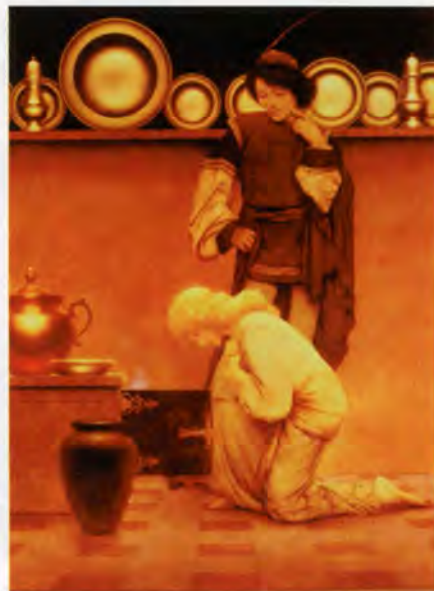
The life and career of one of Nevada's longest serving and most influential U.S. senators is explored in "'Silver Key' **Pittman: Nevada's Frontier Statesman**" at the Nevada Historical Society's museum in Reno until April 30. Pittman, born in 1872 in Vicksburg, Mississippi, joined the Klondike gold rush as a miner and lawyer before moving to booming Tonopah in 1902. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1913 and served until his death in 1940. The Nevada Historical Society, at 1650 North Virginia Street on the University of Nevada, Reno campus, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday. Call 775-688-1190 for details.

The Nevada Museum of Art in Reno presents "**Mapping the Pacific Coast: Coronado to Lewis and Clark, the Quivera Collection**" until April 17. The exhibition documents the mapping of the West Coast of North America with maps, books, and illustrations dating from 1544 to 1802. The museum, at 160 West Liberty Street in Reno, is open daily. Call 775-329-3333 for information on museum shows.

# Maxfield Parrish Premiere in Reno

**RENO**—The Nevada Museum of Art will host the West Coast premiere of "**Maxfield Parrish: Master of Make-Believe**," a retrospective of Parrish's work that is touring the United States through 2006. The exhibition features more than 80 pieces from American museums and private collections and includes idealized landscapes and calendar and book illustrations. A highlight is a selection of rarely seen murals, including *North Wall*, commissioned by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney.

Parrish (1870-1966) studied fine art and architecture and experimented with photography. He launched his career with two book illustration projects, *Poems of Childhood* by Eugene Field and *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* by Edith Wharton. The exhibition includes an early study for *Italian Villas*, in which Parrish painted directly on a photograph to master the architectural details. In the 1920s he was noted for his magazine covers for *Collier's*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Life*, *Scribner's*, and *Cosmopolitan*. "Maxfield Parrish: Master of Make-Believe," which is sponsored by the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority, will



"Violetta and the Knave" by Maxfield Parrish is among the works appearing at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno.

appear April 30 to June 26 at the Nevada Museum of Art. Various hotel packages that include exhibition tickets can be reserved by calling 800-4-RENO or by logging onto [www.renotahoe.com](http://www.renotahoe.com) or [www.nevadaart.org](http://www.nevadaart.org).



## Feeding Time

African penguins are fed by a keeper at the **Flamingo Hotel's Wildlife Habitat** in Las Vegas. The birds, along with Chilean flamingos, parrots, swans, ducks, koi, and turtles, live in a tropical environment with islands and waterfalls near the hotel pool. Admission is free, and the habitat is open daily. Call 800-732-2111 or visit [www.flamingolasvegas.com](http://www.flamingolasvegas.com) for information.





## Birdwatching Country

Birdwatchers will be able to see American avocets (above) and other shorebirds that feed in the wetlands of the Lahontan Valley near Fallon.

**FALLON**—Spring is one of the best times to go birdwatching in the **Lahontan Valley Wetlands**, 60 miles east of Reno. Shorebirds begin arriving in March, with migration peaking in April. Land birds begin to filter into the Fallon area in mid-April, continuing into May.

Birdwatchers can expect to see avocets, stilts, sandpipers, dowitchers, and other wetlands species. Falcons take advantage of the growing concentration of shorebirds, and resident birds such as house wrens, black-headed grosbeaks, and Bullock's orioles begin breeding.

Although Carson Lake and the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge are well-known viewing spots, other birdwatching areas include Big and Little Soda Lakes, the Carson River Diversion Dam, S-Line Reservoir, Harmon Reservoir, and Fallon Naval Air Station Nature Trail.

To obtain a *Birding in the Lahontan Valley Wetlands* brochure, call the Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority at 800-874-0903 or visit [www.fallon-tourism.com](http://www.fallon-tourism.com).

You can obtain the brochure and make reservations for tours during the annual Spring Wings Bird Festival (May 13-15) by calling the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, 775-428-6452. Visit the event's Web site, [www.springwings.org](http://www.springwings.org), for details.

## Railway Engine Returns

**YERINGTON**—Locomotive No. 6 is back in Yerington. The engine, built in 1929, was used in the construction of Hoover Dam in the 1930s before being purchased by the Nevada Copper Belt Railway in 1945. The NCBR ceased its Mason Valley operations two years later. The Pacific Locomotive Association stored the locomotive at its California yard until donating it to the **Lyon County Museum** in 2001. The locomotive was shipped to the Yerington city yard, where it was renovated by volunteers, and put on display in a new building at the museum on Main Street.

Railroad buffs can see period photos of No. 6 and other locomotives and cars that ferried ore, freight, and passengers on NCBR's 40 miles of track beginning in 1909. Also displayed are tickets, lanterns, railroad

schedules, and freight waybills. A May 2, 1925, letter from the American Locomotive Company gently reminds NCBR officials that a new locomotive will be delivered upon the receipt of \$2,500.

The Lyon County Museum is open 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday to Sunday and 10 to 4 on Saturday from April to November. Tours can be arranged by calling 775-463-6576. Visit [www.yerington.net](http://www.yerington.net) for information on the Yerington museum.—*Joyce Hollister*



Rico Sacchini stands next to the renovated NCBR Locomotive No. 6.



## Clowning Around

Spectators will see clowns and other colorfully costumed participants in the Tahoe City Parade on Saturday, March 5, during the annual **North Lake Tahoe Snow Festival**. The winter carnival on March 4-13 will offer such events as the Polar Bear Swim, Great Ski Race, and Monster Dawg Pull. Visit [www.tahoesnowfestival.com](http://www.tahoesnowfestival.com) for a schedule.



## Ancient Art Tours



Rock art can be seen at Valley of Fire.

**LAS VEGAS**—Visitors to Southern Nevada can take monthly guided tours to see nearly 100 panels of ancient rock art in **Valley of Fire State Park**. "These particular images are probably between 800 and 2,000 years old, but some could be much older," says Alanah Woody, executive director of the Nevada Rock Art Foundation, which sponsors the tours.

To create the valley's extensive rock art, also known as petroglyphs, Native Americans chipped patterns in the sandstone's "desert varnish" patina, revealing the red iron oxide underneath. Many of the images depict animals, but others are a mystery, and experts can only speculate about the markings' significance.

The tours take place on the second Saturday of the month through May and will resume in October. Call 775-315-5497 to make a reservation.

## 3-D Thrills

**RENO**—Audiences skim down a glacier or journey deep into the Earth thanks to two new 3-D movies at **Boomtown's Family Fun Center**. *Glacier Run* takes an icy ride beneath the lights of the Aurora Borealis while *Journey to the Center of the Earth* plunges viewers into the planet's core through a maze of caverns and steel shafts.

The new films join a lineup of three other multidimensional movies, *Cosmic Coaster*, *Haunted Mine Shaft*, and *Magic Carpet Ride*. The movies rotate every 15 minutes beginning at noon; the cost is \$4.50 per person. The center also has a Ferris wheel, Maxflight Virtual Reality Coaster, antique carousel, more than 200 video games, a snack bar, and party room. Passes cost \$7 and \$14.

The Family Fun Center opens daily at Boomtown, seven miles west of Reno on Interstate 80. Call 800-648-3790 or visit [www.boomtownfuncenter.com](http://www.boomtownfuncenter.com) for information and party discounts. ■

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**NEVADA**  
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# Whale Tale

Super-high rollers and their casino hosts are special breeds,  
as described in this excerpt from **Whale Hunt in the Desert:**  
**The Secret Las Vegas of Superhost Steve Cyr.**

By Deke  
Castleman



The host with the most, UNLV grad Steve Cyr has hobnobbed with famous players from Michael Jordan to Larry Flynt. Top left: The entrance to the Las Vegas Hilton's lavish Verona Suite. Left: The symbols of whaledom: a private jet for the trip to Vegas and a stretch limo for your in-town ride.



Somewhere along the line, the term whale was inserted into the gambling lexicon to describe the biggest bettors in the casino universe. In the lingo, "whale" denotes the world's richest men and women (but mostly men) who play casino games at the highest allowable stakes.

No one knows for certain how many of these highest of high rollers there are. The largest table-game bet currently taken in Las Vegas is \$250,000, but only seven or

ousines—stocked with Dom Perignon and Beluga caviar—to places such as the Mansion at MGM Grand, among the world's most exclusive accommodations. There, concierges, VIP hostesses, casino hosts, casino executives, limo drivers, butlers, and personal chefs cater to their every whim.

Whales can receive as much as \$250,000 in free play simply for walking through a casino's door, with the promise of up to a 20-percent discount on their gambling losses. If they don't feel like partaking in private dinner parties prepared in person in their 15,000-square-foot penthouse villas by flambé, salad, and pastry chefs, they can strut their stuff into five-star restaurants and

tens, then speaks to Kirsti, a Hilton VIP hostess, about a suite assignment. "OK, I'm on my way. I'll be there in five minutes. Hold tight." He pauses, then says, "Relax, Kirsti! Who's the man, baby? I'll handle it."

He hurries down toward the stage and gives a thumbs-up to Mr. A. (Unless the two are extremely friendly, a casino guy addresses his player by the first initial of his last name. Calling him by his first name is too familiar, while using his full last name could, inadvertently, compromise his privacy.) Cyr signals that he's got to run, but he'll be back in a while. Then he blows through the casino and out the front door, where his silver Trans Am sits at the curb, as if he's the only car owner who happened to drive to the 600-room Hard Rock that Saturday night. He dukes off a 10-spot



Spacious and splendidly appointed suites are among the enticements that resorts use to reel in whales. Above is a sitting room in the Hilton's Sky Villas.

eight human blue whales can handle that kind of action. The second stratum tops out at \$150,000 per hand, a level manageable by up to 50 players worldwide. A hundred more can "fade" \$100,000 a hand.

Theirs is a firmament of 35-person entourage, flown in to Las Vegas on business jets, private airliners, or chartered jumbos. They're shuttled by fleets of stretch lim-

The largest table-game bet currently taken in Las Vegas is **\$250,000**, but only seven or eight human blue whales can handle that kind of action.

scribble their names on \$20,000 dinner and drink tabs.

The casino employee who hunts, harpoons, and harvests the whales is the casino marketing executive, also known as the player-development representative and host. Upwards of 500 hosts ply their trade in Las Vegas. And of them all, the host among hosts, the manipulator among manipulators, the champion harpooner in the modern-day whale hunt in the desert is a character named Steve Cyr.

Steve Cyr (pronounced seer) is standing at the back of the Joint, the Hard Rock casino's chic concert hall. He's rocking out to the wailing guitars and pounding drums of a makeshift band consisting of a blackjack high roller and three of his musician friends. It's been a dream of this player, Jeff Armstrong, to perform at the Joint, and Cyr sold the idea to the Hard Rock bosses. In return, Armstrong will spend a couple of hours at the tables betting \$10,000 a hand. But for now, he's up on stage, opening for the Fabulous Thunderbirds.

Cyr's cell phone rings. He answers, lis-

to the parking attendant in the valet cubicle, who hands him his keys. He hops in the car and peels out for points north.

At the Las Vegas Hilton, Cyr heads down the back hallway that connects the Sky Villa elevators to the Hilton's high-limit pit. He slides through a side door and strolls toward the lone dice table in the far corner of the room, out of place among all the baccarat and blackjack games. It sounds wrong, too: The craptable cacophony disturbs the typically tense and tempered air of a high-roller room.

Whooping it up at the table are Moe Cohn and a half-dozen of his dice-shooting cronies. The setup is complete with a full crap crew—two dealers, stickman, boxman, and floorman—and the highest maximums in the dice universe. Cohn is Cyr's new biggest player, with a \$10 million line of casino credit. He's the CEO of a major California corporation, and he has the gambling gene.

Tonight's his first time playing at the Hilton. Cyr has already met him at the airport with a limo and a \$5,000 bottle of Chateau Lafite Rothschild; ushered him up to the 13,200-square-foot Tuscany Villa; made sure his credit line was ready at the cage; secured a reservation for eight at Le Montrachet, the Hilton's *très chic* French





After a busy night at the tables, the fortunate Hilton player can retreat to the comfortable bedroom of the 15,400-square-foot Verona Suite in the Sky Villas. The resort calls the Verona, perched on the 30th floor, the largest hotel suite in the world.

restaurant at that time (it no longer exists); and had the crap table moved into the high-limit room (the first time such a thing had ever been done at the Hilton).

The hoopla from the players indicates that the table's hot. Cyr stands back a bit at first and watches as Cohn tosses the cost of a new Cadillac across the crap layout. The boxman, Mel, signals Cyr with three fingers pointing up: He's ahead 300 large.

Cyr's mentors, the old-school Las Vegas hosts and operations bosses, taught him that you don't host a sucker while he's gambling. You don't hang out at the table. You never distract him. You let him play his game. When he's through, you can do all the hosting you want. But Cyr has never subscribed to the conventional wisdom. He's especially irreverent when it comes to the gospel according to the old school. He enjoys hanging around his players at the games. He gets a thrill out of watching whales make bets the size of an average worker's annual wage.

Cyr gets caught up in the love. He cuts into the middle of the table and starts whooping it up and high-fiving Mr. C and his cronies as they make their points.

By 1994, Jimmy Newman, head honcho at the Hilton, had been marketing to international whales for nearly a decade. During that time, all he had in his lodging inventory were the nine Classic Suites on the 29th floor. Built in 1986, they were aging and small at 1,200 to 2,000

square feet. Newman desperately needed big villas to accommodate Asian high rollers, many of whom wanted to come in large groups. And he got them.

The largest of the 30th floor Sky Villas, the Verona, is 15,400 square feet; Hilton marketing claims it's the largest hotel suite in the world. The Verona features 30-foot-high neo-Michelangelo-style hand-painted ceilings, three bedrooms, three and a half bathrooms, two hot tubs, two fireplaces, a huge living room, cozy media room, a glassed-in observation area overlooking the Strip, a 2,000-pound marble dining-room table (it's not among the expensive trinkets that the Hilton fears will disappear), more tons of marble for the floors, pillars, columns, arches, pedestals, counters, and statues, and gold gold gold—lamps, chairs, faucets, even gold-threaded pillowcases. At the touch of a remote, high-definition TVs appear from hidden consoles at the feet of the beds. The \$85,000 Bosendorfer grand piano had to be airlifted in during construction, before the roof was sealed.

One wing of the Verona Villa is built around an outdoor pool and garden; sliding glass doors from the master bedroom

open onto the "back yard." There's a swimming pool and two hot tubs, plus a pond with koi (large goldfish that symbolize luck and longevity to Asians), barbecue grill, sumptuous turf with room for two removable tent pavilions, and a fountain.

One night a whale was wasted, and Cyr and a butler literally had to help him into the sack in the Verona's master bedroom. He woke up the next morning in a huge room he didn't recognize, and couldn't remember how he'd gotten there. He called his butler and said, "What did you put in the champagne last night? I must be dreaming. I keep hearing the sound of a lawnmower outside."

The butler responded, "Well, sir, they're cutting your grass."

"I'm at the top of a tower, aren't I?"

"Yes, sir, but you've got a big back yard. Hit the button on the console next to your bed to open the drapes"—and there was the landscaping crew tidying up the large lawn on the roof of the Hilton.

For more than six years, the Sky Villas couldn't be rented for any amount of money. Cyr once had the following conversation with Bill Gates, who wanted to stay in the Verona during the huge Comdex convention, at which he usually makes the keynote speech:

Gates: "How much to rent one of the Sky Villas?"

Cyr: "Sorry, Mr. G. They're not for rent."

Gates: "Really? Not even for twenty thousand, twenty-five thousand, a night?"

Cyr: "No, sir. The Villas are reserved for players who bet twenty-five thousand *a hand*."

These days, though, you can pay to stay in the Villas. The Verona runs

\$17,500 per night, but if you stay three nights, you get a \$2,500-per-night price break, so it'll only set you back 45 large for a long weekend. ▀



*The preceding was adapted from Whale Hunt in the Desert: The Secret Las Vegas of Superhost Steve Cyr, in which Deke Castleman reveals the evolution of the casino host and the stories of men and women who bet \$20,000 a hand. Whale Hunt in the Desert (336 pages, 12 photos,*

*\$24.95 hardcover, ISBN 0-929712-91-9) was published this spring by Huntington Press, 3687 South Procyon Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89103. For details call 800-244-2224 or visit [www.lasvegasadvisor.com](http://www.lasvegasadvisor.com). The author is senior editor of the Las Vegas Advisor.*





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# Ghost Town Lawmakers

Some of Nevada's most notable legislators hailed from Hamilton, Tybo, and other towns that no longer exist.

By Robert E. Erickson

When Mineral County voters elected George B. Ackerman to the Nevada Assembly in 1916, his place of residence was Marietta, a tiny mining town whose best days were long past. During his first and only legislative session in Carson City Ackerman maintained a rather unkempt appearance. With a perpetual five o'clock shadow and lit cigarette in his mouth, the well-traveled agricultural journalist and entrepreneur was easy to spot mingling with colleagues in the halls of the State Capitol.

But Ackerman, a former *Boston Herald* writer and *Sparks Forum* editor, was a man who advocated change. In the 1917 session he introduced the bill that created the state highway department. His other measures weren't successful, but they were farsighted. One would have prevented elected officials from receiving salary increases during their terms of office. Another called for the

registration of all motor vehicles in Nevada as well as the establishment of statewide speed limits for motorists—not to exceed 12 mph in towns or 30 mph in the country.

If Ackerman was ahead of his time, so was his hometown of Marietta. Today the primary residents of Marietta, located on a salty flat west of Tonopah, are the 80 burros that occupy the first official wild burro range in the United States.

Ackerman was one of about 180 Nevada legislators whose places of residence, mostly gold and silver camps, currently qualify for that great Nevada distinction of being ghost towns. Since 1864, the year Nevada became a state, 2,056 individuals have been elected to the Legislature from approximately 154 cities, towns, and settlements. Today, 78 of those communities—slightly more than half—are considered ghost towns (see map on page 22).

Early-day Nevada lawmakers who hailed from such

Legislator Levi Syphus lived in the old Mormon farming town of St. Thomas and gained a reputation as an expert on water law. St. Thomas later was covered by Lake Mead.

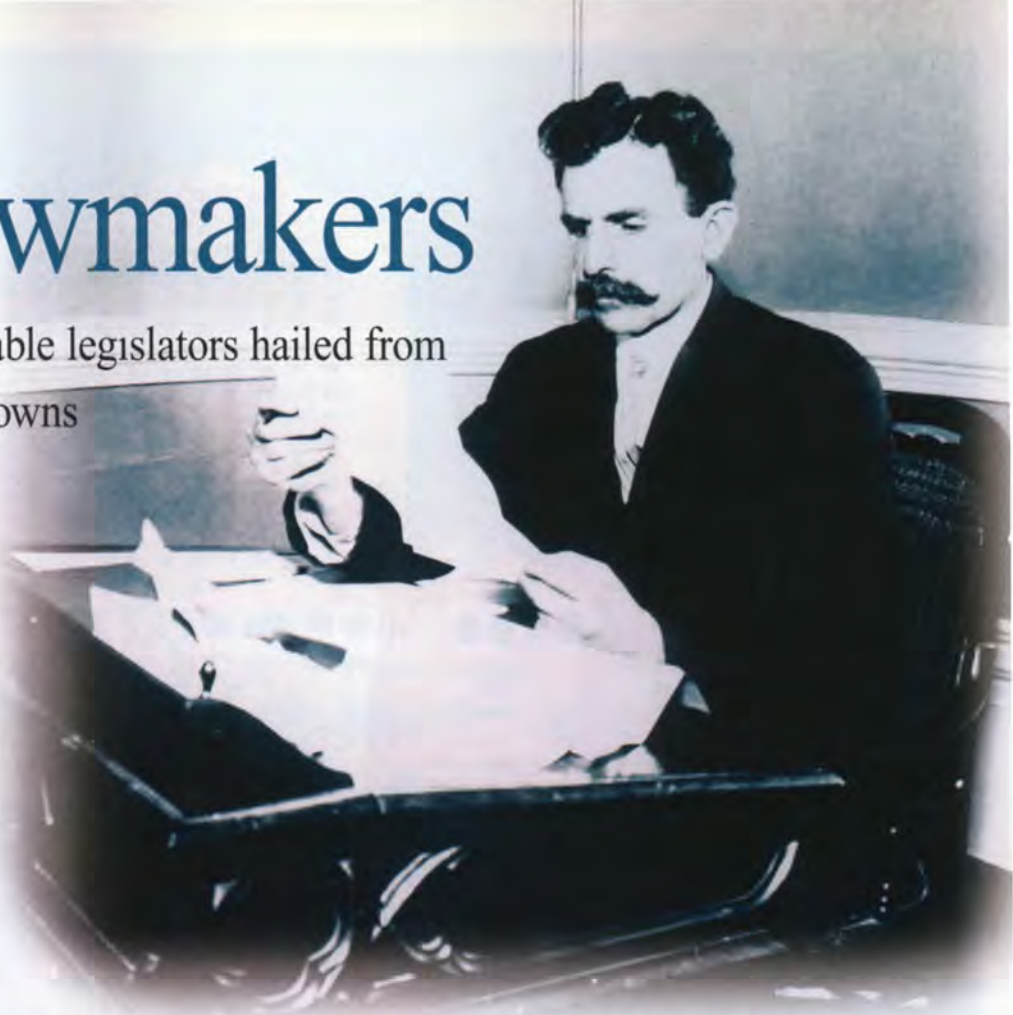
places as Bullion, Cornucopia, Gold Mountain, Lucky Boy, Ruby Hill, Treasure City, and Wonder saw their towns abandoned when the mines played out or more glorious strikes were announced elsewhere. Often the legislators who were in the mining business moved on to other future ghost towns.

For years state law ensured that a veritable legion of legislators would hail from the hinterlands. Before the "one man, one vote" reapportionment of 1965, each of Nevada's 17 counties had at least one senator and one Assembly member.

Like Ackerman, a number of ghost town lawmakers showed a knack for the job during the Nevada Legislature's biennial sessions in Carson City. Levi Walter Syphus, who served in both the State Senate and Assembly and became known as the father of Nevada water law, lived in the old Mormon settlement of St. Thomas, which later was covered by Lake Mead.

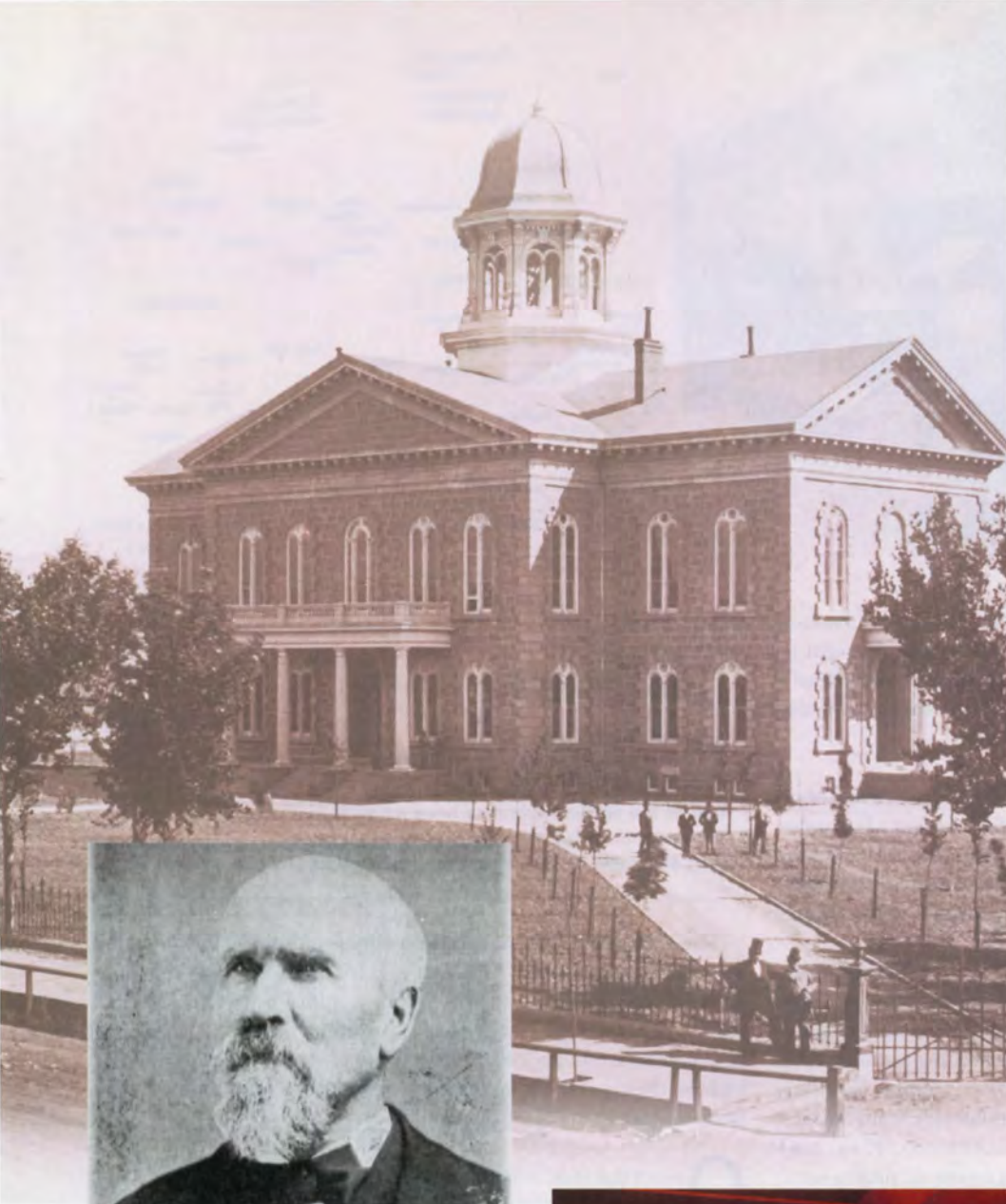
At one point Syphus lived in one county while representing another, apparently without controversy. In 1908 the Democratic assemblyman was elected to the State Senate representing Lincoln County, but during the 1909 session St. Thomas became part of the new Clark County (with Las Vegas the county seat) created by the Legislature. Syphus thereby became the first state senator to reside in Clark County. However, he continued to represent Lincoln in 1911 even though he actually lived in Clark, which officially was represented by Senator George Bergman of Nelson.

As a state senator, Syphus was known for his expertise in water matters. Later, as plans for Hoover Dam progressed, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation appointed Syphus to a three-member commission to appraise private property in and around St.



Assemblyman George B. Ackerman of Marietta was depicted by Reno cartoonist Lew Hymers in 1917





Henry A. Comins, a women's suffrage advocate, once lived in long-vanished Hamilton. Left: Legislators began meeting in the Capitol in the 1870s.



The speaker of the Assembly in 1893, Thomas Jefferson Bell lived in Tybo, Grantsville, Cloverdale, Midas, and Berlin—all ghost towns today.

**Many old-time  
Nevada lawmakers  
saw their towns  
abandoned when the  
mines played out.**



Assemblywoman Jewel Parsons and her husband, Elton, operated a well-known gas stop at Coaldale, 41 miles west of Tonopah. Parsons was the only female ghost town legislator.





Thomas before the town disappeared under the waters backed up by Hoover Dam. Interestingly, due to the current drought in the West, Syphus' hometown has reemerged as Lake Mead's shoreline has receded, and tourists can visit the weedy town site and its old foundations.

South of Tonopah stand the ruins of another ghost town once represented by a Nevada lawmaker. After driving a few miles west of Lida Summit on State Route 266, motorists will spot rock walls and a historic marker. The prospectors who found silver there in 1866 named the place Palmetto, mistaking the Joshua trees for small palms.

Only one Palmetto resident served in the Legislature: Assemblyman S. J. Davis, a member of the Union Party, in 1869. Like many early legislators elected from transient towns, Davis was more concerned about local affairs than the big picture. That session his primary effort was a resolution urging Nevada's Congressional delegation to establish semiweekly mail service from Belmont to Aurora by way of San Antonio, Pratt, and Palmetto. Today, all those places are ghost towns or nearly so.

Legislators from remote Nevada towns found the trek to Carson City long and difficult, particularly in January, when sessions

After his colleagues elected him Assembly speaker in the 1893 session, Bell gave a stirring speech in the Assembly chambers on the Capitol's second floor. Twenty-five of the 30 assemblymen had not served in the previous session, so Bell decided a lecture was in order.

"Men are grown-up boys," Bell said, "and if a young man was at high school and spent all his time at play, he would not progress. Neither will we if we follow such a course."

**Some early-day legislators undoubtedly saw Carson as a more civilized place to spend the winter.**

Later they made the journey by rail when possible. When Assemblyman W.J. Dooley traveled from now-deserted Delamar, southwest of Caliente, to Carson City for the 1899 session, he was reimbursed for an astonishing 2,134 miles round-trip. Records do not describe Dooley's exact route, but he probably traveled through either Salt Lake City or Los Angeles, continued by train hundreds of miles to Reno, and then took the Virginia and Truckee Railroad to Carson City.





Don Crawford, who marched in parades with his burro Jenny (at left, with Little Jack), hailed from tiny Vya.

A rancher and real estate man, the Democrat often marched in parades with one of his two burros, Jack and Jenny. Serving from 1942 to 1962, Crawford advocated moving Nevada's northwestern boundary with California westward to the Warner Mountains. If Crawford had been successful, Surprise Valley and towns like Cedarville, Eagleville, and Fort Bidwell would have been part of the Silver State. Nevada Governor Grant Sawyer and California Governor Pat Brown once played a round of golf to settle the boundary question. Like good politicians, they reported the match had ended in a tie.

Policy matters were only part of the attraction for small-town legislators. In the old days, some undoubtedly saw Carson as a more civilized place to spend the winter, with better lodging and food and a bit milder climate than their own desert hamlets. In hardscrabble times, the pay was no small matter, either. In *Roughing It*, Mark Twain recalled Nevada's first Territorial Legislature of 1861: "It was easy to get legislators, even at three dollars a day, although board was four dollars and fifty cents, for the distinction has its charm in Nevada as well as elsewhere, and there were plenty of patriotic souls out of employment."

Of course, many early-day legislators were dedicated to making Nevada a better place. An example was Assemblyman St. Leger McNaughten. At age 19, in the mid-1870s, McNaughten drove a stagecoach out of Candelaria, a busy Esmeralda County mining town.

