

# NEVADA

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

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**Cover Photo:** Liz Huntington. I was up before sunrise on a March morning, eagerly anticipating the beauty that would light up Virginia City. As I passed by the Virginia & Truckee Railroad Depot, the rising sun's golden light was making a breathtaking appearance. I was able to capture and keep a little Comstock magic that morning.



# BOULDER CITY

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Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge



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# NEVADA

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**Managing Editor:** MEGG MUELLER  
**Associate Editor:** ERIC CACHINERO  
**Art Director:** KIPPY S. SPILKER  
**Senior Graphic Designer:** ALEXANDRIA OLIVARES-WENZEL  
**Circulation Manager:** CARRIE ROUSSEL  
**Business Manager:** JANET KINNEY

#### ADVERTISING

**Sales & Marketing Manager:** ADELE HOPPE  
775-430-2276  
ahoppe@nevadamagazine.com

For media kit, click on "Advertise" at nevadamagazine.com.

**Contributing Writers:** Alex Albright

**Contributing Photographers:** Will Barber, Abe Blair, Larry Burton, Tom Chargin, Keith Clark, Rachid Dahnoun, Dini Esplin, Asa Gilmore, Sally Hanrahan, Dave Harrison, Liz Huntington, Carol Jackson, Janis Knight, Neil Lockhart, Sydney Martinez, Chris Moran, Scott Mortimore, Jeff Noland, Laura Petersen, David Quandt, Susanne Reese, Larry Spradlin, Deb Sutherland, Mark Vollmer, Anna Whiteside

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# On NEVADAMAGAZINE.COM

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## WEB EXTRAS



NEIL LOCKHART

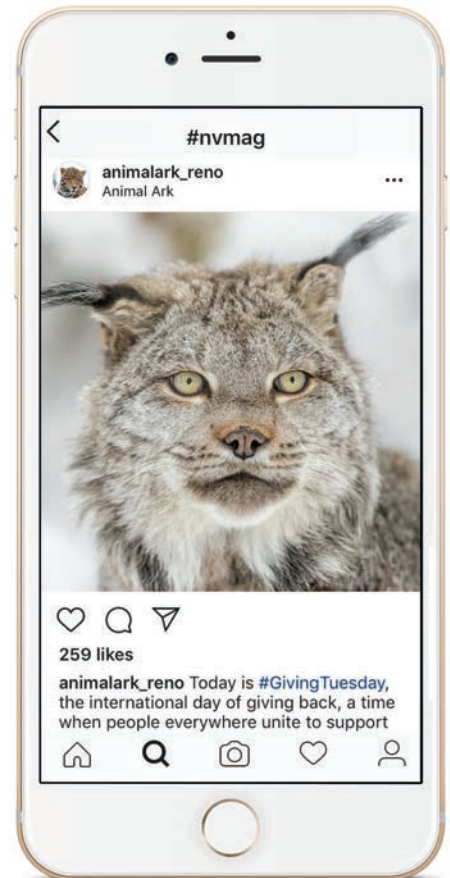
► **Yesterday: Thunder Mountain:** If you've ever traveled east from Reno to Winnemucca, you've driven by it. "It" is Thunder Mountain Monument, nominally a monument but also an enigmatic roadside curiosity, a

colossal sculpture (or series of sculptures), a living quarters, a rock garden, an otherworldly place of silence and mystery, and the life's work of one exceedingly unusual Nevadan. On page 16-17 of this issue, we share a glimpse of the monument, but to learn more about the man behind it, visit our website to read this story, which first appeared in our March/April 2013 issue.



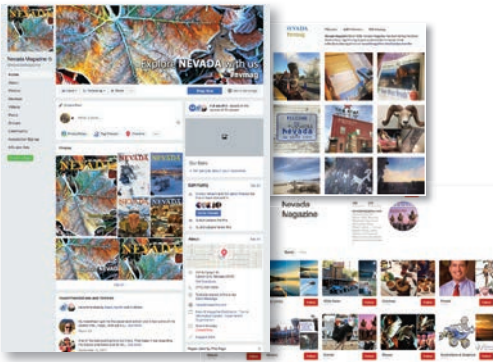
## COMING SOON

A brand new NevadaMagazine.com is debuting this month, so make sure you check often to see our beautiful new website. With a new digital subscription offer that includes all content accessible online, it's *Nevada Magazine, 2.0.*



Would you like to see your Instagram page featured in *Nevada Magazine*? Use #nvmag and let us know about your #Nevada adventure!

## CHECK US OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



## FEATURED VIDEOS

Visit our YouTube channel to see a video of a working stamp mill, along with a look at some Nevada ghost towns. Also, we've got a drone video of Thunder Mountain Monument that you can't miss.





# WIND BENEATH MY WINGS, AIR IN MY TIRES



Happy 2019! Planning the stories for the year is admittedly one of the most difficult tasks of my job, but it's also one of my favorites. Story ideas come from everywhere, and while daunting, it's also exciting when the annual budget starts to get fleshed out and an incredible story year is born. I want to send a big shout out to those who help me create the blueprint for our year, both staff and non-staff. Your advice, feedback, and criticism help me keep this the best magazine in Nevada.

We're on the hunt for more ghost town adventures this year, and as Associate Editor Eric Cachinero and I were painfully reminded recently, Nevada's vast and wonderful backroads are also potentially depressing...literally, as in you can easily feel your tires depressing as the air leaves them. We are 2-for-2 on our last two trips when it comes to flat tires. We've gotten flats a number of times in our travels, but recently we appear to have upped our game and now we get not one but two flat tires in a trip, and in rapid succession no less.

If you travel the dirt roads in Nevada, this comes as no surprise to you. But what did surprise us was this: our flat tires have all come on wide, flat, freshly graded dirt roads. I think our wonderful, patient, kind boss believes we're careening down mountainsides and climbing rock faces, but I'm here to say in print, it's the awesome mining roads that get us. We love these roads, because luckily, they are often well-traveled and as I said, wide and flat, but when they are newly graded you better have 10-ply tires. Which leads me to the best advice I can offer anyone visiting Nevada ghost towns: carry a spare. Heck, carry two if you can. And water, and fuel, some food, a sleeping bag...basically, I encourage all my fellow back road wanderers to go full Boy Scout before you leave home. You won't be sorry.

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

Jumping right into those dirt roads, you'll find Eric's ghost town story on page 28, and on page 42 you'll read about great places to fuel up (you, not your car) in Austin.

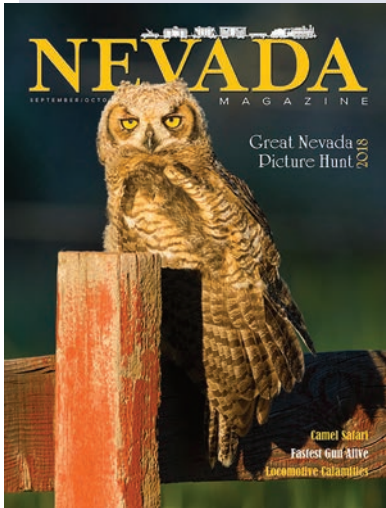
We're debuting a new arts and culture section this issue, also. It's right after our events and shows stories, and we hope it helps you find a bit of our state's creativity. Check it out starting on page 56.

We've got three really special features this issue. The first is a look at the mechanics of mining, which as an industry shaped this state more than any other. From gold pans to massive stamp mills and everything in between, learn about the technology that made the Silver State, well, the Silver State on page 70. On page 80, the first part of a new series debuts. We're calling it True Grit, and it's about Nevada's most tenacious and resilient towns that don't usually get a share of the spotlight.

Humbly and with great love, we showcase our beloved Lamoille Canyon starting on page 64. This is one of our most favorite areas of Nevada, and if you haven't been to visit yet, I'm sorry to hear that. The canyon was forever changed recently, but we have faith she'll be back one day. Until then, we remember the glory that was, and will be again, Lamoille Canyon.

**Megg Mueller**, Managing Editor  
mmueller@nevadamagazine.com





## LETTERS

## SMART CHOICE

I love the haunting owl on the cover of the September/October 2018 issue. I like the photo's brightness and composition. Now whenever I think about this bright Nevada owl, I feel a bit wiser. — **Robert Wexler**, Reno

## HAPPY READER

I would like to renew my subscription for another year. Thank you for publishing a very good magazine. It is perfect.  
— **Richard B. Taylor**, Charleroi, Pennsylvania

## FOND MEMORIES

I liked the article on the Walker River State Recreation Area (November/December 2018). I was able to help change the propane tanks at the Flying M once. I saw a lot of changes in northern Nevada in the years I worked there. Keep up the good work on the magazine; I enjoy the pictures and reading the articles.  
— **Steve Mortense**, Port Angeles, Washington



## WE VALUE YOUR INPUT

Write to [editor@nevadamagazine.com](mailto:editor@nevadamagazine.com) or via mail at 401 N. Carson St., Carson City, NV 89701. You can also comment on stories and read more letters at [nevadamagazine.com](http://nevadamagazine.com). Letters and comments are subject to editing.

## EASY ON THE EYES

A few months ago I wrote to you to point out that I thought the size of the print in the magazine was getting too small, especially for senior people like me. I never expected you to respond, but you did and even put it in the magazine saying you would bring that up when some changes are due. I just started reading the latest issue and noticed that the print is quite a bit larger and so much easier to read! Thanks so very much for doing this.  
— **Bruce Horan**, Gardnerville

*MM-Bruce, you're welcome! And when you're right, you're right. We hope other readers have found the magazine easier to read also.*

## JOB WELL DONE

Congratulations on your numerous awards from the Nevada Press Association. Among a large field of competitors, *Nevada Magazine* deservedly won first place in the General Excellence category. I commend your publication for your wins in both the Best Investigative Story and Best Graphic Designer categories, among many other awards. I know I speak for many here in our great state when I say that I appreciate your work and look forward to seeing what you will produce in the future.  
— **Senator Catherine Cortez Masto**



## COVER TO COVER

While many people agreed with our cover choice, Liz Huntington's photo submission for our November/December issue won our Facebook poll. Congratulations to all who submitted!



## CONTRIBUTORS

## ALEX ALBRIGHT



Alex Albright lives in Fountain, North Carolina, where he and his wife operate Fountain General Store, an occasional live music venue. His book "The Forgotten First: B-1 and the Integration of the Modern Navy," received the 2014 Willie Peace History Book Award and was a Montaigne Medal finalist. ■ PG. 22-27

To find out how to contribute, visit [nevadamagazine.com/writer](http://nevadamagazine.com/writer)



# Up Front

## WINERIES

### Pahrump Valley Winery completes major expansion

Nevada's largest-producing and most-successful winery, Pahrump Valley Winery, has recently completed a \$1.7 million expansion. Owners since 2004, Bill and Gretchen Loken started the expansion in summer 2017 with only 1,800 square feet of production area. The expansion added 7,000 square feet for wine production, an automated bottling line, and event space in the barrel room.

Highlights of the expansion include 12 new gleaming stainless-steel fermentation tanks custom-made in Germany, some standing more than 12 feet tall and having a duplex configuration so two wines can be produced in the floor space of one.

The new bottling line, imported from Italy, is capable of handling 2,000 bottles per hour with only three people operating it. The old bottling line required eight people to fill only 500 bottles per hour. The new line can handle screw caps, as well as corks and labeling.

Some 250 oak barrels—American, French, and Hungarian—each with their own unique quality, serve as wine aging vessels in what Gretchen Loken refers to as her “winemaker’s spice rack.”

A new event space in the barrel-aging room can host up to 75 people for weddings, vow renewals, special events, wine maker dinners, and meetings.

Since 2004, the Loken’s have been producing nationally recognized wines, having received to-date more than 460 national wine awards with 113 of those for the Nevada-grown wines. Although mostly desert, Nevada is a



great place to grow grapes, Bill Loken notes. The southern, hot climate is suited for grapes destined for red wine, while cooler areas produce white wine grapes.

“Grapes grow in the desert around the world, although we’re not used to thinking about it in Nevada,” he says. “But we have proven that you can produce award-winning wines with Nevada-grown grapes.”

Guests may buy and sample—based on availability—the history-making Nevada Ridge wines, Barbera, Mourvedre, Primitivo, Silver State Red, Syrah, Tempranillo, and Zinfandel all made with Nevada-grown grapes and produced at the winery.

Public tours are held at 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. most days.  
[pahrumpvalleywinery.com](http://pahrumpvalleywinery.com), 775-751-7800







## MONUMENTS

### Battleborn Memorial unveiled near the Capitol

Governor Brian Sandoval, State Senator David Parks, and architect Zak Ostrowski in November unveiled Nevada's newest memorial at the Legislative Plaza on the State Capitol grounds, dedicated to the state's fallen soldiers and service members all the way back to the Civil War.

"All of these heroes died for an idea greater than themselves, and the idea of the American spirit," Sandoval says. "We are a free people because of their service, their courage, bravery, and patriotism. Nevada will never forget the sacrifice of the service men and women, and the sacrifice of their families."

The idea for the memorial began in 2013 when Senate



Bill 420 was passed, championed by Parks. Construction began in summer 2018 on the site near the Veteran's Memorial Wall already on the plaza.

The selection process for the architecture firm to create the memorial included members of the Nevada Arts Council, Veterans Service Commission, and architects. The panel selected Las Vegas' PUNCH Architecture. The three architect partners of PUNCH all graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

The names of 895 fallen service members are etched on brass plates in the memorial's roof. The plates reveal the name of the fallen service members to visitor's as they walk through the memorial, which has been designed to allow for more names to be added. [visitcarsoncity.com](http://visitcarsoncity.com), 775-687-7410



## UP FRONT



■ **Eataly**, the authentic Italian marketplace, opened its Las Vegas location at Park MGM in December 2018. Las Vegas marks the sixth U.S. location of the Italy-based company, which has more than 35 stores worldwide. The 40,000-square-foot culinary destination features unique food counters, bars, cafes, and dining experiences offering traditional Italian food in a vibrant ambiance. Eataly Las Vegas features al fresco dining, as well as several areas dedicated to live cooking demonstrations. [parkmgm.com](http://parkmgm.com), 702-730-7777

■ More than 25 Lake Tahoe-area nonprofit organizations received \$78,974 in donations from the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority and **American Century Championship** as a result of funds raised during the 2018 celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe. [tahoesouth.com](http://tahoesouth.com), 800-288-2463

■ **SoulCycle**, the unique mind-body-soul indoor cycling experience, is thrilled to announce that it's officially bringing the party to Las Vegas with a brand-new 62-bike studio at Wynn Plaza. With more than 88 studios across the United States and Canada, SoulCycle continues to grow by bringing its transformative ride to Nevada. [soulvegas.splashthat.com](http://soulvegas.splashthat.com), 702-637-3230

■ Storey County officials have announced the **Tahoe Reno Industrial Center** (TRI) has been granted its own zip code by the U.S. Postal Service. The new zip code is 89437. TRI—located just east of Reno—is the world's largest industrial park and home to such companies as Tesla Gigafactory, Blockchains, Zulily, and Chewy.com. [tahoereno.com](http://tahoereno.com), 775-685-4195

■ "Las Vegas Review-Journal" readers have awarded **The Burlesque Hall of Fame** the "Best of Las Vegas" bronze medal for best museum. The nonprofit museum has been open since April 2018, and is the only museum dedicated to the art of burlesque. It includes exhibits on the history of burlesque from the late 1800s to today including costumes, props, posters, and other artifacts. [burlesquehall.com](http://burlesquehall.com), 888-661-6465

## BREWERIES

### Sparks brewer takes two top awards at international contest

Revision Brewing Company's Double IPA and Revision IPA bested 2,344 registered beers from 51 countries across all continents to take two major awards at the European Beer Star 2018. Revision's Double IPA won the gold medal and Revision IPA won the silver medal.

European Beer Star from the Private Brauereien association is one of the most coveted trophies in the international brewing world with 144 jury experts choosing the top beers in the world. Revision Brewing Company opened in March 2017 and has been winning awards since the brewery's first year. [revisionbrewing.com](http://revisionbrewing.com)



## GRAND OPENINGS

### Plaza Hotel & Casino plans permanent outdoor equestrian facility

The Plaza Hotel & Casino is bringing the Western legacy back to Downtown Las Vegas. Building on the success that its outdoor equestrian facility had last year, the Plaza is expanding the amenity and is making it the first and only permanent outdoor equestrian center in Downtown Las Vegas.

An official hotel sponsor of the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) and exclusive host hotel for the Junior NFR, the Plaza's new equestrian center will feature two outdoor arenas for roping practice and exercise during the rodeo. After NFR concludes, the Plaza's equestrian center will become the city's newest outdoor event venue. [plazahotelcasino.com](http://plazahotelcasino.com), 800-634-6575





# A GETAWAY

THAT'S ALWAYS WITHIN REACH.

There's a lot going on in Mesquite. Whether you choose to partake or simply kick back and relax is entirely up to you. From an array of dining options, to specialty entertainment, to gaming, to championship golf, there is something for every taste. Mesquite is a quick escape that combines a friendly, small-town atmosphere with unique attractions. Comfortably nestled in the picturesque Virgin River Valley.

Learn more at [VisitMesquite.com](http://VisitMesquite.com).

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■ **Las Vegas Lights FC** recently announced the signing of U.S. Soccer legend Eric Wynalda as its new Technical Director and Head Coach. Wynalda is widely celebrated in U.S. soccer history with many firsts for an American in the sport. His coaching career began in 2012 with Cal FC, an amateur club that achieved unprecedented success. Following this, Wynalda was named technical director and head coach for NASL's Atlanta Silverbacks where he won the 2013 NASL Spring Championship. [lasvegashlightsfc.com](http://lasvegashlightsfc.com), 702-728-4625

■ Next spring, Caesars Entertainment will open **Jimmy Kimmel's Comedy Club** at The LINQ Promenade in Las Vegas. The club will showcase comedians ranging from up-and-coming talent to household names curated by Kimmel and his team in a venue designed by Jimmy and his comedian friends. The club will be open seven nights a week, with a bar open daily and shows offered nightly. [thelinq.com](http://thelinq.com), 702-794-3366

■ In 1869, regular train service was established between Gold Hill and Carson City, and this year the **Virginia & Truckee Railway** is gearing up for its sesquicentennial celebration. From June to October various events will take place at the V&T Railway's Eastgate Depot in Carson City. Celebrations are set to include a special dinner with V&T historians speaking, a display of artifacts at the V&T Railway Eastgate, special train rides, and other activities. [vtrailway.com](http://vtrailway.com), 775-291-0208

■ The **World Financial Group Continental Cup of Curling** returns to the Orleans Arena on Jan. 17-20. This curling event pits six of the top men's and women's teams from North America up against six of the best from the rest of the curling world. Several disciplines, including the new mixed doubles event, are contested over a four-day period. Participants include Olympic champions, world champions, and more. [lasvegascurling.rocks](http://lasvegascurling.rocks), 775-964-4980

## PHOTOGRAPHY EVENT

### FOCUS Comes to Vegas

FOCUS 4 will be held in Las Vegas for the first time on March 27 at the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas. A bi-annual award-winning photographer symposium, FOCUS stands for Friendship, Open-mindedness, Collaboration, Understanding, and Success! It is sponsored by Nevada Magazine and moderated by Art Director Kippy Spilker, growing in size and popularity over the last two years in the Carson City area.

