

Benny Binion: The Cowboy of Glitter Gulch
Susie Raper: The Lady Was a Rustler
Fred Dressler: Thinking Man's Cattleman

NEVADA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAL WEST SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1981 \$1.50

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Nevada is a glorious and terrible place. From the ground, David Muench shows us what it really is. From the air, the U.S. Air Force generals assure each other that the enormous expanse of nothing called Nevada is the perfect site for a missile base.

When the feds see this special cowboy issue and Muench's 1982 full-color scenic calendar, we believe they'll know they were wrong.

All of a sudden, Nevada and the western range seem to be the places to be. Great photographers, Washington bureaucrats and members of the media are knocking down the sagebrush with their rent-a-racers, attempting to catch a glimpse of the real West, to record it on film, to make movies and commercials, to claim it for "defense reasons," and to get energized before

returning to the cities and people who can't tell a Gloria Vanderbilt cowboy from a Tuscarora buckaroo.

Richard Avedon, one of the world's great photographers, has been criss-crossing the sun belt with a trio of assistants and a truckload of gear for several months photographing people for his next book, "Faces of the West." The incredible John McPhee came west to write "Basin & Range," which was excerpted in our last issue. Famous western photographers like Ansel Adams and David Muench refuse to leave.

This issue is dedicated to real cowhands. To Harry Webb whose "Old Spook" starting on page 40 tells a wonderful and true tale of a wild horse; to Marvel, Hage, Dressler, Arculerius and Baird Davies; to all the men and women who live and work on the Nevada range.

Inside you'll find cowboys, ranchers, rustlers and sheepherders; a mix of impressions by a mix of writers and photographers who all see the same thing. And they see it well.

One of our favorite photographers, Linda Dufurrena, lives on a ranch. Her husband Buster, their three sons and

four sheepherders run a bunch of cattle and about 3,000 sheep in northern Nevada. The work is constant and it's tough.

"My photography goes to hell in spring because of lambing," she says. "I have no time at all because I take care of the orphans, the lepies, and have to mix powdered milk and feed 160 lambs three times a day for two or three months."

Dufurrena became a photographer in 1975 for her own survival, covering high school rodeo. "I got bored sitting watching. Golly, those things go from seven in the morning until dark. My three sons competed in the timed events, roping and bull dogging, and some of the cousins were in it too." So she started taking pictures of the events, printing at night in her truck or motel room and selling the photos the next day to cover expenses.

The cover shot is Linda's and the model is a real buckaroo, her son Tim. "I've given up photographing rodeo now," she says. "What I'm really trying to get are portraits of working people." As you can see on page 15, Dufurrena does it well.

Craig Aurness, another self-taught photographer who now owns a stock photo agency called West Light, started shooting under the guidance of an old-time photographer in Los Angeles. After a year he was working for *Sunset Magazine*. Several years later he worked his way into shooting for *National Geographic*. To date he's had four articles published in that prestigious magazine with a Mono Lake feature scheduled for this fall. Aurness particularly likes photographing cowboys and two of his excellent portraits can be found on page 7.

Tony Gleaton, a former fashion and modern dance photographer and New York/San Francisco/Los Angeles wanderer, discovered Nevada because of a Kenny Rogers television special. Right after the cowboy show Gleaton bought some new equipment, bulk-loaded some black and white film and hopped a bus to Reno, which was as far as he could afford. He then hitchhiked to northeastern Nevada to take pictures of people like the ones he saw on the TV special.

"Cowboys have changed my life," he said when he called our office from a truckstop in Arizona last summer. "Goddamn, I'm in Flagstaff en route from Wells, Nevada, back home. I never have any money, everything's in

(Continued on page 13)

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If I were you, I'd build a high fence around Nevada that even the goddammed government couldn't breach. But if you're looking for retirees, send the literature.

Herman Quick
Los Angeles, CA.

Great article by Jeanes on New Jersey types. Perhaps the totally obscure Dr. Loomis should team up with the Northern California speech therapist who offers sessions on how to get rid of the New Jersey/New York accents. The article brought howls of laughter to all my friends and has won some new readers for Nevada Magazine, tho I honestly haven't had the guts to show it to one of my lady friends who's from New Jersey. Maybe I'll don my Nevada Magazine suspenders and shove it under her ample snoz since the suspenders have amazing powers to make one braver, and a little crazy!

Dick Shayne
Las Vegas, NV.

Your magazine gets better and better. "Invasion of the Booty Snatchers" is hilarious.

Anne Atkinson
Reno, NV.

As a new resident of your state I am most impressed with your magazine. For informative, lively writing it far exceeds the standards of the state magazine of my previous home, Arizona.

Rick Stetter
Reno, NV.

The last issue of "Nevada" is a pee-warmer. I sure got a kick out of it from cover to cover—especially the letters.

Harry Webb
Tujunga, CA.

It's against my better judgment but I'm renewing one more year. We moved from Nevada (Las Vegas) 13 months ago and each new issue's arrival only brings another bout of homesickness.

Bicki Stewart
Champaign, IL.

You are doing a fine job. I just wish your magazine came every month. I read it from cover to cover, ads and all.

Beulah Williams
Gaston, OR.

DON'T CHIP OFF THE OLD ROCK

I enjoyed the photos and story on Lehman Caves in the July/August issue but didn't enjoy noticing that most of the stalactites pictured on the upper part of page 25 have been broken off.

I hope that those in charge of the national monument are not allowing this vandalism to continue. It would be a shame to think that stalactites that took thousands of years to form were becoming tourists' souvenirs.

Fred Hinners
Reno, NV.

Hinners, most broken stalactites are the result of natural breaks over the centuries and of souvenir hunters before Lehman Caves became a national monument in the 1920s, according to Chief Interpreter Ed Wood. "Before then the rule was if you could break it, you could take it." Wood says rangers are ever-vigilant, that two scavengers were cited in 1980 but no breaks or violators were spotted this summer. Stalactite snatchers can face a \$500 fine and six months in the hoosegow.—Ed.

We enjoy Harry Webb's "Horse Sense and Nonsense," his dry wit, his homey way of presenting the everyday happenings, always with a humorous twist. Your last edition featuring Virginia City certainly deserves top rating. If making those early days live again is the aim of your magazine, you have certainly succeeded.

Robert & Helen Walker
Sunland, CA.

Your articles were different than I expected and some of the pictures are simply lewd! Please cancel my subscription now and I should get my money back.

Nathan Holdeman
Louisville, GA.

THE GAMBLING NATURE

Personally I didn't care one bit about the March/April 1981 issue on Gaming so I just put it aside and started looking forward to the May/June issue; a waiting that was well rewarded. Now I feel that the latest issue, July/August, is the finest I've received since the magazine's been coming my way. Thank You for helping me to enjoy "our" state while I have to continue to be surrounded by these completely flat expanses of Texas.

Lyndon Crane Allen
Gunter, TX.

Not being of a gambling nature, when the "Gambling Special" arrived (aside from laughing over the array of odd faces on the cover) I figured there was nothing of interest for me in this issue.

But when calls and letters came from friends telling me what a whale of a "Nevada" this particular issue was, I sat up and took notice. Wow!

After reading this remarkable tome from cover to cover I can think of no more fitting

(Continued on page 13)

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SAGEBRUSH COWBOYS



When a fellow's young, he don't give much thought to the future. There's always plenty of good horses to ride, cows to chase, and those old hills just seem to beg you to ride over the top and see what the other side has to offer. There's a whole, wide world to ride in, north in the summer, south in the winter. No trail is ever too rough, no bronc too wringy.

Early some fall morning you wake up to find about four inches of heavy, wet snow lying on your bed tarp. If you got your feet wet yesterday, it's pure



CRAIG AURNES

hell pulling those cold, damp boots on. A cup of hot coffee is a little help in warming up, but the worst is yet to come. No self-respecting cow pony will let you put a frozen blanket on his back, set a heavy saddle on it and have a stiff cinch pulled up snug on his belly, without showing fight.

When your joints are cold and stiff, and an old pony is doing his double best to unload you, a cowboy don't feel none too happy. Top this off with the fact that a cowboy's wage scale ain't the highest in the world. A top hand in any

TONY GLEATON



CRAIG AURNES



country makes a fair salary but the average cowboy gets room and board and not a whole lot more.

Even the run-of-the-mill cowboy still has to be able to shoe horses, rope the animals that need doctoring, ride a few colts, fix fence, repair windmills, pipelines and water tanks, keep his cattle on good grass, put out salt and pack feed in the winter. Then maybe if he's lucky he'll get a couple of days off around the first of the month.

Even so, there's a certain amount of glamour that clings to a cowboy because of the things he's done, the places he's been.

When you're old you think back to a sunrise on the breaks of the Missouri,

LINDA DUFURRENA



DRAWING BY CRAIG SHEPPARD





SHARON RHODES



LINDA DUFURRENA



the mist rising up from the cottonwoods, the birds starting their song and a timid little doe gazing at you with big eyes. You remember a chilly Canadian prairie with riders holding a herd of cattle, almost too many to see across, with the wind spitting snow while the beef is cut away from the cows and calves. The sullen thunder of the Rio Colorado, booming between its mile-high canyon walls, the hidden parks of lush green grass, and wild flowers peeking through.

You remember the sting of the thorns and branches when you forced a way through the mesquite to overtake and rope that old steer before he



LINDA DUFURRENA

climbed the sandy banks of the San Pedro River; the way the coffee and beans tasted around a camp fire in Sonora; watching a little burro calmly teach a big, wild bull to lead; and the cattle in Sinoloja that stood on their hind legs to reach the bark and tender branches of the mesquite trees.

And you remember other things like riding the deep canyon of the Owyhee River, the bands of wild horses, the sagebrush flats and the rugged mountains of Nevada. And when you look back over all the years, remembering the horses, cattle, girls and the men you rode with, you kinda know the good outweighed the bad.—Wally Basye



THE LEGEND

If the American cowboy is hard to find, you can blame Hollywood or Zane Grey. But he's there somewhere, as real as the sweatstains on his battered old John B.

By Phillip Finch

He's a cultural icon. He's a character from our national mythology. His image is known around the world; everybody recognizes the American cowboy.

Or at least a facsimile of him.

The problem is that the cowboy is also a lone figure in a crazy-house of mirrors. The place is full of cowboy distortions and cowboy magnifications and cowboy replicas that only accidentally resemble the real thing.

Blame it on Hollywood and "Rawhide," on Zane Grey, Waylon Jennings, John Wayne, Louis L'Amour and every other person or institution that has interpreted the cowboy reality. That's the essence of art, of course. Nothing wrong with it, except that the millions of mirror images obscure the real cowboy they're supposed to reflect.

But he's in there, somewhere.

Finding him means digging into history, beyond the first TV cowboy, beyond Saturday matinee serials, beyond even Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows and the dime novels of Ned Buntline.

Back to about 1850, in Texas, where some pioneers seek fortune—or at least subsistence—by catching a few of the wild Longhorn cattle and bringing them to markets in the East. The Longhorns are wary and stubborn, the arroyos deep, the thickets dense, the markets distant.

Somehow, though, a few men succeed. They watch Mexican vaqueros, adapt some of their customs and techniques, invent others, anything to make their difficult task a little easier. This job of handling wild cattle on an open range is a new one for Americans. A name must be found for the men who do the job. Cowpunchers, they're

called. Cattle wranglers. Cow buckers. Buckaroos.

And finally, cowboys. They're defined not by their thoughts or attitudes, but by the job they do. It is a job that saps their strength, taxes their will, bruises and breaks their bodies.

It's a job that not everybody is able, or crazy enough, to do. The men drawn to it put up with long hours in the saddle, under hot sun and cold rain. They accept low wages, or none at all. They do not complain of aching muscles and bone-weariness. They learn to cope with loneliness.

The job, in short, attracts the kind of man who prefers hard work outdoors to comfort in a house, who enjoys solitude, who takes pride in exhaustion at the end of a day. By a simple and elegant process of natural selection, the job creates a new breed with traits and characteristics unto itself.

Here myth and reality converge. Waylon sings of the awkward cowboy, uncertain around women; the truth is that life on the range taught nothing of females or the social arts. The Duke's cowboy is stubbornly fair but a terror when he is wronged; with formal law sometimes hundreds of miles away,

“

The general manager doesn't know a thing about cows, but the cow boss does. He always sticks up for the old cowboy and sees that he gets his job back.

”



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early cowboys developed a code of behavior and dealt harshly with those who spurned it.

The mistake is in treating the cowboy as a historical abstract. He's still around, still doing a hard job that nobody else will do, and he is as real as the sweatstains on a battered old John B.

Like the old cowboy who stands at the stoplight in Gardnerville once every few weeks, looking for a ride. He's got a carton of Beech-Nut chew under his arm, and one thundering hangover under his hat.

He's easy to spot. He looks like a cowboy ought to look. Scuffed boots with sharp toes, slim-fit jeans that ride low on his waist, mother-of-pearl buttons on his shirt, a dirty felt hat with a wide brim.

Travolta, of course, proved that Justins and a Stetson do not a cowboy make. But the old cowboy's face is as right as his clothes. His skin is tough brown beef jerky and around his eyes is a suggestion of infinite weariness. You can't buy a face like that off the rack.

Once a month during spring and summer, he drives the company Jeep down from the line camp in the mountains, down into town to spend his paycheck and generally to do things that he can only think about up there in the green meadows. If the ranch's general manager catches him drunk with the company Jeep, he fires the old cowboy and takes away the keys. Then the old cowboy has to find somebody with a four-wheel drive to take him back up to work at the line camp. Somehow he always manages.

The drive is 20 miles out of Gardnerville on paved roads and then

another 12 on ruts, rocks and potholes. It is slow going and there is plenty of time for the old cowboy to grouse about the general manager.

See, the general manager doesn't know a damn thing about cows or cowboys. But the cow boss does, and he knows how hard it is to find a good hand. He always stands up for the old cowboy, always sees that he gets his job back and gets the company Jeep in time to drive down for his next blowout.

Not that it matters much to the old cowboy. He can find work anywhere, he says.

He lives alone in the line shack more than half the year. When the last snow melts in the high country he moves up from the valley with his horses to ride fence and to repair the winter damage. Then the cattle company sends its stock up in trucks to feed on the high grass. The old cowboy helps to drive them to the meadows and then he is alone with the cows until the onset of winter, when the company takes the fattened cows to the valley again.

It is not a luxurious life. The line camp in the meadow has a tarpaper roof and a dirt floor. It is about the size

“The shadows that fall across his shack at night are from the highest mountain peaks. Sometimes he eats trout that he has plucked barehanded from a nearby pool.”

of a commodious jail cell, and furnished in like manner, with a single chair and a table and a metal cot on which he lays his bedroll. He is always busy, because there is always fence to be ridden, and fence to be repaired, and wandering heifers to be caught.

He lives among the tall pines. The shadows that fall across his shack in the evening are from the highest of the high mountain peaks. He cooks over a camp fire, usually canned goods that the company sends up every couple of months. Sometimes, though, he eats trout that he has plucked barehanded—he swears this is true—from a quiet

pool near the shack. The pool is full of big fat trout that never see bait or a lure, for this is private property, posted against trespassers.

The pay isn't much, he says. But he doesn't need much. He owns the three horses in the barbed wire corral beside the shack, and he owns the saddle that he cinches on their backs.

Except for the troublesome general manager, he does his work without interference. Nobody looking over his shoulder, checking a time sheet, carping at this or that.

And if the general manager gives him too much trouble, the old cowboy will just tie up his bedroll and go find work somewhere else. Arizona would be nice, he thinks. The cowboying was good in Arizona, the last time he was there.

That's the best part of being a cowboy. Job security. Absolutely, he says. He can walk into any decent ranch today and find a job, walk in and hire on. Because there is always work for a living legend. □

Phillip Finch is the author of several books including the recent Birthright, a novel set in early Virginia City, and Texas Dawn, published last spring by Seaview Books.



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LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)

description than to declare it a kaleidoscope of fun, photos and history assembled in one eye-catching volume.

Now comes the big "but." Before this mighty work was wrapped up and got put to bed my mind's eye envisions editor and staff yanking their locks out by the fistful and taking off through a bramble patch screaming like demented banshees.

Harry Webb
Tujunga, CA.

Webb, how did you know?—Ed.

Keep up the good stories and those gorgeous pictures by David Muench. Wish I could spend more time in Nevada but I figure twice a year is great.

Betty Stulgis
Olympia, WA.

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 4)

hock. I swapped a color photo for a car once and I didn't have any money for gas so I was writing IOUs at different ranches all over Nevada." Gleaton says if it wasn't for Sammy's Camera in Hollywood, Focus Photo in Los Angeles, and Jon Gilbert at Jonathan Western in Redondo Beach who help finance his cowboy habit, he couldn't have got the pictures shown on page 59 through 62.

But Gleaton's luck is changing. His cowboy prints are selling as limited editions (75 only and 16"x20") at \$240 a print; he has six murals coming up for a new hotel in Texas; and from August 28 to September 5 he has a show at the Stremmel Galleries in Reno.

"All I do is go and take pictures of how I feel about what I see. That's the only thing I do. I just take pictures and everyone's been kind enough to put up with me.

"You know people are saying to me that I don't have roots and this might sound cute in the article but it's really a bitch to live this way. I wouldn't suggest it for anyone. I get so mad by the time I get back to L.A. and swear I'll never go out again, but I'm already planning to come to Nevada next week!"

A trucker was ready to hit the road for L.A. so Gleaton yelled into the phone: "I've got to go! You know I've covered a lot of the West lately and photographed a lot of ranches, but I have too much respect for the cowboys to even think that I'll ever be a buckaroo."—Caroline J. Hadley

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The Long Trail Home



It was a time of rest and reunion for the sheepherders. The bands had been brought down from the high mountains to the valley ranch, and after the long trail drive the business of mouthing and separating the ewes was a slow and easy task.

It was a time of conversation and visiting. The soft flow of Basque filled the corrals and the bunkhouse. Although they rose at daylight and worked in the corrals until the long noonday rest, they paused often in the milling dust to lean against a fence and tip back their sweaty hats and visit. They spoke of how their bands had fared in the mountains and where the feed was good and of their dogs and the endless troubles with the burros. They spoke of the outfit and how they treated their men, and of the time the camptender



**Fall is the time when
sheepmen come down
from the mountains.**

**Photos by
Linda Dufurrena**

who brought the supplies had committed the unpardonable sin of forgetting the wine. And how they were treated was important because they were Basques and their pride was their flaming shield, and they took insult from no man.

At nightfall, when the evening meal was done, there was a campfire under the trees and the wine *chahakoa* made the circle often, and there was talk of home and their people and the melancholy songs of the Pyrenees. The time of aloneness in the mountains was passed, and it was reunion, and in a few days this too would pass and they would be wending their ways into the high country again, alone.

