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# NEVADA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAL WEST

APRIL 1985/$1.75

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# NEVADA

Volume 45, Number 2 March/April 1985


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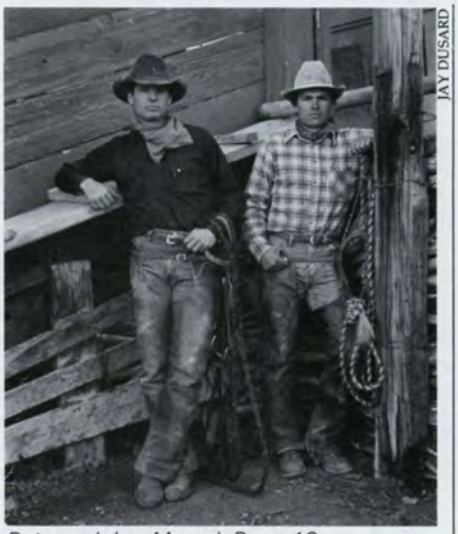
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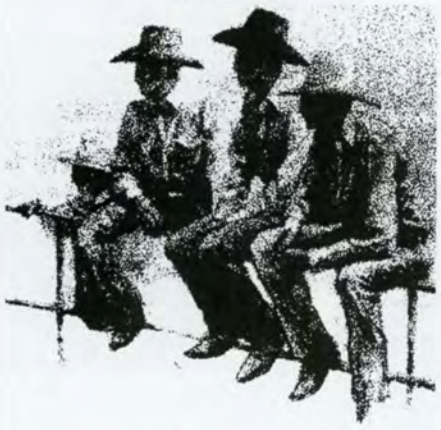
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**David E. Moore,** Senior Editor
**Dale Smith,** Art Director
**Ann Henderson,** Marketing & Entertainment
**Jim Crandall,** Feature Editor
**Melissa Cronin Loomis,** Events Editor
**Scott Shelley,** Associate Editor
**Patty Noll,** Advertising Coordinator
**Brenda Craig,** Marketing Assistant
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**David Muench,** Showcase
**Norm Nielson,** On The Airways
**Julian Stone,** At-Large
**Leon Mandel,** In Grosse Pointe

**DICK BRYAN,** Governor

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

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# Up Front

**First choice on Main.**

For 49 years, Elko General Merchandise has been at the same spot on Main Street. The store's items have always been practical, the popular choice of ranchers, farmers, and sheepherders who need goods that are tough and durable.

The store's founder, Joe Anacabe, came from the Basque country in 1914 to work as a sheepherder. He tended the flocks and later ran a store at McDermitt. In 1936 he moved to Elko, to open the big store. Anacabe had a good business, but he was also alone. So in 1953 he returned to Spain to look for a wife. He came back to Elko with a beautiful Basque woman named Margareta.

Joe is gone now, but Margareta and their daughter Anita Anacabe Franzoia still run the store much as it's always been. "I not going to change," Margareta says with a thick accent and bright smile. "I am going to keep it like that because, you know, my husband they tell him, 'You change this store and we not come in.'"

Outside Anacabe's you won't see any flashing neon or signs advertising specials. It's the kind of store that makes perfect sense—no trendy merchandise, embroidered back pockets, or use for credit cards.

"I got no machine," the proprietor simply states.

Inside, the store is dimly lit, but friendly and old-fashioned. The high ceiling is lined with cork, and creaking ladders roll back and forth on each side of the long room so that boots and clothing placed close to the rafters can be retrieved.

Regular customers still make their living on the range. All merchandise is top quality. There are boots for riding, boots for irrigating, boots for walking. There are huge piles of denim as well as wool caps, gloves, hats, thermal underwear, and socks. There are suspenders, down jackets, wool shirts, slickers, and dusters. And big scarves, all standard buckaroo issue.

"The cowboys come in about once a month to look around. Maybe buy something," says Margareta. "Sometimes they just visit." The store is open from 9 to 11:45 a.m. and 1 to 5 p.m. weekdays, on Saturday from 10 to 11:45 a.m.

"Sometimes in the winter, we don't open in the morning, or we don't open in the afternoon, or we don't open at all," says Deborah Weinand, who helps out during the week. "When the spring rains start, we stay open as often as possible." The store is always closed on Sunday because, Margareta says, "I need one day off!"

It was while visiting the Anacabes on a weekday that I discovered an unexpected prize. At the cash register Anita had placed a rack of post cards. Among the cards were photos of buckaroos who looked a lot like the people you see buying boots and dusters at Elko General Merchandise. Joe Marvel. Pete. The boys from the IL Ranch near Tuscarora, and some of the Maggie Creek hands. The cards were the work of photographer Jay Dusard, and in this issue, on the cover and pages 18 through 23, you'll find Dusard's extraordinary black-and-white cowboy portraits.

Next time you visit Elko, stop in and say hello to Margareta and Anita. They'll ask if they can help you, smile, and probably sell you something tough and durable.



*Caroline J. Hadley*

# Letters

**The Truth about Pizen Switch**

**With Pahrump, Who Needs Florida?**
Thank you for the terrific column (Up Front, "The Nevada Myth," Nov/Dec '84). My husband and I have been trying to explain why we are retiring to Nevada to friends and relatives without much luck, but now I have something in print as to the way we feel about the state: It seems your thoughts are our thoughts. Nevada is a fantastic state and we look forward to retiring to the Pahrump Valley, hopefully in 1988.

We have heard all the arguments from people who have gone to Las Vegas for one of those three-day packages, and we have given them a good argument as to why they should return. Their idea is that the only thing there is in Nevada is gambling, and if you don't gamble you won't like it. It would be great if your tourist trade would also advertise, just as your column did, the wonders of Nevada, especially Southern Nevada for winter holidays. We have had three Christmas holidays at our home in Pahrump and the weather has been great—cool nights and warm (not hot) days. Playing golf over Christmas holidays is great. Florida for retirement—who needs it?

Also, the article by Gary Avey on Red Rock Canyon was really great; loved the pictures.

Mary Atkinson
Downsview, Ontario, Canada

Dear Caroline: You and your staff are to be commended. Good work. As my Basque parents used to quote, "One has to put up with seven to 12 cranks to get a Model T to run smoothly." You have.

Lenore Holbert
Elko, NV

**Truth About Pizen Switch**
Your magazine has been my favorite since the years I spent in Nevada, and your feature on Yerington by Roger Smith (Jan/Feb '85) sure was good.

I spent nine months in Yerington helping prospect the copper of the Gould and Adams lease, which was later worked by Anaconda. I helped sink a shaft. We hit water at 120 feet and fought for every inch till we reached the 245-foot level, when we had to stop because of the water.

Best regards to your staff and crew.

Lloyd Walters
Corvallis, OR.

Your Yerington story was poorly written, poorly edited, and lacked a lot of fact. Being a past resident I take exception to your tripe. If this is the best you can do please cancel my subscription.

(Who the hell is Roger Smith?)

Anthony K. Smith
Sparks, NV

*Right you are. I confused the Mormon church with the Methodist church, and dragged the Baptist across town and forced it onto Main Street. I went to high school in Yerington and should know better than to move buildings around so recklessly.—Roger Smith*

**Queen of Tarts**
Thank you for the excellent, interesting article on Julia Bulette by Susan James in the Sept/Oct '84 issue. The article reflects detailed research about Bulette's colorful life, true or not. Give us more, please.

Bob Eklund
Pine Grove, CA.

**Please Cancel the Puffery**
As a freelance photographer I must congratulate you on the quality of your photos and the reproduction. They are first class. Sadly, all this fine effort is diminished by the onslaught of garish advertisements and puffery, which cheapen your publication to a level that I find personally unacceptable.

Gerhard Lippold
Universal City, CA.

*Sorry, Lippold, we'll miss you.—Ed.*

Your magazine expands Nevada for us. I'm writing to let you know how "Christmas in Coaldale" by Barbara Allen Haga in the Nov/Dec '84 issue warmed my heart, brought a lump to my throat, and tears to my eyes. The writer really projected the true Christmas spirit.

Midge Gamble
Newport Beach, CA.

**Ski Where?**
In our effort to promote the high points of Nevada, through *Nevada Magazine,* sometimes something slips by, promoting something else.

In the Jan/Feb '85 issue, the photographs with the article, "Ski the High Country" depict some beautiful skiing. On page 40, the three people by the van are most likely from California, due to the

*(Continued on page 51)*

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# A Toast to Ghosts

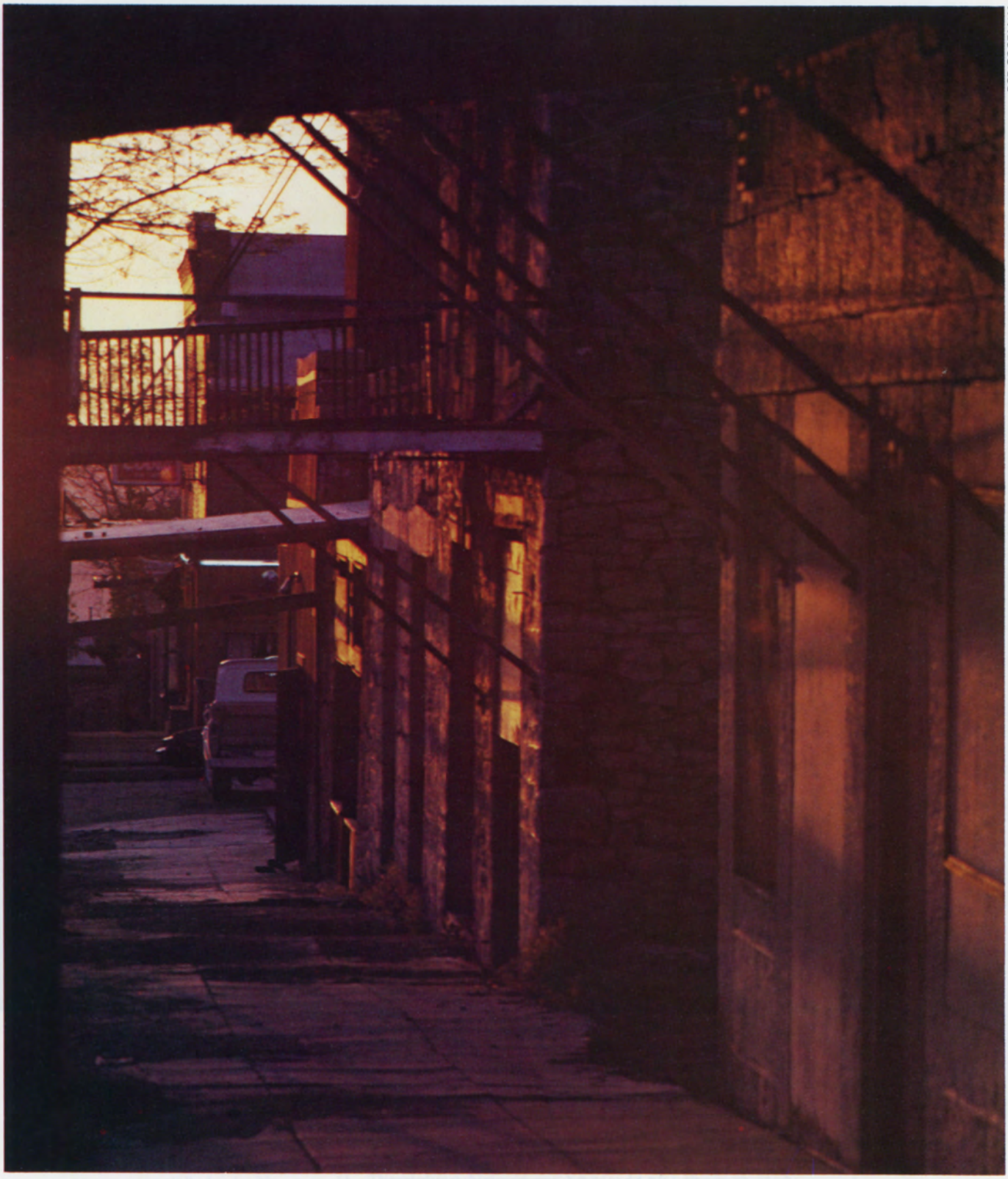
**A visit to these historic haunts will be sure to raise your spirits.**

**By Richard Menzies**

*I met a traveller from an antique land*
*Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone*
*Stand in the desert....Near them, on the sand,*
*Half sunk, a shattered visage lies....*
*And on the pedestal these words appear:*
*"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:*
*Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"*
*Nothing beside remains. Round the decay*
*Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare*
*The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

*—Percy Bysshe Shelley*

The fate of the fabled king came to mind one summer's day as I poked among the ruins of Metropolis, a little known and seldom visited ghost town a few miles north and west of Wells. Nothing much is left of the town but the arched brick entrance of an old school and the concrete footings where the Hotel Metropolis once stood. Three stories high and equipped with all the modern amenities, it was reputed to be the finest hotel between Reno and Ogden, Utah at the time of its opening



BOB GOODMAN

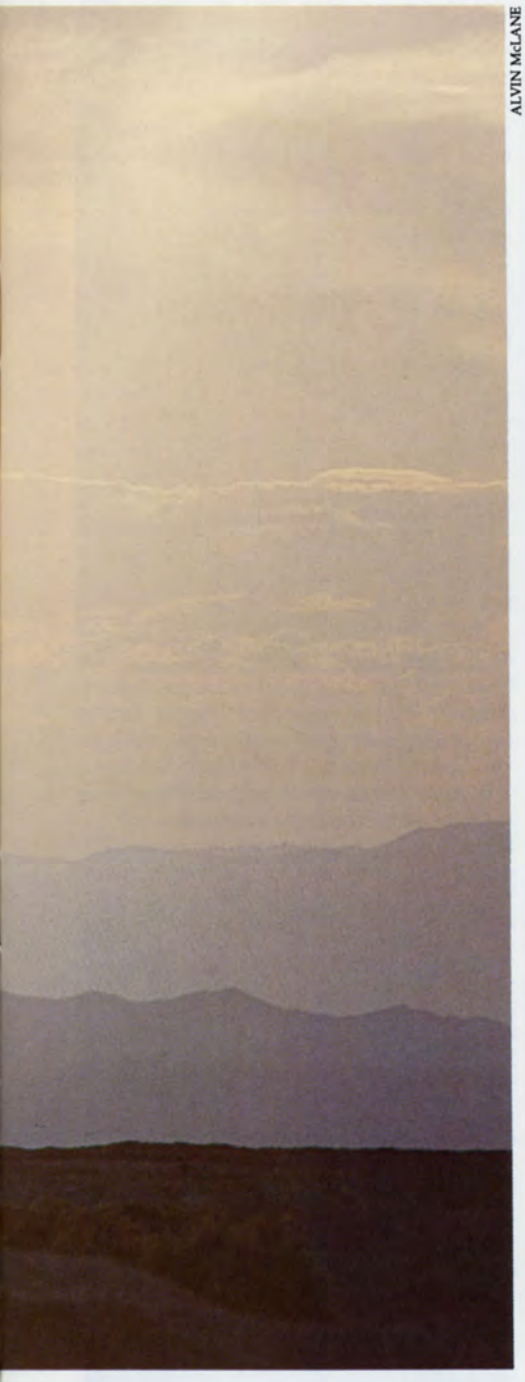
## AUSTIN
**1 8 6 3**

*"Ho for the Reese River," shouted boomers as they crowded into Austin. Nevada's second largest city at the height of its silver production in the 1860s, the town now has about 300 residents.*



## TONOPAH
### 1900

*This booming silver camp attracted Wyatt Earp, produced two U.S. senators, and gave work to a young Jack Dempsey. The Nye County seat, Tonopah shrank as its mines played out in the '20s, grew during World War II with a bomber training base nearby, and was boosted by molybdenum mining in recent years. Above, an old mine building on the outskirts of town leans with the wind.*



ALVIN McLANE



BOB GOODMAN

## PARADISE VALLEY

**1 8 6 3**

*Prospectors came to the valley for gold and stayed to raise hay in its fertile soil. Only a store, saloon, and gas station survive on streets that once had hotels and churches as well.*

in 1912. Metropolis never lived up to its name, however, and during the intervening years the luxury hotel has disappeared into thin air, leaving behind just a hole in the ground, a few stray bricks, and a cornerstone on which is inscribed the cryptic message "Take care, boys."

The admonition had been scratched onto the surface before the cement had set, evidently by a builder who, like his building, is gone. All that remains is a simple monument to a workman's pride, a testament to love's labor lost.

Throughout Nevada are hundreds of similar ruins; in fact, ghost towns outnumber the living ones by a ratio of about 10 to 1. Had each and every one survived to the present, rural Nevada today would be something of a bustling metroplex. But because so many did fade away, the vacant townsites lend an old-world ambience of faded glory and lost civilizations.

Hovering somewhere between the past and the present are such places as Austin, Pioche, Manhattan, Belmont, and Tuscarora, where life goes on amid tumbledown structures that bespeak other, more prosperous days. As a tourist mecca, Virginia City thrives because of its ghost town aura, while at the other end of the state the inhabitants of Jarbidge swear by the quietude and peace only a dead town can offer. One of them, formerly a Trappist monk, told me he came to Jarbidge to get away from the "stress and strain" of the monastery.

Nevada's myriad boom towns and mining camps were the mobile home parks of their day. Founded for the most part on a mineralogical promise, often greatly exaggerated by rumor, they began as canvas tent towns occupied by transient prospectors and miners known as "boomers." As the diggings progressed,




BOB GOODMAN

## GENOA
**1 8 5 1**

*A trading post, Mormon stockade, and surrounding farms gave Nevada's first town and bar plenty of business.*



DAY WILLIAMS

## RHYOLITE
**1 9 0 5**

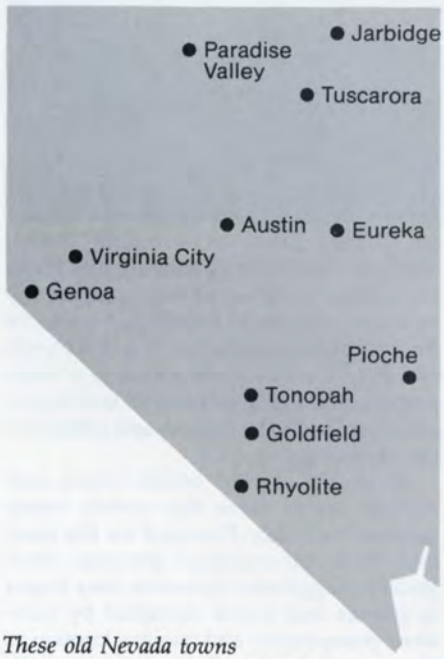
*The Amargosa winds blow through the ruins of the John S. Cook bank.*

they were joined by camp followers, merchants, wives, children, shady ladies, and shady lawyers. Footpaths turned into streets lined with log cabins, frame buildings, and false-fronted stores and saloons that presented a facsimile, if not a parody, of the eastern cities the boomers had left behind. With all the room in the world to spread, buildings of the business district tended to crowd together, as if to ward off the loneliness of the vast Nevada outback.

It was this penchant for togetherness that cost the boom towns dearly, and the annals of any sizable settlement are bound to include the year of the great fire. Some were rebuilt; others never recovered.

As the ore veins played out, the boomers moved on to investigate the next strike, taking with them what they could carry and leaving behind the rest. Abandoned houses were left to be scavenged for lumber or ravaged by wind and rain. In more recent years, Nevada's unprotected ghost towns have fallen prey to the even more destructive forces of human erosion. Vandals armed with sledge hammers—ghost town busters—have toppled masonry walls, and relic hunters equipped with electronic metal detectors have pried up the floorboards and left no stone unturned. Even the outhouses have been mined by bottle hounds for whom yesteryear's privies are today's glory holes.

What remains are the graveyards, which in the century past flourished as a sort of high art form. Life in the mining camps was a polyglot melting pot, but for the deceased it was posthumous apartheid. In many towns the dearly departed were laid to rest in separate cemeteries, segregated according to race, religion, fraternal affiliation—even by cause of death. Roman Catholic immigrants from Ireland today repose in Calgary, while Odd Fellows and Masons have their separate plots across the way. In another part of town the bones of Chinese dead lay awaiting shipment back to their homeland, and in still another are the remains of victims of infectious diseases. In between,




*These old Nevada towns are rich in history and atmosphere.*



RICHARD MENZIES

*Helen Wilson vacations at her cabin in the tiny gold town of Jarbidge, where she grew up.*

you might stumble over the unmarked grave of a fallen outlaw.

Nevada's pioneers took death seriously, as well they might, for the grim reaper was an all too frequent house guest. A demographic analysis of 19th century graveyards disclosed an alarmingly large percentage of young wives and children, and it was a fortunate pioneer to attain the Biblical allotment of three score and ten.

As if to compound their grief, the survivors erected Gothic marble tombstones bearing somber elegiac verse pointing out the futility of mortal existence. Subjected to a century of weathering, simple epitaphs painted on wooden headboards now stand out in bas-relief; graves that once sprouted daisies now support mature pinyon pines.

Oddly enough, I don't find such places depressing, but rather invigorating. There's nothing like an afternoon spent poking through ruins or perusing tombstones to put the problems and worries of everyday life into proper perspective. Stanley Gurcze, a legless vagabond I once picked up near Elko, told me he found ghost towns to be an excellent tonic against self-pity. "Peaceful places to camp," he said, "and I always come away feeling damn glad to be alive."

The old gold camp of Jarbidge, north of Elko near the Idaho border, is a peaceful town these days. "I say sometimes we shouldn't come back, but we always do," Helen Wilson told me one day as she reminisced beside the wood stove in her turn-of-the-century summer cabin in Jarbidge. Helen was just a babe in arms in the summer of 1910 when her mother Hattie Goodwin rode into town on horseback. Hanging on behind was Helen's older sister Grace.

"On Thanksgiving the town hall was opened," Grace recalls. "They had a beautiful dance. We had dances, we had card parties. I can remember particularly the Christmas parties we had. I remember singing a song, 'Star of the East,' and I was so scared. And then after that we all came down and Santa Claus came."

Helen and Grace grew up, married, and traveled the world, but Jarbidge remains their psychic touchstone. The Bluster Mill where their father worked and the caved-in log post office in Pavlak where their mother was post mistress are rapidly being reclaimed by the Humboldt National Forest. But nothing will ever erase their memories of home, friends, and close communal ties.

Call them deserted if you will, but Nevada's ghost towns are still haunted by the indelible spirits of old dreams and boomers past. □

*Richard Menzies often hides out in Eastern Nevada ghost towns while on leave from Salt Lake City.*




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# MEAD'S MASTER CASTERS

**Real fishermen don't tell fish stories — at least not without a lot of baiting. Here six of Mead's finest pass on some secrets about fishing their favorite lake.**

**By Rob Powers**

As anyone who has ever tackled a lake with a rod knows, the vast majority of that curious breed known as fishermen can be divided into two groups: those who talk and those who catch. It goes without saying that the talkers have the best stories.

To even the most casual observer, it is clear as a pristine trout steam that the first people who could cast away all sense of control and get the gullible to bite are the last ones to do it. Real fishermen, it turns out, don't tell fish stories. Not without an awful lot of baiting, anyway.

The reason for this? Well, good fishing is the art of subtlety, a sport that demands a certain amount of intuition. The ability to know what is going on at murky depths, beyond the range of human sight, is paramount. That's why it's easy for real fishermen to fathom a real fish tale when they are inflicted with it.

Then there is the simple fact that good anglers don't have to prove anything to anyone except themselves. Says fishing guide Al Cieri, "They know if you can catch fish. And they know that not every day is going to be a diamond. They know that if they overextend themselves by their mouth, any good fisherman will recognize it right away. What they do is fact. There's no reason to embellish it."

In Lake Mead, fishermen have one of the most diverse and challenging bodies of water imaginable, an azure gem surrounded by barren hills, with hundreds of miles of coastline punctuated by myriad coves and backwaters. The lake's lure is unmistakable. Cieri says, "I have had better days in other places, caught bigger fish in other places, but in its consistency, it's very difficult to beat Lake Mead."

Determining just who are some of the best anglers in one of the best fishing spots around must be done in a roundabout manner. You always knew that Muhammad Ali, in his prime, was the best boxer in the world. All you had to do was ask him. It's not so easy with fishermen. Ask one if he is the best, and he will probably hem and haw and shuffle his feet and kick sand on the tackle box.

It's best to poke around, to gently prod the people who are familiar with the lake and those who practically live on it—please don't ask how you determine who falls into this group—and ask them who they'd nominate for Mead's Rod and Reel Hall of Fame. Pretty soon a pattern develops. Names are named, and what might pass for the truth emerges.

### AL CIERI: SCHOOLING ANGLERS

The consensus among those who should know holds that Al Cieri, fishing guide extraordinaire and newspaper columnist, is to fishing in Southern Nevada what Julius Erving is to basketball. "One of the finest fishermen around," says Don Sollberger, who is frequently called that himself. "He's respected by fishermen in Nevada and throughout the country."

Cieri is one of the few people in the state who makes his living as a fishing guide. He moved to Las Vegas 25 years ago from Montana and retired from his job as a medical products sales manager




*Al Cieri and Ellen Regan test the waters.*



five years ago. He became a fishing guide, he says with a somewhat rueful laugh, "because I thought it was going to be easy." That it hasn't been easy doesn't matter much anyway. He wouldn't think of doing anything else.

Being a guide, even at a fisherman's paradise, has its disadvantages. "You're lucky to work 220 days a year," says the 48-year-old Cieri. "That's an awful lot. There's a lot of physical work, a lot of long hours. You really have to like fishing and being on the lake."

He does. And Cieri also realizes that, as a guide, what he knows about Lake Mead and the habits of fish on any given day can profoundly affect his business. So what he derives from the time he spends on the water—he somehow manages to work in eating and sleeping—is manyfold.

The real key to being a good fisherman, Cieri believes, is perseverance, as well as having an eye for detail. All that sophisticated fish-finding gadgetry on his 20-foot Sunset boat would be just so much beeping hardware in less capable hands, for he must be consistently wise about the quirks of weather, underwater terrain, feeding habits, and a million other considerations. "You have to be observant to a lot of things that go on in the water," he says. "You try to eliminate whatever luck you can. And I just don't approach it that seriously. I work hard, but I apply intelligent moves. I make the most of my time. I know that if I am persistent I will catch fish."

Curiously, as a guide, Cieri believes there are more important things than helping company presidents fill their plastic coolers with striped bass. "The primary thing you have to do is impart knowledge to clients," he says. "They are there to learn from you. The fish are secondary, believe it or not. The fish are gone after one meal. The knowledge is there for the rest of their lives."