Comprised of presentations and demonstrations given by respected local photographers as well as organized photo walks and outings, these symposiums

are great social learning events for photographers. Come and meet new friends, gain helpful insight and knowledge, and just have a good time. The event is open to photographers of all levels, and even those shooting with a cellphone will find something of value.



Join the FOCUS Photographer Symposiums Facebook group for more information or to see photos and video from past events.

[nevadamagazine.com/home/focus](http://nevadamagazine.com/home/focus), 775-687-0606

## MUSEUMS

### Mob Museum offers daily tours of Underground Distillery

The Mob Museum, The National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement, is now offering daily tours in The Underground Distillery at 5 p.m. During the 30-minute tour, which involves sampling a variety of distilled spirits, participants receive an in-depth explanation of the distillery equipment and distillation process and learn about Prohibition and its impact on distilled spirits.

The tours are designed to encourage visitors to develop an appreciation for the flavor of moonshine as The Underground's moonshine is as authentic as it can safely get. It is made in-house with 100 percent corn and bottled at 50 percent ABV.

[mobmuseum.org](http://mobmuseum.org), 702-757-4764



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■ **The Park Lane project** in Reno will start construction early this year. The first phase will build about 700 residential units and also include the Village Park, renovating the movie theater and perimeter landscaping. Eventually the space will include 1,700 residential units, a 1-acre park, retail space, a hotel with 160 rooms, and indoor farmer's market. Park Lane Mall was the biggest shopping center in northern Nevada for decades but after demolition has been a barren lot for more than a decade.

[parklanelife.com](http://parklanelife.com)

■ The **Vegas Golden Knights** announced the team's official inaugural season book is on sale. The 144-page book contains an augmented reality component where the photos within the book come to life, enabling readers to relive some of the most memorable moments from the team's historic and record-setting inaugural season. The book contains nearly 200 images—many which have never been published before.

[vegasteamstore.com](http://vegasteamstore.com)

■ The **Nevada Department of Transportation** is enacting a change on some Tahoe-area highways which will now require any vehicle traveling without tire chains during winter chain restrictions to be four-wheel or all-wheel drive with snow tires. Under the new requirement, only four-wheel or all-wheel vehicles with snow tires and all vehicles with approved tire chains will be allowed when chain requirements are in place on the following state roads: State Route 431 (Mt. Rose Highway), State Route 207 (Kingsbury Grade), U.S. 50 between Glenbrook and Carson City. Tire and chain requirements will not change on other highways.

[nvroads.com](http://nvroads.com), 877-687-6237

■ The **Thunder From Down Under** showroom at the Excalibur in Las Vegas is undergoing renovations through spring 2019. The shows Thunder From Down Under and The Australian Bee Gees will continue in a temporary theater.

[excalibur.com](http://excalibur.com), 702-597-7777

## RESTAURANT ROUNDUP

### New eateries, seasonal menus, and more in Las Vegas

Downtown's **Carson Kitchen** has unveiled its winter menu featuring seasonal twists crafted by Executive Chef Scott Simon and his team. Known for playful interpretations on American comfort food, Carson Kitchen's winter menu features an all-new cheddar crab fondue complete with jalapeño and tarragon, sausage and broccoli rabe flatbread with spinach pistou and pickled onion, and the hot Italian with cured meats, an olive and tomato tapenade, and a side of signature spicy tater tots. The new winter menu is available through mid-March.

[carsonkitchen.com](http://carsonkitchen.com), 702-473-9523

**Su Casa**, the Silverton Casino Hotel's newest culinary venture nestled inside Mi Casa Grill Cantina, is now open. The trendy coastal eatery will take taste buds on a trip with fresh coastal favorites like ceviche, poke bowls, sashimi, and nigiri and hearty dishes such as sushi burritos and Ramen.

[silvertoncasino.com](http://silvertoncasino.com), 702-263-7777

**The Smashed Pig** in Downtown Las Vegas redefines unabashedly good pub-inspired fare with the revitalization of its menu. The gastrolounge reinvestigates the cozy neighborhood pub with newfangled twists on classic comfort food dishes. The added mouthwatering starters include crispy deviled eggs, spicy tater bites, and the fire-roasted artichokes, which are anticipated grub favorites.

[thesmashedpig.com](http://thesmashedpig.com), 702-444-7816

**CATCH Las Vegas**, the globally inspired, seafood-centric hotspot has opened doors to its new enclave at ARIA Resort & Casino. In a setting of glitz and glamour, CATCH is steadfastly committed to delivering a globally inspired selection of dishes seen through modern perspective, innovative flavor combinations, and spectacular presentations.

[catchhgh.com](http://catchhgh.com), 702-590-5757

The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas has opened two new venues. **Ghost Donkey**, a speakeasy-style mezcal and tequila bar, rounds out the offerings at newly-opened Block 16 Urban Food Hall. The famed mezcal and tequila bar pulls inspiration from the alluring ingredients and flavors of Mexico to create an authentic fiesta experience. Late-night snacks include an assortment of elevated nachos like wild mushroom and chicken mole. **Red Plate**, a sophisticated new dining concept celebrates traditional Chinese cuisine in a refined setting. Helmed by esteemed Chef Yip Cheung, Red Plate honors traditional Chinese techniques and preparations to present an authentic Cantonese menu with hints of modern inspiration. Menu highlights include an array of carefully selected, signature roasted meats, Chinese hot pot, and handmade dim sum.

[cosmopolitanlasvegas.com](http://cosmopolitanlasvegas.com), 702-698-7000



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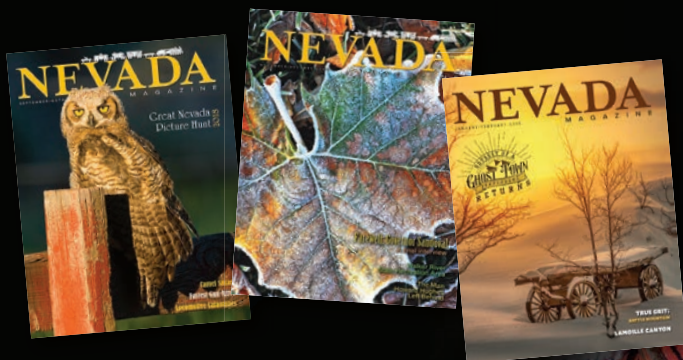
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Travelers looking for fun and innovative yoga classes while visiting Reno and Carson City can download the new app by **Good Elephant**. The local company promotes affordable and comfortable classes for everyone, even offering a pay-what-you-can class option through the app. Classes are held throughout the two communities in art galleries, coffee shops, local business, and more.

[goodelephant.co](http://goodelephant.co)

**Casino Dominoes**, the state-of-the-art new domino casino game, which made its debut in September 2018, has successfully completed its trial run and is officially live on the casino floor of the Plaza Hotel & Casino Las Vegas. Casino Dominoes is currently available as a table game.

[plazahotelcasino.com](http://plazahotelcasino.com), 800-634-6575

**Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art** has debuted two installations by renowned artist Yayoi Kusama. An immersive experience for visitors, Yayoi Kusama offers a unique wonderland of lights and reflections where guests are invited to experience each artwork from within. Both installations, *Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity* and *Narcissus Garden*, will awaken a sense of wonder and showcase Kusama's exploration of infinite space.

[bellagio.com/bgfa](http://bellagio.com/bgfa), 702-693-7871

**Ruth's Chris Steak House** has opened at The Row in Reno. Located in the Silver Legacy Resort Casino, the restaurant will be the property's flagship steak house. Ruth's Chris specializes in custom-aged USDA Prime steaks expertly prepared and served on 500-degree sizzling hot plates.

[silverlegacyreno.com](http://silverlegacyreno.com), 800-687-8733

The historic **Goldfield Hotel** in Goldfield is undergoing renovation, and much of the original tile floor will be covered. Some tiles from the grand entry way were salvaged and are being sold to help complete the renovation.

[justjeri.com](http://justjeri.com)

## GRAND OPENING

### The Loop debuts first restaurant

As the first business to open at The Loop—Reno's newest dining, sports, and entertainment complex—Zeppelin will provide an intimate atmosphere for adults with a unique menu offering shareable food options created by award-winning Executive Chef Jakon Tolhurst and Executive Sous Chef Craig Domer.

Chef Tolhurst brings more than 15 years of experience to the Reno cooking scene and has developed an exquisite menu designed for groups both large and small that will pair with the intricately hand-crafted

cocktail menu. Zeppelin's cuisine and décor are inspired from the 1904 World's Fair and Count Ferdinand Von Zeppelin.

The Loop has been a vision of its developers for more than five years, and the team is committed to making a difference in Reno by providing an innovative



place for social gathering and like-minded businesses combining distinctive dining with an emphasis on fresh, locally sourced ingredients,

plus hip, upscale bars featuring craft cocktails, unique wines, and local beers. Tons of entertainment and family friendly activities from boutique bowling lanes to roller skating to an indoor, multi-level rope obstacle course, and a state-of-the-art indoor sports facility will also be a part of The Loop experience.

[zeppelinreno.com](http://zeppelinreno.com), 775-387-4937





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# THUNDER MOUNTAIN

Nevada has many treasures, but only some of them earn the title of truly unique.

*The word unique gets thrown around a lot, and its true meaning is often muddled. Merriam-Webster defines the word as “being the only one” and “being without a like or equal.” In this section, we highlight Nevada treasures that are not only special, but are truly unique and can be found nowhere else in the world; treasures that can be found only in your state.*



SALLY HANRAHAN



PHOTO BY TOM CHARGIN,  
PROVIDED BY LISA GAVON

Thunder Mountain Monument, located just off Interstate 80 in Imlay, is truly unique. The structure now exists as a brief head-turner to the tens of thousands of cars that pass it each day, but the few who stop to investigate learn the story of this spiritual place. The monument is the creation of WWII veteran and artist Frank Van Zant, who in 1969 started to build upon his arrival to Imlay. Van Zant was a self-identified Creek Indian, who built Thunder Mountain as both a shelter from a potential apocalypse, as well as a spiritual haven and hostel during the hippie era. Van Zant would eventually take on the American Indian name Rolling Mountain Thunder after experiencing an epiphany.

During the next several decades, Rolling Mountain Thunder built the bizarre and beautiful monument. He constructed many stone and concrete buildings, along with more than 200 concrete sculptures. The sculptures mainly depict American Indian figures, and portray the injustices they experienced. Scattered among the various buildings and sculptures is a plethora of random objects, though their placement is not random. Each object seems to have its place, whether it is a car windshield concreted into

Left to right: Farley the Freeway Dog, Obsidian, Rolling Mountain Thunder, Sacred Star, True, and Little Thunder.





SALLY HANRAHAN

a wall to be used as a window, or a plastic doll head stapled to a tree. Old cars are covered in concrete and rocks, as is a rusty typewriter. The largest structure is covered in colorful paint and a protruding “handle-like” half circle at the highest point. When asked why the white loop adorns the top, Rolling Mountain Thunder replied, “In the last days, the Great Spirit’s going to swoop down and grab this place by the handle.”

Rolling Mountain Thunder lived at the monument until he took his own life in 1989. After his passing, the site sat idle and became the victim of vandalism until it was declared a Nevada State Historic Site in 1992. The monument is open to the public for self-guided tours during daylight hours, and a restoration project spearheaded by Van Zant’s children is underway to restore the site.

See [nevadamagazine.com/thundermountain](http://nevadamagazine.com/thundermountain) to learn more about the monument and to see a drone video. ▀



“IN THE LAST DAYS, THE GREAT SPIRIT’S GOING TO SWOOP DOWN AND GRAB THIS PLACE BY THE HANDLE.”















Pages 18-19: "The forecast for the morning was light clouds after a fresh few inches of snow overnight," says Abe Blair of his sunrise shot. "I ski toured up to Relay Peak for an overnight campout in hopes of a magnificent sunrise over Lake Tahoe. Waking up to more than two feet of snow and a heavy cloud cover, I thought sunrise was going to be a bust. Just as the sun breached the horizon, a window through the clouds opened up and this magical view looking into the Washoe Valley from my 9,000-foot perch unfolded in front of me."

Opposite page: Rachid Dahnoun captured this photo of the super blue blood moon eclipse in January 2018. "I drove out to one of my favorite locations deep in the Nevada desert, the abandoned town of Coaldale, to capture the show," he says. "The final image is a composite of 18 photos—16 different shots of the moon combined with a night sky frame blended with a predawn frame. I wanted to create one image that encompassed all of the moon phases and sky gradients of this spectacular event."

Right: "Last spring, I thought it might be fun to take some pictures of the old mining town of Belmont," says Dave Harrison. "It's a little off the beaten path, and I wasn't surprised to find that I was the only crazy photographer there. While I was poking around looking for that perfect shot, I was accosted by one the locals. 'Don't miss the old mill,' he said. I decided to camp for the night and wait for the morning. I awoke to six inches of snow. I was both excited and nervous at the same time. The snow added a unique element to the scene."



DAVE HARRISON



#### FACEBOOK GROUP CHOICE

"One cold day, my friend and I were hiking in the Virginia Range trying to find wild horses to photograph," says Deb Sutherland. "We looked for a while but didn't see any. We were having fun and laughing when we looked up and there they were standing on top of the hill watching us." They just stood there silently beautiful in front of the painted sky and let us photograph them."

Each issue, our Nevada Photographers Facebook group votes for their favorite photo out of three selected by Nevada Magazine's Art Director.



DEB SUTHERLAND

**JOIN OUR NEVADA PHOTOGRAPHERS FACEBOOK GROUP**  
facebook.com/groups/nevadasnaps



# Langston Hughes Sought Solitude in Reno

Escaping to The Biggest Little City proved prolific for the venerable author.



Langston Hughes, 1936

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

BY ALEX ALBRIGHT

When Langston Hughes caught the 5:55 a.m. train from Truckee, California, to Reno in September 1934, he was 10 years into a career that would be marked by greatness and controversy. Already a successful poet, novelist, and journalist at the age of 32, Hughes was widely regarded as the unofficial poet laureate of the Harlem Renaissance, which in the 1920s ushered in a prolific and important time for African-American authors, artists, and musicians.

He published more than 35 books—including the popular “Simple” series—11 plays, and an almost countless number of poems and prose in his lifetime. He drew ire from other African-American authors, poets, and critics for his portrayal of black life, which he wrote about in unflinching terms and refused to sugar-coat for a mass audience. Despite the naysayers, Hughes was beloved by the people whose frequently rough lives he wrote about, and he became the first black American to earn a living just from his writing and public speaking.

By the time he stepped off the train in Reno, he had become the most recognizable and controversial African-American writer of his time.



## RENO PROVES A MUSE

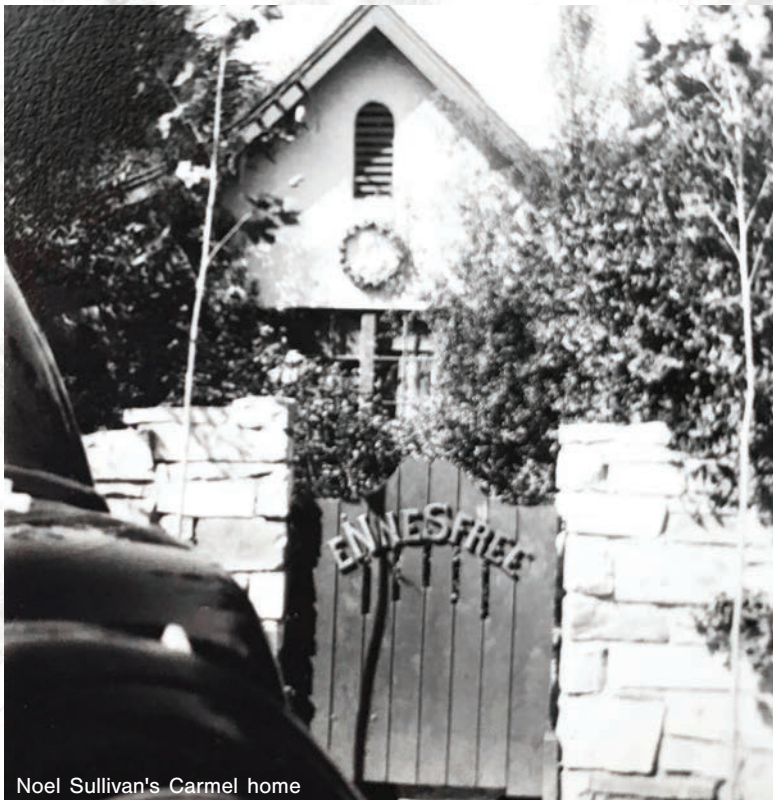
"I had always wanted to see Reno," he writes.

He told hardly anyone where he had gone, "to find a little peace and quiet for work." His time in Reno is overlooked in many accounts of his life.

His first trip to Reno was to scout for a place he might return to for a period of extended and uninterrupted writing that would take him into 1935. He liked what he found in Reno's Chinese and African-American communities, and in the boarding house where he registered as James Hughes. He returned in early October for what he hoped would be several months of productive, moneymaking writing. However, his father's death would draw him away from Reno before the end of November.

Hughes had been staying in California, but his active social life was too distracting and his political activities had become dangerous. In Reno, he would live in isolation, and once there he settled quickly into a working routine: 11 short stories were written partially or wholly in Reno or inspired by his time there. Two of his best and most lucrative stories, "On the Road" and "Slice 'em Down," borrow heavily from Depression-era Reno for characters and settings.

Hughes' total time in Reno consisted of the nine-day scouting visit and a subsequent five-week stay at 521 Elko Street. He paid \$2.50 a week and lived in the boarding house home of a widow, Helen Hubbard, whose husband had been among the founders of the Reno NAACP in 1919. Hughes recounted later he liked her "big white house with a lawn," where "everyone puts in a small sum for food and one of them cooks, so it makes eating very cheap."



Noel Sullivan's Carmel home

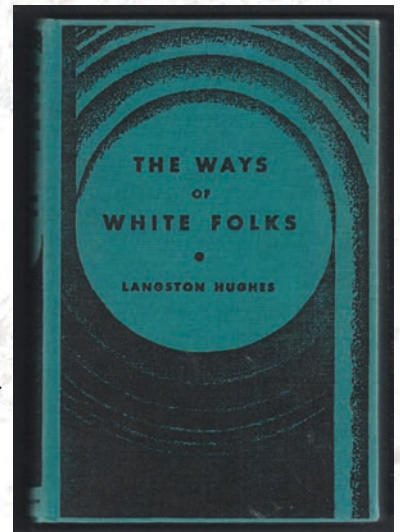
## THE DRIVE FOR SOLITUDE

In August 1933, Hughes had accepted a long-standing invitation from wealthy arts patron and social activist Noel Sullivan to stay at his Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, cottage. An ardent admirer of Hughes, Sullivan provided him with everything he needed for a year so that he could "consolidate his career as a professional writer." By December 1933, he had completed his first collection of short stories, "The Ways of White Folks."