—Robert Laxalt,
"Sweet Promised Land,"
Harper & Row



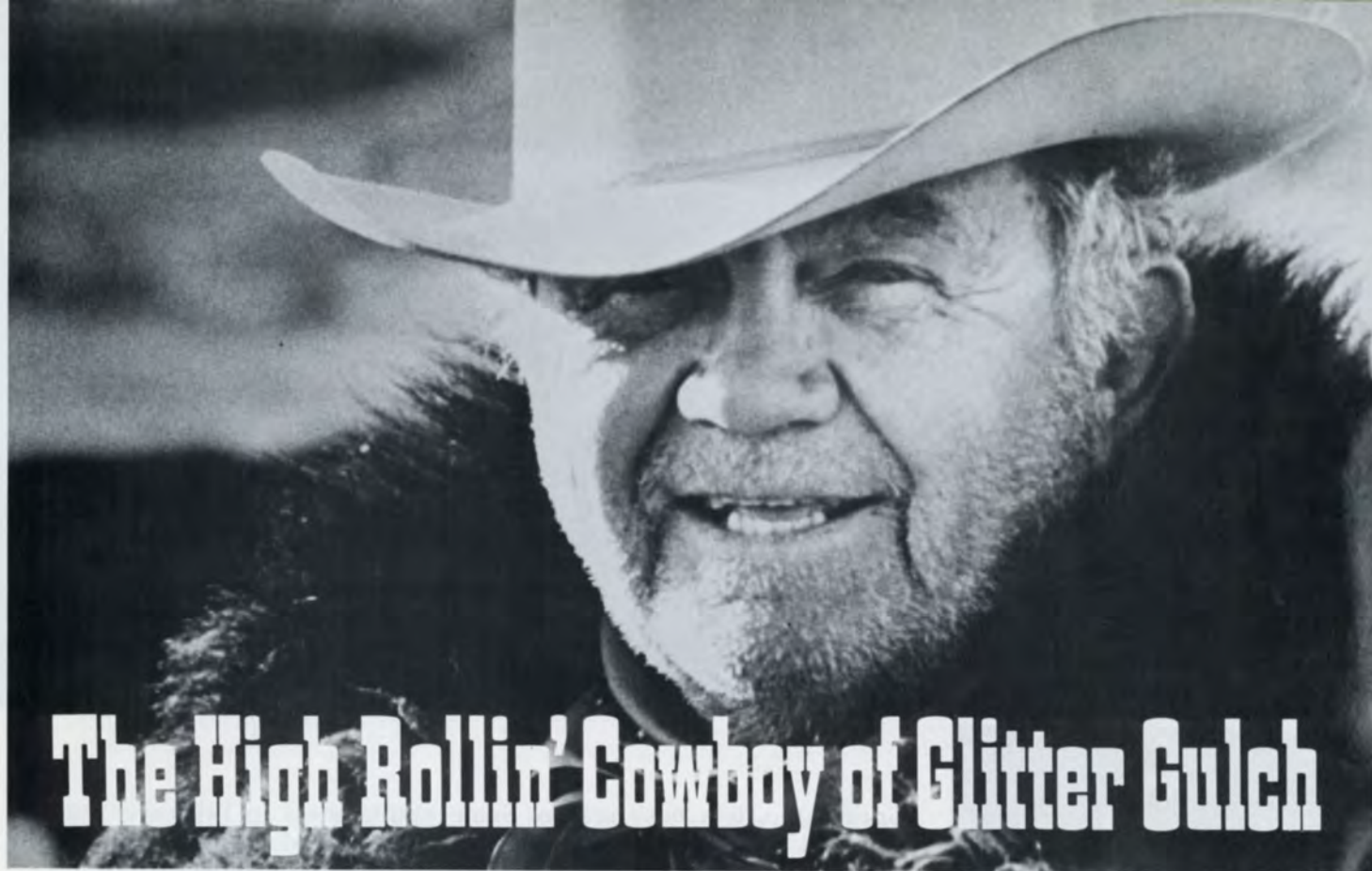
Every fall Basque herders and their sheep make the long trek down from the mountains to the desert. The bands of the Dufurrena Sheep Co., based near Denio, spend the summer in the Bilk Creek Range in Humboldt County. As the band begins its 80-mile journey to winter range near Sulphur, they gather for an early-morning drink at the edge of Bilk Creek Reservoir (above). Some weekends the regular herders in Buster Dufurrena's outfit are joined by men like Pete Salla (below), a Winnemucca plumber who enjoys the chance to get out in the hills again.





Spring, too, is a busy season. Some outfits shear in February, but to avoid the risk of sudden freezes, Dufurrena does it in May. The members of Idaho's Rodriguez Shearing Co. (far left) shear the 3,000 bucks and ewes in about four days, weather permitting. When a lamb is separated from its mother at such times, the lamb does a curious thing: it hops around the corral (left). The sheep are divided into three 1,000-sheep bands. Each group has its own brand, like the one applied by Ignacio Garijo (below) with red paint.





The High Rollin' Cowboy of Glitter Gulch

Benny Binion's casino is probably the most successful in downtown Las Vegas, but usually he'd rather be at the ranch. By A.D. Hopkins

From a table in the bay window of the restaurant, overlooking the blackjack pit of the Horseshoe Casino, Benny Binion watches. He's an old man now, in cowboy boots and western shirt with buttons of real gold coins, looking out of place in a restaurant full of the necktied movers and shakers of Las Vegas. An old man alone at the moment, seemingly idle—until you notice the eyes. Piercing, intelligent, the eyes flick from one passerby to another, sizing them up, categorizing. They are eyes as vigilant as a boss cougar's, and they do not stop moving even during serious conversation.

Binion is the founder of the Horseshoe, the most successful casino on Las Vegas' Fremont Street, but he probably would have been even better at running a gambling house in the 1870s, in some wide-open cow town. He has lived to be 76 partly by his skill with a gun, and has passed his gambling business on to sons who treat his word as law.

"Dad went into the gambling business in the first place because he wanted enough money to buy a ranch," says Benny Binion's younger son, Ted, 38, who is now casino manager. "In

1953, when he got in trouble with the Internal Revenue Service and had to pay off, he sold the Horseshoe instead of the ranch."

The Binions still have that ranch—a little Montana spread of some 160,000 acres—and they bought the Horseshoe back in 1964.

Born in Grayson County, Texas, about 60 miles north of Dallas, Benny Binion absorbed cowboying and gambling simultaneously. He recalls, "My parents and grandparents were stock traders, ranchers and so forth; my father played poker all the time. I never went to school, not even grade school, because I was sick a lot as a kid. I suppose if I had it to do over again, I would almost certainly be a gambler again, because there's nothing else an ignorant man can do."

Asked what he might have become had he been blessed with an education, Binion grins. "There's more than one kind of education, and maybe I prefer the one I've got."

By the time he was 24 he was making his living running small craps games in Dallas. Gambling was illegal but tolerated; enough raids were con-

ducted to make the business discouraging, but not enough to make it impossible.

"We used to gamble in hotel rooms, mostly," says Binion. "The crap table would have legs that folded down, and it fit into a crate that looked like a bed crate. And since hotels always have beds and things going in or out, you could take them in without being conspicuous. If you had 30 minutes' notice you were going to be raided, you could clean the place out, too."

Illegal gambling has always been a dangerous business, and particularly so in the 1920s and '30s. Benny Binion survived more than one gunfight. He has admitted to reporters that he was pardoned by Texas authorities for a 1931 murder. Another Texas murder charge against him was dropped after it was decided Benny had acted in self-defense.

For the record, says Binion, he has been to prison twice—once, briefly, for selling whiskey during Prohibition, and again in the 1950s for income tax evasion. He has been trying to get a pardon ever since.

Back in the forties, he says, gambling

was a lively scene around Dallas. "The places we had were as elaborate as you could get. They'd be in hotel rooms, or out in the country, and everybody knew about them but you had to know somebody to get in. The main game was dice. And the limit was high—I believe we got it up to \$2,000 at one time. You could go higher than the limit if you talked to me about it."

But in 1946, he says, "They changed administrations on me." And politics did what rival gamblers and gunmen could not: they forced Benny Binion to leave Dallas.

Binion drove to Las Vegas with the trunk of his new Cadillac full of money. "I don't even remember how much there was," Binion says, "but I made sure there was enough."

His elder son, Jack, now 44 and president of the Horseshoe, was only a child then. Jack remembers that when Benny made a trip back to Texas to get the family, they returned to Las Vegas with a particular suitcase that was treated with special care. "I was about 10 then, and I couldn't lift that suitcase," Jack says. "Of course it was money. My parents were afraid to leave it anywhere. I didn't know what was in it. The only one who did, other than my parents, was my older sister, who was about 14. If the hotel caught fire she was supposed to get that suitcase out."

Benny bankrolled the Las Vegas Club on Fremont Street and in 1951 opened Binion's Horseshoe in a location where casinos had failed under half a dozen names and managements. "I got in there for less than half a million dollars," he says.

In those days, the downtown Las Vegas gambler dwelt in a poolroom atmosphere of linoleum floors and green-shaded overhead lights. Binion installed the first carpet in a downtown casino.

"He also installed a betting limit of \$500 when everybody else had a \$50 limit," says Jack, "and that was what did the trick."

The high limit, says Benny, gives bettors "a lot of gamble for their money." Most gamblers hope to hit a streak of good luck and snowball a small stake into a large one. A person betting the "Pass" line at craps, which pays even money, will frequently double his bet each time he wins; winning a \$10 bet, he will bet \$20 the second time, and if he wins that, \$40 the third. But in pre-Binion Las Vegas, he would have been blocked from doubling his bet again, by the \$50 limit.



Binion's sons, Ted (left) and Jack, became gambling executives when they were in their twenties.

And even if he enjoyed a run of seven straight winning bets, he could have won only \$270.

Under Binion's \$500 limits, the same run of luck would let him win \$1,130. Gamblers understood that. "The serious gamblers have been coming here ever since," says Jack.

Today a gambler at the Horseshoe can bet \$25,000 on the red or black at roulette, \$10,000 at blackjack, or \$5,000 on the "Pass" or "Don't Pass" lines at craps, with a \$10,000 odds bet backing up the craps line bet once the point is established.

By special arrangement a gambler may wager even more. "We've never turned down a bet," says Ted Binion.

Despite the Horseshoe's reputation, Benny himself has avoided other high-rolling games such as oil and real estate. In Las Vegas, a landowner once offered Benny his favorite piece of land if Benny would just cancel his \$20,000 gambling debt and give him another \$20,000 as well. "I checked with some people and they said that piece wasn't worth nothing; it had a big wash running through it. So I said I'd rather have the money."

Caesars Palace today stands on that property.

"I never did want to be in the real estate business anyway," says Benny Binion with a grin. "Then I'd have to make appointments and keep 'em, and I've tried to live my life without doing that, so when I want to do something I can do it now."

One man who profited in a curious fashion from Binion's impulsiveness was a long-time customer from Texas whose wife had terminal cancer. "He kept getting more and more depressed so he came out here to gamble a little, because that was his way of coping with depression. That time he lost. And then he had a heart attack.

"I went to see him in the hospital and he knew he wasn't going to make it. He said the only thing he regretted was that he would have liked to have seen his old lady one more time.

"I said, 'Would you like to give it a try?' and he said, 'I haven't got much to lose, have I?' So I paid for an ambu-

(Continued on page 26)

The Biggest Bet in History

There are a dozen more elaborate casinos in Las Vegas, but it is Binion's Horseshoe that holds the world's record for the highest bet ever accepted in a casino.

In the spring of 1980, a man about 25 years of age showed up at the Horseshoe and dropped \$47,000 at the tables. Then, Jack Binion says, "He said he'd like to make arrangements to bet \$1 million at one bet, and one thing led to another, and we said he could.

"I forgot all about it, but about August, here he came." The young gambler didn't have \$1 million, but he did have \$777,000 in \$100 bills. It took a suitcase to carry them, and the gambler had another suitcase, empty, to carry away the money he hoped to win.

Ted Binion okayed the bet with little fanfare. "The guy bet the money on the 'Don't Pass' line," Jack Binion recalls. "The woman with the dice rolled a five-ace on the comeout roll, establishing six as her point. Then she rolled a five-four, and then a five-two—sevened out in three rolls, so he won." The gambler put the money he had won into the empty suitcase, and Ted Binion personally escorted him to his car.

The Binions never found out for sure, but they believe the gambler was the son of a rich oilman. And Jack says his only regret is that he didn't get down the stairs from his office fast enough to see the biggest casino bet in history, anywhere in the world.—ADH

THE SAGA OF SUSIE RAPER



The demure Mrs. Raper decided to make her home on the range—as a cattle rustler. By Terri Sprenger-Farley

Except for the strange events that followed, no one would have given her husband's accident a second thought.

Susie Raper and her husband, Thomas, had just arrived in Nevada from New Orleans with their three young sons when he was wounded during an Indian attack in Humboldt County in 1868. Everyone would have assumed the shot was just bad luck if it hadn't been for all that followed: the cattle rustling and horse theft, the running irons and badger games, and finally the murder charge.

Susie Raper, coquette and cattle rustler, was the darling of Northern Nevada in the late 1800s, sashaying through ballrooms, courtrooms and bedrooms with equal charm. At a time when most rustlers were provided with "wooden overcoats," Susie received indulgent smiles and grudging admiration. She used men like she gathered cattle, with guile and nerve, as she demonstrated shortly after her husband was wounded.

After the attack at Paradise Valley, Susie and her family fled 60 miles south to Camp Dun Glen and the protection of the Nevada Volunteers. There Susie convinced a freighter bound for California to take the Rapers along.

She apparently convinced him of more than that, for when they reached California, Susie owned all five yoke of oxen and the wagons. Bundling up her boys, she left the freighter penniless and bewildered, sold the oxen, doffed her husband and returned to Nevada, settling in the Austin area. She was 23 years old.

She could have become a schoolmarm, taken in laundry or spun out her days cooking beans for cowboys. But when her money ran out, she decided to enter the cattle business.

Broke, but armed with charm and ingenuity, she ran into rustler John Berry. He taught her how to round up cattle, use a running iron to change brands and build up a tidy little herd of her own.

Her beginner's luck didn't last long. Although she gave a good account of herself, showing "fight, nerve and skill in the handling of a six-shooter," according to the *Elko Independent*, she was arrested and charged with rustling. So began the public's love affair with Susie Raper.

"The defendant is a woman of about 29 years of age [she was 24], an Australian by birth, is rather prepossessing in appearance; has a passable face, a graceful and well-rounded form and good carriage," leered the *Independent*.

"As a coquette," wrote the *Carson City Appeal*, "she has been successful in capturing the affections and coin of many clever but 'spooney' chaps all over the country. She has cheek enough to put up and attempt to carry out any kind of a job. Smart, bold and of winning ways, she seldom misses her mark."

The *Territorial Enterprise* waxed poetic: "She can shoot a pistol like a sportsman, ride a mustang with the grace and dash of a vaquero, drive a bull team to

equal a Missourian and in the parlor or ballroom 'get away' with most women for style."

Her attorney tried to procure her release under a writ of habeas corpus. He failed, and, with an eye to the press, brought her to court, where, the *Independent* reported, "she acted as if it were fun." She was acquitted.

Susie was back in the Elko jail in two months, again for rustling. When the sheriff locked her up, she cried, and the newspaper made much of her mournful eyes and the missing "coquettish swagger" as she walked between the jail and courthouse during the trial.

Those who packed the courtroom wondered if she had learned her lesson. But when she gave vent to "a tirade of abuse upon the heads of those who had deserted her," they knew Susie was not repentant.

Applauding her spirit, the jury acquitted her again. Two days later, she was back. Some jewels—discovered missing while Susie was out on bail—had turned up in her pocket. The verdict was predictable: not guilty.

"No jury could be impaneled," mused the *Reese River Reveille*, "that could find a woman guilty."

By the time Susie was arrested in Austin for a third rustling offense, her notoriety had spread. Crowds filled the street in front of the International Hotel, and they cheered the lathered horse and breathless woman who had led the lawmen on a wild chase.

Susie now recognized arrests and trials as minor inconveniences of her trade, and she did not disappoint the admirers who packed the courtroom. With the verve they'd come to expect, the laughing defendant celebrated her acquittal by giving the gaping prosecutor a kiss as she left the dock.

New wealth brought new pleasures. Susie acquired a racehorse and named him Humboldt, after the county which earlier had been so generous. Now in the Elko area, she and her sons lived well, and if they sometimes forgot to pay their bills, well, most people were willing to chalk it up as an oversight.

The butcher in Mineral Hill was not so generous. He convinced Constable Brophy of the nearby town of Carlin to attach Humboldt, in payment of a bill, while Susie was absent.

On learning of the incident, she swallowed her rage, went to the stable and sweet-talked the groom into letting her lead the horse into the stable yard. Once outside, she sprang astride and kicked Humboldt into a gallop, threat-

ening destruction to anyone who tried to retake her horse.

Humboldt couldn't outrace everyone, however. The two were run down on Carlin's main street, according to one Carson City paper, "after a liberal exhibition of her well-molded extremities to the greedy street gazers and Susie left with curses on her lips."

Next on Susie's list of conquests was Captain Robert Payne, late of the Nevada Volunteers. Together with a determined group of marauders, they rustled their way to even greater fame.

Meanwhile Susie applied for a license to do business as a sole married woman. Her application stated primly that she would "raise, buy and sell horses and cattle, do dairying" and run a lodging house. Cloaked in respectability, she sniffed at even the pretense of stealth.

“

Susie now recognized arrests and trials as minor inconveniences, and she did not disappoint her admirers who packed the Austin courtroom.

”

Her herds grew so large, however, that public enchantment with her exploits began to wane. Elko had become a county in 1869, and such escapades didn't sit well with its citizens. In 1871 Susie and her captain were arrested and jailed, and the town-folk hoped she at last would learn her lesson from "the experience of the dungeon."

She *had* learned. She'd learned that turning her smile on an admiring deputy could produce cell keys, and those keys could produce freedom. She and Payne escaped from the Elko jail and fled across the desert to the Indian Territories of present-day Oklahoma.

She never returned to Nevada, but those who had watched her headlong ride into infamy didn't forget her. They devoured each news report on their heroine.

In the early '70s they discovered she'd joined up with the Choctaws and Cherokees. Then, at the urging of Payne, she turned against the tribes and aided emigrants in homesteading Indian land. U.S. marshals were sent to put an end to the flourishing enterprise, and readers of the *Elko Independent*

chuckled over the outcome.

"Susie's good genius again ruled and leaving camp early on a March morning she took an excursion on a raft down the Red River leaving her friendly Captain with a paper of tobacco and her jailer without his keys."