**BILL SPELLMAN: FIRE & WATER**

Bill Spellman divides his life between making sure water gets put on fires and getting fired up on the water. A captain in the Henderson Fire Department, he also has been a part-time fishing guide for the past three-and-a-half years. "I fished the lake 20 years before that," says Spellman, who takes both of his vocations seriously and talks about a total commitment to fishing, although guiding comprises no more than 30 days a year. Without his fire captain's job, he says, "I'd starve to death." Without fishing, he'd go crazy.

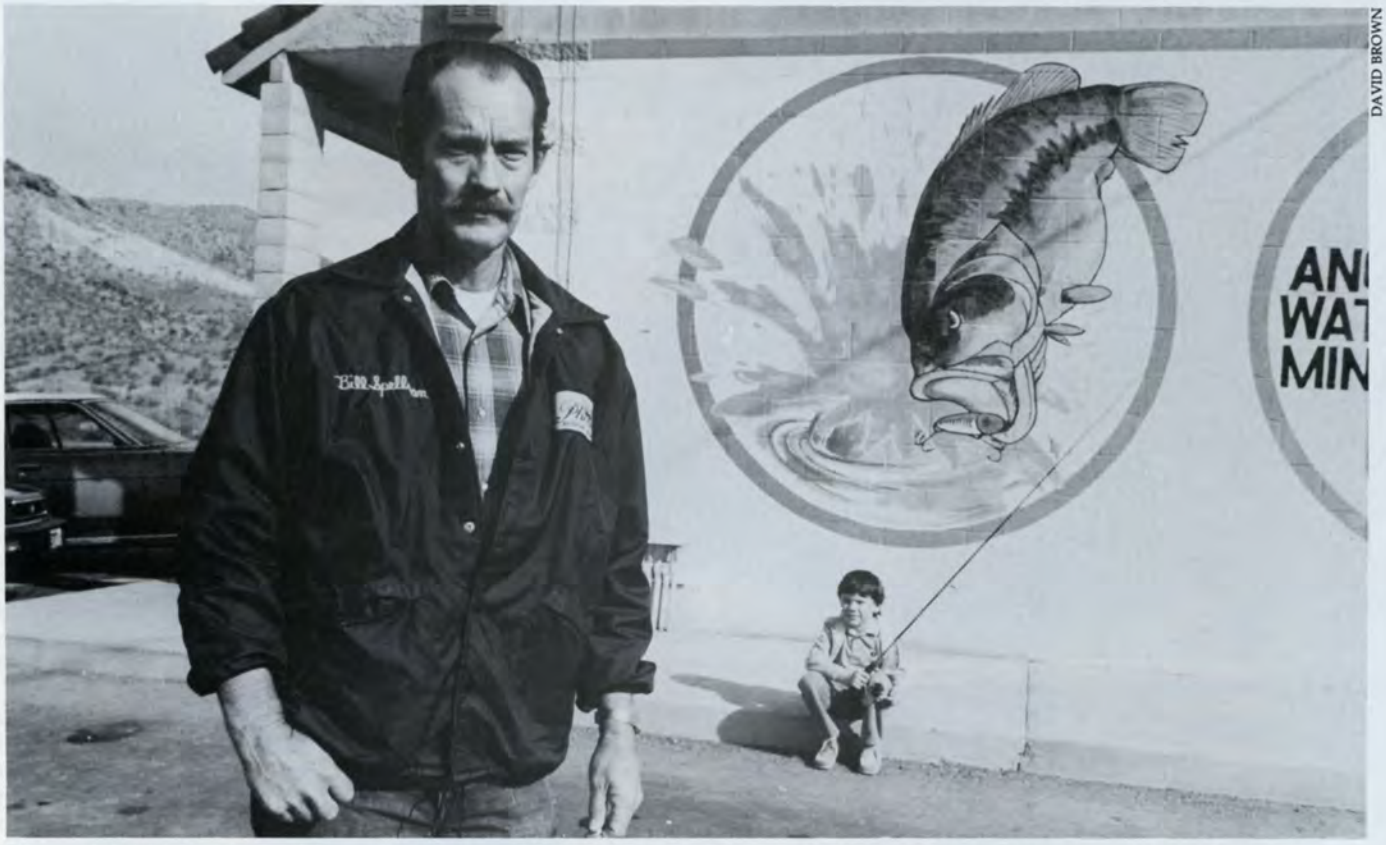
"You can't go out there on a once-a-month basis," Spellman says. "The habits of the fish are constantly changing. What you have today you won't have tomorrow. You have to establish a pattern." When the water cools in November, for instance, Spellman looks for the lake to "roll over." Plankton, the microscopic organisms fish feed on, comes to the top, spreading the stripers from top to bottom. Such are the signs a good fisherman knows.

As Spellman sees it, the quality of anglers at Lake Mead is getting better every year. "I remember when you could count the striper fishermen on one hand. Now you have 40 who are dandies. Year by year they're getting better, and that's what it's all about."

What it's also about is crowds. "For the economics of Southern Nevada, it's a boom," Spellman says. "But I like to remember the old days, when you could sit by yourself all day. Now you have to go 40, 80 miles and beyond to get that solitude. We used to go out there March, April, May, and never see another boat. Now they're out there on a 12-month basis."

The fish have changed, too. "It used to be largemouth bass. Then, with the evolution of striped bass 15 years ago, we went from a three-fish limit to a 10-fish limit. Now stripers are a seasonal fish, from August to November. From January to March they're almost impossible to catch."

As was one striper Spellman hooked on July 7, 1980. "It was a monumental day in my life. I hooked the fish in about 55 feet of water at 8:30 in the morning. Six




DAVID BROWN

*Wherever Bill Spellman takes his grandson Jason, the fish seem to be jumping. Spellman is a guide and Henderson fire captain.*

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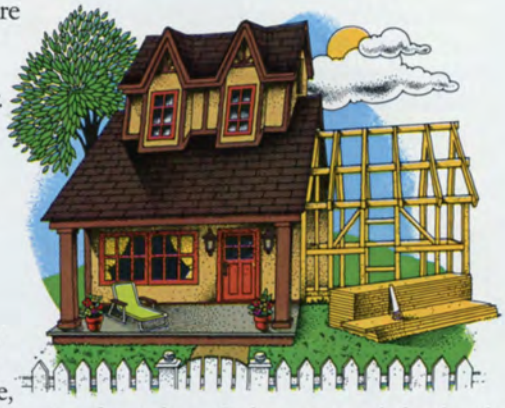
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hours later I was three miles from where I started. The fish was pulling the boat. It was a potential record-holder, and it broke the line. My boat was for sale, all my equipment was for sale. It was a bad experience, but I'd love to live it again—with a different outcome."

Of those Spellman takes out on the lake, he says, "Eighty percent have very little knowledge of it. We get everything from bricklayers to millionaires, people who have fished all over the world.

"We are there to teach, too. When you're fishing for largemouth or striped bass, you have to have special skills. When it comes to casting, people are pretty inept with that. They have caught big fish with trolling, but there's no accuracy, no pinpoint casting." Many people pay Spellman simply to have a good time. "They're mostly happy with the day. The lake is one of the most beautiful in the Southwest. They are seeing waters they've never seen, fishing for fish that are exotic to some people."

Sometimes it seems to Spellman as if waters he is seeing for the thousandth time are being viewed for the first. That's one reason he comes back to the lake. For him, as for so many others, fishing is an inseparable part of life. "It has been forever," he says. "I bought my first boat when I was nine and I've been in one ever since."

**ELLEN REGAN: HANGING FISH**

The sparkling waters of Lake Mead seem light years from the smoky Desert Inn casino where she works as a cocktail waitress, and that suits Ellen Regan just fine. For her, being on the water serves as a kind of therapy, a revitalizing experience that helps her deal with the frenetic pace of her job on the Strip.

"I suppose you do equate success with the number of fish you've caught, or the size," she says. "But it's not the total picture. Being out there is the only fresh air I get. It's invigorating and relaxing at the same time. A casino, when it's quiet, is boring. But a lake when it's quiet is a thrill."

Regan is a good example of a kind of angler whose ranks have swelled in recent years, someone who shows you don't have to grow up with a rod in your hand to appreciate fishing later in life—or to become very good at it. Al Cieri says he has watched Regan make giant strides in the sport over the past few years. "She has progressed tremendously in her approach to finding fish, which is always the biggest challenge to everybody," he says. "She doesn't need anybody else anymore. She can read the conditions."

Regan gets out on her 23-foot day cruiser as often as she can, which is never often enough. Each time she plunks a lure in the water is a lesson, she says. And with every bit of knowledge comes the humbling realization that there is so much to know.



PATRICIA MORTATI PHOTOS

*Zen and the art of angling: Ellen Regan lets the fish catch themselves.*

"Every time I go out I learn something new," she says. "This summer I didn't hook as many as the other guys, and if I did hook them I'd lose them. I found things I was doing wrong. You don't realize that there are so many things about fishing that, even when the fish are abundant, you can come home empty-handed."

There are fewer and fewer days that Regan, 40, comes home that way anymore. To this pleasant development she attributes constant practice, experimentation, and a curious but effective method she calls "letting the fish hang themselves."

"There have been times," she says, "I've kinda gone to sleep with the rod out and woken up to find a fish has, uh, died."

**THE ROMANS: A RECORD BAIT**

They're out there like clockwork, often solitary shore-bound figures disturbing the still silence of the pre-dawn lake with soft conversation and softer casts. Carson and Gaines "Shorty" Romans don't really like to tell stories about themselves, but no local fishing story would be complete without theirs.

The mention of Shorty sparked in Don Sollberger a gentle laugh of recognition. "We renamed Vegas Wash after him. He knows this lake better than anyone, catches more fish than anyone. He's out there two and three times a day."

Carson is 60 and a maintenance worker at a Strip hotel. His brother Shorty is five years older. A former carpenter, Shorty is retired. Some time ago he had an operation to remove a cancerous voicebox. The two, both married, have lived in Las Vegas on and off for the past 40 years. They fish

*(Continued on page 24)*



*After Shorty Romans, left, introduced anchovies as bait, brother Carson set a striper record.*

# The Nevada Buckaroo

## Packing my saddle along with my camera, I spent branding time out where the beefsteak begins.

**Photos and story by Jay Dusard**

They look like they just rode out of a Charlie Russell painting, these buckaroos. And "buckaroos" are what Northern Nevada cowpunchers call themselves. They won't be insulted if you call them cowboys, but their direct link to Spanish herdsmanship, by way of the California vaquero, is better reflected in the term buckaroo.

In his book *The Vaquero,* my friend Arnold Rojas says that the California vaquero was born in 1776 when Don Juan Bautista de Anza led his colonists across the desert from the Mexican state of Sonora. Nearly 75 years later—during the gold rush—many New England mariners who had sailed to California remained and joined the ranks of the vaquero. They pronounced their newly acquired title "buckera," then further Anglicized it to "buckaroo."

The expansion of civilization in the American West has pushed most surviving buckaroos into the sagebrush deserts of the Great Basin. In 1981, buckaroo Skeeter Clark told me, "If the U.S. had a buckaroo state, it would cover Southeastern Oregon, Southwestern Idaho, Northern Nevada, and Northeastern California."

On my visits to ranches in buckaroo country and other parts of the West, helping with the cattle work was the best way I knew to get acquainted with the people I wanted to photograph. So, in addition to my 8x10 camera and bulky tripod, I took along my saddle and other cowpunchin' gear. Thus outfitted, I pulled into Northern Nevada in May 1982—branding time.

The first day there I rode the luminous, greening ridges between the Independence Range and the Tuscaroras with the Maggie Creek buckaroos. We gathered a good-sized bunch of cows and calves and trailed them to the nearest branding trap. To my delight, Jose Gonzalez, the cow boss, invited me to join the first shift of ropers. We were roping the calves by the hind legs, and for a while luck was with me because I was making a pretty fair showing dragging them in to the ground crew. But frustrated after missing five or six double-hock shots in a row, I started towing a calf in by one leg. Steve Nelson, the camp man whose country we were working, rode up while building a loop in his long Mexican *maguey* rope. As he passed by, he told me quietly, "On this outfit, it's two heels or we don't go to the fire." Yep. Thereafter, I tried extra hard to emulate the good heelers back home and spare the long-ears any unnecessary strain.

Joe and Pete Marvel's Buffalo Ranch rambles over parts of the Buffalo and Jersey valleys, broad expanses delineated by parallel mountain ridges bursting through the tops of long, sage-clad *bajadas* that slope down to dry lakebeds. It's good desert cow range and home to a few bands of wild horses.

Here we trailered out a number of miles from headquarters, then spread out horseback, covering lots of country. We threw together cows, calves, and a couple of bulls and drove them a few more miles to the corrals of an old starved-out homestead. The corrals, though, were serviceable, having been reclaimed by the Marvels. Another invitation to drag calves; I took down my rope, relishing the buckaroo hospitality shown to the pilgrim with the big camera.

About 40 miles northeast of the Buffalo Ranch, the Humboldt River flows past the headquarters of the T Lazy S. There, I stopped by to see buckaroo and saddlemaker Bill Russell. The T Lazy S crew was in for the weekend, so I was able to photograph some of them. The tough part was having to decline the invitation to spend some time out with the wagon, which would be working the ranges until shipping time in the fall.

Home life, of course, isn't filled with conveniences for a family living at a remote cow camp or headquarters, way beyond pavement, power lines, and double-wide nesters. But it's just fine for the Marvel and Nelson families and others like them—that is, until the kids reach school age. The trick then is to find a camp that's closer to town for that period in the family's life, like my friends Royce and Laurel Hanson did. But it's a real safe bet that when the offspring leave the nest, Mother and Dad will gravitate back to the back-of-beyond. Must be something about the view, the air, the quality of light, the feel of the seasons—or maybe the spring water, or the fresh fruit from a small orchard set out by an earlier buckaroo family.

Today, this way of life is an anachronism, some people would say. But it's no more so than the space shuttle or home computers or MTV—at least not out where the beefsteak begins. They're still out there, those buckaroos. You just can't see 'em from the interstate. □

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*Jay Dusard received a Guggenheim Fellowship to photograph working cowpunchers from Canada to Mexico. This led to the publication of his critically acclaimed book,* The North American Cowboy: A Portrait. *He is currently collaborating with writer Alan Weisman on a book about the U.S.-Mexico border (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). Dusard lives in Prescott, Arizona.*

**Martin Black, Stampede Ranch, Nevada, 1982**

When I met Martin, he and his family were holding down a remote cow camp, and later that year he won several events at the Elko County Fair. In this photo, Martin's gear is notably buckaroo-style. Instead of nylon rope he packs a hand-twisted rawhide riata on his slick-fork saddle. The long, floppy tapaderos over his stirrups give warmth and protection and are big and noisy enough to back a cow or school a bronc. His short leggings, called chinks, are popular in the light-brush areas of the Great Basin.

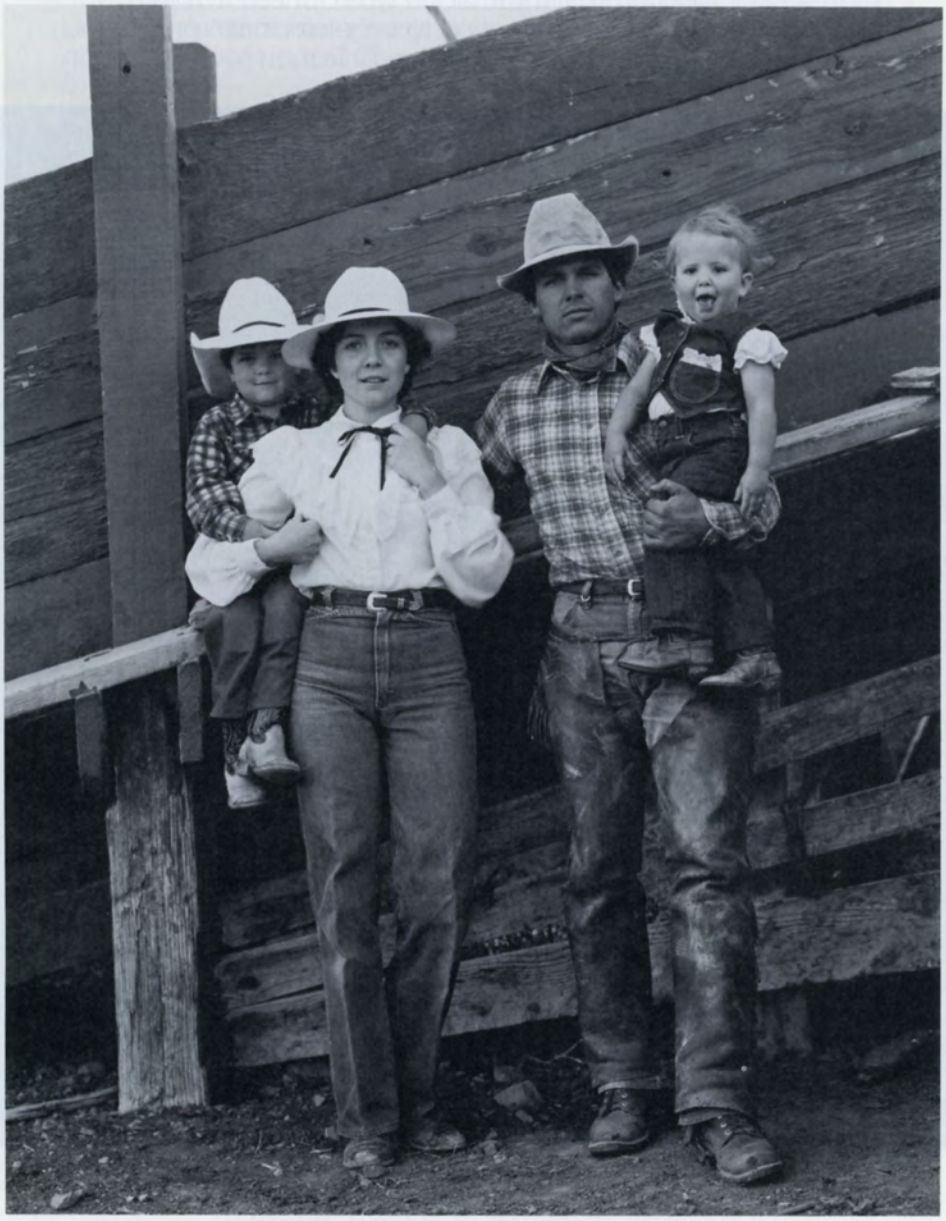


*'The Nevada Buckaroo' portfolio continues*



**Hunter, Steve, and Julie Nelson,**
**Maggie Creek Ranch, Nevada, 1982**

In addition to being a topnotch buckaroo, Steve "Whitey" Nelson knows his way around snow country and has a *Nevada Magazine* ski feature to his credit ("Up the Down Mountain," Winter '79). His wife Julie is from the Midwest, but she's one of the best ranch cooks I've met.



**Sam, Patrice, Joe, and MaryAlice Marvel, Buffalo Ranch, Nevada, 1982**

Joe and Patrice carry on a longtime Marvel family tradition of cattle ranching in the north-central part of the state. Joe also is one of the state's best-known rodeo cowboys; in 1978 he was pro rodeo's world champion saddle bronc rider.

*'The Nevada Buckaroo' portfolio continues*

**Jeff, Laurel, Royce, and Lisa Hanson,**
**Maggie Creek Ranch, Nevada, 1982**

The Hansons' camp was near Carlin so Jeff and Lisa could go to high school. Mealtime at their place was a memorable event – there's little danger of converting to vegetarianism on a cow outfit. Royce is now the cow boss at the JD Ranch south of Carlin.



**Bill Russell (feedlot boss), Robert Bennett, Clay Lindley, and Thad Smith (wagon boss), T Lazy S Ranch, Nevada, 1982**

The wind that day was too much for my camera, so this three-second exposure was made just inside the doorway of the horse barn. High-heeled lace-up boots like Robert Bennett's have been popular among buckaroos for years and are beginning to show up in other areas.




*The North American Cowboy: A Portrait by Jay Dusard is available from Consortium Press, 2223 View Drive, Prescott, AZ 86301, 602-778-9124. Foreword by John Nichols, introduction by Kurt Markus, 124 pages, 83 laser-duotone plates, 11x12¼" hardcover, $39.95 plus $4.50 for shipping and handling.*

**CASTERS** *(Continued from page 17)*

frequently together, as Carson's schedule permits. Shorty, unencumbered by a job now, essentially lives out at the lake.

"I try to get out there twice a week, sometimes more in the summertime," says Carson, who unhaltingly calls his brother the better fisherman. "He's out there every day, knows where they're biting."

Each has a legitimate claim to fame in local fishing circles. Carson holds the Lake Mead striper record with a 52-pound, 8-ounce monster he pulled in on January 17, 1983. "I thought I had a snag," he remembers, laughing. "Then the snag started pulling back. She was a female full of eggs. It took about 25 minutes, I think. Seemed like a year."

Fittingly, he caught his prize using frozen anchovies, a bait his brother is generally credited with introducing to Lake Mead. "He read about it somewhere, that stripers were hitting on anchovies in California. This was several years ago. Now all the bait shops and even grocery stores here sell frozen anchovies."

Carson modestly calls his record catch "just plain luck" and would rather talk about his brother. "He has had a hold of some big ones out there. Once he was in a rubber raft, using a red fin, a large lure. This fish was pulling my brother around in the raft. I believe it was a striper—that's the only thing out there big enough. The fish straightened out the hooks of the red fin." Despite their closeness, a soft edge of competitiveness frequently surfaces between the brothers, Carson says. "Sometimes, before we go out to the lake, I tell him to stay home for the day 'cause I'm going to catch all the fish."

Still, there are times even Carson can't help but sit back and watch, with some awe, as fishermen from hundreds of miles away seek out his brother. "They come up and ask where Shorty's at. He is always showing them what to do, how to catch them. He really is a sportsman."

**DON SOLLBERGER: BINGO & BASS**

When Don Sollberger isn't working at the Rod 'n' Reel in Henderson, selling fishing tackle in the wee hours of the morning, he's out at Lake Mead using it himself.

Sollberger, a retired Air Force master sergeant, has fished the lake for the past 17 years. In August 1984 he went up against 287 of the best fishermen in the world in the U.S. Open at Lake Mead. He finished fifth, winning $10,000 and immeasurable respect from his peers. However, had it not been for an unexpected windfall the previous Christmas, he probably wouldn't have entered at all.

"My wife and mother-in-law knew I wanted to fish the tournament," he says, "so they played bingo, and started winning. They saved and last Christmas gave me a box full of money. Fifteen hundred dollars is what they saved." The Open cost just about that much, including a $1,250 entry fee and incidentals.

The tournament didn't start out particularly well for Sollberger, 46, who grew up fishing in the bayous of Louisiana and retains a Southern twang as thick as 100-pound test. Contestants weren't allowed to fish the lake a month prior, but they were permitted two days beforehand to "pre-fish," to hit the lake and record their observations of what the fish are doing.

"I went out those days and found a lot of fish," he says. But on the first day of the tournament Sollberger discovered something had gone terribly awry. "None of my fish were there. They had all moved from shallow to deeper water."

Thank goodness for boats and four-inch, purple-and-red glitter worms. He took both where the fish were, and by the fourth day he had accumulated 22 pounds of largemouth bass—six pounds behind the winner, but good enough for fifth place.

Even before the tournament Sollberger was well known among locals. He gives a fishing report many mornings to Boulder City radio station KRRI and over the years has worked at several tackle shops in the Las Vegas Valley. He also helps run a monthly bass tournament sponsored through the Rod 'n' Reel. During the past 17 years Sollberger has been witness to many changes at Lake Mead, among them a rise in crowds, a decline in the largemouth bass population, and varying levels of nutrients in the water.

Does the crowded lake cause him to reminisce about the halcyon days of near-deserted shoreline? Not really. "You can always find some place the people are not," he says. And places where the fish are. □

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



PATRICIA MORTATI

*"I think I hooked another one," says Don Sollberger, left, as Bill Spellman checks a rod. Gear doesn't make an angler, they agree, but it helps.*




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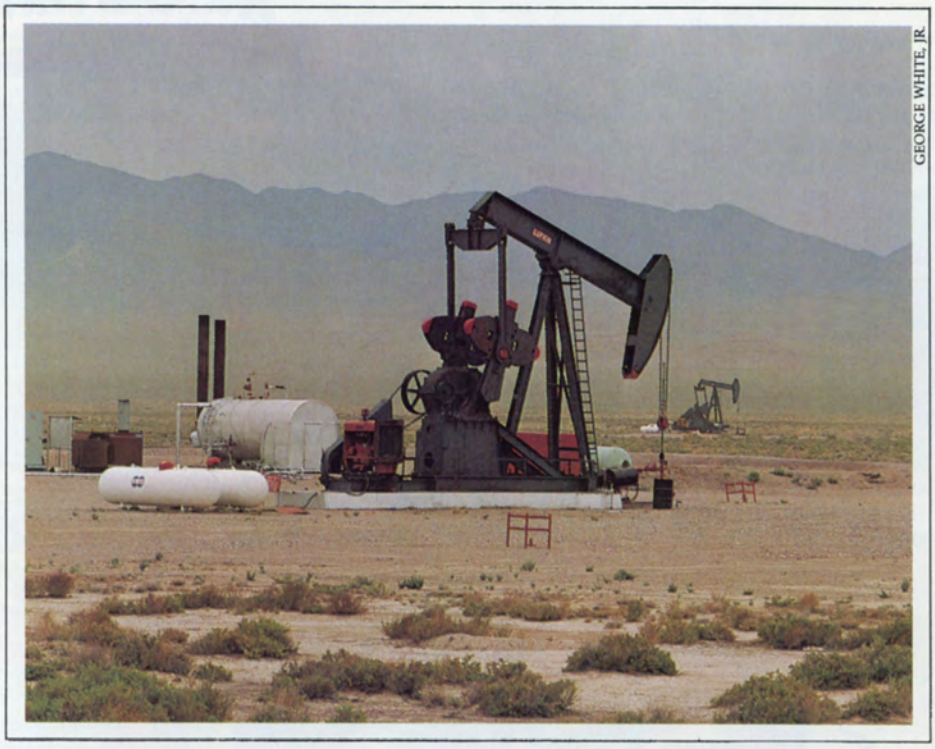
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# Black Gold in Railroad Valley

**Thirty years after the first producing well started to gush, the state's oil trickle has turned into a rush.**

**By E. Wayne Hage**

Jim Sharp hurried into the ranch house kitchen on an icy February morning in 1954. "They've struck oil at Eagle Springs!" he told his family. He had good reason to be excited—and bewildered. First, there wasn't supposed to be any oil in Nevada. Second, it was on *his* range land.