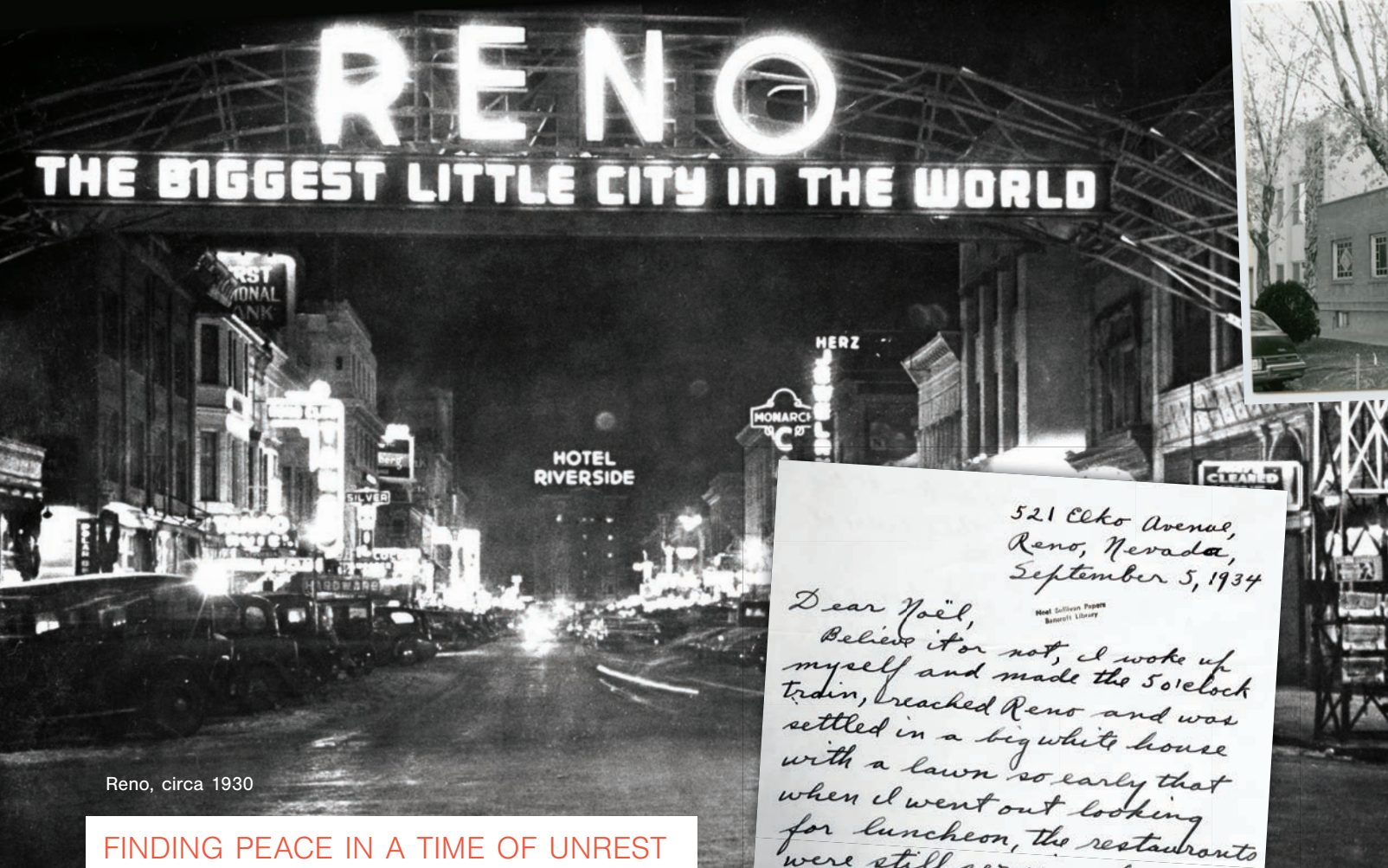
Hughes was popular and admired by Carmel's liberal arts and leftist crowd of affluent whites that included the poet Robinson Jeffers and the socialist Lincoln Steffens. Hughes had become, biographer Arnold Rampersad writes, "the most glamorous black leader sympathetic to the leftist cause."

But by spring 1934, Hughes was complaining: "there are too many people in my life." Although his literary output decreased, Hughes remained active both in local politics and in the California labor strife and violence that in 1934 mirrored problems throughout the United States.

After two strikers were killed in San Francisco in July 1934, the Carmel town council ordered tear gas "in order to be ready for civil insurrection;" a group of citizens backed by the newly formed American Legion and "armed with riot guns began to drill on the local polo grounds." The Carmel "Sun" warned: "There is trouble in store for those who persist in communistic activity, and that is as it should be." Hughes was warned that he himself was in physical danger and he left Carmel quickly, "not wishing to be tarred and feathered."







Reno, circa 1930

## FINDING PEACE IN A TIME OF UNREST

Reno became the writing retreat and safe haven Hughes needed. He describes his arrival in a letter to Sullivan: It was “so early that when I went out looking for luncheon, the restaurants were still serving breakfast! It is so nice and hot here that I feel like I am back in Africa.” He won his first \$2 at a casino known as “the Chinaman’s” that evening.

Reno, he writes, was “a very prejudiced town with no public places where Negroes could eat other than two cheap Chinese restaurants.” It had, he continued, “no Negro section as such,” except for a “scrubby little area across the railroad tracks where the Colored Club for gambling was located.”

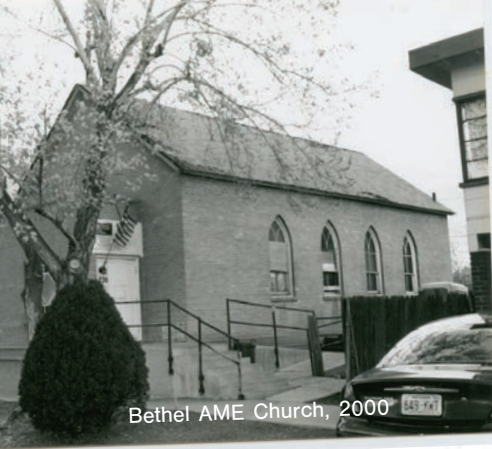
Afternoon walks introduced Hughes to what he called a large hobo jungle populated by “hungry Negroes from the East” who came through “in freight cars, heading for San Francisco” or “from the Coast, heading for Kansas City or Chicago where they thought times might be better. A few of these black wanderers settled for a while in Reno.” Two of those he met became the central characters of the short story “Slice ‘em Down,” which was published in “Esquire” magazine. In “On the Road,” Sarge—another itinerant—seeking sanctuary from a Reno snowstorm, thinks he has pulled down a church with its locked doors, *a la* the biblical Sampson, though in fact he’s actually been dreaming while being beaten and jailed for vagrancy.

## A DIFFICULT TIME

African Americans had been wandering into Nevada since before it became a state, settling first in Virginia City and subsequently in Goldfield, Carson City, and Reno. Race prejudice was nothing new although it was inconsistent, depending on when, where, and what ethnic group was involved. Nevada historian Mella Harmon writes that Nevada’s black population “decreased markedly” during the last decade of the nineteenth century because of the decline in mining opportunities for blacks, and that the state practiced “non-legislated segregation.” But Reno’s black population stayed virtually the same: U.S. Census figures list 22 blacks in 1870, 23 in 1890, and 28 in 1900.

As the economy shifted from mining to vice, Reno became an even more popular stopping-off place, especially for transients hoping for some luck. By 1907,





Bethel AME Church, 2000

Reno's permanent black population had grown, unofficially, to 225 and as it was organizing that year, Bethel AME Church anticipated a membership of about 50. One of the city's

new residents that year was the only black weatherman in the U.S., Oscar H. Hammonds. The 1910 census indicates that Reno's black population had, since 1900, outpaced in growth the white population by over 300 percent.

By the 1920s, the national edition of the Chicago "Defender" had become the most important black audience newspaper in the country, in part because of its weekly reports from communities in every state. Sporadic reports from Nevada began in 1910, but not until 1922 do they appear with any regularity. They reveal an active social and civic life for Reno's African-American community centered around Bethel AME. Often, these reports take the form of society notes, filled with names of who's been to what party. They

also offer intriguing glimpses into local history: by 1923 the Hubbards were operating a boarding house. They, the Hammondses, and others frequently enjoyed parties that included luncheons, "elaborate buffets," and



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The cast of "Etheopia at the Bar of Justice," performed at the Bethel AME Church on May 22, 1935. The man seated behind the desk is Oscar Hammonds.

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**NEVADA** A WORLD WITHIN.  
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“dancing till wee hours.” The Hammonds family was especially active in Bethel organizations and community events. Oscar Hammonds was choir director, leader of a male quartet, and president of the Booker T. Washington Forum.

Hammonds became the subject of the profile by Hughes for the Pittsburgh “Courier” that was reprinted in black-audience newspapers across the country. Born and educated in Indiana, Hammonds began work as a weather observer and was assigned to Reno in 1907, becoming the only black weatherman in the U.S. After a brief posting in San Francisco, he returned in 1910 to Reno and retired from the weather service there in 1935. By the time Hughes caught up with him, he was one of the most influential and popular black citizens of Reno and likely Nevada’s most prolific black author. He wrote monthly weather summaries for the state’s newspapers, which generally printed them unattributed.

Hughes describes Hammonds as a man who enjoyed his work because “it cannot become monotonous as no two days have ever been known to be exactly alike, nor any summer or winter like the preceding summers or winters.”

Revealing his interest in folklore, Hughes asked Hammonds whether science has made folk ways of weather predicting obsolete: “Mr. Hammonds laughed and said, ‘That’s rheumatism, not rain’ and he went on to assure me that amateur weather prophets were much less accurate than charted government observations.”

## RENO’S INFLUENCE

In addition to his stories and the Hammonds profile, Hughes wrote about Reno in a memoir, an essay fragment, and several letters; he also kept notes on some of his daily activities.



JAMES WELDON JOHNSON COLLECTION, BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY

A photo taken by Hughes at Pyramid Lake in September 1934. Hughes wrote on the back of the photo: “Mrs. Willard, Miss Thooey, Tommy, and Gordon, guests of Ted Gilbert on picnic.”

Under the pseudonym David Boatman he wrote four still-unpublished “white” stories, as he termed them to his agent, not about black life, “but about love.” They were intended to make good money with publication in popular mainstream magazines. The first of these came to him after a sunset walk to a “forlorn little mountain cemetery” outside of Reno, where he had a psychic experience he would later write was a premonition about his father’s death.

While in Reno, he made much of the city and region’s attractions: he kept time for boxer Kid Chocolate who was preparing for a fight at the local Chestnut Street Arena; traveled to Carson City with a singing group, and to Virginia City to see the gold mines and opera house; picnicked at Pyramid Lake; saw “The Count of Monte Cristo” at the Majestic Theatre; won and lost small

amounts of money; wandered the streets and out into the hobo jungles on the outskirts of town; and enjoyed “swell blues and jazz” at the local “colored club.”

Today, the boarding house in which Hughes stayed is long gone, as are the alleyway joints he frequented. Hillside Cemetery—located near the University of Nevada, Reno—which inspired his story “Mailbox for the Dead” is derelict and endangered by encroaching development. The only significant building still standing is the old Bethel AME Church at 226 Bell Street. The congregation moved to a new building in Sparks in 1993.

After Hughes left Reno, he lived primarily in New York City for the rest of his life. He continued to travel the U.S. and the world, and remained a prolific writer and political activist until his death in 1967. ▀





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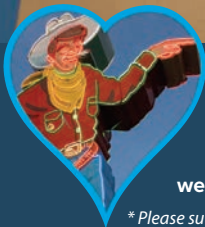


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ODYSSEY OF A  
GHOST TOWN  
EXPLORER

Walters



## CHAPTER 2

## PART 7: THE ELEPHANT

BY ERIC CACHINERO

Ghost towns by their very nature are plagued by hardships. They exist because something didn't work out the way people had hoped. They exist because obsessions of riches and grandeur faded to sometimes sickening realizations that precious time may have been wasted; wrong choices were made. They exist because of broken dreams.

Early Western prospectors and frontiersmen referred to this sobering introduction to hardships as "seeing the elephant." The term is appropriate and all encompassing, because it described the quickly shattered dreams many prospectors experienced when they showed up to the west expecting roads paved in gold, only to be introduced to a life tougher than they could have ever imagined.

So in the most appropriate manner possible,

*Nevada Magazine* Editor Megg Mueller and I are reminded of this fact soon after we depart on our first ghost town trip of the year. Much like the hopeful settlers of Nevada's early days, we set out into parts unexplored with delusions that everything will work out great, only to be stopped dead in our tracks. We see the elephant.



ERIC CACHINERO



## TUSKS IN OUR TIRES

We leave the office on a brisk late-fall morning, adopting our usual plan of packing way too many activities in a day. We head out U.S. Route 50 en route to Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, with the goal of exploring some of the abandoned mining camps that dot the Stillwater Range to the east.

We drive through the semi-abandoned town of Stillwater and snap some photos at the refuge before heading east into the range. An inviting gravel road coaxes us farther and farther into the mountains, and before long, Nevada's true residents start to reveal themselves. A portly coyote and a covey of chukar let us know we've reached Mountain Well, which is aptly named because it's, well, a well in the mountains. The sighting is good news, because it gives us a point of reference on our atlas and tells us we're getting close to our first real ghost town of the day: La Plata.



Mountain Well

In 1862, silver was discovered in the area, leading to the formation of the Mountain Well Mining District. Many stone structures were built, and mining operations fueled and funded by Eastern capitalists began popping up across the region. The town of La Plata was completely owned by the Silver Wave Mining Co., and its success led to it being named the Churchill County seat in 1864. At its peak, La Plata had a post office, three mills, and many businesses. Like many silver camps, the town's success was short-lived, though, and people and riches waned as early as 1867. The county seat was moved to the town of Stillwater, and La Plata faded.

I wish I could tell you what remains at La Plata today. Alas, the elephant is flashing his ivory tusks at us and is about to charge.

**"We spend what seemed like hours driving up and down the same dirt road seeing nothing, somehow convincing ourselves that La Plata will just materialize somewhere if we keep doing this ridiculous dance."**







PHOTOS: ERIC CACHINERO

Somehow we find ourselves lost, or maybe La Plata is lost. Anyway, this isn't too surprising. I've been lost dozens of times on backroads, but for the lives of us we cannot find the ghost town. We spend what seemed like hours driving up and down the same dirt road seeing nothing, somehow convincing ourselves that La Pla-

ta will just materialize somewhere if we keep doing this ridiculous dance.

Finally we are able to tell more or less where we are, and realize we're right next to the correct road to get us to La Plata. Smiles and relief abound and we set off up a road we're sure is the correct one.

Optimism is short-lived. The elephant lets out a threatening trumpet and several sharp snorts, which sound somehow like the all-too familiar hiss of a tire rapidly losing air.

The elephant tramples us.

Changing a flat tire is easy, but sobering because after changing it, we don't have a spare, which means its back to town for us just three hours into our trip to get our flat repaired.

As we're driving back to town, still on dirt roads, I glance at the tire pressure monitor on the dash and am once again in shock when I realize the elephant has turned and is barreling back at us for another round.

We have another flat, this one slow leaking, thankfully. Normally I don't drive on slow-leaking tires, but with no spare, we have no choice. We limp back to Fallon and luckily find a tire shop that gets us fixed up. Unfortunately, though, the tire fiasco has wasted almost our entire day of ghost towning. We have no choice but to drive straight to Austin for the night with our tails between our legs, praying that maybe tomorrow the elephant will let us pass.

LEGENDS OF THE VALLEY  
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WHILE CERTAIN OTHER PLACES IN NEVADA ARE JUST WINDING DOWN AROUND 6 AM, JT HUMPHREY IS ROLLING OUT. IN TOW ARE PHOTOGRAPHERS, BIOLOGISTS AND A TRUCKLOAD OF THE TERMINALLY CURIOUS WHO FEEL A DAY ENCOUNTERING EAGLES, MUSTANGS AND PETROGLYPHS TRUMPS A FULL HOUSE AND THE JOY OF BINGO. UNTIL LATER TONIGHT, THAT IS. SUCH IS THE PACE OF CARSON VALLEY, WHERE LIFE IS SERVED COMFORTABLY RAW.

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Skookum

ERIC CACHINERO

## INVISIBLE BOOMTOWNS

The next day, we lick our wounds and get back on the road with the intention of exploring a couple ghost towns nearby Austin. We head out in search of Ledlie, Jacobsville, and Skookum. The three ghost towns are supposedly located just north of U.S. Route 50 west of Austin, and before we know it we're out getting lost again. We try to find Ledlie; nothing. We find a sign for Jacobsville and attempt to locate the townsite; nothing. Then, just as I'm fearing the elephant is rearing its ugly head yet again,

we spy what we believe is the remains of Skookum in the distance, and let out a sigh of relief that we may actually end up seeing a ghost town this trip.

It's hard to imagine that for as desolate as the area is today, Ledlie was an important asset to the Nevada Central Railway in the 1880s. The town acted as a station for freight teams traveling to Ione, Grantsville, Silver Peak, and Jefferson, and was a busy railway station in the early 1900s for the adjacent Skookum mines, just two miles to the northwest. Rich ore was discovered at Skookum in





Skookum

ERIC CACHINERO

1906, leading to a boom fueled by whispers of gold floating around at nearby Ledlie. Skookum was mostly a tent town, though stores and a newspaper were present during its peak. Proximity to the railroad, as well as unlimited water, made Skookum pretty comfortable, though the quickly drained riches did not.

Jacobsville has a bit more of a salacious history. The town was the result of the Overland Mail & Stage Co. establishing its base near the Reese River at Jacob's Spring, named after the

Overland's division agent. Upon the creation of Lander County in 1862, Jacob's Spring was renamed Jacobsville, bringing with it two hotels, three stores, a post office, a courthouse, and a mill. In its early days, Jacobsville was known to be the only place in the region where reasonable quantities of whiskey could be obtained, but as time moved on, it began to lose population to nearby Austin. In an effort to persuade the miners in Austin to move to Jacobsville, a letter was sent to the Austin "Reveille" newspaper that read: "How do you do way up in Austin there? If you will come down and make us a visit here, I will take you around and show you some of the prettiest ladies on the Pacific Coast. There is the beautiful Miss J. and Miss K., then there is pretty little Miss S., with her nice curls... Then if you aren't satisfied, I will see that you become acquainted with some of our fine-looking married women. You fellows can brag of your rich mines and mountain fever up at Clifton and Austin, but they are nothing compared to our pretty women at Jacobsville." As Nevada author Stanley Paher puts it, "the invitation went unnoticed." Austin dominated Jacobsville in every way, and the camp faded within a decade.



Jacobsville marker

MEGG MUELLER



Though Megg and I don't find any remains at Ledlie or Jacobsville (or any pretty ladies), we are able to explore some scant ruins at Skookum, including the remnants of one building and a mineshaft that rest along the bank of the Reese River. We explore quickly before moving on to our first real redeeming town of the trip: Amador.