Payne ended up in jail. Susie was reported to be cultivating a flower garden in Texas, with one eye on her neighbor's cattle.

In 1875, Susie's youngest son, Joe, then 14, arrived in Elko looking for his long-lost mother. He'd find her or bust he said, and townspeople shook their heads, telling each other he sure was "the son of his mammy."

In 1878 folks read that she had married a man named A.R. Booth. Would he last as long as the unfortunate Tom Raper?

He didn't. In 1882 she married a man named Yonkers. They opened a saloon in Socorro, New Mexico. It did well, but for some reason they decided to move on after liquidating all their assets. Poor Mr. Yonkers, Susie reported when she reached White Oaks, had succumbed to smallpox on the trip. She'd had to bury him by herself.

Since there had been no smallpox in the area, people looked somewhat askance at the earnest, pretty woman with the Australian accent. But then her boys came to join her, and she settled down to ranch, and people forgot.

It wasn't until 1886 that Elko heard that Susie had been jailed for murder. A man named George Black had been foolish enough to deed her his ranch. Two days later he was found shot to death. The people of Socorro were not beguiled by the now middle-aged Susie, it seemed. The *Socorro Chieftain* wrote of her "cold, glittering gray" eyes, and shuddered over a macabre photograph—Susie and a well-dressed gentleman standing beside an upright coffin, in which stood a female corpse—found in her possession.

But again she wasn't convicted, and that was no surprise to the people of Elko.

What did surprise them was the report of her death in 1897. Some folks mourned her, but the old timers just shook their heads and laughed. They knew Susie would find some way to talk herself out of that one, too. □

Terri Sprenger-Farley of Verdi is currently at work on Heroines and Hussies, a collection of biographies of little-known historical women.

WHERE THE WEST IS WORN

Do your old Acme boots pucker around your ankles like worn out socks? Are your favorite pair of Levi's (God bless 'em) wearing thin in the saddle? Does your 25X Stetson hat resemble a potato pancake? Not to worry.

Once again, Nevada, the Magazine of the Real West, presents the complete Nevada Western Store Guide, a comprehensive list of 41 stores in the Silver State which specialize in everything from Stetson pants to lizard boots, toe caps to Garcia bits and spurs.

CARSON CITY

D-Bar-M Hitchin Post—3080 Highway 50 East, 883-3633. 9-5:30, Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Panhandle, Tem Tex, Karman. Hats: Resistol, American. Boots: Tony Lama, Nocona, Acme. Pants: Lee, Wrangler. Hat shaping, boot repair, horse trailers, barns, corrals. Owner, Elaine Smith.

The Outdoorsman—3733 N. Carson St., 883-2755. 9-6 daily. Shirts: Tem Tex, Prior, Levi. Hats: Stetson, Resistol. Boots: Acme, Tony Lama. Pants: Levi, Stetson, Britannia. Manager, Frank Fry.

Rogers Western Store—1821 N. Carson St., 882-5633. 9-5:30 Mon. Sat. Shirts: Miller, Stockman. Hats: Resistol. Boots: Acme, Tony Lama, Justin. Pants: Lee, Levi, Wrangler. Owner, Virginia Rogers.

ELKO

J.M. Capriola Co.—500 Commercial St., 738-5816. 8-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Panhandle Slim, Wrangler. Hats: Resistol, Bailey. Boots: Tony Lama, Nocona, Acme. Pants: Levi, Wrangler, Lee. Garcia bits and spurs, custom saddles. Owners, Bill Bear and Paula Wright.

Elko General Merchandise—416 Idaho St., 738-3295. 9-11:30, 1-5 Mon.-Fri. Shirts: Miller, Karman. Hats: Resistol, Bailey, Bee. Boots: Tony Lama, Acme, LaCrosse overshoes. Pants: Levi, Lee, Wrangler. Owners, Margaret and A.T. Anacabe.

ELY

White Pine Feed—1234 High St., 289-4521. 9-5 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Lee, Wrangler. Pants: Tem Tex, Lee, Wrangler. Hats: Resistol. Hat shaping, riding equipment and feed. Owner, K. Kirkely.

FALLON

Ranchland—116 So. Maine, 423-2496. 9-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Miller, Champion, Tem Tex. Hats: Bailey, American. Boots: Nocona, Texas. Pants: Lee. Riding equipment. Owner, Mary Lou Welch.

Town & Country Fashions—2030 Reno Highway, 423-6571. 9-6 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Panhandle Slim, Levi, Larry Mahan. Hats: Resistol, Stetson. Boots: Nocona, Tony Lama, Bona Allen. Pants: Levi, Lee, Wrangler. Owner, George Ghilia; Manager, Len Lucero.

GARDNERVILLE

R-J Stockmen's Supply—Highway 56 (turn south at Sharkey's Nugget), 782-3833. 9-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Hats: Resistol. Boots: Tony Lama, Justin, Wrangler. Saddles, tack and feed. Owners, Rick and Janet Jorgenson.

INCLINE VILLAGE

The Cowboy Store—774 Mays Bl., 832-7998. 10-6 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: H Bar C, Panhandle, Lotus Leather, Salamander. Hats: Charlie 1 Horse, Resistol, Bailey. Boots: Justin, Larry Mahan, Dan Post, Acme. Pants: Larry Mahan, Panhandle, Levi, Wrangler. Hat shaping, custom belts, Sawyer sheepskin coats. Owner, Don Steinmeyer.

LAS VEGAS

Adams Western Store—1415 Western St., 382-1522. 9-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Lee, Levi, Tem Tex, Karman. Hats: Bailey, Miller, Boyd. Boots: Nocona, Justin, Acme, Wrangler. Pants: Lee, Levi, Wrangler. Riding equipment and livestock supplies. Owner, Les Adams.

Chaparral Western Wear—1104 N. Nellis Blvd., 452-4041. 10-6 Mon. Sat. Shirts: Tem Tex, Prior, Stetson. Pants: Levi, Lee, Wrangler. Hats: Resistol, Miller, Stetson straws. Boots: Tony Lama, Acme. Riding accessories. Manager, Luann Baker.

Conrad's Western Store—1210 Hinson St., 870-5981. 9-6 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Pendleton, Lasso, Kenny Rogers Collection, Larry Mahan. Hats: Stetson, Resistol, American, Bailey. Boots: Tony Lama, Dan Post, Texas, Wrangler. Pants: Levi, Wrangler, Lee. Manager, Alexander Campos.

Cowboy Supply—1859 N. Decatur, 648-0680, or 5025 S. Eastern, 736-2120. 9-6 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Tem Tex, Panhandle Slim, Larry Mahan. Hats: Resistol, Bailey, Biltmore. Boots: Acme, Dan Post, Justin. Pants: Lee, Wrangler, Prior, Panhandle Slim. Riding equipment, hat shaping. Manager, Doris Taylor.

Custom Leather—3216 W. Charleston, 870-2500. 9-5 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: H Bar C, Larry Mahan, Prior. Hats: Bailey, Miller. Boots: Justin, Acme, Dan Post. Riding equipment. Owner, Maxine Deacon, Dorothy Payne.

Dirty Shame—3535 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 731-1903. 9am-10pm every day. Shirts: Janet Armstrong, Anna Zapp, Salamander. Hats: Biltmore, Resistol. Boots: Lucchese, Larry Mahan, Justin. Hat shaping. Manager, Phyllis Loftis.

Dudley's Western Wear—3909 W. Sahara Ave., 873-7949. 10-6 Mon.-Fri., 9-6 Sat. Shirts: Larry Mahan, Tem Tex, Lee, Levi. Hats: Resistol, Biltmore, Miller. Boots: Laramie, Dan Post, Acme. Pants: Levi, Lee, Lasso, Prior. Hat

shaping, handmade boots. Owners, Sanda and John Dudley.

Las Vegas Frontier—304 E. Fremont, 382-5401. 9-8 Tues.-Sat., 9-5:30 Sun. & Mon. Shirts: Tem Tex, Karman, Kenny Rogers Collection, Pendleton. Hats: Eddy Bros., Bailey, Stetson. Boots: Justin, Acme. Manager, Fred Brann.

The Rowel—3049 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 735-2244. 9:30-6 every day. Shirts: Miller, Rockmount, H Bar C. Hats: Bailey, Eddy Bros. Boots: Acme, Laredo. Owner, Charlie Shelton.

Silver Dollar Western Wear—2501 E. Charleston Blvd., 386-0814. 24 hrs., every day. Shirts: H Bar C, Levi, Janet Armstrong. Hats: Bailey, Stetson, Resistol, Charlie 1 Horse. Boots: Tony Lama, Lucchese, Acme, Frye. Pants: Lee, Levi, Larry Mahan, H Bar C. Hat shaping, casino and music. Manager, Pam Kirk.

Wagon Masters—Tropicana Hotel, 458-7808; Meadows Mall, 870-0710; Fashion Show, 369-0999; Boulevard Mall, 737-7262. 10-9 Mon.-Fri., 10-6 Sat., 12-5 Sun. Shirts: Levi, Wrangler, Karman. Hats: Resistol, Studs. Boots: Frye, Justin. Pants: Levi, Wrangler, Britannia, Jordache. Hat shaping.

Western Boot World—1370 E. Flamingo Rd., 732-8122. 10-8 Mon.-Fri., 10-7 Sat., 11-5 Sun. Hats: Bailey, Resistol, Larry Mahan. Boots: Justin, Tony Lama, Dan Post, Acme, Frye, Nocona, T.O. Stanley, Dingo, Morgan Miller, Cowtowns, Wolverine. Boot stretching, hat shaping. Owners, Bill Kulik, Bob Martini.

PAHRUMP

Tomken Enterprises—Highway 52 at W. St., 727-5247. 10-6 Tues.-Fri., 10-5 Sat.-Sun. Shirts: Levi, Tem Tex, Panhandle Slim. Hats: Bailey, Keystone. Boots: Nocona, Texas, Acme. Pants: Wrangler, Levi, Tem Tex. Riding equipment, feed and supplies. Manager, Thomas Duke.

RENO

Albers of Nevada—755 Timber Way, 322-8625. 8-5:30 Mon.-Sat., 10-5 Sun. Shirts: Wrangler. Hats: Resistol, American. Boots: Tony Lama, Nocona, Acme. Pants: Levi, Wrangler, Lee. Saddles, tack. Managers, Dave and Gila DeKay.

Bridles 'N Britches—630 Gentry Way, 825-7771. 9-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Panhandle Slim, Tem Tex, Larry Mahan. Hats: Resistol, American, Bailey. Boots: Justin, Tony Lama, Nocona, Acme, Larry Mahan. Pants: Wrangler, Lee, Panhandle Slim. Riding equipment, hats shaped and cleaned, boots stretched. Owner, Bob Peterson.

D-Bar-M Western Store—1020 E. 4th St., 329-9107. 9-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Panhandle Slim, Dee Cee, Karman. Hats: Resistol, American, Bailey straws. Boots: Tony Lama, Nocona, Sanders, Acme. Pants: Lee, Wrangler. Hat shaping, boot repair, special orders. Owner, Jack Bassett.

Parker's Western Clothing—151 N. Sierra, 323-4481. 8:30-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: H Bar C, California. Hats: Stetson, Bailey. Boots: Justin, Tony Lama. Pants: Lee, Levi, H Bar C. Suits: H Bar C. Hat shaping. Owners, Parker Bros.

Western Boot World—3358 Kietzke Lane, 827-BOOT. 10-8 Mon.-Fri., 10-6 Sat., 12-5 Sun. Boots: Tony Lama, Justin, Nocona, Acme, Dan

(Continued on page 31)

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AUTUMN GOLD

Photographs by Harry Upson (opposite) and Richard Menzies (below) catch the seasons turning as autumn comes to Nevada. The air turns crisp. The sky turns a half-tone bluer. Mornings arrive progressively later, and the evening light disappears sooner. Banks of rivers and streams shine as the sunlight reflects from shelves of thin ice. In ravines and draws, along rivers and washes, trees prepare for winter, their leaves growing brittle and changing from summer green to autumn yellow.

A stand of mountain aspen burnish a Sierra slope in Washoe County. Called “quakies” from the way their leaves tremble in the morning breezes, these trees splash color down the folds of hills and mountains throughout Nevada, streaking the Silver State landscape with gold in the fall.

Below the dour, ice-veined rockface of 13,061-foot Wheeler Peak in White Pine County, quakies and pine crowd the sides of a road. Such contrasts distinguish Great Basin scenery—severe ridges, azure sky, and gray-brown desert with flashes of unexpected color.—*Roger Smith*



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COWBOY OF GLITTER GULCH

(Continued from page 19)

lance and crew and they left right then. He did get to see her. He lived two hours after he got there."

Then there was the famous old-time gambler, Joe Bernstein. He died broke, and Benny Binion paid for the funeral and made sure that Joe was sent to eternity with a pair of dice clutched in his hand.

When Binion bought back the Horseshoe in 1964, he installed Jack, then 26, as the youngest casino president in Las Vegas. Ted, then 21, became casino manager. Binion's wife, Teddy Jane, became treasurer, and she still runs the casino cage at the age of 64.

“

When the famous gambler Joe Berstein died broke, Benny paid for the funeral and made sure Joe was sent to his eternity with a pair of dice clutched in his hand.

”

The casino is widely recognized as the most profitable in downtown Las Vegas, but just how profitable is not on the public record, since the Horseshoe is owned entirely by the family.

Jack Binion says, "We're ahead of everybody downtown whose figures we can learn, which naturally includes all the publicly-held casinos which issue stockholder reports." One of those the Binions are presumably ahead of, then, would be the Golden Nugget—a much bigger casino directly across the street. Golden Nugget Inc., which has other properties as well as the casino, turned a \$2.9 million profit in 1980.

Jack Binion is a serious man noted mostly for the long hours of work he puts into the casino and its best-known promotion, the World Series of Poker. But when the spirit is on him he can be a high-roller himself. Jack's golfing buddy is Doyle "Texas Dolly" Brunson, professional poker player and twice world champion. Once, betting and redoubling bets with other golfers, Binion and Brunson found themselves with \$180,000 riding on a single hole. Binion shot par on the hole, but Brunson bogeyed and lost the bet. Later the winner gave the money back—pot by pot, over the poker table.

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Most people think the biggest gamble the Binions take is in exhibiting \$1 million in a horseshoe-shaped display, a spellbinding arrangement of one hundred \$10,000 bills before which casino customers can have their photographs taken. But Benny says the money is, in fact, relatively safe. All \$10,000 bills are registered to the owners, and if somebody stole them, "he'd just have so much paper."

Once Binion had to take the money to the bank for business reasons. Two security guards were sent to the bank with what they thought was the money; they arrived and opened the package to find only cut-up newspaper. As the guards stood quietly discussing the fastest means of getting to Australia, Benny walked into the bank, pulled off his boot and removed the million.

Today Binion spends half the year in the kind of surroundings that spawned him—on his Montana ranch, where he raises some of the country's best quarter horses, especially sought for rodeo pickup horses.

On the ranch, Binion spends up to 12 hours a day in the saddle. "He just hates to take a pickup truck anywhere he could take a horse," explains his son Jack. "And when he has one pasture with 100 square miles in it, it takes a while to ride across it, let alone fix a fence when you get there."

In the casino, Benny's methods are quite the opposite. Jack or Ted, or even their mother may stay up all night tending to business. Benny passes the winter at his restaurant table, conversing with broken-down cowboys or up-and-coming senators, apparently with equal enjoyment. He holds court like a king—a genial, highly approachable, iron-tough cowboy king.

Asked if his father's past bothers him, Jack Binion responds without hesitation, "Not a bit. After thinking about it a while, it becomes sort of a source of pride. Of all the historic figures you can remember from a hundred years ago, aside from politicians and war heroes, most of them are people who were on the outs with the law.

"I'll make you a bet right now," Jack says with a grin. "I'll bet you can't tell me right now who was president when Jesse James rode." □

A.D. Hopkins is editor of the Nevadan, the Sunday magazine of the Las Vegas Review-Journal, and a freelance writer with special interests in western history, Las Vegas and gambling.

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The Thinking Man's Cattleman

Fred Dressler's philosophy of self-reliance has extended for five generations, from his grandfather, who first settled in Carson Valley in the 1860s, to his grandchildren, who live there now. By Warren Lerude

A continuing thought awakens in the agile mind of 83-year-old Fred Dressler as day breaks in faint light over the hills to the east of Carson Valley.

It is time, as it was yesterday and

will be tomorrow, to saddle a horse and ride over some of the 3,500 acres of Nevada's historic Dressler home ranch.

Dressler's been doing just that—and covering a lot of open range across America as well—in the nine decades

of ranching that have won him many honors. He's been elected to the national leadership of the Cowboy Hall of Fame. And within the two-story Victorian ranch house he calls home, hanging on a wall near a cluttered

Fred Dressler, 83, rises at six o'clock every morning at his ranch on the east side of Carson Valley. He is a past president of the American Cattlemen's Association, whose members noted in a recent award that "he still brings in a wet horse at day's end."



rolltop desk, is testimony to his impact on the livestock industry: the National Golden Spur Award, highest honor for a cattleman.

Dressler was born in the white frame house where he lives today with his childhood sweetheart, Anna, now 83, whom he married 60 years ago. Their son and daughter live with their families just down Dressler Lane. For this is the heart of the Dressler ranching empire that sprawls over another 14,000 acres in California's nearby Alpine and Mono counties.

Dressler rises at six o'clock every morning and heads on horseback for the solitude of the Nevada range where he has time to reflect on a rich past and what he frequently considers to be a troubled present and future.

An optimistic cowboy in spirit, he's a modern rancher in practice. He's a philosopher of the range and a poet in the sagebrush.

Sample Dressler thinking: "We have responsibilities as citizens, the pride and dignity and self-respect of standing on our own two feet and not leaning on the other folks for our existence."

Dressler has applied such thinking in public service at home, across the state and nationally.

He has served, for instance, on the Douglas County School Board for 25 years. He has been elected president of the Nevada State Cattlemen's Association. And he has led national livestock efforts as president of the American Cattlemen's Association.

The Dressler philosophy of self-reliance has extended for five generations, from Dressler's German emigrant grandfather, who first settled in the great green sweep of the Carson Valley, to Dressler's grandchildren, who live there now.

Adventurous and determined, unable to write anything other than his own name, August Frederick Dressler left his native Germany and struck out for New York. Dismissing city life, the new American walked across the country, rejecting such fertile lands as those of Iowa and Nebraska, in search of a pristine place to settle.

He found rich pasture land at the base of the towering Sierra Nevada and in 1860—four years before Nevada achieved statehood—he began building acre by acre the ranch that his own son and his grandson, Fred Dressler, would continue to expand.