In 1888, he was elected to the Assembly for the first of four terms, alternating as a member of the Democrat and Silver parties. Even though he represented a small town that today is a ghost, McNaughten served as chairman of the powerful Assembly Ways and Means Committee and as speaker pro tempore.

In 1895, the enterprising Candelaria resident authored a most progressive bill that became law. It provided for the establishment of free public libraries and reading rooms around the state. So when visiting a library in the Silver State today, we should remember Assemblyman McNaughten and the many other Nevada lawmakers with ghost town heritage. ▣

*Robert E. Erickson retired last year as research director and resident historian of the Legislative Counsel Bureau in Carson City. He currently is a member of the Nevada Silver-Haired Legislative Forum.*



Noble H. Getchell was a mining man and philanthropist who served in the Legislature for two decades.

the permanent school fund and provide for the licensing of teachers. Comins also was a key supporter of women's suffrage in Nevada. In 1895 he sponsored a bill to amend the state constitution to give women the right to vote. Both houses approved the measure in 1895 but not in 1897 so it was not placed on a statewide ballot. Nevada women had to wait until the state constitution was amended in 1914 before they could vote in state and local elections.

Mining magnate Noble H. Getchell served in the Legislature from 1923 to 1942. Getchell was a large man with a shiny, bald head, and his powerful face looked as if it had been chiseled out of the very Nevada rocks he mined for many years. Although he mostly lived in Battle Mountain, Getchell listed the mining camp of Betty O'Neal as his place of residence in 1931 and 1933. Getchell, who made a fortune in mining, provided scholarships and other support to the University of Nevada in Reno, where the main library is named in his honor.

The lone woman legislator from a current ghost town was Jewel Parsons. In 1965 the Democratic assemblywoman represented Esmeralda County while she and her husband operated a motel and tavern at Coaldale, a U.S. 95 stop west of Tonopah that has been abandoned in recent years. Parsons also was the last member of the Legislature to come from a currently deserted settlement.

Another recent legislator from a place that barely exists today was Don Crawford from Vya, far north of Reno in Washoe County.

## NOW IN SESSION

You won't encounter any ghost town lawmakers at the Nevada Legislature this spring, but you will find their spiritual stomping grounds. Every odd year the state's legislators meet in Carson City, and proceedings are open to the public. The current 120-day session began February 7 and continues through June 6.

As a visitor you can listen to the buzz of voices filling the hallways and feel the energy and sense of community in the nation's fastest-growing state. You can observe floor sessions of the Assembly or Senate from the galleries, attend committee hearings, visit the gift shop, and hobnob with Nevada's politicians and journalists at the Caucus Deli on the main floor. Wall displays offer a pictorial history

of past legislatures and the Senate Hall of Fame. Information, including a self-guided walking-tour brochure, is available at the Legislative Police Desk in the foyer or by visiting [www.leg.state.nv.us](http://www.leg.state.nv.us).

Across the Capitol Mall stands the old State Capitol, where the Legislature met from 1871 to 1969 before moving to the current Legislative Building in 1970. The venerable Capitol still houses the offices of the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, state treasurer, and state controller. On the second floor you can stroll into the old chambers of the Assembly (north wing) and Senate (south wing); the latter houses an exhibit on the Capitol's history. Visit [www.gov.state.nv.us](http://www.gov.state.nv.us) for more information.





# *Red Rock Reverie*

Springtime brings wildflowers  
and waterfalls to this national refuge  
near Las Vegas.

**Photos and Words by Jim K. Decker**



**W**hen I moved from Virginia to Las Vegas in 1978, a friend invited me to go hiking at Red Rock Canyon. As an outdoor enthusiast, I quickly said yes. He took me bouldering at a place called Calico Vista 1, the first pull-out on Red Rock's 13-mile, one-way loop road, a brief drive west of the city. We climbed on the iron-rich, multicolored sandstone for most of the day, and I fell in love with the park.

After exploring Red Rock for the past 27 years, I am still amazed by its diversity of plant life, hiking trails, and seasonal weather. In 1990 the canyon, part of the Spring Mountains, was designated the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The Bureau of Land Management operates a visitor center at the entrance to the loop road, and more than 30 miles of hiking trails wind through the NCA's 197,000 acres. The area has more than 600 plant species. The state, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are cooperating to protect 57 rare and sensitive species of plants and animals, 25 of which occur nowhere else in the world.

Spring is one of my favorite seasons to

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Left: A waterfall tumbles down Lost Creek on the western side of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Right: Hikers will find spring blooms such as yellow golden asters and purple monkey flowers.







Above: Morning glory blooms near Sandstone Quarry in Red Rock Canyon. Right: Watercress covers a rivulet of Lost Creek.

visit Red Rock. From March to May the wildflowers show off their white, yellow, and purple petals. Snow still stands above the escarpment, feeding waterfalls in the canyons on the park's west side. Also, the spring weather is pleasant—it is not yet hot.

Spring is a good time to hike the trails to Sandstone Quarry. Along the way you will see scrub oak, pines, and the lichens that grow on the rocks' north sides. If you happen to visit after a rain, you will see

water pooled in the sandstone. That's when I like to scramble into the hills to photograph the pools and their reflections. Ice Box, Pine, and Oak Creek canyons are fun to hike in the spring, especially if the afternoon is warm. They get a lot of shade, and the canyons' cool rock walls sometimes feel like a refrigerator.

While hiking Lost Creek or one of the other canyons, I often take a break and listen to the water running. It is hard to imagine that Las Vegas is less than 25 miles

away. That's what I really enjoy about Red Rock: the serenity. ▣

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*Jim K. Decker is a Las Vegas resident and a photographer with the Las Vegas Review-Journal. For more information on Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area call the park's BLM visitor center, 702-515-5350, or visit [www.redrockcanyon.blm.gov](http://www.redrockcanyon.blm.gov). The park has an entrance fee of \$5 per vehicle. The visitor center has a bookstore and gift shop, and rangers offer interpretive programs throughout the year.*







# Q&A



## The Golden Years

John Ascuaga reflects on half a century at the Nugget. By Joyce Hollister

John Ascuaga (left) and his Nugget on Victorian Avenue in Sparks.

John Ascuaga drives 100 miles round trip every weekday from his ranch home in Jacks Valley, where he runs 400 head of cattle, to John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks. The original Nugget opened as a 60-seat coffee shop with slots on March 17, 1955. Five years later Ascuaga bought the casino from his mentor, hotelier Dick Graves. Today the Nugget has 1,600 rooms, nine restaurants, a convention center, pool, spa, and health club. Entertainers from Smash Mouth to Bo Diddley play in the showrooms. The Nugget is observing its 50th anniversary on March 17 with a party and fireworks.

Ascuaga and his wife, Rose, have four children, Camille, John Jr., Michonne, and Stephen. Michonne and Stephen are the Nugget's CEO and senior vice president of marketing, respectively.

Ascuaga, 80, eats lunch every day in The Loft, the Nugget's employee dining room. "It's a nice place to sit down, and the food

is first-class," he says. Although the boss doesn't work on Saturdays anymore, he's still much involved with Nugget operations. On the morning he spoke with *Nevada Magazine's* associate editor, Joyce Hollister, Ascuaga looked forward to an afternoon-long meeting on redevelopment in Sparks, which is celebrating its centennial this spring.

**Q What was Sparks like when you arrived in the 1950s?**

**A** There wasn't much here. It was a railroad town. They were phasing out coal locomotives and going to diesel. It was doom and gloom at Sparks at that time. They were phasing out a lot of employees, and we picked up the slack, plus a lot more.

**Q Tell me about the first Nugget.**

**A** We started with a small coffee shop, and we had slot machines and a pit, and then a short time later we bought the drugstore

next door from Mr. Peterson, the pharmacist. We put a steakhouse in the back part of what was Peterson's drugstore. Then we ventured into entertainment. We had Jack Teagarden and his band play, which was almost unheard of.

**Q What was it like to work with Dick Graves, the Nugget's founder?**

**A** Outstanding, just outstanding. He was really a mover. He was really an idea man, and I can't say enough about him. We had a good working relationship. He was six-five and I'm five-five. We were quite a team, walking down the hallway.

**Q You worked for Graves in Idaho?**

**A** I worked my summers at Graves' Shore Lodge when I went to the University of Idaho. Our families were friends from the day my folks came from the Basque Country. I was a bellman at his hotel all through school. He asked me if I'd like to



go to work for him. I had one semester left—I was now at Washington State University—so I graduated from WSU in February, and I went to work for him right there in Coeur d'Alene.

**Q Why did Graves move to Nevada?**

**A** They outlawed slot machines in Idaho. Dick was really well established in Idaho, but they moved lock, stock, and barrel. He asked me if I'd like to come along, and I said, why not? I was single. We started with the Nugget at 223 North Virginia in Reno. Then we went to Carson and Yerington. He thought there was opportunity here, and there was.

**Q What was your working day like?**

**A** It was not 8 to 5, but you pace yourself. When I got married, I went home for dinner every night, then came down here for two or three hours. Saturday night was when you worked. Today, people don't go to town on just Friday or Saturday—they go any darn time they want. Down on the farm, you went to town on Saturday. Now people might go to town three times in one day, just get in the car and go.

**Q You've hosted many celebrities. Who's your favorite?**

**A** Red Skelton is still my favorite. Pearl Bailey, she was just outstanding. She was very religious in a lot of ways. She had a lot of depth to her. Ella Fitzgerald, she was just outstanding, too, and Louis Armstrong, he was so great. And Ray Charles.

**Q Any funny stories?**

**A** I remember having dinner with Hoss [Dan Blocker in TV's *Bonanza*]. There was this huge double-cut prime rib, and he consumed all of that and was ready for strawberry shortcake. Jimmy Durante, I remember him so well. I sent him over to the Courtyard [an earlier Nugget hotel]. It was the only place we had for him to stay. We thought it was the Ritz-Carlton. Anyhow, when he performed, he always called me "Mr. Escooszheco."

**Q Tell me about Bertha, the Nugget's performing elephant from 1962 to 1999.**

**A** Bertha was really special. She went everywhere. She was on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. That was quite a task—you don't move an elephant in the back of a pickup, you know. Our trailer was so dilapidated and pathetic, we had an elephant trailer built in Idaho. We also used it for cattle. They had to reinforce the sides because we had to let Bertha out a side door. She couldn't get through that little chute in the



Ascuaga poses with *Bonanza* star Lorne Green at the Ponderosa Ranch in 1960.

back like the cows. I think she'd been to every parade in the whole area. We built her the Elephant Palace with a swimming pool, and she ate better than half of us.

**Q What is your business philosophy?**

**A** Our philosophy has always been to be the best. It's OK to be all right, but we try to be the best. We honestly feel we've reached our goal to excel in the food operation. And we excel in our staff. I look at my people as my salespeople.

We meet with all our employees two times a year, all 2,000 of them. We work 25 hours a day on our health program. We were the first casino that had our own medical staff. We have a medical office downstairs with five nurses, all RNs. We offer preventative measures and have a health fair every year.

**Q What about your scholarship program? You give scholarships to graduating seniors from 24 high schools as well as two minority scholarships every year.**

**A** I think we've given over 500 scholarships. It's probably the most gratifying program we've ever had. It really puts your faith in youth again to look at those young faces. It makes you so proud to see them.

They keep in touch with me. A lot of them become doctors or lawyers, but I haven't had any free services from any of them [laughs]. But I don't expect it.

**Q What did you learn from your Basque parents?**

**A** When my folks came over here, they couldn't speak English. It was difficult for them. I'm sure when my mother and father had a spat, they didn't have a counselor to go to. It was a long way from Boise, Idaho, to the Basque Country. They couldn't take a train to go home to Momma and Poppa. They worked it out.

They raised four of us on a farm, and we never went hungry once. They really had some values. We had one car, and we were lucky to have that. We got along pretty darn good. I think what I learned from my parents is you learn to live with what you have and make it work. They taught me the values of being honest and that your name means a great deal.

**Q Your family means a lot to you. Is that why you go home each night for dinner?**

**A** Yeah. Besides, my wife's a darn good cook.

**Q Where did you meet your wife, Rose?**

**A** She was a surgical nurse at St. Mary's Hospital in Reno, and I met her across the street [at the original Sparks Nugget] where she was with her relatives from Beowawe. We were married four months after we met. As soon as we got married, we started to have a family, and she never worked again.

**Q What do you think of having your children Michonne and Stephen working with you?**

**A** I feel secure that their philosophy is the same as mine. That's what I admire about them—they treat everybody equally. We treat everybody the same here. I always say to Michonne that the dishwasher is important. If you don't have clean dishes, you can't have a restaurant.

And they treat me like everybody else. Michonne's my CEO now. I have to report to her every day.

**Q So what do you do?**

**A** I'm still signing checks [laughs]. Hell, this is a big job. We had a mechanical problem yesterday, and I walked down to the west end of the west tower. I said, man, I didn't know this place was so large. ♡

*Joyce Hollister, Nevada's associate editor, recalls Bertha visiting with kids at the Minden library.*



# Showdown in the *Big Smoky*



My stampede string secure, I rode a mustang with a reputation  
on a spring cattle drive in the Toquimas.

Story and Photos by Ruth Anne Kocour

**M**y first cattle drive begins on a warm May afternoon with a trip to a Reno Western-wear store. At the shop a white-haired codger peers at me through his spectacles. "How can I help you, ma'am?"

"I've been invited to go on a cattle drive," I reply.

The codger bursts out laughing. So does another man standing behind a rack of cowboy boots. When he finally gets control of himself, the codger says, "That's no invitation, Missy. That's a job!"

Ignoring his remark I say, "I need a hat."

"A cowgirl, huh?" he replies, thumbs hooked in his suspenders.

"No, I need it for the sun, and I want it to stay on my head."

He laughs again. "Then you need a stampede string." *Stampede?* I think.

If you're wondering what a stampede string is, it's the hat's slider cord that snugs under the chin, as I soon learn. The codger leads me to the cheapest hats in the store, no doubt convinced that my first cattle drive will be my last.

He throws a hat on my head and asks, "There, how's that feel?" Then he demonstrates how the rim can be shaped for any look. I leave the shop armed with my new hat and the assurance that I am now equipped to drive cattle, flaps-up or flaps-down.

A few days later I arrive at Jim Stahl's ranch near Round Mountain in Big Smoky Valley. A long, sparsely settled expanse





Cowboys and cattle head to the mountains and summer pasture.

**“I hooked Showdown to a hitchin’ post to throw a saddle on him,” Jim says, “and all my friends showed up to watch me git killed.”**

viewing trip to Mount Jefferson. Jim and Karen are now divorced, but she often helps Jim guide the hunters and dudes. Karen is a spunky strawberry blonde whose parents came to the states from Denmark. She works at Round Mountain Gold driving a 290-ton haul truck equipped with tires 20 feet in diameter.

“We’ll spend the next three days pushin’ 300 head of cattle up to their summer pasture in the mountains,” Karen says of the drive. “Danny Berg is the cattle boss. They’re his cows, so he’ll be in charge. Be sure to ask Danny about the one-horned steer that gored him in the leg.”

Our route will take us over the Toquimas, which like most Nevada ranges are riddled with canyons and ravines. Jim squints toward the mountains, his steely blue eyes and silver-blond eyebrows standing out against his sun-bronzed skin.

“Horses that have grown up in rocky, mountainous terrain are the most sure-footed and dependable out here,” Jim tells me. He adopts mustangs from BLM’s Wild Horse and Burro

Facility in Palomino Valley north of Sparks. The first and wildest mustang he ever adopted was a light sorrel stallion that had been caught on the Black Rock Desert. The horse stood over 15 hands, large for a mustang.

“I named him Showdown because I figured that’s what breakin’ him would be,” Jim explains. Showdown was so wild that Jim’s friends asked if he were taking out life insurance before breaking the mustang. Having never tamed a horse, Jim decided to attend a seminar at the Wild

Horse Facility called “Breaking Wild Mustangs.” One seminar wasn’t enough. He took another.

When the big day came, Jim says, “I hooked Showdown to a hitchin’ post to throw a saddle on him, and all my friends showed up to watch me git killed.”

Karen interrupts. “You’ll be riding Showdown during the cattle drive, Ruth Anne. Showdown has mellowed. He’s now one of our steadiest mounts.”

I’ll soon see. I keep it to myself that I haven’t been on a horse in 15 years.

The next morning we’re up before sunrise, hauling our mustangs by trailer to Blue Springs, the starting point. As the sun breaks over the Toquimas, we’re mounted up and riding through fields of wild irises and mustard backlit by the sun’s early-morning rays—a “purdy spot,” according to Danny, who relaxes in his saddle, elbow propped on horn, chin in hand. A playful smile flashes from beneath the shadow of his black hat and beard. Danny has brought a few friends to help. He issues quick directions and, with five cow dogs on his tail, rides off to round up the herd. We scatter to search for cows and calves that may be hiding in the brush.

“Be sure to keep away from bogs and hazards, like downed barbed wire, that could trip up the horses,” Karen warns me.

From the road this valley floor may look to some like an arid wasteland of stark, relentless sun. Riding out onto it, the place comes to life. Hidden water sources feed carpets of grassland, wildflowers, and stands of sage taller than I am on Showdown.

of sagebrush between Austin and Tonopah, the valley is bordered by the Toiyabe Range to the west and the Toquima Range to the east. Getting to Big Smoky Valley is a two-pack-of-chewing-gum drive, 200 miles east of Reno along U.S. 50, America’s Loneliest Road.

In 1981 Jim quit the steel mills of Michigan and headed for Nevada after a run-in with a vat of molten metal. Now retired from the Round Mountain Gold Mine, Jim runs Mustang Outfitters, a guide business that holds a couple of cattle drives each year. Jim is a gourmet campfire cook and a master guide for pack and hunting trips, photo safaris, and mustang watching.

I had met Jim and his wife, Karen, on a previous bighorn-





The herd moves up a draw. Right: Two of his dogs wait for orders from cow boss Danny Berg. Below: The three Kretschmers, Chance (left), Ray Jr., and Ray Sr., are ready to ride.



Jackrabbits freeze, and lizards scatter for cover as bellowing bulls, lowing cows, and bleating calves thunder past, trailing long clouds of dust across the landscape.

When sage gives way to sun-baked alkali flats, the herd strings out in a line that extends to the horizon. Alkali crust crumbles under Showdown's even gait. It's one thing to see Central Nevada by car and quite another to experience it on horseback as one might have a century ago.

On the drive we are joined by Chance Kretschmer and his grandfather, Ray. Chance, a handsome 21-year-old who looks as if he were chiseled from solid rock, is a star running back for the University of Nevada, Reno football team. Chance led the country in rushing his freshman year.

While Chance chases down a wayward calf, Ray tells me more about his grandson. "UNR wasn't interested in a walk-on from



Tonopah. So his grandmother wrote a letter to the coach and said, 'You need to give my grandson a chance. The coach did, and by the end of his first season Chance led the nation with the most yards gained. Because of Chance the door has opened for other kids from rural Nevada.' It seems a ranch and rodeo upbringing is good training for the trench warfare of football.

Huge thunderheads loom on the horizon when we bed the herd at a neighbor's ranch. Surprisingly, after 10 hours in the saddle, I'm not sore. Showdown and I are bonding.

At daybreak we're already driving the cattle up the Toquima Range, where compression has forced rock into striated layers of auburn, yellow, and blood red. When I look back at the valley from our mountainside perspective, the few ranches appear as mere outposts lost in vastness.

As we move the herd along, Karen occasionally spots a calf too tired to make it. She drops a well-placed loop over the animal and gently tugs it back to the truck that follows. Still, not all the calves are up to the trip; two die that day. "If they



can't survive the drive, they won't survive the summer on open range," Danny says. "It's sad but true." That night another calf is born.

Early the next morning we push the herd across the pass that leads to Monitor Valley. Jim is riding Convict, a mustang he adopted from the prison in Susanville, California. Karen is trying to break in a colt that's acting spooky.

By now Showdown and I are one. For another day we chase calves, cows, and bulls up and down embankments, across side hills of loose gravel, and through dry creek beds that come to life only in wet years. We search out strays from under sage and along hidden streams in side canyons lined with aspen, juniper, and piñon pine. From the pass the view of snow-covered Mount Jefferson reminds me of the Tetons, without the crowds.

By mid-afternoon we reach the herd's summer grazing pasture, an alpine meadow fed by springs and mountain snow pack. Sitting tight on our mounts we hold the herd in place until calves and mothers find each other, including our 12-hour-old, born on the drive.

I'll be back with Showdown next year to check on that calf. In the meantime my stampede string holds my hat securely to the wall of my Reno home. ♥

*Ruth Anne Kocour is a Reno resident and the author of Facing the Extreme, a book about climbing Mount McKinley. Jim Stahl of Mustang Outfitters is planning his next cattle drive on Memorial Day Weekend. "We do 'em at the ranchers' convenience, usually in spring and fall," he says. See sidebar for more information.*



Mustang Outfitters' Jim Stahl, with Karen Hansen, adopts and trains wild horses.



Nevada dude ranches and outfitters offer guests a chance to ride, rope, and relax.

At Nevada guest ranches vacationers can experience the Old West as it was more than 100 years ago. Ranchers host trail rides, hunting and fishing trips, hayrides, cookouts, meals, and campfire entertainment. The cost ranges from \$700 to \$1,500 per week. Families and groups are welcome. Following is a sampling of Nevada guest ranches.

**Badlands Wilderness Ranch**, in O'Neil Basin northeast of Elko, offers horseback rides and seasonal cattle drives. Other activities include wildlife watching, hiking, hunting, fishing, and sightseeing. Wells, 800-616-0670, [www.badlandsranch.com](http://www.badlandsranch.com).

**Corley Ranch**, a working ranch in the Carson Valley, hosts daytime functions. There is no lodging. Entertainment includes music and fast-draw demonstrations. Gardnerville, 775-265-3045, [www.corleyranch.com](http://www.corleyranch.com).

**Cottonwood Guest Ranch**, 70 miles north of Wells and 30 miles from paved highway near the Jarbidge Wilderness Area, offers seasonal horse drives, cow camps, pack trips, trail rides, and other activities. Pickup from airports in Elko and Twin Falls, Idaho, can be arranged. O'Neil Basin, Wells, 775-755-2231, [www.cottonwoodguestranch.com](http://www.cottonwoodguestranch.com).

**Hidden Canyon Guest Ranch**, near Great Basin National Park, is 20 miles south of Baker on the Nevada-Utah border. Lodging consists of several cabins, teepees, a lodge, and a camping area. Baker, 775-234-7267, [www.greatbasinpark.com/hiddenecanyon.htm](http://www.greatbasinpark.com/hiddenecanyon.htm).

**Hunewill Circle H Guest Ranch**, a 26,000-acre spread south of Wellington near Bridgeport, California, offers horseback riding, barbecues, fishing, and a 60-mile cattle drive. Special events include cattle-working and roping clinics. Bridgeport Summer 760-932-7711, winter 775-465-2201, [www.hunewillranch.com](http://www.hunewillranch.com).

**Mustang Outfitters**, in Big Smoky Valley between Tonopah and Austin, offers pack-in trips by horseback in the Arc Dome, Table Mountain, and Alta Toquima wilderness areas. Vacationers may go hiking, birdwatching, fishing, or hunting for elk and deer. Owner Jim Stahl plans a cattle drive on Memorial Day Weekend. Round Mountain, 775-964-2145, [www.nevadaoutfitters.org](http://www.nevadaoutfitters.org).

**Nevada High Country Outfitters**, based at the Jaz Ranch in Lamoille, arranges hunts in the Ruby Mountains. Lamoille, 775-777-3277, [www.nevadajaz-ranch.com](http://www.nevadajaz-ranch.com). The ranch has info on the Nevada Outfitters and Guides Association, [www.nevadaoutfitters.org](http://www.nevadaoutfitters.org).

**Old Yella Dog Ranch and Cattle Company**, 190 miles north of Reno at Vya, offers lodging in cabins, camping area, and motor-home spaces. Tenderfoots may take lessons in cattle-brand recognition, roping, ranch cooking, and horse grooming. Vya, 530-279-2779, [saddleup@oldyelladogranch.com](mailto:saddleup@oldyelladogranch.com).

**Ruby Crest Ranch** (Elko Guide Service) provides pack trips, fly-fishing outings, and ranch vacations that include horseback riding, wildlife viewing, and wagon rides. Elko, 775-744-2277, [www.nv-biz.com/ruby ranch](http://www.nv-biz.com/ruby ranch).

**Soldier Meadows Guest Ranch** offers High Rock Canyon Jeep tours, hayrides, hot springs, and cookouts in the Black Rock Desert. Sixty miles north of Gerlach, 530-279-4881, [www.soldiermeadows.com](http://www.soldiermeadows.com).

**Tyson's Canyon Ranch** near Virginia City has new owners, Peter and Judy Sorensen. Former owners John and Carol Tyson remain to provide guest entertainment for groups. The ranch has riding trails, lodging, evening campfires, music, and cowboy poetry. 775-847-7223, [www.nevadaduderranch.com](http://www.nevadaduderranch.com).

**More Info:** Nevada Commission on Tourism, 800-NEVADA-8, [www.travelnevada.com](http://www.travelnevada.com).—Wilma LaRocca





# Puttin' on the *Riv*

The **RIVIERA**, the Strip's first high-rise resort, celebrates an entertaining **50 years.**

When the Riviera Hotel opened on April 20, 1955, Liberace performed two important duties. Earning a record \$50,000 a week, the pianist opened the Clover Room to large crowds. He also wielded the scissors at the Riviera's ribbon cutting.

Liberace's leading role was fitting because, as much as any Las Vegas hotel, the Riviera has been identified with its entertainment. For years the big stars—Louis Armstrong, Ginger Rogers, George Burns, Shirley MacLaine, Frank Sinatra, Diana Ross, Liza Minnelli—all played the Riv. Barbra Streisand, Ann-Margret, and Dolly

Parton made their Vegas debuts there. Today the Riviera presents two of the Strip's longest-running shows, "Splash," the popular production show that once featured an enormous diving tank, and "An Evening at La Cage," the female-celebrity-impersonator show starring Frank Marino.

Entertainment will be prominent as the hotel celebrates its Golden Anniversary Party on April 18-23. Festivities include a gathering of Riviera showgirls from the 1950s, displays of historic photos of Riviera stars, a concert by Michael Bolton, and a 50-year ribbon cutting.



Two "Splash" dancers wear traditional Las Vegas showgirl costumes (above). Today the Riviera greets the Strip with multi-hued neon (right).







Mickey Rooney pulled a rickshaw full of lovely ladies in 1955 (above). Top left: A smiling Liberace starred at the Riviera ribbon cutting in 1955. Liberace opened the showroom for a record \$50,000 a week. He later noted, "When the curtain went up, the ovation was tremendous. So was my bank account." Top right: The Twist was the rage when Riviera headliners Louis Armstrong and Marlene Dietrich demonstrated the dance's moves in 1962.

When Liberace snipped the first ceremonial ribbon, the Riviera was a marvel. It had 320 rooms and stood an unheard-of nine stories high. "All previous resorts had consisted of low-rise motel or bungalow units in the architectural tradition of the old West," UNLV's Eugene P. Moehring notes in his 1989 history of Las Vegas, *Resort City in the Sunbelt*. "Builders had feared that the hardpan caliche soil, when combined with the valley's high water tables, would not support weighty, high-rise buildings."

The Riviera stood tall, however, through initial financial troubles and a succession

of owners that included early-day mob figures, Broadway producer David Merrick, singer Dean Martin, and eventually travel-company owner Meshulam Riklis, who rescued the Riv in the 1970s. Under Riklis' ownership, the hotel and casino greatly expanded. The hotel currently has 2,100 rooms.

This spring, the Riviera recalls its entertainment roots with a Celebrity Display and Photo Op featuring Liberace's red, white, and blue Bicentennial Rolls-Royce. Call 775-734-5110 or visit [www.rivierahotel.com](http://www.rivierahotel.com) for more information on the Riviera's 50th anniversary party.—David Moore



Barbra Streisand made her Las Vegas debut opening for Liberace at the Riviera in '63, a year before finding stardom in "Funny Girl."



# Pubs That Hop



A nautical theme greets Boiler Room guests at the Colorado Belle in Laughlin.



The Boiler Room at Laughlin's Colorado Belle.

Inside Nevada's **brew pubs**,  
it's not just about the beer.

**By Bob Barnes**

**G**eorge Washington, the father of our country, made beer at Mount Vernon. One of his recipes called for a whole chicken to be placed in the brew.

You won't find chicken beer in Nevada's brew pubs, but you will taste chili-pepper, cherry, and coffee flavors and more than 50 locally created brews such as Red Rock, Silver State Stout, and Ichthyosaur Pale Ale. In all, Nevada has 13 brew pubs that collectively have won more than two dozen medals from the prestigious Great American Beer Festival

and World Beer Cup. Monte Carlo Brewpub, the only brewery on the Strip, has ranked in the top five for individual U.S. brew-pub production over the past three years.

From full-bodied stouts to crisp pale ales, the brews appeal to a wide range of tastes, each savory and intriguing in its own mysterious way.

"It's funny how people vary in their taste in beers," says Dottie Smith, a supervisor at Brew Brothers in Reno's Eldorado Hotel. "Men, particularly the UNR students, like the Big Dog Ale, which



has the highest alcohol content, while women like the wheat beer."

Of course, when you're evaluating a brew pub, it's not just about the beer. Even if you aren't a beer connoisseur, you'll find numerous attractions.

At night brew pubs often hop with rock bands, karaoke, and acoustical groups. A few establishments, like Great Basin Brewery in downtown

The brews appeal to a wide range of tastes, each savory in its own mysterious way.

Sparks, clear away the tables for dance bands two or more nights a week.

Good food is a hallmark of brew pubs. Several like Gordon Biersch in Las Vegas and Silver Peak in Reno have nice outdoor dining areas. Happy-hour food specials abound.

If a beautifully crafted, honey-hued hefeweizen can't distract you from the slots, the pubs at Barley's, Ellis Island, Monte Carlo, Triple 7 at Main Street Station, the Boiler Room at the Colorado Belle, and Brew Brothers, situated in casinos, offer both.

Also, brew pubs have special atmospheric elements. The copper brewing apparatus is perpetually shiny. At the Triple 7 Brewpub inside Main Street Station, patrons can admire antiques and the long mahogany bars.

One pub's atmosphere could be called cheesy—that of Big Dog's Draft House, which celebrates all things Wisconsin. The walls of the northwest Las Vegas brew pub are adorned with Cheese State memorabilia—cow bric-a-brac, photos of Green Bay Packer greats, and tributes to Tom Wiesner, the late Wisconsin football star and Big Dog's founder.

So for those who like bratwurst and banter with their brew, here are more than a dozen Nevada brew pubs that serve craft beer made on the premises. Awards refer to the Great American Beer Festival (GABF) and World Beer Cup (WBC). Call to confirm details.