## MAP MAYHEM

It's probably no surprise that we get lost again trying to find Amador. We joke that we're rusty from not going ghost towning for a while, but eventually find out that for the first time ever in my experience, my Nevada atlas was wrong. Luckily we carry a couple maps, and after driving aimlessly for a while, we find our way up the western edge of the Toiyabe Range and into the ghost town of Amador, where much to our happiness, there's lots to see.

Silver was discovered in Amador Canyon in early 1863. A modest camp sprang up, and by the fall, there were several hundred living there. Though the town did produce some riches, it failed to produce on any level that would be considered respectable. The town peaked in 1864, boasting business and a post office. History maintains that the town



Amador

ERIC CACHINERO

had an ore crusher that was an "exploded humbug which could not crush potatoes, much less quartz."

We poke around Amador for a while, exploring some remnants of brick and stone buildings, as well as a cool mine opening. Though the opening has been sealed with metal bars, visitors can still peek inside the old mine shaft. A number of tailing piles dot the landscape, as do the remnants of steam-powered mining equipment.

After Amador, we set off up State Route 305 toward Battle Mountain, and make a quick stop-off at the ghost town of Walters, located almost on the road, but easy to miss.

Walters was around from 1880-1938. It wasn't quite a town, but was a stop on the Nevada Central Railroad. A baseball diamond and grassy fields enticed visitors from nearby towns to picnic and relax for the day. Today, the train station still stands, and is one of the better remaining station houses left from the Nevada Central, though it was recently the victim of vandals and has been closed off. If you visit, please admire this piece of Nevada history from behind the fence.

We snap some shots of the building, before continuing up State Route 305, fighting daylight to visit one more town for the day: Galena.

Galena popped up around 1863, and by 1866, it had a townsite with a park-plaza and a water system. The town boasted many of the luxuries of early boomtowns, and the addition of large, mature trees and a small creek through the town made it a sight to behold. By 1870, there was a daily stage running from Battle Mountain Station that brought supplies. The town's mines produced large



Amador

MEGG MUELLER



## KEY

★ GHOST TOWNS VISITED IN THIS ISSUE

## VISITED GHOST TOWNS

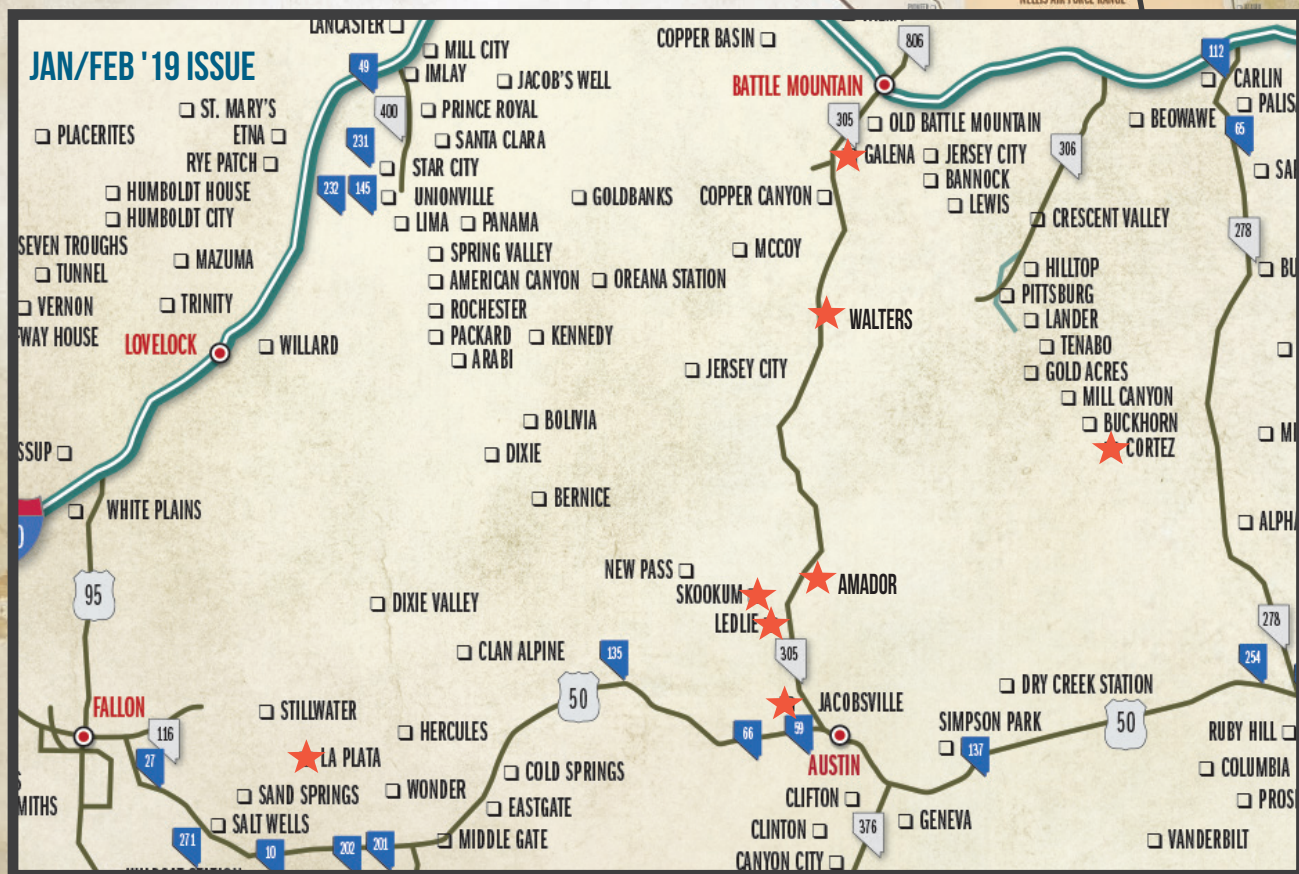
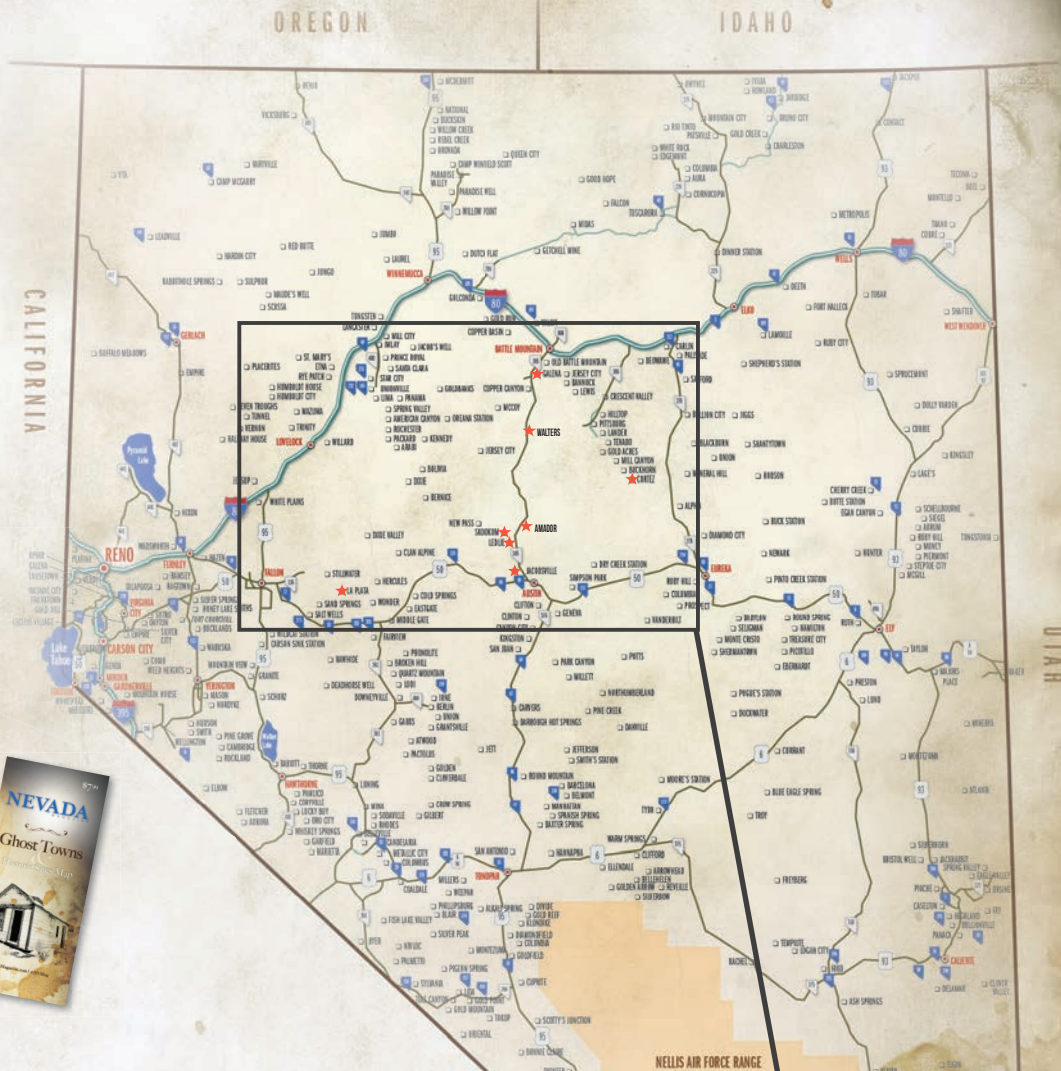
JAN/FEB '19 ISSUE

LA PLATA  
(ATTEMPTED)  
JACOBVILLE  
LEDLIE  
SKOOKUM

AMADOR  
WALTERS  
GALENA  
CORTEZ

## WANT TO GO ON YOUR OWN GHOST TOWN ADVENTURE?

TURN THE PAGE TO FIND OUT  
HOW YOU CAN GET A COPY OF  
THE GHOST TOWN MAP!







Cortez

MEGG MUELLER

amounts of silver, gold, and lead, though by 1875, they began to slow. Galena was mined intermittently during WWI and WWII, and even all the way up through the late 1960s.

There's a lot to explore at Galena. Remnants of mid 1900s mining look misplaced in the landscape, presenting a strange amalgam of historic and modern equipment and buildings. The older edifices stand sentinel towards the bottom of the canyon, while more remnants of newer mining operations dominate the top. Barrels once containing chemicals are scattered across the landscape and piled up among the sagebrush, sitting strangely next to what appears to be a historic small stamp mill. As the last bits of light fade from the canyon, I frantically jog from structure to structure trying to snap as many photos as I can, while Megg explores a bit before taking refuge in our vehicle from the sub-freezing temperatures. As we drive out of the canyon towards a hot meal and comfy beds awaiting us in Battle Mountain, my mind again returns to the elephant, and how the early prospectors had made Galena their home, even when the temperatures were much colder and in conditions much more unforgiving than ours.



Galena

ERIC CACHINERO



Cortez

MEGG MUELLER

## THE NEVADA GIANT

The next morning, we fuel up and take a quick tour of the Cookhouse Museum in Battle Mountain before getting on the road en route to our final ghost town of the trip: Cortez. We head east on Interstate 80 before turning south on State Route 306. We mosey through the quiet town of Beowawe and continue south through the spacious Crescent Valley. We quickly realize that save for a few mining trucks, we're the only traffic on the road.



Cortez

ERIC CACHINERO



TRAVEL  
LOG

MILES

833

DAYS

3

GHOST  
TOWNS

5

That's until, however, we come to a four-way stop. Approaching from the left is the biggest dump truck I've ever seen, with each of its tires much larger than our vehicle. We make the executive decision to let the truck go first, and we quickly realize we've stumbled into an active mining zone. We drive around some more, convincing ourselves that we're completely lost yet again, before heading up a windy road on the southwestern slope of Mt. Tenabo. Our fears of failure fissure when we surprisingly approach a metal sign with an arrow that reads "CORTEZ TOWN SITE." We know we've made it.

Mexican prospectors discovered silver ore in Cortez in 1862. Further exploration would reveal rich silver ledges on the cliffs above the town—which were aptly named The Nevada Giant—leading to the formation of the Cortez mining company in 1863. A man by the name of Simeon Wenban was considered the patriarch of the town of Cortez, having built a mansion there, which included running water—a rare luxury at the time. Wenban funded mining operations in Cortez, including the establishment of a mill, which employed mostly Chinese miners and millhands. Mining activity continued throughout the years until the 1930s, when The Depression tanked the price of silver and made mining unprofitable. The Cortez Gold Mine, owned and operated by Barrick Gold, is still mined on a large scale.

Megg and I poke around Cortez for a bit, discovering something new behind every small bush. Decrepit wooden shacks are strewn across the hillside, as are some impressive stone remains and metal scraps. A person could spend half a day exploring this intriguing ghost town, but remember that the town is in the middle of an active mining site. If you decide to visit, please be cautious and courteous to the operations happening all around you. Getting there is daunting, but well worth the experience.

### PACHYDERM PROSPERITY

We make it back to Carson City without seeing the elephant again. We lucked out this trip, but it did remind us we better get back to embracing a couple ghost town basics: carry plenty of water, food, and emergency supplies; always let someone know where you're going and when you'll return; and always bring a spare tire (two, if you're really smart). Because all it takes is one wrong turn or one misplaced rusty nail to bring the curse of the elephant crushing down upon you, and sometimes by the time you see him, it will be too late. ▀



## NEVADA MAGAZINE'S GHOST TOWNS & HISTORIC SITES MAP

*Nevada Magazine's Ghost Towns & Historic Sites map is back in stock! This Nevada treasure comes jam-packed with historical information, color photographs, ghost town trip itineraries, park and territory information, fun facts, and a large state map showing the locations of hundreds of ghost towns. Printed on tear-resistant and water-resistant paper, the map is the perfect companion for Nevada's backroads.*

Maps are available for sale on our website at [nevadamagazine.com](http://nevadamagazine.com) or by calling *Nevada Magazine* Circulation Manager Carrie Roussel at 775-687-0610.



# COWBOY ARTS & GEAR MUSEUM

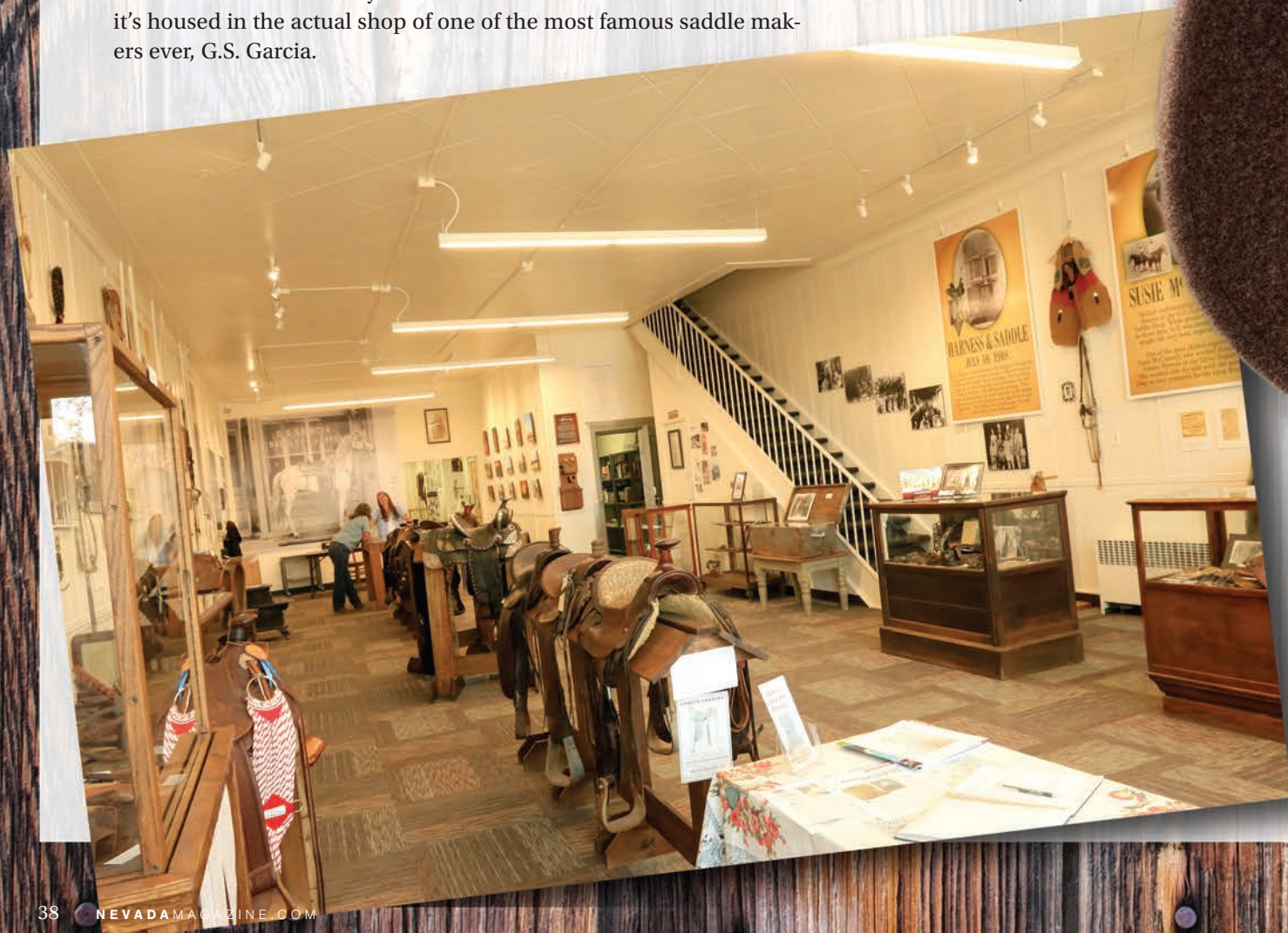
The culture and heritage of the American buckaroo takes center stage.

BY MEGG MUELLER

The image of a cowboy is synonymous with the west. Of course there were cowboys around the world long before the Wild West was settled, but if you mention cowboys, it's the west that springs to mind. Romantic images of hardscrabble men (and yes, some women) who lived on the land, rode majestic horses, drove cattle across landscapes covered with brush, and camped beneath endless starlit skies...that's a cowboy.

The culture of the cowboy is still alive in rural Nevada, where it's not romantic fantasy but a life lived daily by many men and women. Nevada has always celebrated and honored their contributions and the new Cowboy Arts & Gear Museum in Elko is the latest venue to pay homage.

The museum is not only home to some of the finest saddles and silver work ever created, it's housed in the actual shop of one of the most famous saddle makers ever, G.S. Garcia.





## MUCH MORE THAN JUST A BUILDING

Garcia and his wife Sauternina moved to Elko in 1894. A saddle maker from Santa Margarita,

California, Garcia knew the area was in the center of the ranching and mining booms happening in northeastern Nevada, and Elko was located on the Central Pacific Railroad line, so he set up a small shop to ply his trade.