Fred Dressler grew up tough and lean. He broke broncs on the ranch and cracked books at Douglas County High



C.J. HADLEY PHOTOS

Fred and Anna Dressler, childhood sweethearts who have been married 60 years.

School where he was the only boy to graduate in 1918. Of classmates Evelyn Walker Reed and Alma Settlemyer Fricke, Dressler jokes, "We could have a reunion in 24 hours. We're still all alive." Mrs. Reed lives in Reno, Mrs. Fricke in Minden.

It was in the tiny high school in Gardnerville that Dressler began discovering heroes who would help determine his life's philosophy.

"Alexander the Great was a man of the soil, a man of the earth," the bow-legged old Nevada rancher reflects today, eyes steeled with sure knowledge. "Alexander the Great put together a country and helped people and put together people who created a great empire."

Whether on a plane bound homeward from Washington, where he meets with federal officials over restrictive land regulations, or in the antique-filled Victorian parlor of his home 24 miles south of the state capital, Carson City, Dressler speaks always in perspectives. And he speaks bluntly.



Fred Dressler grew up tough and lean. He broke broncs on the ranch and cracked books at Douglas County High School, where he was the only boy to graduate in 1918.



On bureaucratic government and its opposite, self-reliance: "It's an attitude and a philosophy. See, they were drifting into the idea of creating circumstances where some segments of our society depend on us and they think we owe them their living. I don't owe anybody anything except to be kind to him and to help him and push him off dead center.

"But I don't propose to be the man who carries him all the rest of his life when I've got my own life to sustain."

When Dressler goes to Washington as a past president of the American Cattlemen's Association, he meets with the likes of the secretary of the interior and he delivers a message of western thinking about public lands and private enterprise.

Example: "Federally owned lands are a burden to private enterprise. Private enterprise is the only thing that we exist on, that our economy stands on. You have to make a profit. All operations should be making a profit. The lands should be in private enterprise where they can be properly taxed so they make their contribution and not be sitting out there creating a livelihood for a group of people who are a burden."

He calls federal administrators "tax-eaters" and puts highest on the list the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, both of which he deplores as consumers rather than producers.

A Dressler solution: Do away with one of the two administrative agencies, put the lands into private ownership and on the tax rolls, then have only one federal agency oversee them. Result: tax dollars raised, government spending cut.

Dressler views the Sagebrush Rebellion, which is epitomized by such thinking, as not exclusively western. He sees the eastern factory owner, boggled by OSHA rules, and the southern wage-earner, burdened by taxes, as equally rebellious against federal government.

Dressler thinks of the inheritance tax as federal extortion which prohibits the American family from passing along earnings, be they in money or land, that were won through hard work and honesty.

Such philosophy, pointedly expressed, has earned Dressler the reputation among Nevadans as a no-nonsense, thinking-person's rancher who sticks to original values and varies not an inch.

"I think Fred Dressler has all of the



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scattered forms of self-reliance rolled into one," says Nevada's governor, Robert List, who grew up on a ranch in the neighboring Washoe Valley. "In this day and age, a lot of ranchers have sort of drifted away from the adherence to the principles of the old West. They'd just as soon have lunch in town as stay on the ranch all day. Fred's the guy who'll go to town when he has something to do. But he's damned anxious to get back to his responsibility, to his family, his country, his property and his livestock."

Dressler is equally appreciated by the home folks in Gardnerville and Minden, who recently honored him as Carson Valley Leader of the Year.

Longtime fellow school board member Alex Glock, now 79, likes to tell about how the 100 or so celebrants at the volunteer fire department's annual bash gather around Fred Dressler at story-telling time.

There's a hush in the firehouse when Dressler brings out his cowbells and begins telling stories, tingling a bell softly, ringing another deeply, about how the cattle sound in the quiet of the night on the range.

Whether at home in Carson Valley or at a national meeting, Dressler is a focal point for persons who admire self-reliance and self-restraint. On September 19, 1980, some 1,200 persons gathered at Lubbock, Texas, to honor the Nevadan with the Golden Spur Award. The citation read: "At age 82, he still brings in a wet horse at day's end and continues to actively participate in national meetings where his wisdom is heard and understood."

Wisdom comes eloquently for Dressler. He remembers the sayings of Will Rogers, but in the telling, the Oklahoma humorist drifts away and the listener hears pure Nevada Dressler:

"Will Rogers had a saying, 'The Indian never got lost.' You wonder what he meant. He said the Indian always looked back to see where he came from.

"So if we don't teach our young people to look back and have something to look back to, to indicate where they came from, they're going to get lost," the old rancher says as he gazes across alfalfa fields to the Sierra.

Pure Dressler, and the independent values of the American West. □

Warren Lerude, former publisher of the Reno Evening Gazette and Nevada State Journal, is a writer and media consultant based in Reno.

WHERE THE WEST IS WORN

(Continued from page 22)

Post, Dingo, Frye, Wolverine, Morgan Miller, Cowtown, Brahma, T.O. Stanley. Hats: Resistol, Bailey. Owner: Bob Martini.

Wrangler Wranch—Park Lane Center, 826-3434. 10-9 Mon.-Fri., 10-6 Sat., 12-5 Sun. (also at South Lake Tahoe). Shirts: Larry Mahan, Wrangler, Prior. Hats: Resistol. Pants: Wrangler, Sedgefield. Hat shaping. Owners, Jane Dodge, Joe Alexander.

ROUND HILL

Julie's of Tahoe Western Wear—Round Hill Mall, 588-4666. 11-6 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Tem Tex, Rockmount. Hats: Rockmount. Boots: Dan Post, Acme, Texas. Owners, John and Julie Foster.

SPARKS

Lee's Western Wear—2130 Oddie Bl., 358-0666. 10-7 Mon.-Sat., 12-5 Sun. Shirts: Panhandle Slim, H Bar C, Pendleton. Hats: Resistol, Stetson. Boots: Tony Lama, Justin, Acme, Dan Post, Larry Mahan. Pants: Lee, Levi, Wrangler. Hat shaping, boot repair. Owner, Lee McKenzie.

TONOPAH

A-Bar-L—111 Main St., 482-3658. 9-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Miller, Pendleton, Karman. Hats: Bailey, Stetson, Resistol, American. Boots: Wrangler, Red Wing, Tony Lama, Acme. Pants: Levi, Lee, Wrangler. Hat shaping. Owner, John Campos.

VIRGINIA CITY

Diamond Jims—19 S. C Street, 847-0764. 10-6 every day. Shirts: Larry Mahan, Tem Tex, Salamander, Janet Armstrong, Lotus. Hats: Biltmore, Eddy Bros. Boots: Justin, Tony Lama, Nocona, Lucchese, Acme, Zodiac. Pants: Larry Mahan, Cowgirl Clothes. Custom ordering and shipping, custom-made hats. Owner, J.A. Schafer.

Nevada Trading Post—27 N. C Street, 847-0535. 10-6 Mon.-Fri., 9-7 Sat.-Sun. Hats: Stetson, Bailey, Resistol, Eddy Bros., Biltmore. Boots: Dan Post, Nocona, Larry Mahan, Tony Lama, Justin. Pants: Pioneer, Lee, Boyd buckles, riding equipment, hat shaping, coin appraisals, Carson City mint dollars. Managers, Doug and Marilou Walling.

WINNEMUCCA

Stockmen's—100 S. Bridge St., 623-2788. 9:30-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Miller, Pendleton. Hats: Resistol, Rockmount. Boots: Tony Lama, Acme, Nocona, Red Wing. Pants: Lee, Levi, Farah. Hat shaping, cleaning. Owner, Jim Bidart.

Tip's Western Wear & Custom Saddles—185 Melarkey St., 623-3300. 9:30-5:30 Mon.-Sat. Shirts: Karman, H Bar C, Panhandle Slim, Kenny Rogers Collection. Hats: Resistol, American. Boots: Nocona, Justin, Hondo. Pants: Wrangler, Lee, Larry Mahan, Kenny Rogers. Custom saddles. Owners: Ken and Cathi Tipton.

YERINGTON

Jeans & Things—227 S. Main St., 463-3362. 8:30-5:30 every day. Shirts: Wrangler, Dee Cee, Lee. Hats: Resistol, American, Eddy Bros. Boots: Tony Lama, Nocona, Hondo. Pants: Wrangler, Lee. Tack, saddles, hat shaping. Owners, Bob and Nancy Smith. □

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Showguide

Nevada's Ugliest Madame

Kids love 'em on TV, but Wayland and Madame's stage show is rated 'R.'

By Ann Henderson

Kermit the Frog, Charlie McCarthy and all the other famous show business puppets wouldn't recognize Madame as one of their own kind. The sharp-tongued star of Wayland and Madame has the look of a tacky grande dame who is something of a swinger.

"You know it's time to leave a party when you trip over the pattern in the rug," she advises a Sahara Las Vegas audience.

"Madame is just a crazy rich lady," explains Wayland Flowers, the creator and falsetto voice of the wisecracking puppet. "She's somebody who is not great looking, but doesn't care anymore what people think. She's just having a good time."

Backstage, Wayland was relaxing between shows while Madame hung around with the rest of the Flowers family—Crazy Mary, an escapee from Bellevue, and Miss Jiffy, the rose of Harlem. Their summer show, "Madame Goes to Harlem," was the team's first Nevada appearance as headliners in a main showroom. It was also an experiment for the hotel, since the Sahara had built a revue around Flowers' popular lounge act to offer an alternative to the more expensive superstar shows.

Wayland and Madame are familiar to TV audiences as regulars on "Hollywood Squares" and the syndicated series "Solid Gold." They were the first



performers ever to win an Emmy award for talent in a documentary, "Old is Somebody Else—Aging, Everybody's Doing It." Flowers also developed the characters for Marlo Thomas' special for kids, "Free to Be You and Me," another Emmy winner.

But the Nevada showroom version is not for kids because Wayland and Madame are not censored at all. Suggested rating: broad-minded adults. "I guess there are some people who are offended by my act," says Wayland. "I used to try and please everybody, but you can't. I'm not going to go out there and do some milk-toast thing with puppets, because I couldn't hold an audience that way for five minutes."

Wayland succeeds so well, in fact, that you can forget he's there directing Crazy Mary (whose flaming red hair is a shock-treatment coiffure) when she says, "I love being nuts. I don't have to explain anything I do."

Or when Madame complains about the weather. "Las Vegas is hot in the summer, but the static electricity in winter is worse," she leers. "I once stuck a key in the door and blew every sequin off my gown!" But Wayland's strange sense of humor is always in evidence.

The 41-year-old performer grew up in Dawson, Georgia, and began working with puppets when he was a grade schooler. He was introduced to a Madame-like puppet during his post-college days in New York City and quickly mastered the intricate movements of the hand-and-rod figures. Now he designs and sculpts his own puppets in clay. Onstage Flowers lets their personalities develop, using voices,

accents and funny situations he has encountered.

Because Madame, Crazy Mary and Miss Jiffy command all the attention during performances, few people know much about Wayland Flowers. He doesn't mind that at all. "I used to be jealous of people who shot up real quick and made it," he says, "but then I watched what happened. You know what 'star' is spelled backwards? 'Rats.' Lord, I wouldn't want that because I really enjoy what I do."

Madame is a bit of a philosopher, too. "I've been from Bangkok to Bangladesh and done everything twice and loved it both times," she says, "but let me tell you, when you get to be my age and you haven't done it all, and you bend down to adjust your wedgies and all you see are peanuts and confetti, then you know for sure the parade has passed you by."

Wayland and Madame return to the Sahara Las Vegas October 2 through November 14. □



Las Vegas

ALADDIN, 736-0111: Wayne Newton, Dave Barry, 8/27-10/7; Lola Falana, 10/8-21; *Theatre for the Performing Arts* (phone 736-1738): "Dancin'" Broadway show, 9/8-20; Peking Opera, 10/26-11/1

BARBARY COAST, 737-7111: Royal Dixie Jazz Band, indf.

CAESARS PALACE, 731-7333: Cher, thru 9/2

CIRCUS CIRCUS, 734-0410: Round the World Circus Acts, 11am-midnight, free



Donna Summer, the Queen of Disco, appears at the MGM Las Vegas, September 10-16.



Charlie Daniels and his band fiddle around at Harrah's Lake Tahoe October 30-November 5.

DESERT INN, 733-4444: "Annie," Broadway musical, thru 9/20

DUNES, 737-4110: Casino de Paris. Dinner show 7:45pm, from \$15; cocktail show 11:45pm, \$14 includes 3 drinks

FLAMINGO HILTON, 733-3333: City Lites. Dinner show 8pm, from \$14.50; cocktail show midnight, \$10 includes 2 drinks

FOUR QUEENS, 385-4011: Nightly entertainment

FRONTIER, 734-0110: Shecky Greene, thru 9/2

HACIENDA, 739-8911: Nightly entertainment

HOLIDAY CASINO, 732-2411: Wild World of Burlesque. 10pm & 12:30am, Mon.-Fri.; 8pm, 10pm & 12:30am Sat.; dark Sun.; \$6.95 includes 2 drinks

IMPERIAL PALACE, 731-3311: Bravo Vegas, indf. 9pm & midnight, from \$8, includes 2 drinks

LANDMARK, 733-1110: Continuous entertainment.

LAS VEGAS HILTON, 732-5111: Bill Cosby, Captain & Tennille, 9/1-18; Liberace, 9/19-10/12; Bill Cosby, Juliet Prowse, 10/13-11/2

LAS VEGAS INN & CASINO, 731-3222: Entertainment Tues.-Sun.

MGM GRAND HOTEL, 739-4567: *Ziegfeld Room*: Jubilee!, 8pm & midnight; *Celebrity Room*: Rich Little, Debbie Reynolds, thru 9/2; Crystal Gayle, David Copperfield, 9/3-9; Donna Summer, 9/10-16; Dean Martin, 9/17-23; Mac Davis, 9/24-10/7; Eddie Rabbitt, 10/15-28

MARINA, 739-1500: 24-hour entertainment

MAXIM, 731-4300: Old Tyme Burlesque. 8pm, 10:15pm, 12:30am, \$9.75 includes 2 drinks

RIVIERA, 734-5110: Buddy Hackett, thru 9/2; TBA 9/3-10/28; Neil Sedaka, Joan Rivers, 10/29-11/11

ROYAL AMERICANA, 734-0711: Dondino, indf.

ROYAL HOTEL CASINO, 733-4000: Burlesque Burlesque, indf.

SAHARA, 735-4242: Jerry Lewis, Vic Damone, thru 9/2; Don Rickles, 9/3-16; Jack Jones, 9/17-24; Jim Stafford, 9/25-10/1; Wayland & Madame, 10/2-11/14

SAM'S TOWN, 456-7777: 24-hour entertainment

SANDS, 733-5000: *Copa Room*: dark. *Regency Lounge*: continuous entertainment

SILVERBIRD, 735-4111: The Muglestons, thru 9/19; Jeneane Marie & Starburst, 10/5-24; Pete Willcox, 10/26-12/5

SILVER SLIPPER, 734-1212: Boy-Lesque, indf.



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Comedian Dave Barry livens up the Aladdin when he appears with Wayne Newton August 27-October 10.

STARDUST, 732-6325: Lido de Paris 81

TROPICANA, 739-2411: Folies Bergere 81. Dinner show 8pm from \$21; cocktail show midnight, from \$15

UNION PLAZA, 386-2444: Broadway plays 8pm & 11:45pm nightly except Mon.; Mickey Finn Show 2pm & 4pm daily except Sun.

★ Lake Tahoe

CAESARS TAHOE, 588-3515: Lily Tomlin, thru 9/6

CLOUD'S CAL-NEVA HOTEL, 832-4000: Toast to Broadway, revue, thru 9/30

CRYSTAL BAY CLUB, 831-0512: Ken Pettiford, 9/1-13; Tony Austin Trio, 9/22-10/11; Alice Valente & Company, 10/13-25

HARRAH'S LAKE TAHOE, 588-6606: Melissa Manchester, thru 9/3; Neil Sedaka, Charlie Callas, 9/4-17; Anne Murray, 9/18-24; Bill Cosby, Jack Jones, 9/25-10/8; Glen Campbell, 10/9-22; Charlie Daniels, 10/30-11/5

HARVEY'S, 588-2411: Ron Rose Sound, thru 9/27; Fanfare, 10/12-25

HYATT LAKE TAHOE, 831-1111: The Billy Kay Show, 9/1-13; Garfin Gathering, 9/15-10/4; Bach, 10/6-25; Kelly and the Kid, 10/27-11/8

SAHARA TAHOE, 588-6211: The Great American Dream, musical production, indf.

★ Reno, Sparks, Carson City

CARSON CITY NUGGET, 882-1626: The Jaguars, 9/1-10/4

CIRCUS CIRCUS, 329-0711: Round the World Circus Acts, 11am-midnight, free

ELDORADO, 786-5700: Freddy Powers, The Reycards, 9/1-27; Freddy Powers, Family Portrait, 9/29-10/11; Freddy Powers, Dae Han Sisters, 10/12-11/1

FITZGERALD'S, 786-3663: Dan Miller Band, thru 9/20; Galen, 9/22-10/18; The Esquires, 10/20-11/15

HARRAH'S RENO, 329-4422: Gordon Lightfoot, thru 9/2; Helen Reddy, 9/3-16; Larry Gatlin, 9/17-23; Loretta Lynn, 10/1-14; Don Rickles, 10/15-21; Bobby Vinton, 10/22-28; Melissa Manchester, 10/29-11/4

MAPES, 323-1611: Nightly entertainment

MGM GRAND HOTEL, 789-2000 (800-648-3568 toll free CA, AZ, OR, ID, UT): Ziegfeld Theatre: Hello Hollywood Hello; Lion's Den: Spun Gold, Zaras, thru 9/8; Robyn & Sputz, 9/9-10/6

JOHN ASCUAGA'S NUGGET, Sparks, 358-2233: *Celebrity Room*: Ben Vereen, thru 9/2; Mel Tillis, George Lindsey, 9/3-16; Roy Clark, 9/17-30; Ronnie Milsap, 10/15-31; *Casino Cabaret*: Lelands, 9/2-22; Montana, 9/23-10/11; Boxcar Willie, 10/13-24

ON SLOW, 786-7310: Nightly entertainment

ORMSBY HOUSE, Carson City, 882-1890: David Proud, thru 9/13; Texas Heatwave, 9/14-10/4; Garfin Gathering, 10/5-18; The Motifs, 10/19-11/8

RIVERSIDE, 786-4400: dancing to the music of the '40s, thru Sept.; Zella Lehr, thru Oct.