## Statewide Guide to Nevada Brew Pubs

### Las Vegas Area

#### Barley's Casino and Brewing Company

4500 E. Sunset Rd., Henderson, 702-458-BREW, [www.barleys.com](http://www.barleys.com). Established 1996.

**Entertainment:** Spring and fall concert series, yearly brew festival in early May.

**Best Beers:** The GABF-winning Bavarian hefeweizen (try it without a lemon) is an explosion of banana and clove flavor. Red Rock is an amber-hued, pleasantly malty lager.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Jim Wilson, who stays close to his brewing roots by serving as V.P. of a local homebrew club.

**Awards:** 2 GABF.

**Menu Highlights:** The humongous slices of pizza from the Brickhaus Pizza Kitchen are as good as pizza gets. A slice costs only \$1.25 during happy hour.

**Interesting Nuances:** Barley's has one of the area's best happy hours with \$1.50 drafts 3 to 6 p.m. weekdays and 9 to 11 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Barley's, which has a sports book, is located in the Green Valley Town Center.

#### Big Dog's Brewing Company at the Draft House

4345 N. Rancho Rd., Las Vegas, 702-645-1404, [www.bigdogsbrews.com](http://www.bigdogsbrews.com). Established 1993.

**Entertainment:** None unless you consider it entertainment to be surrounded by rabid Green Bay Packer fans on game day. The Draft House has a Wisconsin theme and a reputation as the foremost Packer bar in town.

**Best Beers:** Big Dog's Pale Ale (GABF gold medal) is a classic big-flavored, hoppy American pale ale. Black Lab Stout (GABF bronze medal) is rich and dark with hints of coffee and cocoa.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Dave Otto, former slot host at the Holy Cow (Big Dog's predecessor) who rose to brewmaster.

**Awards:** 4 GABF, 2 WBC.

**Menu Highlights:** Wisconsin specialties such as pecan-crusted walleye flown in from Wisconsin, fried cheese curds, and three kinds of bratwurst.

**Interesting Nuances:** Winner of the most major brewing awards in the Vegas area. Formerly the Holy Cow, Big Dog's closed that Strip brew pub in 2002 and



Conducting a taste test at the Monte Carlo.

opened its new brewery at the Draft House in northwest Las Vegas in 2004.

**Other Locations:** Big Dog's Bar and Grill (1511 N. Nellis Blvd., 702-459-1099) and Big Dog's Cafe and Casino (6390 W. Sahara Ave., 702-876-3647).

#### Chicago Brewing Company

2201 S. Fort Apache Rd., Las Vegas, 702-254-3333. Established 2000.

**Entertainment:** Monthly cigar smokers in the upstairs cigar bar.

**Best Beers:** Two-time award-winning Daisy Chain Tripel is very malty sweet, available seasonally. All Nighter, an easy drinking, straw-colored light ale, won a gold medal at the 2004 GABF.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Kyle Cormier, a one-time home brewer and a former assistant at Chicago and Monte Carlo.

**Awards:** 4 GABF, 1 WBC.

**Menu Highlights:** Chicago-style deep dish pizza, cheese knots.

**Interesting Nuances:** Brewmaster Kyle Cormier excels at brewing Belgian-style beers and usually has one or two on tap. Small balconies allow fresh-air sipping. Chicago is located in the Village Square Center at Fort Apache and Sahara, steps from the Regal Cinema complex. Chicago's beers are also on tap at the Four Queens downtown and at Magoo's pubs in the valley.

#### Ellis Island Casino and Brewery

4178 Koval Lane, Las Vegas, 702-733-8901, [www.ellislandcasino.com](http://www.ellislandcasino.com). Established 1998.

**Entertainment:** Karaoke 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. daily.

**Best Beers:** EI Light is very light-bodied but refreshing. The seasonal Fallfest is amber-hued with a mild malty flavor.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Jimi Sullivan, a former Triple 7 and Ellis





Beer and pizza are made on the premises at brew pubs like the Triple 7 at Main Street Station.

Packed on weekends, **Gordon Biersch** is a major **meeting spot**, so expect delays getting to the bar.

Island brew-making assistant who has appeared in two swimsuit editions of *Celebrator Beer News*.

**Awards:** Best Karaoke by the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* online readers' poll.

**Menu Highlights:** BBQ chicken and ribs come on huge platters for less than \$10.

**Interesting Nuances:** Definitely the cheapest beer in town at only \$1 a pint 24/7. An expansion will add a beer garden. Ellis Island is located on Koval Lane behind Bally's.

### Gordon Biersch

3987 Paradise Rd., Las Vegas, 702-312-5247 [www.gordonbiersch.com/restaurants](http://www.gordonbiersch.com/restaurants). Established 1997

**Entertainment:** Live jazz from noon to 3 p.m. on Sundays.

**Best Beers:** Bavarian Hefeweizen is one of the best, full of banana and clove flavors. Marzen is a red, malty, smooth lager.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Richard Lovelady, who left the world of finance to do something he loves.

**Awards:** Best Microbrewery in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* readers' poll seven years running.

**Menu Highlights:** Asian, European, and American specialties, Oriental chicken stir-fry, garlic fries.

**Interesting Nuances:** GB is the only brew pub in Las Vegas with no gaming. The spacious outdoor dining area is one of the nicest places to dine al fresco in Vegas. Packed on weekends, GB is a major meeting spot, so expect delays getting to the bar. It's located on Restaurant Row on Paradise near Flamingo.

### Monte Carlo Casino and Brewpub

70 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Las Vegas, 702-730-7438, [www.monte-carlo.com/dining/pub](http://www.monte-carlo.com/dining/pub). Established 1996.

**Entertainment:** After 9 p.m. the pub becomes a nightclub with a DJ and bands until 2 a.m. (minimum age 21); cover charge is \$10 for men Fri.-Sat.

**Best Beers:** Jackpot Pale is a hoppy, fruity pale ale. Silver State Stout is an Irish-style stout, rich and dry.

### The Guy Who Makes the Brew:

Anthony Gibson, a former assistant at Tenaya Creek.

**Awards:** Best Brew Pub awards from readers of *Nevada Magazine* and *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

**Menu Highlights:** BBQ-chicken pizza, Yakima apple and smoked-chicken salad, BBQ ribs.

**Interesting Nuances:** Monte Carlo is the only brew pub on the Strip and the only Vegas brewery with a bottling line (bottled brews are available only at the Monte Carlo).

### Tenaya Creek Brewery and Restaurant

3101 N. Tenaya Way, Las Vegas, 702-362-7335, [www.tenayacreekbrewery.com](http://www.tenayacreekbrewery.com). Established 1999.

**Entertainment:** Buy a beer and play free on one of the two pool tables. Bright Tank guitar duo plays Saturday evenings.

**Best Beers:** Ringtail IPA is not strong enough to be a traditional IPA, but it's a great American pale. Winter Solstice Barley Wine, intensely sweet and malty, is available seasonally.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Tim Etter, owner-brewmaster who previously brewed at Uinta Brewery near Salt Lake City.

**Awards:** 1 GABF.

**Menu Highlights:** Brewmaster's Top Sirloin served with mushroom sauce, Vodka Salmon, Prawns Pasta.

**Interesting Nuances:** Tenaya is Vegas' only family-owned brew pub. Brewmaster Tim Etter is part owner. The large windows make you feel as if you're not in a bar. Tenaya has the longest happy hour of any brew pub in town—3 to 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily. It's located near U.S. 95 and Cheyenne Ave. on Tenaya Way across the street from Mountain View Hospital.

### Triple 7 Brewpub at Main Street Station

200 N. Main St., Las Vegas, 702-387-1896, 800-713-8933, [www.mainstreetcasino.com](http://www.mainstreetcasino.com). Established 1996.

**Entertainment:** None.

**Best Beers:** Award-winning Black Cherry Stout, available seasonally, has a wonderful blend of cherry and roasted flavors. Royal Red Lager, a WBC medal winner, has a toasted malt flavor balanced with moderate hop flavor.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Matt Marino, who once brewed at Uinta in Salt Lake City.



**Awards:** 3 GABF, 1 WBC.

**Menu Highlights:** Sushi bar, pizzas, garlic fries.

**Interesting Nuances:** Triple 7 the only brew pub in downtown Las Vegas, has a sizeable piece of the Berlin Wall built into the urinals of the men's room—it was named No. 2 for historic restrooms by the Travel Channel. The property is full of antiques, including the pub's serving bars.

## Laughlin

### Boiler Room at the Colorado Belle

2100 S. Casino Dr., Laughlin, 702-298-4000, [www.coloradobelle.com](http://www.coloradobelle.com).

Established 1997

**Entertainment:** None.

**Best Beers:** Stout is a dark brew that is nitrogenated, producing a creamy head similar to Guinness Stout. Golden Ale is a light-bodied brew ideal for craft-beer newbies. New brews are planned.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:**

Marshall Redmond, who recently took the helm of the nautically themed brew pub inside the Colorado River resort.

**Awards:** 2 GABF.

**Menu Highlights:** Sweet 16 deal is a



Brewmaster Darren Whitcher (left) and chef Mark Granucci oversee Reno's Brew Brothers.

16-ounce T-bone and a 16-ounce beer for \$9.95. Pizzas are made in a wood-fired oven; the dough is house-made.

**Interesting Nuances:** On Thirsty Thursdays pints are 75 cents all day, making this the best brewed-beer bargain in the state. Sports are shown nonstop on 23 TVs throughout the pub. The décor is out of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

## Reno-Sparks

### Brew Brothers

Eldorado Hotel, downtown Reno, 775-786-5700, [www.eldoradoreno.com](http://www.eldoradoreno.com). Established 1995.

**Entertainment:** Bands play from 9:30 to 1 nightly except Sunday, when a radio DJ spins tunes.

**Best Beers:** Big Dog Ale is full-bodied (and high-alcohol). Lucky Lady Lager is a domestic-style brew with fewer calories.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:**

Darren Whitcher, who helped set up the Brew Brothers brewing operation.

**Awards:** WBC, *Reno Gazette-Journal* reader awards, Best Brew Pub in America by *Nightclub and Bar* magazine.

**Menu Highlights:** Teriyaki sirloin steak dinner, Tuscan chicken salad with pasta, chili cheese fries.

**Interesting nuances:** Brew Brothers is located on the Eldorado Hotel's second floor near the mezzanine connecting the Eldorado, Silver Legacy, and Circus Circus. Cover bands keep the place hopping nearly every night. There's a cigar stand at the entrance that sells 75 brands. Aficionados can buy a \$12 Cubita or \$25 Monte Cristo to puff at the bar. Smoking is allowed after 5 p.m.

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**Other Location:** There's a Brew Brothers Express in the food court of Reno-Tahoe International Airport.

## Great Basin Brewery

846 Victorian Ave., Sparks, 775-355-7711, [www.greatbasinbrewingco.com](http://www.greatbasinbrewingco.com).  
Established 1993.

**Entertainment:** Open-mike comedy on Thursday, bands on Friday and Saturday. In summer bands usually play outside during the Sparks Hometowne Farmer's Market on Thursday evening. In fall the local Cleveland Browns booster club meets at Great Basin.

**Best Beers:** Named for Nevada's state fossil, Ichthyosaur India Pale Ale has a strong, pleasantly hoppy flavor. Cerveza Chilibeso, a seasonal and a three-time GABF-winning pilsner, has a kiss (beso) of jalapeño.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Tom Young, who appeared on *Nevada Magazine's* March/April '97 cover with his founding partner, Eric McClary, sampling brews.

**Awards:** 7 GABF, 3 WBC, *Reno Gazette-Journal* and *Reno News and Review* awards.

**Menu Highlights:** Fish and chips, Wisconsin-style beer cheese soup, and garlic fries.

**Interesting Nuances:** Located on Victorian Square two blocks east of John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks, Great Basin is a hot spot during the Thursday-night farmer's market in summer. "The Worst



Brew fans dine al fresco at Great Basin Brewery on Victorian Square in Sparks.

Seat in the House" is a table near the busy entrance where diners earn a free beer with entrée.

## Silver Peak Restaurant and Brewery

124 Wonder St., Reno, one mile south of downtown, 775-324-1864, [www.silver](http://www.silver)

[peakbrewery.com](http://peakbrewery.com). Established 1999.

**Entertainment:** Mellow acoustical groups play Tuesday night (bands play outside on the deck in summer).

**Best Beers:** XXX Blonde Ale is a golden ale popular with macrobrew fans. Red Roadster is a beer with a rich flavor created by crystal and Vienna malts.

## Hops and Lemons



To paraphrase Will Rogers, I've never met a beer I didn't like. I also like brew pubs and the major new taste experiences that can be found in those establishments.

**Brew Pub Defined:** A brew pub is a small brewery that produces and sells craft beer on the same site. The craft beer is all barley with possibly wheat, rye, copious amounts of hops, fruit, herbs, or spices.

**Ales and Lagers:** For a beer lover, a brew pub offers several attractions. Microbrewery beer is not only extremely fresh (having been brewed within days) but also made with all malt (barley or wheat), which produces a full-bodied, rich-tasting brew.

This contrasts with mass-produced domestic beers that add 30 to 40 percent rice and corn, resulting in a light-bodied brew with a thin flavor profile. I call these macro brews "lawn-mower beers" because they taste best super-cold.

Beer can be divided into two categories, ales and lagers. Ales tend to be fruity, citrusy, and rich flavored and more bitter because of liberal additions of hops. Common styles are pale ales, stouts, and red ales. Lagers—pilsners, bocks, or dunkles (a dark lager)—are crisper and smoother.

**Lemon or Not?** A popular brew is hefeweizen, a wheat ale with two variations, Bavarian and American. The American hefe-

weizen has a slightly sour but simple taste. The Bavarian uses a particular strain of ale yeast that imparts a complex banana and clove flavor even though there are no fruits or spices in the beer.

Bartenders seem compelled to squeeze a lemon into your hefe whether you ask for it or not. The majority of brewmasters I know find this offensive because the lemon distorts the beer's true flavor. So consider requesting the lemon be served on the side and sip without it first. Thanks to the diligence of their brewmasters, you will not be served a lemon at

Barley's or Gordon Biersch unless you request it.

**Beer Samplers:** When facing the beer menu at a brew pub, you may be dazed by so many elaborately described choices. The "dark, velvety stout with outstanding crispness" sounds good, but so does the "assertive, unfiltered flavor of our finest pale ale."

I recommend ordering the the sampler, a group of four to six small glasses of the brew pub's available beers. It's fun to conduct your group's own taste test and observe how certain flavors awaken your taste buds.—*Bob Barnes*





### The Guy Who Makes the Brew:

Mike Cronin is the brewmaster.

**Menu Highlights:** Lambburger, tomato and roasted garlic bisque, dinner entrées like double-cut pork chop and Atlantic salmon. Silver Peak's pizza dough is made with grains from the brewery.

**Interesting Nuances:** The outdoor deck offers a sunny spot in summer. Inside, the dining room is the quietest eating spot in Reno's brew pubs.

**Other Location:** Silver Peak Grill and Taproom, 135 N. Sierra St., Reno, 775-284-3300. The year-old restaurant is located downtown near the Truckee River and Riverside movie theater.

## Lake Tahoe

### Lake Tahoe Brewing Company

24 Stateline Rd., Crystal Bay, 775-831-5822. Established 1999.

**Entertainment:** Bands play Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday in the pub (on the patio during summer).

**Best Beers:** Crystal Bay Red Ale has a mahogany color with a clean finish. Meeks Bay Blonde, a Kolsh (German-style) brew, is light and crisp.

**The Guy Who Makes the Brew:** Everett Charles, a co-owner.

**Awards:** 1 GAFB, 4 WBC, 3 California State Fair Commercial Competition.

**Menu Highlights:** Jambalaya, wiener schnitzel, half-pound American Kobe-beef hamburger.

**Interesting Nuances:** The north-shore restaurant and pub are nonsmoking. Happy-hour customers wear drinking hats on Tuesday. Co-owners Rob Curtis and Everett Charles hold special events like a Halloween pumpkin-smashing contest, a crawdad festival, and an octopus-toss competition.

## Also Worth Noting

**Ruby Mountain Brewing Company:** Owners Steve and Maggie Safford make award-winning beer at the brewery on their Northeastern Nevada ranch. Located 10 miles south of Wells, the state's only packaging and distributing microbrewery sends Angel Creek Amber Ale, Wild West Hefeweizen, and other brews in bottles and kegs to supermarkets and taverns around the state. The Saffords will hold three concerts this year. Call ahead for a tour of the brewery and gift shop. Write HC 60, Box 100,

Clover Valley, NV 89835; 775-752-BEER, visit [www.rubymountainbrewing.com](http://www.rubymountainbrewing.com).

Although the beer is not brewed locally, two Vegas brewhouses primarily serve beer made at their breweries.

**Hofbräuhaus Las Vegas:** This reproduction of the original Munich Hofbräuhaus has a biergarten, oompah bands, and traditional Bavarian brews from Germany, including its own Hofbräu beer. Located at 4510 Paradise Rd. across from the Hard Rock; 702-256-5500, [www.hofbrauhauslasvegas.com](http://www.hofbrauhauslasvegas.com).

**BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse:** Like the Hofbräuhaus, BJ's serves its

own brews. The chain offers seven standard beers, from a hoppy pale ale to a robust high-alcohol imperial stout. There also are three guest taps and 15 Belgian ales guaranteed to keep any beer geek happy. Located at 10840 W. Charleston Blvd., east of I-215; 702-853-2300, [www.bjsbrewhouse.com](http://www.bjsbrewhouse.com).

*Bob Barnes is a native Las Vegas who frequently evaluates beer and brew pubs as a regional correspondent for the Celebrator Beer News. Nevada Magazine staff writer Wilma LaRocca and editor David Moore contributed to the brew-pub guide.*

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# Nevada Almanac

Wild horses, **Nevada Trivia**, and a new contest.

## WILD HORSE SENSE

A street-smart mustang charms a Canadian visitor

By Eleanor Sabean

During a visit to Reno from my home in Nova Scotia, my friend Uli drove me to Virginia City. I was most impressed with the town, which seemed to be straight out of the old Western movies that I had grown up watching. The only difference that I could see were the cars lining the main street instead of the Cartwrights' horses tied up at the hitching posts.

I was busy gazing out the window at sagebrush, miles and miles of it, as we returned to Reno on State Route 341. As we rounded a turn, I shrieked, "Look over there!" Standing perfectly still in front of a driveway was a little liver-chestnut horse.

Uli pulled the car to the side of the road directly in front of the horse. Seeing that there was no fence around him and noticing that he was not moving a muscle, I stepped out of the car for a closer look.



Wild horses graze in the Virginia Highlands north of Virginia City. The Comstock herds descend from animals turned loose in the ranching and mining era of the late 19th century.

The horse stood stock still. Laughing, I said to Uli, "Look. It's a statue. It is the best fake horse I've ever seen." As a professional horsewoman, I have raised, trained, and shown horses for many years, and I would like to think that I know a real horse when I see one.

Uli tooted the car horn. "Aha," said Uli. "It has a sound-activated sensor. Did you see the ears move?" Uli, who is an engineer, wanted to make sure I understood the concept. "Watch," he said as he tooted the horn once again. Sure enough, only the ears moved.

I was thoroughly impressed with this mechanical marvel. I decided I had to have a picture of it to show my horse friends. Uli grabbed the camera, and I began walking toward the horse. When I got within 50 feet, the "fake" horse turned his head, looked at me, and slowly walked off.

"I've heard that there are wild horses in Nevada, but this is the first time I've seen one since I've been here," said Uli.

"Wild horses!" I breathed.

As we edged the car away, we turned back to watch the horse happily trotting down the middle of the road. Hearing a car approaching, he stepped off the road and waited for the car to pass. Resuming his travels he stepped back onto the road and continued on until he heard another vehicle. He once again stepped to the side to let the traffic pass.

This little wild horse had more road sense than any of the well trained horses I'd ever known. ▀

*Eleanor Sabean lives in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. A freelance writer, she contributes to several Canadian newspapers and Atlantic Horse and Pony Magazine.*

## Nevada Trivia

**Q** What community was originally to be called Casino, Nevada, but the name was denied by the U.S. Postal Service?

**A** Laughlin, Nevada, was proposed to be called "Casino" by Don Laughlin, the town's founder and owner of the Riverside Resort in Laughlin. Postal authorities suggested using his name instead.

**Q** How much beer was sold to the 20,000 residents of the booming mining town of Virginia City in 1880?

**A** A staggering 225,000 gallons of beer were sold during that year—or about 15 gallons per person.

—from *The Nevada Trivia Book* by Richard Moreno

## A New Nevada Magazine Contest

**A**lmost every traveler returns home with an amusing story to tell. Sometimes it's about a funny thing that happened—or an oddball character or unusual place.

In our new **Nevada Magazine Funny Stories Contest**, we ask readers to submit their favorite

amusing Nevada anecdotes of 150 words or less. Entries will be judged on a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the funniest. E-mail your entries to [jhollister@nevadamagazine.com](mailto:jhollister@nevadamagazine.com) or mail to Joyce Hollister, Nevada Magazine, 401 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701 by March 15.



# NEVADA *Events & Shows*

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# From *Sir* With *Love*

**Sir Elton John** stars in a visual showcase at Caesars Palace. **By Mike Weatherford**

**T**he words "Elton" and "Vegas" conjure a mental picture of ostrich feathers, platform boots, and diamond-studded eyeglasses—the campy, vampy Elton John of the late '70s. So when the singer announced last summer that he would perform a special show, "The Red Piano," at Caesars Palace during Celine Dion's vacation breaks, it was easy to wonder: Which Elton would be sitting at the red grand piano?

Perhaps we'd see the flamboyant and outspoken showman who keeps himself in the news, whether he's advocating gay marriage or needling Madonna for lip-syncing her concerts.

Or we might find the other Elton, the man knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1998 and owner of the voice that takes us back 20 or 30 years, reminding us how good his songs really were and continue to be. After all, his last two albums, "Songs From the West Coast" and "Peachtree Road," are throwbacks to his '70s heyday. Piano and string arrangements push aside synthesized dance beats, befitting a singer who long ago lost his falsetto and today relies on a deeper resonance.

Leave it to photographer and director David LaChapelle to fuse both aspects of the singer's legacy into a dazzling showcase in the 4,100-seat Colosseum Showroom. Since Sir Elton, 57 no longer kicks over the piano stool or runs amuck in his concerts, LaChapelle compensates with visual energy, presenting a parade of images on the giant high-definition LED screen built for Celine Dion.

At the start, showgoers have time to check out Elton's new stage appearance—basic dark suit with red shirt and cravat, which he calls his "Vampire Lestate look"—before neon motel and dirty-bookstore signs begin flashing on the LED screen to the percolating thump that becomes "Bennie and the Jets."

The screen explodes into Peter Max colors for the second song, "Philadelphia Free-



Elton John plays his classics during "The Red Piano" at Caesars Palace.

It was easy to wonder: Which Elton would be sitting at the red piano?





Photographs of Marilyn Monroe form a backdrop for "Candle in the Wind."

dom," mixing photos of the early Elton with a barrage of film and photos celebrating the disco era.

The somewhat mysterious "Daniel" is clarified by the on-screen show. For years "Daniel" remained cryptic, Elton tells the crowd, because he cut the third verse. The video eliminates any guesswork, focusing on a supine young man as he transforms from sun-baked surfer to the subject of a military funeral.

As Elton sings "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me," a couple on the screen dance in and out of the frame in a ballet of violent domestic passion. That same voyeurism strips celebrity of its glamour for grainy black-and-white views of Marilyn Monroe during "Candle in the Wind" and the backstage maelstrom surrounding a shell-shocked Elton (played by Justin Timberlake of 'N Sync) at the apex of his career in "Rocket Man."

But as soon as we ponder the downside of sleaze and celebrity, we celebrate them again as Elton launches into a high-tech arrangement of "Pinball Wizard." Speeded-up film of the Strip races in and out of casinos to capture seedy-looking gamblers and strippers in a way that makes you want to join in.

Speaking of strippers, Pamela Anderson cavorts on a stripper's pole for the video of "The Bitch Is Back," augmented by real bubbles.

If all this suggests that Elton may have become the human soundtrack to an epic TV show, the notion isn't far off. The show is skimpy on live-camera close-ups of the singer or his band. Also, the production could use a song or two that calm the visuals and allow Elton to dominate the



Catherine Zeta-Jones, Michael Douglas, and Barbara Walters visit Elton backstage at Caesars.

stage as he used to do. But for his first year at Caesars, at least, Elton has stuck fast to a 90-minute, 15-song format. He reaches out to the audience with between-song banter and during the finale, "Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting," when a few lucky patrons get to come onstage to dance amid giant inflatable hot dogs and ice-cream cones.

By the end, the giant letters "L-O-V-E" make explicit the show's larger themes of love and passion, further signified by the piano's red color.

The music speaks for itself, whether it's as new as "Answer in the Sky" from "Peachtree Road" or as classic as the encore, Elton's 1970 breakthrough hit, "Your Song." It's everyone's song now, and the shared ownership extends to nearly every

The letters "L-O-V-E" make explicit the show's larger themes of love and passion, further signified by the piano's red color.

song in the show. If Elton feels he can take a detached seat at the piano to celebrate these classics, rather than working in overdrive to sell them as he did in the old days, that is the reason he can.

## Show Notes

"The Red Piano" starring Elton John plays in the Colosseum Showroom at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas on March 29-30 and April 1-3, 5-6, and 8-10. Show time is 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$110, \$192.50, and \$275, including tax. Drinks are extra. Call 888-4-ELTON-J to order tickets. For show packages call 800-634-6001. For group rates call 702-731-7208. ♣

Mike Weatherford is an entertainment columnist for the Las Vegas Review-Journal.



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# Las Vegas

AREA EVENTS AND SHOWS

As Las Vegas continues its centennial celebration, the **NASCAR** flag drops at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, and **Rod Stewart** performs at MGM Grand. *Nevada Magazine* presents the following events scheduled in Southern Nevada during the city's centennial year. Call ahead to confirm dates and details of events or visit [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org) for centennial information.

## Events

**Yabba Dabba Video Poker Tournament** • Feb. 27-March 2 • \$249 entry. Flamingo Las Vegas, 800-225-4882.

**"Taming of the Shrew"** • March 1 • Performance by Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespearean Festival. Virgin Valley High School, Mesquite, 702-346-5295.

**"Love's Labor's Lost"** • March 2-6 • Shakespeare's tale of four boys who decide to improve themselves by living a monastic lifestyle. Black Box Theatre, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**Spy Kids 3-D Game Over** • March 3 • Winter film series. East Las Vegas Community Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-1515.

**"The Rope"** • March 3-6 • Eugene O'Neill's play about a dysfunctional family. Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, 702-652-5483.

**Kawasaki Team Green Laughlin U.S. Hare Scrambles** • March 4-6 • Best in the Desert off-road motorcycle race. State Route 163, 10 miles west of Laughlin, [www.bitd.lasvegas.net](http://www.bitd.lasvegas.net).

**Jeremy Camp** • March 5 • Mercy Me opens the concert. Thomas and Mack Center, Las Vegas, 702-739-FANS.

**Vienna Boys Choir** • March 5 • Choir covers five centuries of music. Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**Dam Dance** • March 5 • Annual square and round dance. Boulder City Gym, Boulder City, 702-293-1359.

**Lox, Eggs, and Onions** • March 6 • Humorist Jerry Teamkin performs a one-man show. Summerlin Library, Las Vegas, 702-794-0090.

**Tip Toe Through the Tulips Slot Tournament** • March 6-9 • \$249 entry. Flamingo Las Vegas, 800-225-4882.

**Informal Dance Concert** • March 8 • Ballet, modern dance, jazz, tap, ballroom, yoga, and Middle-Eastern presentations. Nicholas Horn Theatre, Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, 702-651-4201.

**"Voice on the Western Wind"** • March 9-13 • A farmer makes a deal with a stranger and gives up control of his life. Paul Harris Theatre, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**World of Outlaws** • March 10-11 • Winged sprint cars race on



Violinist Chee Yun performs with the Las Vegas Philharmonic on April 9 at UNLV.

the dirt track. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, call 800-644-4444 for further event information.

**NASCAR Bud Pole Day** • March 11 • Qualifying and practice. Super Speedway, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, 800-644-4444.

**NASCAR Race Jam** • March 11-13 • Entertainment held in conjunction with NASCAR Weekend at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Fremont Street Experience, Las Vegas, visit [www.vegasexperience.com](http://www.vegasexperience.com).

**Southern Highlands Collegiate Golf Championship** • March 11-13 • Fifteen teams play, including eight of the top 10 ranked schools. Southern Highlands Golf Club, Las Vegas, 702-242-3003.

**Sam's Town 300** • March 12 • NASCAR Busch Series race. Super Speedway, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, 800-

644-4444 for additional information on NASCAR Weekend.

**Curtis Stigers** • March 12 • Jazz singer-saxophonist performance. Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6211.

**Fiesta Flamenca** • March 12-13 • Spanish dance troupe. Nicholas Horn Theatre, Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, 702-651-4201.

**World Series of Poker** • March 12-22 • Rio, Las Vegas, 877-367-9767.

**Community Roots: The History of West Las Vegas** • March 12 and 19 • Workshop on African-American pioneers in West Las Vegas and Nevada history conducted by Ray Willis. West Las Vegas Arts Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-4800.

**Rudy and Edie Aikels Quintet** • March 13 • Bass and vocal jazz concert. Winchester Cultural Center, Las Vegas, 702-313-6778 for event information.





**Pitcher Edwin Jackson takes aim on the season opener for the Las Vegas 51s of the Pacific Coast League.**

**Las Vegas Wind Quintet** • March 13 • Chamber music. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

**UAW-Daimler Chrysler 400** • March 13 • NASCAR Nextel Cup series race. For the first time, three-day pit passes are available on a first-come basis. Super Speedway, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, 800-644-4444.

**Nevada Chamber Symphony** • March 13 • Clark County Library, Las Vegas, 702-433-9280.

**Sandstone Canyon Hike** • March 13 and 19 • Three-hour, three-mile, moderate-to-strenuous hike. Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, 15 miles west of Las Vegas, 702-875-4141.

**Blarney Stone Bucks Slot Tournament** • March 14-16 • Flamingo Laughlin, 800-435-8469.

**Khac Chi** • March 15 • Ensemble uses instruments that represent 2,000 years of cultural history. Mesquite Campus Theatre, Mesquite, 702-346-5295.

**St. Patrick's Day Dance** • March 17 • Featuring Carl Grove Combo. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

**Teadas** • March 17 • St. Patrick's Day concert. Valley View Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-267-4849.

**Dance Concert** • March 18 • Little Theatre, Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, 702-651-4201.

**Friday Cruise Night** • March 18 • Sunrise Ranch Bar and Grill, North Las Vegas, 702-643-0000.

**Al Ek and the Shuffle-Aires** • March 18 • Downtown Cultural Series noon concert. Lloyd D. George U.S. Courthouse, Las Vegas, 702-229-1087.

**Bright Light City** • March 18-May 15 • Seven artists show their interpretation of Las Vegas. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

**Juan L. Sanchez Ensemble** • March 19 • Spanish, Latin, and Middle-Eastern music. East Las Vegas Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-1515 for event information.

**Monster Jam World Finals** • March 19 • Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas, 702-739-FANS.

**Prague Symphony Orchestra** • March 19 • Concert includes Beethoven's Symphony No. 6. Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**"The Magic School Bus"** • March 19 • Play for children. Henderson Pavilion, Henderson, 702-267-4849.