It wasn't long before word of his exquisite craftsmanship was the talk of cowboys all over the state, and always the forward thinker, it prompted Garcia to create a mail-order catalogue in 1897. Now a sought-out national sensation, Garcia's business expanded and he took on employees eager to learn the trade, including a young Joe Martin Capriola who apprenticed with the master from 1905-1907 (more on him shortly).



G.S. Garcia



PHOTOS: LAURA PETERSEN

HISTORICAL PHOTOS  
COURTESY OF COWBOY  
ARTS & GEAR MUSEUM







G.S. Garcia Harness and Saddle Shop, circa 1907

Garcia went on to win a gold medal for a saddle decorated with precious gems and intricate silverwork at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. More medals followed, and in 1907, the G.S. Garcia Harness and Saddle shop on Commercial Street in downtown Elko was built, with a store on the ground floor and a workroom for leather and silver crafters on the upper floor. Business boomed and Garcia's reputation was well on its way to legend status.

In 1929, J.M. Capriola moved back into town from his ranch and opened his own saddle shop just a few doors from his mentor. Capriola concentrated on leather goods and sold the silver bits and spurs Garcia made. Garcia would send Capriola saddle repair jobs, while he concentrated on his intricate saddles. The two men remained friends until Garcia died in 1933. His sons kept the business alive until 1938, when the family decided to return to California.

## A LONG-AWAITED DREAM

"We'd always fantasized about having a museum in the Garcia building," Museum Director Jan Petersen says, referring to her friend Paula Wright. "It was always her dream."

John Wright—Paula's son—and his wife Susan are the current owners of J.M. Capriola's, which is still in its same location J.M. opened in 1929. John's grandparents, Paul and Betty Bear, bought Capriola's in 1958 and in 1978, they acquired the Garcia Bits and Spur Co. and the two were reunited for good. The Bears eventually passed the business on to their daughter Paula.



Cowboy Arts & Gear Museum

Paula was tragically killed in a horse accident in 2012, but her friends and family kept that dream alive. When John was approached about the building, the time had come and a team effort brought the museum to life.

Jan is a fourth-generation Nevadan; her family came to Elko in 1869 on the Transcontinental Railroad. She was working at the California Trail Interpretive Center when John and Susan approached her about opening the museum. She had never run a museum before, but she jumped in, worked to get 501(C)(3) nonprofit status for the museum, and after that happened, she says, the ball just started rolling.

"We started putting the word out that we were looking for stuff," Jan says. "The Western Folklife Center had photos in their collection they wanted to share, the (Northeastern Nevada) museum had stuff that was in storage they donated, and people brought items in. They shared their treasures with us."

## COWBOY CULTURE

The museum is replete with memorabilia from G.S. Garcia: family photographs, historic images, saddles, bits, spurs, vintage bridles, belt buckles, and many other items, including the Garcia horse, which was used to show saddles in the original shop.

"We wanted to recreate the look of a saddle shop from World War I," Jan explains. "The Northeastern Nevada Museum had the Garcia horse, so the horse went back into the stall in the front window. "



Jan notes the museum includes many items that aren't Garcia related. A 1915 telephone is a hit with younger visitors (most kids can't figure out how to dial it, Jan notes), as is the 1917 Edison Diamond Disc phonograph player that still works. A 1962 Capriola saddle was donated by local rancher Joe Riordan, and according to Jan, there are plans for more rotating exhibits.

"We get short-term loans (of items) and long-term loans, so we'll be having stuff coming in and out," she says. "We don't want to be exclusively Garcia, but we want to highlight the heritage and the cultural history of cowboys throughout the west."

The museum is finding its niche in Elko, settling in nicely among the other draws in the largest city in Nevada's Cowboy Country. The Western Folklife Museum, the Northeastern Nevada Museum, J.M. Capriola's, The Star Restaurant, and the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, which happens each January, all draw visitors looking to experience that cowboy culture.

While the museum celebrates the craftsmanship of Garcia and Capriola, there is also a section that honors the legacy of NV Energy and its 75-year history in Elko. Long-term plans include a research library, an extensive photography collection, and eventually using the second floor of the building to give presentations and classes on such cowboy traditions as rope braiding and silver engraving. Anyone looking for their

own bit of cowboy heritage can have a brand drawn for them at the museum, also.

The history of American buckaroos and the vaqueros that came before them is what the museum is dedicated to preserving. The ranching and cowboy lifestyles are threatened with extinction as the world moves into a more digital era and Jan believes that with the migratory nature of families today, kids are missing out on an important piece of history.

"The museum for me is about establishing those legacies. It gives kids the connection of the past to the present. Today kids often struggle with having a sense of place, and that connection of who they are. Everyone needs to have that connection," Jan says.

"We are here, sharing these stories that are too good to be lost." ▀



### SADDLE UP SOME CULTURE

#### Cowboy Arts & Gear Museum

542 Commercial St.

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[cowboyartsandgearmuseum.org](http://cowboyartsandgearmuseum.org), 775-389-1713

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- National Cowboy Poetry Gathering- January 28 thru February 2
- Elko Mining Expo-June 3 thru June 7
- National Basque Festival-July 5 thru July 7
- Silver State Stampede-July 12 thru July 14
- Ruby Mountain Balloon Festival-July 26 thru July 28
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# Austin's AWESOME EATERIES

There's a reason  
they don't call it  
the hungriest road  
in America.

BY MEGG MUELLER

Anyone who has survived a roadtrip across the Loneliest Road in America—U.S. Route 50, more commonly known as Highway 50—can probably sympathize with what I'm about to say; the town of Austin may have been where the trip got sketchy if you were feeling a bit peckish.

There have always been restaurants in Austin, which I will quickly add is one of my favorite towns in the state, but the trouble I often encountered was when I was rolling into town around the dinner hour, particularly in spring, fall, or winter. There simply wasn't any place to eat, save the gas station's tiny store. I'm not above a frozen burrito or bag of chips, but sometimes, you really need a good hot meal after a day exploring Nevada's back roads.

I'm happy to say, that day has come.

Meet the Silver State Café & Saloon. Also known as the Silver State Bar & Grill, depending on the sign you see, but regardless, welcome to good food in Austin, after dark.





PHOTOS: MEGG MUELLER

## SILVER STATE SAVIOR

Dee Helming opened the café and bar (conveniently situated right next to one another with a doorway in between) in March 2018. She's been in Austin since 1981, so if you've been to town you've probably crossed paths with her. She was, until recently, with the Austin Chamber of Commerce, so if you had your Highway 50 passport stamped it was probably Dee. She also owns The Union Street Lodging, a great little bed and breakfast in town. She's also the current president of Nevada's Pony Express Territory and principal officer of the Austin Historic Mining District. What's really something is that she was manning the kitchen on our recent visit to the Silver State.

Dee brought in some help at the B&B so she could focus her attention on her newest venture, and from the

look of things, it was a good idea. Since opening, the Silver State has been full most of the year, just like Austin itself, thanks to Ormat's geothermal plant expansion. Austin has just three restaurants; Dee stays open the latest and adheres to her posted hours of 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. There is no smoking allowed in the Silver State, either the restaurant or the bar.

Walking into the café, you might just step back outside, check up and down the street to make sure you're where you think you are before stepping back into the pleasant and welcoming environs of the restaurant. Clean, casual, and spacious, the café has an eight-seat counter for those who want to get close to the action, plus plenty of comfortable booths and tables. Not overly decorated or themed, the café has a warm, inviting feel, whether it's your first visit or your tenth. While that's nice and all, the real reason you're here, however, is the food.

## SATISFACTION, AT LAST

Associate editor Eric Cachinero and I settle in at the counter, ready to have a hot meal. Dee's static menu is simple and delicious; pizza, sub sandwiches, soups, and salads. Daily specials shake things up with wing night, stews, chicken strips, and flatbread pizzas among the changing items. I choose the combo pizza and Eric decides on the pastrami melt sandwich.

Eric and I both love comfort food. After a day like we had (see page 28 for that story) we aren't usually looking for high-end fancy dining with foods we've never heard of. It may be why we're such fans of the meals we find







Pastrami melt

PHOTOS: ERIC CACHINERO

her crust, it was thin but substantial, crispy but not brittle, and perfectly held my myriad toppings in place. Every bite—including the leftovers the next day—was delicious and exactly what this weary traveler needed. Eric's sub was piled with pastrami, Swiss cheese melting everywhere, topped with mustard and pickles. It was either really tasty or abducted by aliens because I looked over at Eric not long after it arrived and it was already gone.

in rural Nevada on a roadtrip; it's always just a little more delicious than if we'd had it for lunch on a normal workday.

Pizza may be my favorite food, and I've noticed a trend toward super thin crusts that don't stand up to the toppings they should be shuttling toward my mouth. Whatever magic Dee placed on

## LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE

The next morning is a balmy 12 degrees as we set out, and no way is the quick gas station breakfast we normally have going to cut it. Thankfully on the other end of the food spectrum from Silver State, is the Toiyabe Café.

Located just east of the Silver State on the opposite side of the street, the Toiyabe Café opens at 6 a.m., which allows us to get a jump on the daylight. In the summer months, the Toiyabe stays open until 8 p.m., but in the winter months they close at 2 p.m. so plan accordingly so you don't miss a chance to stop for a bite.



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ERIC CACHINERO

The restaurant only has a few patrons as we come in, and there are plenty of open tables. I beeline for the one next to a wall heater, and our waitress quickly brings us water and the requisite coffee while we peruse the menu. I'm in the mood for waffles, so I get the waffle combo with scrambled eggs and sausage. Eric spies the biscuits and gravy over hash browns and is immediately sold.

What a way to start the day. My plate holds an enormous thin waffle, a large serving of perfectly scrambled eggs, and two clearly-home-made sausage patties the size of saucers. The sausage was amazing, with slightly crispy edges and just enough spice to keep things interesting. I dunked it in the maple syrup, and the salty-sweet combo

was heavenly, and livened up the entire meal. Across the table, Eric is silent. If you've read any of my previous Cravings stories, you know this means he's happy. He's staring at a gigantic plateful of biscuits and thick country

gravy atop a serving of golden, crispy hashbrowns that cover the entire plate.

He digs in, and lets a small sigh escape. He's still for just a second, then attacks his plate voraciously. It's definitely a hit, and while he slows his pace toward the end of his meal, he clearly enjoys every bite.

Hwy 50 will always be a wild and lonely roadtrip. The miles between towns and often between seeing another car guarantee that. But I'm happy to say, it will no longer be a hungry roadtrip, thanks to Austin's awesome eateries. ▼

### CHOW DOWN

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NATIONAL COWBOY POETRY GATHERING  
ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF WESTERN CULTURE TURNS 35.

PHOTOS: CHARLIE EKBURG

On Jan. 28-Feb. 2, the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering returns to the Western Folklife Center in Elko. Now in its 35th year, the event once again allows guests to get their fill of arts, culture, and traditions of the rural West. The event features poetry, music, storytelling, dancing, workshops, exhibitions, discussions, food, and fellowship.

Highlighted events and classes for the 35th year include rawhide braiding, leather floral design and carving, spit cooking, cowboy comics, food workshops, and more. Attendees can also attend dance classes and dancing events and boogie the night away.

Cowboy Poetry Gathering guests can experience the event in the way that best suits them, with many different ticket packages available, including single-day passes and three-day deluxe passes. The best way to do so is to visit [nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org](http://nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org) to see the full schedule of events.



**WHERE**

Western Folklife Center, Elko



**WHEN**

Jan. 28-Feb. 2



**WORTH A CLICK**

[nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org](http://nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org)





JEN ROSENSTEIN

## LAS VEGAS SHOWS

ROCK AND ROLL ALL NITE ONE FINAL TIME  
DURING ICONIC BAND'S FAREWELL TOUR.

**A**fter an epic and storied 45-year career that launched an era of rock 'n' roll legends, KISS announced that the band is launching its final tour ever in 2019, appropriately named "End of the Road." The initial announcement was made in 2018 on NBC's "America's Got Talent," which sent the internet into overdrive with fans hoping their city would get one final KISS show. The tour makes a Las Vegas stop at T-Mobile Arena Friday, Feb. 15. The show is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m.

Known for its trademark larger-than-life blistering performances, KISS has proven for decades why it is hands down the

most iconic live show in rock 'n' roll. The Rock and Roll Hall of Famers have sold more than 100 million albums worldwide and said this tour is devoted to the millions of KISS army fans.

"All that we have built and all that we have conquered over the past four decades could never have happened without the millions of people worldwide who've filled clubs, arenas, and stadiums over those years," KISS says. "This will be the ultimate celebration for those who've seen us and a last chance for those who haven't. KISS army, we're saying goodbye on our final tour with our biggest show yet and we'll go out the same way we came in: unapologetic and unstoppable."



### WHERE

T-Mobile Arena



### WHEN

Feb. 15



### TICKETS

t-mobilearena.com,  
702-692-1600



### WORTH A CLICK

kissonline.com

**ALSO AT  
T-MOBILE ARENA**  
Ice Vegas Invitational, Jan. 4-5  
Disturbed, Jan. 12  
Calibash Las Vegas, Jan. 26  
George Strait, Feb. 1-2



## HOTTEST SHOWS

**ZZ TOP**

The Venetian  
Jan. 18-19, 23, 25-26, 30; Feb. 1-2  
venetian.com  
702-414-9000

**CHRIS TUCKER**

Wynn  
Jan. 19  
wynnlasvegas.com  
702-770-9966

**TIFFANY HADDISH**

Mirage  
Jan. 25-26  
mgmresorts.com  
702-792-7777

**KRIS KRISTOFFERSON**

The Smith Center for the Performing Arts  
Jan. 26  
thesmithcenter.com  
702-749-2000

**LADY ANTEBELLUM**

Palms  
Feb. 8-9, 13, 15-16  
palms.com  
702-942-7777

**CHICAGO**

The Venetian  
Feb. 8-23  
venetian.com  
702-414-9000

**"PJ MASKS LIVE!"**

Orleans Arena  
Feb. 26  
orleansarena.com  
800-745-3000

**SMOKEY ROBINSON**

Wynn  
Feb. 27  
wynnlasvegas.com  
702-770-9966



DENISE TRUSCELLO

## MUST SEE "BRITNEY: DOMINATION"

Park MGM  
Feb. 13-14, 16-17, 20, 22-23, 27  
March 1-2  
May 8, 10-11, 15, 17-18, 22, 24-26  
July 24, 26-27, 31  
Aug. 2-3, 7, 9-10, 14, 16-17  
parktheaterlv.com, 702-730-7777

Grammy Award-winning superstar Britney Spears took over Park MGM in October 2018 to announce her new Las Vegas residency "Britney: Domination" at Park Theater. A 26-story, 550-foot wide 3D projection set to some of the pop icon's greatest hits illuminated the new Las Vegas resort towers prior to her appearance. Following the record-breaking projection, the new show name appeared on the building as Britney rose from beneath the stage in front of thousands of her fans.

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Dan Aykroyd and Judith Belushi Pisano have announced that **"The Official Blues Brothers Revue"** appears at M Resort Spa Casino on Saturday, Jan. 12. The duo, comprised of Kieron (Elwood Blues) Lafferty and Wayne (Jake Blues) Catania, were hand-picked to carry the torch first lit by the iconic duo of Aykroyd and John Belushi on "Saturday Night Live" in 1978 and later immortalized in the eponymous blockbuster 1980 film.

ADMIT ONE

**TICKETS**

themresort.com

**CALL**

800-754-3000

The national tour of **"Come from Away,"** a Broadway musical about the true story of the small town that welcomed the world on Sept. 11, 2001, makes its Las Vegas debut at The Smith Center the performing Arts for a limited engagement Feb. 19-24.

ADMIT ONE

**TICKETS**

thesmithcenter.com

**CALL**

702-749-2000





### WHITE PINE FIRE & ICE SHOW

**Cave Lake State Park**  
[elynevada.net](http://elynevada.net), 800-496-9350

Cave Lake State Park is gearing up for its hottest—and coldest—event of the season. Participants craft piles of ice and snow into creative sculptures of all shapes and sizes—everything from castles to the Loch Ness Monster. Other events include ice-skating, campfires, fireworks, ice bowling, sledding, and more.

**Jan. 11-13**



JILLIAN CACHINERO

**EAGLES & AGRICULTURE**  
**Carson Valley**  
[carsonvalleynv.org](http://carsonvalleynv.org),  
 775-782-8144

Eagles & Agriculture returns for another year of winged action. The event highlights in-the-field eagle and raptor viewing, giving photographers and avian enthusiasts a chance to view the birds interacting with the beautiful Carson Valley.

**Jan. 24-27**

## JANUARY

### Through Jan. 6 GLITTERING LIGHTS

Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Las Vegas  
[glitteringlightslasvegas.com](http://glitteringlightslasvegas.com)

### 11-12 GARY ALLAN

Peppermill Concert Hall, West Wendover  
[wendoverfun.com](http://wendoverfun.com), 800-217-0049

### 11-12 SHEEP DIP SHOW

Eldorado, Reno  
[sheepdipshow.org](http://sheepdipshow.org)

### 12 FIREWORKS EXPRESS

Nevada Northern Railway, Ely  
[nnry.com](http://nnry.com), 775-289-2085

### 12 JEFF FOXWORTHY

Nugget Casino Resort, Sparks  
[nuggetcasinoresort.com](http://nuggetcasinoresort.com), 800-648-1177

### 17-20 WORLD FINANCIAL GROUP CONTINENTAL CUP OF CURLING

Orleans Arena, Las Vegas  
[curling.ca](http://curling.ca), 702-284-7777

### 18-20 MESQUITE MOTOR MANIA

Mesquite  
[visitmesquite.com](http://visitmesquite.com), 877-637-7848

### 25 TRAVIS TRITT

Nugget Casino Resort, Sparks  
[nuggetcasinoresort.com](http://nuggetcasinoresort.com), 800-648-1177

### 26 MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET

Silver Legacy, Reno  
[silverlegacyreno.com](http://silverlegacyreno.com), 775-325-7401

### 26 ROTARY ICE FISHING DERBY

Cave Lake State Park  
[elynevada.net](http://elynevada.net), 800-496-9350

### 28-Feb. 2 NATIONAL COWBOY POETRY GATHERING

Western Folklife Center, Elko  
[westernfolklife.org](http://westernfolklife.org), 775-738-7508

### 30-Feb. 14 RENO/TAHOE SENIOR WINTER GAMES

Reno/Tahoe  
[reno.gov](http://reno.gov), 775-657-4602



National Cowboy Poetry Gathering

CHARLIE EKBURG





**Jan. 25-27**

## MESQUITE BALLOON FESTIVAL

**Mesquite**  
[visitmesquite.com](http://visitmesquite.com),  
 702-346-7529

Come watch colorful hot air balloons fly through the scenic Virgin Valley near Mesquite. The Stars and Stripes balloon takes the lead each morning, accompanied by more than 40 others. As the sun sets, spectators get an up-close view of balloons as they put on a spectacular glow show.