SAHARA RENO, 322-1111: *Opera House Theatre*: Bal Du Moulin Rouge, revue, indf.; *Gilded Cage Cabaret*: Rusty Warren, thru 9/6; Dummar, 9/8-13; Freddie Bell, 9/15-27; The Checkmates, 9/29-10/18

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STATEWIDE AND STRONG



The Right Stuff

When it comes to fashion, Looking Nevada is on top of the scale, far above Off-Duty Prospector, Restrained Gaming Executive and Nature-Loving Backpacker. Here's a guide to seeming to be any of the above—or avoiding same. By Leon Mandel

Our new western president had not been crouched over the nation's camp fire two weeks when he appeared on the White House lawn dressed to go bronc riding.

If the elitists at the Oak Brook Polo and Pinkie Raising Club expected scruffy kickers and a Levi jacket, what they got were cashmere turtleneck, bench-made Crimean cavalry boots and bespoke jodhpurs. The Right Stuff. Must have broken their split-level hearts.

You are what you seem. You seem to be what you wear or carry or push or drive or escort. To the exquisite disappointment of his detractors, our new western president pays attention to wearing, carrying, pushing, driving and escorting The Right Stuff. So should you.

This is particularly true in Nevada where men, more frequently than not, are men, even though they take their women to buy clothes off the same rack as they do. Nevada has a tradition of offering itself to the world to be taken at face value, which can be confusing when a high-steel hardhat and a governor can talk and dress alike. That they do is the consequence of the social worth of Looking Nevada. Since there are so few genuine Nevadans, Looking

Nevada is as aspired to as Looking Regal at Prince Chuck's wedding. When it comes to fashion, Looking Nevada is right on top of the socioeconomic scale, VogueHarper'sGentleman'sQuarterlywise.

Immediately above Restrained Gaming Executive. Several dozen notches over Off-Duty Prospector. Towering atop Nature-Loving Backpacker. A mile or two over Utility Company Corporation. And absolutely stratospheric compared to Easterner.

What follows, then, is a Guide to Seeming to be Any of the Above—and how to avoid same—through authenticity of dress and manner. A Guide, that is to say, to The Right Stuff.

Looking Nevada: This is not difficult in places where Urban Cowboy singles bars abound, as in New York, Miami, London. The natives there are convinced that western dress requires sequins, polyopalescentmetallic purple boots and gold plated spurs. What would seem shocking in Carlin or Panaca passes for drabness in the fantasy world Out There. Paul Laxalt's western-cut suit, shiny boots and Peter Pan haircut go all but unnoticed in the District of Columbia. Laxalt knows the Right Stuff and how to wear it, but nobody in Washington knows it. All

the better. Right Stuff should only be noticed by people who know Right Stuff when they see it; comments by know-nothings about the wonderfulness of Wrong Stuff tells you as nothing else that the speaker is Wrong Stuff himself. Such citizens would scoff at Laxalt's home state wardrobe. In public he drapes himself in a set of Levi's that look as though they had been bought from an Elko thrift store. Perfect. Even when he's walking down a Las Vegas sidewalk, he *seems* to be at the wheel of a Jimmy dualie. You might spot an inconsistency hanging from his rhetoric but you'll never see a fringe on his jacket. All the result of paying as much attention to the Wrong Stuff (and shunning it) as the Right.

Laxalt is an exemplar. So, in his own way, is The Greeter.

The Greeter (a dead ringer for Dan Haggarty of Grizzly Adams) *does* wear fringes. His jacket is fringed with the stuff, fringes cascade from his trouser bottoms, his boots are fringed high-top mocassins with reconstituted fringe soles; his hair is all fringe. But somehow, maybe because he spends his time walking the highways of the Silver State and so his fringes are tattered and dirty, his are Right Stuff Fringes. Don't ask how he manages *that*.



When he waves (The Greeter waves to everybody—even people driving Pacers and Concords, clearly Wrong Stuff cars) you can see that over his waving shoulder hangs a, er, purse. A purse? How could a purse be Right Stuff? In the same mysterious way his fringes manage to be, probably. Could be that the purse looks like Davy Crockett's powder pocket. Could also be that it's made of the hide of a cross-roader.

Moya Lear is Right Stuff Nevada too. Her clothes could be Givenchy, her shoes Charles Jourdan. She could be at home at the Court of St. James, the Oak Room at the Plaza or the board room at The Glass House. She is restrained, cool, Nevada elegant. Taki, *Esquire's* gossip columnist, would take Mrs. Lear for old money international. But then, what does Taki know about Nevada?

Restrained Gaming Executive: Once upon a time, appropriate dress for a Player was string tie, pearlescent shirt and Graham/McKay vest w/cigar and eyeshade. No more. Ever since conglomerates, conglomerates and mega and macro conglomerates moved into gaming, and ever since gaming execs took up the commute from McCarran and Cannon International to the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Harry

Parker's Western Wear has taken a back seat to Saville Row. David Rockefeller looks downright shabby in comparison to hotel/casino heavies. If you're new in town and you want to meet a serious decision maker in the state's largest industry, just follow the faint pin stripes. Gaming execs drive Mercedes', do not smoke, exercise regularly at the command of their tailors and cardiologists, tell time by gold Rolex (worn with the face on the bottom of the wrist), never allow waiters to pour sour cream on their baked potatoes, and write everything down in tiny, morocco-bound, English-made notebooks.

When they travel, Nevada corporate office dwellers are frequently mistaken for American financial representatives of Arab sheikhdoms or German holding companies.

Frequently, they are.

Off Duty Prospectors: Sheep boots—the rounded ones that look like they were processed by the wrong end of a junkyard crusher, all scruffy, filthy, gummy and covered by about two million years of excreta—that's where the Right Stuff for off duty prospectors begins. Add three quarters of an inch of hard wire beard (women not excluded) grizzled like the coat of a wise old

Scottie. The Right Stuff neckerchief—a sine qua non—is one that survived the Little Big Horn and hasn't had the blood stains taken out of it. Ultimately, the Right Stuff prospector can be distinguished from the counterfeit by the aura and degree of aging of the long-sleeved, wool underwear shirt that is indispensable. Off-duty prospectors drive 1952 Chevy pickups. Off-duty energy source prospectors live in Houston and buy mail order from Neiman Marcus.

Nature-Loving Backpacker: The great futurist Peter Schwartz is often seen poking around Nevada backcountry in an old plain shirt and combat boots. Since he is also often seen poking around in the Himalayas, he's far too serious a backpacker to take as an example. If you see a man (or woman) minding his own business and scrambling over rocks, assume you've encountered an anomaly: a backpacker who doesn't want you to know he's a backpacker. The all-show-no-go backpacker is the citizen we're concerned with here. He is easy to spot with his flat black Jansport pack, L.L. Bean Sportif Stretch trail shorts (with 12 pockets), Patagonia canvas shirt in a restrained redwood shade, thinsulate underwear and Gore-Tex boots. He

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will be carrying a Hammacher Schlemmer windchill meter in one hand, and in the other a bag of a disgusting mix of dehydrated nuts and berries, which he crams into his mouth at every other step.

You measure a man by what he eats.

A Nature-Loving Backpacker is a Gorp Gobbler.

Utility Company Corporado: You won't see this rare species often; some folk have spent decades with binoculars and Standard and Poor's Spotters Guide waiting to catch just one glimpse. But if a two-tone Seville with an extra large chrome surround on its grille almost runs you over, put aside your terror and try and get the merest image of its driver; it just *might* be a UCC. One hand will be on the steering wheel, one hand will be held out the window, palm cupped, waiting for a stream of golden coins to descend from the heavens. The driver will be dressed in a pastel suit made of polyester, vinyl, polyvinyl, polyvinyl chloride or am-besol. It will be patterned in high school referee stripes, Westernbancard checks or backgammon spears. The Seville will always have at least 18 persons in the back seat, all accountants. The car will be wearing a bumper sticker reading, "Have You Hugged Your Kids Today?"

Easterner: Think of Barbara Walters in designer jeans, spiked heels, a Bloomingdale's-bought hat that looks like a cross between Lily Dache, Waltzing Matilda and Hoss Cartwright, 15-inch fingernails the color of sheep dip and a turquoise belt buckle that wraps around the waist and goes from throat to ankle.

Think of Andy Warhol in the same.

Best way to tell an Easterner is to walk behind him/her. For some reason, people who live in the Atlantic Corridor like to sew other people's names on the seat of their pants.

Easterners are uneasy in Nevada and it shows. Most don't know how to act, much less react, on the frontier. When it comes to doing things in Nevada, Easterners are comfortable at only two tasks. Spending money and going home.

Both are Right Stuff things for them to do. □

Leon Mandel's latest books are *Fast Lane Summer* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, June 1981, and *Gambling Man: The Life and Times of William Fisk Harrah* (Doubleday, January 1982). He is a regular Nevada Magazine contributor.

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Old Spook



My friend Al Hernig insisted that I could catch that uncatchable wild horse. Old Spook was his name, and around the Cortez Valley he was a legend. By Harry E. Webb

Most mustangers referred to him as The Walker Black. Indian Dicey called him Old Spook. I called him, at one time or another, everything in a mule skinner's vocabulary.

I refer to him as a mustang, but he was no more mustang than a thousand others around him. He was a little of everything from the early Spanish pony to our modern Morgans; some Hackney, a bit of Arabian. But, regardless of size and ancestry, if they were wild, to us they were *mustangs*.

This story had its inception, I suppose, when I emerged from the Hay Ranch barn cussing like a bogged-down freighter and shaking my rawhide riata which had suddenly acquired as many ends as a centipede has legs. A

blankety-blank pack rat had chewed it to pieces as it hung from my saddle astride a manger. To further compound the loss it was the only rope on the ranch. It was then I noticed our weekly stage halted in the road and the driver, Charley Walker, was hunched forward on the seat arguing with my friend Al Hernig.

"Hell's fire, man," I heard Charley say, "might as well send a blind man out to catch bullet-hawks with a dip-net!"

Charley was an old mustanger of few words but when he did speak you could bet your boots it was gospel.

"Harry'll get him," came Al's voice. Such definiteness made Charley sit bolt upright.

"The hell he will!"

"The hell he won't!" returned Al with finality.

Reckon I'd best introduce Al so you'll know what I'm talking about. He was one of the Philadelphia Hernigs of dairy fame, and like many city fellows was nuts over horses, saddles and such doodads. Also, when he took a notion for something he got it; there was a heap of mule in Al. If he called a Clydesdale an Arabian By Gum it was an *Arabian*. Also, or worse, he had a hero-worship complex and I was *it*. I had met Al when I was East with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and he thought I could do anything the book called for.

For instance, I was hardly back on Nevada soil, where I was working for the Hat outfit, when he wrote asking me to get some elk tushes as he'd joined the Elks Lodge. For a while this had me stumped. There wasn't any such critters in the whole state and here I'm supposed to shoot him a couple *right now*. Only things in my neck of the desert was Indians, mustangs and whirlwinds. But, as always, I was Johnny-at-the-rathole and through a Jackson Hole friend Al had his molars in jig time.

Anyway, another year had rolled around and here he was on a look-see around the West. He'd expected to have to fight Indians every step to the ranch but he figured it was worth it for the three day stopover. And, having everything else—he already had a Tennessee Walker—he'd taken a notion for a mustang to ship home. Hence his pestering the stage driver to sell him one. Charley had an overabundance of them. To him they were just so many junipers. Buy one and he'd throw in two, all for ten dollars. Providing, that is, *you* caught them. But being a mustanger, and square, he didn't want to unload one on Al. He'd never take advantage of a tenderfoot. Oh, wouldn't he?

"Harry'll get him," persisted Al. "Just because you guys can't catch him doesn't mean *he* can't." Al was getting himself, and me, too, more disliked by the minute. Charley was shouting something about the so-and-so dudes as he wrapped the lines around the brake staff. I meandered over.

"What's th' rumpus?" I asked.

"None-atall," said Charley, stuffing something in his pocket. "I've just sold this (Charley described him) the Owyhee Injun Reservation, is all!"

"What's the deal, anyway?" I asked Al, when Charley was out of earshot.

"I just bought a horse," he said, hopping about. "I offered him a hundred dollars," he all but whispered, as if it was a downright steal, "and he finally took it."

"Any particular one?"

"Old Spook," he said triumphally. "The one—"

"Well the jumped up—!" I began, then thought better of it. "Al," I said, "you don't know a mustang from a load of hay or you wouldn't give a plugged nickel for one. At least, not *that* one! Now who in hell's gonta catch him?"

"You are," he said, as if it was as good as done. Well, I'd asked for it by regaling him half the night with wild yarns about this mysterious black pinto that roamed the ridges and coulees of the great Cortez Valley.

He wasn't exactly a pinto at all. Outside of a white head and white stockings to his knees and hocks he was jet black. Instead of being chalk-eyed like most "paints" his right eye was black as coal. That is, until he got mad. Then it glowed like a big ruby.

Indian Dicey had given me Old Spook's pedigree and the amazing story of his early life. It was an unbelievable story, yet one confirmed by other mustangers.

Old Spook was the foal of an ordinary "broom-tail" and sired by a hotblood stallion that had escaped the Dean Ranch to mingle with the Cortez Valley mustangs two years before he had been recaptured. Charley Walker and some Indian mustangers had corralled the pinto's band and for the promise of a pint of whisky Dicey had volunteered to ride the queer-marked stallion that had been the object of many a long, hard chase. Forefooted and saddled while he was down, Dicey had stepped aboard.

With murder in his ruby eye and dynamite in his feet this belling critter had gone "higher'n the moon and swapped ends faster and wickeder" than anything his small audience had ever witnessed. Finally the latigo broke and Dicey and saddle came down on top of the stockade corral. Someone forefooted and "busted" the raging animal and in a few minutes he was wearing Charley's Bar H brand and minus his reproductive glands. The instant his feet were free he leapt up, landed on the seven foot fence, hung there a moment before tumbling out and streaking for the hills.

That was in 1906. The black's bridle teeth showed him to be over five years old at the time. Although he was seen

at intervals and chased aplenty he escaped being corralled again until July 1910 when, by a lucky break, Dicey, Shelton Raine and Joe Walker, brother of Charley, slapped the gate shut on him at the Tom Jewell ranch in Pine Valley.

Once again the suggestion was made, augmented by a jug of spirits, that someone "scratch out" the so and so right then and there. The lot fell to Shelton and in a matter of minutes the pinto was forefooted and saddled, and with Shelton all set the fireworks began. But the glossy 10-year-old had profited by his years, and before many jumps Shelton dropped his shot-loaded quirt and went for leather. Then came a terrific crash as the gate flew to splinters,

“



Old Spook had me spotted instantly. He whirled, circled and tore through the mares as if he had to be in Texas by sundown.

”

and with his rider left among the wreckage the black was out and away once more. This time, however, he didn't get far. Hitting a barbed wire fence he slid along the top strand until a post sheared off and he fell squealing and kicking in the tangle of sawing wires. By the time Jewell and Dicey got to him, his pumping life stream had already run 20 feet down the adobe slope.

Jumping on his gory, flailing head Dicey at last got him by the under jaw and nose, but his bull-dogging was wasted energy; the cyclone of a moment before was fast sinking into helplessness from loss of the hissing blood. From his

right breast to the top of his neck was a gash you could lay your arm in, and unable to stomach the sight Jewell held a wobbly 32-20 Colt and sent a bullet through the black's neck right behind the ears. The saddle off, they returned to the corral and bolstered themselves with generous swigs from the gallon jug.

"Now," someone said, cussing, "we'll have to wrangle a team in the morning and drag his carcass away!"

When morning came Jewell stood on the porch in his drawers gazing about. Then he let out a startled yell that aroused the others. Unbelieving, they hurried partly clad to investigate. Even though they'd consumed a lot of whisky there sure wasn't any mistake about *this*. There were the weaving splotches of blood leading up a sandy wash to prove it hadn't been a dream. Numerous wallowed places showed where the animal had fallen, lain and risen to stagger on. Making no effort to overtake him, the three hastened back to finish the jug. Well, one good thing, they wouldn't have to wrangle that team!

Months later the black was jumped out of a gulch on Stafford Mountain, bordering Cortez Valley. But this time there wasn't that seal-sleekness to the coat nor the beautiful arched neck that had caused mustangers to halt their mounts and gaze in open-mouth admiration. He was now bony and shaggy. It no longer mattered, though. All who knew of his deep scars, and few didn't, were no longer interested. The only interest was the wonderment as to how he could possibly have survived not only the tremendous loss of blood but Jewell's bullet also. His survival became legend.

As the months passed he was unmolested in so far as mustangers were concerned. Nor were they interested in the chunky roan always seen trailing close upon the black's heels. Sometimes they would be flushed out of some coulee but more often the two would be sighted atop some peak, as if alert for their enemy on horseback. Let a rider a mile off turn in their direction and they'd be gone. This uncanny wariness came near being their undoing, though. Mustangers and cow hands who thought they had a fast mount took to giving them a whirl just for the fun of it, then finally in dead earnest. The two inseparable geldings had become a cactus in every mustanger's boot. If it wasn't a single foe disrupting their browsing it was finding themselves fogged to hell and back by whole relays of determined riders. These were the

tough customers to elude, but "Old Spook," as Dicey now called him, had become a past-master at dodging and sneaking.

One March day, when mustang vitality is at low ebb, half a dozen riders were scattered at strategic points, with Willow Corral Pass the stake-out for the *remuda*. That day their grain-fed mounts had forced the two weary-legged fugitives to near run their hearts out before night ended the chase. At least 75 muddy, slushy miles had been put behind them and if there is any such thing as a "horse laugh" those mustangers must have received it that night. Had Old Spook but known it, though, his escape was by the mere skin of his teeth. Two riders, who had lately turned to killing mustangs for their hides, yanked carbines from their scabbards just as the staggered victors topped a ridge but a few yards away. But a third man, with a six-shooter in his fist, and a sense of fair play in his gizzard, slid his mount to a halt and hit the ground.

"I'll kill th' first son-of-a— that plugs one o' them horses!" he yelled. So the steaming renegades were spared to put the shelter of a hill behind them and drop down into the night.

Summers and winters passed with other pitfalls aplenty to guard against; the most subtle of all being the secret corral that, overnight, sprung up in some canyon, its flaring wings hidden in the hillside bushes. But Old Spook outsmarted this by leading his roan partner along high divides and never running in gulches or canyons when crowded by his enemies. He also learned to forsake water for days on end when water holes were "flagged" by mustangers. But now, on this August day in 1915, let us return to my friend Al.

All afternoon and well into the new day I argued with him that I couldn't catch the black, even if I had the best mount in the country let alone the worst. The only horse on the ranch where I was stationed that could be called a mount was a blue roan I used to chore around on as I watched over a field full of brood mares and their colts. "Blue" was a *ridgeling* and was mine to worry over for the simple reason no one on the home ranch would have him around. For the edification of those not familiar with these half-eunuchs of horsedom let me say that they are the pure essence of worthlessness. They'll haze every mare to a whisper and chew the backs off any gelding they can outrun. And, that not being fault enough,

he was *ringtail*. Before a ringtail horse can be jumped out to head a critter he must first wind up his tail before his brain seems to grasp the idea that he also has legs.