**Field Cookery and the Army Diet, 1840-1865** • March 19 • Living-history demonstration and lecture. Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park, Las Vegas, 702-486-3511.

**Piano Concerto Competition** • March 19 • Sixth annual event. Recital Hall, Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, 702-651-4201.

**Spring Festival** • March 20 • Family picnic features food, entertainment, contests, and music. Freedom Park, Las Vegas, 702-383-8395.

**Henderson Civic Symphony** • March 20 • Young artist concert. Valley View Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-267-4849.

**Savion Glover: Improvography** • March 21 • Tony Award-winning choreographer. Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**International Food and Folklife Festival** • March 23 • Annual cultural-diversity celebration features entertainment and food. Clark County

Government Center, Las Vegas. [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org).

**Dutch Oven Cooking** • March 26 • Children's program, Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park, Las Vegas, 702-486-3511.

**Erik Aliana and the Korongo Jam** • March 26 • The music of Cameroon. Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6211.

**Old Time Barn Dance** • March 26 • Square, mixers, contras, waltzes, and polkas. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

**Easter Sunday Breakfast Cruise** • March 27 • Trip on Lake Mead aboard the *Desert Princess* paddlewheel. Hemenway Harbor, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, 702-293-6180.

**Masquerade of Cash Slot Tournament** • March 27-29 • First place \$50,000. Imperial Palace, Las Vegas, 800-634-6441, ext. 2.

**Laughlin River Stampede PRCA Rodeo** • March 30-April 3 • More than 700 athletes compete for \$225,000 in prize money. Events Center, Laughlin, 702-298-2214.

**Big League Weekend** • April 1-2 • The Seattle Mariners play the Chicago Cubs in the home stadium of the Triple-A Las Vegas 51s. Cashman Field, Las Vegas, 702-386-7200.

**"Wit"** • April 1-3, 6-10, 13-17 • An English professor has a rational approach when dealing with terminal illness. Black Box Theatre, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**Drum Fest** • April 2 • Fourth annual percussion festival. Henderson Pavilion, Henderson, 702-267-4849.

**Sandstone Canyon Hike** • April 2,

20, 16-17 • Three-hour, three-mile, moderate-to-strenuous hike. Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, 15 miles west of Las Vegas, 702-875-4141.

**"The Frog Prince"** • April 2, 4, 9 • Missoula Children's Theatre. Valley View Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-267-4849.

**Jazz Singers Concert** • April 5 • From jazz standards to Broadway. Nicholas Horn Theatre, Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, 702-651-4201.

**Ultimate Challenge Blackjack Tournament** • April 8-10 • First place \$20,000. Imperial Palace, Las Vegas, 800-634-6441, ext. 2.

**"(W)Rites of Passage"** • April 8-10, 14-17 • Local students present observations and experiences in words, movement, and drama. Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6553.

**"Songs from Mama's Table"** • April 9 • A cappella choirs. Henderson Pavilion, Henderson, 702-267-4849.

**"A World of Harmony"** • April 9 • Violinist Chee Yun appears with the Las Vegas Philharmonic. Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**Teddy Bear Tea and Fashion Show** • April 10 • Benefit for the Lied Discovery Children's Museum, tickets \$75. J.W. Marriott, Las Vegas, 702-382-3445.

**LPGA Takefujii Classic** • April 11-16 • Top women golfers compete in the LPGA Tour event. Las Vegas Country Club, Las Vegas, 702-898-4653.

**NHRA SummitRacing.com Nationals** • April 14-17 • Drag racing. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, 800-644-4444.

**"Days of Wine and Roses"** • April 14-17, 21-24 • Drama about



**Rod Stewart headlines April 2 at the MGM Grand's arena.**



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Fiesta Flamenca appears March 12-13 at the Community College of Southern Nevada.

a couple coping with alcohol addiction. Little Theatre, Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, 702-651-4201.

**Friday Night Cruise** • April 15 • Fairway Chevrolet, Las Vegas, 702-643-0000.

**Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company** • April 15 • Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**Kids Day** • April 16 • Lessons and crafts about Native Americans, kindergarten through fifth grade. Must pre-register. Lost City Museum, Overton, 702-397-2193.

**Leland Faulkner** • April 16 • Performance for children includes storytelling, pantomime, and shadow-play. Valley View Recreation Center, Henderson, 702-267-4849.

**The Life of a Soldier During the Late War, 1861-1865** • April 16 • Living-history lecture by costumed soldiers. Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park, Las Vegas, 702-486-3511.

**Riviera's 50th Anniversary Party** • April 17-24 • Celebrities, tournaments, and special events commemorate the Strip resort's opening in April 1955. Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, 702-734-5110.

**"The Graduate"** • April 19-24 • Las Vegas Broadway series. Cashman Theatre, Las Vegas, 702-798-5090.

**Budweiser World Cup Finals** • April 20-24 • Dressage and jumping event. Thomas and Mack Center, Las Vegas, 702-739-FANS.

**Laughlin River Run** • April 20-24 • More than 60,000 Harley-Davidson fans gather for a bike rally that includes concerts, poker run, competitions, and vendor booths. Laughlin, 800-357-8223.

**Ten Minute Play Festival** • April 20-24 • UNLV playwrights. Paul Harris Theatre, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**Golden Bough Trio** • April 21 • Celtic folk music. Mesquite Campus Theatre, Mesquite, 702-346-5295.

**Digging History** • April 23 • Archeological program for children. Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park, Las

Vegas, 702-486-3511 for information on park programs.

**Claire Bloom: Shakespeare's Women** • April 23 • British actress Claire Bloom performs the writer's greatest women characters to mark the Bard's 440th birthday. Artemus Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**Earth Day Weekend** • April 23-24 • Demonstrations and a guided nature hike through the Ash Grove Trail on April 24. Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, 15 miles west of Las Vegas, 702-875-4141.

**Third Annual CCSN Jazz Week** • April 25-29 • Big bands April 25, combo night April 26, vocal jazz April 27, jazz invitational April 28, arranger's holiday April 29. Nicholas Horn

Theatre, Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, 702-651-4201.

**Peanut Pals Swap Meet** • April 27 • Collectors of Planters and Mr. Peanut memorabilia gather. Railhead, Boulder Station, Las Vegas, 602-703-7874.

**Mesquite Days** • April 28-May 1 • Carnival, vendor booths, parade, fireworks, and entertainment. Old Mill Park, Mesquite, 702-346-8732, ext. 0.

**Tournament of Seats Poker Tournament** • April 29-May 1 • Qualifying rounds for World Series of Poker. Harrah's Laughlin, 702-298-4600.

**"You Can't Take It With You"** • April 29-May 1, 5-8 • Broadway comedy. Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-ARTS.

**Mozaik** • April 30 • Celtic and Eastern European music. Henderson Pavilion, Henderson, 702-267-4849.

## Centennial and Coming Events

**Antique Air Show Parade** • May 7 • More than 100 airplanes fly over the Las Vegas Strip. Event features a fly-in of an antique Jenny aircraft to commemorate the first commercial flight into Las Vegas. Air show is part of the celebration of the Las Vegas Centennial. North Las Vegas Airport, North Las Vegas, [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org).

**Cinco de Mayo Festival** • May 8 • Family picnic features food, music, contests, and entertainment. Freedom Park, Las Vegas, 702-383-8395.



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Dale Earnhardt Jr. makes a pit stop during Las Vegas' NASCAR Weekend. Races on March 10-13 include World of Outlaws, the Sam's Town 300, and the UAW-Daimler Chrysler 400.

**Helldorado Days Western Village** • May 10-15 • Livery stable, general store, entertainment, food vendors, whiskerino contest, and kangaroo court. Main Street Station parking lot, Las Vegas, 702-281-0687.

**Las Vegas' 100th Birthday Celebration** • May 14 • Three Helldorado parades downtown including Kiddies, Old Timers, and Hotel and Casino parades. Fourth and Fremont streets, Las Vegas, [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org).

**Happy Birthday, Las Vegas** • May 15 • Re-creation of the 1905 land auction takes place at Main Street Station. The world's largest birthday cake weighing more than 130,000 pounds, and a street party at the Fremont Street Experience. Downtown, Las Vegas, [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org).

**Nevada Passage** • May 19-24 • Made-for-television adventure race takes place in statewide rural and urban areas. Rock Climbing and Scramble takes place May 19, Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Las Vegas. Personal Watercraft Time Trials take place May 20, Lake Mead, Boulder City. [www.travelnevada.com](http://www.travelnevada.com).

**"Tapestry"** • May 27 • The Nevada Youth Alliance begins more than 40 performances of an original centennial musical. Nicholas Horn Theatre, Community College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas, plus additional locations, 702-393-6163.

**36th Annual World Series of Poker** • June 2-July 15 • Play will be held at the Rio June 2-July 13 and conclude at Binion's Horseshoe July 14-15. Rio and Binion's Horseshoe, Las Vegas, 877-367-9767.

**Once Upon 100 Weddings** • June 9 • 100 couples will be wed on the Fremont Street Experience mall to celebrate Las Vegas' centennial. Downtown, Las Vegas. For more information visit [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org).

**CineVegas 2005** • June 10-18 • Film festival features actors and films that have a Las Vegas theme and will explore the city's impact on the movie industry in the last 100 years. Also, a national contest is under way to choose the "Five Favorite Vegas Movies of All Time." Brenden Theatres, Palms Casino, Las Vegas, 702-229-6712.

**Interfaith Choir** • June 15-16 • Centennial event. Cashman Theatre, Las Vegas, [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org).

**The Mormon Celebration** • June 15-18 • 150th anniversary of the founding of the Old Mormon Fort features a rededication ceremony, concerts, fireworks, and a 200-person out-

door pageant on the "Trail of Hope" and the establishment of the Mormon foothold in Las Vegas. Location TBA, [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org).

**Centennial Birthday Bash: Las Vegas Style** • July 2 • Fourth of July party with headliners. Entertainers and location TBA, [www.lasvegas2005.org](http://www.lasvegas2005.org).

**The McMillin Nevada 1,000** • July 6-10 • A 1,000-mile Best in the Desert off-road race begins July 6 with registration at the Suncoast in Las Vegas. The four-day race in Central Nevada will be staged around Beatty, Goldfield, and Tonopah. Las Vegas, 702-641-2431.

**"Guys and Dolls"** • Aug. 10-13, 17-20, 24-27 • Broadway musical presented under the stars. Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, 15 miles west of Las Vegas, 702-594-PLAY.

**San Gennaro Feast** • Sept. 13-18 • Italian food, music, artists, craftsmen, and carnival. Boca Park, Las Vegas, 702-286-4944.

**Mexican Independence Day Festival** • Sept. 18 • 194th anniversary event features music, food, and entertainment. Freedom Park, Las Vegas, 702-383-8395.



A 1954 Chrysler New Yorker custom built for Howard Hughes is on display at the Auto Collections at Imperial Palace in Las Vegas. An air-filtration system is in the trunk (inset).

**NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series** • Sept. 24 • Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, 800-644-4444.

**Sparks and Las Vegas Black Tie 50/50 Ball** • Oct. TBA • Held in conjunction with the Nevada League of Cities meeting Oct. 11-16. Dinner will celebrate the Sparks and Las Vegas centennial celebrations. Golden Nugget, Las Vegas, 702-229-2005.

**Las Vegas Invitational** • Oct. 12-16 • PGA Tour event. TPC Summerlin, TPC Canyons, and Southern Highlands, Las Vegas, 702-242-3000.

**NHRA ACDelco Las Vegas Nationals** • Oct. 20-23 • Drag racing. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, 702-644-4444.

**Professional Bull Riders** • Nov. 3-6 • Thomas and Mack Center, Las Vegas, 702-739-FANS.

**Aviation Nation Nellis Air Force Base Air Show** • Nov. 10-12 • Air races, demonstrations, static displays. Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas, 702-229-2005.

**National Finals Rodeo** • Dec. 2-11 • Thomas and Mack Center, Las Vegas, 702-739-FANS.

**Las Vegas Showdown** • Dec. 17 • UNLV basketball games. Thomas and Mack Center, Las Vegas, 702-739-FANS.

**Las Vegas Bowl** • Dec. 23 • College football game. Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas, 702-739-FANS.

## Ongoing Events

**Spring Mountain Ranch Walking Tours** • Daily guided 45-minute tour of the historic site's reservoir and Wilson Gravesite and the blacksmith shop and Sandstone Cabin, the second oldest buildings in the Las Vegas Valley. Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, 15 miles west of Las Vegas, 702-875-4141.

**Free Concerts** • Tues.-Sat. at the Fremont Street Experience, Las Vegas, 702-678-5777.

**CasaBlanca Gaming Tournaments** • Keno on Wed. and Sat. Slots on Sun. CasaBlanca, Mesquite, 800-459-PLAY.

**Oasis Gaming Tournaments** • Keno on Mon., Fri., and Sun. Blackjack on Mon. Slots on Thurs. No Limit Hold 'Em on Sun. Pizza and poker on Wed. Early Bird Poker Shootout on Mon.-Fri. Bad Beat Progressive Jackpot poker on Wed. and Sun. Oasis, Mesquite, 800-21-OASIS.

**Virgin River Gaming Tournaments** • Slots on Tues. and Thurs.



Blackjack on Fri. Keno on Tues. and Thurs. Virgin River, Mesquite, 800-346-7721.

**Poker Tournaments** • Daily. Golden Nugget, Las Vegas, 702-385-7111.

**"Cult of Potato"** • Thru March 5 • Mixed-media potato-centric exhibition. Contemporary Arts Collective, Las Vegas, 702-382-3886.

**Valerie Barns** • Thru March 6 • Photography exhibit. Spring Valley Library, Las Vegas, 702-507-3820.

**Moving Pictures: Susanne Forestieri** • Thru March 13 • Oil paintings by Las Vegas figurative artist. Charleston Heights Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-6383.

**Through My Father's Eyes** • Thru March 13 • Smithsonian exhibition features photographs by Filipino-American Ricardo Ocreto Alvarado. Las Vegas Art Museum, Las Vegas, 702-360-8080.

**The Beginning of a Cultural Artistic Legacy** • Thru March 13 • Combined exhibit by the late Albert Fennell and his daughter Simone celebrate African American History Month. Rainbow Library, Las Vegas, 702-507-3710.

**Joseph Palermo: Retrospective** • Thru March 13 • Paintings, drawings, linocuts, and sculptures by the Las Vegas whose careers include boxer, blackjack dealer, soldier, air-traffic controller, mercenary, and doo-wop group manager. Las Vegas Art Museum, Las Vegas, 702-360-8000 for details.

**Austine Wood Camarow** • Thru March 13 • Polarized light collage exhibition. Las Vegas Art Museum, Las Vegas, 702-360-8000 for details.

**Community Roots: The History of West Las Vegas** • Thru March 19 • Weekly workshops focus on pioneers in West Las Vegas



**Leland Faulkner's performance for children includes storytelling, pantomime, shadow-play, and origami making. He performs April 16 at the Valley View Recreation Center in Henderson.**

history. West Las Vegas Arts Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-4800.

**Photography: Las Vegas Now and Then** • Thru March 20 • Marjorie Barrick Museum, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-3381.

**Up Close and Personal: The People of Las Vegas** • Thru March 20 • Paintings by Diane Eugster. West Charleston Library, Las Vegas, 702-507-3940.

**Centennial Exhibition: Collagist Merrilee Hottt** • Thru March 27 • Works created from found material and original images.

Reed Whipple Cultural Center, Las Vegas, 702-229-4674.

**Black Threads** • Thru March 27 • Quilt exhibit by Evelyn Brown celebrates African American History Month. West Las Vegas Library, Las Vegas, 702-507-3980.

**Bettina Larkin** • Thru March 29 • Photography exhibit. Enterprise Library, Las Vegas, 702-507-3760.

**Gene Redden** • Thru April 3 • Jazz-themed paintings celebrate African American History Month. Summerlin Library, Las Vegas, 702-407-3860.

**Nevada Camera Club** • Thru April 5 • Annual show. Sunrise Library, Las Vegas, 702-507-3900.

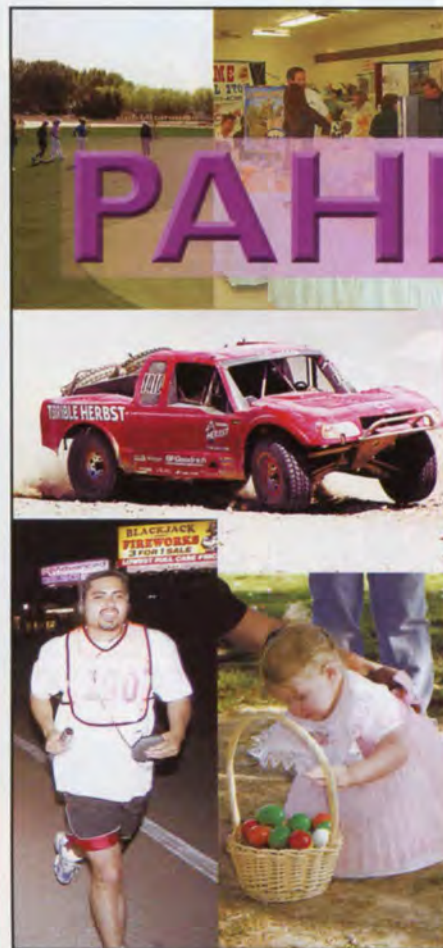
**Explorations in Photography** • Thru April 10 • Exhibit by Robert Elayer. Whitney Library, Las Vegas, 702-507-4010.

**Creative Convictions II** • Thru April 15 • Exhibit celebrates Black History Month. Bridge Gallery, City Hall, Las Vegas, 702-229-4674.

**Plaza World Poker Classic** • April 18-May 17 • Professional players. Plaza, 702-386-2110.

**Anne Guertin** • Thru April 19 • Acrylic paintings focus on the lives of women. Green Valley Library, Henderson, 702-507-3790.

**Las Vegas Aerial Gallery** • Thru April 30 • Works by 10 local artists are featured on a street banner display from Charleston Blvd. to Mesquite Ave. Las Vegas, 702-229-5431.  
**Riviera Celebrity Display and Photo Op** • Thru May 31 • The gold lamé jacket and a car owned by Liberace, the first entertainer to perform at the Riviera on April 20, 1955, will be on display for photo opportunities. The exhibition is part of the Riviera's 50th anniversary party to be held April 17-



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# PAHRUMP

**March 26**  
**Pahrump Valley Chamber Golf Gala**  
Mountain Falls Golf Club



**April 9**  
**Easter Egg Hunt**  
Petrack Park

**April 22-24**  
**BizExpo2005**  
Saddle West Hotel, Casino & RV Resort

**April 23**  
**Baker to Vegas Foot Race**  
Sponsored by the PVCC

**April 30**  
**Terrible's 250 "Best in the Desert"**  
**Off Road Race**  
Sponsored by Terrible's Casino

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APRIL 20  
1955 - 2005



LIBERACE  
1956 ELVIN PRESLEY



LIBERACE  
RIBBON CUTTING



DEAN MARTIN  
1970



LIBERACE'S  
1954 ROLLS ROYCE



LAS VEGAS' FIRST  
HIGH-RISE



FRANK SINATRA  
1991

- ★ FIREWORKS ON APRIL 20 & 22, 2005
- ★ MONTH LONG CASINO PROMOTIONS AND FOOD SPECIALS
- ★ PHOTO DISPLAY OF 50 YEARS OF ENTERTAINMENT EXCELLENCE
- ★ RECREATION OF RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY FROM APRIL 20, 1955
- ★ SEE WALK OF STARS FEATURING LIBERACE AND FRANK MARINO OF LA CAGE
- ★ CAKE & CHAMPAGNE



1963



BARBRA STREISAND



DUKE ELLINGTON  
1970 JACK E. LEONARD



LOUIS ARMSTRONG  
1962 MARILYN DIETRICH



JACK BENNY  
1967 GEORGE BURNS



MIKEY ROONEY  
1955



FIFTY **50** YEARS  
1955 2005

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

IN CONCERT  
*Michael Bolton*  
APRIL 22 & 23, 2005





24. Riviera, Las Vegas, 702-734-5110 for event information.  
**Neon Unplugged: Signs From the Boneyard** • Thru Aug. 2005 • Thirty pieces include historic photos, non-restored neon letters, and signs from historic marquees. Lied Discovery Children's Museum, Las Vegas, 702-382-KIDS.

**Nevada Theatre Company** • Thru Nov. 2005 • Two touring plays: "Three Ways Home: Nevada Becomes a State" and another centennial presentation about the birth of Las Vegas. Call for dates and locations, 702-873-0191.

**Las Vegas Lives! 100 Years of Photographs** • Thru Dec. 2005 • Centennial exhibit. Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas, 702-486-5205.

**Whistle Stop to Windfall: 100 Years in Las Vegas** • Thru Jan. 2, 2006 • Exhibit traces the story of what made Las Vegas unique, its changing face (from tent houses to casinos), residents, and colorful characters. Clark County Museum, Henderson, 702-455-7955.



**Magician Franz Harary and his large-scale illusions appear May 18-22 at the Riverside Resort in Laughlin.**

**Bats!** • Thru Dec. 2006 • Exhibit covers the myths and facts about the winged creatures. Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas, 702-486-5205.

**Helga Blackford** • March 1-31 • Multimedia exhibit by Henderson artist. Lost City Museum, Overton, 702-397-2193.

**UNLV Women's Basketball** • The Lady Rebels play March 3 vs. BYU and March 5 vs. Utah. Cox Pavilion, Las Vegas, 702-739-FANS.

**Las Vegas Wranglers** • The West Coast Hockey League team plays March 15 vs. Bakersfield Condors, March 18 and 29 vs. Fresno Falcons, April 1 vs. Victoria Salmon Kings, April 2 vs. Bakersfield Condors, April 5, 8, 9 vs. Alaska Aces. Orleans Arena, Las Vegas, 702-461-PUCK.

**Las Vegas Centennial Celebration Exhibition** • March 18-May 22 • Art pieces from Las Vegas casinos and resident artists. Las Vegas Art Museum, Las Vegas, 702-360-8080.

**"Just Like Me"** • March 25-April 30 • Exhibition of portraits from children's books. Marjorie Barrick Museum, UNLV, Las Vegas, 702-895-3381.

**April Exhibition** • April 1-30 • Paintings by Joyce Spavin. Lost City Museum, Overton, 702-397-2193.

**Drag Races at the Bullring** • April 9, 14, 23, 30, May 7, 14, 21, 28, June 4, 11, 18, 25, July 3, Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27, Sept. 3, 10, 17, Oct. 1 • Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas, 702-644-4444.

**Las Vegas 51s Baseball** • The Pacific Coast League team plays April 15-18 vs. Colorado Springs Sky Sox, April 19-22 vs. Salt Lake Stingers, May 2-5 vs. Fresno Grizzlies, May 6-9 vs. Sacramento River Cats, May 19-22 vs. Albuquerque Isotopes, May 23-26 vs. Round Rock Express, May 31-June 3 vs. Colorado Springs Sky Sox, June 4-7 vs. Fresno Grizzlies, June 17-20 vs. Tacoma Rainiers, June 21-24 vs. Sacramento River Cats, June 30-July 3 vs. Portland Beavers, July 14-17 vs. Tucson Sidewinders, July 26-29 vs. New Orleans Zephyrs, July 30-Aug. 2 vs. Oklahoma Red Hawks, Aug. 12-15 vs. Tucson Sidewinders, Aug. 20-23 vs. Portland Beavers, Aug. 29-Sept. 1 vs. Tacoma Rainiers, Sept. 2-5 vs. Salt Lake Stingers. Cashman Field, Las Vegas, 702-386-7200.

**The 24-Hour Show: Making a Living in Las Vegas** • June-Jan. 2006 • Multimedia exhibit explores the lives of casino and entertainment workers. Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas, 702-486-5205.

## Shows

### BOULDER CITY

**Hacienda** • 702-293-5000 or 800-245-6380: Between Boulder City and Hoover Dam.

### HENDERSON

**Casino MonteLago at Lake Las Vegas** • 702-564-4766. Special events at MonteLago Village: Shamrock Street Party, March 17-19. Easter Eggs-travaganza, March 27.

**Fiesta Henderson** • 702-558-7000: Bands play in the Lava Lounge on Fri.-Sat.

**Green Valley Ranch** • 702-617-7777: Jazz Club: Entertainment Fri.-Sat. Grand Events Center: Smokey Robinson, March 19. Hall and Oates, April 8. Bill Engvall, July 30. Whiskey Beach: REO Speedwagon, June 3.

**Hyatt Regency Lake Las Vegas** • 702-567-6181: Piano music and hors d'oeuvres, 6-9pm Fri.-Sun.

**Joker's Wild** • 702-564-8100: Entertainment Wed.-Sun.

**Ritz-Carlton Lake Las Vegas** • 702-567-4700: Firenze Lobby Lounge: Florentine Tea daily from 2:30-5pm.

**Sunset Station** • 702-547-7777: Amphitheater: Jazz Attack featuring Richard Elliott, Jonathan Butler, Rick Braun, and Peter White, May 13. Trace Adkins/Billy Currington, May 14.

### JEAN

**Gold Strike Hotel** • 702-477-5000 or 800-634-1359: Bands play nightly except Tues.

**Nevada Landing** • 702-387-5000 or 800-628-6682: Bands appear nightly except Wed.

### LAS VEGAS

**Aladdin** • 702-785-5555 or 877-333-WISH: V Theatre at Desert Passage: "V," variety show. "X," adult revue, 10:30pm nightly. "The Fab Four," Beatles tribute, dark Tues.-Wed. Call 702-932-1818. Aladdin Theater for the Performing Arts: Entertainment TBA. Steve Wyrick Theater: Magician Steve Wyrick, dark Tues. Sinbad's Lounge: Bands play nightly. Music in the Curve nightclub 10:30pm-5am Fri.-Sat., and 7-9pm Wed. for Jazz Night.

**Arizona Charlie's** • 702-258-5200: Naughty Ladies Saloon: Checkmates, March 1-12. Mojo, March 15-19. Smooth, March 22-26. 650, March 29-April 2. Randy Anderson, April 5-16. Vision, April 19-23. Greg Peterson, April 26-May 7. Karaoke 8:30pm-1:30am Mon. Jerry Tiffe plays 4-7pm Fri.

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[www.theelvisweddingchapel.com](http://www.theelvisweddingchapel.com)



**Arizona Charlie's East • 702-951-9000:** Palace Grand Lounge: Primetime, March 15-20. Randy Anderson, March 22-April 3. Perfect Choice, April 13-17. Checkmates, April 19-May 1.

**Bally's • 702-739-4111 or 800-237-SHOW:** Jubilee! Theater: "Jubilee!", dark Fri. Society of Seven with Lani Misalucha, 3pm Sat.-Thurs. Backstage Walking Tour at 2pm Mon., Wed., and Sat. Entertainment in the Indigo Lounge.

**Barbary Coast • 702-737-7111:** Barbary Coast Lounge: Pete Vallee as "Big Elvis," 3-6pm Tues.-Fri. Bands like Smith Brothers, Elements, and In-10-City play Wed., Thurs., Sun. in the lounge.

**The Beach Nightclub • 702-610-5237:** "Laughs at the Beach," touring stand-up comedians, 8-10pm Thurs. and Sat.

**Bellagio • 888-987-6667:** Cirque du Soleil's "O," indf., dark Mon.-Tues. Light Nightclub, 10:30pm-4am Thurs.-Sun. Caramel Bar, 5pm-4am Mon.-Sun. Musicians play in the Petrossian Lounge and Baccarat Bar. Fontana Room: Entertainment nightly. Tuscany Kitchen: Art of Cooking demonstrations, for reservations call 702-693-7155.

**Binion's Horseshoe • 702-382-1600:** Benny's Bullpen: Vinnie Favorito, stand-up comedy, thru March 5.

**Boardwalk Casino • 702-735-2400:** Lighthouse Lounge: Spectrum, Motown sound, indf., dark Mon. Purple Reign, a tribute to Prince, dark Sun.-Mon.

**Boulder Station • 702-432-7777 or 800-683-7777:** The Railroad: Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers, March 4. Foreigner, March 11. Chris Cagle, March 12. Josh Gracin, March 24. Toto, March 25. John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band, April 1. Keiko Matsui, April 2. Mel Tillis, April 9. Maynard Ferguson, Oct. 6. Jerry Tiffe plays 2-4pm Thurs. KIXX: Shooting Stars Karaoke, Thurs.-Sat.

**Bourbon Street • 702-737-7200:** Big Easy Showroom: "Spotlight," starring magician Will Roya, 7pm, dark Fri. The Michael Johns Show, comedy-hypnotist, 11pm Sun.-Thurs. "Hypnoliarious," 9pm Wed.-Sun. "Mandatory Friends," 9pm Tues.

**Caesars Palace • 702-731-7333 or 800-445-4544:** The Colosseum Showroom: Celine Dion stars in "A New Day....," March 3-27, April 14-May 29, dark Mon.-Tues. (call 877-4-CELINE). "The Red Piano" starring Elton John, March 29-30, April 1-3, 5-6, 8-10. Jerry Seinfeld, June 10-11. Shadow Bar: Dancers perform nightly. DJ 9pm-2am Wed.-Sun. Entertainment in the Café Lago Restaurant, Terrazza Lounge, Cleopatra's Barge Nightclub, and Galleria Bar.

**Circus Circus • 702-734-0410 or 800-444-CIRCUS:** Free circus acts from 11am to midnight.

**Excalibur Hotel • 702-597-7600:** King Arthur's Arena: "Tournament of Kings," jousting-dinner show. Merlin's Theater: "Thunder From Down Under," all-male revue nightly except Thurs. Catch a Rising Star Comedy Club: Comedians perform at 10pm nightly and 7:30pm Thurs. Court Jesters Stage: Strolling entertainers, 10am-10pm daily. Minstrels Lounge: Live bands and dancing. Music in the Regales and Camelot restaurants.

**Fitzgeralds • 702-388-2400 or 800-274-LUCK** (U.S. outside Nevada): Fitzgeralds Showroom: Bobby Ruffin's Tribute to the Drifters, 5:15pm Thurs.-Mon. "Spirit of the King" starring Steve Connolly, 7:15pm Thurs.-Mon. Jun Polistico, Philippine singer, 9pm Thurs.-Mon. Bands play daily on the First Floor Stage.

**Flamingo Las Vegas • 702-733-3333 or 800-221-7299:** Flamingo Showroom: Gladys Knight, 7:30pm, dark Sun.-Mon. "Bottoms Up," comedy revue, 2 and 4pm, dark Sun. George



**Josh Groban sings "To Where You Are," "Alla Luce Del Sole," and other songs March 19 at Mandalay Bay.**

Wallace, comedian, performs 10pm Tues.-Sat. Second City Theater: "Second City," improv comedy sketches, 8pm Thurs.-Tues, 10:30pm Thurs. and Sat. "Second City Scriptless," 8 and 10:30pm Wed., 10:30pm Tues., Fri., and Sun. Bands play in Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville.

**Four Queens • 702-385-4011 or 800-634-6045.**

**Four Seasons • 702-632-5000:** Piano entertainment during Traditional Afternoon High Tea in the Verandah restaurant, 2-5pm daily.