Probably there was more sheer surprise than thoughts of money that morning at Sharp's house in Railroad Valley, halfway between Tonopah and Ely. He and his family had no way of knowing they were standing on an oil field that 30 years later would prove to be one of the richest mineral deposits Nevada has ever seen. Certainly, Sharp couldn't have foreseen the irony of his situation: Because the federal government

controlled most of the range in Nevada, including his, Nevadans would profit little from the state's black gold bonanza.

Until that morning, geologists had agreed that there wasn't any oil in Nevada—or at least any profitable deposits. Everyone knew there was *some* oil. R.M. Catlin of the Central Pacific Railroad and USGS geologist Clarence King had independently identified oil shale in Northern Nevada in the 1870s. In 1907 the Washoe Oil and Development Company found a little oil in its 1,890-foot well west of Reno. Between 1917 and 1924 the Catlin Shale Products Company near Elko reported 12,000 barrels of oil extracted from shale, although it couldn't locate enough suitable shale to continue. In fact, state officials recorded 81 oil-exploration attempts before 1953, but little oil was found, and Nevada's jigsaw-puzzle geology made exploration exasperating. Oil drillers had earned something of a bad name, too, because of slippery promotional schemes.

When George Hadley began exploring in 1950, four years before the discovery on Sharp's range, most people thought he was another scam artist or crackpot. Hadley was drilling north of Eureka on the Bruffy Ranch. The Bruffy brothers had a spring that continuously oozed a small amount of oil, and Hadley thought that was significant. He knew the conventional description of Great Basin geology—that nothing suggested large oil deposits—but he had been told the same thing 20 years earlier about California's Cuyama Valley, where he then discovered a major oil field and became a millionaire many times over.

Hadley drilled in 1951 and 1952, and although he found no commercial oil, there was an oil "show" (chips of oil-stained rock) and the underground geology looked promising. But he died in an auto accident shortly thereafter, and it would be 30 years before Hadley's theory that Bruffy's was rich in oil would be vindicated.

Meanwhile, the Shell Oil Company was taking an interest in another part of the state. Eagle Springs lay about 65 miles southwest of Ely, and as at Bruffy's the geology was not necessarily correct for potential oil deposits.

A test hole was drilled at Eagle Springs nevertheless, and it was said at the time that this would be a *real* wildcat hole (one drilled on inconclusive evidence). Still, exploration progressed until that winter morning in 1954 when Nevada's first producing well brought up oil.

A small exploration boom developed in the area as major companies and independents vied for drilling rights. The myth that the Great Basin was barren of oil had been proved false.

Still, the Eagle Springs discovery seemed a little odd. Oil was found in volcanic formations, where it traditionally isn't found, and there weren't the usual natural gas pockets associated with the find. As it turned out, those conditions weren't necessary for oil's presence in the Silver State, but their absence left the experts scratching their heads.

While production gradually increased at Eagle Springs from 1954 to 1976, oil men remained frustrated as they drilled dry hole after dry hole. So far, Nevada oil production was a few hundred barrels per day of asphalt-bearing oil, which wasn't the highest quality.

Interest in the Railroad Valley fields diminished, and by the early 1970s most major oil companies and many independents had farmed out their leases and moved on to more promising prospects. Another myth was now gaining acceptance: Eagle Springs was the only oil field in Nevada.

The new misconception abruptly dissolved in November 1976 when news leaked out that Northwest Exploration had struck oil seven miles west of Eagle Springs at a place called Trap Springs. The oil companies rushed back to Nevada. Wildcatting continued to be the norm, and while producing wells were developed at Trap Springs, diminishing flows and a series of dry holes tempered the excitement.

In 1981 Northwest Exploration made another significant discovery nine miles south of Trap Springs on Bacon Flat. Oil companies began to acknowledge that even though the Railroad Valley geology was frustrating, the area appeared to have major potential.

During this same period Amoco began an exploration program in the area of the Bruffy Ranch where George Hadley had drilled in the early '50s. In April 1982, when Amoco's Blackburn Three well began production, Hadley's theories were proved correct, and the Blackburn field was reported as a major find.

Sometimes factors other than geology influence oil exploration. Back in Railroad Valley, Northwest Exploration had to drill a hole in order to fulfill federal requirements on a lease block east of Bacon Flat at the mouth of Grant Canyon. The company wanted to drill where it would satisfy the requirements for the greatest area at the least expense. The geology did not look favorable at the site finally chosen, and almost everyone expected a dry hole.

Drilling began in the summer of 1983, and another surprise was in the offing. At a relatively shallow depth, near 4,000 feet, and in an entirely different rock formation from that at Eagle Springs and Trap Springs, drillers encountered an oil show. Within another 300 feet they struck a

# Beau Derricks

Will the Silver State become an oil state like Texas or Alaska? Probably not, but it could make a respectable showing.

Nevada ranked 28th among oil-producing states two years ago, but with the recent strikes it may join the ranks of crude-rich states like Colorado, Montana, and Utah. "Nevada may be able to double or triple its yearly oil production," says Scott McDaniel, a resources engineer at the State Department of Minerals. Denver geologist Al Pekarek, an experienced oil explorer, agrees: "I think we're right there with things about to break loose."

Earlier this year in Central Nevada, the state's most promising area for petroleum, eight companies were pumping from six oil fields. Five fields lie in Nye County's Railroad Valley, including Trap Springs with 21 wells; Eagle Springs, 12 wells; Currant Field, one well; Bacon Flat, one well; and Grant Canyon, four wells. Producing more than 6,000 barrels each day, the Grant Canyon field is Nevada's largest. The Blackburn (Bruffy's) field in Eureka County has 10 wells. Most producing wells have depths between 4,000 and 7,000 feet.

The Grant Canyon strikes have encouraged the new oil rush. "The situation may be analogous to that of the Overthrust Belt in Wyoming nine years ago," Pekarek explains, referring to fields that now bring up about $330 million in oil yearly. "They drilled a lot of dry holes there but then found some very large fields. It appears Grant Canyon is having the same effect on Nevada. It is bringing in the same big-money exploration."

The Department of Minerals granted 11 drilling permits in 1983; last year the department had issued 69 permits and expects many more applications in 1985. Atlantic Richfield, Jayhawk Exploration, Marlin Oil, Conoco, and Phillips are developing prospects in Nye, White Pine, Lander, and Pershing counties.

Exploring for oil in Nevada can be risky, however. State records show that over the years more than 400 wells have been drilled, of which 41 became producers. The 1-in-10 success rate is low compared to other regions, but since drilling and pumping costs here are low and profits potentially high, oil companies have been eager to take a chance on Nevada oil. —*Roger Smith*

# Oil Is Where You Find It

## A geologist's view of Nevada's oil mysteries.

**By Carolyn Dufurrena**

Although oil trickles from crevices and hot springs in half a dozen Nevada valleys, few people paid much attention to the phenomenon until recently. Geologists thought the seepage was the residue of old, dissipated deposits. They said that the Basin and Range geological province, which includes most of Nevada, was so complex that no one could find oil even if it were present.

As more and more oil was found in the state, geologists revised that view. This is how they think the oil deposits developed and how they go about finding them:

First, take a hypothetical oil field in Central Nevada and follow it from the deposition of the original rock 350 million years ago to the way it looks today.

It is the Devonian period. There are no mountains in Nevada. A great ocean covers the state; the shoreline, somewhere near Central Utah, runs north and south. The basin deepens westward, toward where the Pacific Ocean is now, and a string of volcanic islands is all that exists of California.

From the shore to, say, Eureka, the water is fairly shallow, and tides move across huge mud flats inhabited by clams and snails. Sandy bars of tiny shell fragments wash back and forth in the waves. Offshore are small islands, or patch reefs. Coral grows prolifically near the edge of the continental shelf. It would be a great place to snorkel.

At times, the ocean gradually recedes tens or even hundreds of miles, and the reefs and mud flats surface. Rain trickling through the sediment dissolves parts of the coral and the shells, while tiny pores form within the rock. Then the sea returns, covering the developing limestone with the fine-grained mud of the sea floor.

Moving west from Eureka, past Lone Mountain toward where Austin and the Toquima Range are now, the basin deepens. Tidal surges give way to real marine currents. The water is quieter, except for occasional storms that sweep across the reefs, tearing coral away from the reef and flinging it along with sand and shell fragments down the slope toward the sea bottom. Tiny organisms live, die, and sift through the ocean currents toward the sea floor. Algae and plankton accumulate, and thick, black limestones form, enriched with the organic remains of countless tiny creatures.

As these lime muds are buried, they are compacted to one-tenth their original thickness and subjected to higher and higher temperatures. Gradually the organic remains of plant and animal life are cooked into a hydrocarbon soup.

After the soup simmers for a few million years, it begins to migrate from the black shales where it formed. Nonporous formations then trap the soup.

Often a structural trap keeps enough of the black ooze in one place to make a worthwhile oil field. A structural trap forms when rocks fold into an arch-shaped "anticline." The oil migrates uphill to the crest of the anticline and is trapped. Or, a block of oil-bearing limestone may be faulted up or down; if non-porous rock surrounds the block, the oil stays. There are many kinds of traps, but those are two of the most common.

So that is our model oil field, buried a mile or two under the earth's surface. There it sits for the next 100 million years or so, while the oceans shrink to their current shores and faulting and erosion create the mountains and valleys of the Nevada we know. Some oil-bearing limestone surfaces during mountain building. The oil may leak out in seeps or leave a residue that tells the geologists, yes, there is oil in this valley someplace; to their consternation, there often are no other clues.

Of course, the wildcatters persist. There is a saying that "oil is where you find it," and so the oil developers drill a wildcat and see what they can find. Clues or no clues, they find oil in a lot of unlikely places.

The search for black gold can take as little as a year or as long as five. After establishing the favorability of an area, the first step is to lease the land where you think an oil field is lurking. Most of Nevada is federal land, and federal leases are cheap. For a 10-year term you can secure the rights to an acre of public land for just $1. Privately held acreage or popular drilling areas may be more pricey; an acre of choice property in an oil-producing part of West Texas might rent for $5,000. But even a buck an acre is expensive when a geologist can only narrow the prospect down to a 10-by-25-square-mile area—an initial land investment of $160,000.

In the second step, sound waves are used to find a buried oil trap. This is done by laying out a series of electrical cables equipped with "geophones." Then a "thumper truck" pounds the earth with a steel plate or column. The generated sound bounces off rock layers miles under the earth and comes back to the geophones. All the seismic echoes are recorded; when deciphered by a computer, they tell the geologist where the oil field is buried—or might be buried.

Seismic interpretation is an art as well as a science; there are no guarantees that what the instruments hear a mile or two below the surface is really there. But having narrowed down the area of interest to two or three square miles, you cross your fingers, pick the best spot, and drill that hole.

The search has become an expensive proposition. You've just spent $600,000 for the seismic program at $12,000 per mile for about 50 miles of information. Add that to the original lease cost, and the tally is about $760,000. Drilling the actual wildcat costs about $155 per foot, so the typical depth, 5,000 feet, runs $775,000. That's a total investment of $1,535,000. You need some partners.

Small companies can't risk a $1.5 million dry hole every year, so they form partnerships. Tulsa-based Mapco Oil, operator of the Grant Canyon field, does it this way: Seven small companies form the Nevada Joint Ventures Group. The companies are scattered from Houston to Denver but get together in committee to decide which Great Basin properties to acquire and develop. One company is elected as the operator for each well or field developed; this company actually drills the wildcat, based on information shared by the partners. The seven of them split the costs and, of course, the profits.

Mapco's Grant Canyon wells cost about $700,000 each to drill, and the company has drilled six so far. Of the six, three are oil producers. That doesn't sound like great odds, maybe, but each one of those producing wells paid for itself in 21 days. Grant Canyon One has been producing now for about a year-and-a-half, and GC Two and GC Three have been operating about a year. Each produce more than 1,500 barrels of oil every day, and even with the price at about $22 per barrel, it's a money-making proposition.

The company is happy with its find, and well it should be. Although the wells haven't produced long enough for anyone to predict what their lifespans will be, some wells drilled in Railroad Valley in the 1950s are still pumping. Such successful producers more than pay for the time and expense of finding them—and for all the dry holes as well. □

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*Carolyn Dufurrena is a consulting oil geologist based in Winnemucca.*

spectacular deposit. It brought up more than 1,500 barrels of high quality oil per day, and best of all the oil was free-flowing, so pumping costs were avoided. In the old days, this kind of well would have been called a "gusher," but modern methods of control captured the phenomenal flow of oil from the outset. Nevada, as an oil producing state, was now on the map.

This new well was named Grant Canyon One, and it immediately doubled Nevada's total oil production. A series of new wells followed, and two more free-flowers brought in daily quantities exceeding that of the first.

One would think that annual oil production now worth hundreds of millions of dollars would transform Nye and Eureka counties into hubs of prosperity. That is what happened on the barren range lands of Oklahoma and Texas during their oil booms, when rural towns became centers of commerce almost overnight and had the best in government services for their citizens.

But as Nye County Administrator Roy Neighbors, who lives in Tonopah, points out, "There is a vast difference between Nevada and Texas or Oklahoma. Texas and Oklahoma are private land states. Oil discovered there immediately raised the values of the producing lands, upon which property taxes to support local government services are based. States also claimed a barrel tax.

"Nevada, on the other hand, has 86.7 percent of its land area owned by the federal government, and that land pays no property tax. Neither do the counties receive a barrel tax."

Our state and oil counties do receive some benefits from well production. The federal government returns 50 percent of all money from its lease fees, which vary from $1 to $2 per acre, to the state. The feds also return 50 percent of the royalties received, which equal 6.25 percent of production. This tax-sharing amounted to $11 million in 1984 alone. Also, a tax of five cents per barrel helps support Nevada's Department of Minerals.

The money returned by the federal government goes into the state distributive school fund and is disbursed to Nevada counties according to population. However, Roy Neighbors and Nye County Assessor Bernie Merlino don't agree with that method of distribution. While Nye County produced $2.5 million in lease-royalty revenues, only $190,000 was returned because Nye has only about 12,000 residents. This, they say, is unfair.

"We are in desperate need of revenues to deal with the impact of the new oil industry in Nye County," Neighbors says. "For instance, we now have the largest oil trucking operation in the West operating


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from Railroad Valley. Unimproved dirt roads in the area are destroying the heavily laden trucks which haul the oil. We need a $10 million road program to support the oil industry which presently exists, but all we receive is $190,000 for our local school fund. Something is going to have to give."

Merlino briefly dreamed about the revenues from a well like Grant Canyon One on privately-owned land. "It is conceivable that a well like that on private land could bring in three-quarters of a million dollars in revenue to local government instead of the approximately $18,000 currently received. The problem is, 97 percent of Nye County is federally owned.

"The three percent that is privately owned must provide all our property tax for public services. We can hope that someone discovers oil on private land, but 97-to-3 odds aren't that good."

To answer that problem officials from the energy-rich central counties are working on legislation with various state officials that would give the counties a greater share of oil revenues as production increases. The legislation, they say, would not reduce the amount that other counties presently receive. Nye County Planner Steve Bradhurst says, "We expect major increases in oil production in the future. We're betting on the come."

Oil expert John Stout of the Bureau of Land Management's Ely office agrees, and he doesn't believe the current drop in oil prices will hurt exploration in the state. "I don't foresee a decline," he says. "In fact I see an even greater interest developing.

"Nevada oil fields are being recognized as perhaps being small but with the potential for very high quality wells such as you see at Grant Canyon. It is very economical to develop wells producing high volumes by free flow. In some of the big oil fields in other parts of the country, they may have hundreds of wells, but each well may be producing only 10 or 15 barrels a day and at high pumping costs."

The future for oil production in the state looks bright. Drilling applications at the state's Department of Minerals increased six-fold in 1984, and more companies are betting that the Central Nevada boom is just beginning. As Stout says, "There are a lot of oil company executives in Denver and Chicago looking at 2,000 barrels per day production figures from free-flowing wells in this state and asking, 'Do we have any leases in Nevada?' " □

*E. Wayne Hage is a Central Nevada businessman and rancher who writes and lectures on land-use economics. He also closely follows the state's oil industry. Kathi Hanks of Tonopah contributed to the article.*



BOB McKEEVER

*The Gila monster can roar like a mountain lion, but it's a rare and endangered species.*

# Poisonous Creatures

## Introducing some of the nicest animals you may never want to meet.

**By David Moore**

They are seen mostly in old Saturday afternoon westerns. They also play villains in campfire stories, and after the flames go out, that awful question is sure to be on the mind of every camper: What if one of those things gets in my sleeping bag?

Thus the poisonous creatures of the desert, that uniquely prehistoric fraternity that seems to be everywhere yet never seen, are heartily feared and loathed by the general public.

But are they really all that dangerous?

You bet they are, and hospitals around the state always stand ready to deal with bad bites and stings. But there are compensations. Poisonous creatures like the sidewinder and dreaded scorpion are just as shy as other, more





*These two dancing rattlers were spotted by photographer Gordon Wiltsie in the White Mountains. "They didn't rattle or try to bite each other," he says. "They spiraled their bodies in the air until one gained an advantage and threw the other to the ground. Then they started again."*

cuddly animals. While some venomous varieties are surprisingly common—even the best homes have a few black widows lurking in the shadows—meeting a dangerous species is a rare occurrence, even for people who spend all their time outdoors.

Luckily for us squeamish types, Nevada's poisonous creatures lead highly private lives, and eating, stalking, web weaving, and nest raiding are far more important to them than sinking their teeth into us. It's a live-and-let-live proposition that works both ways. Take the Gila ("heela") monster, a poisonous but beautiful lizard. "It's not something to be feared," says Russ Grater, a retired National Park Service naturalist who lives in Boulder City, "but it shouldn't be monkeyed with, either."

Also, by remembering a few simple rules you can reduce the risk of sudden encounters in the desert and mountains. Try to avoid wading headlong through the brush and walking directly over rocks. When climbing, don't reach in holes or onto ledges without a quick look beforehand. Watch where you sit down.

And if you're lucky enough to see a tarantula or Gila monster, step back and hope you brought a camera.

Probably the state's most feared creatures are snakes, whether poisonous or not. Countless gopher and king snakes have had their heads bashed in to pay for the imagined sins of rattlers, which *are* poisonous.

The impulse to kill snakes at one time seized even the eminent walker and author Colin Fletcher. In *The Thousand Mile Summer*, he described a brief standoff with a sidewinder in Death Valley. "The snake disappeared into a bush, and I walked on up the road, oddly pleased with myself," he wrote. "The desert had taught me something. When I killed those early rattlesnakes, I could have justified myself with a score of reasons. But the 'reasons' would have been excuses. I know now that what drove me to kill was plain, ordinary, understandable fear."

Although a good rattler still is a dead rattler to a lot of people, others admire the snake for its remarkable heat sense, quickness, and poisonous mechanisms. Nevada has seven varieties of rattlers, ranging from the high-strung western diamondback in the south to the more laid-back Great Basin rattler in the north. They use their fangs to inject the poison, which attacks the blood. In the old days Nevada Indians used water parsnip and skunk cabbage to treat bites; today the danger is lessened by getting to a doctor quickly or using smart first aid (see May/June '83). In fact, for most victims the shock is worse than the bite.

Two other low-profile poisonous snakes are the lyre and night snakes. The



*"They were the wickedest looking desperadoes the animal world can furnish," Mark Twain declared, but in reality tarantulas are easy-going. A bite is said to be like a bee sting.*





GORDON WILTSIE PHOTOS

latter is a gentle nocturnal resident of most of the state, and two distinct varieties live on either side of the Colorado River. Southern Nevada's lyre snake is active mornings and evenings. Both snakes are rear-fanged. They have mild poisons but aren't considered dangerous to people, in part because they can't open their mouths very wide.

All lizards in the U.S. are nonpoisonous, with one exception—the Gila monster. The banded variety extends from Arizona into Southern Nevada, occasionally startling hikers around Lakes Mead and Mohave, the Valley of Fire, and Searchlight. Beautifully beaded with black and salmon markings, the Gila monster must be a fearsome sight at ground level as it lumbers about, looking for quail eggs, or waiting patiently by the trail, ready to pounce on the first mouse that comes along.

To us, the Gila monster poses little threat. About 18 inches long, it can turn its neck and bite quickly, but it is a slow runner and would rather be left alone. The only danger is putting a hand or foot close enough for the big lizard to feel threatened. Even then the poison, a lethal neurotoxin that attacks the nerves, comes from near its lower teeth, so the Gila monster must grind the poison in while holding a tight grip. Usually a person will be OK if he or she can break away quickly.



BOB McKEEVER PHOTOS

*Scorpions are often discovered under boards and rocks. This common variety has a bigger body than the long, thin, deadly type found recently in extreme Southeastern Nevada.*

People who encounter a Gila monster in a canyon or wash tend to have fond memories of the experience. As you approach, the lizard will whip its stocky body around to face you. Then you'll hear its voice, an incredible, rasping roar worthy of a mountain lion. This exhaling of air is responsible for an old wives' tale, Russ Grater says. "Its breath was considered poisonous. The hissing was such a startling thing, and people would say that if you were exposed to its breath, you'd die."

Despite its poison, the Gila monster is a rare and endangered creature and thus is protected in Nevada by state and federal laws. For years people killed the lizards at random, and today there is an even greater threat—a black market in which collectors of rare species will pay as much as $500 for a Gila monster kidnapped from the desert. Wildlife officers around Las Vegas and Lake Mead have caught people nabbing the lizards to take them home or sell to a fence.

While the beaded lizard remains rare, the black widow spider, a statewide resident, flourishes and deserves a healthy fear. The spider's name comes from her habit of killing the male after mating, and her ruthless reputation is somewhat deserved—not so much for her disposition, because she will avoid confrontations, but for her lethal bite. The poison is a neurotoxin, and while the site of the bite may not hurt, there may be intense abdominal and muscular pain for several days.

The black widow likes warm, dark, protected places, so you should watch out under houses and in dark corners, woodpiles, outhouses, and even car trunks. The spider is easily recognized by the red hourglass on its belly, a warning sign known from Canada to South America.



BOB McKEEVER PHOTOS

*The sidewinder travels by throwing its head forward and looping its body after, which leaves a series of S-curves in its wake. The small rattler can burrow in loose sand, too.*

One man who sees thousands of black widows every year is Neil Harris, county undersheriff and owner of Neil's Pest Control in Elko. In spring and summer, when Elko residents are working around their houses, he gets frequent calls to rid homes of black widows. "You learn to accept them," he says. "You can usually tell its web because it's random and strong, while most house spiders will spin a fancy web. If you go under the house with a stick and clear the webs aside, the spiders will usually run away. If you go right into a web, though, there's a good chance you'll get bit." Harris says he's been bitten "a couple of times" during his eight years in the business. "I didn't notice it till later. Afterwards it became sore, but I don't remember being sick," he says.

Crawling under houses also is a good way to meet scorpions. The scorpion gives its name to a constellation, but in the desert it likes to stay close to the ground—under rocks, boards, and rugs.

It may be only the size of a small lizard, but the scorpion deserves respect. An Arizona variety—the yellowish *Centruroides exilicauda,* which is long and thin—injects a neurotoxin that causes great pain and can be deadly. In Nevada, nine times out of 10 you'll see two chunkier types, *Paruroctonus* and *Vejovias;* there's also *Hadrurus,* the giant hairy scorpion. Their stings aren't considered dangerous. But last year *Centruroides,* the bad one, was found in the state east of Lake Mead by State Entomologist Bob Bechtel of Reno. "They weren't known to exist in Nevada," he says. "These little devils cling and climb. The others are more ground-dwelling."

Not surprisingly, victims tend to be people who spend a lot of time in the desert. At Tonopah's county hospital, which serves much of Central Nevada, administrator Ben Aguilera says the staff occasionally treats geologists for scorpion stings and insect bites. "A lot of times we don't know exactly what bit them," he says. "It can happen at night, when they're sleeping, so they never know."



NEVADA DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

*The violin spider, a Southern Nevada native, shouldn't be fiddled with, but it's rarely seen.*

*The western black widow has a painful, nerve-attacking bite and is probably the most common poisonous creature in the desert. This spider is found in dark places such as under houses and in woodpiles and outhouses. It is easily recognized by its red hourglass and random web.*



Similar cases of mistaken identity have given a bad reputation to the brown recluse, which is something of a mystery spider. Although a highly venomous variety, *Loxosceles laeta,* has been chomping on South American victims for centuries, deeds of the true brown recluse, *Loxosceles reclusa,* which leaves an ugly sore around its bite, have come to light only in the past 40 years. But *reclusa's* true territory extends from Florida to Texas—not to our region.

"No one has ever brought in a true brown recluse," says Bechtel, the state entomologist with the Nevada Department of Agriculture in Reno. Instead, we have a less harmful relative, *Loxosceles deserta,* and less than a dozen of the spiders have been positively identified in

the state. All were found in Southern Nevada—one at the Test Site and the rest near Las Vegas—so Bechtel says there's little basis for reports of recluse bites in other parts of the state.

The spider is similar in size to the black widow and is best identified by a dark shape on its body that resembles a violin. Bechtel says, "The *deserta* is fairly shy and retiring. It's primarily a ground-dwelling species and doesn't seem to hide in privies like black widows do. You find it in washes, on canyon walls." Bechtel, who has been with the agriculture department since 1957, contends that the spiders should be called violin or brown spiders, not brown recluses, because the latter refers to the Southeastern *reclusa.* He says, "If you're going to say it, say it right."

Another spider with a bad rep but a better known name is the tarantula. From Zane Grey to George Lucas this hairy crawler has terrorized fictional heroes and heroines, usually by walking slowly up the bedcovers before the intended victim wakes up. Yelling often follows.

In real life, however, the tarantula is relatively harmless. A South American version does have a lethal bite, but in the western U.S. the spider's bite seems to have about the effect of a bee sting—severe for some people, an annoyance for most others.