Anyway, here I was with old Blue for a mount, a hunk of rat-eaten rawhide for a lariat and I'm to jog 20 miles or so to *find* and *catch* an uncatchable mustang. Might as well try holding back the dawn, though, as to argue with Al, so to keep the peace and convince him I had at least tried I'd go off somewhere and lay in the shade of a cut-bank 'til evening then come in with a big "No luck" tale.

It now being 2 a.m. I decided I might as well feed Blue some rolled barley, drink some java and with a biscuit in my pocket get going. Nothing like an early

zons. Then I thought of my mount and the absurdity of the whole business. What a joke!

Suddenly my gaze was riveted on a tiny speck that had topped a rise a mile across the valley. Mustangs. I started to move on. Then the huddled, drab picture changed color. Just how, was not perceptible. Yet something had changed it from *just* mustangs. It looked like—by the powers of Mount Kelly, it was! No mistaking that blaze of white! My heart raced as I bent low over Blue's motionless neck. Then I had to laugh. Times on end I had come in close contact with this wily critter when I had a top mustang-horse between my knees instead of a mount that would be as useless as a plow mule.



Old Spook outsmarted the canyon traps by leading his roan partner along high divides. He also learned to foresake water for days on end when water holes were 'flagged' by mustangers.

DRAWINGS BY CRAIG SHEPPARD

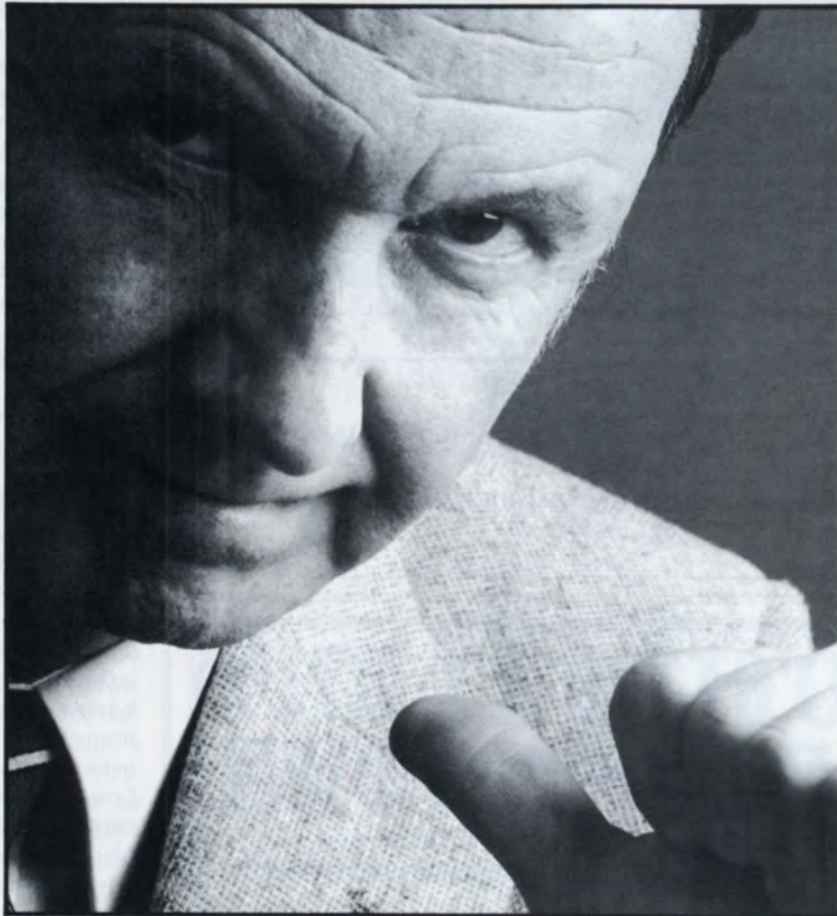
start. It would also look pretty much legitimate to Al.

A smoky moon was sliding behind the high Cortez Range to my west when a sudden desire gripped me to cross over and take a look-see down in the valley, but long before we had gained the summit the east was already a blaze of fire. Going to be hottern'n hell with all the blowers going, I told myself. Ten o'clock found us on the shimmering Cortez Valley floor with Blue panting like a lizzard and me asking myself what I'm supposed to do now. Hunt some shade, I reckoned. Then Al's unshakable faith in me began taking effect and I found my eyes scanning distant hori-

The little group would mill around, pause, then come forward a few yards. That was Old Spook's method of looking things over. What puzzled me was the fact that he had taken up with any bunch. They came forward slowly, warily. A good thing they were looking into the sun. Growing bolder they began playing and scampering like kids as they galloped somewhat towards me on a trail that led to a mud spring near some dilapidated buildings.

When a depression hid them from view I lost no time in getting behind a small knoll where sly peeks told me of their progress until they were abreast of me but a few yards away. But, I had

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been mistaken. Old Spook was the only wild one in the bunch. All the rest were gentle Morgan mares and a few colts belonging to Ed Thomas, the former owner of the tumble-down premises a short distance away. With his glossy mane waving out from the high arched neck he was more regal than ever I had seen him. They passed so close I could see the white splotch on his neck, a reminder of where the 32-20 slug had passed through. I wondered about his roan partner; probably dropped by some hide-hunter's rifle.

Old Spook was plenty pinched in the flanks yet he showed no signs of sweat and this revealed a story as if I had witnessed it. Indians, preparing to catch mustangs, had flagged all the water holes around Stafford Mountain, Willow Corral and Scotch Gulch. For lack of other material they do this "flagging" by uprooting large sagebrush and standing them, roots up, about the water holes. Mustangs give these terrifying objects a wide berth. After a few days Mr. Injun slips out, removes the brush and is ready to rope any mustang that's fool enough to "tank up."

The sight of those Morgan mares made me want to shout in glee. They'd been corralled, pampered and petted by their owner until you could almost walk up to them on the open range. Oh, for a decent mount! Such a chance came but once in a lifetime and this was *it*. The horses were nearing the abandoned homestead so, there being no cover between us, I might as well show myself. I recalled having seen a small sheep corral near the spring and I began laying plans. The mares were on home ground now and should be easy to corral in any sort of pen.

Mounting, I came from behind the knoll. Just as I expected! Old Spook had me spotted instantly. He whirled, circled, came back a few jumps, then tore through the mildly interested mares as if he had to be in Texas by sundown. I moved closer. The corral was still there and the mares headed for it as if used to being there. Old Spook dashed back into the bunch and I whipped up. Never let a mustang slow up. That's when their noggin starts working. Before I realized it we were abreast of the open end corral and on past it. I whipped and spurred, and the mares turned easily, only to dodge past the opening going the other way. It was whip, cuss and gee-haw Blue around until horses were going in every direction, with Old Spook running rings around the whole layout. Oh,

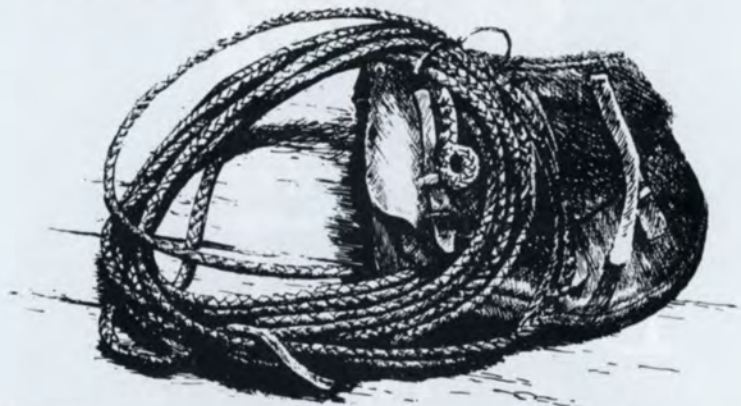
God. If I could just scatter out! Two 16-foot panels had been removed from the corral but the mares simply wouldn't pause long enough to see the hole. And still, for some reason, Old Spook stayed with them. It was uncanny. I firmly believed it ordained that I was to capture him.

Spur, whip, shout and turn, with the dust so thick I collided with a cow as she dashed out of the water hole. Dust so dense I wondered if Old Spook was still with us. He was! I cussed, cajoled and pleaded. Poor old Blue was so winded, so slow in turning that I came near jumping off and going it afoot. Then, without making sense, Old Spook streaked through the opening with the mares hot on his heels and Blue right among them. Tired as he was, this blasted ridgeling was running true to form and letting sex crowd all else out of his head. Seconds later, what with fighting Blue to keep him away from the mares, I had us fenced in. So far, so good!

I unbuckled my riata. Damnation! Never expecting to have any need of it I had, however, brought along this 20 foot piece of the honda end. As I tied the end fast to the saddle fork I cussed every pack rat ever to be born. I'd have to work fast before Old Spook got his bearings. Trouble soon commenced, though. The instant I eased Blue toward the crowding mares he threw his mouth wide open and lunged for Old Spook who knocked down a couple of colts and cleared the fence. But he stopped just as suddenly as he had departed, so jerking back a panel I was soon whipping at an angle around him. Hearing a commotion I turned to see the mares coming hell-bent right in my dust. By now Blue was so addled he could only ring his tail and trot, but I somehow got the band back in the corral. How? It was one of the world's mysteries. This time Blue went "cold jawed" and plowed in among the squealing, kicking mass and had his forelegs over a mare's ridgepole when my kneecap stopped a pair of hind feet. Then, when I was bent double from pain, another old biddy almost kicked my face off. I'll never know how I got there but I found myself on the ground far outside the corral with the mares and my quarry still inside.

Swinging Blue around like one would a sawlog in a pond I spurred back and got the panels wired up. But every time I started toward Old Spook he would tear through the bunch and threaten to hop the fence. How in

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Sam Hill was I to get close enough to snare him with a 20 foot rope? That was the problem. With the tiny loop ready to be tossed I eased ahead and when Old Spook's eye told me I had reached the limit of sneaking I socked in the spurs and threw. But instead of the one quick jump needed to shorten the distance Blue only went "oomph" and rung his tail. Old Spook done a lot of milling around but didn't jump the fence so I dabbed another loop that bounced off his ears. If he just had horns, I told myself after a dozen throws, I'd have had him easy! There simply wasn't enough loop left to go over his head.

Then it happened. A loop no larger than a dinner plate went smack over his nose and up over his ears. I had him! Hoo-ray for me! Hoo-ray for me! Just then about half the mares in the corral got their bellies over the rope and were taking Blue, Spook and most of the corral with them. When the air cleared he was still tearing around on the end of the rope and the next oversized problem was to build a hackamore on him that would stay put. With a decent mount under me I could have "busted" him in short order, but after trying out every trick I knew luck favored me and he got tangled up and went down. At last a makeshift hackamore was on him and I stood back and took happy stock of conditions. By now my knee was as big as a County Fair pumpkin, my clothes were like a hula dancer's skirt and my busted lips stuck out like the bloody snout of a razorback hog. But, man, was I happy!

Now it was poor old Blue's job to drag him home and for the next five miles we played leapfrog with each other. If he wasn't up in the saddle with me he was heaving back and leading about as easy as a plow under a foot of sod. Well, if Blue could hold out and lug him up the mountain we'd be hunky-dory once we got to the top. We'd have a downhill pull from there plumb to the ranch. But the steady drag was starting to cause trouble. The half-hitches were cutting into Old Spook's nose, shutting off his wind. Wasn't much I could do, though, but keep going.

Blue was staggered tired as we neared the Cortez summit. It took frequent rests for him to navigate at all, and when I'd urge him on his tail would go round like a windmill. I'd been guarding against this but it happened! His tail got over the rope and was clamped down on it. Now if there's one thing

that will rejuvenate a fagged-out cayuse this is it. Like an explosion Blue's nose went between his hind legs and with Old Spook snorting and kicking we took back down the mountain in 20-foot leaps. Between the bucking and the rope sawing into my thigh I could neither stay on nor get off, but the problem solved itself. We all got tangled up and went rolling over and over.

The next thing I knew the rope was parted at the saddle fork and Old Spook, now spooked aplenty, was tearing down the mountain. At sight of this my heart sank so low I never even thought of giving chase. Wasn't any use. He was a gonner this time! But it just goes to show you what luck can do. No sooner had he hit the flat when he went end over end and began cutting all sorts of didoes. Hopping on my one good leg to where Blue had quit rolling I crawled on and wasn't long in getting to where Old Spook was turning back flipflops. It was plain he'd be strangled in the next few seconds for the loops around his nose had cut off his breathing.

In roping wild horses on the range we become hardened to the sickening sound and sight of a strangling horse, but to see this beautiful animal swaying and gasping for just one tiny bit of precious air was too much for me. We had all cursed, threatened and admired him at one time or another but the memory of all his cunning, his stamina, his continuous struggle for survival, now brought forth an overwhelming surge of pity. Disregarding the flailing feet that tried to batter in my skull, my fingers fought to loosen the nose hitch before he pitched forward. I would gladly have cut the rope and let go but even my knife had disappeared. Gradually the rope began giving and with a final heave it came free just as a tremor ran through him and he lurched forward, his head and me under him.

Perhaps it was sheer imagination but I could have sworn there was a light of gratitude in his puffed, blood-shot eyes as air and life rushed back into him and he just lay there, legs twitching, sides heaving. It was then I noticed Blue had near been scalped in his roll down the mountain and, even though he had done everything wrong and wasn't worth the lead it would take to kill him, I hurriedly anchored the riata once again around the pommel then put my arms around Blue's neck and hugged it to my throbbing face. There's something about a horse that

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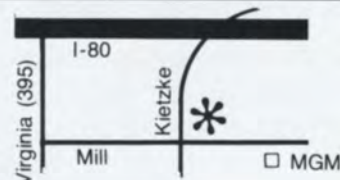
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makes a feller do those things.

Travel was slow on the homeward journey with me groaning every step and fearful that at any moment Blue's tail might get us kettled off again. But I can say this for Old Spook, he never once let the lead rope so much as tighten.

A bright, midnight moon found us back at the ranch, the corral gate wide open as if there was no doubt that I'd bring home the bacon. Well, I'd sure delivered the goods and expected an effusion of praise and back-slapping. None came. Only: "God what a beauty!" Al kept saying as if reciting a litany. Finally: "Have any trouble getting him, Harry?" My mind was murdering him but I mumbled a nonchalant "Not a bit; easy as pie."

"I knew you wouldn't," he agreed. "Now tomorrow I'll break him gentle and ship him home when I go." Oh, "what fools we mortals be," thought I.

Al didn't break Old Spook "tomorrow." He couldn't get any closer than the tip of the bronc reins, much less mount him. But Spook didn't mind it a bit when I petted and handled him. He even seemed to like me as I hobbled about and led him around.

I again handed Al the reins, but Old Spook jumped past him and kicked him in the stomach. I'd have to ear him down, that was certain, even though I hated to disillusion Al. He maintained the horse wouldn't buck if he could just get on him. Getting a mouthful of ear I pulled Spook's head down while Al worked his shoe in the stirrup and got aboard. When I let go Old Spook let out a squall like a butchered pig and his belly went higher than my head. As I have said, Al was stubborn. But after four bad falls, the last time landing on his back on the snubbing post, he called it quits and I fell "heir" to Old Spook. Al was mighty glad to be rid of him at a loss of a hundred dollars and a lot of skin.

Perhaps this narrative should have its ending here, for to give Old Spook his dues would fill a book. But he deserves a bit of eulogy.

He was easily broken and in two months was running mustangs alongside the finest mounts in the country. Many a fine mustang fell victim to my loop, but Spook was so fearless on the steep downgrades that it would make your hair curl to let him have his head.

During the many years I rode him he never got over his aversion to upsidedown sagebrush. Mere sight of one and he'd swap directions like a

rubber ball thrown against a rock wall. Being thick through the chest gave him a strong heart, and although you could see the big artery pulsating in that deep neck gash he was tireless and indestructible. In the 10 years I trapped for the Government he carried me over 30,000 recorded miles. His lot was hard. Yet, in the middle 1930s he still looked and acted like a six-year-old. To be sure, his eyes weren't what they used to be; he now saw upended sage where none existed and his moods were unpredictable. As Charley Russell once said, he'd "kick your head off one minute and help you look for it the next."

In 1938 I was joking with Chas. B. Sexton—General Manager of the Eureka-Nevada Railway—that I'd bet him \$20 Old Spook could outrun his train to Eureka. The train—termed the Slim Princess by the natives—and roadbed had fallen into such disrepair that the schedule had long been nine hours between Palisade and Eureka, its terminus, a distance of 81 miles.

Perhaps I would have lost my bet but I still think not. However, before we were to compete, Fate suddenly stepped in in two forms. The railway—locomotives, roundhouse and track, in fact every piece of metal—was sold to the Japanese for scrap. Then, as the wreckers were pulling up the last joint of rail on the Palisade end, Old Spook also was no more.

With six fine saddle horses in the field I took Old Spook—he being the handiest—to run in some work stock from the range. The job wasn't as easy as expected and before the bunch was corralled my mount had to get down to some real "mustanging." It was in the corral I noticed Old Spook was a mass of lather and staggered as he walked.

Tossing my saddle on the ground I watched him dropping down and getting up, all the symptoms of colic, and when the usual remedy failed to help I headed for a veterinary friend in Elko, 50 miles distant.

Doc Henderson guessed it to be a ruptured blood vessel, probably in the stomach, as this was quite common among old horses, and while he offered no hope he urged full speed on the return. Doc owned and loved horses. But we were too late. His diagnosis had been correct.

As I knelt beside that old, scarred head I looked up through the swimming haze to ask Doc something. But he had turned his back and was fumbling for his handkerchief. □

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SHOWDOWN IN RENO

Low flying and high drama at the Reno Air Races.

The longest running air race in the sport's history resumes at the Stead air field 10 miles north of Reno on September 18-20. The Reno Air Races, first held in 1964 on a dirt airstrip on Bill Harrah's ranch, moved to the former Stead Air Force Base in 1966. The annual national championship now brings more than 20,000 race fans to Reno, and a purse of more than \$250,000 attracts top flyers from all over the country.

The fans come to watch tiny Sport Biplanes and International Formula Modified (IFM) racers zip around the six-mile inner course at speeds over 200 mph, and to take in the sight of high-powered World War II fighters—Mustangs, Bearcats and Corsairs—racing the Unlimited 15-mile course at speeds

well over 400 mph.