**Feb. 7-10**

## DAM SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

**Boulder Theatre, Boulder City**  
[damshortfilm.org](http://damshortfilm.org),  
 702-509-4326

The 15th annual Dam Short Film Festival takes place Feb. 7-10 at the historic Boulder Theatre, which was built in 1933, in Boulder City. Organizers claim the event is the largest film festival in the state and promises four days of fun and more than 120 short films in many styles and genres.

### 1 ROYAL BLISS

Peppermill Concert Hall, West Wendover  
[wendoverfun.com](http://wendoverfun.com), 800-217-0049

### 7-9 SHEEP SHOW

Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno  
[wildsheepfoundation.org](http://wildsheepfoundation.org), 406-404-8750

### 8-10, 15-17 WINTER STEAM SPECTACULAR

Nevada Northern Railway, Ely  
[nnry.com](http://nnry.com), 775-289-2085

### 8 ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

Peppermill Concert Hall, West Wendover  
[wendoverfun.com](http://wendoverfun.com), 800-217-0049

### 9 TOM SEGURA

Grand Sierra Resort, Reno  
[grandsierraresort.com](http://grandsierraresort.com), 775-789-2000

### 10 THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT SALOON CRAWL

Virginia City  
[visitvirginiacitynv.com](http://visitvirginiacitynv.com), 775-847-7500

### 16 DIERKS BENTLEY

Reno Events Center, Reno  
[visitrenotahoe.com](http://visitrenotahoe.com)

### 23 RUSSELL PETERS

Silver Legacy, Reno  
[silverlegacyreno.com](http://silverlegacyreno.com), 775-325-7401

### 23 TONI BRAXTON

Grand Sierra Resort, Reno  
[grandsierraresort.com](http://grandsierraresort.com), 775-789-2000

### 24 TIM MCGRAW

Reno Events Center, Reno  
[visitrenotahoe.com](http://visitrenotahoe.com)

## 27-March 3 WINNEMUCCA RANCH HAND RODEO

Winnemucca Events Complex, Winnemucca  
[ranchrodeonv.com](http://ranchrodeonv.com), 775-623-5071



Winter Steam Spectacular



# RAZOR/WIRE

Nevada Humanities presents “Razor Wire,” an exhibition curated by Shaun T. Griffin at the Nevada Humanities Program Gallery in Las Vegas. This exhibition, which opened December 2018 and is on display through Jan. 23, features recent art and poetry from the Razor Wire Poetry Workshop held at the Northern Nevada Correctional Center in Carson City and is part of the Nevada Humanities Exhibition Series. The Razor Wire Poetry Workshop is led by Griffin and offered to incarcerated men who learn to articulate their life experiences through creating poetry and art. The Razor Wire exhibition features works in a variety of mediums, including acrylic painting, pen, ink drawings, pastel drawings, and many poems from the last few years of the workshop. The new issue of “Razor Wire,” the journal produced periodically from the art and poetry created in the workshop, will also be featured. Current and past issues of the “Razor Wire” journal are available at the Nevada Humanities Program Gallery.

Griffin, Nevada poet, editor, and community leader states, “I started this workshop in 1989, and it is the primary artistic outlet on the yard. Since its inception, more than 150 men have participated, and to my knowledge, only two have returned to prison, albeit briefly, for minor parole violations. That is fairly remarkable on a yard where the recidivism rate is frequently over 50 percent.” Griffin adds that he hopes that the Razor Wire exhibition will inspire his students to keep writing. “Outside of the workshop their lives spiral to small things—walking, sleeping, eating—but having an identity beyond the yard, especially that of being an artist, is lifesaving. These kinds of exhibitions let the men know they have value and by inference, their art does too.”



#### WHERE

Nevada Humanities  
Program Gallery



#### WHEN

Through Jan. 23



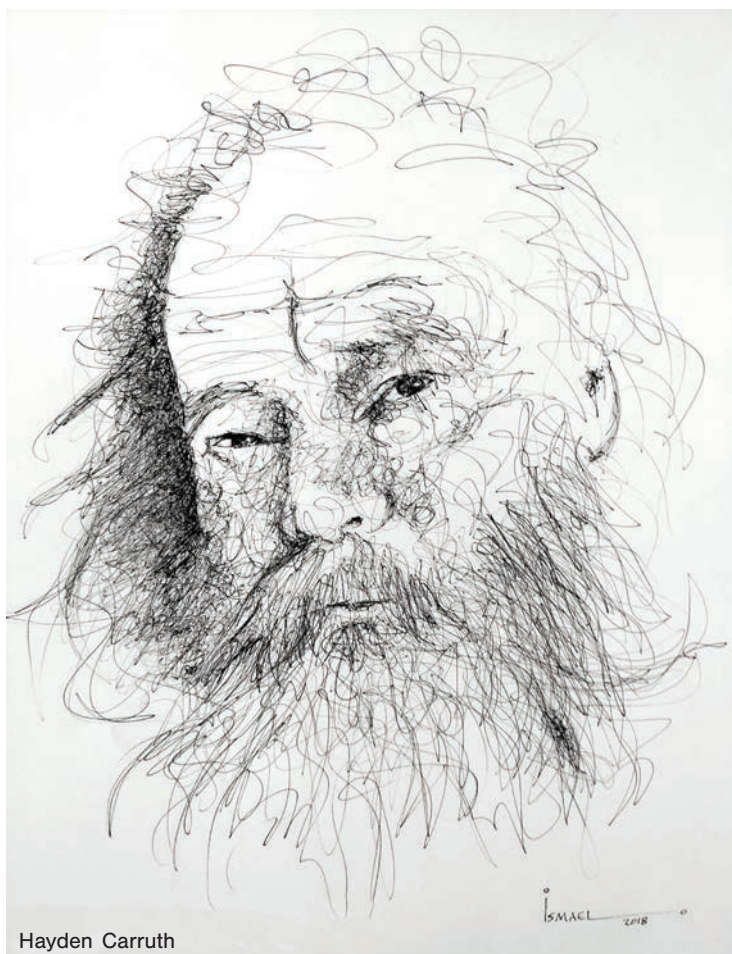
#### CALL

702-800-4670



#### WORTH A CLICK

[nevadahumanities.org](http://nevadahumanities.org)



Hayden Carruth



Raymond Carver



Frederico Garcia Lorca

PORTRAITS: ISMAEL GARCIA SANTILLANES

## ARTIFACTS & ARTISTRY

### “GIG DEPIO: AMERICANA WITH CADMIUM ORANGE”

CCAI Courthouse Gallery, Carson City  
Through Jan. 31  
[arts-initiative.org](http://arts-initiative.org), 775-267-3295

### “EXHIBITION: VESSEL: CERAMICS OF ANCIENT WEST MEXICO”

Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art,  
Las Vegas  
Through Aug. 17  
[unlv.edu](http://unlv.edu), 702-895-3011

### “ANN JOHNSTON: QUILTS OF THE SIERRA NEVADA”

Nevada Museum of Art, Reno  
Feb. 16-May 19  
[nevadaart.org](http://nevadaart.org), 775-329-3333

### “BETHANY LARANDA WOOD: THE WEST AT HAND”

Nevada Museum of Art, Reno  
Through March 3  
[nevadaart.org](http://nevadaart.org), 775-329-3333





# UNCOVER HISTORY

AT NEVADA'S STATE MUSEUMS

Adventure through the rich and colorful story of the Silver State as it unfolds in seven Nevada State Museums. Unearth eras marked by prehistoric giants and eons of natural splendor, experience rhythms of American Indian life and the Old West, feel the booms of mining, railroading, the atomic era, entertainment... *and so much more.*

Where will your **NEVADA STORY** take you?

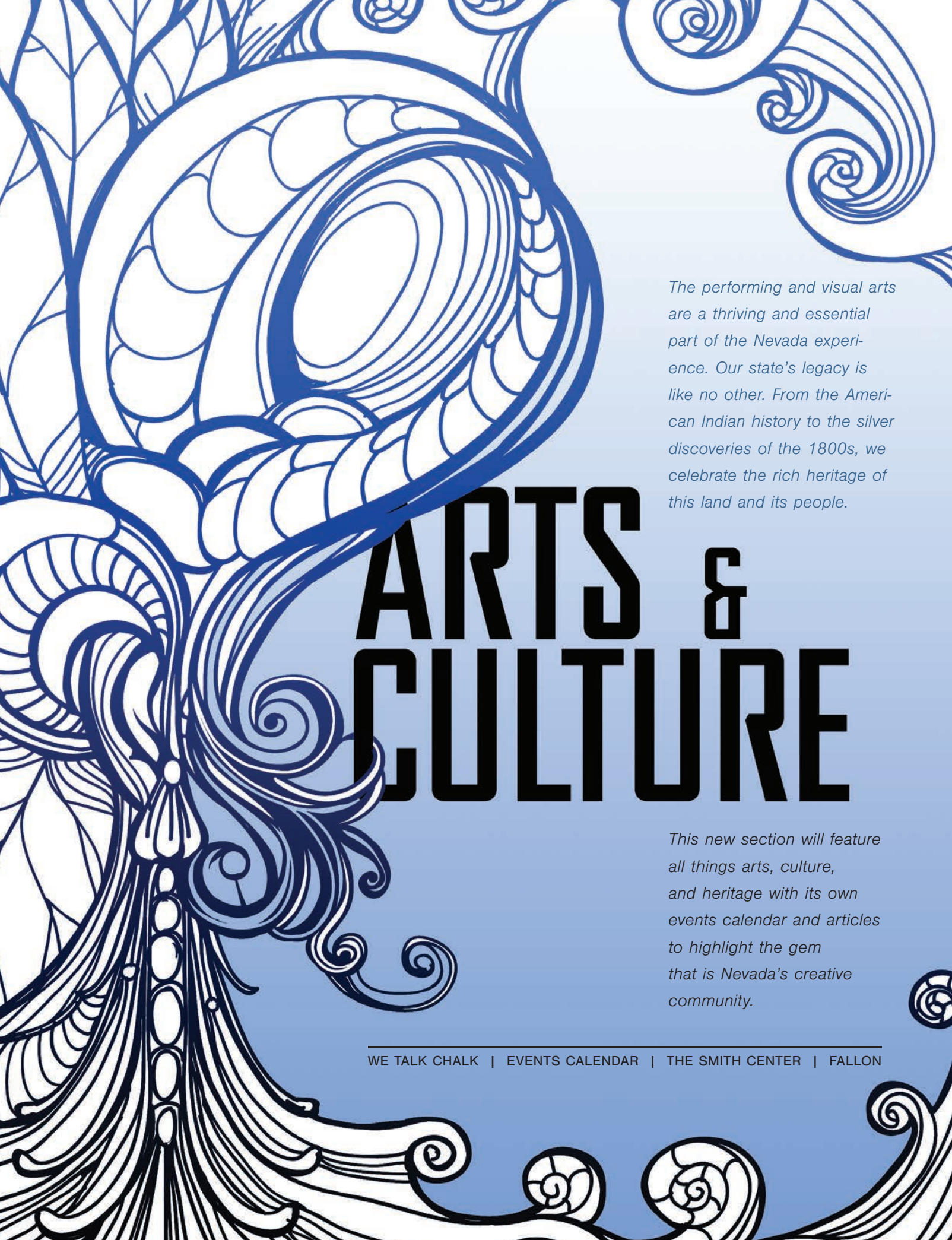
Visit [NVMuseums.org](http://NVMuseums.org) for museum locations, exhibits, & events.  
Become a Museum Member for **FREE Admission** to ALL museums.



**NEVADA**  
MUSEUMS & HISTORY







*The performing and visual arts are a thriving and essential part of the Nevada experience. Our state's legacy is like no other. From the American Indian history to the silver discoveries of the 1800s, we celebrate the rich heritage of this land and its people.*

# ARTS & CULTURE

*This new section will feature all things arts, culture, and heritage with its own events calendar and articles to highlight the gem that is Nevada's creative community.*

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WE TALK CHALK | EVENTS CALENDAR | THE SMITH CENTER | FALLON



# We TALK CHALK

An amazing artist that now calls Las Vegas home is Melanie Stimmell Van Latum at We Talk Chalk. If you've ever seen 3D drawings that make it seem like you're walking a tight rope across the Grand Canyon or catching a huge ocean wave, you may have seen her work.

Melanie's work has been featured all over the world, including Turkey, Colombia, and now in Las Vegas. She attended the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, studying illustration and design, and discovered 3-D art by accident. She's now one of the premier 3-D artists in the world and you can catch her in her studio creating her masterpieces in Las Vegas.

Melanie is a gold-medal winning artist that personally designs and then hand paints each designs to transform any venue with awe-inspiring imagery. We Talk Chalk is a full-service art firm that offers turnkey 3D street painting, street art, and chalk art solutions for businesses, venues, special events, and more. They are always open to new assignments, collaborations, and discussions.

## WE TALK CHALK

1301 S. Commerce Street  
Las Vegas, NV  
wetalkchalk.com  
702-900-6127



*Melanie's art has been featured all over the world.*

Melanie Stimmell Van Latum, "maestra madonnara"





**JAN FEB  
28-2 National Cowboy  
Poetry Gathering,  
Elko**

Since 1985, ranch folk, rural denizens and aficionados of the American West have traveled to meet in Elko, to be captivated by poets and musicians whose verses speak of a life lived on the land. The "Gathering" is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year and will be revisiting its past and charting the course for the future. Not to be missed – tickets available at [nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org](http://nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org)

# JANUARY

**JAN FEB  
4-24**



**The CUP  
Show 2019**

International juried art exhibition, featuring functional and sculptural cups, tea bowls and mugs.

**Clay Arts Vegas,  
1511 South  
Main St.,  
Las Vegas**

**702-375-4147  
[clayartsvegas.com](http://clayartsvegas.com)**



**THROUGH JAN  
27**

**'Anne Brigman: A Visionary in  
Modern Photography'**

**Nevada Museum of Arts,  
160 W. Liberty St., Reno  
775-329-3333, [nevadaart.org](http://nevadaart.org)**

**'Laid Bare in the Landscape:  
The Legacy of Anne Brigman'**

**Nevada Museum of Arts,  
160 W. Liberty St., Reno  
775-329-3333, [nevadaart.org](http://nevadaart.org)**



**JAN FEB  
12-9**

**Midtown Mural Tour**

**Blue Whale Coffee Company,  
32 Cheney St., Reno  
[artspotreno.com](http://artspotreno.com)**

**JAN FEB  
15-19**

**Art Indeed! presents:  
Let's Talk Abstract Art**

**Art Indeed!, 142 Bell St., Reno  
775-846-8367, [artindeed.com](http://artindeed.com)**

**JAN FEB  
1-28**

**Brett Flanigan Mural series**

**The Front Door Gallery, Church Fine Arts,  
UNR Campus, N. Virginia St., Reno  
775-784-1110, [unr.edu](http://unr.edu)**

**Group Exhibition featuring:  
Francisco Zuniga, Matisse  
and David Gallegos**

**Art Source, 2195 S. Virginia St., Reno  
775-828-3525, [artsourcereno.com](http://artsourcereno.com)**

**JAN JAN  
18-19**

**Essentially  
Ellington  
Festival**

The UNLV Jazz Ensemble I, with guest trumpeter Kenny Rampton, perform

during the first Essentially Ellington Festival, along with Lincoln Center artists Chris Crenshaw and Julius Tolentino, and the Latin Jazz Ensemble.

**Performing Arts Center, UNLV Campus  
4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas  
702-895-3011, [unlv.edu](http://unlv.edu)**





# FEBRUARY CALENDAR



**JAN FEB**  
**18-3**

**Reno Little Theater presents: Barefoot in the Park**

Reno Little Theater,  
142 E Pueblo St., Reno  
775-329-0661  
[renolittletheater.org](http://renolittletheater.org)

**JAN FEB**  
**18-15**

**The Poet's Corner**

West Las Vegas  
Arts Center,  
947 W. Lake Mead Blvd.  
702-229-4800  
[lasvegasnevada.gov](http://lasvegasnevada.gov)

**FEB**  
**4**

**Russian National Ballet's 'The Sleeping Beauty'**

Legendary Bolshoi principal dancer Elena Radchenko directs the Russian National Ballet in this production of the Marius Petipa classic "The Sleeping Beauty."

Performing Arts Center, UNLV Campus,  
4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas  
702-895-3011, [unlv.edu](http://unlv.edu)

**JAN**  
**19**

**Oberenak Basque Club 21st annual Winter fest**

Battle Mountain Civic Center  
625 S. Broadway St., Battle Mountain  
775-635-1112  
[landercountytourism.com](http://landercountytourism.com)



**JAN FEB**  
**22-10**

**'Spamilton: An American Parody'**

The Smith Center  
361 Symphony Park, Las Vegas  
702-749-2000, [thesmithcenter.com](http://thesmithcenter.com)

**JAN**  
**31**

**'Romance Is in the Air'**

UNLV faculty will perform chamber works of love and romance from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Selections will include works by Robert Schumann, Amy Beach, and Jake Heggie.

Performing Arts Center, UNLV Campus  
4505 S. Maryland Pkwy, Las Vegas  
702-895-3011, [unlv.edu](http://unlv.edu)



**FEB AUG**  
**2-17**

**'Vessel: Ceramics of Ancient West Mexico'**

Majorie Barrick Museum of Art, UNLV Campus,  
4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas  
702-895-3381, [unlv.edu/barrickmuseum](http://unlv.edu/barrickmuseum)

**FEB FEB**  
**15-17 and** **FEB FEB**  
**22-24**

**The African Company Presents 'Richard III'**

1821, America's first black theatre company, presents classic plays at a theatre in downtown Manhattan for both black and white audiences. But they are challenged when they dare to put on Shakespeare's "Richard III."

Performing Arts Center, UNLV Campus,  
4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas  
702-895-3011, [unlv.edu](http://unlv.edu)







# The Smith Center

NEVADA BALLET THEATRE

## NBT

Since 1972



## LAS VEGAS PHILHARMONIC

MUSIC DIRECTOR DONATO CABRERA

Can a building really inspire the revitalization of a community's relationship to the arts? It can if it's The Smith Center for the Performing Arts in Las Vegas. The Smith Center serves as an incubator for new artistic endeavors, providing inspiration and encouragement to local arts organizations.

The heart of the venue is the 2,050-seat Reynolds Hall, which features several mezzanine and balcony levels, a large stage, and a full-orchestra pit. In the Cabaret Jazz theater, located in the Boman Pavilion next to the main venue, guests can experience intimate jazz and blues concerts in a space reminiscent of old New Orleans clubs. The Troesh Studio Theater, also located in the Boman Pavilion, is a versatile space used for rehearsals, community events, and black box theater performances. Featured throughout the venue and the adjacent Symphony Park community are many commissioned pieces of art that help define the space, including statues, sculptures, and artwork.

The Smith Center's impressive array of coming events includes such shows as "Hello Dolly," "Fiddler on the Roof," and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." Vocalists such as Sarah Brightman, Carol Albert, and Kris Kristofferson share the calendar with the top jazz and classical musicians. In January, George Winston takes to his piano, and in February, the Beach Boys will perform. A full calendar of events is available online.

Home to resident companies Nevada Ballet Theatre and the Las Vegas Philharmonic, The Smith Center's state-of-the-art facilities are fulfilling the city's longstanding dream of engaging the entire community in new and exciting ways to enjoy the arts.