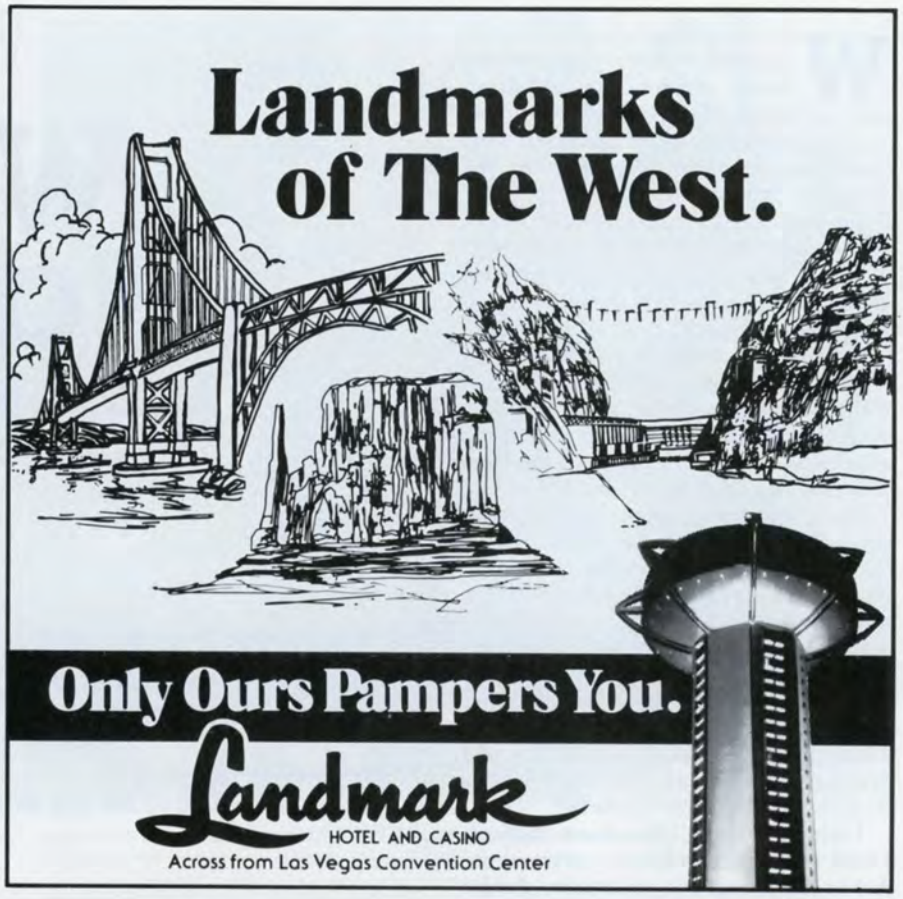
Tarantulas are most visible in October and November, when the males make their annual search for females. On their journey the spiders often can be seen crossing roads, which provides a good chance to stop and take photos or just watch.

Some outdoor people are adept at letting tarantulas walk on their hands and arms. One such person is Homer Pattie of Boulder City. Pattie, a retired engineer, helps conduct weekend hikes as a volunteer guide at Lake Mead. While not recommending the practice for everyone, he says he's probably picked up 200 tarantulas as well as numerous snakes and lizards. "I do it so people can take pictures. It shows them that the spiders are not harmful, and you shouldn't harm them," says the fearless tarantula fan. "They're really very gentle creatures."

So next time you see a tarantula crawling up the sleeve of Hopalong Cassidy or Indiana Jones, you'll know the spider would rather be eating grasshoppers, marching off to find a mate, and generally minding its own business. Like all other poisonous and semi-dangerous creatures, it has its own important place in nature, and the chances of one of us getting bitten are extremely slim in any case.

Now, that's something worth yelling about. □

*Senior Editor David Moore likes to observe poisonous creatures from a distance.*




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# Black Wallace and the Senate Fight of 1899

**It was the last hurrah for the most powerful man in Nevada when William Stewart and Francis Newlands took their battle to the Legislature.**

**By Susan James**

When the Nevada Legislature met in January 1899 to pick a United States senator, the politicians and journalists who were noisily gathering in Carson City often discussed such controversies as the price of silver, the decline of mining, and the war in Cuba. They also talked about the political power of one Nevadan—lobbyist Black Wallace.

Would Wallace, backed with railroad money, be able to keep William Stewart in the Senate for another term? Or would Francis G. Newlands, a wealthy lawyer and Nevada's sole congressman, defeat Wallace's machine? For three decades Wallace had had a reputation for getting what he wanted at any cost, but this time he was facing the fight of his political life.

Some say that Charles Chestnut Wallace earned his nickname "Black" for his black hair. Others attribute the name to his staunch support of the Republican Party, since during the Civil War many Republicans were abolitionists, supporting the "black" cause. In any case, when Wallace came to Nevada in 1863, he was more interested in mining than politics. He drifted through Austin, Virginia City, and Treasure Hill and was known variously as "C.C.," "Blackie," and "Charlie."

Historians know little about Wallace. Those who watched him in action wrote that he had a magnetic personality, that he was "born to rule." But Wallace shunned high political office, preferring to work behind the scenes. While others wallowed in discord, Wallace took command, prompting newspaper editor Sam Davis to note, "Legislatures, Central Committees, and State Conventions were mere pieces on his political chessboard."

Ten years after his arrival in Nevada Wallace became the assessor of Eureka County. The self-styled lobbyist used his position to advantage. He became a familiar sight at conventions and the Legislature and developed a reputation as a hard worker who never broke a promise or backed down from a fight.

While building his political network, the ambitious lobbyist came to the attention of railroad czar Collis P Huntington, a Californian who was one of the principal builders of the Central Pacific Railroad. Most Nevadans had cheered the arrival of the railroad in the late 1860s, but as rates went higher and higher, voters grew increasingly hostile over the railroad's political and economic power. Huntington reacted by hiring lobbyists who could defend his company's interests in Carson City. By 1883 Black Wallace was on the Central Pacific payroll.

The railroad also had to protect itself on the national level, so before the 1887 election for the U.S. Senate, Wallace struck a bargain with William Stewart.

A lawyer, Stewart was one of the state's best-known public figures. He had helped sort out the early tangle of mining claims on the Comstock Lode, and in 1864 he won a seat in the U.S. Senate, representing the new state of Nevada. Before retiring from politics in 1875, he had made a lot of contacts, one of whom was Collis Huntington. Stewart had been wary of the railroad's entry into Nevada, but gifts of Central Pacific stock and cash inspired Stewart to lobby for laws friendly to the railroad.

When Stewart announced in 1886 that he would campaign for his old Senate seat, Wallace knew he had a man who would defend the needs of the highest bidder. Wallace furnished him with a well-organized machine and worked quietly as the brains behind the operation. Thanks to Black Wallace and the railroad, Stewart was elected.

His supporters, however, cared less about the railroad than they did about mining. They hoped that unlimited coinage of silver would raise silver prices so that mining operations in Nevada could expand. By the early 1890s, the miners' cause was too popular to challenge, so Wallace and Stewart decided to join the Silverites. Unable to persuade the state Republican Party to adopt a silver plank, they left the GOP to help organize the Nevada Silver Party in 1892. Wallace and Stewart's control of the new party ensured the railroad's control of the state.

Stewart was reelected to the U.S. Senate in 1893, but many voters began to question his sincerity. Some said that the railroad's price-gouging had caused Nevada's recent depression, others that Stewart was a traitor to the silver cause. By January 1899, Nevada newspapers were taking potshots at Stewart. He was "nothing



*Senator Stewart made his reputation as a mining lawyer.*



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTOS

*Black Wallace, standing tall by the lamppost at right, appears to be presiding over this 1897 legislative portrait at the Capitol.*

more nor less than the hireling and tool" of the Central Pacific Railroad, said the *Tuscarora Times Review*. The *Reno Evening Gazette* declared that Nevada needed a senator "who is free from the badge of slavery to corporations" and from "cranky fads and crooked schemes."

Nevadans also complained that Stewart, like other senators since the Comstock era, didn't live here. He made his home in the East, managing to return to Nevada every six years in time for reelection.



*Congressman Newlands said a younger man like himself should replace Stewart.*

Clearly, Black Wallace had his work cut out for him in the senatorial election of 1899. Nevadans called Stewart the "Grand Old Hypocrite," but they found Wallace's manipulations more despicable. A letter to Ely's *White Pine News* suggested that anyone with an "India rubber imagination" could predict that the state's legislators would fall victim to "rottenness and corruption" at the hands of railroad lobbyists. The *Tuscarora Times Review* accused Wallace of using the Silver Party to serve the railroad. The paper compared the lobbyist to "a harlot hawking her shame," traveling from one end of the state to the other to drum up business for a corporation that cared little about the needs of Nevadans.

Wallace and Stewart were not too concerned with the growing opposition until Congressman Francis G. Newlands emerged as a candidate. Newlands declared his candidacy in December 1898, a month before the Legislature would meet in Carson City. He was a popular politician. Before moving to Nevada in 1888, he had been a successful lawyer in San Francisco. He also had the good fortune to marry the daughter of William Sharon, the wealthy banker who had controlled many mines and the V&T Railroad during the Comstock's heyday. Stewart had helped Newlands, a Silver Party man, get elected to Congress in 1892.

Stewart and Wallace regarded Newlands' challenge as both a betrayal and a bona fide threat. Besides being popular, Francis Newlands was rich and could buy votes just as easily as the Central Pacific Railroad. That scared Wallace.

The senatorial election was to be held under the old system by which the voters elected legislators, who then picked the state's U.S. senator. Nevadans spoke loudly in November 1898, electing some legislators who stood squarely against Stewart.

But Wallace began working his magic with railroad money. A former congressman, Thomas Wren, had told the editor of the *White Pine News* that the "railroad gang must be broken up, Stewart must be defeated." By the middle of January 1899, however, Wren had changed his tune and was working in Carson City with the railroad gang on Stewart's behalf. The Tuscarora paper, suspecting bribery, called Wren "one of the biggest toads in the Stewart puddle."

Newlands and the Wallace-Stewart faction waged war in the newspapers. The *Carson City Morning Appeal* ran special supplements criticizing Newlands, and

vicious cartoons portrayed him as a traitor to Stewart and a dandy tied to Sharon's coattails. The *Nevada State Journal* took Newlands' side. The editor pointed out that the supplements had been printed in the East. He wrote that "Nevada is good enough to call home for a brief period every six years, but when Stewart had a little money Nevada need not expect to get it."

Mudslinging was followed by gunslinging. Wallace imported Colonel Jack Chinn of Kentucky and David Neagle, both famous ruffians, to keep legislators in line. One of them, Assemblyman Alexander McGowan, later insisted that he had been forced to vote for Stewart. Virginia City's *Territorial Enterprise* reported that Chinn took the legislator to a hotel room and said, "McGowan, you _____ of a _____, you have promised to vote for Stewart, and if you don't vote for him by G—d, I will kill you."

Backed by such persuasive campaign aides, Wallace and Stewart had the state Senate vote locked up, but something had gone wrong in the Assembly—only 15 of the 30 assemblymen supported Stewart, and he needed a majority to win. Undaunted, the incumbent declared, "I am going to be returned to the Senate whether the people of Nevada want me or not."

In the crucial Assembly vote, which was scheduled for January 24, 1899, Stewart wanted a first-ballot victory since it seemed likely that his support would erode in a prolonged fight. Shortly before the vote, Black Wallace swung into action. Only 29 assemblymen answered the roll call that afternoon. W.A. Gillespie, an uncommitted representative from Storey County, had mysteriously vanished from the halls of the Capitol. Newlands' supporters moved to delay the proceedings, but that motion was voted down.

The nominations began. McGowan, inspired by his conversation with Colonel Chinn, tearfully spoke of Stewart's devotion to the silver platform. Others jumped to the floor, extolling the virtues of the incumbent. To avoid public defeat, Newlands withdrew his name from nomination. The vote was taken. Stewart won, his 15 solid supporters outnumbering the 14 in opposition.

Many newspapers expressed outrage at the vote. The *Enterprise* wrote of "Nevada's Degradation," calling its readers' attention to the "bare-faced corruption, bribery and general infamy" that accompanied the election. According to the *White Pine News,* everyone knew about Stewart's "past record, his subserviency to the railroad and thugs that he had employed." But the Legislature was weak. "The work that Black Wallace had been doing," the *News* said, "has borne its poisonous fruit."

When Gillespie reappeared in the Assembly two days later, he insisted that he had decided to go home when it became clear that a Republican would not be elected. The *Enterprise* and the *Carson News* reported a rumor that a $5,000 bribe had inspired Gillespie's defection. *Carson City Morning Appeal* editor Sam Davis later wrote that the figure was $1,800 and that Gillespie had participated in a mock abduction.

Wallace had returned Stewart to Washington, but his machine was left too weak to defeat Newlands again. Newlands was reelected to Congress in 1900, and he served as one of Nevada's two U.S. senators from 1903 to 1917

As it turned out, the 1899 senatorial election was one of Wallace's last great battles. He died on January 31, 1901, while the Legislature was in session. Newspaper editors, perhaps suffering from a loss of memory, eulogized Wallace as "a man of rare attainments" and a cornerstone of Nevada politics. In a forgiving tone the *Reno Evening Gazette* asked its readers to "drop the mantle of charity over his manipulations and remember him only as a private citizen." The *Nevada State Journal,* once a vociferous critic, praised the former political boss for his "natural ability" and foresight, adding that "there was nothing malicious in Charlie Wallace." He was "by nature kind and true to those he used." □

*Susan James of Reno is a devoted student of Nevada and medieval history.*


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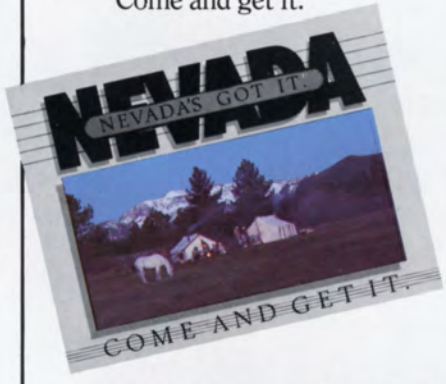
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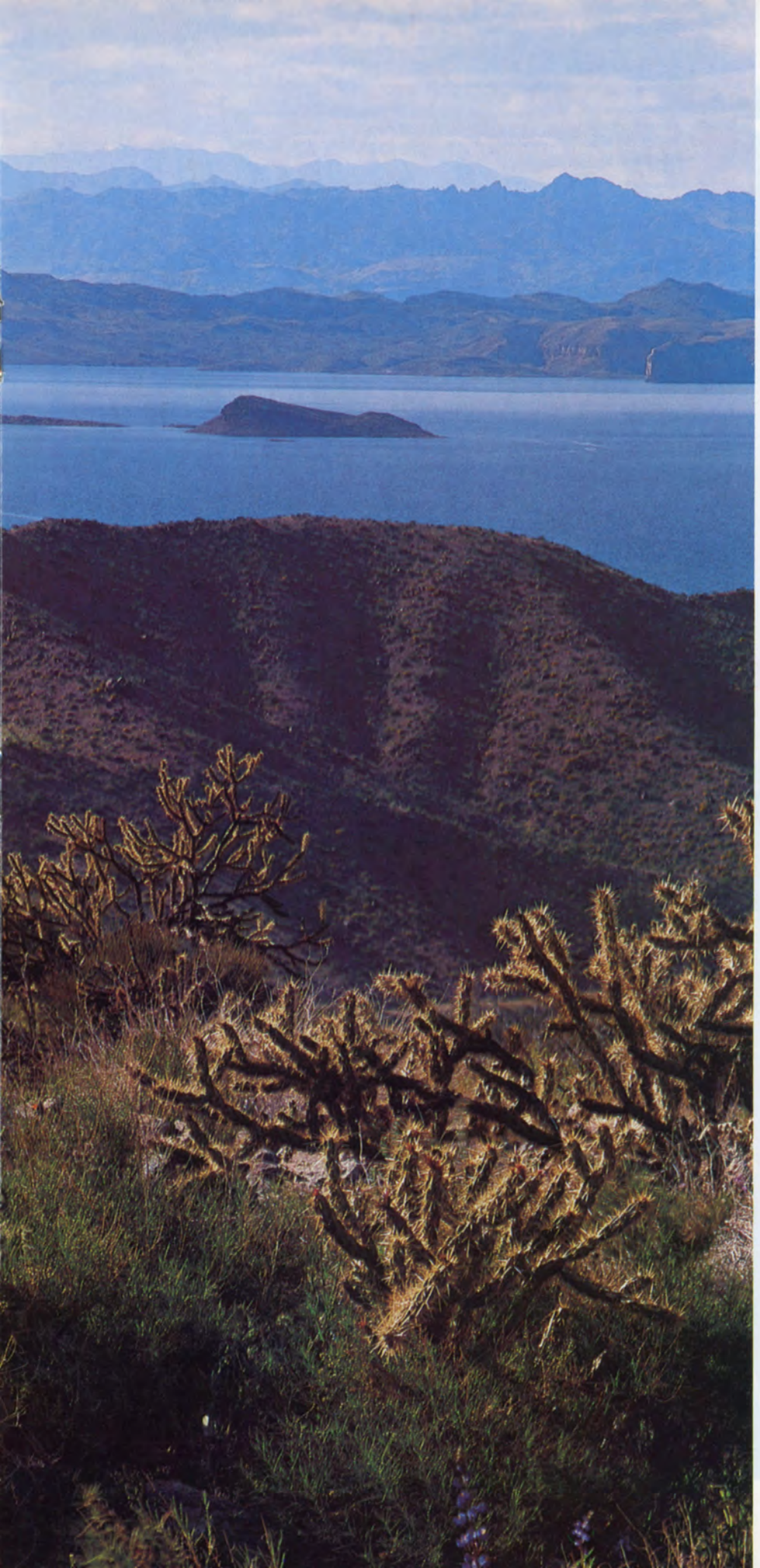
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# Muench's Gallery

## David Muench visits the Colorado River

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



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# High Over Hawthorne and Other Gambling Gambits

**For richer or poorer, this gambler approaches each Nevada vacation like an adventure — which it sometimes is.**

**By Rick Lanning**

In the past 20 years I've happily gambled away many vacations in Nevada casinos. I love the colorful spin of slot machine reels, the feel of padded felt on blackjack tables, the glow of keno boards, and the anything-goes atmosphere that can be found nowhere else in the civilized world.

But what I love most of all are the surprises. You may win big fast, go broke faster, or stay even for hours. You may sit next to stars of the stage and screen and find out they're just people too. Or you may chart a course that leads to adventures you never expected.

So I approach my Nevada vacations with a bit of reckless abandon. This is not a new approach—I've learned my lessons well over the years. Each lesson has been exciting, sometimes a little scary, but always rewarding. Following are some of the moments I remember best:

☆ ☆ ☆

*SCENE:* Las Vegas, at a downtown casino. It's just past 10 a.m. and I'm about to parlay a small fortune into a large one at a blackjack table. To my left there is a commotion. I turn around to see an astonishing sight: country-western singer Buck Owens trying to lift a big, husky man off a chair at another table. The man, who has been drinking, is testy. He simply does not want to go, but Buck is just as adamant. He heaves the guy upright and pulls him toward an elevator.

*BUCK:* "Come on, guy. Bedtime. You've lost enough for this session. Let's get some sleep."

*MAN (mumbling):* "Hell, let me at 'em. I can win. Dealer, double down!"

*BUCK:* "I told you, no more gambling. You've lost enough to pay your salary here for six months!"

*ME:* "Mr. Owens, I'm Rick Lanning. I'm a magazine writer and I'd like to discuss the possibility of setting up an interview with you. "

*BUCK:* "Later, son. [He hands me his card.] Right now I've got to get my guitar player off to bed. Give me a call."

*SCENE:* Buck and his friend disappear into the elevator. We never do get together.

☆ ☆ ☆

We were in Las Vegas, and the day was not going well. We had been in town less than three hours, but my colleague, an Irishman with a wild eye for cards and dice, had already lost his money and was now borrowing mine.

Reluctantly, I gave him $20. He lost that in less time than it takes to tell about it and then asked me for more. I gave him what I had left, and he disappeared. Miserable, I headed for one of the casino bars. I ordered a drink. After a while, a photographer came by and informed me that our friend was on a hot streak. We went to a blackjack table where a group of people had gathered. My friend was three sheets to the wind and happy as could be. He had a huge pile of chips stacked up in front of him. The dealer didn't have a chance. Although my friend was quite drunk, he just couldn't lose.

"Oh, there you are," he roared upon seeing me. Good-naturedly, he reached into his stack of chips and pulled out a black one. It was worth $100. "How's that for a return on an investment?" he said, winking. Then he turned back to his gambling. Happy to be paid, I took the hundred, cashed it in, and went on my own tour of Las Vegas.

In the morning I went to his room. I knocked and there was no answer. The door was unlocked, so I pushed it open and stepped inside. My friend was passed out on the bed, a nearly empty bottle of Chivas Regal was on the nightstand. There was an ashtray, and several of the cigarette butts had lipstick on them. At that moment there was a soft knock at the door. I opened it. A lovely, dark-haired girl in her twenties stood there.

"Is he OK?" she asked. "He drank pretty much last night and I was worried about him." I assured her that he was fine and sleeping off his drinking session.

She appeared relieved. She told me she was a chorus girl at a Strip hotel, and that a casino official had told her to look after my friend since he had won a large amount of money and the casino didn't want anything to happen to him. Then she smiled.

*(Continued)*

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN BARDWELL

"Promise me you won't tell him I told you this story," she intoned. I promised.

"Well, he had been drinking quite a bit, as you know. I went into the bathroom. While I was in there I looked out and he was on the bed, hiding his money in the chandelier. That hurt me. I mean, I'm not a thief. But I didn't say anything. If that's what he wants to do with his money, fine. I don't want it." Later they were talking when she smelled smoke.

"Isn't that your money burning?" she asked. Both of them looked at the chandelier. Tiny curls of smoke were rising from the light fixture, and at the same moment a small flame appeared. With a great yell, my friend jumped up and grabbed the light fixture. Smouldering bills flew in every direction. Fortunately the money was more singed than burned. The girl called security, and the money was locked in the casino safe for the rest of the night.

"I'm not a thief," she repeated, and I believed her. Although my friend and I worked together for five more years, I never told him about the incident, and he doesn't know that I know about it.

☆ ☆ ☆

The machine's name was Big Bertha. It sat on the main floor of Circus Circus in full view of passersby. The arm on the slot machine was nearly six feet long and required considerable effort to pull. Once that was done, the drum would roll and the results would line up: cherries, plums, oranges, bars, elephants, or monkeys. Three monkeys meant you had won $50. Three elephants meant the payoff was $1,000.

One weekend I was in Las Vegas with a cousin. Out of curiosity, I looked on as others played the giant new machine. After watching the action for a while, I decided Big Bertha could be beaten. I managed to play it for an hour before we had to head for the airport and home, but in that brief period I won around $50. I noticed the monkeys and elephants were appearing regularly. With the greatest reluctance I went home, promising myself I'd return.

The next Friday I drove up from Phoenix, a four-hour trip, and headed straight for Circus Circus. Nobody was playing the machine. Baby, I thought, now you're all mine. I got some silver dollars from the change girl and started to play.

Thirteen dollars later, it happened. Three pink elephants magically appeared. I didn't believe it. Bells went off, cannons roared in my head, lights flashed. Little old ladies ran up to me to touch me for luck. In a daze, I watched as someone from the casino counted out $1,000 in $20, $50, and $100 bills. I stuffed the money into my pocket, played the machine once to wipe off the score, and went to another $1 machine. Grinning foolishly, I started stuffing dollars into it. Moments later three bars lined up and I hit it for $100. I put that money away and headed for my car and drove nonstop to Phoenix. I had been in town less than an hour.

☆ ☆ ☆

The first thing I noticed was that the stewardess had runs in her nylons. The second was that the pilot hadn't shaved and looked like he badly needed sleep.

Pushing aside my fears—we were out for a night of fun—I boarded the Champagne Flight Special, following my new bride Nan, my pal Dave, and his wife Lee.

> "'Lee says the ranch houses are higher than we are,' I looked through the dusty window. We *did* look low. 'Waitress,' I bawled. 'More champagne!'"

We were at the airport in beautiful downtown Burbank. It was about 10 years ago. Dave and I had just gotten off our jobs at the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* and were heading for action, adventure, casino gambling, and unlimited free champagne! At least that's what the ad in the paper's Business Personals section had stated: "Champagne Flight Special, $10, Free Champagne & Round-Trip Air Travel, Hawthorne, Nev."

The plane wasn't new by any stretch of the imagination. It reminded me of one of those World War II cargo planes. I half expected the passengers to be sitting in cargo netting hung from the walls.

But we were out to have *fun*. We settled back into our seats, ignored the chipped paint and the cigarette-strewn aisle—they sure must have been making a lot of champagne flights lately, I thought—and waited for takeoff.

The plane's engines sputtered and ignited. They didn't sound too good to me. I tightened my seat belt.

Lee, more nervous than I, was a tall Texan. She worked as an assistant to a dentist and thus had seen her share of horrors. She was not the type to hide her feelings.

"Miss," she said as the stewardess lurched past us, "where the hell's the champagne?"

A moment later Lee was clutching her prize, a six-month-old bottle of California champagne. Unceremoniously, she popped the cork and proceeded to chug. When she was done, she passed the bottle around. Even Nan, who didn't drink, choked down the bubbly. By the time it got to me there wasn't a drop left. We ordered another bottle.

The plane was taxiing down the runway. It lurched and bounced as if it were on stilts. I heard Dave muttering. The "Fasten Your Seat Belt No Smoking" sign lighted up and stayed on for the remainder of the trip. The plane lumbered down the runway. My heart caught in my throat as I wondered if it would have enough speed to get airborne. It did. Barely.

And so we were flying. A bit more relaxed, I took time to fill the little plastic glass the stewardess had given me with the dry California champagne.

"Hawthorne, here we come!" Dave said, hoisting the bottle high. "We're going to lay those blackjack tables open, right pardner?" I agreed. I even smiled.

Lee didn't hear us. She was staring out the window. Nudging Dave in the ribs, she pointed and said something. Dave's face turned white.

"What's wrong?" I wanted to know.

Dave turned to me. His lips barely moved. "Oh, nothing," he said. "Lee says she thinks the ranch houses are higher than we are."

I pushed her aside and looked through the dusty window. We *did* appear to be low.

"Waitress," I bawled. "More champagne!"

By the time we arrived in Hawthorne—it was less than an hour's trip—we were singing up a storm. The plane touched down, bumped along the runway, and skidded to a stop.

Outside, the air was frosty—considerably colder than Los Angeles. A green shuttle bus was waiting to take us to the casinos. Whooping and hollering, we headed for town.

For eight hours, we played cards, shot dice, pulled slot machine handles, ate shrimp, drank beer, and spent money. When we were finished, we had spent about $50 each.

It was time to head back to the airport.

Lee balked. She was drunk but not crazy. "Why don't you all go back on the plane," she pleaded. "I'll take a bus." It was all Dave could do to pull her aboard. Lee immediately reached for the champagne.

The same stewardess was there, and the pilot's eyes looked like a road map of Texas. All the way back I kept looking for ranch houses and drank more than my share of champagne.