**Gold Coast • 702-367-7111 or 888-402-6278** (U.S. outside Nevada): Lounge: Kinda Dixie Jazz Band, noon-6pm Mon.-Fri. Bands like Elements, Front Page, Smith, and San Fernando play nightly except Mon. Gold Coast Showroom: "Forever Plaid: A Heavenly Musical Hit," dark Fri. Latin Breeze, Fri.-Sat. and Mon., indf. Ballroom dancing with disk jockey Larry Taylor 7-10pm Tues. Dance lessons 6-7pm. Sunday Tea Dance Party with Larry Taylor from 1-4pm. Dance lessons noon-1pm. Drama workshop, 2-4pm Tues.

**Golden Gate • 702-385-1906:** Live piano 6pm-midnight.

**Golden Nugget • 702-386-8100:** Theatre Ballroom: Downtown Gordie Brown, Fri.-Tues. Lon Bronson's All-Star Band, 10pm Mon., midnight Sat. Bob Newhart, April 15-16. George Benson, June 10-11. Bands play in the Show Bar Lounge. Music in the ZAX restaurant.

**Golden Palm • 702-798-1111:** Karaoke party, 10pm-4am.

**Greek Isles • 702-737-5540:** Star Theater: "Tribute to Frank, Sammy, Joey, and Dean," dark Fri. Sandy Hackett Comedy Club, nightly. "The World's Greatest Magic Show," Sat.-Thurs., 2pm Sun.

**Hard Rock Hotel • 702-693-5066:** The Joint: Entertainment TBA. Dance to DJs in Baby's Night Club.

**Harrah's Las Vegas • 702-369-5111:** Clint Holmes Theater: Clint Holmes, 7:30pm, dark Sun. "Skintight," adult revue, 10:30pm Mon.-Wed. and Sat.-Sun., 7:30pm Sun., 10pm and midnight Fri., dark Thurs. Mac King, comedy magic, 1 and 3pm, dark Sun.-Mon. Improv Theater: Comedy 8:30 and 10:30pm, dark Mon. Café Andreotti: Strolling musicians, 5:30-10:30pm Wed.-Sun. Range Restaurant: jazz, 5:30-10:30pm Fri.-Sat. Piano Bar: TJ's All-Star Karaoke Party, 6-9pm nightly. Dueling Pianos, 9pm nightly. Entertainment daily in the Carnival Court 12:30pm-1am.

**Hofbräuhaus Las Vegas • 702-853-BEER:** Bavarian bands play.

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**Imperial Palace** • 702-794-3261: Imperial Theatre: "Legends in Concert, impersonator revue, 7:30 and 10:30pm, dark Sun. Casino Floor: Celebrity impersonators deal blackjack to gamblers. Entertainment nightly 5:30pm-1am in the Kabuki Lounge. Tequila Joe's: Karaoke, nightly. "Be a Legend" Amateur Celebrity Impersonator Karaoke Contest is held monthly. Poolside: Imperial Hawaiian Luau begins late April.

**JW Marriott Las Vegas** • 702-869-2335: Plush Ultra Lounge and Supper Club: Opens 5pm weeknights, noon weekends. Music and dancing.

**Crave Nightclub (Desert Passage at the Aladdin)** • 702-836-0833: "The Fashionistas, adult musical, dark Sun.

**Lady Luck** • 702-477-3000 or 800-523-9582: Lady Luck Showroom: "Ovation, variety show featuring numerous acts, 7 and 9pm, dark Tues. Lucky Louie's Lounge: Bands play Thurs-Sun.

**Las Vegas Hilton** • 702-732-5755 or 800-222-5361: Hilton Theater: Barry Manilow stars in "Manilow: Music and Passion," Wed.-Sat. Travis Tritt, March 11-12. George Lopez, March 18-19. ZZ Top, June 8-10. Shimmer Cabaret: Comedian David Brenner, 8pm thru March 31, dark Thurs. Aussie Angels, 10pm, dark Tues. Dance music 10pm Wed.-Sun. Entertainment in the Benihana Lounge at the Hilton. **Luxor** • 702-262-4555: Luxor Theatre: "Blue Man Group: Live at Luxor," percussion theater. Pharaoh's Theater: "Midnight Fantasy," production show, dark Mon. Steakhouse Lounge: Piano entertainer. Performers play nightly in Nefertiti's Lounge and Ra Nightclub. Movies are featured in the IMAX theater, and tours are available at King Tut's Museum.

**Mandalay Bay** • 877-632-7400: Mandalay Bay Theatre:

"Mamma Mia!," the Broadway musical based on the music of Abba, dark Fri. Matinee Sat-Sun. at 5pm. Mandalay Events Center: Josh Groban, March 19. House of Blues: Black Label Society, March 12. Flogging Molly, March 20. An Evening with Joe Satriani, April 9. Steve Vai/Eric Sardinas, April 28. Juanes, April 29. Dance music, Fri.-Sun. Karaoke, 11pm Mon. Gospel Brunch, 10am and 1pm Sun. Live music Thurs.-Sun. in the Courtyard. OBA lounge atop House of Blues open late nights Mon.-Fri. Bands play in the Orchid, Island, and Coral Reef lounges. Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay open daily. Socrates Café: Book discussions, 7pm Tues.

**MGM Grand** • 702-891-7777 or 800-929-1111: MGM Grand Garden Arena: Erik Morales vs. Manny Pacquiao, super featherweight title fight, March 19. Rod Stewart, April 2. Jimmy Buffett, April 9. EFX Theatre: "KÅ," the newest Cirque du Soleil show, dark Wed.-Thurs. Hollywood Theatre: Tom Jones, thru March 13. David Copperfield, March 17-April 13. Howie Mandel, April 14-20 and May 12-18. Carrot Top, April 21-27. Tom Jones, April 28-May 11. David Copperfield, May 19-June 1. Howie Mandel, June 14-29. David Copperfield, June 30-July 13, July 28-Aug. 10, Aug. 25-Sept. 21, Howie Mandel, Sept. 29-Oct. 5 and Oct. 25-Nov. 9. David Copperfield, Nov. 17-30. La Femme Theatre: "La Femme, topless Crazy Horse production from Paris, dark Tues. Studio 54: Dancing Tues.-Sat. Entertainment in the Teatro Euro Bar except Wed., and the Tabu and Zuri lounges. Fashion show 10pm Wed. in Tabu.

**The Mirage** • 702-792-7777: Danny Gans Theatre: Impressionist Danny Gans, dark Fri. and Mon. Jay Leno, March 4-5. Wayne Brady, March 18-19. Ray Romano, April 8-9. Kevin James, April 22-23. David Spade, May 27-29.

Wayne Brady, June 24-25, Sept. 30-Oct. 1, Nov. 24-25. Entertainment also is found in the Ava and Onda lounges and Baccarat Bar.

**Monte Carlo** • 702-730-7000: Lance Burton Theatre: "Lance Burton, Master Magician," dark Sun.-Mon. Top 40, disco, country, and classic-rock dance music nightly in the Monte Carlo Pub and Brewery. The Club @ The Pub: Late night bands and DJs play beginning at 11pm.

**New Frontier** • 702-794-8200: Gilley's Saloon: Free bull rides 4-9pm Mon.-Tues. and all night Wed. Mud wrestling 10pm Wed. Free line-dance lessons 7:30pm Thurs. Bikini bull riding midnight Fri.-Sat. Line dancing 9pm.

**New York-New York** • 702-740-6969 or 800-693-6763: Broadway Theatre: "Zumanity," adult Cirque du Soleil production, 7:30 and 10:30pm, dark Wed.-Thurs. Cabaret Theatre: Comedienne Rita Rudner performs nightly. The Pub at Nine Fine Irishmen: Entertainment nightly. Coyote Ugly: Dance nightclub opens at 6pm. The N.Y.P.D. (New York Piano Duos) dueling pianos play from 8pm nightly and 2-6pm Fri. in the Bar at Times Square. Bands play in the Big Apple Bar. Manhattan Express Roller Coaster opens daily at 10am.

**The Orleans** • 800-ORLEANS: Orleans Showroom: The Live Lawrence Welk Show, March 3-6. Grant Griffin in Concert, March 8. Bill Engvall, March 10-13. Debbie Reynolds, March 17-20. Steven Wright, March 23-26. Neil Sedaka, March 29-April 3. Vicki Lawrence and Mama: A Two-Woman Show, April 7-10. Desert Chorale, April 11. Bobby Vinton, April 14-17. The Smothers Brothers, April 21-24. Gordon Lightfoot in Concert, April 28-May 1. Engelbert Humperdinck, May 5-8. Little Richard, May 11-15, dark May 13. Burt Bacharach, May 19-22. Air Supply, May 26-29. Andy Williams, June 1-5.

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Frankie Avalon and Bobby Rydell, June 9-12. Neil Sedaka, June 14-19. Dion, July 14-17. Mrs. USA Pageant, July 25-28. Will the Real Rich Little Please Stand Up?, July 29-31. Tony Orlando, Aug. 11-14. Neil Sedaka, Aug. 16-21. Engelbert Humperdinck, Aug. 25-28. Air Supply, Sept. 1-4. Vicki Lawrence and Mama: A One Woman Show, Sept. 15-18. Little Richard, Sept. 21-25. Bobby Vinton, Sept. 29-Oct. 2. Burt Bacharach, Oct. 6-9. Chris Botti, Oct. 13-16. Orleans Arena: Monster Truck Thunder and Fire Extravaganza, Aug. 19-20. Freestyle MotoX Championship, Sept. 23-24. Bourbon Street Cabaret: Performers like Bruce Conte appear nightly except Mon. Brendan's Irish Pub: Bands like In-10-City, Elements, and Front Page play nightly except Mon. Jazz on Tues., Blues Zydeco on Wed. Irish acoustic sing-a-long on Sun. "Rock This Town Live," tribute to Elvis, Buddy Holly, and Jerry Lee Lewis, Tues.

**Palace Station** • 702-367-2411 or 800-634-3101: Laugh Trax Comedy Club: Comedians perform Tues.-Sat. Jack's Irish Pub: Entertainers perform nightly.

**The Palms** • 702-942-7777: Entertainment in Rain, ghostbar, and the Lounge.

**Paris Las Vegas** • 800-237-SHOW: Theatre des Arts: "We Will Rock You," production based on the music of Queen, nightly except Thurs., matinee 2pm Sun. Bands play in Le Cabaret Lounge, Napoleon's Lounge, and Ah Sin Restaurant, entertainment nightly. Dancing 10pm-4am Wed.-Sun. in the Risqué nightclub. Eiffel Tower rides 10am-1am daily.

**The Plaza** • 800-634-6575: Plaza Theatre: Celebrity Sunday Brunch, 10:30am-2:30pm. Guest celebrities drop in to entertain. Larry G. Jones, singing comedy-impressionist, 6pm nightly except Fri.

**Rampart Casino at the Resort at Summerlin** • 877-869-8777: Addison's Lounge: Rock, oldies, and R&B bands perform in the lounge from 8pm-midnight Fri.-Sat. Round Bar: Entertainment nightly.

**Rio All-Suite Hotel** • 702-252-7776 or 800-PLAYRIO: Samba Theater: Penn and Teller, comedy-magic show, dark Tues. Scinta Showroom: "Erocktica," adult revue, 10pm, dark Thurs. Chippendales Theater: Ultimate Girls' Night Out is a new \$7-million complex dedicated to women. The 400-seat theater features private sky boxes, cocktail lounge, and the male revue "Chippendales: The Show," 8pm Thurs.-Tues. and 10:30pm Fri.-Sat., dark Wed. Club Rio Nightclub is open for late-night dancing Thurs.-Sat. Calypso Room: "Tony 'n Tina's Wedding," off-Broadway interactive dinner theater, nightly. "Masquerade Show in the Sky": Carnival-themed parade above the casino daily at 3, 4, 5, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, and 9:30pm. Bikinis Beach and Dance Club: Nightclub opens 10pm Thurs.-Sun. Sexy swimwear competition on Thurs. Bands play nightly upstairs in the high-rise Voodoo Lounge. I-Bar Ultra Lounge: Opens daily at noon with beverage entertainers.

**Riviera** • 702-794-9301: Royal Pavilion: Michael Bolton, April 22-23. Splash Theatre: "Splash," production show, dark Mon. La Cage Theatre (third floor): "An Evening at La Cage," celebrity female impersonators revue, 8pm, dark Tues. "The Amazing Johnathan," bizarre magic, 10pm, dark Thurs. Mardi Gras Plaza (second level): "Crazy Girls" adult revue, dark Tues. "Riviera Comedy Club," 8:30 and 10:30pm nightly. Le Bistro Theatre: Dueling Pianos: Keyboard Cabaret, 2:30, 4, and 5:30pm. Singer Marlene Ricci, 8:30pm Tues. "Neil Diamond Tribute Starring Jay White," 7pm Sun.-Thurs. The Exotic Hypnotics, featuring Genie and Richard, 11:30pm Tues.-Sun. "A Tribute to Sinatra" starring Kevin Cavanaugh, 8:30pm Mon. Dr. Scott Lewis: Outrageous





Comedy Hypnotist, 10pm Mon. "The Escape," starring Dixie Dooley, 8:30pm Thurs.-Sat. "An Evening with Marilyn" starring Roxanna Bonilla-Giannini, 7pm Fri.-Sat.

**Royal Resort** • 702-339-5200: Cosmo's Ristorante: "Dinner With Mama," interactive dinner theater, 7pm Mon.-Thurs.

**Sahara** • 702-737-2515: Sahara Theatre: Entertainment TBA. Congo Room: Coasters, Platters, and Drifters. Bands play in the Casbar Lounge.

**Sam's Town** • 702-454-8048: Sam's Town Live: Dennis Bono, radio show with guest celebrities. Roxy's Saloon: Randy Anderson, thru March 20. Travis Caudell and Aces Wild, thru March 6. Bobby Kingston, March 10-13. Huck Daniels Revue, March 16-20. The Verge, March 23-27. Mystic Falls Park: Laser and water show at 2, 6, 8, and 10pm.

**San Remo** • 702-739-9000 or 800-522-7366: Parisian Cabaret: "Showgirls of Magic," revue, dark Mon. Entertainment in the Bonne Chance Lounge.

**Santa Fe Station** • 702-658-4900: Showroom: B. J. Thomas, March 18. Memphis Championship Barbecue: Rockside, 10pm Sat.

**Silverton** • 702-263-7777 or 800-588-7711: Showroom: Entertainment TBA. Mermaid Restaurant and Lounge: Mermaids perform hourly in a 117,000-gallon saltwater tank from 6-11pm. The Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World attraction features a 40,000-gallon freshwater aquarium, waterfall, trout stream, an archery range, 32-foot rock climbing wall, and a sporting goods retail section that includes a NASCAR section.

**Stardust** • 702-617-5577 or 888-217-9565: Wayne Newton



A "Mystère" performer balances during the long-playing Cirque du Soleil show at Treasure Island in Las Vegas.

Theatre: Siegfried and Roy present "Havana Night Club—The Show," Cuban production show, thru April 11; show times vary, call for information. Don Rickles/Lainie Kazan, March 3-6. Tim Conway and Harvey Korman, March 9-12. Chicago, March 16-19. Ann-Margret, March 23-26. Wayne Newton, March 28-April 27. Ba-Da-Bing Room: "Ba-Da-Bing," interactive dinner show. Starlight Lounge: Karaoke

is scheduled Mon. and Fri. in the Strip hotel-casino. **Stratosphere** • 702-382-4446 or 800-99-TOWER: Theater of the Stars Showroom: "American Superstars," impersonator revue, dark Thurs. "Bite," topless revue featuring evil vampires, 10:30pm, dark Thurs. "Viva Las Vegas," musical revue, 2 and 4pm daily except Sun. Outdoor Events Center: Entertainment TBA. Images Lounge: Huck Daniels performs 10pm-2am Mon. Bands like Stinger, Front Page, and Rhythm Nation play 10pm-3:30am Tues.-Sun. Candace Davis Martin plays nightly thru May 1 in the Top of the World Lounge, dark Mon.-Tues. Crazy Armadillos: Karaoke on Tues.-Wed. DJ Dance Party on Thurs.-Mon. Bands play Thurs.-Mon. Stratosphere Thrill Rides: "Insanity" is the latest tower thrill ride, which includes X Scream, Big Shot, and the High Roller roller coaster attractions.

**Suncoast** • 702-636-7111: Suncoast Showroom: Air Supply, March 4-6. Ragus Irish Show, March 11-13. Sergio Mendes, March 18-20. Giovanni, pianist-singer, March 25-26. "Sentimental Journey: Remembering Billy Eckstine and Sarah Vaughan," original musical, March 27. Bill Acosta, April 1-3. Chris Botti, April 8-9. Aga-Boom/New Age Clowns,

April 15-17. The Osmond Brothers, April 22-24. Debbie Reynolds, April 29-May 1. David Sanborn, May 6-8. Sha Na Na, May 13-15. Tony Orlando, May 20-22. Southern Fried Chicks, May 27-29. Paul Williams, June 3-5. Carol Lawrence, June 10-12. Larry Carlton, June 17-19. Ramsey Lewis, June 25-26. Alter Ego, July 1. Spyro Gyra, July 8-9. The Lettermen, July 15-17. Collin Raye, July 22-24. James Darren, July 29-31.

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The Aga-Boom/New Age Clowns appear April 15-17 at the Suncoast in Las Vegas.

Connie Stevens, Aug. 5-7. Bob James, Aug. 12-13. Jack Jones, Aug. 19-21. The Bellamy Brothers, Aug. 26-28. Tower of Power, Sept. 2-4. The Four Freshmen, Sept. 9-11. Debbie Reynolds, Sept. 16-18. Suncoast Lounge: Bands like Elements, San Fernando, and Destiny Unknown play nightly except Mon.

**Terrible's** • 702-733-7000: Stage Bar Lounge: Bands play Tues.-Sun.

**Treasure Island (TI)** • 702-894-7111: Cirque du Soleil in

"Mystère," dark Mon.-Tues. Entertainment in the Mist and Breeze lounges. Tangerine Nightclub opens at 4pm Wed.-Sun. and features burlesque performances in the speakeasy style. The venue has a deck overlooking "The Sirens of TI," the hotel's pirate-battle attraction, which plays outside at 5:30, 7, 8:30, and 10pm.

**Tropicana** • 702-739-2411: Tiffany Theatre: "Les Folies Bergere," dark Sun. "The Magic of Rick Thomas," 2 and 4pm daily except Sun. Tropics Lounge: "The Tropicana Bird

Show," 11:30am, 1:30, and 2:30pm except Thurs. "T. Fox and the Fox City Show," dark Sun.-Tues. Comedy Stop Theatre: "The Comedy Stop," stand-up comedy nightly. Celebration Lounge: Entertainment nightly. "Air Play," aerialists perform above the casino at 11am, 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9pm. **Tuscany** • 866-830-0250: "Tribute to Streisand and Sinatra," 7pm.

**Venetian** • 702-733-5000: Entertainment TBA.

**Westward Ho** • 702-731-2900: Crown Room: Bands play.

**Westin Casuarina** • 866-837-4215: Westin Theatre: "Forbidden Vegas," satirical musical revue, dark Wed.

**Wynn Las Vegas** • New resort is scheduled to open in late April.

## LAUGHLIN

**Avi** • 702-535-5555: ArrowWeed Lounge: Bands play nightly.

**Colorado Belle** • 702-298-4000: Entertainment nightly.

**Edgewater** • 702-298-2453: Lounge: Music plays nightly.

**Flamingo Laughlin** • 702-298-5111 or 800-435-8469: Flamingo Amphitheatre: Tanya Tucker, March 19. Randy Travis, April 2. John Kay and Steppenwolf, April 21. Styx, April 22-23. Paul Rodriguez, May 4. The Beach Boys, June 4. Kenny Rogers, Sept. 10-11. Club Flamingo Showroom: "The Really Big Shew," variety show, 7 and 9pm, dark Fri., thru April 17.

**Golden Nugget Laughlin** • 702-298-7111 or 800-237-1739: Tarzan's Nightclub: Dinner and dancing to the music of the '40s and '50s on Tues. Bands play nightly.

**Harrah's Laughlin** • 702-298-4600 or 800-447-8700: Rio Vista Outdoor Amphitheater: Ronnie Milsap, March 5. Jeff Foxworthy, April 16. Fiesta Showroom: "Rhinestone Cowgirls," musical revue, 8pm, thru Dec. 31, dark Sun. and Wed. "Showgirls," adult topless revue, 10pm, thru Dec. 31, dark Sun.-Wed.

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**Ramada Express** • 702-298-4200 or 800-243-6846: Pavilion Theatre: Entertainment TBA. Caboose Lounge: Bands play nightly except Mon. Karaoke Madness is scheduled on Mon. American Heroes Museum of Memories: Memorabilia and speakers program, and patriotic show.

**River Palms** • 702-298-2242 or 800-835-7904: Bermuda Club: The Magic and Comedy of Berri Lee, 6pm Sat. Berri's Comedy Club, 9pm Tues-Sat.

**Riverside Resort** • 702-298-2535 or 800-227-3849 ext. 616: Don's Celebrity Theatre: Mel Tillis, March 1-6, Collin Raye, March 8-13. "Ragus," March 15-20, Irish dance spectacular. Charo, March 22-27. Ricky Van Shelton, March 29-April 3. Hot August Nights: Neil Diamond Tribute, April 5-10. Freddy Fender, May 3-8. Etta May and the Southern Fried Chicks, May 10-15. Franz Harary, illusionist, May 18-22. Gallagher, May 25-29. Superstars Live in Concert, July 5-Aug. 31. Gallagher, Sept. 2-4. Adventures in Parrot dice: Jimmy Buffet Tribute, Sept. 6-11. Bellamy Brothers, Sept. 28-Oct. 2. Freddy Fender, Oct. 4-9. Ricky Van Shelton, Oct. 18-23. Smothers Brothers, Oct. 25-30. Mel Tillis, Nov. 1-6. Entertainment in the Lightning Strikes Nightclub.

#### MESQUITE

**CasaBlanca** • 702-346-7529 or 800-459-7529: CasaBlanca Showroom: Little Texas, March 12. Hypnotist Michael Mezmer, March 25-26. Comedy Club: Weekends when no performers are scheduled. Entertainers appear in the Skydome Lounge nightly except Mon.

**Eureka Casino Hotel** • 702-346-4646: Wild Cactus Lounge: Fun Fool's Karaoke, Tues. Bands play Thurs-Sun.

**Oasis** • 702-346-5232 or 800-621-0187: Club Xtreme: Karaoke, Tues. Dance music Wed., Fri.-Sat. Cabaret Lounge: Bands play nightly except Mon.

**Virgin River** • 702-346-7777 or 800-346-7721: Entertainers play in the casino lounge nightly except Mon.

#### NORTH LAS VEGAS

**Cannery** • 702-507-5700: The Club: Viva! Tribute to Santana, March 4-5. Marshall Tucker Band, March 11. David Lee Murphy, March 12. Edgar Winter, March 19. Survivor, April 16. "A Really Big Shew: A Salute to Ed Sullivan," April 22-23. Next Movement, April 29-30. Peace Frog: Tribute to the Doors, May 6-7. Black Diamond Tribute to KISS, May 13. Felix Cavaliere's Rascals and Chuck Negron of Three Dog Night, May 14. Peabo Bryson and Jeffrey Osborne, May 21. Summer Kick-Off Concert: Turtles, Vogues, Archies, Andy Kim, and Bo Donaldson and the Heywoods, May 28. Blues Brews and BBQ Festival with John Lee Hooker Jr., Blowin' Smoke, Blues Storm, and Section 8, June 17-18. War, June 25. Pin-Ups Bar: Bands play nightly except Mon.

**Fiesta Rancho** • 702-631-7000: Club Tequila: Ricky Van Shelton, March 25. Mel McDaniel, April 22. Nazareth, Oct. 21. Superstar Tributes, Fri. Comedy Live, Sat. Music in the Cabo Lounge. Skating in the Fiesta Ice Arena.

**Jerry's Nugget** • 702-399-3000: Royal Street Lounge: Motown Fridays, Latin Explosion, Sat., dance music.

**Texas Station** • 702-631-1001: Dallas Events Center: Merle Haggard, March 11. The Armadillo: Kroakies Karaoke, Wed. Loveshack plays '80s music on Fri.-Sat. Sunday Swing with Jerry Tiffe, 4-8pm.

#### PRIMM

**Buffalo Bill's Resort** • 800-FUN-STOP: Star of the Desert Arena: Tanya Tucker, March 12. Bands play weekends in the lounge. Funniez Comedy Club: Comedians Fri.-Sat.

**Primm Valley** • 800-FUN-STOP: Show Bar Lounge: Entertainment Fri.-Sun.

**Whiskey Pete's** • 800-FUN-STOP: Whiskey Pete's Show Bar Lounge: Entertainment Fri.-Sun.

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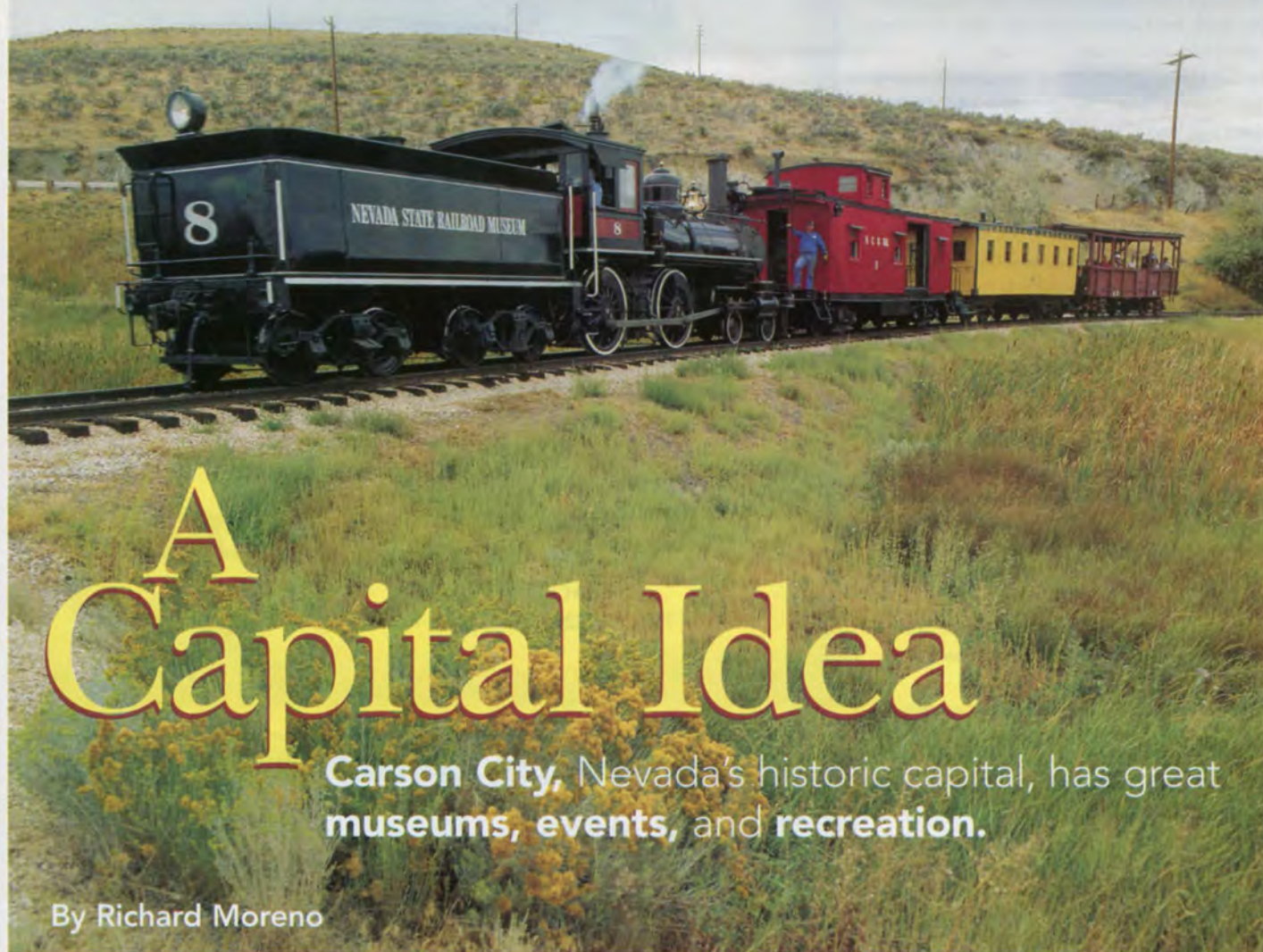
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# Nevada insider

The inside scoop on Nevada places of interest.



## A Capital Idea

**Carson City, Nevada's historic capital, has great museums, events, and recreation.**

By Richard Moreno

Visitors can ride a steam train on special weekends at the Nevada State Railroad Museum.

**C**arson City doesn't usually get the play of its more famous neighbors, Reno and Lake Tahoe. Johnny Cash never sang that he "shot a man in Carson just to see him die," nor did Mark Twain ever write, "Carson City must surely be the fairest picture the whole earth affords." And there's no Comedy Central TV show entitled *Carson City 911*.

Yet despite the lack of notoriety, Carson City, located 30 miles south of Reno on U.S. 395, deserves to be noticed. It's a charming, friendly community of 55,000 souls and just may be the most metropolitan small town in the state.

Carson City's status as the state capital means that one of its main industries is state government—and all those professionals working for the state want and

"History is what sets Carson City apart from other destinations in our region."

need various amenities. Additionally, every two years the 63 members of the Nevada Legislature meet in Carson, meaning that for about six months the city plays host to the state's most powerful politicians and lobbyists.

So, while a relatively small city, Carson has things not often found in communities

its size, particularly when it comes to restaurants and services. Locals often joke that almost as much business gets done in popular eateries like Adele's, the Station Grille, and Glen Eagles as on the floor of the Assembly or Senate.

### Historic Appeal

In addition to providing fine dining, Carson City prides itself in preserving its past. Last year the editors of *True West* named Carson City "Best Western Historical Site." The city's 2003-2004 visitor profile noted that history is the primary reason tourists visit Carson City.

"I think history is what sets Carson City apart from other destinations in our region," notes Candace Duncan, executive director of the Carson City Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Because we've been





The Capitol dome peeks above flowering trees and spring bulbs at the Capitol Mall.

the state capital since the 1860s and because we have so many historic buildings here from that era, it was easy for us to put that all together to promote."

She adds that the city's historic ties to Mark Twain, Virginia City's Comstock Lode, and the Virginia and Truckee Railroad—subjects that interest many people—are strong attractions for visitors.

The city can trace its roots to the beginning of the state of Nevada. In 1861, when the Nevada Territory was established, Carson City was named the capital of the territorial government. Three years later, when statehood was bestowed, Carson City was designated the official state capital.

Carson City's first residents, however,

were ranchers, not politicians. In 1851, a trading post was established in Eagle Valley, in which Carson City is located, to provide goods and services to travelers heading to California. A few years later, the trading post and most of the surrounding area was purchased by Abraham Curry, B.F. Green, J.J. Musser, and Frank Proctor. They laid out a town site and named it in honor of frontier scout Kit Carson, who had traveled through Nevada with explorer John C. Fremont.