### THE SMITH CENTER

361 Symphony Park  
Las Vegas, NV 89106  
thesmithcenter.com  
702-749-2000







GERI KODEY



Clockwise, from top: "Genius In Flight," Cabaret Jazz, Reynolds Hall, and Grand Lobby.

Opposite page: The Smith Center for the Performing Arts.





# VISIT FALLON

## THE OASIS OF NEVADA



TRAVELNEVADA

The oasis of Nevada has a lush and diverse arts and culture scene, rich in history and replete with adventure.

### OATS PARK ART CENTER



LAURA ROBB/TRAVELNEVADA

The arts and culture scene in Fallon is surprisingly diverse and well worth the drive. One notable venue is the Oats Park Art Center—a top-tier art facility housed in a 1914 school building—which hosts world-class performances, film screenings, author readings, and art exhibits. Look for a calendar of events online.

#### OATS PARK ART CENTER

151 E. Park St, Fallon

775-423-1440

[churchillarts.org/oatsparkartcenter](http://churchillarts.org/oatsparkartcenter)

### HIDDEN CAVE AT GRIMES POINT

Grimes Point, Hidden Cave, and other exposed caves—located just 10 miles east of Fallon in Northern Nevada—reveal the archeological story of the area's American Indians. The petroglyphs at Grimes Point are a historical textbook that offers an easy self-guided tour among the rock art. These carvings can be seen while hiking an easy 1-mile loop. Setting off from the parking lot, the trail is best hiked in a counter clockwise direction.

Hidden Cave—formed some 21,000 years ago—is an underground peek at how the American Indians used this formation to store food and implements. In 1927, four boys looking for bandit gold stumbled onto the cave, however the first archaeological excursion to the cave wasn't until 1940. Since then, the cave has had two other excavations where artifacts have been discovered. On the second and fourth Saturday of each month (except federal holiday weekends) free public tours of the cave are given. The tours start at the Churchill County Museum. It's a 15-minute hike up the trail to the cave, so be prepared.



KIPPY S. SPILKER



SYDNEY MARTINEZ/TRAVELNEVADA





## THE CHURCHILL COUNTY MUSEUM

The Churchill County Museum and Archives is one of the finest small museums in the western United States. It has more than 20,000 square feet of exhibits, artifacts, and detailed displays including permanent history displays and traveling exhibits. The museum showcases the lifestyles of American Indians who inhabited the area thousands of years ago. The



PHOTOS: SYDNEY MARTINEZ/TRAVELNEVADA

tule duck and baskets exhibits are spectacular examples of the craft of weaving, and the travails of pioneers through the Forty-Mile Desert are presented through an audio interpretation and a display of relics found there.

For more information, contact the museum at 775-423-3677 or visit [ccmuseum.org](http://ccmuseum.org).



CHRIS MORAN/TRAVELNEVADA

## FREY RANCH ESTATE DISTILLERY

Nevada's only estate distillery, Frey Ranch is producing 100 percent Nevada wine and spirits from a working ranch in Fallon. Owned by a 5th-generation Nevada farmer, Frey Ranch is on the forefront of diversifying the crops grown in Fallon to be even more water savvy, and making tasty, award-winning beverages in the process.

### FREY RANCH AND CHURCHILL VINEYARDS

1045 Dodge Ln., Fallon  
775-423-4000, [freyranch.com](http://freyranch.com)





**THROUGH THE LENS**

# LAMOILLE CANYON









# AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER 2018, AND LEADING INTO



LARRY BURTON

BY MEGG MUELLER

*Nevada Magazine* has run stories about Lamoille Canyon for more than 70 years. We've written about Lamoille Canyon in the winter, summer, spring, and fall. We've covered the hikes, the skiing, the camping, and the wildflowers. We've written about the Ruby Mountains where the 12-mile canyon was formed, dug many ice ages ago by glaciers.

It is one of the few places in the state that is mentioned in the magazine at least once a year, and it's forever in the hearts of those who visit, which is proven by the number of photos we receive each year of this magical place.





# OCTOBER 2018. LAMOILLE CANYON WAS ON FIRE.

LARRY SPRADLIN

In this issue, the story is different. At the end of September 2018, and leading into October 2018, Lamoille Canyon was on fire. The Range Two fire began Sept. 30, 2018 near Spring Creek and burned more than 9,000 acres. Much of the blaze traveled up Lamoille Canyon, destroying the Lamoille Camp lodge in the heart of the canyon, which was built in 1939 by the Boy Scouts of America. Picnic areas and other structures were lost to the flames, but the Thomas Canyon Campground near the top of the canyon was spared. The road into the canyon is closed until further notice.



KEITH CLARK





SUSANNE REESE



RACHID DAHNOUN



JANIS KNIGHT



JEFF NOLAND



SALLY HANRAHAN





The Nevada Division of Forestry has already conducted volunteer events aimed at reseedling the mahogany and sagebrush, clean up trash revealed by the fire, and fencing work. One event had a turnout of more than 140 volunteers, a testament to how Nevadans (and even folks from Utah) feel about the canyon.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation, but it appears it may have been human caused. Mother Nature will work her magic on Lamoille Canyon as she always does, though it will take many years before the scars are covered. Already, patches of green life are showing up amid the blackened hillsides. As she continues to heal this winter, we pay homage to the beauty that is Lamoille Canyon.



SCOTT MORTIMORE



WILL BARBER



MARK VOLLMER



KEITH CLARK





# MINE

Technology developed in the early days of Nevada mining required innovation, experimentation, and a whole lot of determination.

BY ERIC CACHINERO

In July 1849, frontiersman and prospector Abner Levi Blackburn—armed only with a bread pan and butcher knife—went sniffing for gold. Blackburn was guiding a Mormon pack train to the California gold fields, when they stopped to camp at Gold Cañon (the area that would become Dayton). His memoirs recount what would become a monumentally significant discovery:

Mill near Austin

LARRY BURTON





# MECHANICS

*"I took a bread pan and butcher knife and went out to the raveins [sic] to prospect and found gold in small quantities in three places. Went to a larger raveine whear [sic] the water run down over the bedrock a little on the side of the gulch. Dug down in the slate and found a fair prospect and kept panning [sic] for an hour or more. Went back to camp and all hands grabbed pans, knives, and kettles and started out. We scratched, scraped, and panned [sic] until nearly sundown, earning \$10."*

---

Abner's find is credited as the first documented discovery of gold in Nevada, meaning that the first mining technology in the state was a simple pan and knife. But those modest tools wouldn't remain the standard for long. Mining technology would change drastically during the next 100 years, often at a rate of speed that would render revolutionary technology obsolete shortly after its debut.



## HAND, PAN, ROCKER, SLUICE, & WASH

Perhaps the most iconic and recognizable of all mining technology is the gold pan. They have been around since the days of ancient Rome, and as Abner demonstrated, just about anything could be converted into a pan. Prospectors often used steel pans, but didn't hesitate to use whatever else they had laying around, be it bread pans or pie tins. They sometimes even fashioned them out of wood.



Rocker box

The pan was and still is the cheapest and simplest method of gold extraction and it works by using gravity to the favor of the prospector. Once a prospector found a promising placer (surface) deposit, he would load the (hopefully) gold-bearing dirt into a pan, mix the dirt with water (in areas where water was available), and gently agitate the mixture by shaking the pan back and forth, before intentionally spilling off the top layers of useless dirt. The motion causes the gold—which is 19 times heavier than water and around six times heavier than most other streambed materials—to migrate to the bottom of the pan, while the lighter rocks rest on top before being discarded. The process is repeated until the prospector is left with a highly concentrated pan that usually consists of heavy black magnetite sand and gold.

But gold pans used alone were slow. Miners would often use a rocker box or sluice to concentrate gold on a larger scale after they used a pan to find a suitable prospect area. A rocker box consisted of a high-sided wooden box, with a screen on the top and open on one end, that was placed on rockers (like those found on a rocking chair). Material was loaded into the top with water, then rocked side to side to filter out larger stones and waste material. Gold and other heavy particles would exit through the open hole in the box, and were trapped

in carpet (called miner's moss). The heavily concentrated material could then be panned to extract the gold.

Sluices worked in a similar way, using gravity and water to trap gold. Sluices consist of a wooden frame and a series of drop-offs (think of an extremely narrow hallway consisting of spaced-out declivous stairs). Water is steadily fed into the mouth of the sluice, before running down the series of stairs. Material is fed at the top of the stairs, where it begins to wash down. Lighter waste material is simply washed down the stairs and onto the ground, whereas the heavy gold is trapped behind each stair (riffle) because of the eddy (swirling, reverse circular current) and lower water speed formed behind each one. Sluice boxes are easy to use; however, they're only about 40-percent efficient and need a constant water supply.

Another method common in early Nevada placer mining was dry washing. Dry washing involved placing material on a riffle board, then using a bellows to blow air over the board. Gold would become caught in the riffles, while lighter materials would be blown off onto the ground. For being such a cheap method, it was quite effective, though more labor intensive than sluicing.



Dry washer

ERIC CACHINERO





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*- Aurel Baker, Wilderness Athlete  
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**TRAVEL NEVADA**







3-stamp mill

## STAMP MILLS

The aforementioned methods were common in early Nevada mining and small-scale operations, but once production ramped up, so did the technology to process it. Unlike placer mining that usually involves finding loose gold on the surface, lode mining involved digging deep for rich veins that were often tightly interwoven and bonded with hard rocks. This created a problem that was quickly solved by the introduction of heavy

machinery into the mining process. What was the best way to break up tons and tons of hard rocks? Smash (stamp) the ever-living daylights out of them with giant reciprocating metal stamps, of course.

Queue the stamp mill's introduction into the Wild West. The first stamp mills began popping up in the eastern states in the early 19th century, and would make their way west, becoming a common method of ore processing well into the 20th century. The stamp mill was widely used in large gold and silver mining camps and remote claims alike, because of its reputation as an effective and relatively portable device. In fact, early advertisements for the machines boasted that all of the necessary parts could be hauled in by mule and assembled at the camps using simple hand tools.

A stamp mill worked using gravity to pulverize rock. The mill consisted of a wooden frame that held a certain number of heavy steel or cast-iron stamps in a vertical position. Ore was fed into the machine via an ore chute. The stamps were raised up and allowed to drop using rotating cams on a horizontal rotating shaft, much like modern car engines use today. A belt—turned using either water, steam, electricity, or internal combustion engine—was used to rotate a large wooden wheel, which turned the cam shaft, raising and dropping the stamps onto the ore, crushing it into finer pieces that could be more easily processed. The process was fast and incredibly noisy.

Stamp mills were often referred to by the number of stamps they had. Many small, remote operations had stamp mills with only three stamps, while some were much larger. Berlin has a remarkably intact 30-stamp mill, while the ghost town of Blair once boasted an impressive 100-stamp mill that in 1907 was the largest such facility in the state.

### STAMP MILL DEMONSTRATION

Check out our YouTube channel for a video of an operating stamp mill in action.

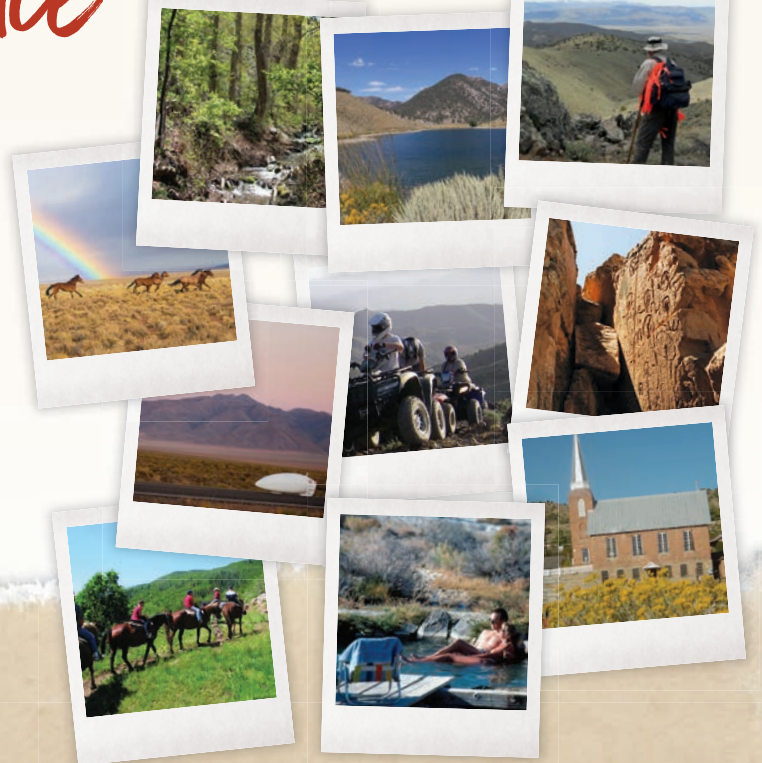


5-stamp mill at Tunnel Camp ghost town



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A WORLD WITHIN.  
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## MERCURY, CHLORINE, & SAGEBRUSH TEA

The discovery of The Comstock Lode in 1859 and subsequent boom would forever change the way people mined in Nevada, necessitating new technologies and methods of metal extraction. Unlike gold, which appears in flake and nugget form, the silver of The Comstock Lode ranged from a “bluish putty” to bluish-gray quartz, looking so foreign that even the preliminary prospectors didn’t immediately realize that it was silver.

While panning and sluicing can concentrate gold flakes, how did a prospector concentrate microscopic silver? By heating and evaporating mercury, more commonly referred to in those days as quicksilver. The 1890 newspaper “Alta California” estimated that there were more than 20.5 million pounds of mercury used on The Comstock alone, extracting 8 million ounces of gold and 192 million ounces of silver.

We now know that the solution to this problem wasn’t the safest or most eco-friendly (much of that mercury ended up in the environment around Virginia City). So much mercury was used, in fact, that 15 million pounds of it alone ended up being spilled into the Carson River drainage, according to the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology. This spillage resulted in mercury levels 26 times higher than federal standard by 1992 numbers.

Creating gold and silver amalgam (alloy of mercury and another metal) involved mixing the pulverized ore from stamp mills with water, mercury, and salt in heated tubs. The mercury would attract and hold onto particles of silver and gold before it was isolated from waste rocks, heated, and evaporated, leaving only pure silver and gold behind.

There were myriad similar methods and variations used for gold and silver extraction during this time, including the use of chlorine (Ophir Mill in Washoe Valley was known for using this process). In the early days, mill men processing the ore resorted to sometimes almost superstitious experimentation, tossing often-bizarre additives into the mix, such as cedar bark, sagebrush tea, and common trash, hoping to unveil a secret process to isolate the valuable metals.

## CYANIDE

It wasn’t long, though, until another method of gold and silver extraction would render mercury amalgamation obsolete. Developed in the late 1880s, the MacArthur-Forrest cyanide process exposed Comstock ore to cyanide, converting the metals to a water-soluble mixture. The method was simpler and retained more precious metals than the mercury process.

Cyanide mills were employed heavily on The Comstock toward the end of the 19th century. In these mills, crushed



Donovan Mill cyanide tanks



Sutro Tunnel

ERIC CACHINERO

ore was suspended in a cyanide solution in large tanks or vats. The solution leached the gold from the ore, allowing miners to efficiently and effectively pull metals from large amounts of material in a relatively quick manner.

Though the methods of application have changed, mixing gold with a cyanide solution is still the most commonly used leaching process to this day, and is employed on an enormous scale at modern gold and silver mines in Nevada.



## SCALDING WATER, AIR, DYNAMITE, & DRILLS

Once all of the surface ore was scooped up on The Comstock, miners began to dig, and with that action again came a host of new challenges. Excavating solid earth and rock isn't easy. In fact, it's extremely laborious. It required delicate planning, support systems, hoisting mechanisms, proper ventilation, and drainage. Another challenge in The Comstock mines was the extreme temperatures. At several thousand feet below the surface, air temperatures climbed sometimes to more than 120 degrees, while scalding water—in the 150-170 degree range—penetrated the mines and could boil a man to death instantly if he was unlucky enough to come in contact.

To take care of the hot air problem, vents were dug and ice-cooled air was pumped into the mines, allowing miners to work for more than several minutes at a time. To take care of the water problem, bucket bailers were brought in to pump the water out, before being replaced by superior hydraulic- and steam-powered pumps. More ingenious

methods to remove the water from The Comstock mines were also tried. Engineer and philanthropist Adolf Sutro drilled an approximately 6-mile-long horizontal tunnel from Dayton to underneath The Comstock mines to drain the water from the bottom. The plan failed, however, because by the time Sutro's tunnel reached The Comstock Mines, they had already dug deeper than his tunnel.

In early Comstock mining, simple hand drills and black powder were used to simultaneously dig deeper and separate valuable ore from the surrounding rock. Miners would drill holes into the rocks by hand using a drill bit and a hammer, pack the hole full of explosive, light the fuse, and move away before the blast. Later methods employed the much more efficient pneumatic rock drill to create the drill holes. In 1867, Alfred Nobel (creator of the Nobel Prizes) invented and patented dynamite, which proved to be a much more effective blasting agent than black powder and quickly became the standard explosive for mining.



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## HEAD FRAMES, CAGES, & ORE BUCKETS

Once miners had blasted tons of ore into smaller pieces, they needed a way to remove it from the mine's vertical shafts. Miners would load (muck) ore into large metal buckets that also acted as a way to transport both equipment and miners. Larger mines sometime used mine cages, that could hold more weight and resources.