We arrived safely in beautiful downtown Burbank. As the plane came to a stop, the pilot thanked us for flying and invited us back. The "Fasten Your Seat Belt No Smoking" sign was still on when we ran for our cars. □

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*Rick Lanning now lives and writes in Florida.*



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# The Battle Born Fort



DAY WILLIAMS

**Battered but proud after 125 years, Fort Churchill reminds us of a time when the West was still being won. Plus, more current happenings at Lake Lahontan and Dayton State Park.**

**By Jim Crandall**

As you stand on the veranda at the Fort Churchill museum and look down at the adobe ruins scattered like old teeth in the desert, it may be hard to imagine the fort's once proud military bearing. But in the 1860s that same view glittered with color and vitality, as neat rows of white buildings teemed with hundreds of blue-uniformed soldiers.

Fort Churchill State Historic Monument is a place of bold memories. Nine miles south of Silver Springs on U.S. 95 Alternate, it was built in 1860 to protect the Pony Express, westbound pioneers, and settlers. During its 10 years of service, Lincoln separated Nevada from Utah Territory and later declared Nevada a state. The Civil War raged and died in the east, and the vast wealth of the Comstock Lode was discovered in the hills 25 miles away.




*The history and water sports of Dayton, Fort Churchill, and Lahontan state parks entice travelers between Carson City and Fallon.*

For the state's park system, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this spring, the fort is a valuable historic treasure.

When the fort was built, however, the costs seemed extravagant to military economists. Materials had to be hauled by wagon from Sacramento and San Francisco, and local supplies commanded gold-camp prices. In 1861 the construction's final tally was $178,888, about 10 times the cost of similar forts.

Although Churchill today looks as if its walls had been pummeled with cannon balls, the soldiers there saw little action. Transcontinental telegraph lines replaced the Pony Express in 1861. After a few skirmishes, Indians and whites developed a peaceful, if cool, relationship, and when the Central Pacific Railroad completed its route across the nation in 1869, emigrants



BOB GOODMAN

sold their wagons and bought train tickets.

The fort was abandoned in September 1869 and the buildings were auctioned off. The economists who winced at construction costs must have fainted at the news that local trading post owner Sam Buckland paid $750 for salvage rights to the entire compound.

The fort fell silent as the wind and rain honed the adobe into eerie desert sculptures. Then in 1925 the Nevada Sagebrush Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution took an interest. Governor James Scrugham acquired the property from the federal government and deeded it to the DAR in trust.

The DAR had little money, however, and in 1935 the fort became a Civilian Conservation Corps camp. Over the next two years more than 250 men formed and



DAY WILLIAMS

*Wind, rain, and time have honed the adobe of Fort Churchill into smooth desert sculptures. On summer weekends, park rangers give tours explaining each building's original use. Above, some of the grout the Civilian Conservation Corps used in the 1930s to stabilize the fort was stronger than the bricks and now stands out in bold relief.*

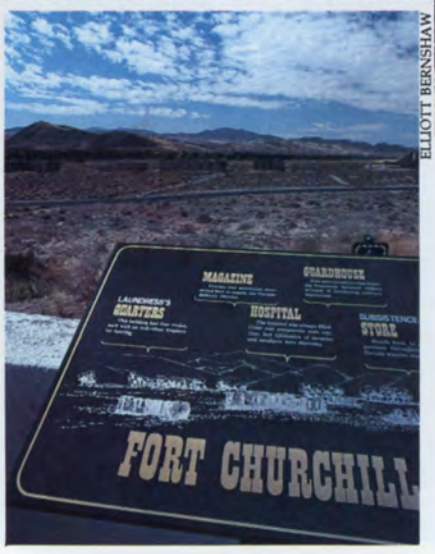
## Park Particulars

As the Nevada Division of State Parks celebrates its 50th anniversary, special events are slated for Fort Churchill, Lahontan, Dayton, and other parks in 1985. This spring's events include birdwatching at Dayton on March 23 and April 27, and History Day at Fort Churchill on April 28.

For more information about camping and day use at the three parks, write or call: Fort Churchill State Historic Monument, Silver Springs, NV 89429 (577-2345); Lahontan State Recreation Area, 16799 Lahontan Dam, Fallon, NV 89406 (867-3500); and Dayton State Park, Box 412, Dayton, NV. 89403 (885-5678).



BILL SERNIUK




ELLIOTT BERNSHAW



*The view from the museum, right, puts the park in perspective. Above, walkways pass within haunting distance of the ruins.*

fitted 100,000 adobe bricks in an effort to stabilize the ruins, but the new work crumbled as fast as the old.

The CCCs also built the museum, and with a roof and paint it managed to withstand the elements. After the CCCs left in 1937, the fort again was abandoned. Finally in 1957 Governor Charles Russell proclaimed Fort Churchill a state park, and the old outpost began getting regular protection and care.

Today the park has camping and picnic grounds under cottonwoods and willows along the Carson River just east of the fort. Walking trails in the quarter-mile-square compound have markers that describe each building's original use.

The museum, which sits on a rise above the ruins, looks strangely modern, but it is a near replica of the original adobes. Inside are artifacts, historical sketches, publications, and a scaled down model of the fort as it appeared in the 1860s.

The museum is where you begin to get the feel of the place. It tells about a rugged past, of soldiers on guard in a strange land. Stay a moment, and then go outside to the veranda, and look down at the ruins of the old fort.

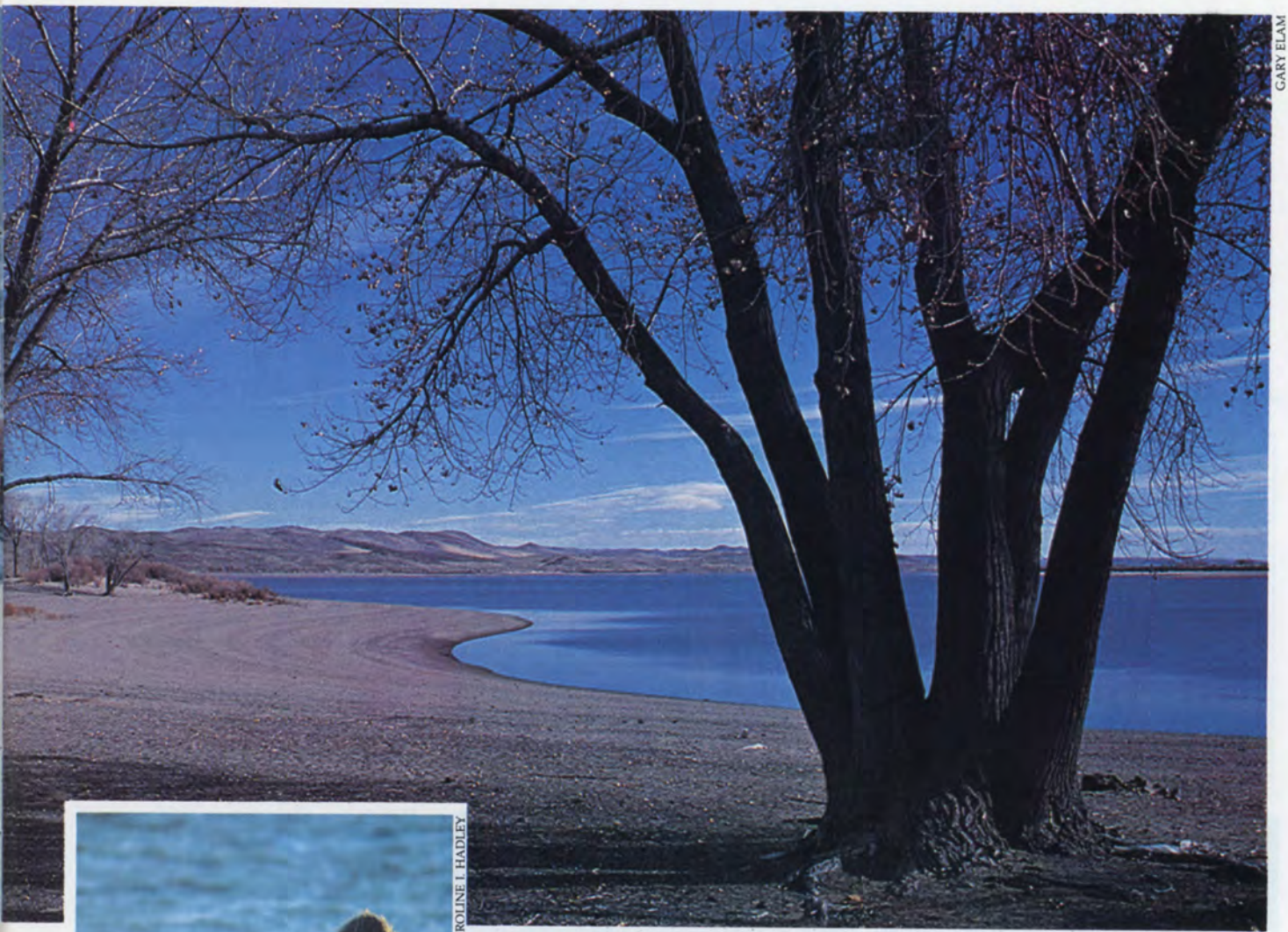
> "Soldiers at the fort saw little action as telegraph lines replaced the Pony Express and the Central Pacific Railroad completed its route across the nation."

## Lake Lahontan

On Fourth of July weekend the state's seventh largest city isn't a city at all—it's Lahontan State Recreation Area. With 10,000 surface acres of water and 69 miles of sandy beaches and coves, the reservoir attracts thousands of water lovers to its cool climes each summer as speedboats roar, catfish jump, hamburgers sizzle, and toddlers giggle and flirt with the gentle, toe-tickling waves lapping at the shore.

Lahontan may draw up to 20,000 visitors on a busy summer day, but the site was just a desert dust bowl at the turn of the century. Then the Newlands Project, which broke ground in 1902 as the nation's first federal reclamation job, created the lake with the construction of Lahontan Dam on the Carson River. Water also

GARY ELAM





CAROLINE I. HADLEY

*The Newlands Project, the first federal reclamation program, irrigated the Lahontan Valley and created the lake now enjoyed by boaters, campers, and beachcombers.*

came from the Truckee River through a series of canals across the desert. The project provided electricity to Fallon, and irrigation turned the parched Lahontan Valley into a paradise of lush alfalfa fields and cattle ranches.

When construction ended in 1915, the federal government turned over responsibility for recreation to the two counties, Churchill and Lyon, that border the water. Lyon developed beaches on the western shores, while Churchill did the same on the north and east.

Locals loved it. The camping was old-fashioned—drive down on the beach, build a campfire, and let the kids run. But as more and more people discovered the lake, the call for more conveniences and law and order went up.

In 1971 Lahontan became a state park, and today it features a wide range of camping conditions. For the spoiled, there are showers and bathrooms, numbered camp slots, paved roads, boat-launching ramps, and picnic grounds. For the rustically inclined, there are still miles of dirt roads weaving in and out of shady, secluded coves. The water level can vary by the year or season, but the coves are popular retreats, especially for people with four-wheel-drives towing camp trailers.

To stake your claim on a cove it's best to get there early on Friday afternoon and set up camp. Then just lay back, watch the catfish splash, barbecue a hamburger, and set the kids free.

## Dayton Park

The historic town of Dayton, 11 miles east of Carson City on U.S. 50, has sometimes had an identity problem. Founded as a mining camp in the 1850s, Dayton later matured into a ranching town. The saloons on Main Street served whiskey to the miners, wine to the Italian farmers, and nobody seemed to mind the mix.

So it is just and proper that Dayton State Park, at the north end of town, should straddle the highway and feature both ends of the bar, so to speak—mining ruins on the west, and rich pastures that keep the ranchers in chips on the Carson River to the east.

Near the river is the main park area, where cottonwoods loom over campsites and picnic areas. Known as Squatter's Flat




ED OPSITOS

*At Dayton State Park, marked trails lead walkers and birdwatchers along the Carson River.*

before the state park system took it over in 1975, the place has always been popular for spreading out bedrolls, telling tall tales by the campfire, and taking strolls along the river. The Division of State Parks has been careful to maintain the casual atmosphere while adding amenities like restrooms, a covered barbecue area for group outings, and RV sani-dumps.

Across the highway a series of hand-hewn caves, concrete foundations, and stone walls are all that remain of the once stalwart Rock Point Mill. Built in 1861, the mill had eight five-stamp batteries that were driven by 13- and 16-foot water wheels. The mill could crush 40 tons of Comstock ore in a day.

> "The Dayton mill's 1910 reconstruction included an aerial tramway that shuttled ore eight miles down from Gold Hill."

The mill burned twice, in 1882 and 1909, but was rebuilt each time to greater capacity. The 1910 reconstruction included an aerial tramway that shuttled ore eight miles down Gold Canyon from Gold Hill. Footpaths now wind through the foundations, which serve as planter boxes for a colorful sprinkling of sagebrush and wildflowers. □

*When Feature Editor Jim Crandall immigrated to Nevada in a creaking Karmann-Ghia in 1973, he camped at Squatter's Flat.*






**LETTERS** *(Continued from page 5)*

license plate. Yet the license plate "SKI3PIN" cleverly encrypts "Ski Aspen."

The question now: Are they just passing through, or are they discussing the possibilities of obtaining a new plate that reads, "SKNCLIN" (Ski Incline)?

Dave King
Shaw AFB, SC

*King, 3PIN MNS X-C BINDING. SKNCLIN'S CLRR, THGH. THNKS.—Ed.*

**Another Florida Swap Wanted**

Your magazine is getting much more enjoyable. However, we were disappointed in the lack of photos of Pyramid Lake. The ones you printed by Day Williams were interesting, but it would have been nice to also be able to see what the gorgeous lake looks like. (We have not seen it for years and some people have never seen it!)

Do you know anyone who wants to buy (or swap) some Florida property half mile from the beach for Nevada property? Our hearts are still in Nevada, while our bodies are wrinkling in Florida. We're dying to come back home.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Smith
Laurel, FL.

**Count Me In!**

The other day a friend of mine asked, "Where are you going for your vacation this year? I guess you will go to Las Vegas again, knowing how much you love to gamble." This was not a bad guess on his part since my wife and I have been visiting Las Vegas every year since 1973.

My reply, however, caught him by surprise. "You know," I said, "I have really been doing some serious thinking about this year's vacation and I have decided to go someplace where my wife and I can do a variety of things. Since my wife likes to snow ski and I like to water-ski, we would like to go to a place where we can do both. While we are there I would also like to try some fishing as well as house boating and scuba diving, in a beautiful scenic lake nestled in the mountains.

"Also, since we both enjoy sightseeing we would like to find a place which is both beautiful and historic, where we could marvel in both flat country and mountains, deserts and lakes.

"It would be great if this place could have, along with everything else, great food, top-flight entertainment, and maybe even some gambling, but it would have to have a warm, dry climate, and I want to be able to do it all for about $60 to $80 a day, including hotel, food, and shows."

"That sounds impossible," my friend said. "I doubt if such a place even exists, but if you ever find it count me in. By the way," he said, "you never answered my

*(Continued on page 55)*

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# Nevada Bookshelf

## Bonanza days, Reno, and Bill Harrah's cars.

**By Roger Smith**

**Harrah's Automobile Collection: One Man's Tribute to the Great Automobiles of the World,** *by Dean Batchelor and photographs by John Lamm. GP Publishing, 4140 South Lapeer Rd., Pontiac, MI. 49051. $39.95, 256 pages, 290 photos, hardcover.*

A monument to the past, Dean Batchelor's book tells the Harrah's Automobile Collection (HAC) story, a story that will end in the next couple of years as HAC's rare cars are auctioned off and re-collected by others. Richly adorned with photos, this table book documents the origins and development of Bill Harrah's collection and describes how the antique vehicles were restored. But car lovers will revel most in Part II of this book, "The Great Cars of HAC." Here are histories, specifications, and color photographs of cars like the 1913 Stanley Mountain Wagon, 1934 Packard Sport Phaeton, 1931 Bugatti Royale, and 1953 Corvette, motorcycles like the 1938 Crocker Special, and airplanes like the 1928 Ford Tri-Motor. Along with *American Cars* (1982, by Leon Mandel and photographed by Baron Wolman and Lucinda Lewis), Batchelor and Lamm's book is the best view left of the magnificence of Bill Harrah's automania.

**Red Shirts and Leather Helmets: Volunteer Fire Fighting on the Comstock Lode,** *by Stephen R. Frady. University of Nevada Press, Reno, NV. 89557. $19.95, hardcover, $12.95 softcover, 261 pages, 55 pages, 55 photos and illustrations.*

By 1865 Virginia City had fire departments as large and well equipped as any on the West Coast. It needed them, for the city was a firetrap; flames from a mine or mill could easily spread through the town in hours, as happened twice. *Red Shirts* tells the doughty department's history, but the author, the current fire chief of the Virginia City Volunteer Fire Department, writes about much more than fires and firemen. He writes about the rivalries between fire companies, gunman and fire chief Tom Peasley, prostitute Julia Bulette, politics, personalities, tragedies, and comedies. Supplied with a glossary and footnotes, this book is a readable, scholarly study of a major Comstock social institution.

**Tough Little Town on the Truckee: Reno 1868-1900,** *by John M. Townley. Great Basin Studies Center, Reno, NV. 89502. $19.95, 286 pages, 155 photos, illustrations, maps, and charts, softcover.*

This book's purpose, writes historian John Townley, is to review the Truckee Meadows' development since 1868 "and assess the effect of its unique economy in the 20th century." Townley has worked hard to gather a great variety of sources for his study, as the ample bibliography shows. A reader will find reproductions of news clippings, poems, cartoons, advertisements, old-time maps, photos, and drawings. Printed in two-column format, the book is the first in a series about Reno history and thoroughly recounts the growth of a frontier community.

**Reno, Hub of the Washoe Country: An Illustrated History,** *by William D. Rowley. Windsor Publications, Woodland Hills, CA. $22.95, 126 pages, 188 photos and illustrations, hardcover.*

Professor William Rowley of the University of Nevada, Reno, has produced a concise history of Reno for general readers, and complementing his text are reproductions of a variety of posters, ads, labels, and paintings, including some by artists Robert Caples and Craig Sheppard. To further portray the Biggest Little City's character, Robert Nylen has added portraits of "Partners in Progress," a review of important local institutions and businesses.

**An Editor on the Comstock Lode,** *by Wells Drury. University of Nevada Press, Reno, NV. 89557. $10.95, 343 pages, softcover.*

Wells Drury wrote for Virginia City's *Chronicle, Daily Stage,* and *Territorial Enterprise* during the heyday of the Comstock Lode. He knew the high and mighty of the mines, like John Mackay; the politicians, like William Stewart and John P Jones; and the legendary writers, like Dan DeQuille and Mark Twain. As a reporter, he also knew firsthand the dizzying enthusiasms and abrupt tragedies that hard-rock mining produced. It is no wonder, then, that this book of memoirs is thoroughly readable and excitingly genuine —worth 10 or 12 Comstock histories. An appendix offers a miscellaneous collection of new stories, spoofs, poems, and quips that Drury and friends like Ambrose Bierce wrote about Virginia City when it was the greatest, most adventurous city in the West. *An Editor* was first published in 1936, and this Vintage Nevada Reprint makes the book as accessible again as Twain's *Roughing It,* just as it should be. □

*Roger Smith of Reno teaches English at UNR and is* Nevada's *regular book reviewer.*




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**Austin and Reese River Mining District: Nevada's Forgotten Frontier**

**by Donald Abbe**

In the early 1860s, fortune seekers swarmed to the Reese River Mining District to stake their claim in the rich silver strike. But by the middle of the decade, the district dwindled from a large area of intense activity by thousands of prospectors to a peaceful town occupied by only a few hundred people. This book examines the discovery, boom, and bust cycle so prevalent in western mining.

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HORSE SENSE & NONSENSE

# Dancing in the Dark

**I was amazed when Frank made a Eureka roar in Elko, but that was nothing compared to what Paddy later roped at the ranch.**

**By Harry E. Webb**

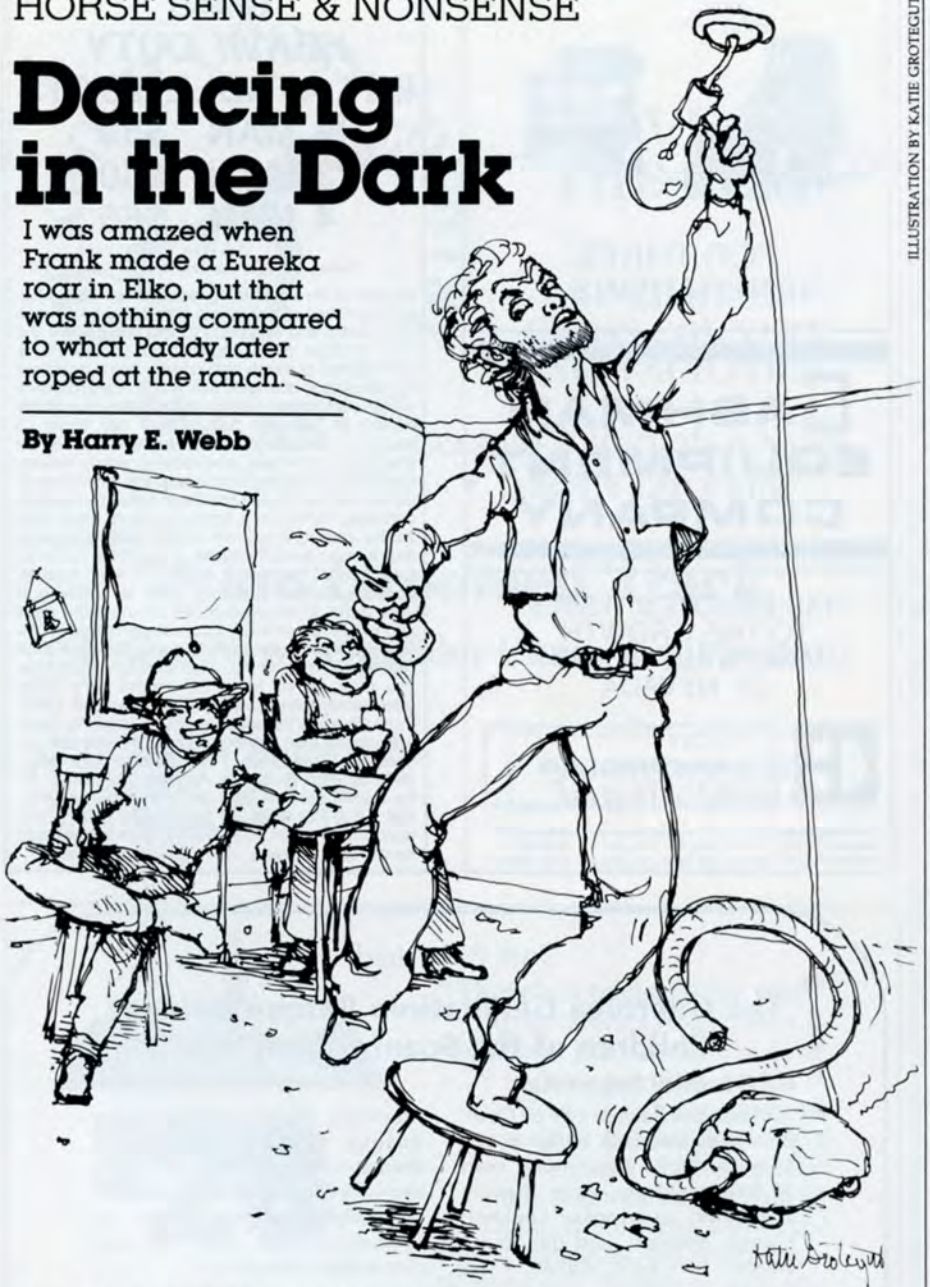


ILLUSTRATION BY KATIE GROTEGUT

Every time I ran across those two fellows there was trouble sure to follow. I'm speaking of Frank Shurze and Paddy Ryan. The former worked at the Catlin Oil Shale Plant across the river from Elko. The latter was a bronc rider, cowboy, and rodeo follower and well known most anyplace.

Now, as the evening wore into midnight and we three cronies exchanged views on everything from bronc riding to the intricate process of making motor oil out of rock, we found ourselves in Frank's littered room on Railroad Street. Things are a bit hazy, but I recall Paddy and I whooping in glee as Frank staggered around in the dark and tried to catch the light bulb dangling from the 10-foot ceiling. I also seem to remember hearing grunts and snores from above as Frank's gyrations went on and on in semi-darkness.

Suddenly there was light and Frank said, "God Almighty, didja ever see such a dirty place? Gotta swamp 'er out some day. Come to think of it, do it right now. You fellers hep yourself to the bed while I muck out." Going to a closet he was soon yanking on a long cord and asking us if we had ever seen a dingus called a vacuum cleaner. Paddy said he had but not to yank the damn thing out by the roots! The "damn thing" was finally dislodged, and Frank went through his gyrations again in trying to stab the prongs in the receptacle above the bulb. We whooped and laughed some more until some wakened sleeper pounded on the floor.

The cleaner had been stowed away with the switch left on, and when Frank finally succeeded in hitting a slot, that ancient Eureka emitted a screech that could have been heard from the shale plant to the Indian village off in the sagebrush north of town and brought landlord and bug-eyed tenants to give us their opinions of such goings on.

But as his last jab brought results, Frank had staggered on and taken a nose dive under the bed mumbling, "Sorry, folks, sorry."

That's when the night cop—Judici, I believe—appeared and demanded, "What in hell's going on here?" Seems the landlord had mistaken the screeching vacuum for murder being done and called the law. His and the cop's demands that Paddy and I vacate and pronto reacted on Paddy like a red flag to a bull.

He wasn't about to be ordered around and going into his fighting crouch offered to whip the cop and all the cops in Elko if they tried to make us leave. Good thing the badge wearer was a sensible guy and a friend of Paddy's or we would have soon been in the drunk tank instead of politely being escorted to the Commercial Hotel at 2 a.m. But I wasn't to be shed of this fighting Irishman. Not by a snoot full!

A week later we were together at Bill Rand's ranch. Bill was a four-mile neighbor and had asked me to help with a "few" outsized cows he had bought, and since the first one they had put in the chute for cropping an ear and venting the brand had wrecked the chute, it was a case of roping them neck and heel and stretching them out.

That's when I discovered Bill and Paddy had been buddies during their two years of fighting in France during World War I. On their return Bill had taken over this big ranch and Paddy had followed the rodeo circuit where he and Hoot Gibson of movie fame alternated in being pronounced, "World's Champion All Around Cowboy."

But to get back to that branding job, Paddy had necked a few as we stretched them out for Bill to lop off the tip of the right ear and toss it across the corral where the two ranch dogs vied for such morsels, as Mr. Rand Sr. ran the branding iron. A snuffy cow shot across in front of Paddy and he lay a loop on her, and even though I expected to see his horse jerked down he foolishly threw on the dallies. When that 1,100-pound bovine hit the end of the rope, and as the dally end sailed through the air, Paddy was cussing and trying to pull off his glove.