Curry eventually bought out his partners and became an energetic promoter of the community, which prospered as a supply point for miners working in Virginia City, 15 miles northwest. In addition to selling



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The Nevada Day Parade (above) will roll through downtown Carson City on October 29. Ghostly figures (top) will haunt historic houses during the Ghost Walk on October 22.

lots and developing a number of businesses, Curry donated 10 acres for a state capitol. The Capitol was completed in 1871 and remains one of the oldest buildings in the city.

Today, the best way to explore Carson City's historic sites is by taking a stroll or drive on the Kit Carson Trail. The 2.5-mile tour, which is marked with a bright blue line, passes more than 60 of the community's most historic buildings and homes, many constructed in the 1860s and 1870s. If you tune your car radio to AM 1020, AM 1040, AM 1060, and AM 1080, you can listen to informative 90-second "Talking Houses" recordings describing 24 of the

historic Carson homes along the route.

For example, the Orion Clemens House at 502 N. Division St. was built in 1863 by the brother of Samuel Clemens, better known by his pen name, Mark Twain. The latter is believed to have occasionally stayed in the house in 1863 and 1864. Other homes on the trail include the Krebs-Peterson House at 500 N. Mountain St., a handsome frame residence built in 1914 by a prominent surgeon and featured in *The Shootist*, actor John Wayne's last movie. Also, the G.W.G. Ferris House at 311 W. Third St. was the boyhood home of George Washington Gale Ferris Jr., who invented the Ferris Wheel.

## City of Museums

Perhaps not surprisingly, given its rich history, Carson City has an extraordinary number of quality museums for a community so small. They include:

**Nevada State Museum:** Located in the former U.S. Mint at 600 N. Carson St., the Nevada State Museum is filled with displays and exhibits describing the historical, cultural, and natural history of Nevada. It's open 8:30-4:30 daily. Call 775-687-4810 or visit [www.nevadaculture.org](http://www.nevadaculture.org).

**Nevada State Railroad Museum:** At 2180 S. Carson St., the Nevada State Railroad Museum is devoted to the preservation and study of the state's railroads.

Carson City has an extraordinary number of quality museums for its size.

The museum's primary focus is on the fabled Virginia and Truckee Railroad, which ran between Reno and Virginia City. Several vintage railroad buildings have been moved to the museum grounds. During summer weekends, rides are offered on a diesel motorcar, the *Washoe Zephyr*. On holiday weekends and special days, the museum also offers rides on some of the historic rolling stock pulled by steam locomotives. The museum is open 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. daily. Call 775-687-6953 or visit [www.nsrml-friends.org](http://www.nsrml-friends.org).

**State Capitol:** Visitors to the State Capitol will find an informative exhibit, "The Story of Our Capitol," in the Old Senate Chambers on the second floor. On display are the original Nevada Territory seal and a copy of the lengthy telegram that relayed the Nevada state constitution to Washington, D.C., on October 8, 1864. The Capitol, located at Carson and Musser streets, is open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. Call 775-687-5030.

**Nevada State Library and Archives:** Located behind the State Capitol, the Nevada State Library and Archives at 100 N. Stewart St. is the official repository of state records. Visitors will find historic documents, a display of the original state constitution, and a changing gallery. Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Call 775-684-3320 or visit [www.clan.lib.nv.us](http://www.clan.lib.nv.us).

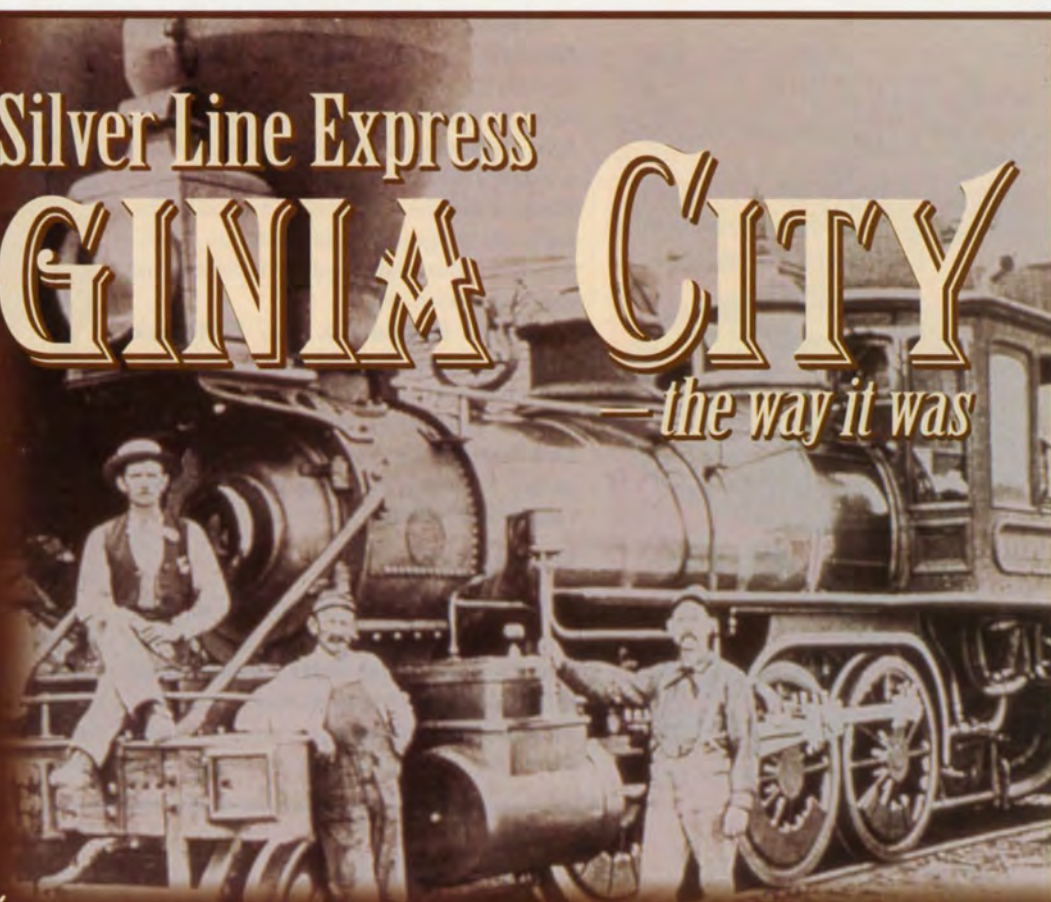


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## Children's Museum of Northern Nevada

**Located at 813 N. Carson St., the Children's Museum is filled with hands-on exhibits. Highlights include the Shadow Box, a photosensitive room that captures a visitor's silhouette, and Smith's Grocery Store, a kid-sized play supermarket. The museum is open 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tues.-Sun. For information call 775-884-2226 or visit [www.cmnn.org](http://www.cmnn.org).**

**Warren Engine Co. No. 1 Historic Fire Museum:** Tucked inside the city's main fire station at 777 S. Stewart St., the Warren Engine Co. Museum displays historic fire-fighting equipment, photos, and prints. It's open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Call 775-887-2210.

## Recreation

Folks who live in Carson City say that one of the best things about the place is that it's close to the Sierra Nevada range without actually being in the mountains. That means residents are minutes away from the skiing, hiking, boating, and



The Silver Dollar Car Classic is held in July.

mountain-biking opportunities found at Lake Tahoe—but don't get as much snow in the winter.

Carson City is also known for golf. There are four championship golf courses within city limits, including Eagle Valley, with two 18-hole courses; Empire Ranch, with 27 holes; and Silver Oak, which has 18 holes. The immediate area boasts

## Carson City Insider Guide Advertiser Listing

**Bliss Mansion Bed and Breakfast** at 608 Elizabeth Street is a restored historic home built in 1879. Travelers stay in suites with private baths and enjoy a gourmet breakfast in the formal dining room. Suites have fireplaces, down pillows and comforters, claw-foot tubs, and herbal soaps. The mansion hosts special parties, receptions, and weddings. For information call 775-887-8988 or 800-887-3501 or visit [www.blissmansion.com](http://www.blissmansion.com).

**Carson City Convention and Visitors Bureau** occupies a Western-style false-fronted building on the grounds of the Nevada State Railroad Museum at Fairview and U.S. 395. Visitors can find information about Carson City history, events, lodging, recreation, attractions, and group tours. Call 800-NEVADA-1 for a Visitors Guide or log on to [www.visitcarsoncity.com](http://www.visitcarsoncity.com) for an online brochure and tickets to events in the Reno-Lake Tahoe-Carson City area.

The **Carson Nugget** has been in downtown Carson City for more than 45 years. The Nugget has four restaurants—Garden Room Coffee Shop, Oyster Bar, Steak House, and a buffet that features seafood on Friday nights—and a bar and lounge. Groups, receptions, and parties are hosted in the upstairs banquet room. The Carson Nugget Prospectors Club Card offers discounts and coupons. The nearby City Center Motel (800-338-7760) offers accommodations. For information call 800-426-5239 or visit [www.ccnugget.com](http://www.ccnugget.com).

**Carson Station Hotel-Casino**, at 900 S. Carson St., is two blocks from the Nevada Legislature and Capitol. The hotel has 92 hotel

rooms, casino, sportsbook, bar, and entertainment and dancing in the Cabaret Lounge. Inside the casino is the Station Restaurant and across the street is the Station Grille, which serves steaks, seafood, and sandwiches and hosts banquets and parties. For information call 800-501-2929 or visit [www.carsonstation.com](http://www.carsonstation.com).

**Comstock Country RV Resort** at 5400 S. Carson St. (U.S. 395 S.) is a five-star-rated park with 156 full hookups, pool and spa, laundry, tennis, shuffleboard, arcade, horseshoes, and free casino shuttle. Virginia City, Reno, Minden-Gardnerville, and Lake Tahoe are within a 30-minute drive. Mention *Nevada Magazine* when making reservations and receive a free souvenir. Call 800-638-2321.

**Piñon Plaza Resort and RV Park** at 2171 U.S. 50 E. offers party packs, Ladies Night Out, Guys Night Out, and 50 kinds of margaritas. The hotel has an outdoor swimming pool, spa and fitness center, bowling center, RV park, Branding Iron Café, and the Steakhouse. Rooms and suites have a Southwestern décor. Call 877-519-5567 or visit [www.pinonplaza.com](http://www.pinonplaza.com).

**Virginia City Convention and Tourism Authority** maintains the Crystal Visitors Center at the corner of C and Taylor streets. The restored building once housed the Crystal Bar, one of the best known saloons in Virginia City. Travelers can learn about Comstock mine tours, train rides, mansions, museums, unique shops, restaurants, lodging, and events. Call 800-718-7587 or visit [www.virginiacity-nv.org](http://www.virginiacity-nv.org).



an additional five golf courses—Dayton Valley, Sunridge, Carson Valley, Genoa Lakes, and Sierra Nevada Golf Ranch. The area courses are known collectively as the "Divine Nine."

## Annual Events

Carson City hosts many events each year. Here's a sampling of 2005 events:

**March 12:** Cowboy Jubilee and Poetry includes a Western barbecue at the Community Center. Call 775-883-1532.

**May-June:** The spring Farmers Market is held in Telegraph Square, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat. Call 775-746-5024.

**May 28:** Kit Carson Wild West Tour, walking tours of Carson City's historic district. Call 800-NEVADA-1.

**June 10-12:** Carson City Rendezvous, mountain man encampment, Civil War reenactments, Native American dancing, Pueblo de Nevada. Call 800-NEVADA-1.

**June 18:** Taste of Downtown, a fundraiser for Advocates to End Domestic Violence, offers samplings from Carson City restaurants. Call 775-883-7654.

**June TBA:** Run What Cha Brung features more than 300 classic cars at Fuji Park. Call 775-883-0927

**June 30-July 4:** July Fourth Celebration Carnival, with crafts and fireworks, Mills Park. Call 775-687-4680.

**July-Aug.:** Farmers Market in the Pony Express Pavilion at Mills Park, 3:30-7 p.m. Wed. Call 775-746-5024.

**July 29-31:** Silver Dollar Car Classic, a celebration of the music and cars of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s at Mills Park. Call 800-NEVADA-1.

**Sept.-Oct.:** Farmers Market, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat., Telegraph Square. 775-746-5024.

**Oct. 22:** Kit Carson Trail Ghost Walk visits historic houses. Call 800-NEVADA-1.

**Oct. 27-30:** Nevada Day Celebration, with a parade on Oct. 29 and carnival, beard contest, music, art show, and other activities, commemorates Nevada's statehood. Call 800-NEVADA-1.

**Dec. 10-11:** Santa Train offers rides on cars pulled by an 1882 steam-powered locomotive and a special appearance by Santa Claus at the Nevada State Railroad Museum. Call 775-687-6953.

## For More Information

For more information about Carson City, contact the Carson City Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800-NEVADA-1, or [www.visitcarsoncity.com](http://www.visitcarsoncity.com).

*Richard Moreno is Nevada Magazine's publisher. He thinks Carson City 911 would be a great television show.*



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# Centennial City

Sparks celebrates its first 100 years with fireworks, a history fair, and a lighthouse **By Joyce Hollister**

**T**his spring the good citizens of Sparks are celebrating their community's centennial with fireworks, a grand ball, and the groundbreaking for a lighthouse.

A lighthouse, you ask?

In the 1990s, Sparks acquired the old Helms gravel pit on Interstate 80 and transformed what the late Mayor Tony Armstrong once called a "big hole in the ground" into the Sparks Marina Park. In 1997 the marina was filled with water ahead of schedule by the New Year's Day Flood, and today the park offers beaches, boating, fishing, and a place to hold events.

This is where the lighthouse comes in. On March 17 city officials will break ground for the 40-foot-tall replica on the marina's west shore. The steel structure

**Sparks became an instant city when the Southern Pacific moved its division point from Wadsworth to a point three miles east of Reno.**

will commemorate Sparks' first 100 years while its working light will serve as a beacon for the next century.

Other **Sparks Centennial** festivities are planned. Chautauqua performer Mike Fischer, a dentist from Gardnerville, will portray Governor John Sparks at the groundbreaking, and that evening, fireworks and entertainment will celebrate both the centennial and **John Ascuaga's Nugget's** 50th anniversary. At the **Sparks**



On March 17 fireworks will explode above John Ascuaga's Nugget on Victorian Square.

**Heritage Museum** a four-foot-high faux cake decorated with historical photos will be displayed March 15 to April 2. On April 3, real cake and ice cream will be served in honor of the museum's 20th anniversary, and a new exhibit, "**Back to the '80s**," will be unveiled. The display will present 20-year-old artifacts such as a bicycle, helmet, and jersey belonging to the first American winner of the Tour de France, Greg LeMond, a former area resident.

On May 13 guests may dress in period attire for the **Sparks Centennial Dinner and Dance** to be held at the Nugget. On June 18, the **Reno Rodeo Salutes the Sparks Centennial** parade will march down Victorian Avenue. Before the parade a **Pancake Breakfast** is planned at Victorian Square, and afterward, a **Fireman's Muster**.

Booths in the square will sell food and crafts at the **Turn-of-the-Century Faire**, where children's **History Fair** projects, sponsored by the Washoe County Sparks Library and the museum, will be displayed. For details visit [www.sparks100.org](http://www.sparks100.org).

The Sparks Centennial Commission is selling *History of Sparks, Centennial Edition*, a 200-page, hard-bound pictorial history (\$35), and *Sparks Now and Then*, a DVD (\$10). For information about the book, DVD, or other museum anniversary activities, call 775-355-1144. To buy John Ascuaga's Nugget's *50 Years of Memories: 1955-2005*, a 144-page coffee-table book (\$39.95), visit [renomagazine.biz/nugget50/](http://renomagazine.biz/nugget50/) or the Nugget Gift Shop.

This spring's centennial events celebrate the history of Sparks, which in the





Allison Welling (left) wore a railroad engineer's costume in last year's Sparks Hometowne Christmas Parade, which kicked off the city's centennial celebrations. At right, Sparks telephone operators were photographed in 1905, the year the Rail City was incorporated.



course of 100 years has evolved from a quiet railroad town to a tourist destination. Sparks became an instant city when the Southern Pacific moved its division point from Wadsworth to a spot three miles east of Reno in 1904. Railroad officials sold house lots for \$1 each to their employees, whose homes were carried by flatcar from Wadsworth, 27 miles east of Sparks.

Sparks, incorporated March 15, 1905, was named after Governor John Sparks and was referred to as the Rail City for nearly half a century, but the town began to decline after the SP moved its shops to Roseville, California, in the early 1950s. The advent of warehousing and light industry in the 1960s and '70s stimulated the economy, but it was Sparks Nugget owner Dick Graves and his manager, John Ascuaga, who brought the tourists. The Nugget opened in 1955 as a small coffee shop with slot machines and moved across B Street to larger quarters in 1958. Ascuaga took over in 1960, and today John Ascuaga's Nugget employs 2,000 people—more than the railroad ever did.

After haggling over a downtown renovation theme for several years, the Sparks City Council fixed on a Victorian motif in the late 1980s. Tom Burrous of the Sparks Economic Development Division explains, "The Victorian era is remembered with fondness for its barbershop quartets, beautiful homes, ice cream socials, and basically a slower time of life."

The city held its first Hometowne Christmas celebration in 1987. The next

year the redevelopment agency remodeled four city blocks, adding old-fashioned light posts, grass, trees, a fountain, and a Victorian-style bandstand. On July 4, 1988, officials cut the ribbon on the new Victorian Square. Four more blocks were renovated, and an amphitheater, sundial,

and train platform were added in 1989, when B Street was renamed Victorian Avenue.

Today Victorian Square also has an interactive fountain and a 14-screen cinema. Tourists flock to the weekly summer farmer's markets, Star Spangled Sparks Fourth of July fireworks, Hot August Nights, and the Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off on Labor Day weekend.

It's not your grandmother's Sparks anymore. "When I was a kid, there were about 5,000 people. Now there's well over 85,000 people here," said Mayor Armstrong, who had moved to the town at the age of four and had been a tireless advocate for Sparks as a city councilman, mayor, and chairman of the Sparks Centennial Commission. In an interview shortly before his unexpected death in January, Armstrong said, "The downtown was a very historic part of our community, and we wanted to revitalize it and show it off."

Sparks' next proposed project is an entertainment-retail-dining complex on the marina's east shore. The complex has a Disney-like design with water taxis and an entertainment island, a nice complement to the Sparks Centennial Lighthouse. ▀

Joyce Hollister is Nevada's associate editor.

A large advertisement for the Carson Valley Inn. The top half features a photograph of the inn's exterior at night, with warm lights and a large American flag. Below the photo, a woman in a yellow jacket and glasses is smiling. The text "You're INNvited!" is prominently displayed in a stylized font. Below this, a list of activities: "To play. To dine. To dance. To laugh. To meet. To stay. To enjoy. To win!" is shown. Further down, a quote from Jeane Mulreany, owner of the inn, is included. At the bottom, the Carson Valley Inn logo is shown, along with contact information: website, phone numbers, and address.

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# Reno-Tahoe

## AREA EVENTS AND SHOWS

**P**olar-bear swimmers compete in one of the hottest events of the **North Lake Tahoe Snow Festival Winter Carnival**. Sparks hosts multiple festivities this spring as the city celebrates the **Sparks Centennial** and **John Ascuaga's Nugget's 50th Anniversary**. In Carson City, buckaroo balladeers will gather for the **Cowboy Poetry and Jubilee**. It's recommended to call ahead to confirm event dates and times.

## Events

**An Evening with Garrison Keillor** • March 1 • Storyteller and host of *The Prairie Home Companion*. Nightingale Hall, UNR, Reno, 800-225-2277.

**Trail Encounters** • March 1 • Tahoe Rim Trail Assn. program on geology, flora, fauna, and Native Americans. Parasol Bldg., Incline Village, 775-298-0231.

**"Epicene or the Silent Woman"** • March 2-6 • Comedy with males taking female roles. Redfield Proscenium Theatre, UNR, Reno, 775-784-6847.

**"Amadeus"** • March 3-4, 10-12 • Mozart confronts jealousy and fame. Bruka Theatre, Reno, 775-323-3221.

**Snow Festival Opening Ceremonies** • March 4 • Torchlight parade and fireworks. Squaw Valley USA, Lake Tahoe, 530-583-6985.

**"Lone Star" and "Laundry and Bourbon"** • March 4-5 • "Lone Star," comedic antics of two good ol' boys on Saturday night. "Laundry and Bourbon," a comedy about three small-town wives discontented with their marriages. Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 775-883-1976 ext. 102.

**North Lake Tahoe Snow Festival Winter Carnival** • March 4-13 • Parades, pizza-decorating contest, sack race, monster dawg pull, polar-bear swim in Lake Tahoe, and entertainment. Venues around North Lake Tahoe, 800-824-6348.

**Dummy Downhill Race** • March 5 • Dummies are placed on skies and snowboards and sent racing down Show-Off Run. Mt. Rose-Ski Tahoe, Reno, 800-SKI-ROSE.

**Family Fun Relay Race** • March 5 • Diamond Peak Ski Resort, Incline Village, Lake Tahoe, 775-832-1177.

**Trail Encounters** • March 5 • Bring snowshoes to learn how to track animals. Tahoe Meadows, Incline Village, 775-298-0231.

**Mountain Dew Vertical Challenge** • March 5-6 • More than 30 race categories open to boarders and skiers of all ages and abilities. March 5 at Sierra-at-Tahoe, March 6 at Northstar-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe, 800-GO-NORTH or 530-543-3139.

**Snowbomb Sick and Twisted** • March 6 • Slopestyle competition for all ages and abilities. Diamond Peak Ski Resort, Incline Village, Lake Tahoe, 775-832-1177.

**Reno Philharmonic Orchestra** • March 6 • Program includes Bernstein and Mahler with soprano Devon Guthrie. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-323-6393.

**Lake Tahoe Winterfest Gay and Lesbian Ski Week** • March 6-13 • Boy George to be featured guest DJ for the Laser Blue



The Polar Bear Swim, a popular spectator event at Gar Woods Restaurant in Carnelian Bay, is part of the North Lake Tahoe Snow Festival, March 4-13.

Dance Party on March 12 at the Horizon in Stateline. South Shore locations, 877-777-4950, [www.laketahoewinterfest.com](http://www.laketahoewinterfest.com).

**Trail Behavior** • March 8 • Tahoe Rim Trail Assn. hosts a class on backcountry baking and organic cooking. Parasol Bldg., Incline Village, 775-298-0231.

**UNR Men's and Women's Basketball** • March 8-12 • The Wolf Pack and Lady Pack host the Western Athletic Conference tournaments. Lawlor Events Center, UNR, Reno, 775-784-4500.

**"Railroad Rhythms"** • March 9 • Wednesday evening program presents railroad-related tunes sung by first and second grade school students. Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City, 775-687-6953.

**Celebrity Special Olympics** • March 11-12 • Athletes pair with celebrities. Heavenly Mountain Resort, Stateline, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

**USASA Slopestyle Competition** • March 12 • Open to amateurs of all ages. Sierra-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe, 530-577-4760.

**Diamond Cup** • March 12 • Second annual family race challenge. Diamond Peak Ski Resort, Incline Village, Lake Tahoe, 775-832-1177.

**Reno Chamber Orchestra** • March 12 • Mozart, Bernstein, and Shchedrin. Guest violin soloist William Preucil. Nightingale Hall, UNR, Reno, 775-348-9413.

**Marchtober Fest Plaza Party** • March 12 • Games, food and drink specials, and music. Northstar-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe, 800-GO-NORTH.

**Physicians' Spouses Rummage Sale** • March 12 • 54th annual fundraiser. Location TBA, Reno, 775-829-1303.

**Echo to Kirkwood Nordic Race** • March 12 • 13-mile race/tour starting at Echo Summit and ending at Kirkwood Cross-Country Ski Center. Lake Tahoe, 209-258-7248.

**Cowboy Poetry and Jubilee** • March 12 • Music, poetry, and barbecue. Community Center, Carson City, 775-883-1532.

**Pipe Snake Half Pipe Contest** • March 12 • Skiers and boarders compete. Mt. Rose-Ski Tahoe, Reno, 800-SKI-ROSE for information.

**Top O' the Mornin' Fun Run/Walk** • March 14 • St. Patrick's Day 10K, 5K, and one-mile runs or 5K walk. Victorian Square, Sparks, 775-353-7815.

**Jazz and Poetry** • March 15 • Mile High Jazz Band performs. Comma Coffee, Carson City, 775-883-2662.

**Health and Hiking** • March 15 and 17 • Tahoe Rim Trail Assn.



programs led by health professionals. Parasol Bldg., Incline Village, 775-298-0231.

**John Ascuaga's Nugget's 50th Anniversary Party** • March 17 • Sparks, 775-356-3304.

**Sparks Centennial Festivities** • March 17 • Chautauqua of Governor John Sparks at the groundbreaking of a light-house at the Sparks Marina. Fireworks and entertainment celebrate the city's centennial and John Ascuaga's Nugget's 50th anniversary. Sparks Marina and Victorian Square, Sparks, www.sparks100.org.

**Rene Marie** • March 17 • Concert by jazz vocalist. Nightingale Hall, UNR, Reno, 775-784-6847.

**St. Patrick's Day Party** • March 17 • Fitzgeralds, Reno, 775-786-3300.

**St. Patrick's Day Irish Buffet** • March 17 • Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-783-6611.

**St. Patrick's Day Celebration** • March 17 • Food and drink specials. Carson Nugget, Carson City, 775-882-1626.

**Hacienda de la Sierra** • March 18 • Ski party with music and prizes. Incline Village, 775-832-1606.

**"Jungle Book"** • March 18-19 • Play based on Rudyard Kipling's tale presented by Carson Performing Arts. Community Center, Carson City, 775-283-1684.

**"The Merry Widow"** • March 18 and 20 • Nevada Opera presentation. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-786-4046.

**Dummy Downhill** • March 19 • Contestants build contraptions for jump competition. Diamond Peak Ski Resort, Incline Village, Lake Tahoe, 775-832-1177.

**Winter Trails Day** • March 19 • Tahoe Rim Trail Assn. program to learn or develop snowshoe and cross-country skiing skills. Tahoe Meadows, Incline Village, 775-298-0231.

**Appraisal Fair and Vendor Show** • March 19 • Sparks Recreation Center, Sparks, 775-355-1144.

**Puttin' on the Ritz** • March 19 • Fundraising dinner-dance at St. Gall Community Hall, Gardnerville, 775-782-8692.

**Telegrass Festival** • March 19-20 • Second annual party with bluegrass music, telemark clinics, demos, and vendors. Sierra-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe, 530-659-7453.

**Carousel of Cards Blackjack Tournament** • March 19-20 • Circus Circus, Reno, 888-682-0147.

**California Gold Rush USSA Ski Championship** • March 20 • Skiers compete head-to-head in 50K race. Royal Gorge Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 530-426-3871.

**East Fork Gallery Spring Reception** • March 20 • East Fork Gallery, Gardnerville, 775-782-7629.

**Children's Concert** • March 20 • Elementary school choirs perform. Community Center, Carson City, 775-883-2219.

**Environmental Issues** • March 22-23 • Tahoe Rim Trail Assn. focuses on local concerns. Parasol Blvd., Incline Village, 775-298-0231.

**"The Giving Tree"** • March 24-26, 31-April 1-2 • Children's theater presents Shel Silverstein's story of the relationship between a boy and a tree. Bruka Theatre, Reno, 775-323-3221.

**Full Moon Snowshoe and Nordic Tours** • March 25 • Northstar-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe, 800-GO-NORTH.

**Red Bull Silver Belt Skiercross Race** • March 25-26 • Race has shotgun start on an ungroomed trail with natural obstacles. Sugar Bowl, Lake Tahoe, 530-426-9000.

**"Accidental Death of an Anarchist"** • March 25-26, 31, April 1-2, 7-10, 14-16 • Satirical play. Bruka Theatre, Reno, 775-323-3221.

**Dance Dance Dance in Carson City** • March 26 • New callers dance offers a workshop during the day and call that night. Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 775-883-9351.

**Bud Light Ladies Day** • March 26 • Male skiers wearing dresses

get discount lift tickets and compete in a Beauty and the Beast pageant and a Drag Race. Mt. Rose-Ski Tahoe, Reno, 800-SKI-ROSE.

**Forum Youngblood Snowboarder Slopestyle Series Finals** • March 26 • Thirty snowboarders. Sierra-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe, 530-659-7453, ext. 270.

**Alpine Meadows Mad Cow Downhill** • March 26 • Any route is acceptable in this dash, but helmets are required. Alpine Meadows Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 530-583-4232.

**Easter at Sierra** • March 27 • Easter bunny and Easter egg hunt and toss. Sierra-at-Tahoe, Lake Tahoe, 530-543-3136.

**Easter Champagne Brunch** • March 27 • Flowers for women. Carson Nugget, Carson City, 775-882-1626.

**Easter Egg Hunt** • March 27 • Event for adults and kids, plus a kids' fun race. Alpine Meadows Ski Resort, Lake Tahoe, 530-583-4232.

**Royal Deal Video Poker Tournament** • March 28 • Circus Circus, Reno, 888-682-0147 for further event information.

**\$1,500 Blackjack Tournament of Champions** • March 29 • Qualifying round. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-783-7711.

**Dummy Gelände** • March 29 • No live dummies allowed for this dash down the slopes. Heavenly Mountain Resort, Stateline, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

**\$20,000 Tri Game-a-Thon Tournament** • April 1-2 • Slots or blackjack entry includes free \$1,000 keno competition. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-783-7711.

**"42nd Street"** • April 1-3 • Broadway Comes to Reno series. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 800-714-5331.

**North Tahoe Spring Blast** • April 1-9 • Music, events, and parties. Squaw Valley USA, Lake Tahoe, 530-583-6985.

**Benefit Bash** • April 2 • Dance, appetizers from Tahoe restaur-

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rants, wine and brew tastings, and a silent auction. North Tahoe Conference Center, Kings Beach, Lake Tahoe, 530-581-4161.

**Pond Skimming** • April 2 • The challenge is to cross the water without getting wet. Heavenly Mountain Resort, Stateline, Lake Tahoe, 775-586-7000.

**One-Hit Wonder** • April 2 • Ski and snowboard big air contest. Mt. Rose-Ski Tahoe, Reno, 800-SKI-ROSE.

**Sundae Sunday** • April 3 • Cake and ice cream mark the opening of the museum's latest exhibit, Back to the '80s. Sparks Heritage Museum, Sparks, 775-355-1144.

**Intercultural Celebration** • April 4-23 • Diversity events highlight Hispanics, the hip-hop culture, Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, gay pride, and Asian heritage. UNR Campus, Reno, 775-784-4936.

**Banff Mountain Film Festival** • April 5-6 • Independent films and mountain adventure videos. Celebrity Showroom, John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, 775-851-5180.

**Billy Dutton Uphill** • April 9 • Fundraiser features a 3.2-mile ski, run, or snowshoe trek to High Camp. Squaw Valley USA, Lake Tahoe, 530-583-6985.