Previous races have seen high drama enacted over the desert. Last year a P-51 Mustang named "Jeannie" defied all odds to win the Unlimited championship. One week earlier the airplane had suffered severe damage in a landing accident at Van Nuys, California. But Dave Zeuschel's intrepid team worked round-the-clock to repair the plane, and it reached the Stead field just five minutes before the close of the official arrival period. The airplane was cautiously qualified that afternoon.

While other competitors had gone flat-out on the first day to qualify, "Jeannie" had to fight her way into the finals by winning races on both Friday and Saturday, placing extra strain on the highly modified Merlin engine. In



U.S. AIR FORCE

Fantasies in Flight

The Thunderbirds of the U.S. Air Force put on a dazzling display of rolls, loops and flat-out flying at the annual air show at Nellis A.F.B. on October 3. The jets take off at midday, and admission is free.

the title race, however, pilot Mac McClain jumped to the front, narrowly leading 1979 champion John Crocker through all six laps to the most Cinderella-like ending the races had ever seen.

Drama has been mixed with near-tragedy, too, as in the case of the highly-modified Mustang sponsored by the Red Baron Racing Team in 1979. The Red Baron held the world air speed record for piston-engined airplanes, 499.875 mph, set only weeks before at Tonopah.

During the race the Red Baron was eating the exhaust of John Crocker's "Sumthin' Else." As the airplanes roared down the homestretch, Red Baron pilot Steve Hinton radioed he'd

(Continued on page 57)



Nevada's events, shows and celebrations are listed by region as a speedy reference for weekend trips and vacations.

SOUTH

ONGOING EVENTS

Las Vegas Mormon Fort Tours, Tues.-Sun.
Historic and Cultural Focus Tours, Las Vegas, 382-7198

Historic artifacts on display, Southern Nevada Museum, Henderson, and UNLV Museum of Natural History, Las Vegas

SEPTEMBER

Gallery Exhibits, thru Sept., stone sculpture by Hank Smith, mixed media by Melita Coombs, young people's exhibit & Roman, Egyptian, Ghandaran & Phoenician artifacts collection, Las Vegas Art Museum

Sculpture and Drawings, thru 25, exhibit by Mike McCollum, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas
Rub Outs, thru 30, visual art display by Susan Salaeh, Henderson Library

Pottery Show, 1-17 by Kim and Greg Kennedy, Charleston Heights Art Center, Las Vegas, info. 386-6383

Student Exhibit, 1-18, silkscreen, weaving, calligraphy, pottery, watercolor and oils, Reed Whipple Gallery, Las Vegas, info. 386-6211

Women's Body Building & Mr. America Championships, 3-5, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas

Pioche Labor Day, 4-7, daily events: wrist wrestling, swimming, horseshoes; 4: street dance; 5: bottle show, hay scramble, fashion show, king and queen crowning, firemen's dance; 6: pancake breakfast, cake walk, fireworks; 7: sunrise salute, parade, mining events, kids games

Nevada String Quartet, 6, concert, Flamingo Library, 2pm, Las Vegas

Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, 6-7, Sahara Hotel, Las Vegas

Captioned Film for the Deaf, 8, "101 Dalmatians," Flamingo Library, Las Vegas

Fall Blackjack Classic, 8-11, Sahara Hotel, Las Vegas

Billiards Championship, 8-14, Hacienda Hotel, Las Vegas

Jaycees State Fair, 9-13; daily: carnival, booths, home arts, photo & art exhibit, auto & boat show, music, magicians; special events: jello jump, tricycle race for adults, tug of war; Wed.-Fri. 4pm-midnight, Sat. noon-midnight, Sun. noon-10pm; info. 457-8832, Las Vegas Convention Center

Merv Griffin Show Taping, 11-15, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas

International 50 & 75 Mile Ski Marathon, 12-13, Boulder Beach, 8am, Lake Mead

Ukrainian and Hungarian Music, 14, lecture, slides, recordings, free, 4401 Kay Place, Las Vegas

Welterweight Boxing Championship Fight, 16, Sugar Ray Leonard vs. Thomas Hearns, tickets \$50-500, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas



Just Whistlin' Mendelssohn

For those who can't afford a concert harp, or lack the virtuosity to play a violin, there's a cheap and simple instrument, with amazing musical potential, available right under their noses.

Whistling has graduated from cat-call to concert hall. No longer just a casual pastime, whistling is now a respected form of art. For example, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra employs a full-time resident whistler who puckers up while the rest of the orchestra gets in tune.

Carson hosts its annual International Whistle-Off on September 26 and 27. Famous whistlers like Jason Serinus (above), who dubs for Woodstock in Peanuts movies, will join not-so-famous whistlers from around the globe. They'll be there as solos, pairs and groups to compete in categories from classical to country.—Diana Magleby

Nevada's Oldest Rodeo

When Winnemucca throws a party, the whole town gets involved. And you can bet they'll have it all together this coming Labor Day Weekend for their annual Winnemucca Rodeo and Tri County Fair. A parade, 4-H livestock show and street dance heads the roster, but the focus of the celebration and pride of the town is the 56th annual PRCA rodeo, Nevada's oldest.

"Hello Dolly," 17-20, 24-27, Reed Whipple Center, Las Vegas

Coin & Stamp Show, 17-20, Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas

Raft Race, 19, Boulder Beach, 9am, Lake Mead
Schlachtfest, 19, German-American Clubhouse, 7pm, North Las Vegas, info. 649-8503

Pahrump Valley Harvest Festival, 19-20, parade 9am followed by rodeo, 4-H fair, display booths, gymkhana, BBQ and dance, Community Center, info. 727-5800

Creature Features in Ceramics, 20-Oct.16, art show, Reed Whipple Gallery, Las Vegas, info. 386-6211

World of Art, 20-27, demonstrations and displays by 60 artists, Boulevard Shopping Center, Las Vegas, info. 735-8268

Violin Concert, 23, Eugene Fodor, Ham Hall, UNLV, 8pm, Las Vegas

Fall Trapshooting Tournament, 23-27, Mint Gun Club, Las Vegas

Circus of the Stars, 24-Oct.7, TV taping, Sports Pavilion, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas

Professional Boxing, 24, Hacienda Hotel, Las Vegas

Babe Ms. Las Vegas Bikini Pageant, 27-Oct.1, Landmark Hotel

Art Exhibit, 27-Oct.25, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas

John Davidson Show Taping, 28-Oct.2, Las Vegas Hilton

"The Country Wife," 28-29, Judy Bayley Theatre, 8pm, UNLV, Las Vegas

Las Vegas Chamber Players Recital, 29, Virko Baley, piano, 8pm, Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas

"Midsummer Night's Dream," 30, Judy Bayley Theatre, 8pm, UNLV, Las Vegas

OCTOBER

"Waiting for Godot," 1, Judy Bayley Theatre, 8pm, UNLV, Las Vegas

Art Reception, 1, for disabled artists, 7:30-9:30pm, Lorenzi Park Adaptive Center, Las Vegas

Water Colors and Oils, 1-31, by Jim Heller, Henderson Library, reception Oct.3, info. 565-9247

"Il Compieglio: A Venetian Comedy," 2, Judy Bayley Theatre, 8pm, UNLV, Las Vegas

Annual D Street Festival, 3, music, dance, arts and crafts, D and Jackson Streets, Las Vegas

Air Show, 3, Thunderbirds flying demonstration, midday, free, Nellis A.F.B.

LAS VEGAS GRAND PRIX

Auto racing's most glittering spectacle comes to Nevada this fall.

Race cars faster than a politician's handshake shimmering in every color of the rainbow; women so beautiful they would put Helen of Troy in a bread line; billion dollar corporate sponsors opening hospitality tents and serving caviar, foie gras, hummingbird's eyebrows and Alka Seltzer; champagne flowing like, er, champagne; drivers dressed like moon walkers strutting through the crowd with the panache of bullfighters.

The Grand Prix Circus is coming to town.

Town is Las Vegas. The place is Caesars Palace. The date is October 17.

The Grand Prix Circus is something else. Begin with the drivers. Every one is young, every one paid enough to keep your average royal family in ermine for a century. And talent? Of the 100 million or so licensed drivers in the U.S.—of which perhaps 25,000 are licensed racing drivers—there are exactly nine, 9, drivers considered good enough to race grand prix cars. There

are smaller numbers from Austria, England, Holland, France, Germany, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Italy and Canada; in all, perhaps only 50 drivers in the world are sufficiently talented and brave to play in this highest of auto racing leagues.

The cars are enormously sophisticated, hugely expensive devices capable of going from a stop to 100 mph in less than four seconds and then continuing on to 200 mph in another four. Teams are sponsored by Middle Eastern airlines, soft core porn magazines, cigarette companies—you name it; but it takes about \$5 million to open.

Grands prix carry so much prestige that only one is allowed per year per country; the exception is the U.S. (which has two, the Long Beach and Caesars Palace races) and that is only because of its size.

But those are statistics. What cannot be measured is the electricity, the sheer intensity of a grand prix weekend. It stuns the senses, it overloads imagina-

tion. It inundates participants and viewers with emotions so pungent, so strong, so addictive that the glitterati travel the whole circuit from Brazil to South Africa to Spain to England yes, to Las Vegas, because all the money and glamour of their routine superstar lives can produce nothing to equal it.

Grand Prix Weekend. People have been known to pawn their children to go to just one.

On October 17, 1981, it will be in our front yard.—Leon Mandel

Tickets are \$50, \$75, \$100, \$150 and \$250. They are good for time trials and practice Thursday and Friday and for the race Saturday on the specially built track at Caesars. A \$50 ticket will get you a grandstand seat on the north straightaway, but race officials say every seat will have an unobstructed view of the entire 2.2-mile track, a rarity in grand prix racing. You can also purchase a one-day garage pass for an additional \$10.

Boulder City Art Festival, 3-4, Bicentennial & Government Parks, 10am-5pm

Nevada String Quartet, 4, concert, 2pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas

Faculty Recital, 6, Carol Kimball, mezzo-soprano, 8pm, free, Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas

"Mon Uncle D'Amerique," 7, film, French subtitled, 7:30pm, \$20 for nine films in series, Red Rock Theatre, Las Vegas

Oktoberfest, 10, Sahara Hotel, 7pm, Las Vegas
Las Vegas Chamber Players Recital, 13, Nancy Shade, soprano, 8pm, Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas

Captioned Film for the Deaf, 13, "Airport 77," 7pm, Flamingo Library, Las Vegas

Henderson Expo, 16-18, carnival, food booths, exhibits, entertainment, Mini & Little Miss Expo contests, info. 565-8951

Grand Prix, 17, international auto race, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas

Bluegrass Music Pick-Out, 17, noon to dark, free, Lorenzi Park, Las Vegas

J & B Gold Putter Championship, 17-18, LPGA stars, Desert Inn & Country Club, Las Vegas

University Musical Symphonic Orchestra, 18, free, 2pm, Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas

Gordon MacRae Golf Classic, 18-21, Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas

Slam-Am Invitational Golf Tournament, 18-22, Sands Hotel, Las Vegas

Nevada 81 Traveling Photography Show, 19-Nov.2, Las Vegas Art Museum



C.J. HADLEY



DAVID MOORE

Celebrating Two Nevada Anniversaries

Battle Born Nevada, A Scorpio, celebrates two anniversaries in Carson City with the help of thousands of residents and visitors on Nevada Day, October 31. The theme this year is "Silver Turns to Gold," which marks the 50th anniversary of gaming in the Silver State. The festivities include bed races, a huge parade, beard contests, fire department water fights and parties aplenty. The day is also the occasion for the World Championship Rock Drilling in which single jack drillers pound steel into granite in the tradition of the state's early mining camps. Shown here is last year's champ, Richard Bauer of Colorado. Bauer set a record of 11-5/32 inches in his 10-minute drill—which was equalled minutes later by defending champ Fred Andreasen of Carson City. This astounding result forced a drill-off, which Bauer won. Both competitors and a top-ranked field will be back this Nevada Day.

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THE LAS VEGAS FALL ANTIQUES SHOW & SALE

Hours: October 23, 24, 1-10 p.m.
October 25, 1-6 p.m.
Dunes Hotel
Las Vegas Strip



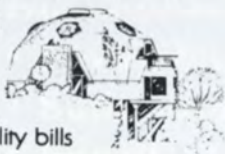
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Faculty Recital, 20, Yoshi Ishikawa, bassoon, free, 8pm, Ham Hall, UNLV, Las Vegas
Antique Gun & Knife Show, 21-27, Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas
"Life With Father," 22-Nov.1, comedy, Judy Bayley Theatre, 8pm, UNLV, Las Vegas
North Las Vegas Fairshow, 23-25, arts and crafts, Fiddler's Festival, balloon races and art exhibits, 8am, Community College, info. 642-9595

Fire Department Open House, 24, Boulder City, 2-4pm

Art Show, 24, for disabled artists, Meadows Mall, mall hours, Las Vegas, info. 386-6358
Maracaibo Symphony, 26, Ham Hall, 8pm, UNLV, Las Vegas

Professional Boxing, 29, Hacienda Hotel, Las Vegas

CENTRAL

SEPTEMBER

White Pine Pro-Am Golf Tournament, 12-13, county golf course, Ely, info. 289-8877
Indian Summer Fall Festival, 12-20, tournaments in archery, bridge, golf and tennis for the over-50 set, Ely, info. 289-3720

OCTOBER

Halloween Costume Party, 31, buffet dinner and prizes, Outlaw Bar, Baker, info. 234-7302

NORTH

SEPTEMBER

California Vicarians Fly-in, 4-7 Burbank, CA to Jackpot

Elko County Fair, 4-7, stockhorse events, 4-H horse shows, horse racing, livestock show, Intermountain Quarterhorse Futurity, bicentennial branding contest, exhibits and home arts, fairgrounds, info. 738-7135

Winnemucca Rodeo and Tri County Fair, 5-6; Buckaroo Breakfast, Nixon Lawn at 7am both days; rodeo 7pm both days; 5: livestock 4-H show 8am, fair open 10am, parade down Winnemucca Blvd. at 3:30pm, street dance 10pm-2am; 6: livestock 4-H auction and fair open 10am, BBQ, Nixon Lawn, 4pm; info. 623-2225

Cactus Pete's \$20,000 Amateur Golf Tournament, 8-12, Jackpot

Beth Quick Women's Golf Tournament, 9-10, Ruby View Golf Course, Elko

International Feedlot Team Roping Championship, 21-25, daily 9am, Horse Palace, Spring Creek

OCTOBER

Cactus Pete's Air Race, 3, from Great Falls, MT. to Jackpot

Antique Show, 8-11, Convention Center, Elko
Celebrity Golf Classic, 10, Ruby View Golf Course, Elko

Great Man-Mule Race, 18, Elko to Lamoille, 20 miles, meet at 9am at Stockmen's

Range Bull Sale, 19-20, fairgrounds, Elko
Capriola Days, 20-25, steer & calf roping competition, Spring Creek Horse Palace

High-Ho-Hump

The International Order of Camel Jockeys will again converge on the slopes of Sun Mountain in Virginia City on September 11-13. These brave lads and ladies will risk limb and life in an effort to pilot ungainly camels down the racetrack on E Street.

WEST

ONGOING EVENTS

Dayton Flea Market, weekends

Nevada State Museum, 8:30-4:30 daily, special 50 years of gaming exhibit, Carson City

Nevada Artists Assn. Gallery, 10-4 Mon.-Sat., 449 W. King St., Carson City

Art exhibitions, 2-6 Wed.-Mon., 559 D St., St. Phillip's Center Gallery, Hawthorne

Atmospherium-Planetarium, open daily, UNR, Reno, show info. 784-4811

Photographs & Memories, 9-5 Mon.-Sat., noon-5 Sun., Churchill County Museum, Fallon

Art Exhibit, Reno Tahoe Visitors Center, 135 N. Sierra, 10-2 Tues.-Sat.

Historic Artifacts, Lyon County Museum, 10-4 Sat., 1-4 Sun., Yerington

SEPTEMBER

Lake Tahoe Designer Showcase, thru 7, solar energy home tour, South Lake Tahoe, info. 916-577-0732

Nevada 81 Traveling Photography Show, thru 14, Lyon County Library, Yerington

Gold Panning & Dredging, 2, lecture, 8pm, Reno Gem & Mineral Society, 480 So. Rock Blvd., Sparks

Bird Watching, 5, Washoe Lake State Park, 8am, info. 885-4379

Fallon Junior Rodeo, 5-7, music nightly, 5-6: rodeo 9am, 7: Kiwanis cowboy breakfast 7am, Maine St., Lions Club Parade 10am, rodeo finals 1pm, fairgrounds, info. 423-6041

Art & Craft Fair, 5-6, food booths, craft booths & entertainment, free, Village Green, Incline Village

Silver State Marathon, 6, Davis Creek to Bowers Mansion, 26.2 mile run, 6:30am followed by picnic, music, hot air balloons, hang gliders, info. 825-0553

Pacific Crest Canoe & Portage Race, 6, Carnelian Bay, 9am, Lake Tahoe

Fall Blackjack Classic, 8-11, Sahara Hotel, Reno

"The Great Train Robbery" & "Dawn of the

Men, Women & Mules

A herd of joggers will dance along a path of fallen road apples between Elko and Lamoille during the 20-mile "Man-Mule Race" on Sunday October 18. The race, which began on a bet three years ago, has turned into one of Elko's largest benefits, raising both blisters and much needed money for a handicapped children's riding program.