"Just what I thought," I heard him say and noticed a thumb dangling. Bill hurried over and Paddy said, "Finish the job, Bill. Cut the damn thing off." Rand Sr. came running with a hot iron shouting, "Don't cut that thumb off! We'll rush him to Doc

Eastman. So come on and load him up!"

But Paddy was saying, "Dammit, Bill, hack the damn thing off or give me your knife and I'll do it!" Bill hacked off the thumb and from force of habit flung it across the corral and I wouldn't be so crude as to say what happened to Paddy's thumb.

As for the Catlin Oil Shale Plant, it was abandoned and Catlin returned to Scotland. The plant had produced the world's finest grade of oil, but at $15 a pint the cost was prohibitive for anyone except the government. Shurze? Some said he went with his boss.

Paddy Ryan? He was pretty well known thoughout the world, and he won the most coveted award of all—to be inducted into the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

I and several others of his friends often wonder just which category the commission judged him on? Was it on his meanness, his drinking, or maybe his freckled face and infectious grin? Or was it through his ability as a bronc-riding cowboy? As to which of these won him his laurels I can't say, but I do know he is enshrined in that famous edifice minus a right thumb. □

*The late Harry E. Webb was a cowboy, novelist, and Nevada rancher. He was honored by the Cowboy Hall of Fame in 1984.*

**LETTERS** *(Continued from page 51)*

question. Where are you going on your vacation this year?"

"Las Vegas," I replied.

Robert C. Cirbus
Warminster, PA.

**Tales From Tales of Nevada**

Your "Tales of Nevada" series on the radio surely brings back memories. In North Las Vegas in 1956, if there was a fire we had to call the grocery store across the street. They'd ring a bell and the volunteer firefighters would rush to the tiny firehouse and roar away in one truck.



MASON COLLECTION

The photo shows the city hall in 1956 with my Mercury out front. Those were the good old days.

D. Mason
Las Vegas, NV

**Mag for Medicine Hat**

What a great magazine you are publishing of late. What is the charge to send a gift subscription to Alberta, Canada? Our son works for the *Medicine Hat News* there and was intrigued by a copy I mailed him.

Mr. J.P Strickland
Reno, NV

*Just $9.95, drawn on a U.S. bank.—Ed.*

May you continue to set ever higher standards of journalistic and photographic excellence.

Frances Nauss
York, PA.

If the quality doesn't improve, this will be my last subscription renewal. More photo work and less writing please. Look at *Arizona Highways* as an example.

Jack M. Thomas
Sanford, FL.

**Pershing: More Than Just Alfalfa**

I am a resident of Lovelock and Pershing County, which is a 6,000-square-mile chunk of Nevada that has been sadly neglected by the printed media, including *Nevada Magazine.* Any mention of Pershing County these days usually refers to "The Lovelock Valley, where they grow alfalfa."

*(Continued on page 76)*




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# Sagebrush Gourmet

**"A diner's guide to the Silver State."**

*Following is a selective guide to reader-approved Nevada restaurants whose advertisements appear in this section. Besides descriptions of menu and atmosphere, the listings include prices, hours and other details for your convenience. If you have any comments on the establishments listed, drop us a line at Nevada Magazine, Sagebrush Gourmet, Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV. 89710-0005.*

**CATTLEMENS**
Hwy. 395, Washoe Valley
Between Reno and Carson City. 849-1500
A ranch-style restaurant, the cozy Cattlemens offers excellent meals at moderate prices. The special sirloin steak dinner is a popular and good buy. Currently $6.45, this dinner includes a baked potato, salad, bread, ranch-style beans, sirloin steak and a glass of wine. Other entrees range from a simple hamburger steak to a filet mignon and lobster. The Alaska king crab is delicious! Open seven days a week for dinner from 5 p.m. No reservations. AE, MC, VISA.

**COMSTOCK HOTEL & CASINO**
Second and West Street
Reno. 329-1880
Home of the famous One-Pound New York Steak Dinner for only $5.99. The Comstock's popular 24-hour **Miner's Cafe** also features complete breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus. Enjoy reasonably priced gourmet meals served in an intimate and relaxing atmosphere in the new **Comstock Dinner House.** Reservations accepted. Full-course dinners complete with wine are a bargain at $6.99 in the **Specialty Room Restaurant.** Every fine meal tastefully prepared to your order. Valet parking available. The Comstock Hotel and Casino, "Where the Old West comes alive every day in Downtown Reno." AE, MC, VISA.

**JEREMIAH'S RESTAURANTS**
171 E. Tropicana
Las Vegas. 736-3044
and
Corner Kietzke & Plumb
Reno. 827-2080
Uncompromised devotion to quality food and service makes Jeremiah's a prime choice for fine dining. Fresh fish, steaks and prime rib are the specialties, with the wide choice of accompaniments a popular highlight. Dinner may include a trip to one of the most lavish salad bars in the West, or a bowl of Jeremiah's famous clam chowder. A wine list with more than 50 offerings is also featured. All major credit cards accepted.


LOUIS & LORRAINE ERREGUIBLE'S
LOUIS' BASQUE CORNER



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*"RENO'S MOST UNIQUE DINING EXPERIENCE"*





"We Ate Here"
*Famous Martin Hotel*
"A Truly Delightful Experience"

Since the turn of the century the old Martin Hotel has served
Basque and American Dinners to boarders and guests.
Served family style. 7 days. No menu.
Traditional bell rings starting dinners at 6:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.
Bar opens at 10:00 a.m. 'til midnight.
Lunch served (Menu) Mon.-Sat., 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Located in the Hub of Northern Nevada
Railroad & Melarkey Streets
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445
Your Host & Owner "Frenchy" Fouchet – (702) 623-3197



**LOUIS' BASQUE CORNER**
301 E. 4th Street
Reno. 323-7203
Louis' restaurant offers a warm, unhurried atmosphere that hints of yesterday. Master chefs prepare genuine Basque cuisine such as Tripes Callos, Poulet a la Basquaise, Paella, Boeuf Bourguignon, and entrees including Coq au Vin (chicken in red wine sauce), Lapin Chasseur (hunter's rabbit), and Ris de Veau (sweetbreads) as well as many other delicious French and Spanish Basque dishes all served family style with complimentary wine. You can enjoy a famous picon punch, cafe royale or perhaps an Izarra. Basque culture is reflected in the pottery, artifacts and pictures from the Pyrenees which grace the walls of the two traditional dining rooms. Louis and Lorraine Erreguible host many special dinners and parties in this authentic Basque restaurant. Ample free parking. Lunch: Mon.-Fri., 11:30-1:30; Dinner: 6 p.m., nightly. All major credit cards accepted.

**MARTIN HOTEL**
Railroad & Melarkey Streets
Winnemucca, NV. 623-3197
"We ate here!" Delicious Basque and American food at the famous Martin Hotel. Founded in the late 1800s, the Martin retains its old Basque hotel traditions and a comfortable bar. Lunch: 11:30-2 (menu). Dinner: 6-10 p.m. (no menu). Fixed fare includes steak, side dish (clams & rice, oxtail or tongue). Prime rib or steak Saturday only. Basque fare and wine, $10-$12. Seating family-style. No reservations. Closed all major holidays. MC, VISA. Rooms available.

**STAR HOTEL**
245 Silver (at Third)
Elko. 738-9925

Built in 1909 as a boardinghouse for Basque sheepherders and ranchers, today the Star Hotel still houses sheepherders. But now it's also home for an extraordinary family-style restaurant specializing in hearty meals, European style. Joe and Anita Sarasua offer entrees including steak, seafood, chicken, oxtails, and roasted bits of lamb prepared with onion and red pimientos. Try a picon punch and the Friday chef's special of lobster, bacalao or rice and clams (in season). Dinner entrees include ample portions of soup, salad, vegetables, beans, spaghetti and French fries followed by ice cream or sherbet. Fine and plentiful fare. Dinners only: 5-9 p.m. Closed Sundays. No reservations. No credit cards.


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**BASQUE**
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**STAR ★ HOTEL**
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**Specializing in**
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**Kietzke & Plumb**
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☆ Fresh Seafood ☆ Prime Rib
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**171 E. Tropicana**
**736-3044**

SAUTEED SHRIMP • TERIYAKI CHICKEN

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**Comstock**
Hotel Casino
DOWNTOWN RENO
**For Plain or Fancy Vittles!**

**HATCH BROS. DELICATESSEN**
Whether it's a quick sandwich or salad for lunch or that late night snack, this old time deli is the place for you. Next to Piper's Show Stage.

**SPECIALTY ROOM RESTAURANT**
House specialties served at one low price of $5.99 in an informal, relaxed atmosphere. Chicken Cordon Bleu, Rainbow Trout Almondine and the popular One-Pound New York Steak Dinner featured. No reservations necessary.

**MINER'S CAFE**
Home of Reno's "Famous One-Pound New York Steak" dinner, this popular 24-hour restaurant also features a complete breakfast, lunch and dinner menu. No reservations necessary.

**Comstock Dinner House**
Gourmet meals reasonably priced and served in a relaxed, intimate atmosphere reminiscent of 1880s charm. Prime rib, Veal Oscar and broiled salmon steak are just a few of the specialties. Reservations accepted.

**2nd & West Sts.**
FREE VALET PARKING
**329-1880**

# THE NEVADA CALENDAR

## March & April 1985

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




### Missis with the Mostest

Hosts Richard Dawson and Vickie Carr will introduce the nation's best better halves during the Mrs. America Pageant at the Reno Hilton April 22-29. The contestants, who must be U.S. citizens, over 18 years old, and married, will be judged on beauty, poise, and personality. The title-seekers also will be on hand for photo sessions in the casino area during the week. The nationally televised crowning will take place in the Opera House Theatre on the 29th. There is no charge for admission, but seating will be first come, first served.

# LAS VEGAS TERRITORY

## March

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

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

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

**Nuclear Exhibit,** thru 3/9, on benefits and drawbacks of nuclear power, includes items melted by Hiroshima blast and paintings by survivors, Museum of Natural History, UNLV, 739-3381

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

**AAA & AA State Basketball Championships,** 2/27-28 and 3/1 boys and girls on Wed. at Clark and Valley high schools, on Thurs.-Fri. at Las Vegas Convention Center, 733-2323 or 885-4390

**Concert,** 1 8pm, Radio Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, Ham Hall, UNLV, 739-3535

**Museum Exhibit,** 1 opening of a 1930s Tudor-style Las Vegas home and a 1900 Goldfield cottage in the Heritage Street exhibit, Clark County Museum, Henderson, 565-0907

**From America with Love,** 1 BYU's Young Ambassadors musical performance, adults $5, students, senior citizens, and handicapped $4, children 12 and under $3, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**A State Basketball Championships,** 1-2, boys and girls high school basketball, Bonanza High School, 870-7238 or 885-4390

**Hoover Dam Square Dance Festival,** 1-2, 12th annual square and round dance gathering hosted by Circle 8 Square Dance Club; meet at Elton Garrett Junior High on Fri. at 7:30pm and Sat. at 12:30 and 7pm; on Sat. from 9 to 10am everyone dances at Hoover Dam; Boulder City, 293-4918

**"Equus,"** 1-2, drama for mature audiences, 8pm, Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 739-3353

**"Aladdin,"** 1-3, 7pm Fri., 2pm and 7pm Sat., 2pm Sun., Rainbow Company Children's Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**UNLV v. Cal State-Long Beach,** 2, basketball, 8:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 739-3267

**Jackpot Team Roping,** 2, 16, 23, and 4/13, sign-up 9am, roping events 10am, free to spectators, rodeo arena, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**Luciano Pavarotti Concert,** 3, famed operatic tenor performs with the Las Vegas Symphony Orchestra, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 362-9500

**All-Star Wrestling,** 2, 7:30pm, $12 ringside, $8 general, Showboat Hotel, 385-9196

**Orchestra Concert,** 3, University Musical Society, James Stivers conducting, 3pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 739-3736

**Craps Tournament,** 3-5, Tropicana Hotel, 739-2105

**Art Exhibit,** 3-27 paintings by Florida artist Benini, reception on 3rd from 2-4pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384



## The Voice of Choice

Luciano Pavarotti opens his 1985 world tour with two performances in Nevada—at Reno's Lawlor Events Center March 1 and at Las Vegas' Thomas and Mack Center March 3. Concert-goers are paying from $15 for rafter seats to $175 for up-front privileges and a cocktail reception for him.

**Exhibit Opening,** 4, opening of remodeled exhibits on local history, Clark County Museum, Henderson, 565-0907

**Photo Exhibit,** 4-31 show of pioneer photography of the Great Basin, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

**Art Exhibit,** 4-29, paintings by Jose Bellver, reception on 4th from 5-7pm, Fine Arts Gallery, UNLV, 739-3237

**"Aladdin,"** 8-10, 7pm Fri., 2pm and 7pm Sat., 2pm Sun., Rainbow Company Children's Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**"K2,"** 8-9, drama for mature audiences, 8pm, Clark County Community College Theatre, North Las Vegas, 643-6060

**Amateur Rodeo,** 9-10, all rodeo events, open to amateurs, 1pm, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**Photo Exhibit,** 9-4/21 microelectronics and fiber optics, Museum of Natural History, UNLV, 739-3381

**Las Vegas Chamber Symphony Orchestra Concert,** 10, featuring maestro Masatoshi Mitsumoto, 3pm, free, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**"K2,"** 14-16, drama for mature audiences, 8pm Thurs-Sat. with additional 2pm performance Sat., Clark County Community College Theatre, North Las Vegas, 643-6060

**"The Woolgather,"** 14-4/6, comedy drama, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., Las Vegas Little Theater, 735-0167

**Beer Can Collectors of America Trade Show,** 15-16, open to public, Showboat Hotel, 385-9107

## Best Dam Dance

When festival-going square and round dancers crowd into Boulder City on the first weekend in March, many will be reeling with their partners at the annual dance on Hoover Dam. It takes place Saturday morning from 9 to 10 near the Exhibition Building on the Nevada side, says Ray Stamer, president of the local Circle 8 Club. "Last year we had a record, about 300 people dancing there," he says. "We usually stop a lot of traffic."

**U.S. Championship Chess Tournament,** 15-17 Imperial Palace, 731-3311

**Nevada State Parks 50th Birthday Kick-Off,** 16, rededication ceremony at 10am, meet at Visitor Center, Valley of Fire State Park, 12 miles south of Overton, 885-4370 or 397-2160

**Las Vegas Americans v. Wichita Wings,** 16, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:35pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 368-4625

**"El Amor Brujo,"** 17 Spanish ballet, 2pm, Ham Hall, UNLV, 739-3420

**An Afternoon in Old Vienna,** 17 Las Vegas Symphony's annual celebration with dancing to the waltzes and polkas of Johann Strauss, period costumes (1870-1900) optional, 2-5pm, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6211

**Concert,** 18, Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, 8pm, Ham Hall, UNLV, 739-3535

**"Suspicion,"** 19, Hitchcock film, 7pm, $1, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**Baccarat Tournament,** 20-24, Desert Inn, 733-4400

**PGA Panasonic Las Vegas Invitational,** 20-24, top pro golfers and celebrity amateurs compete, $1,042,000 tournament purse, play is at the Desert Inn, Tropicana, and Las Vegas country clubs, 382-6616

**Las Vegas Americans v. Dallas Sidekicks,** 21 Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:35pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 368-4625

**Films,** 21-22, "Faces of Freedom" and "Mirrors of the Universe," 7pm, $2, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

**Star Program,** 23, learn about stars, planets, and constellations, 7-8:30pm, bring flashlight and warm jacket, meet behind Red Rock Recreation Lands Visitor Center, 20 miles west of Las Vegas, 363-1921

**Las Vegas Americans v. Chicago Sting,** 23, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:35pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 368-4625

**Sailboard Regatta,** 23-24, sailboard competition, starts at 10am depending on wind, Special Events Beach, Lake Mead, 368-2885

**"Lifeboat,"** 26, Hitchcock film, 7pm, $1, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**ESPN Boxing,** 28, 6pm, Showboat Hotel, 385-9196

**Las Vegas Americans v. St. Louis Steamers,** 28, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:35pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 368-4625

**"Rigoletto,"** 29-30, New York City Opera Company, 8pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 362-9500

**Gems for the '80s,** 29-31 free, 10am-9pm Fri.-Sat., 10am-6pm Sun., Hacienda Hotel, 458-7302

**Music and Magic,** 30, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, 2pm and 7pm, Cashman Auditorium, 739-7818

**Open Barrel Race,** 30, hosted by Washington County Barrel Racing Assn. of Utah, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**Winter Wine Extravaganza,** 30, 4-8pm, Caesars Palace, 382-1022

**Spring Regatta Sailboat Race,** 30-31 starts at 10am depending on wind, open competition, Special Events Beach, Lake Mead, 368-2885

**Las Vegas Americans v. Baltimore Blast,** 31 Major Indoor Soccer League, 6:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 368-4625

**Pan Tournament,** 31-4/3, Union Plaza, 386-2110

**Poker Satellite,** 31-4/4, tournament to place in the World Series of Poker 4/30-5/23, Four Queens, 385-4011

**Art Exhibit,** 31-4/24, bronze sculptures by Lyle London, reception on 31st, 2-4pm, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

## April

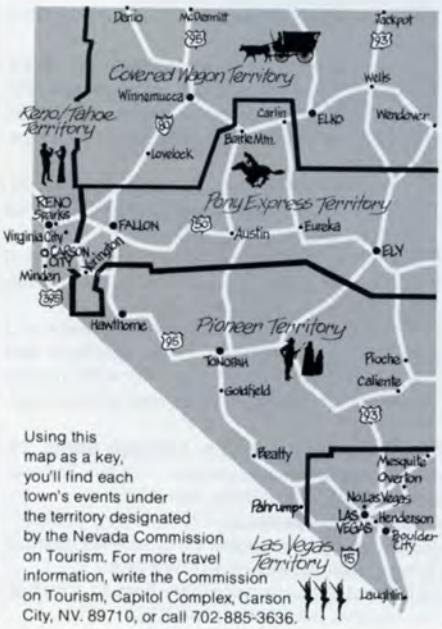
**Mint 400 Starting Positions Drawing,** 2, drawings in the 18th annual Mint 400 Desert Race to be held 5/2-5, Mint Hotel, 385-7440

**Art Exhibit,** 2-5/9, local artists, Reed Whipple Art Gallery, 386-6384

**Art Exhibit,** 3-30, drawings done in 1885 by French artist and balloonist Alexander Tissandier, Lost City Museum, Overton, 397-2193

**Tropicana Las Vegas Easter Run,** 4-6, exposition and health fair all three days; 2-mile fun run, 10-km, and half marathon down Strip on 6th, Tropicana Hotel, 368-2885

**Tour: Indians of the Great Basin,** 4-7 guided bus tour from Las Vegas into Southern and Central Nevada, including views of petroglyphs, Indian lore, and culture, sightseeing in Ely, Tonopah, Caliente, Pioche, Austin, Rhyolite, Goldfield, Big Smoky Valley, and Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park, Nevada Discovery Tours, 735-5450




Using this map as a key, you'll find each town's events under the territory designated by the Nevada Commission on Tourism. For more travel information, write the Commission on Tourism, Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV. 89710, or call 702-885-3636.

**"The Servant of Two Masters,"** 5-6, Italian comedy, 8pm, Black Box Theatre, UNLV, 739-3353

**Tour: Life on the Old Spanish Trail,** 5-6, guided bus tour from Las Vegas into Eastern Nevada and Southern Utah, including outdoor barbecue, lodging, and walking tour in St. George, sightseeing along the Virgin River, Lost City Museum, and Lake Mead's north shore, Nevada Discovery Tours, 735-5450

**Las Vegas Americans v. Tacoma Stars,** 6, Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:35pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 368-4625

**Amateur Rodeo,** 6-7 all rodeo events, open to amateurs, 1pm, Peppermill's Western Village, Mesquite, 346-5232

**Craps Tournament,** 7-9, Tropicana Hotel, 739-2105

**Poker Satellite,** 7-11, poker tournament to place in the World Series of Poker 4/30-5/23, Four Queens, 385-4011

**Art Show,** 8-26, Magnolia Editions Print Collection, reception on 8th, 5-7pm, Fine Arts Gallery, UNLV, 739-3237

**Piano Concert,** 9, Christopher O'Riley performs works by Beethoven, Lyatoshinsky, Schumann, and Strauss, 8pm, Ham Hall, UNLV, 739-3420

**All-Star Wrestling,** 10, 7:30pm, tickets $12, $8, and $5, Showboat Hotel, 385-9196

**Las Vegas Americans v. Los Angeles Lazers,** 11 Major Indoor Soccer League, 7:35pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 368-4625

**Clark County Fair,** 11-13, exhibits of country crafts, cooking, and canning; 4-H, FFA, and FHA projects, Logandale, 397-2604

**Las Vegas Stars v. Edmonton Trappers,** 11-14, triple-A pro baseball, 7:35pm Thurs.-Sat., 1:35pm Sun., Cashman Field, 386-7200

**"The Servant of Two Masters,"** 11-14, Italian comedy, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Black Box Theatre, UNLV, 739-3353

**Ballet,** 11-14, "A La Hitchcock," "Symphonic Variations," "Fresh Aire," and an original ballet, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Nevada Dance Theatre, Judy Bayley Theatre, UNLV, 739-3838

**"A Wrinkle in Time,"** 12-14, science-fiction play, 7pm Fri., 2pm Sat.-Sun., Rainbow Company Children's Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**Poker Tournament,** 12-14, Marina Hotel, 739-1589

## Win a Mint

It's been called the toughest off-road race in America, and if that's not enough to attract racers, the Mint Hotel offers $100,000 in prizes, too. The 17th Annual Mint 400, May 2-5, begins with a tech inspection Friday in front of the Mint casino in downtown Las Vegas. Then the drivers take their cars to the Las Vegas Speedway, north of town, for the Saturday start of the four 100-mile laps through the desert around the city. Some cars look like little more than a cage of aluminum piping with an engine and wheels, machines tough enough for the desert. Tougher yet are the drivers, dust devils such as Parnelli Jones, Rick Mears, Al and Bobby Unser, Rod Hall, James Garner, and Kitty O'Neill. There will be special areas reserved for spectators along the race route, with easy access from main roads.



LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

## The Thwack and Whiz of the Dimpled Sphere

A lot of big swingers prefer Las Vegas in the spring, when two major golf events come to town. The Panasonic Las Vegas Invitational, March 20-24, attracts top-flight PGA pros and celebrity amateurs for five rounds at the Desert Inn, Tropicana, and Las Vegas country clubs. You may spot Tom Watson teeing off with Glen Campbell or Arnold Palmer and Sean Connery, so bring your autograph book *and* your scorecard. NBC will cover the event. On April 18-21 the LPGA J&B Scotch Pro-Am Tournament at the Desert Inn offers $200,000 in prizes to the best women golfers in the world, including Reno's Patty Sheehan. Above is Panasonic contender and Reno resident Craig Stadler.

**Boulder City Spring Jamboree,** 13, 8th annual celebration, 10am parade, pancake breakfast, arts and crafts show, contests, rodeo, takes place downtown and at rodeo grounds, 293-2034

**Sailboat Race,** 13-14, from Lake Mead Marina to Echo Bay, open competition, 368-2885

**Las Vegas Americans v. San Diego Sockers,** 14, Major Indoor Soccer League, 6:05pm, Thomas and Mack Center, UNLV, 368-4625

**Poker Satellite,** 14-18, poker tournament to place in the World Series of Poker 4/30-5/23, Four Queens, 385-4011

**Marvin Hagler v. Thomas Hearns,** 15, prizefight for the middleweight title, date subject to change, 7:30pm, tickets $50-$600, outdoor arena, Caesars Palace, 731-7865

**Las Vegas Stars v. Calgary Cannons,** 15-18, triple-A pro baseball, 7:35pm Mon.-Wed., 1:35pm Thurs., Cashman Field, 386-7200

**"Rebecca,"** 16, Hitchcock film, 7pm, $1, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**Henderson Industrial Days,** 16-21 town party, 565-8951

**LPGA $200,000 J&B Scotch Pro-Am,** 18-21 100 of the best women professional golfers compete along with celebrities at the Desert Inn and Las Vegas country clubs, 733-4460

**"The Servant of Two Masters,"** 18-21 Italian comedy, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Black Box Theatre, UNLV, 739-3353

**"A Wrinkle in Time,"** 19-21 science-fiction play, 7pm Fri., 2pm and 7pm Sat., 2pm Sun., Rainbow Company Children's Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**Star Walk,** 20, walk under the night sky and learn about the stars, planets, and constellations, 7:30-9pm, bring a flashlight, warm jacket, and sturdy shoes, meet at the Red Rock Canyon Recreation Lands Visitor Center parking lot, 20 miles west of Las Vegas, 363-1921

**Gin Tournament,** 21-25, Union Plaza, 386-2110

**ESPN Boxing,** 25, 6pm, tickets $10 and $15, Showboat Hotel, 385-9196

**"They're Playing Our Song,"** 26-27 musical comedy, 8pm, Clark County Community College Theatre, 643-6060

**"A Wrinkle in Time,"** 26-28, science-fiction play, 7pm Fri., 2pm and 7pm Sat., 2pm Sun., Rainbow Company Children's Theatre, Reed Whipple Cultural Center, 386-6553

**Indian Powwow and Trade Show,** 27-28, traditional dancing and authentic costumes, food, arts and crafts; mountain men selling furs, beads, and handicrafts; everyone is welcome, 10am-10pm Sat., 10am-6pm Sun., $2, West Hall of Convention Center, 642-6674

**Photo Exhibit,** 27-6/9, photographs of lichens, Museum of Natural History, UNLV, 739-3381

**Art Exhibit,** 28-5/22, Japanese paintings, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**Alan King/Caesars Palace Tennis Classic,** 29-5/5, top men's professionals compete in singles and doubles matches for $500,000 in prize money, date is subject to change, outdoor arena, Caesars Palace, 731-7865

**"Notorious,"** 30, Hitchcock film, 7pm, $1, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 386-6384

**World Series of Poker,** 30-5/23, Binion's Horseshoe Casino, 382-1600

## Events of Note

- **Chariot Races** with cowboys slapping leather Ben Hur-style are scheduled every Saturday in March at the track in Wells.
- **Nevada 85,** the Northeastern Nevada Museum's traveling photo show, opens March 1 at the Elko museum.
- **Beer Can Collectors of America Trade Show** features a brewery's worth of old suds cans at the Showboat Hotel in Las Vegas March 15-16.
- **Behind the Scenes Casino Tour** offers a peep through the smoke-tinted looking glasses of casino catwalks on March 16 in Reno.
- **PASCO Wave Camp** in Gardnerville is an uplifting experience for glider pilots hoping to catch a ride on the Sierra Wave March 30 through April 7
- **Hilton's $1-Million Pot-O-Gold Playoff** brings together jackpot champs for a grand crankfest April 2 at the Reno Hilton.
- **Marvin Hagler and Thomas Hearns** battle for the middleweight title in a spring bout tentatively scheduled for April 15 at Caesars Palace.
- **El Capitan Cutthroat Derby** has Walker Lake anglers tipping the scales with trout in Hawthorne through April 26.