**Carson Valley POPS Orchestra Spring Concert** • April 9 • CVIC Hall, Gardnerville, 775-265-2841.

**Topaz Lodge Chili Cook-Off** • April 9-10 • Topaz Lodge, Topaz Lake, 775-266-3339.

**Reno Philharmonic Orchestra** • April 10 • Program by Copland, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. Guest baritone Gary Aldrich and violinist Anne Akiko-Meyers. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 775-323-6393.



**Jammin' Jazz Gats-B Dancin'** shows his championship form during the Pepper Memorial Classic. The dog agility trials will be held April 16-17 in Carson City.

**"Salt Lake Line Archaeology"** • April 13 • Illustrated program by Jeff Wedding on digs at former railroad work camps. Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City, 775-687-6953.

**"Macbeth"** • April 15-16, 20-24 • Shakespearean drama with all-female cast. Redfield Proscenium Theatre, UNR, Reno, 775-784-6847.

**"Stomp"** • April 15-17 • Broadway Comes to Reno series. Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, Reno, 800-714-5331.

**Comedy Night** • April 16 • Sorooptimist International fundraiser features comedians, food, drink, and auction. Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 775-450-4940.

**Comstock Cowboys** • April 16 • Concert to benefit the V&T Railroad. Carson Nugget, Carson City, 775-882-1626.

**Sertoma Chili Cook-Off and Craft Fair** • April 16-17 • Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-266-9468.

**Pepper Memorial Classic** • April 16-17 • Dog agility trials are a fundraiser for canine cancer. Fuji Park, Carson City, 775-425-2375.

**Spring Jam 8** • April 16-17 • Ski races, music, and prizes. Squaw Valley USA, Lake Tahoe, 530-583-6985.

**Carousel of Cash Slot Tournament** • April 16-17 • Circus Circus, Reno, 888-682-0147.

**April Jazz** • April 19 • Mile High Jazz Band performance. Comma Coffee, Carson City, 775-883-2662.

**Incline Star Follies** • April 22-23 • Family cabaret fundraiser featuring local talent. Cal Neva Resort, Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe, 775-830-7469.

**"Shirley Valentine"** • April 22-23, 28-May 1, 5-7, 12-14 • Willy Russell tale of life and love. Bruka Theatre, Reno, 775-323-3221.

**Dance Dance Dance in Carson City** • April 23 • Guest Tom Thoreau. Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 775-883-9351.

**Genoa's Spring Fling** • April 23-24 • Artisan show and antiques appraisal. Main Street, Genoa, 775-782-4951.

**Carson City Symphony Concert** • April 24 • Guest piano soloist Frank Levy performs Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto

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No. 2." Community Center, Carson City, 775-883-4154.

**Street Hop Car Show and Shine** • April 24 • Open to all makes and models. Food, music, and dash plaques. Diamonds Casino, Reno, 775-324-3445.

**\$1,500 Blackjack Tournament of Champions** • April 26 • Qualifying round. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-783-7711.

**World Series of Poker** • April 26-May 10 • Qualifying round for the Las Vegas finals June 2-July 15 at the Rio Suite Hotel and July 16-17 at Binion's Horseshoe. Harveys Lake Tahoe, Stateline, Lake Tahoe, 877-367-9767.

**Gates and Wakes** • April 29-30 • Pros ski or snowboard in the morning and wakeboard or waterski in the afternoon on Lake Tahoe. Alpine Meadows, Lake Tahoe, 530-583-4232.

**Eagle Valley Muzzleloaders Spring Rendezvous** • April 29-May 1 • Trappers, traders, black-powder shoots, and living-history demonstrations. Greenhouse Garden Center Canyon, Carson City, 775-687-7410.

**Become a Motorman** • April 29-May 1 • Class to learn to operate the Nevada State Railroad Museum's 1926 Edwards diesel-powered motorcar. The \$120 fee includes a rail-roader's cap, hosted barbecue, qualification certificate, and hands-on experience as a motorman and conductor. Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City, 775-687-6953.

**Carson Valley Inn Spring Stag Golf Tournament** • April 29-May 1 • Play at Genoa Lakes and Sierra Nevada Golf Ranch. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 775-783-6625.

**Reno Chamber Orchestra** • April 30 • Actor Leonard Nimoy will narrate the concert, which includes the music of Beethoven and Ullman and a performance by the winner of the college concerto competition. Nightingale Hall, UNR, Reno, 775-348-9413.

**Lake Cushing Classic** • April 30 • Pond crossing aboard skis, snowboards, or any other vessel that will almost float. Squaw Valley USA, Lake Tahoe, 530-583-6985.

**Reno Doll and Teddy Bear Show** • April 30 • Seminars, demonstrations, and displays. Reno Hilton, Reno, 775-224-1884.

**Maxfield Parrish: Master of Make-Believe** • April 30-June 26 • Show opens. Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 775-329-3333.

## Ongoing Events

**Blackjack and Slot Tournaments** • Daily. \$5 entry fee. Circus Circus, Reno, 888-682-0147.

**Gaming Tournaments** • Blackjack on Tues. and Sun., pai gow poker on Wed., limit Texas hold 'em on Wed., no-limit Texas hold 'em on Sun.-Thurs., slots on Thurs., keno on Sun. Peppermill, Reno, 775-689-7114.

**Siena Gaming Tournaments** • Blackjack on Mon., video poker on Tues. and Fri. Siena Hotel, Reno, 775-337-6260.

**Blackjack Tournaments** • Tues. \$20 buy-in and Fri. \$10 buy-in. Carson Nugget, Carson City, 800-426-5239.

**Gaming Tournaments** • Video poker on Thurs. \$10 buy-in, limit Texas hold 'em on Tues., no-limit Texas hold 'em on Thurs. Carson Valley Inn, Minden, 877-783-7711.

**Nevada State Museum** • Visitors can take a behind-the-scenes tour on the last Friday of each month. Tour covers the anthropology, plant, and animal collections. Advance registration is required. Carson City, 775-687-4810 for information on museum tours.

**Wine Walk** • Third Saturday at 2pm. Free wine tasting at participating merchants with the purchase of a map and glass for \$10. Riverwalk Arts District, Downtown, Reno, 775-337-1717.

**"The Journey"** • Thru March 4 • Paintings by Rossitza Todorova. Sierra Arts Gallery, Reno, 775-329-ARTS.

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**Vintage Racers: Fast and Furious** • Thru March 21 • Race cars from 1910-1920. National Automobile Museum, Reno, 775-333-9300.

**Peter Goin** • Thru March 25 • Photography exhibition by Reno documentary photographer. Nevada Arts Council, Carson City, 775-687-6680.

**The Wynn Collection** • Thru March 30 • Fourteen paintings from the Steve and Elaine Wynn Collection. Includes works by Picasso, Monet, Matisse, and Rembrandt. Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 775-329-3333.

**After 9/11: Messages From the World and Images From Ground Zero** • Thru March 30 • Commemorative exhibition of letters, poems, paintings, quilts, and photos. Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center, Gardnerville, 775-782-2555.

**Hortense "Kay" Tinkham** • Thru March 31 • Paintings showcase Northern Nevada railroading. Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City, 775-687-6953.

**Gold Fever** • Thru April 24 • Film traces 5,000 years of gold's cultural, economic, and historical significance. Also showing, *Starlight: A Journey Through the Cosmos*. Fleischmann Planetarium and Science Center, Reno, 775-784-4811.

**Joanna Frueh: A Retrospective** • Thru April • Multimedia artist, poet, and performer. Sheppard Gallery, UNR, Reno, 800-225-2277.

**"Silver Key" Pittman: Nevada's Frontier Statesman** • Thru May 23 • Exhibition on the life and career of Nevada's longtime U.S. senator. Known as the "Voice of Silver" because of his focus on the price of silver. Nevada Historical Society, Reno, 775-688-1190.

**Tireless and Unremitting: The Chinese and Nevada's Railroads** • Thru Jan. 2006 • Explores the relationship of Chinese immigrants with the railroad and other aspects of their culture



Family life is skewered by 3 Blonde Moms on March 4-5 at the Carson Valley Inn in Minden. From left are Maryellen Hooper, who has appeared on *The Tonight Show*, Helen Keane of the Style Network, and Joanie Fagan, who has appeared on *The Drew Carey Show*.

and daily life in Nevada. Nevada State Railroad Museum, Carson City, 775-687-6953.

**UNR Women's Basketball** • The Lady Wolf Pack plays March 3 vs. Hawaii Manoa, March 5 vs. San Jose State, and hosts the women's Western Athletic Conference Tournament,

March 8-12. Lawlor Events Center, UNR, Reno, 775-784-4500.

**Concerts in the Gallery** • George Hanepen Quartet, March 4. Chris Bayer, March 11. Chris Good, March 13. James Cavanaugh, March 25. Joe Venuto Duo, April 1. Bob Moss

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- Lahontan Auto Racing, May thru Oct.
- Fallon Farmer's Market, June thru Aug.
- Nevada Motocross Championships, Aug. 20-21
- Overland Hotel's 4th Annual Chili Cook-Off, Aug. 21
- Hearts O'Gold Cantaloupe Festival, Sept. 3-6
- Fallon Senior Pro Rodeo, Sept. 24-26
- 7th Annual Stockhorse Spectacular, Oct. 7-10
- 5th Annual Reining Futurities, Oct. 7-10
- Fallon Harvest Days & Nevada State Picnic, Oct. 7-9
- Waterfowl Hunting Season, Begins in Oct.
- WNCC Collegiate Rodeo, Oct. 22-23
- Christmas Tree Lighting, Dec. 3
- Fallon Chamber of Commerce Hometown Christmas, Dec. 4
- New Year's Eve Fire Works, Dec. 31
- Spring Wings Bird Festival, May 13-15, 2005
- Silver State International Rodeo, July 1-4, 2005
- Nevada Indian Days Rodeo & Pow Wow, July 15-17, 2005

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Trio, April 8. Mazer and Smith Ensemble, April 15 • Lunch break concerts, Riverside Artist Lofts, Reno, 775-329-ARTS. **Last Tracks** • March 5, 12, 19, 26 • Wine tasting and appetizers at Snowflake Lodge followed by a sunset run on Saturday. Diamond Peak Ski Resort, Incline Village, Lake Tahoe, 775-832-1177.

**Hope Valley Snowshoe Thompson Tour** • March 12 and 25 • Sorensen's Resort, south of Lake Tahoe, 800-423-9949.

**Four-Foot Centennial "Cake"** • March 15-April 2 • Faux birthday cake decorated with historical photographs depicting the growth of Sparks. Sparks Heritage Museum, Sparks, 775-355-1144.

**Back to the '80s** • April 3-Oct. 31 • Exhibit marks the museum's 20th anniversary with memorabilia from the era that brought Cabbage Patch Dolls and Post-it Notes, and local artifacts such as Greg LeMond's Tour de France jersey. Sparks Heritage Museum, Sparks, 775-355-1144.

**DeSotos, Dames, and Dudes: Divorce Reno Style** • April 11-Oct. 3 • Exhibit traces the period when divorcees arrived en masse to take the cure. National Automobile Museum, Reno, 775-333-9300.

**Maxfield Parrish: Master of Make-Believe** • April 30-June 26 • Show of Parrish paintings and illustrations. Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 775-329-3333.

## Coming Events

**"Mark Twain Tonight"** Starring Hal Holbrook • May 7 • Reno, 800-714-5331.

**Reno River Festival** • May 12-15 • Truckee River Whitewater Park, Reno, 800-FOR-RENO.

**Sparks Centennial Dinner and Dance** • May 13 • www.sparks100.org.

**Lake Tahoe Jazz Festival** • May 20-25 • Incline Village and Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe, 800-4468-2463.

**Nevada Passage/Whitewater Kayaking** • May 24 • Last event of the Nevada Passage, a made-for-television adventure competition. Reno, www.travelnevada.com.

**Rhythm and Rawhide: Reno Philharmonic Orchestra with Ian Tyson** • May 21 • Reno, 775-323-2850.

**Kit Carson Trail: Wild West Historic Home Tour** • May 28 • Carson City, 775-687-7410.

**Pro Wakeboard Tour** • June 3-5 • Sparks Marina Park, Sparks, 407-571-4622.

**Sparks Farmer's Market** • June 10-Aug. 26 (except Aug. 5) • Sparks, 775-353-2291.

**Reno Rodeo** • June 16-25 • Reno, 800-225-2277.

**Reno Rodeo Parade and History Fair** • June 18 • Sparks, www.sparks100.org.

**Artown Festival** • July 1-31 • Reno, 775-337-1717.

**Star Spangled Sparks Fireworks** • July 4 • Sparks, 775-358-1976.

**Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival** • July 14-Aug. 21 • Sand Harbor State Park, Lake Tahoe, 800-74-SHOWS.

**Big Easy Cajun Festival** • July 16-18 • Sparks, 775-358-4771.

**Hot August Nights Cars and Music Festival** • Aug. 3-7 • Reno and Sparks, 775-353-2291.

**Reno-Tahoe Open Golf Tournament** • Aug. 15-21 • Reno, 775-322-3900.

**Nevada State Fair** • Aug. 24-28 • Reno, 775-688-5767.

**Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-Off** • Sept. 2-6 • Sparks, 800-648-1177.

**Great Reno Balloon Race** • Sept. 9-11 • 775-826-1181.

**Virginia City Camel Races** • Sept. 9-11 • 775-847-7500.

**National Championship Air Races** • Sept. 15-18 • Reno, 775-972-6663.

**Sample the Arts at Victorian Amphitheater** • Oct. 2 • Sparks, 775-353-7816.

**Sparks Annual Turkey Trot** • Nov. 25 • 775-353-7815.

**Sparks Annual Hometowne Christmas Parade and Festival** • Dec. 4 • 775-353-2291.

## Shows

### CARSON CITY

**Carson Nugget** • 775-882-1626 or 800-426-5239 (continental U.S. including Nevada): Nugget Show Lounge: Entertainers like The Motifs, Michael Mandella, Tommy Bell, Madison Avenue, and Band on the Run appear Tues.-Sun.

**Carson Station** • 775-883-0900: Bands play nightly except Mon.

**Casino Fandango** • 775-885-7000: Bands play in the Cabaret Lounge.

**Piñon Plaza** • 775-885-9000: Sports Book Lounge: Bands play Wed.-Sun.

### CARSON VALLEY

**Carson Valley Inn** • Minden, 775-782-9711 or 800-321-6983: Shannon Ballroom: 3 Blonde Moms, March 4-5, comedy show. Four-Way Street: A Tribute to Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, March 22-27. Cabaret Lounge: Bands play for dancing, dark Mon.

**Sharkey's Nugget** • Gardnerville, 775-782-3133.

**Topaz Lodge** • Topaz Lake, 775-266-3339: Bands play Fri.-Sat.

### RENO/SPARKS

**Atlantis** • 775-825-4700 or 800-723-6500: Grand Ballroom: Entertainment TBA. Bands play in the Center Stage Cabaret.

**Boomtown** • 775-345-6000: Can-Can Theater and Dancehall: Bands appear Tues.-Sun.

**Club Cal Neva** • 775-323-1046 or 877-777-7303: Entertainment on Fri. and Sat.

**Circus Circus** • 775-329-0711: Circus Cabaret: Entertainment daily except Tues.-Wed. Free daily circus acts, 11am-10:30pm.

**City Center Pavilion** • 888-288-1833: Entertainment TBA.

**Eldorado** • 775-786-5700, 800-648-5966 (U.S. outside Nevada) or 800-648-3024 (Canada): Eldorado Showroom: Entertainment TBA. Bands play nightly at the Brew Brothers microbrewery. Piano music in the Roxy Lounge. BuBinga Lounge: Dance to DJs and bands Tues.-Sat. Bands play in the Casino Cabaret Thurs.-Sat.

**Fitzgeralds** • 775-785-3300 or 800-648-5022 (U.S. outside Nevada): Bands perform nightly in the Fitz Showbar.

**Golden Phoenix** • 775-785-7100: Showroom: TBA.

**Harrah's Reno** • 775-788-2900 or 800-HARRAHS: Sammy's Showroom: "Showgirls," adult revue, indf., 10:30pm Thurs.-Fri. and Sun.-Mon., 11:30pm Sat., and 8pm Wed., dark Tues. Bands play Fri.-Sat. in the Sapphire Lounge and the Virg Nightclub.

**John Ascuaga's Nugget** • Sparks, 775-356-3304 or 800-648-1177: Rose Ballroom: John Ascuaga's Nugget's 50th

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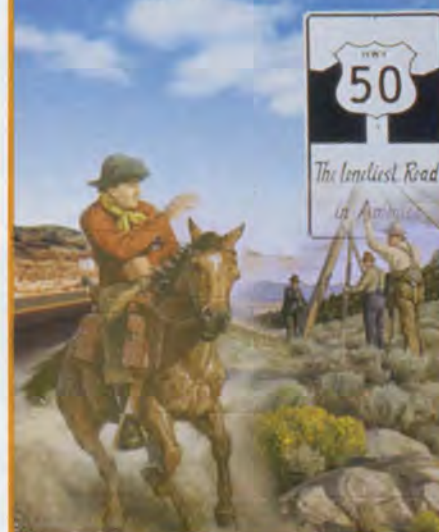
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Anniversary Party, March 17. Celebrity Showroom: Les Brown and the Band of Renown, March 2. Craig Chaquico, March 4-5. Legends of Swing: Tribute to Stan Kenton, March 9. Asleep at the Wheel, March 11-12. The Four Freshmen, March 16. America, March 18-19. Bands play in the Casino Cabaret and Trader Dick's. Flamenco guitarist Thurs. and jazz Fri.-Sat. in Restaurante Orozko.

**Peppermill** • 775-826-2121 or 800-648-6992: Tahoe Grand Showroom: Entertainment TBA. Cabaret Lounge: Bands play nightly. Piano music featuring Ron Perry or Dale Vernon nightly in the Steakhouse.

**Rail City Casino** • Sparks, 775-359-9440: Side Track Lounge: Bands play on weekends.

**Reno Events Center** • 800-687-8733: Alicia Keys, March 13.

**Reno Hilton** • 775-789-2285 or 800-648-3568 (U.S. outside Nevada): Hilton Theater: Entertainment TBA. Bands play nightly in The Garage.

**Sands Regency** • 775-348-2200: Tequila Bar: Bands play Wed.-Sun. Comedians perform in the Just For Laughs Comedy Club, dark Mon.-Tues.

**Siena** • 775-337-6260: Lexie's Lounge: Jammin' With the Siena Jazz Ensemble Tues.-Sat. Corky Bennett performs Tues.-Sun.

**Silver Club** • Sparks, 775-358-4771 or 800-905-7774: Entertainment in the Casino Lounge.

**Silver Legacy** • 775-329-4777 or 800-687-8733 (U.S., Canada, and Mexico): Grande Exposition Hall: John Heffron and Tammy Pescatelli, March 5. Joe Cocker, March 12. Music in the Rum Bullions Island Bar. Comedians perform at the Catch a Rising Star comedy club, dark Mon. Silver Baron Lounge: Piano music.

**Tamarack Junction** • 775-852-3600.

**Western Village** • Sparks, 775-331-1069, 800-648-1170.

### STATELINE, LAKE TAHOE

**Bill's Lake Tahoe** • 775-588-2455: William's Back Door Blues Club: "Hypnosis Gone Wild," with Terry Stokes Jr. Bands play 9:30pm-12:30am Thurs.-Sat.

**Caesars Tahoe** • 775-588-3515 or 800-648-3353: Circus Maximus: Indigo Girls, March 5. The Club Nero has dancing. Stone St. Bar and Grill: Monthly Girl Powder Concert Series, artist TBA.

**Harrah's Lake Tahoe** • 800-HARRAHS: South Shore Room: Kenny Wayne Shepherd, March 4-5. "Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! A Tribute to the Beatles starring Rain," March 12-13, 18-20, 25-27, April 1-3. California Bar: Arthur Herve, Tues.-Sat. Bands play in the Casino Center Stage.

**Harveys** • 775-588-2411 or 800-553-1022 ext. 2883: Cabaret: The Improv, comedians perform nightly except Mon. "X: An Erotic Adventure," adult musical revue, dark Mon. Cabo Wabo Cantina Lounge: Bands play in after-hours nightclub setting.

**Lake Tahoe Horizon** • 775-588-6211 or 800-322-7723: Golden Cabaret: "Fusion," comedy-magic revue. Bands play in the Aspen Lounge Thurs.-Sun.

**Lakeside Inn** • 775-588-7777: In the Tavern: Karaoke with Psycho Attitude, 11pm-3am Fri.

### NORTH LAKE TAHOE

**Cal-Neva Resort** • Crystal Bay, 775-832-4000 or 800-225-6382. Showroom: Entertainment TBA.

**Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe** • Incline Village, 775-832-1234: Bands play in the Regency Grand Ballroom. Lone Eagle Restaurant: Music, Wed.-Sat. Casino Stage Bar: Pianist, Wed.-Sun.

**Jim Kelley's Tahoe Nugget** • Crystal Bay, 775-831-0455.

**Tahoe Biltmore** • Crystal Bay, 775-831-0660: Breeze Nightclub: Music nightly except Mon.



# Do It in the Dirt

Racers show **no fear** in off-road events in Nevada's **outback.**

By Ann Henderson

**D**avid Pearson of Las Vegas shares a name and a passion with NASCAR driver David Pearson of South Carolina. But instead of driving paved ovals, the 21-year-old Nevadan races his 250cc motorcycle full-throttle across rocks and sagebrush.

Pearson will be the defending champion at the **Kawasaki Team Green Laughlin U.S. Hare Scrambles** on March 4-6. The event, held 10 miles west of Laughlin on State Route 163, is considered a "tight race," one of the most technical in the Best in the Desert series. A tight course may be run at lower speeds, according to Best in the Desert Director Casey Folks, but it has more corners that test the rider's skill.

Pearson has honed those skills in races in the U.S., Spain, France, Czechoslovakia, and Brazil. Wearing the green Kawasaki team colors, Pearson competes in the open pro class. He is seventh in the World Off-Road Championship rankings and third in the National Hare and Hounds series.

Pearson began racing at age six in the local motorcycle circuit, but his real experience came in the hills and gullies around the family ranch in Spring Valley, 20 miles east of Pioche. When not herding cattle and raising alfalfa, Pearson and his cousins, Nick, now 27 and Russ, 24, spent every spare moment competing. That relationship continues today as Nick and Russ, who also live in Las Vegas, race professionally for Yamaha.

"My closest competition is probably Russ and Destry Abbott," says David, whose Uncle Lee still tends the family ranch. "There is a Pearson family rivalry, but we respect each other."

Pearson and his wife, Denitha, live in Las Vegas with their two children, Jessica, four, and Anthony, two. "Jessica gets very excited at races," he says. She may be part of the next generation of racing Pearsons.

**A Thousand-Mile Race:** On July 6-10, Best in the Desert will revive the Nevada 1,000 off-road race featuring cars, trucks, motorcycles, and quad teams. The Corky McMillin family of San Diego is sponsoring this year's event and will have three members competing—Corky, who at 74 finished second overall in the 2004 Vegas to Reno race, and his 18-year-old grandsons, Andy and Daniel. Spectators also can look for David Pearson, the event's



Nevada racers to watch this summer include Rob MacCachren (top left), Daryl Folks (top right), and David Pearson (left), the defending champion at the Laughlin U.S. Hare Scrambles.

defending motorcycle champion, as well as another Las Vegas, Rob MacCachren. The 30-year-old MacCachren, who has been racing since 1982, has 10 championships to his credit.

The four-day **McMillin Nevada 1,000** will begin July 6 in Las Vegas with stops each night in Tonopah. A special area, Camp Adventure, will be created in Tonopah for RVs and tents.

"I suggest anyone wanting to attend contact us for a spectator map," Casey Folks says. "Ninety-nine percent of the race locations are on federally owned lands, so there are restrictions." He adds that maps are produced for all of the group's races. For information visit [www.bitd.com](http://www.bitd.com).

## Desert Racers

Following is a sampling of off-road races in rural Nevada this year.

**Kawasaki Team Green Laughlin U.S. Hare Scrambles:** March 4-6, Best in the Desert, Laughlin, [www.bitd.com](http://www.bitd.com).

**Sturgeons Casino Lovelock 250:** April 23-24, VORRA race, Lovelock, 530-417-5333.

**Terrible's Town 250:** April 29-May 1, Best in the Desert, Pahrump, [www.bitd.com](http://www.bitd.com).

**Casino West Yerington 200:** May 29-30, VORRA race, Yerington, 530-417-5333.

**McMillin Nevada 1,000:** July 6-10, Best in the Desert, Las Vegas and Tonopah, [www.bitd.com](http://www.bitd.com).

**Las Vegas Primm 300:** Sept. 9-11, SCORE International, [www.score-international.com](http://www.score-international.com).

**TSCO Vegas to Reno:** Oct. 6-8, Best in the Desert, [www.bitd.com](http://www.bitd.com).

**Henderson's Terrible 300:** Dec. 2-4, Best in the Desert, [www.bitd.com](http://www.bitd.com).

**Laughlin Desert Challenge:** Jan. 2006, SCORE International, [www.score-international.com](http://www.score-international.com).

Ann Henderson is Nevada Magazine's events and entertainment editor.





# Rural Nevada

## EVENTS AND SHOWS

This spring, photographers will focus their cameras at **Shooting the West** in Winnemucca, and birdwatchers will train their binoculars on the **Walker Lake Loon Festival**. Fallon hosts the comedy-improv group "**Second City**," and **Gary Puckett and .38 Special** headline at Cactus Petes in Jackpot. Be sure to call ahead to confirm events' dates and times.

## Events

**Pick of the Remuda Sale and Trade Show** • March 4-5 • Event Center, Winnemucca, 775-625-1302.

**Ranch Hand Rodeo** • March 5-6 • Convention Center, Winnemucca, 775-623-5071.

**Pahrump High School Rodeo** • March 5-6 • McCullough Arena, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Highland Games and Celtic Gathering** • March 5-6 • Scottish competitions. Petrack Park, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**"Swingin' the Benny Goodman Songbook"** • March 11 • Singer Terry Blaine, pianist Mark Shane, and clarinetist Allen Vachie. Eureka Opera House, Eureka, 775-237-6006.

**Shooting the West Photography Seminar** • March 11-13 • Workshops and guest speakers. Convention Center, Winnemucca, 775-623-5071.

**Harmonia** • March 12 • Music from Eastern European cultures. Barkley Theatre, Fallon, 775-423-1440.

**Drag Racing** • March 12 • Test and tune. Top Gun Raceway, Fallon, 775-423-0223.

**Wildhorse Perch Derby** • March 12-13 • Ice fishing for cash prizes. Wildhorse Reservoir, Wildhorse, 775-758-9494.

**Pahrump Valley Equestrians** • March 13-14 • Training and competition. McCullough Arena, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Peppermill Keno Tournament** • March 13-14 • Wendover, 800-217-0049.

**Montego Bay Blackjack Tournament** • March 13-14 • Montego Bay, Wendover, 800-217-0049.

**Rough Rider Gymkhana** • March 20 • McCullough Arena, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Rainbow Slot Tournament** • March 20-21 • Rainbow Casino, Wendover, 800-217-0049.

**Pahrump Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament** • March 26 • Fundraiser. Mountain Falls Golf Course, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Pahrump Gunfighters** • March 28 • Enactment and skits. Dusty Flats off Bell Vista, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Spring Cribbage Classic** • April 1-3 • Tenth annual competition. Convention Center, Winnemucca, 775-623-2511, ext. 2207.

**April Fool's Slot Tournament** • April 1-3 • El Capitan, Hawthorne, 800-922-2311.

**Spring Adventure Hike** • April 2 • Ranger-led four-mile hike to look for signs of spring. Bring water and a lunch and dress for the weather. Cathedral Gorge State Park, two miles northwest of Panaca, 775-728-4460.

**United Way Golf Tournament** • April 3 • Fundraiser. Mountain Falls Golf Course, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.



**Harmonia** performs the music of Hungary, Romania, Croatia, Slovakia, and the Western Ukraine on March 12 at the Barkley Theatre in Fallon.



**Drag Racing** • April 3 • Test and tune. Top Gun Raceway, Fallon, 775-423-0223.

**Peppermill Slot Tournament** • April 3-4 • Peppermill, Wendover, 800-217-0049.

**Children's Easter Egg Hunt** • April 9 • Petrack Park, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Drag Racing** • April 9-10 • Test and tune and ET Race. Top Gun Raceway, Fallon, 775-423-0223.

**Pahrump Valley Equestrians** • April 10 • Training and competition. McCullough Arena, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Nevada April Circuit: AQHA Show** • April 14-17 • Working cow horse event with cutting, reining, roping, and halter classes. Events Complex, Winnemucca, 775-623-4625.

**"Taming of the Shrew"** • April 15 • Utah Shakespearean Festival performance. Eureka Opera House, Eureka, 775-237-6006.

**Walker Lake Loon Festival** • April 16 • Free boat and barge rides to view loons, lectures on the lake and Native American culture, food, and entertainment. Walker Lake, Hawthorne, 775-945-8243.

**"Second City"** • April 16 • Comedy-theater troupe performs sketches, music, and improvisations. The Chicago-based company has a group playing the Flamingo in Las Vegas. Barkley Theatre, Fallon, 775-423-1440.

**Wildflowers of Eastern Nevada** • April 16 • Slide program and discussion. Cathedral Gorge State Park, two miles northwest of Panaca, 775-728-4460.

**Ranch Rodeo** • April 16-17 • 20th annual. Spring Creek Horse Palace, Spring Creek, 775-753-6295.

**Evening Geology Walk** • April 17 • Ranger-led walk of less than a mile to discuss the park's formations. Dress for the weather and bring a flashlight. Cathedral Gorge State Park, two miles northwest of Panaca, 775-728-4460.

**Peppermill Three-Card Poker Tournament** • April 17-18 • Peppermill, Wendover, 800-217-0049.

**Moonlight Walk** • April 23 • Ranger-led walk. Bring a flashlight and dress for the weather. Cathedral Gorge State Park, two miles northwest of Panaca, 775-728-4460 for more program information.

**Sturgeons Casino Lovelock 250** • April 23-24 • VORRA off-road race. Lovelock, 530-417-5333.

**Police Association Baker, California, to Las Vegas Run** • April 23 • Relay run. State Routes 372 and 160, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Earth Day** • April 24 • Honeysuckle Park, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Pahrump Gunfighters** • April 25 • Enactment and skits. Dusty Flats off Bell Vista, Pahrump, 775-727-5800.

**Terrible's Town 250** • April 29-May 1 • Best in the Desert off-road race. Pahrump, 702-457-5775.

**GPS and Geocaching Workshop** • April 30 • Bring your GPS for a treasure hunt. Jackets and flashlights needed. Cathedral Gorge State Park, two miles northwest of Panaca, 775-728-4460.

**Confederate Memorial Day** • April 30 • Living-history military program by United Daughters of the Confederacy and Nevada Civil War Volunteers honoring veterans. Fallon Cemetery, Fallon, 775-423-8797.

**Jesse Sykes and the Sweet Hereafter** • April 30 • Quintet performs in the country-gothic style. Barkley Theatre, Fallon, 775-423-1440.