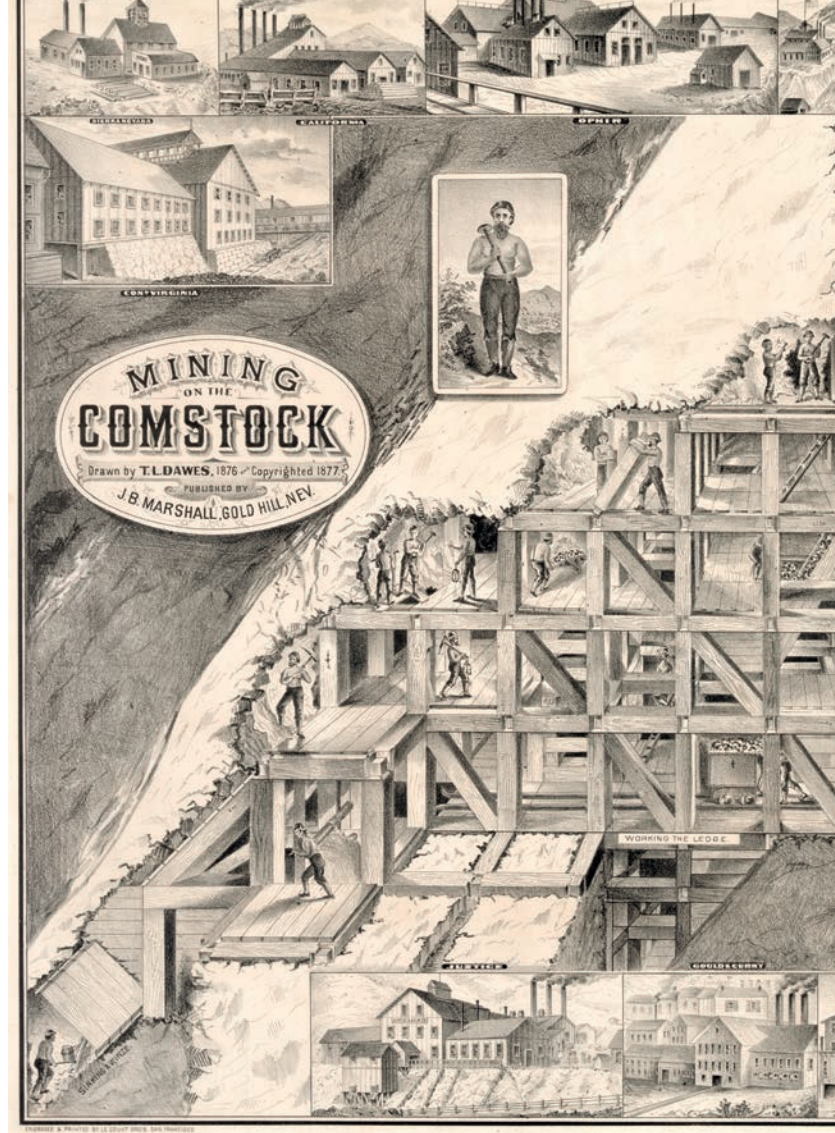
Head frames were used for both delivering men and heavy equipment into the jobsites, as well as hauling rocks out. Head frames were often tall, wooden structural frames at the top of mineshafts that used a cable system to lower and raise weight. The mechanical hoist—housed appropriately in the hoist house—rotated to pull or release a cable, which was wrapped around a wheel at the top of the head frame. The cable was attached at the other end to an

ore bucket or mine cage, which held equipment being lowered and raised in the shaft.

Early Comstock mines used hemp ropes to hoist, which became deadly as the mines got deeper. Often, hemp ropes would break when loaded with excessive weight, sending miners plummeting to their deaths at the bottom of deep mineshafts. Later, iron chains were used in place of hemp rope, followed by twisted wire rope that proved much safer (these wire ropes would also be used on San Francisco's famous cable cars). In addition, mine cages were equipped with spring-loaded rods and teeth that would dig into the sides of the mine and stop a falling mine cage if a cable snapped.

Some mines had horizontal shafts, in which case removing ore carts was often easier and safer than raising and lowering them in deep

mineshafts. Ore carts were filled with material, then either pulled by donkeys or mules, or were simply pushed by men. The combustion engine would later be used to take the burden off men and animals.



Headframe at Tonopah Historic Mining Park

PHOTOS: ERIC CACHINERO





## SQUARE-SET TIMBERING

When rock was removed from underground mining, regular mine timbers could not support the caverns left behind, and the mines were in danger of collapse. A German-born engineer named Philip Deidesheimer was tasked with creating a new system specifically for The Comstock mines, and his response was the square-set system. He created a series of interlocking timbers that could be used to create support in almost any shape of cavern.



## MINERS CODE OF BELL SIGNALS

Miners had a system of signals when raising or lowering buckets and cages up and down mine shafts. This was the job of the hoister, and because there were no phones and shouting didn't carry over loud equipment, he would use a series of bell rings to communicate with the miners below the surface. Miners today still use signal codes.

According to Nevada Administrative code, the current code of bell signals for underground mines is as follows:

<b>CODE</b>	<b>BELL(S)</b>
Stop	1
Lower Conveyance	2
Raise Conveyance	3
Hoist Persons	3-1
Lower Persons	3-2
Hoist slowly with caution	3-3-1
Lower slowly with caution	3-3-2
Hoist muck or materials only	1-2-1
Release conveyance	2-1-2
Repeat	2-2-2

## TRIED & TRUE TECH

If a Comstock prospector were to somehow time travel to a modern Nevada gold and silver mine, he would undoubtedly be confused. But in some ways, he may recognize the resemblance modern methods and equipment have to the mining of yesteryear. Mine cages still exist; cyanide leaching still exists; dynamite is still used; and in the case of the hobby prospector, the number one tool used is still a gold pan. Modern mining is built off many of the lessons learned from old mining. But no one really uses bread pans and butcher knives anymore...they're a bit old fashioned. ▀

ANNA WHITESIDE







# TRUE GRIT

B A T T L E M O U N T A I N

**Family leads the way in this oft-embattled town.**

BY MEGG MUELLER





LARRY BURTON

A person with true grit is often defined as someone who "sticks to their goals, despite problems, setbacks, and failures." Having true grit means you are tough and determined...you have a steadfast core. In 2019, we are highlighting towns in Nevada that have that core strength. Not all towns in Nevada have huge shiny tourist draws; many exist along the highways that traverse our state but aside from getting gas or grabbing food to go, they are easily overlooked.

Nevada roads go on forever. Small towns

appear on the horizon, but are often quickly in the rearview mirror with little more than a passing thought about the town's existence. And while tourism is the state's largest industry—and the focus of this magazine—it is not why all towns in Nevada exist. This year, we honor some of those towns that defy easy description but stand tall in the desert, refusing to give into the sways of economic hardship or the passing of time. These towns bloom in the dirt, and they embody true grit. First up: Battle Mountain.



## WHY HERE?

Battle Mountain started life some 20 miles east of its current location, but it was called Argenta in 1868 when the Central Pacific Railroad Company determined it needed a stop between Winnemucca and Elko. The tracks were laid and a town sprung up around it, but in just a few months it was decided the town's location would be better suited closer to the more robust Battle Mountain Mining District. So the town of Argenta, tracks and all, was dismantled and relocated. Most of the people followed, and a new name was chosen: Battle Mountain.

The official naming of the town was never recorded, unfortunately, and while the mining district seems the obvious origin, many stories exist about battles that occurred between the white settlers and the Paiute and Shoshone Indians that had long been in the area. The historical marker from the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office even notes a nebulous, alleged battle in 1850 between California emigrants and Native Americans as the origin of the town's name, but according to Dana R. Bennett, president

of the Nevada Mining Association and author of "All Roads Lead to Battle Mountain," the number of stories about battles and the lack of documentation leaves the reason behind the town's name a mystery.

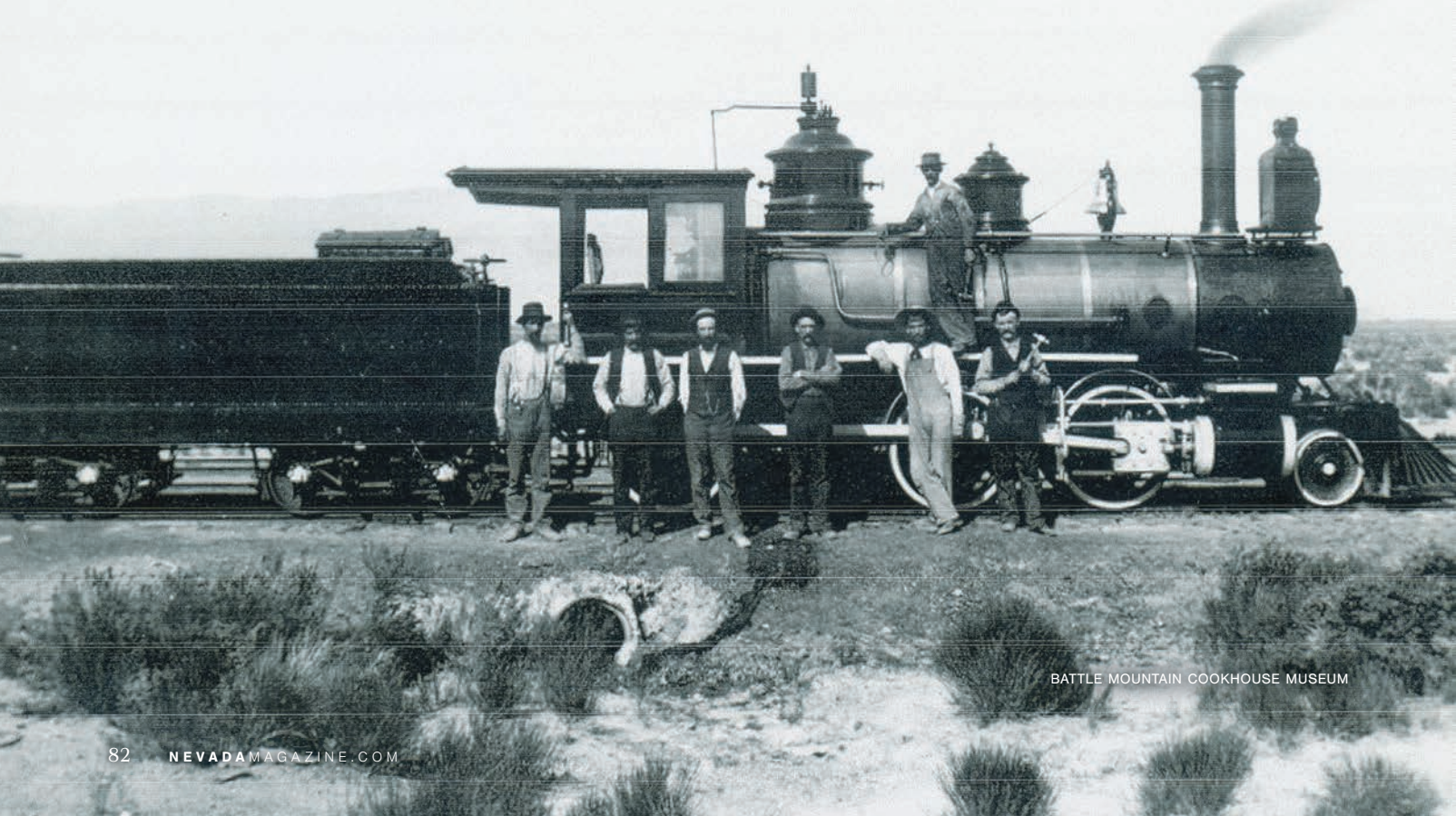
As Dana's book notes, the name, regardless of origin, is "more evocative of the continuing complicated relationship among the people who lived in and traveled through the Humboldt River Valley than of a specific conflict with recognized combatants."

The narrow-gauge Nevada Central Railroad began chugging through the Reese Rive Valley in 1880.



Argenta townsite

LARRY BURTON



BATTLE MOUNTAIN COOKHOUSE MUSEUM





Front Street, circa 1938

BATTLE MOUNTAIN COOKHOUSE MUSEUM



Front Street, 2018

MEGG MUELLER

The history of Battle Mountain—and Dana's book—can be found at the Battle Mountain Cookhouse Museum, which opened in its current location in 2012. The restored 1920s cookhouse is the heart of the town's cultural history, from its native people to the mines and ranches, but also some of the families that have built Battle Mountain from the ground up.

Battle Mountain has ridden the tide of mining's fortunes, and its residents are familiar with the roller coaster nature of the boom-and-bust cycle. But while outsiders may wonder what keeps the town ticking during the bust years when its population dwindles, businesses close, and travelers rarely stop, the people who call Battle Mountain home know the answer—it's them.



The Battle Mountain Cookhouse Museum

LARRY BURTON



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Research Library 12 pm - 4 pm  
Closed Jan. 1st, New Years Day





Auguste Lemaire's Store, 1880

BATTLE MOUNTAIN COOKHOUSE MUSEUM

## DEEP ROOTS

This year, Battle Mountain celebrates its 150th anniversary. For Lori Price, the celebration is doubly momentous. Her family has been in Battle Mountain since her great-great grandfather Auguste Lemaire arrived in 1876, and as director of the Cookhouse Museum—a cultural treasure with big expansion plans for the sesquicentennial—she knows there's reason to celebrate. The Lemaire family have been and are business owners and ranchers, and witnessed the town's prosperity when it was a railroad hub for the mines and ranches in the area. They've also witnessed falling ore prices, drought, recession, and financial hardships seriously impact their hometown. But as Lori notes, Battle Mountain isn't a town to bend to the fickle hand of fate.

"We were the railroad hub and when the mining towns like Lewis and Hilltop ended, it was because there was nothing else," she explains. "We are still here because of the railroad, but ranching and farming sustain us."

The land around Battle Mountain is dotted with ranches, most of which have been in the valley for decades if not longer. Paula Tomera is the executive director of the Lander County Convention and Visitors Authority, and her family has lived in Battle Mountain since the 1980s.

"My husband's family is ranchers, and when mining hit hard times, our life stayed steady," Paula says.

She explains how, at one point, the largest bands of sheep and cattle in the U.S.—about 10,000—grazed around Battle Mountain. Her family represents five generations of ranchers, still going strong.

## DIGGING DEEPER

Mining is also strong in Battle Mountain, once again. The 1880s revealed substantial deposits of copper, silver, gold, turquoise, and barite in the area. Many mining towns played out their often-short-lived lives, but Battle Mountain survived, allowing mining companies today such as Newmont Mining Corp.—which operates the Phoenix Mine 11 miles south of town—to attract employees to the remote location in Nevada and have a place to call home.

And it's working. Battle Mountain now has a little more than 4,000 residents, which is about 26 percent more people than it did in 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Many of those new folks are working for the mines, and it's lucrative work: according to the U.S. Census, the estimated median income in Battle Mountain in 2016 was almost \$88,000; in 2000 it was less than half that.

"Anyone that wants a job, has a job," Paula says. "The mines are desperately looking for tradesmen."

According to Paula, the mines are very supportive of the town, donating to the schools, employee legacy funds,



The Phoenix Mine

MEGG MUELLER

senior programs, and high school scholarships that sends graduates to school to learn about mining, gives them a job in the summer along with housing, and then hires them for work at the mine. It's a symbiotic relationship for the town and mines, and the county. Lander County receives taxes from the mines, which is critical to small town survival. In 2001, for instance, Lander County received about \$1 million in mining taxes, according to the Nevada Department of Taxation. The numbers in subsequent years show the wax-and-wane effect of mining in rural Nevada: 2009, \$6.8 million; 2011, \$60.9 million; and in 2014, \$20.2 million.

Newmont, according to Paula, has a 50-year mine life, so concerns about its viability aren't too pressing today. The economy is booming and the town's infrastructure is

shoring up; Battle Mountain General Hospital—a critical access hospital—has been growing and making capital improvements with donations from Newmont, according to Ann Miles, a physician's assistant at the hospital.

"We've had some trouble finding providers," Ann admits. "But we have two new ones that just joined, and we also have great emergency medical services there."

Along with addressing vital resources for the town, the focus for many, including the Lander County Economic Development Authority, is on bringing new businesses to town. As the economy continues to be strong, those who've been here know how that tale can end.

"We're always looking at how to diversify the economy," Paula says.

# Winnemucca, NV

*There's More Than Meets the Eye...*

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## THE NEED FOR SPEED

In the late '90s and early '00s, Battle Mountain was experiencing a rough patch, it could be said. Gold prices were dropping, development in town was pretty much at a standstill, and the national press didn't have great things to say about the town. Battle Mountain's reputation was pretty much flattened. But flat isn't always bad.

A growing niche hobby—recumbent bike speed racing—was looking for a flat, straight road that could take the sport to its ultimate goal of the highest speeds for human-powered bicycle competitions. They found that road on State Route 305, just south of town. The perfect altitude coupled with an amazingly straight, flat section of highway was all cyclists needed to hold the first World Human Powered Speed Challenge in 2000. It was called the world's fastest bicycle challenge that first year, and for the past 19 years it has grown to an international event bursting at the seams.

"We're packed right now," Paula says. "We can't have more racers come, because we can only close the road 20 minutes at a time."

This year, racers from 11 countries came to seek the title of world's fastest. Paula says there were about 180 participants, plus their teams, and Battle Mountain's approximately 270 rooms and 190 RV spaces were booked solid. Attendees were even staying in Winnemucca and Elko.



LARRY BURTON

This section of S.R. 305 does not have any rumble strips to hinder the racers.

World Human Powered Speed Challenge



Rooms filled to capacity is a great problem to have, but as Paula notes, there's no way to grow the event, as is. She and others in town have been working on that problem and are close to a solution that will allow more racers to come, and equally as important, make the event more spectator friendly. The plan—still under wraps, pending further agreements and financial considerations—will also allow Battle Mountain to expand into other special events.





CAROL JACKSON

## PLACES WE LOVE IN BATTLE MOUNTAIN

### VISIT

#### THE COOKHOUSE MUSEUM

905 Burns St.  
Battle Mountain, NV 89820  
[cookhousemuseum.org](http://cookhousemuseum.org), 775-635-8548

### STAY

#### BIG CHIEF MOTEL

434 W. Front St.  
Battle Mountain, NV 89820  
[bigchiefmotelbmnv.com](http://bigchiefmotelbmnv.com), 775-635-2416

### EAT

#### OWL CLUB CASINO & RESTAURANT

72 E. Front St.  
Battle Mountain, NV 89820  
[facebook.com/owlclubcasinoandrestaurant](https://facebook.com/owlclubcasinoandrestaurant),  
775-635-2444

### ATTEND

#### WORLD HUMAN POWERED SPEED CHALLENGE

Sept. 8-14  
[ihpva.org/whpsc](http://ihpva.org/whpsc), 707-443-8261

#### ANNUAL CHUKAR TOURNAMENT & FEED

Nov. 1-2  
[landercountytourism.com/chukar-tournament](http://landercountytourism.com/chukar-tournament),  
775-635-1112

## LIFE IS GOOD

Special events are important to the community, as are the visitors who come for the myriad outdoor recreational opportunities that compliment the typically spectacular Nevada landscape. For residents, the quality of life is what keeps them in town.

"People have said there's nothing for kids to do here," Lori says. "Well I disagree. We're a small town, but here, kids have a well-rounded opportunity to be involved in everything they want to do."

Ken Beaton taught high school in Battle Mountain from 1972-1975. His time in town may have been brief, but his memories remain.

"It was definitely the smallest town I ever lived in," he says. "But I knew I was responsible for my own entertainment, and we would create things to do. The teachers were very involved with the high school teams. When we'd play Eureka—140 miles one way—we'd attend the games. It was a fun experience, and I missed the kids when I left."

Paula echoes Ken's thoughts when people ask what is there to do in Battle Mountain.

"A few years ago, the town slogan was 'Are you tough enough?' I wasn't sure that was good, but it's true," she says. "Once you're here, if you like the outdoors and you like to entertain yourself, this is the best place in the world to do it."

"We do travel a lot," Lori says about living in a small, rural town. "But it's a great place to come home to." ♥



## STATE MAP

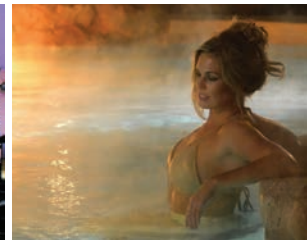


## NEVADA

### State Facts

- Capital: Carson City
- Area: 110,577 square miles
- Highest Point: Boundary Peak (13,147 feet)
- Nicknames: Silver State, Sagebrush State, Battle Born State
- State Song: "Home Means Nevada"





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