# PIONEER TERRITORY

## March

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

**Miss Tonopah Pageant,** 2, winner represents Tonopah in the Miss Nevada Pageant, high school, Tonopah, 482-6769

**Lincoln County Talent Contest,** 15, open to anyone, prizes, 7:30pm, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, Caliente Elementary School Gym, 726-3456




## Henderson's Town Party

In 1947 Henderson was facing economic disaster. The federal government was trying to sell its magnesium plant there, the town's biggest employer, for scrap. But residents persuaded the Nevada Legislature to buy the plant and rent it to private companies, and Hendersonites had jobs again. During Henderson Industrial Days April 16-21 you can join townsfolk and enjoy the parade, beauty pageant, talent contest, rodeo, and carnival. You can also sign up for golf, softball, and bowling tournaments during this annual blowout in Nevada's sixth largest city.

**Leprechaun Lunacy,** 16, contest for several categories including practical jokes, puns, and professional lying (politicians, PR people, car salesmen, and realtors welcome), Rhyolite, call Rhyolite No. 2 for more information.

**St. Patrick's Day Party,** 16, bingo games and refreshments, 7pm, St. Joseph's Hall, Caliente, 726-3212

**Tonopah High School Rodeo,** 23-24, rodeo grounds, Tonopah, 482-6644

## April

**Rotary Easter Egg Hunt,** 6, games and prizes for children, Caliente, 726-3196

**Easter Egg Hunt,** 7 prizes for different age groups, Rhyolite, call Rhyolite No. 2 for more information

**Marsh AFB Band Concert,** 25, free, Lincoln County High School Gym, Panaca, 726-3320

# COVERED WAGON AND PONY EXPRESS TERRITORIES

## March

**Chariot Races,** every Sat. thru March, 10am-2pm, Chariot Race Track, Wells, 752-3355

**Nevada 85,** 1-4/1 photo show, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

**Square Dance,** 2-3, public invited, Grammar School No. 2, Elko, 738-3666

**Concert,** 8-9, two-piece band performs ballads, dance tunes, songs, and stories of the Old West, 7pm, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

**Canadian Brass Concert,** 21 classical ensemble, 7:30pm, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

**Art Show,** 21-4/23, works by Connie Lucas of Elko and Judith Miller of Lamoille, Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko, 738-3418

**Intermountain Coaches Clinic,** 22-24, Convention Center, Cactus Pete's, Jackpot, 755-2259

**High School Science Fair,** 27-30, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

## April

**Nevada 85,** 3-16, photo show, Humboldt County Library, Winnemucca, 623-6388

**Chanticleer Concert,** 10, an all-male ensemble of 10 presents a program of music from old English and barbershop quartets to upbeat Gershwin, 7:30pm, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

**Square Dance,** 13-14, public invited, Grammar School No. 2, Elko, 738-3666

**Silver State (LDS) Cuttings,** 18-20, timed horse event, rodeo grounds, Wells, 752-3355

**Cactus Pete's Air Race,** 19, from Dickinson, ND. and Spearfish, SD. to Jackpot, 755-2259

**Health Fair,** 21 Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

**Nevada 85,** 24-5/7, photo show, Pershing County Library, Lovelock, 273-2216

**Cabin Fever Reliever Square Dance,** 26-27 Grammar School No. 2, Elko, 738-3666

**Cabaret and Fashion Show,** 27 fashions, furs, and jewelry with a dance troupe performing opening and closing numbers, 7pm, black tie optional, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

**Band Concert,** 30, featuring Elko's high school and jr. high school bands, Convention Center, Elko, 738-4091

# RENO/TAHOE TERRITORY

## March

**Art Exhibit,** thru 2, various media by Bob Pepper, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 882-9723
**Art Exhibit,** thru 6, paintings by Robert Griffin and Katrina Lasko, Sheppard Gallery, Church Fine Arts Building, UNR, 784-6682
**A Russian Fortnight,** thru 9, recalling the czarist era with performances of Tchaikovsky's opera "Eugene Onegin," ballets, an all-Russian concert, Russian Avant Garde 1910-1930 exhibit, and Grand Imperial Ball; for dates and locations call 329-1324 or 786-4046
**Super Bowl of Poker,** thru 10, Amarillo Slim hosts seventh annual tournament, Del Webb's High Sierra, Stateline, 588-6211
**Planetarium Program,** thru 17 show written and produced by planetarium staff lets you view the winter sky and learn where to look for constellations, planets, nebulae, and galaxies, Fleischmann Planetarium, UNR, 784-4811
**Reno Reflections,** thru 31 historic and contemporary photographs of the Reno area, Nevada Historical Society's Downtown Gallery, in Reno-Tahoe Visitor Center, 789-0190
**Art Exhibit,** thru 4/6, abstract handmade paper constructions by Ingrid Evans, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333
**Luciano Pavarotti Concert,** 1 world-famous operatic tenor performs on the first day of his 1985 U.S. tour, accompanied by the Reno Philharmonic Orchestra, 8pm, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4444
**"You Can't Take It With You,"** 1-2 and 6-9, comedy, 8:30pm, Collegiate Theatre, Lake Tahoe Community College, S. Lake Tahoe, 916-541-4660 or 916-541-7597
**"Amadeus,"** 1-3, drama, 8:30pm Fri.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Reno Little Theater, 329-0661
**Nevada State Backgammon Championship,** 1-3, $8,500 guaranteed prize money, Peppermill Inn, 826-1984
**Snowfest,** 1-10, North Tahoe winter celebration with events and ski races at Tahoe City, Truckee, Kings Beach, Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, and Donner Summit, 916-583-7625
**Art Exhibit,** 1-4/6, works by Native American artist Jaune Quick-to-see, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333
**Concert in the Atrium,** 1 and every Friday thru April (except April 5), featuring classical, bluegrass, and contemporary music, noon-1pm, Airport Gardens, 329-1324
**Animal Fair,** 1-3, Nevada Humane Society, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 331-5770
**Doctors' Wives Rummage Sale,** 2, for scholarships and local medical needs, 9am-5pm, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 785-4800
**Tashi Concert,** 2, Weber, Takemitsu, Ravel, and Brahms, 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 784-4444
**Crazy Craft Sled Races,** 2, sled racing, food, spirits, dance, party, awards for different categories of decorated sleds, noon, Ski Incline, 831-1847
**Reno Autorama,** 2-3, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 323-6055
**The Great Ski Race,** 3, 30-km. (18-mile) cross-country ski race, starts at 9am at Tahoe Nordic and ends at Hilltop Lodge in Truckee, party at finish line, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-0484
**Historical Presentation,** 3, Jack Gibson gives talk on mining camps of the western Great Basin with slides, free, Hazen Bar, on U.S. 50-A in Hazen, 867-3066
**Nevada Junior Miss Pageant,** 4, dinner and talent competition are open to the public, Reno Hilton, 825-7675
**Pacific Trapshooting Assn.,** 4-10, Peppermill Inn and Reno Gun Club, 827-3388
**Photo Exhibit,** 4-29, photos by Elke Morris, Manville Gallery, School of Medicine, UNR, 784-6001
**SPRINT Series Speed Skiing,** 6-9, Kirkwood Ski Resort, 786-3023 or 209-258-6000
**AlpenFest,** 8, 9am-4pm, Sugar Bowl, N. Lake Tahoe, 916-426-3651
**"Candide,"** 8-9, spring musical presented by the Nevada Repertory Company, 8pm, Church Fine Arts Theatre, UNR, 784-6505
**"Pinocchio,"** 8-9, performed by Children's Theatre of Missoula, MT., 8pm Fri., 2pm Sat., Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 883-1976
**One-Act Plays,** 8-10, competition between community productions statewide with the winner going to regionals 3/26-28 in Reno, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 883-1976
**Ladies Invitational Slot Marathon,** 8-10, Reno Ramada, 788-2000
**Art Display,** 8-4/1 miniature print exhibit from the Pratt Institute in New York City and photos by Greg Kinder, Church Fine Arts Building, UNR, 784-6658
**Hidden Cave Tour,** 9, meets 9:30am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677
**West Point Glee Club Concert,** 9, benefits MS, 8pm, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 329-7180
**Thieves Market,** 10, Daughters of the Nile, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 322-8837
**Hunter Rifle Bench Rest,** 10, 9am, Palomino Gun Club, 22 miles north of Sparks, 323-3950
**Gourmet Ski Tour,** 10, with catered lunch, noon, $15, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-9858
**Bicycle Moto-Cross,** 10, open to public, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307
**California Special Olympics,** 10-14, events for mentally retarded skiers, Echo Summit, S. Lake Tahoe, 916-659-7154
**Horseriding,** 10, 17 24, and 31 horseriding for handicapped children and adults, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307
**U.S. Army Band Concert,** 11 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 786-5105
**San Francisco Special Olympics,** 11-13, Boreal Ski Area, Truckee, 916-426-3666
**SPRINT Series Speed Skiing,** 13-16, training Wed.-Fri., competition Sat., Mount Rose, N. Lake Tahoe, 786-3023
**"Candide,"** 14-17 spring musical presented by the Nevada Repertory Company, 8pm Thurs.-Sat., 2pm Sun., Church Fine Arts Theatre, UNR, 784-6505
**Snaffle Bit Maturity Show,** 14-17 working-horse show for 4- and 5-year-olds, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 785-4800
**Behind the Scenes Casino Tour,** 16, backstage look at a casino and showroom, 11am-4pm, by reservation only, presented by Nevada Historical Society, 789-0190
**KONE & KOZZ Bazaar,** 17 Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 329-9261

## Ready to Rodeo

"Las Vegas will go Wild West in a big way, the most unique celebration ever attempted," the *Las Vegas Review Journal* announced in 1935. That's still true of the Elks Helldorado, which celebrates its 51st rodeo and city-wide bash May 31-June 9. Up north, the action is just as wild at June rodeos in Reno and Wells. The Reno Rodeo on June 25-30, like Helldorado, offers hundreds of thousands of dollars in prize money to top-hand professional riders and ropers. For early rodeo reservations and information, call Helldorado at 385-1221, the Reno Rodeo at 329-3877, and the Wells Rodeo at 752-3355. Of course, the events also feature carnivals, barbecues, and dancing.



## Mr. Tahoe Meets Miss Snowflake

North Lake Tahoe communities offer snow-fault fun insurance when they stage Snowfest on March 1-10 to celebrate the approach of warm weather in the Tahoe area. The fun begins at Squaw Valley with a torch-lit skiers' parade followed by fireworks, torch-bearing hang gliders, music, dancing, and the crowning of the Snowfest Queen. During the festival there will be parades and races at Tahoe City, Truckee, Kings Beach, Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, and Donner Summit. If food is your forte, enter the Truckee Chili Cook-off and other gastronomic battles. Or compete in the Mr. Lake Tahoe Contest or the First Annual Miss Snowflake Pageant. There's also the 12th Annual Crazy Craft (with emphasis on the Crazy) Sled Races on March 2 at Ski Incline.

## Play Ball!

The national pastime reunites fans and players, peanuts and crackerjacks this spring in Nevada's two baseball capitals. In Las Vegas the Stars, the triple-A farm club of the San Diego Padres, play their Cashman Field season opener on April 11 against the Edmonton Trappers. The Stars will play 72 of their Pacific Coast League games at home this year. In Reno, the Padres open their first home stand of the California League season on April 16 at Moana Stadium. The single-A club is a member of the San Diego organization.

**Freddie Hubbard Concert,** 17 jazz, Pioneer Theater, 786-5105
**Senior/Master Benefit Ski Race,** 17 10-km., 10am, Incline Village, 831-5190
**Ski-A-Thon,** 17 benefits Muscular Dystrophy, Mount Rose, N. Lake Tahoe, 849-1149
**Mexican Dance,** 18, live music with a band from Mexico, open to public, State Fairgrounds, 785-4307
**Restaurant and Tavern Race,** 20, Homewood, W. Lake Tahoe, 916-525-7256
**World Cup Slalom Finals,** 20-24, men's and women's races, Heavenly Valley, S. Lake Tahoe, 916-541-1330
**Alvin and the Chipmunks,** 22-24, Lawlor Events Center, UNR, 784-4659
**Pacific Crest Telemark Championships,** 22-24, Northstar, N. Lake Tahoe, 916-562-1010
**Hidden Cave Tour,** 23, meets 9:30am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677
**Bird Watch on the Carson River,** 23, hosted by Lahontan Audubon Society, Dayton State Park, 885-5678
**Gourmet Ski Tour,** 24, Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-0484
**Bach Concert,** 24, Reno Chamber Orchestra, 3pm, Reno Little Theater, 853-1345
**Planetarium Program,** 25-6/9, on threats to life on earth, Fleischmann Planetarium, 784-4811
**"Godspell,"** 29-31 musical, meet the cast afterwards, Proscenium Players, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 883-1976
**Student Dance Concert,** 29-31 Church Fine Arts Theatre, UNR, 784-4041
**Ladies Invitational Slot Marathon,** 29-31 Reno Ramada, 788-2000
**Echo Summit to Kirkwood Ski Race,** 30, 9am at Echo Summit, S. Lake Tahoe, 916-659-7154
**PASCO Wave Camp,** 30-4/7 annual soaring meet, including an attempt to break the world altitude record, Pacific Area Soaring Council, Minden airport, 782-7627 or 588-6708
**NRA Practical Pistol,** 31 8:30am, Palomino Valley Gun Club, 22 miles north of Sparks, 323-3950
**Sierra Nevada Chorale Concert,** 31 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 329-1324
**Lahontan Basin Archaeology,** 31 BLM archaeologist Brian Hatoff discusses digs and ancient cultures of Western Nevada, 2pm, Hazen Bar, on U.S. 50-A in Hazen, 867-3066

## April

**April Fool's Relay Race,** 1 Tahoe Nordic Ski Center, Tahoe City, 916-583-0484
**AlpenFest,** 1 Sugar Bowl, N. Lake Tahoe, 916-426-3651
**Art Exhibit,** 1-26, works by faculty, staff, and students, Manville Gallery, School of Medicine, UNR, 784-6001
**Concert,** 2, Haydn and Beethoven, Reno Philharmonic, Pioneer Theater, 329-1324
**Hilton's $1-Million Pot-O-Gold Playoff,** 2, all winners of Pot-O-Gold jackpots between March 17 1984 and March 16, 1985 will play off for a $1-million grand prize, Opera House Theatre, Reno Hilton, 322-1111
**"Godspell,"** 2-3, 5-6, musical, meet the cast afterwards, Proscenium Players, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 883-1976
**Ecology Day,** 8, discussion and hike at Sand Harbor highlight the lake's special ecology, 10am, Sand Harbor, Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, 831-0494
**"Godspell,"** 9-10, 12-13, musical, meet the cast afterwards, Proscenium Players, Brewery Arts Center, Carson City, 883-1976
**Art Show,** 11-28, works by students in grades 1-12, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, 329-3333
**Hidden Cave Tour,** 13, meets 9:30am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677
**Weaving Exhibit,** 13-14, works by expert handweaver Kate Hanlon, noon-5pm, Hazen Bar, on U.S. 50-A in Hazen, 867-3066
**Rifle Shoot,** 14, 8am, Palomino Valley Gun Club, 22 miles north of Sparks, 323-3950
**Sierra Mountain Race,** 14, triathalon with 10-km. cross-country skiing, 10-km. running, 30-km. of bicycling, individual and relay competition, 10am, Squaw Valley Nordic Center, N. Lake Tahoe, 916-583-8951
**Northern Nevada Health Fair,** 15, Harrah's Tahoe, Stateline, 825-2744
**Reno Padres v. Stockton Ports,** 16-18, class-A pro baseball, 7pm, Moana Stadium, 825-0678
**Reno International Jazz Festival,** 18-20, amateur competition between jazz bands and jazz choirs from elementary schools, high schools, and universities, Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 786-5409



## Jazzed in Reno

Saxman Richie Cole heads the international array of musicians at the 24th Reno International Jazz Festival on April 18-20. Cole, above, leads his energetic band Alto Madness, which features singer Janis Siegal. They will perform April 19 at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center.

**"The Pirates of Penzance,"** 19-20, Nevada Opera Assn., 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 786-4046
**Reno Padres v. Visalia Oaks,** 19-21 7pm Fri.-Sat., 1:30pm Sun., Moana Stadium, 825-0678
**Reno Home Improvement Show,** 19-21 Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 323-6055
**Firefighting in Northern Nevada Exhibit,** 19-10/4, antique equipment and photos outline the history of Northern Nevada firemen, with reception on the 19th from 4-6pm, Nevada Historical Society's Downtown Gallery, 789-0190
**High Power Rifle Shooting,** 21 Palomino Gun Club, 22 miles north of Sparks, 323-3950
**Mrs. America Pageant,** 22-29, nationally televised crowning on 29th, Opera House Theatre, Reno Hilton, 785-7210
**Concert,** 25, New World Brass Quintet, 8pm, Pioneer Theater, 784-4444
**Reno Wine Adventure IV,** 25-28, wine tastings, cooking demonstrations, and seminars geared to wine experts and those new to wine-making and buying, with a gourmet dinner on Sat. evening, Harrah's Reno, 788-3028
**Region VIII FACT '85,** 26-28, one-act play Festival of American Community Theaters; state champions from Nevada, Arizona, and Hawaii present their one-act plays with the winner going to the nationals in Racine, WI., Reno Little Theater, 329-0661
**Hidden Cave Tour,** 27 meet 9:30am at the Churchill County Museum, Fallon, 882-1631 or 423-3677
**Reno Padres v. Bakersfield Dodgers,** 30, class-A pro baseball, 7pm, Moana Stadium, 825-0678
**Reno Philharmonic,** 30, Pioneer, 329-1324

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

### May

**Mint 400,** 2-5, desert off-road race, Las Vegas, 385-7440
**Silver State Square Dance Festival,** 3-5, Reno, 322-0027
**Armed Forces Day,** 17-19, Hawthorne, 945-5896
**Jim Butler Days,** 23-27 Tonopah, 482-3859
**Elks Helldorado,** 31-6/9, rodeo and carnival, Las Vegas, 385-1221

### June

**Winnemucca Basque Festival,** 8-9, 623-2225
**Carson Valley Days,** 8-9, Minden and Gardnerville, 782-7121 or 782-7456
**Wagon Train Days,** 15-16, Carson City, 882-1565
**Reno Rodeo,** 25-30, 329-3877
**USGA Seniors Open,** 24-30, Edgewood Golf Course, Stateline, 588-6736
**Lamoille Country Fair,** 30, 744-4322

### July

**Boulder City Damboree,** 4, 293-2034
**National Basque Festival,** 6-7 Elko, 738-7135
**Panaca Pioneer Day,** 20, 728-4471
**Ely Basque Festival,** 20-21 289-3789
**Lund Pioneer Days,** 23-24, 238-5314

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

# Nevada Notes

## Drive-up betting and a new look at the Donner Party.

**By Jim Crandall**

**High Fly Try**
When sailplane pilots flock to the Carson Valley this spring to soar on the famed updraft known as the Sierra Wave, much attention will be centered on an attempt to shatter two world records.

Borrowing spacesuits from NASA, local resident Linda Draper and her teammates on the FL500 High Altitude Soaring Project will try to soar as high as 50,000 feet in a modified glider. That would break the records of 44,255 feet for a two-seater, set in 1952, and 46,267 feet for a single-seater, set in 1961. The records have stood for so long because going higher requires gear like the NASA spacesuits, which are about as easy to get as a ride on the space shuttle.

Draper, who owns Soar Minden and lives atop blustery Kingsbury Grade near Lake Tahoe, says the pressurized suits would have cost as least $80,000 each. "That is, if you could buy them, which I don't think you can." She hopes she'll be chosen from among four pilots for the attempt, but she says, "This whole thing is a team effort, and whichever pilots are ready when the wind is right, well, they're the ones who will go." Launching is scheduled during the Pacific Area Soaring Council (PASCO) Wave Camp, March 30 to April 7, at the Minden airport.

**Fortune Tellers**
The new drive-through sports betting window at the Edgewater Casino in Laughlin makes placing a bet as easy as ordering a cheeseburger at a fast-food restaurant. "It's a good deal for people who need to make a bet fast," says sports book manager Bill Dark. "But most of the time, folks still like to come inside and see what's going on."

The Edgewater added the novel service while expanding its sports book last winter. The hotel claims the window is the only one of its kind in the state, although it's not the first. The Winners Circle gave Sparks the first one in 1979.

**No Bones About It**
Last summer anthropologist Donald Hardesty of Reno went on a mission of mercy to the infamous winter campsite of the Donner Party. Officials at Donner Memorial State Park, 35 miles west of Reno, had approached the UNR professor about finding and excavating the site of the Murphy cabin. The site had been tromped on and picked over by tourists for years, and officials hoped to excavate before it was destroyed.

Hardesty arranged $10,000 in funding from the National Geographic Society and, using Charles F. McGlashan's book, *History of the Donner Party,* he determined the site of the cabin. McGlashan had interviewed survivors of the 1846-47 winter ordeal and reported that army troops had visited the area in the spring of 1847 They were so appalled by the dismembered bodies and stripped bones that they conducted a mass burial in one cabin and burned it to the ground.

The scientists found musket balls, flints, buttons, and a dime-sized medallion of the Madonna. Then came the bones—cattle, ox, horse, and bear, but none of *Homo sapiens.*

"There were two other cabins where the mass burial could have taken place," says Hardesty. "One is the Breen cabin, which is under the Pioneer Monument in the park, and the other is the Graves cabin, and we think that's under the fruit inspection station on Interstate 80." Neither site is likely to be excavated.

**Why Owyhee? Global Question Answered**
Hawaiian fur trappers have always been a rarity, but they were more common back in the 1840s when the Hudson's Bay Company moved its employees from one far-flung outpost to another.

Hudson's Bay stationed a few Hawaiians in Northern Nevada and Southern Idaho in the mid-1800s, and their influence was felt in the naming of the settlement of Owyhee in northern Elko County. Owyhee is often said to be a corruption of "Hawaii," but that's not the case, according to an old globe I have. The globe, called "Lorino's" and made in 1860 by Gilman Johnson of Boston, shows the big island spelled "Owyhee." Maui was spelled "Mowee" and Oahu "Woahoo."

The islands were more commonly known in the 19th century as the Sandwich Islands, a name that survives in a tributary of the Owyhee River known as Sandwich Creek.—*Fred Hinners*


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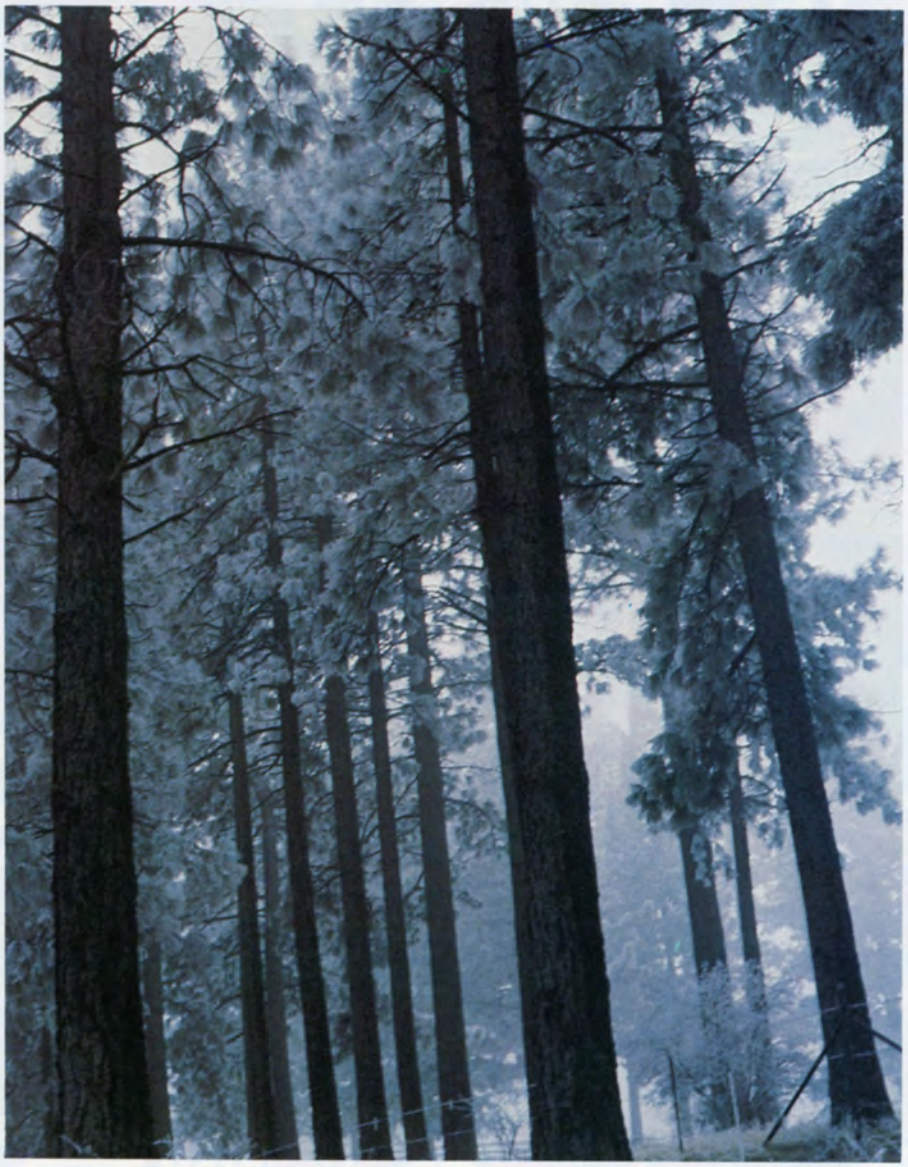


JOYCE LAXALT PHOTOS

# Pogonip

## The beautiful frozen fog returns.

**By Joyce Laxalt**



One Reno morning about 50 years ago I woke up to a strange daybreak of dim and frozen light. Peering through the crystaled pane of my window, I saw that every tree and blade of grass was crusted in an icy beauty that made me think my world had been transformed into the fabled realm of the Snow Queen. I laughed and shouted in delight to my mother.

"It's the White Death," my mother said. "Po-go-nip."