**Winnemucca Pro-Am Golf Tourney** • April 30-May 1 • More than 100 golfers compete. Winnemucca Municipal Golf Course, Winnemucca, 775-623-6326.

**Drag Racing** • April 30-May 1 • ET Race. Top Gun Raceway, Fallon, 775-423-0223.

## Ongoing Events

**Goldfield Historical Firehouse and Museum** • Antique equipment displayed on weekends. Goldfield, 775-485-6303.

**Eye Opener Slot Tournament** • 9am-noon Mon.-Thurs. Saddle West, Pahrump, 800-433-3987.

**Sturgeons Inn Tournaments** • Bingo Tues. and Thurs., slot tournament Fri. Lovelock, 775-273-2971 or 888-234-6835.

**Saturday Night Fever Slot Tournament** • 7pm, \$10 buy-in. Saddle West, Pahrump, 800-433-3987.

**Quilting Creations** • March 1-April 12 • Designers of all ages. Convention Center, Hawthorne, 775-945-3030.

**Fukusa From the Collection of Dr. Edward P. Gerber** • March 1-April 23 • Japanese ceremonial gift covers. Oats Park Art

Center, Fallon, 775-423-1440 for more event information.

**Quilts and Photography Show** • March 8-April 19 • Quilts by Cherie George and photography by Bonnie Rannald. Convention Center, Hawthorne, 775-945-3030.

**Hidden Cave Tours** • March 12, 26, April 9, 23, May 14, 28 • Guided tour of Hidden Cave archaeological site includes self-guided tour of Grimes Point petroglyph site. Churchill County Museum, Fallon. Confirm tour dates, 775-423-3677.

## Coming Events

**Nevada Passage/Four-Wheel Drive Rally and Treasure Hunt** • May 21 • Made-for-TV adventure competition. Historic sites near Ely, [www.travelnevada.com](http://www.travelnevada.com).

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## Upcoming Events in Elko, Nevada

**Wildhorse Perch Derby**  
March 12th-13th

**Ranch Rodeo**  
April 16th-17th

**Bangin' Bones (4X4)**  
**Wild Weekend**  
May 28th-30th

**Bowhunters Classic**  
**3D Archery Shoot**  
June 4th-5th

**20th Annual**  
**Elko Mining Expo**  
June 6th-10th

**Elko County Auto Racing**  
**Bud Shoot Out**  
June 10th-11th

**Elko Motorcycle Jamboree**  
June 17th-19th

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**[www.ExploreElko.com](http://www.ExploreElko.com)**



Nevada Passage/Bicycle Climb and Hike • May 22 • Made-for-TV adventure competition. Lamoille Canyon, 20 miles southeast of Elko, [www.travelnevada.com](http://www.travelnevada.com) for additional event information.

Nevada Passage/Giant Slalom/Freestyle Sand Dune Trials • May 23 • Made-for-TV adventure series. Sand Mountain, 25 miles east of Fallon, [www.travelnevada.com](http://www.travelnevada.com).

Run-A-Mucca Motorcycle Rally • May 27-29 • Winnemucca, 800-962-2638.

Casino West Yerington 200 • May 29-30 • VORRA off-road race. Yerington, 530-417-5333.

Winnemucca Basque Festival • June 11 • Winnemucca, 775-623-5071.

Gridley Days • June 17-19 • Austin, 775-964-2200.

McMillin Nevada 1,000 • July 6-10 • Beatty, Goldfield, and Tonopah. Las Vegas, 702-457-5775.

## Shows

### AMARGOSA VALLEY

Longstreet Inn • 775-372-1777: Weekend entertainment.

### BEATTY

Stagecoach • 775-553-2419 or 800-4-BIGWIN (U.S. outside Nevada): Bands play in the lounge Fri.-Sat.

Exchange Club • 775-553-2368: Karaoke on Fri.

### ELKO

Commercial Hotel • 775-738-3181: Bands play Tues.-Sun.

Gold Country Casino • 800-621-1332: Music on weekends.

High Desert Inn • 775-738-8425: Comedy on Fri.

Red Lion • 775-738-2111 or 800-545-0044 (Western U.S. outside Nevada): Red Lion Lounge: Bands play nightly.



Photographers gather in Winnemucca March 11-13 for Shooting the West, which includes three days of workshops and explorations of Basque eateries.

Stockmen's Hotel • 775-738-5141 or 800-648-2345 (U.S. and Nevada): Showroom: Bands play Tues.-Sun.

### ELY

Hotel Nevada • 775-289-6665.

### FALLON

Bonanza Inn • 775-423-6031.

Fallon Nugget • 775-423-3111.

Stockman's Casino and Holiday Inn Express • 775-423-2117.

### HAWTHORNE

El Capitan • 775-945-3322: Music in the Casino Lounge.

Joe's Tavern • 775-945-2302.

### JACKPOT

Barton's Club 93 • 775-755-2341.

Cactus Petes • 800-821-1103: Gala Showroom: Ray Price, March 11-12. Danny Marona, March 25-26. Gary Puckett, April 8-9. .38 Special, April 22-23. Ronnie Milsap, May 13-

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Singer Terry Blaine appears in "Swingin' the Benny Goodman Songbook" March 11 at the Eureka Opera House.

14. Bill Engvall, May 27-28. Bands play in the Cabaret. Horseshu Casino • 775-755-2321. Cabaret: TBA.

#### LOVELOCK

Sturgeons • 775-273-2971 and 888-234-6835: Center Club Showroom: Bands and karaoke are featured on weekends.

#### PAHRUMP

Pahrump Nugget • 775-751-6500.

Saddle West Hotel, Casino, and RV Park • 775-727-1111: Entertainment in the Club West Nightclub.

Terrible's Lakeside • 775-751-7770.

Terrible's Town Casino • 775-751-7777.

#### SILVER SPRINGS

Silver Springs Nugget • 775-577-4263.

#### TONOPAH

Banc Club • 775-482-5409: Bands play Thurs.-Sat.

Tonopah Station Ramada Inn • 775-482-9777: Bands play on weekends.

#### WENDOVER

Montego Bay • 775-664-9100: Bands play in the lounge.

Peppermill • 775-664-2255 or 800-648-9660 (U.S. outside Nevada): Entertainers appear in the Casino Lounge.

Rainbow Casino • 775-664-4000: Bands play in the lounge.

Red Garter • 775-664-2111 or 800-982-2111 (U.S. outside Nevada).

State Line Nugget • 775-664-2221.

#### WINNEMUCCA

Winners Hotel • 775-623-2511: Winners Lounge: Small Fortune, March 3-5, 10-12. Redstone, March 17-19. Rock 'n Horse, March 24-26. Herb McQuay, March 31-April 2. Nitro Express, April 7-9, 14-16. Jeff Palmer, April 21-23.

Model T Hotel • 775-623-2588: Bands play Thurs.-Sat. Karaoke, Wed.

Holiday Inn Express • 775-625-3100.

Sundance Casino • 775-623-3336.

Red Lion • 800-633-6435.

#### YERINGTON

Casino West • 775-463-2481: Weekend music.

Dini's Lucky Club • 775-463-2868: Weekend music.

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## Tourism Agencies/Chambers of Commerce

**101 Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce**—High desert region, U.S. 50 (Loneliest Road in America), history, mountain biking, hunting. 775-964-2200, [www.mountainsage.org](http://www.mountainsage.org).

**102 Beatty Chamber of Commerce**—Beatty, the Gateway to Death Valley National Park, celebrated its centennial in fall 2004. 866-736-3716, [www.beattynevada.org](http://www.beattynevada.org).

**103 Boulder City Chamber of Commerce**—"The city that built Hoover Dam," golf, outdoor sports, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area. 866-297-4336, [www.bouldercitychamber.com](http://www.bouldercitychamber.com).

**104 Carson City Convention and Visitors Bureau**—Nevada's capital city has "Divine 9" golf courses, lodging, and gaming. 800-NEVADA-1, 775-687-7410, [www.visitcarsoncity.com](http://www.visitcarsoncity.com).

**105 Carson City Convention and Visitors Bureau/Seniors Strike Silver Cards**—Discounts on lodging, meals, museums, recreation, gaming. 800-NEVADA-1, [www.visitcarsoncity.com](http://www.visitcarsoncity.com).

**106 Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Authority**—Genoa, Minden-Gardnerville, and Topaz Lake make up the Carson Valley. 800-727-7677, [www.carsonvalleynv.org](http://www.carsonvalleynv.org) for information.

**107 White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board, Ely**—Bristlecone pines, Great Basin National Park, fishing, hunting, camping, golf, Nevada Northern Railway. 800-HY6-9350, [www.elynevada.net](http://www.elynevada.net).

**108 Eureka Opera House**—Built in 1880 and restored in 1993, the Eureka Opera House is located on U.S. 50 (Loneliest Road in America). 775-237-6006, [www.co.eureka.nv.us](http://www.co.eureka.nv.us).

**109 Fallon Convention and Tourism Authority**—Fallon is home to Navy's Top Gun flight school, Sand Mountain, Lake Lahontan. 866-4FALLON, [www.fallontourism.com](http://www.fallontourism.com).

**110 Elko Convention and Visitors Authority**—In Northeastern Nevada on Interstate 80, Elko has outdoor recreation, history, hotels, casinos, and meetings. Convention Center has 50,000 sq. ft. of meeting space. Free Meeting Planner Guide. 800-248-3556, [www.elkocva.com](http://www.elkocva.com).

**111 Jackpot Tourism**—Located on Idaho border on U.S. 93, Northeastern Nevada resort town with entertainment, casinos, restaurants, golf. 775-755-2229, [www.jackpot-nevada.org](http://www.jackpot-nevada.org).

**112 Nevada Commission on Tourism**—Nevada's tourism authority guides the visitor to unlimited outdoor adventure and world-class resorts. 800-NEVADA-8, [www.travelnevada.com](http://www.travelnevada.com).

**115 Virginia City Tourism**—The historic mining town of Virginia City has shops, restaurants, mine tours and museums, train rides, lodging, and many special events. 775-847-7500, [www.virginiacity-nv.org](http://www.virginiacity-nv.org).

**116 Lander County Convention and Tourism Authority**—Battle Mountain, on I-80, is famous for its *Washington Post* appellation, "Armpit of America." 775-635-1112, [www.battlemountain.org](http://www.battlemountain.org).

**117 Winnemucca Convention and Visitors Authority**—Basque restaurants, outdoor adventure, history, events, nightlife, gaming, convention center. 800-962-2638,

[www.winnemucca.nv.us](http://www.winnemucca.nv.us) for further vacation information.

**119 Pony Express Territory**—Pony Express Trail (1860-1861) parallels U.S. 50 (Loneliest Road in America) through Pony Express Territory. 866-4FALLON, [www.ponyexpressnevada.com](http://www.ponyexpressnevada.com).

**120 Truckee-Donner Chamber of Commerce**—North of Lake Tahoe, Sierra Nevada views, six world-class ski resorts, and Donner Memorial State Park. For information 866-245-4347 [www.truckee.com](http://www.truckee.com).

**122 Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority**—Information on restaurants, shopping, entertainment, events, gaming, lodging, golf. 877-VISIT-LV, [www.vegasfreedom.com](http://www.vegasfreedom.com).

**124 Pahrump Valley Chamber of Commerce**—Pahrump has outdoor activities, events, hotel-casinos, Pahrump Valley Winery, RV parks. 866-722-5800, [www.pahrumpchamber.com](http://www.pahrumpchamber.com).

**128 Wells Chamber of Commerce**—Wells is the jump-off point for California-Oregon Trail sites. Hunting, fishing, golf, and trails, 775-752-3540, [www.californiatrailinterpretivecenter.com](http://www.californiatrailinterpretivecenter.com).

**129 Greater Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce**—Five state parks, Pahrnatag National Wildlife Refuge, ghost towns, mining camps. 775-962-5271, [www.lincolncountynevada.com](http://www.lincolncountynevada.com).

**132 Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority**—Official guide to Tahoe hotels, cabins, lodging, rates, reservations, and vacation packages, Nevada and California. 800-AT-TAHOE, [www.virtualtahoe.com](http://www.virtualtahoe.com).

**133 City of West Wendover**—Swimming, golfing, horseback riding, fishing, birdwatching, casinos, hotels, dining, and entertainment. 866-BZYCITY, [www.westwendovercity.com](http://www.westwendovercity.com).

## Hotels/Casinos

**202 Carson Nugget, Carson City**—Video/slot machines, table games, keno, bingo, restaurants, buffet, gift shop, entertainment. 800-426-5239, [www.cnugget.com](http://www.cnugget.com).

**203 Carson Valley Inn, Minden**—Hotel, motor lodge, RV park, convention center, wedding chapel, pool, spa, gift shop, four restaurants, and casino. 800-321-6983, [www.cvinn.com](http://www.cvinn.com).

**207 Imperial Palace, Las Vegas**—On the Las Vegas Strip, the hotel-casino has 2,700 rooms, 10 restaurants, "Legends in Concert." 888-777-7664, [www.imperialpalace.com](http://www.imperialpalace.com).

**208 John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks**—Off I-80, gaming, John's Club, eight restaurants, wedding chapel, pool, health club, convention facilities. 800-648-1177, [www.janugget.com](http://www.janugget.com).

**209 Peppermill, Reno**—Gaming, seven restaurants, entertainment, pool, spa, salon, senior specials, conventions. 800-648-6992 (mention HNVMA4), [www.PeppermillReno.com](http://www.PeppermillReno.com).

**210 Riviera Hotel Casino, Las Vegas**—The Riviera celebrates its Golden Anniversary in 2005 with a nostalgic look at Las Vegas and the Rat Pack Era. The 50-year-old resort has remodeled rooms, suites, convention facilities, six restaurants, and shows every night, including "Splash" and "La Cage." 800-256-6860, [www.rivierahotel.com](http://www.rivierahotel.com).

**215 Saddle West, Pahrump**—Rooms and suites, restaurant, buffet, RV resort, golf packages, convention facilities, Players Club, slot tournaments. 800-433-3987 [www.saddlewest.com](http://www.saddlewest.com).

**218 Harrah's Laughlin**—Themed after a Mexican resort, 1,571 rooms and suites. Slot players can enjoy Harrah's Total Rewards. Top-name entertainment in the showroom or amphitheater, five restaurants, outdoor activities on the river, meeting and banquet facilities. 800-HARRAHS, [www.harrahs.com](http://www.harrahs.com).

**222 Carson Station and Piñon Plaza Casino-Resorts, Carson City**—Best Western. Carson Station has 92 rooms. 800-501-2929, [www.carsonstation.com](http://www.carsonstation.com). Piñon Plaza has 148 rooms, 70 RV spaces. 877-519-5569, [www.pinonplaza.com](http://www.pinonplaza.com).

**227 Atlantis Casino Resort, Reno**—Concierge tower, 1,000 hotel rooms, health spa, nine restaurants, gaming, 24,000 square feet of meeting space. Mention *NEVADA Magazine*. 800-723-6500, [www.atlantiscasino.com](http://www.atlantiscasino.com).

**229 Cactus Petes Resort, Jackpot**—Hotel has 300 rooms and suites, live entertainment, concerts, five restaurants, 26,000 square feet of gaming. 800-821-1103, [www.cactuspetes.com](http://www.cactuspetes.com).

## Lodging

**402 Lake Tahoe Accommodations**—Management for rental properties, rental homes, or condominiums near skiing, golf, and lake. 800-544-3234, [www.laketahoeaccommodations.com](http://www.laketahoeaccommodations.com).

## Bed & Breakfast

**403 Bliss Mansion Bed and Breakfast, Carson City**—Guests revisit the past, stay in suites with private baths, have gourmet breakfasts. Special parties and weddings are held in the mansion and outside on the verandas and lawns. 775-887-8988, [www.blissmansion.com](http://www.blissmansion.com).

## Shows

**515 Steve Wyrick/Aladdin Resort Casino, Las Vegas**—Magic, illusions, and great entertainment nightly, dark Tuesdays. Shows at 7pm and 10pm, group rates available at 702-258-0020, general public 702-785-5000 or Ticketmaster.

## Attractions, Galleries, Museums

**602 Liberace Museum, Las Vegas**—Museum features jewelry, wardrobe, and costumes worn by the late Liberace, custom-car collection, and pianos. 702-798-5595, [www.liberace.com](http://www.liberace.com).

**603 Nevada Northern Railway Museum, Ely**—Historic tourist train rides on 32 miles of track through copper country beginning in East Ely. Meetings on wheels for business, retreats, weddings, celebrations. 866-40-STEAM, [www.nnry.com](http://www.nnry.com).

## Events

**703 Pioneer Territory**—Death Valley, Boundary Peak, min-

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ing towns, seven state parks and wilderness areas, mountain biking, skiing, hiking. 800-357-8754, [www.pioneerterritory.org](http://www.pioneerterritory.org).

**704 Nevada's Cowboy Country**—Lovelock to Wendover, hotels, casinos, gaming, outdoor adventure, ranches, rodeos, Basque culture, gold mines. 877-626-9268, [www.cowboycountry.org](http://www.cowboycountry.org).

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### Recreation

**901 Lake Mead Cruises**—On Lake Mead and near Hoover Dam, *Desert Princess* or *Desert Princess Too*, events, weddings. 702-293-6180, [www.lakemeadcruises.com](http://www.lakemeadcruises.com).

**902 Tonopah Historic Mining Foundation**—Tonopah Historic Mining Park is on site of Belle and Jim Butler's 1900 claim. Self-guided tours. 775-482-9274, [www.tonopahnevada.org](http://www.tonopahnevada.org).

**905 Nevada Department of Transportation Bicycle Safety**—Information on safety and statewide events. Sells state bicycle jerseys. 775-888-RIDE, [www.bicyclenevada.com](http://www.bicyclenevada.com).

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**913 Lake Tahoe Cruises and Zephyr Cove Resort/Aramark Parks and Resorts**—Paddlewheelers *M.S. Dixie II* and *Tahoe Queen* cruise year-round, offering parties, weddings, groups. Zephyr Cove Resort has a beach, boat rentals, cabins, restaurant, RV Park. 800-23-TAHOE, [www.laketahoe cruises.com](http://www.laketahoe cruises.com), [www.zephyrcove.com](http://www.zephyrcove.com). Mention offer NVM5 or *NEVADA Magazine* when making reservations.

### Restaurants

**1001 Louis' Basque Corner**—Authentic Basque food served family style in downtown Reno, 301 E. Fourth St., since 1967. Open for dinner nightly and lunch Tues.-Sat. 775-323-7203.

### Real Estate

**1101 Liberty Realty Relocation Division**—Relocate to Nevada with a team of specialists. For information on available homes, 800-296-1802, [www.LibertyRelocationDivision.com](http://www.LibertyRelocationDivision.com).

### Retail Shopping

**1203 Gamblers General Store, Las Vegas**—Casino products, antique slots, books, chips, roulette wheels, tables, sold in store and online. 800-322-2447 [www.gamblersgeneralstore.com](http://www.gamblersgeneralstore.com).

### RV Parks

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# Stairways to Heaven

The **Forum Shops**, poker fever, and a new megaresort.

## Spiral Escalation

Since the three-level expansion of the **Forum Shops at Caesars** opened last fall, customers have admired the murals, the vaulted ceilings, and the Las Vegas mall's piece de resistance—a spiral escalator.

"We brought in a group of kids from Warren Walker Elementary School, and they went nuts over the escalator," says Maureen Crampton, the Forum Shops' marketing director. "We couldn't get them off it."

The sensation of riding around is not that different from riding straight up, but you do get a 360-degree sightseeing tour of the three-floor rotunda in the 175,000-square-foot addition. The escalator, the second installed in the U.S. (the first was in the San Francisco Shopping Center), was designed in Japan by Mitsubishi and met the Forum Shops' goal of creating a focal point.

"It's visually appealing as well as functional," says Crampton. "We could have built a straight-shot elevator, but we wanted to continue to push the bar."

And what would be the fun of a straight-shot elevator? The spiral escalator affords an excellent opportunity to people-watch, something the Forum Shops is known for. Perhaps you'll see the city's power players coming from a dinner at Il Mulino New York or Boa Steakhouse, or you might bump into a celeb or two at Carolina Herrera, already a hit with its stunning couture.

You'll also find names like Brooks Brothers and Celine, the French designer. Emilio Pucci is there, as is Juicy Couture and its "sexy basics." The Elysium Gallery has rare coins dating back to 6000 B.C.

The mall is open 24 hours. A nightclub, AM at OPM, features after-hours DJs from 3 a.m. to 9 a.m. Friday and Saturday nights. Forum Shops stores and restaurants are open 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. weekdays and until midnight weekends.

The next expansion, the Exotic Cars at Caesars Palace, is scheduled to open in late spring. It will have 50 rare cars including Ferraris, Lamborghinis, a Bentley Continental GT (priced at \$220,000), a Porsche Carrera GT (\$500,000), and a Ferrari Enzo (\$1.3 million).—Jennifer Prosser

## Treasure Hunt

Visitors who sign up for a Club **Eldorado** membership are eligible to play the Reno casino's new promotion, "Treasures of the Eldorado." Members can play every two hours, up to six times daily by inserting their card in the game



The spiral escalator at the Forum Shops at Caesars offers sightseers and shoppers a 360-degree view.

kiosk. Prizes include \$10,000 cash and restaurant and show perks.

Daily winners will be eligible for a Friday night drawing for slot tournament tickets and the chance to enter a chamber and grab for cash. There also will be six Big Dig parties, the first on March 21. Successful treasure hunters will be feted with dinner, dancing, and a prize purse of \$150,000 in gold. For information call 800-648-5966. Membership in Club Eldorado is free.

## World Series Time

The **Rio All-Suite Hotel** in Las Vegas opened a new 10-table poker room in the property's sports book. The Rio is hosting the World Series of Poker from June 2 to July 13 before the competition moves downtown to **Binion's Horseshoe** for the final two days, July 14-15.

The Rio's nonsmoking poker room is open 24 hours, and food is available for pickup at Toscano's Deli. No-limit Texas hold 'em tournaments are held daily at noon. For information regarding the Rio call 702-777-7650.

## Spring Opening

Casino mogul Steve Wynn's latest resort, **Wynn Las Vegas**, is scheduled to open in late April. That's when visitors will have a chance to satisfy their curiosity about the \$2.7-billion property on the Las Vegas Strip. The hotel stands on the site of the old Desert Inn, which was demolished with little fanfare to make way for the megaresort.—Ann Henderson



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# Cool Water

A **Sandstone Canyon** hike flows naturally at **Spring Mountain Ranch State Park**.

By **Roxanna Brock**

**C**ruising State Route 159 west of Las Vegas—windows open, hair horizontal—I gazed at the cliffs of Red Rock Canyon. It was a cold, wet winter day. When I stopped near Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, I was stunned to see water pouring off black-varnished sandstone miles away in a canyon I'd not seen before.

At the visitor center in the park's old ranch house, a ranger explained that the place was called Sandstone Canyon. She added that experts lead hikes in the canyon about eight times a year, beginning in March.

On the first Saturday in March, I arrived at the park with my pack, water bottles, and walking stick. I met Jim Egan, our guide and a member of the Las Vegas Mountaineers Club, in front of the ranch house. We were joined by three other hikers who were as curious as I was about Sandstone Canyon.

The springs and creeks that irrigate the park have made it a green refuge in the desert. Near the main house, horses grazed in a meadow lush with grass and strewn with cottonwood trees. Egan pointed out, "Cottonwoods just suck a lot of water. If you see cottonwoods, it's a sign there's some type of springs or other water source in the area."

Walking further, we discovered a water trough restored with river rock and concrete by radio star Chet Lauck, who owned the ranch in the 1940s. (Other owners have included Howard Hughes and actress Vera Krupp.) We saw where Lauck's children, Nancy and Chester, had written their names in the concrete. Behind the trough stood grapevines and the second-oldest structure in the Las Vegas Valley, the Sandstone Cabin, which was built in 1864.

Soon we came upon a blue lake bordered by cattails and cottonwoods. Egan explained that three-acre Lake Harriet, built by Lauck in 1947 and named after his wife, is fed by Sandstone Spring Number One. Egan leaned over in the tall grass to open the lid of a flow meter. Normally water flows into the lake at 160 gallons per minute. However, winter had brought much precip-



Guide Jim Egan looks back down Sandstone Canyon from a rocky vantage point.



itation, and the water was gushing at 340 gallons per minute. That offered a hint of what we were about to encounter.

Passing through more high grasses, trees, and rusty water pipe, we found a more desert-like setting. The canyon started to narrow. Monument Peak's

dark, rippling walls rose to our left. Indecision Peak faded away to our right.

Entering the wash leading into the canyon, we encountered large, polished sandstone boulders, white in color, that looked like freshly brushed teeth. Other boulders paraded wild, swirling pink and orange stripes while the rest were solid yellow, black, and pale blue.

Hopping from boulder to boulder, we progressed up-canyon, reaching waterfalls, deep puddles, and thick scrub oak. I enjoyed observing the waterfalls. Tiny, shallow swirls moved down polished slides into pools. Falls poured into deep caves or popped through holes and emerged downstream. Some cascaded over several formations.

My partners left me to explore ahead. I was happy to be alone,



softly balancing from rock to rock, hoping not to fall in. When I caught up, they had turned back due to a large pool blocking our trail.

I had hoped to see the other six springs that are said to feed the stream. Egan explained that even he did not know where the rest were hidden.

Walking out I noticed a large bird sunning in one of Lake Harriet's cottonwoods.

Soon we came upon a blue lake bordered by cattails and cottonwoods.

As we drew near, it flew to the next tree, showing a wing span nearly as wide as I am tall. It was a golden eagle. In all the years I'd spent outdoors I'd never seen one. The mammoth raptor, who probably knew the location of all the springs in Sandstone Canyon, led me safely back to my car, flying from tree to tree.

## Take a Hike

Spring Mountain Ranch State Park, 15 miles west of Las Vegas via West Charleston Boulevard, is located in Red Rock Canyon. The park's attractions include the ranch house, grassy lawns, a picnic area, historic outbuildings, and hiking trails. Park admission is \$6 per car. The visitor center is open daily.

Guided hikes in Sandstone Canyon are scheduled on March 13 and 19, April 2, 10, and 16-17 and May 21; call 702-875-4141 for details. The Sandstone Canyon hike covers three miles round trip and lasts from 1 to 4 p.m. Hikers should bring water, snacks, sunscreen, and good footwear.

The state park hosts an Earth Day Weekend on April 23-24 and numerous living-history programs and summer musicals. Nearby attractions include Red Rock National Conservation Area and Bonnie Springs Old Nevada. Call the park at 702-875-4141 or visit [www.parks.nv.gov](http://www.parks.nv.gov).

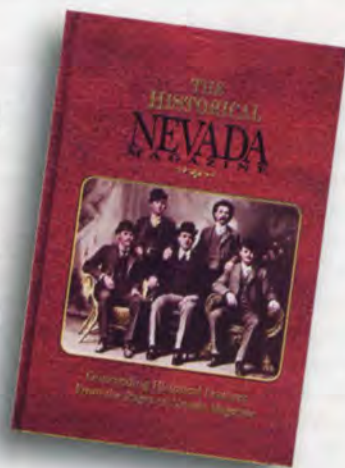
*Roxanna Brock is a Las Vegas writer who has contributed to Rock and Ice, Climbing, Gripped, and Cerca Country Guides.*

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# Lance Burton

Las Vegas is **magical**, but please watch for the tourists.

*Master Magician Lance Burton performs elaborate illusions in which he makes people and a luxury convertible disappear in his showroom at the Monte Carlo in Las Vegas. Burton also shares the stage with showgirls and a flock of 60 birds, including doves, ducks, geese, and a parakeet named Elvis. Burton's easy-going manner, humor, and stylish magic are copied by other magicians. Offstage, the Kentucky native supports many Las Vegas charitable causes, often joining fellow entertainers Clint Holmes and the Scintas in fundraising efforts. Burton lives in Las Vegas with Monte, an eight-year-old golden retriever that he rescued from a local shelter.*



During a television special Burton did what countless Area 51 watchers would like to do—he made a UFO appear on State Route 375, Nevada's Extraterrestrial Highway.

You can always spot them. They have that look in their eyes. It is the same look I see every night during my show. It says, "I can't believe what I just saw." But they are not watching a magic performance. They are walking along the Strip.

When you live in Las Vegas, as I have for 23 years, you forget how impressive the city is to first-time visitors. We have castles and pyramids, volcanoes and pirates, and genies and lions and tigers. No other city in the world can compete with the visual fantasy that Las Vegas provides for free on the street.

I remember the first time I visited Las Vegas. It was 1981. My good friend Johnny Thompson was producing *Le' Sorcery*, a magic show for television. He had to move a truck full of props from Los Angeles to Las Vegas for rehearsals. We drove a rental truck through the desert and arrived in town late at night. As I drove down Las Vegas Boulevard, the hotels and marquees mesmerized me. This was the city I had dreamed about all my life. This was *Las Vegas*, the holy city.

I tried to take it all in by reading every marquee to see which entertainer was

working at which hotel. Preoccupied, I drove right up on the sidewalk in front of the Aladdin! Fortunately it was late, and there were no pedestrians around. Johnny said, "Kid, you better let me drive." After that I was able to take in the sights.

The next year I got my first gig in Las Vegas with the "Folies Bergere" at the Tropicana, an eight-week contract that lasted nine years. But I have always appreciated the city's awesome visual power and how distracting it can be.

I've often watched visitors as they ignore the Strip's overhead walkways and make a mad dash across the street. What's the solution? We could honk our horns to bring potential jaywalkers back to reality, but that might freeze them and actually increase the problem. Maybe we could install "Walk"/"Don't Walk" signs that include a really loud voice. We could get Clint Holmes to write a song about the dangers

of crossing against the light and play it from speakers at every intersection.

Tourists are our lifeblood. Without them there would be no hotels, no shows, no jobs, no 99-cent breakfasts. So keep in mind, when you are driving in Las Vegas, please watch out for the tourists, all 35 million of them.

## Show Notes

"Lance Burton: Master Magician" can be seen in the Lance Burton Theatre at the Monte Carlo on the Las Vegas Strip. Show times are 7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday with an additional 10 p.m. performance on Saturday (dark Sunday and Monday). Tickets cost \$66.50 and \$72.55, including tax and fees. Drinks are extra. For more show information call 877-386-8224 or 702-730-7000 or visit [www.montecarlo.com](http://www.montecarlo.com). ▀





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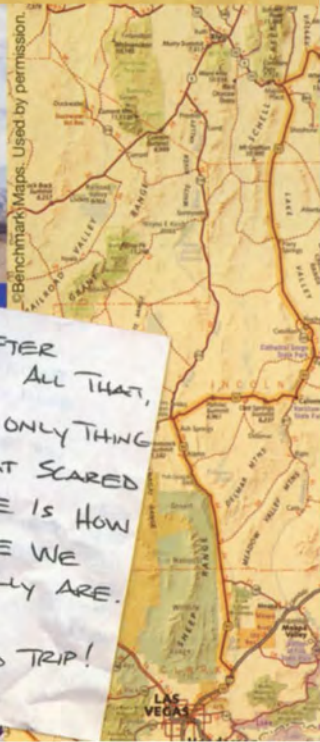


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