During breakfast she told me of the death-bearing frozen fog that in rare years appeared ghostlike in the canyons of the Ruby Mountains near Elko where she was raised. "The Paiutes dreaded the frozen lungs we call pneumonia. Many of them died." She wrapped a woolen scarf around my face and nose before putting me out the door for the walk to Mount Rose School.

The Washoe Indians, too, during cold winters in the valley and beside the lake of their name, far below the snowbound Tahoe of their summer hunting grounds, huddled on those hoar-frost days inside their wicki-ups, wrapped to the eyebrows in rabbit-skin robes. White Death lurked outside. No one challenged the dreaded Pogonip.

Last year, during the first few days of January, I saw Slide Mountain poke its summit through a sea of frozen mist and reach up into the warm life-giving sunshine. Skiers exulted. Below, Washoe Valley was wrapped in an icy blanket. There are no wicki-ups now No rabbit skins pulled close against the fear of death. Just beauty And the knowledge that nature doesn't change. We only see her differently from inside a warm cocoon. □

*Joyce Laxalt of Reno is a freelance journalist.*


CHAMPAGNE
BRUT

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN BARDWELL

# BUFFETS
## COPING WITH CORNUCOPIA

**Casinos know all about temptation, so where better to luxuriate in food?**

### Las Vegas
By John Bardwell

Las Vegas has an abundance of tables. Just as the ones with green felt separate the winners from the losers, the tables with salt and pepper separate the gourmand from the casual eater.

For decades the city's hotels have offered every bait to hook the customer: bargain rooms, superstar entertainment, assorted thrills, liquor, and food. Lots and lots of food. So it was only natural that Las Vegas should embrace a treasured American tradition to feed the masses and then act as if the whole thing had recently originated here in the Nevada desert. The result is the world-famous Las Vegas Buffet.

Like most of us, I remember with great fondness the family occasions when my mother had to feed more relations than the dining room could hold. Every Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas my family gathered to observe the celebration of The Buffet. What a delight for greedy little eyes! Colorful salads and squirmy jello things. Great mounds of mashed potatoes and bread dressing to be drowned in rich gravy. Snapping-fresh green beans with bacon, yams in sweet syrup, little onions in cream that kids never touched. And the turkey: dark meat for us, white for the grownups. There were pumpkin, mince, and fruit pies, and we were encouraged to reach out and fill our plates three times over. No please or thank you, just take the loot and gobble into oblivion.

Most of us retain a longing for the things we enjoyed in childhood, always searching to regain that which is lost. In this case it's eating any and every thing in sight without guilt or consequence. Well, Las Vegas knows all about temptation, so where else would you expect to find the buffet done to luxuriance? In the land where all things are promised and illusion is reality, the bounty of its tables is legend.

I will admit falling under the spell of the salad bar, the steam table, and the dessert carrousel, so my recent quest after Las Vegas' finest buffets seemed like a kid's trip to the ice cream factory. That is, until my fourth or fifth consecutive day on duty. As best I can tell, there are about 40 buffet lines in Las Vegas, not counting fast food places or the mess hall at Nellis AFB.

With all those choices of breakfast, lunch, dinner, and brunch, you would expect a plethora of culinary treasures. But there's a snag in the material of dreams. Because some places give us democracy in dining with no surprises, what you find is something like your mom's holiday dinner gone wrong in the translation. Over there is the lime-colored jello with little marshmallows and three salads made entirely of macaroni and mayonnaise. Remember overcooked green beans seasoned with dry onion soup mix? Did your mother discover the convenience of instant mashed potatoes, too? No matter, just cover it all with this brown gravy. Down at the end of the line there's the big roast beef, but be careful because there are temptations between here and there, like the chopped steak in mushroom soup and fish fillets with watery butter sauce. Three times through the line will be enough if you plan to have several desserts, most of which are based on the same soy protein as the gravy. For all this plus a beverage you will pay from $3 to $7.95, although price is no indication of quality.

I am not telling anyone to stay away. There is good food in Las Vegas buffets.

Most places have one or two good items, and by taking the best from each buffet, you could put together a truly spectacular feast for a small price.

There are other bright spots. If buffet fare needs anything more than quality control, it is imagination and fun. Happily, it seems that everybody is crazy about the brunch, the biggest food fad since the chili cook-off.

As mass feedings go, the brunch phenomenon is a good one. For one thing, brunch with a capital B is only served on Sunday, which lets the hotel food departments show off a little. For another, the nature of the brunch requires fresh fruits, pastries, eggs, and butter—things that cannot be disguised under a coating of canned sauce. And the obligatory champagne seems so mischievous and sophisticated taken before noon.

Obviously, no single person should try to sample every chow line in town and expect to sleep well. Therefore you will have to rely on word of mouth and a trusted gourmand when choosing. Following are a few I would recommend for starters if you're going to eat your way around Las Vegas.

There are breakfasts all over town for a buck if you can stand crowds, noise, and cigarette smoke with your toast. But you really should start the day off with a little class. The **Tropicana** has a fair deal in the pleasant surroundings of the Fountain Theatre, the hotel's former showroom. The breakfast choices of eggs, meat, bagels, fish, and fruit are lavish and pure American, while the room features international dishes later in the day. Breakfast is

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$3.45, and hours are 7 to 11 a.m. weekdays.

The luncheon buffet up the Strip at the **Sahara** is more like a dinner. Salads, beef, and ham are good, and there are a few nice touches, like a mini-quiche. Get a window seat for a pool view at this venerable hotel; otherwise, it's institutional atmosphere. Cost is $2.99 adults, $1.50 children 10 and under, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

At dinner time you can take in the gold-flaked motifs of the **Golden Nugget** downtown. This is one of the few buffets in the city that resembles a restaurant. Like the rest of the Nugget, the room has been decorated well if perhaps too much; plants are everywhere, and the floors are, yes, marble. The food is among the best, especially the salads, and nearly everything seems freshly prepared. Hours are 5 to 11 p.m., and at $8.50, or $4.25 for ages 10 and under, it's a great value.

For Sunday brunch try the **Dunes, MGM Grand,** or **Caesars Palace.** These are among the most popular brunches in Las Vegas, so get there early or be prepared to wait in line. All three are lush, abundant, and heavy on cholesterol and sweets, but you can get your nutrition from lots of lox and some appealing fruit. Prices respectively are $6.50, $6.95, and $8.50, with children's prices a dollar less. The hours are 9 or 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. At any of them you'll get just enough champagne to feel naughty so early in the day.

## Reno/Tahoe

By Andrea Michelsen

The lines leading to the Reno area's most lavish and popular buffets often snake out of view, especially on weekends. That means the chefs must be doing something right (Las Vegas buffets aren't the only famous ones in the state) and, as line-standers, we must find distractions. The most popular is people-watching, a pastime that features a colorful assortment of gamblers and buffet goers ranging from Tuscarora cowboys to high rollers straight out of the pages of *Vogue* and *Gentlemen's Quarterly.* And if people-watching doesn't work, each of the following lines has some unique distractions of its own, especially at dinner or brunch time, when the buffets put their finest offerings on parade.

The **MGM Grand** in Reno has the most opulent setting. From the crystal chandeliers to the big-screen sports TV, there's plenty to admire from the buffet line that winds along the north side of the casino. The brunch is housed in the Ziegfeld Theatre, home of "Hello Hollywood Hello," and offers so many items that your only problem is in the choosing. Save room for dessert—the pastry selections will tempt the most strong-willed dieter. Served on Sundays only from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., brunch is $6.95 for adults and $4.45 for kids.

The Skyway Buffet at **Harrah's** has a relatively peaceful atmosphere, away from the clanging slots just downstairs. Leave your name with the friendly hostess and you are free to wander; you'll be paged when a table is ready. Or, plop down in the comfortable lounge that occupies the skyway—an indoor overpass above Center Street—and enjoy the view of downtown Reno. When you do get around to eating, don't be overwhelmed by the many selections, which include ham, a baron of beef, and 14 salads. The pastry table is delightful. Open every day for breakfast and lunch, Harrah's buffet at dinner (5:30 to 10 or 11 p.m) is $8.95 Saturday, $10.95 Friday, and $7.95 other weekdays; children's prices are about half.

A newcomer to the area's buffet scene is the Rotisserie at **John Ascuaga's Nugget** in Sparks. The buffet is located in the Nugget's impressive new hotel tower and gets its name from the large rotisserie turning at the entrance. As you enter, there's a choice you must make: go through the buffet line or sit down and order from a menu. Buffet selections change daily but always include baron of beef and lovely salads and desserts. Tender chicken livers are a favorite of regulars. If you order from the menu, you can try one of the golden Long Island ducklings you saw twirling on the way in. The dinner buffet is $8.95 adults ($9.95 Friday) and $4.95 children ($5.50) from 5 to 10 p.m.; menu items range up to about $15. The Rotisserie also serves lunch and Sunday brunch.

At **Harvey's** on Tahoe's south shore you take the escalator up to the second floor to find the hotel's bountiful and nightly-changing buffet. Monday through Thursday you can count on baron of beef and alternating entrees like fried chicken and ham. Friday at Harvey's has become a Tahoe tradition, and for good reason. Facing a lineup that includes shrimp, clams, baby lobster tails, fresh fish, and clam chowder, who could resist? If you lean more to beef, check out the Saturday night prime rib. Prices vary: $6.95 Sunday through Thursday, $12.95 Friday, and $9.95 Saturday. Hours are 5 to 10 p.m. week nights and 4 to 11 p.m. Friday, and brunch is served on weekends. There may be a wait, but the buffet's new paging system helps. When a table is ready, your reservation number will be flashed on the keno boards, so you can wander around or gamble instead of standing in one of those intriguing but endless lines. □

*Andrea Michelsen recently sampled the best buffets in Mazatlan, while John Bardwell, the well-known painter and cook, is pursuing new art forms.*

# Showguide

Where the stars and shows are playing this spring.
By Melissa Loomis

## Shows & Stars

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

## Las Vegas

**Aladdin,** 736-0111 Entertainment TBA

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

**Caesars Palace,** 731-7333: Joan Rivers/Doc Severinsen/Garry Shandling, 3/6-19

**Circus Circus,** 734-0410: Circus acts, 11:30am-midnight, free

**Desert Inn,** 733-4566: Sammy Davis Jr., 3/5-31 Robert Goulet/Debbie Allen, 4/2-21 Tony Orlando, 4/23-5/12; dark Mon.

**Dunes,** 737-4110: Continuous entertainment, TBA

**El Rancho,** 796-2222: Lounge entertainment

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

**Four Queens,** 385-4011 Sam Butera, thru 3/17· Sylvia Syms, 4/16-28; Monday Nite Jazz, indf., Dondino, indf.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Las Vegas Hilton,** 732-5755: Bal du Moulin Rouge, indf.; starring Suzanne Somers thru 3/12, starring Charo 3/13-5/7· 8pm dinner show from $19.50, midnight cocktail show $16.

**MGM Grand Hotel,** 739-4567: *Ziegfeld Theatre:* Jubilee! indf.; 7:30pm & 11pm, dark Wed., $23.50; *Celebrity Room:* Mac Davis, thru 3/13; Air Supply, 3/14-20 and 3/28-4/3; Dean Martin, 3/21-27· Tom Jones 4/18-5/1

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

**Maxim,** 731-4300: Jay Ramsey/Sidro's Armada, thru 3/16

**Mint,** 385-7440: Sandy Hackett's Talent Showcase, 8pm Sun., indf.; live entertainment Tues.-Sun.

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

**Riviera,** 737-1755: Solid Gold, indf.; Robert Guillaume, thru 3/13; Fifth Dimension, 3/14-4/24

**Royal Casino,** 733-4000: Burlesque 2000, starring Bernie Allen, indf.

**Sahara,** 737-2424: Star entertainment TBA

**Sam Boyd's California,** 385-1222: Lounge entertainment

**Sam's Town,** 456-7777· Lounge entertainment

**Sands,** 733-5453: Nightly entertainment

**Silver Slipper,** 734-1212: Boylesque, revue, indf.; 8pm, 10pm, midnight, dark Thurs., $6.95

**Stardust,** 732-6325: Lido de Paris, indf., 7pm & 11pm nightly, $17.50, includes 2 drinks

**Sundance,** 382-6111 Basin Street Trio, Kathy Sasser, Woody Neel, and Richard Yusco, all indf.

**Tropicana,** 739-2411: Folies Bergere, indf.; 8pm & 11pm cocktail shows $13.95

**Union Plaza,** 386-2444: Broadway entertainment nightly; 8pm dinner show from $11.95, 11:45pm cocktail show from $7.50

## Lake Tahoe

**Caesars Tahoe,** 588-3515: Little River Band, 3/28-30

**Crystal Bay Club,** 831-0512: Sutro, 3/12-24

**Del Webb's High Sierra,** 588-6211 Danny Marona, thru 3/3; Doug Kershaw, 3/5-17; Willie Tyler & Lester 3/19-31

**Harrah's Lake Tahoe,** 588-6611 *South Shore Room:* Mel Tillis/Sylvia, 3/1-7· Wayne Newton, 3/8-21 Crystal Gayle, 3/22-28; Roy Clark, 3/29-4/4; Sammy Davis Jr., 4/5-18; Bill Cosby, 4/9-10; Rich Little, 4/19-25; Loretta Lynn, 4/26-5/2; *Stateline Cabaret:* Paul Revere & The Raiders, thru 3/3; Tower of Power, 3/5-17 (except Mon.); Freddy Fender, 3/19-24; Rain: A Tribute to the Beatles, 3/26-31 Paul Revere & The Raiders, 4/2-7· Gary & Sandy, 4/16-28 (except Mon.)

**Harvey's,** 588-2411 *Top of the Wheel:* Bruce Zarka, thru 3/17· Stella Starlite, 3/18-4/7· *Casino Theater lounge:* Michael Darrin, indf.; Body Heat Revue, indf., Lelands, thru 3/10; Demarche Sisters, thru 3/17; Bobby Freeman, 3/11-31 Whiskey Ridge, 3/18-31

**Harvey's Inn,** 588-2411 6th Avenue, thru 3/3; Rage, 3/4-24; Prime Time, 3/25-4/13

**Hyatt Tahoe,** 831-1111 Dae Han Sisters, 3/1-10; J.W. Moon, 3/1-11 Martha's Children, 3/12-24; Summer Wind, 3/13-25; Bobby Cure & the Summertime Blues, 3/26-4/7; Abbey Road, 3/27-4/22; Jay Ramsey, 4/9-21, Exchange, 4/23-28; Two's Company, 4/24-29; The Motifs, 4/30

**Nevada Lodge,** 831-0660: Four Tunes, thru 3/10; Stan Galli, 3/12-31 Shadz, 4/2-21 Darren, 4/23-5/12

## Reno, Sparks & Carson City

**Carson City Nugget,** 882-1626: Sneed Brothers & Suzie, thru 3/3; Michael, John & Kimberly with Special Delivery, 3/5-10; Cheryl Cotten with Command Performance, 3/12-31, The Motifs, 4/2-28; Lelands 4/30-5/26

**Circus Circus,** 329-0711 Circus acts, 11:30am-midnight, free

**Eldorado,** 786-5700: Nightly entertainment, Tues.-Sun.

**Fitzgerald's,** 786-3663: Cathy O'Shea, thru 3/10; Shadz, thru 3/17· Cheryl Cotten, 3/11-31 Four Tunes, 3/19-4/14; Whiskey Ridge, 4/1-21; Speedy Garfin, 4/16-5/5

**Harrah's Reno,** 329-4422: *Headliner Room:* Tony Orlando, thru 3/13; Ronnie Milsap, 3/14-20; Mickey Gilley, 3/21-27; The Smothers Brothers, 3/28-4/3; T.G. Sheppard/Lacy J. Dalton, 4/4-10; Bill Cosby, 4/11-24; Andy Williams, 4/25-5/1 *Casino Cabaret:* Tower of Power, thru 3/3; Paul Revere & The Raiders, 3/5-17 (except Mon.); Rain: A Tribute to the Beatles, 3/19-24; Freddy Fender, 3/26-31 Gary & Sandy, 4/2-14 (except Mon.)

**John Ascuaga's Nugget,** Sparks, 356-3300: Gary Thompson's Hi-Heel Sneakers, revue, indf.; Montana, thru 3/3

**MGM Grand Hotel,** 789-2285: *Ziegfeld Theatre:* Hello Hollywood, Hello, indf.; 8pm dinner show from $22; cocktail show $18.50; *Lion's Den:* Miss Pat Collins, The Hip Hypnotist, thru 3/5; Coast to Coast/Santa Fe, 3/6-4/2; Danny Marona, 4/3-30

**Mother Lode,** Carson City, 883-0900: Lounge entertainment

**Ormsby House,** Carson City, 882-1890: Sundance, thru 3/3; Garfin Gathering, 3/12-24

**Peppermill,** 826-2121 Connection, thru 3/3; Duane Baleme, thru 3/10; Gloria Michaels, 3/4-31, Maxx, 3/11-24; Tommy Bell, 3/23-4/21 The Wizards of Coz, 4/1-28

**Reno Hilton,** 785-7100: *Opera House Theatre:* Razzle Dazzle, starring Jack Jones thru 3/13; *Cabaret:* Frenz, thru 3/11, Dae Han Sisters, 3/12-4/8; Power Play, 4/9-5/6

**Reno Ramada,** 788-2000: Ron Shirrel, thru 3/10; Two's Company, 3/1-24; Buddy & Deta, 3/15-4/8

**Riverside,** 786-4400: Nightly entertainment

**Western Village,** Sparks, 331-1069: Yogi and Friends, thru 3/3; Buckboard, thru 3/3; Bobby LaLonde, thru 3/10; Tommy Bell, 3/4-24; Wray Brothers, 3/11-4/7· Ira Allen, 4/1-28; Lelands, 4/8-28; Tommy Bell, 4/29-5/12

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**Laughlin:** Riverside Resort, 298-2535; Del Webb's Nevada Club, 298-2512: Regency Casino, 298-2439; Edgewater, 298-2453; Sam's Town Gold River, 298-2242

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

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**Topaz Lake:** Li Brandi's, 266-3321 Topaz Lodge, 266-3339

**Wendover:** Goldrush Casino, 664-2255; Nevada Crossing, 664-4400; State Line Casino, 664-2221 Red Garter Casino, 664-2111

**Winnemucca:** Star Hotel & Casino and Winners Hotel-Casino, 623-2511

**Yerington:** Casino West, 463-2481, Lucky Club, 463-2868 □








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**"Humboldt Trail," Watercolor 14x27"**
*"I painted that for the Western Art Roundup in Winnemucca last year. That's Star Peak, near Rye Patch, in the background. It took the people's choice award at the show. That's my favorite award."*

NEVADA ART & ARTISTS

# Phil Penn



It might have been a Monday, but after 35 years of working for Lockheed in Sunnyvale, California, most days looked the same to Phil Penn.

He walked into his office, sat down, and thought about his life. He was 55 years old. He and his wife Hazel had raised four kids, all of whom were grown and on their own. Penn looked around the office, got up, walked out, and never returned.

Instead, he headed straight for Carson City—to paint the West. That was in 1975, and although his watercolors of western scenes haven't earned him as much money as he made in the missile business, he says he hasn't regretted his decision.

"Western art is a life style, and I thoroughly enjoy it," Penn says. "I paint the things that are familiar to me, the things of my own time." His grandfather and father came west in a covered wagon in 1898. Penn was born in Montana in 1920, and grew up with tales of pioneer life. Although his family moved to Southern California when he was six, his first rough sketches were of western scenes. He studied art in high school and made frequent trips to Nevada to hunt and paint, but until that Monday in 1975 his artwork was just a hobby.

Now it's his life. He works with transparent watercolors on museum-quality paper because, he says, those paints best capture the moods of the desert. "High-quality water-soluble paints will last 1,000 years," he adds, "much longer than oils and acrylics, which are just high-grade house paints."

Penn finds his subjects by traveling around Nevada and keeping a watchful eye. "When I see something that strikes me, I relax and let the idea build in my mind." He then takes photographs, consults his artist's morgue of photos and sketches, and blends components into a final idea.

Although he has won such awards as a gold for watercolors and the people's choice award at the 1984 Western Art Roundup in Winnemucca, he doesn't display his work in many shows. His paintings can be seen at Donna's Gallery in Carson City and the Riata Gallery in Virginia City. "If I wanted to make a lot of money, I would promote my work more," Penn says.

"But money is no longer my primary concern. Painting is."—*JC*



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**LETTERS** *(Continued from page 55)*

May I suggest some more interesting aspects of Pershing County, such as the large natural cavern near the top of Star Peak in the mighty Humboldt Range. The Chinese Graves, fenced out of Lone Mountain Cemetery and left to fade away in the sagebrush. Also the old pioneer cemetery near Unionville with tombstones going back to the 1870s. Gold mining is making a comeback at nearby Relief Canyon (Lacana Gold Mine). How about the Black Rock Desert? Yes, it is in Pershing County! And Porter Springs, an oasis in the desert. A staggering variety of minerals and gems are found in Pershing County (rockhounds delight!). This list could go on and on.

Hollis E. Proper
Lovelock, NV.

**Hot Springs, Not Boats**

Walley's Hot Springs Resort was most happy to see "Letting off Steam in Genoa" in the Nov/Dec Roadside Attractions section. The accompanying photo, although action-packed and exhilarating, might be called a mismatch to the article. Our pools just aren't big enough for speedboats. To set the record straight, let's see a steamier view.

Carroll B. Bowman
Walley's, Genoa, NV

*Thanks, Bowman. We intended to use this Jay Aldrich photo, which properly places Walley's in Genoa and not on Walker Lake.—Ed.*



JAY ALDRICH

**Benefits of a Broad-Based Constituency**

I knew *Nevada Magazine* was well-read, but I didn't know the magnitude of its coverage. The Northeastern Nevada Museum staff is presently working on Nevada 85, the statewide touring photography exhibition, and we are receiving entry requests from all over the nation. We recently received a request from a photographer in Switzerland who read of the exhibit in *Nevada Magazine.*

Gee whiz and all that stuff! Now I'm even more impressed with your publication and proud that our state is represented by the magazine in many countries.

Howard Hickson, Director
Northeastern Nevada Museum
Elko, NV

□


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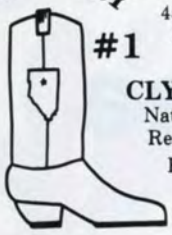
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# The Tennessee Letters

## Pioneer booster Richard Allen regaled Californians with his stories about the strange customs and citizens of frontier Nevada.

**Compiled by David Thompson**

*Writing under the pen name "Tennessee," lawyer Richard Allen of Genoa contributed news of "Western Utah (or Nevada, Carson, Washoe, or whatever it may yet be permanently named)" to the* San Francisco Herald. *Allen was probably Nevada's first PR man. Often biased in viewpoint and questionable in use of facts, his letters outspokenly boosted the merits of frontier Nevada. The following dispatch of March 26, 1860, comes from* The Tennessee Letters: From Carson Valley, 1857-60, *and includes one of the earliest portraits of Virginia City.*

On Thursday night last, our Valley and the adjoining hills received a bitter storm of wind and snow, a sort of equinoctial, which our wise men prognosticate is about the last of the kind for this year, which, if it proves true, will be a benefit to everybody. Since that time the sun has shone out beautifully, the wind has lulled, and the snow almost disappeared again. The mountains between here and Placerville are still difficult for travelers to cross, and fears are entertained that they will continue so for some time to come.

There has been a discernible increase in the discoveries the past week, and as there are more prospecting parties, the new lodes found will be proportionably more. News of fabulous wealth in the vicinity of the sink of the Humboldt is every now and then reaching us, and within the 10 days past probably 50 men have taken that direction.

I mentioned in my last having seen some choice specimens; since then, several others have come to light, giving additional evidence that richer mines, if possible, than yet have been found will ere long astonish the world, and send out to the gaping seekers after news everywhere, the glad intelligence that Western Utah (or Nevada, Carson, Washoe, or whatever it may yet be permanently named) is richer than all the Potosis or El Dorados that have ever been opened to the sight of man

There is much room for reflection when we look over this country and see what are its wants, and what it has not. Go to Virginia, which at this time enjoys the reputation of being the fastest growing town in the Territory, and look at her desolation in the midst of her struggle for life. The people there, in the lack of lumber, and the uncertainty of procuring it at all, have already erected over 150 cloth houses or tents, in addition to several stone tenements, wooden buildings being scarce. Brick could be made here, and probably will soon; lime of an excellent quality can be made as soon as people get time, and become sufficiently sobered down to engage in it

> The International Hotel is crowded. Hundreds lie in the main saloon without any beds, and many swarm the gambling-houses all night and then try to get a bed when other people get up in the morning.

Almost everything which Californians have at home would be in demand here if it could be obtained; and still we are obliged to be content with little or nothing. In Carson City, however, the approximation to the usual luxuries of life is much nearer than at any other town in the Territory. At Virginia the crowd of people far surpass the accommodations for them —board one dollar per meal, lodgings ditto, and the little International Hotel crowded from morning till midnight. Hundreds lie in the main saloon without any beds, and many swarm the gambling-houses all night and try to get a bed when other people get up in the morning. Taking everything into consideration, it seems strange that such an utter lack of everything was allowed to exist when such a heavy demand was soon to rule.

No doubt the present season will give the people here a regular line of daily stages, down the Carson to the Humboldt. Splendid livery stables will be built, and are already in process of construction; gay turn-outs, beautifully caparisoned, will dash across our desert sands. Musical celebrities, theatricals, etc., will visit us; schools will be established; Courts, Judges, etc., will become a necessity, and the march of improvement will be as rapid as the annals of history can instance; still we must wait the slow melting of the snow which divides our country from our Pacific home, before this transformation can, to any extent, commence

Since my last the price of flour has advanced to $30 per hundred and very little in market. Our enterprising friend Riddle, of San Francisco, has taken possession of the saw mill in this vicinity, and in future Carson will be served first with lumber so far as that particular mill is concerned, and there is no probability that it can supply half as much as the people want.

I noticed by a recent arrival of the Express a large supply of the *Herald* and a few of the *Sacramento Union* (no others), which was to me a cheering hope that after all the people of Carson were gradually coming into a proper appreciation of news and the choice of newspapers.

Your correspondent intends taking a trip to the Sink of the Humboldt in a few days, on a tour of information for personal and public benefit, and will be absent probably two weeks. As there is no certainty of communication with Carson City, while absent, you may not hear from me again till my return. □

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*Tennessee later became a Genoa justice of the peace. David Thompson is a Reno attorney and historian. This selection from* Tennessee Letters *is reprinted with permission of the Grace Dangberg Foundation, Box 9621, Reno, NV. 89507. Copies may be ordered for $17.25, which includes tax and shipping.*

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