Great Divide," 9, movies, Washoe Library, 7pm, free, Reno

Nevada State Fair, 9-13, carnival & exhibits daily; 9: opening ceremonies, C&W singer Suzanne Niles 8pm, fireworks 9pm; 10: Nevada state amateur armwrestling championships 4-7pm, guitarist Tim Duane 7:15pm, thrills show 8pm; 11: 4-H poultry judging & showmanship 4pm, talent show 9pm; 12: treats for handicapped children 9-10:30am, destruction derby 8pm; 13: horse show 10am, destruction derby 2pm, fairgrounds, Reno

Virginia City Camel Races, 11-13, also turtle and crab races, antique gas engine display, square dancers, info. 847-0311

Carson Valley Concert, 12, middle school band and chorus, Courthouse Museum, Genoa

Civil War Days, 12-13, period clothing, marching drills, cannon firing, 10am-4pm, Fort Churchill

Filaments of the Imagination, 12-Oct.18, weaving & fiber art, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, Reno

"My Turn on Earth," 12 & 26, musical, 8pm, Pioneer Theatre, Reno

Gallery Exhibit, 15, Katrina Lasko & Rhonda Fogo, Nevada Western Gallery, Reno

Pine Nut Festival, 18-20, handgames and card games daily; 19-20, all-Indian rodeo; 19: free BBQ at noon, traditional Indian pinenut dance at sundown, Schurz Park and Rodeo Grounds
"Chapter Two," 18-20 & 25-26, comedy, Reno Little Theater, 8:30pm except Sept.20 at 7:30pm

Reno National Championship Air Races, 18-20, Stead air base, from 11am, info. 826-7500

Historic Home Tour, 19, guided tour thru eight historic churches, homes and offices, 10am-4pm; starts at Robert's Park, Corbett and Carson Streets, Carson City, info. 882-1565

Snafflebit Futurity, 19-27, Coliseum, Reno
100-Mile Horse Endurance Race, 19, Miners Park, Virginia City

Concert, 20, Reno Chamber Orchestra, free, 2pm, the Chateau, Incline Village

Nevada 81 Traveling Photography Show, 24-Oct.8, Walker-Wassuk Arts Alliance, Hawthorne

Civil War Symposium, 25-26, displays, lectures, Comstock Hotel, Reno, info. 329-1880

Silver State Classic, 26, T-Car Speedway, 5pm, Carson City

Ferrari Hill Climb, 26, Virginia City

Candy Dance, 26-27, arts & crafts both days; 26: dinner at 5:30pm, dance 9pm, Genoa, info. 782-2518

International Whistle-off, 26-27, pancake breakfast 7am, competition at 9am, Legislative Mall, Carson City

OCTOBER

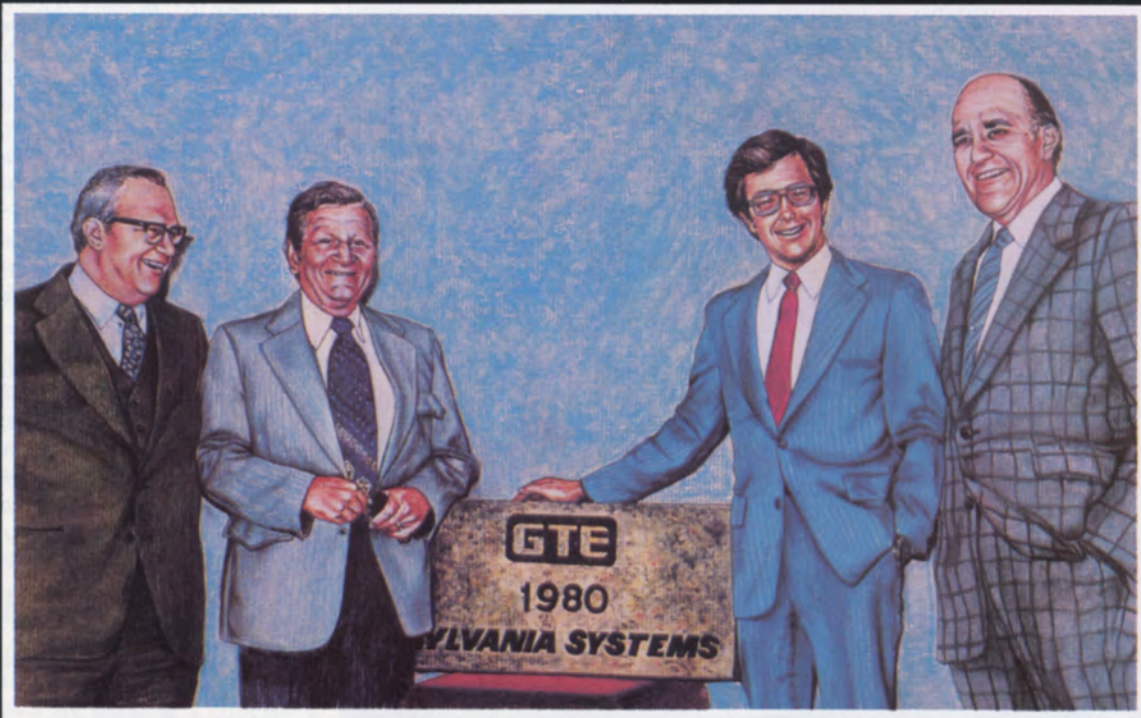
Consumer Electronic Fair, 2-4, Coliseum, 9am-9pm, Reno

Great High Sierra Red Hot Chili Cookoff, 3-4; 3: Cookoff Kickoff Dance 8pm, Ormsby House, Carson City

Doll & Miniature Show & Sale, 3-4, V&T Room, 9am-6pm, Coliseum, Reno

Nevada State Champion Fast Draw Competition, 3-4, hosted by World Fast Draw Association, 9am, Virginia City

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Boulder City's Paintings in the Parks

Boulder City artist Cliff Segerblom, whose acrylic "Bull Durham" is shown above, and many other Nevada artists will display their original works during the Boulder City Art Festival on October 3-4. The annual outdoor gathering runs both days from 10 to 5 at Bicentennial and Government parks.

Fun Day, 4, roping, cutting horse event, trap shoot, horseshoes, BBQ, 8am, Wellington softball field and Compston's roping arena, Smith Valley

Reno Chamber Orchestra, 11, Masonic Lodge Theater, 3pm, Reno

Journal Jog, 11, YMCA, five mile run, 9am, Reno

"The Hunchback of Notre Dame," 14, movie, 7pm, Washoe Library, Reno

"Aida," 16-18, opera, Pioneer Theatre, 8:15pm except Oct.18 at 2:15pm, Reno

Harvest Farm Sale and Auction, 18, country kitchen, gift boutique, square dance band, open 10:30am, auction at noon, Smith Valley Community Hall, Wellington, info. 465-2304

Nevada Appeal Mini Marathon, 24, Roop & 5th Street, 13.1 mile run, 9am, Carson City
Evening of Music, 24, Emery, Schmidt & McCann, 8pm, Granlibakken Resort, Tahoe
World Wide Flea Market, 25, V&T Room, 9am-6pm, Coliseum, Reno

Native American Exhibit, 26-indf., baskets, paintings, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, Reno
Gallery Exhibit, 27, Dennis Parks & Nancy Peppin, Nevada Western Gallery, Reno

"Ski in the Sun 81," 29, Warren Miller film, 8pm, Pioneer Theatre, Reno

Boxing Festival, 30, Community Center, 7pm, Carson City

Crystal Hill Antique Show & Sale, 30-Nov.1, Coliseum, Reno

Nevada Day Celebration, 31, bed races 9am, parade at 10am followed by rock drilling, water fights and beard contests, Carson City

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SHOWDOWN IN THE SKY

(Continued from page 50)

lost oil pressure. As he pulled up to trade air speed for altitude and prepare for an emergency landing, the propeller governor failed, causing the six blades to act as air brakes on the stricken plane. As Hinton turned to line up with the runway, everyone knew he wasn't going to make it; the airplane, over Lemmon Valley, was already at the same altitude as the runway with several miles left to glide. The airplane passed from sight below the hill.

The boom came, followed by billowing smoke. But miraculously the airplane had broken apart on impact, and the fuselage section containing the cockpit had been thrown away from the burning engine and exploding, gas-filled wings. Hinton's crew arrived and pulled him out, and the medical helicopter lifted them away just as the fuselage caught fire. After the nearly 250-mph crash, Hinton's injuries were confined to a broken ankle, broken leg and minor internal injuries.

Race excitement comes in many other, less serious forms. In 1970, pilot Darryl Greenamyer decided to show off for the crowd by making a touch-and-go landing on the first lap of the championship race to show how far ahead he was. Unfortunately, his left main landing gear remained hanging in the airstream when he lifted back off the runway. Greenamyer gamely continued and finished last.

While not as dramatic as the "big iron" of the Unlimited Class, the IFM racers can show some spectacular flying. Just big enough for the pilot, a 115-horsepower engine and a fuel tank, the little monsters have brought their speeds higher than 250 mph as they tear around the course 50 to 500 feet above the ground.

The action starts well before the three days of racing. Qualifying trials take place Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and are free. Season tickets are \$35 reserved seating, \$25 general admission, which doesn't include admission to the pit area. A pit pass is an additional \$15 on Friday and Saturday, \$20 on Sunday. If you want to get close to the planes, your favorite brew and children under 16 are not allowed in the pit area. If you opt for the less expensive general admission seating, carry your own chair. There is a grandstand but it's usually full unless you're an early bird.—Tom Cleaver



Julia Bulette by Angie Whitson. Approximately 15" plus base.
Edition of 25 Bronze with Sterling Silver Appointment Book.

Julia Bulette, born in England of French parentage, at an early age moved to New Orleans with her family; but in 1859 she migrated to Virginia City, Nevada. She quickly became one of the most popular and expensive "Ladies of the Evening" the West ever had. Her clients consisted of bankers, wealthy silver miners, mayors and big time cattlemen; but her steady boyfriend was the Chief of the Volunteer Fireman's Brigade # 1. Julia had another side and she donated heavily to charitable organizations; they made her an honorary fireman, and when a fever epidemic fell upon the town, she turned her brothel into a temporary hospital; she even sold her prized furs and jewels to purchase food and clothing for the stricken. However, misfortune struck, and in 1867 she was murdered by a thief. The women of the town would not permit her to be buried in hallowed ground: So she was interred 200 yards from the cemetery, on a hill, in a conspicuous spot where her grave could be seen from a local saloon. Two thousand persons attended her funeral, all of them men - and her tombstone marker was the head of her bed.

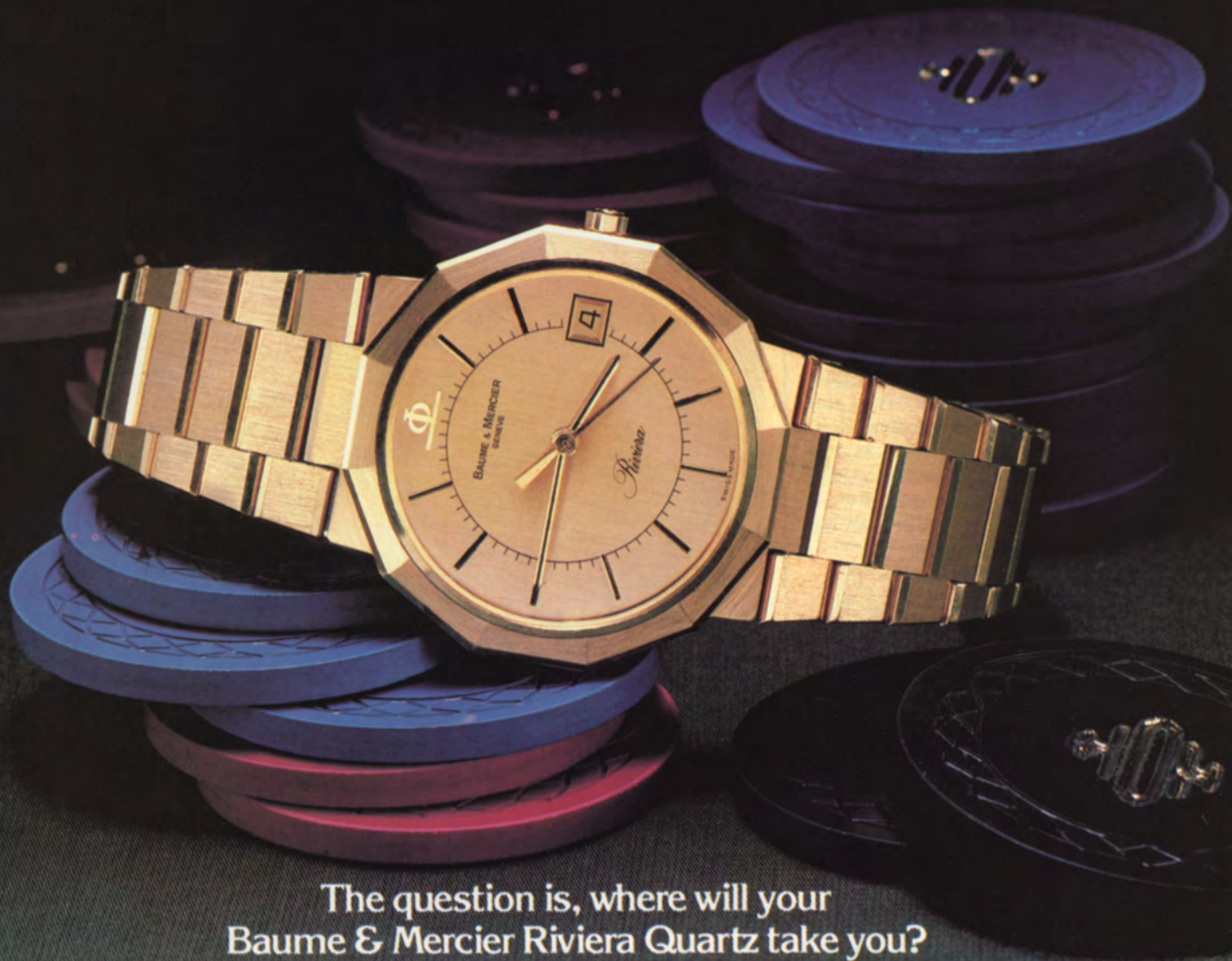
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ELKO COUNTY BUCKAROOS

Photographs By Tony Gleaton

Cowboys on the Nevada range are up long before sunup to catch and saddle their horses to begin working the cattle.

In spring the hands work 18 hours a day, moving cows, separating mothers from unmarked calves, then taking turns roping, branding, cutting, innoculating and earmarking before heading them out to their summer range.

Each fall the buckaroos bring the cattle down from the high country, branding and cutting the

animals that were missed last spring, separating the steers for shipping to feed lots or market, and moving the herd to winter pasture.

Sometimes at the end of the day there's a cold beer waiting in the bunkhouse, and a short time for cards, reading and talk before collapsing in the bedrolls.

Tony Gleaton enjoys photographing working cowhands; his tremendous respect for them shows in his work. □





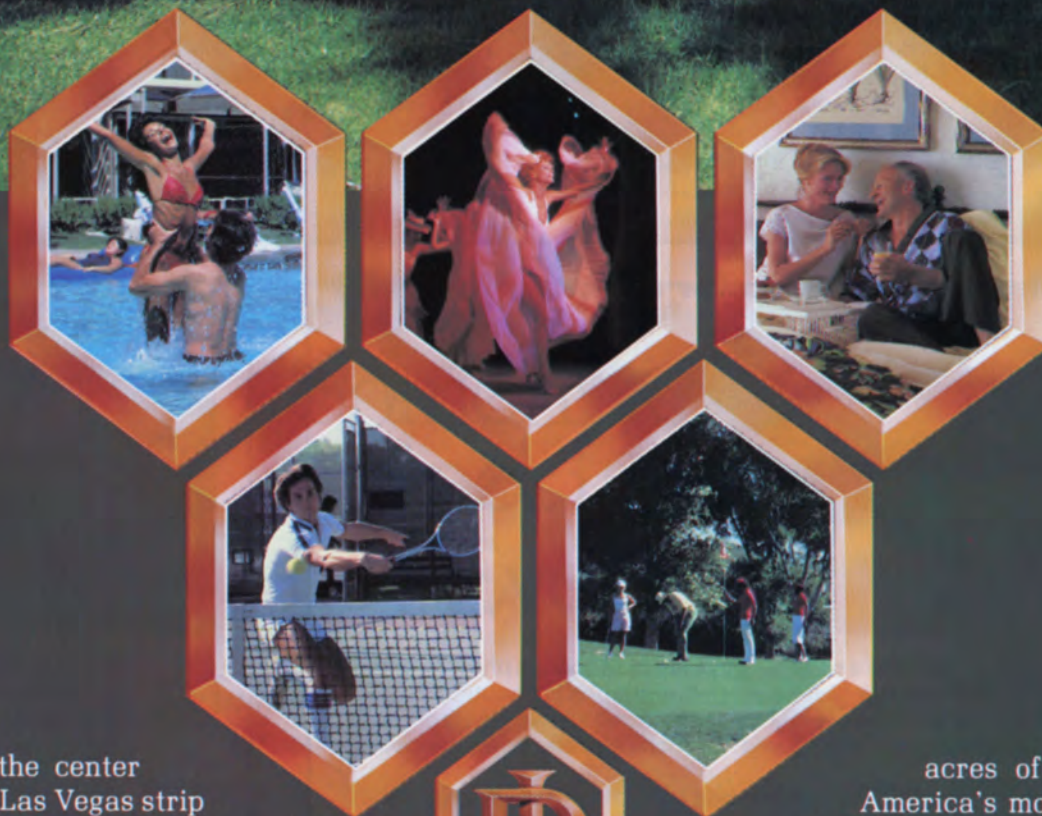






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NEVADA HUNTING SEASONS

Everything from ducks to chukar to mountain goats this fall.

The rites of fall are upon us. It's hunting season as aspens color the mountains and desert nights sharpen to a chill. Chukar play hide and seek with scrambling hunters. Butchers ready their meat lockers for the expected herd of trophy winners.

Nevada's trophy hunters—those stalking deer, antelope, elk, mountain lions, bighorns and mountain goats—received their tags this summer. But seasons for duck, chukar, pheasant and other fowl are still to come.

Here are this fall's seasons:

Mule Deer—Statewide archery hunt runs Aug. 15-Sept. 11 with 1,250 resident and 250 non-resident tags issued. Muzzleloader season for 750 residents is Sept. 12-25. The general hunt, with 20,236 resident and 2,130 out-of-state tags, runs Oct. 10-Nov. 8 in most of the state. In Clark County and Elko's northeastern corner, it's Oct. 17-Nov. 15. The season is Oct. 24-Nov. 29 in

Mineral, Lyon, Storey, Douglas, Carson and Washoe south of the Truckee River.

Pronghorn Antelope—In northern, eastern and central Nevada, the archery hunt is Aug. 8-21 for 200 residents. General hunt with a 545 quota is Aug. 22-30 plus a second hunt at the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge Aug. 29-Sept. 7.

Rocky Mountain Elk—The hunt is Sept. 5-13 in the Schell Creek Range and south of Ely, with 14 tags issued.

Bighorn Sheep—Season is Nov. 14-Dec. 13 in Clark, Esmeralda, southern Lincoln and southern Nye counties with 80 resident and nine non-resident tags. A second hunt east of the Desert Range runs Dec. 19-Jan. 2.

Mountain Goat—A hunt with five resident tags in the Ruby Mountains runs Sept. 12-Nov. 1.

Mountain Lion—Statewide Oct. 1-April 30, with a quota of 135.

The Nevada Wildlife Commissioners have set these guidelines for upland game and waterfowl seasons. Check license outlets for exact dates.

Sage Grouse—Starts Sept. 12, running a week to 10 days.

Blue and Ruffed Grouse—Sept. 12 to mid-November.

Chukar—Oct. 3 to January.

Rabbit—Oct. 3 to February.

Quail—Oct. 3 to January in non-agricultural areas, and Nov. 4 to January in valley farmlands.

Pheasant—Nov. 4, lasting three days to a week.

Ducks—early October through December, except Clark County, which is Oct. 17 to mid-January.

Swan—Early November to January in Churchill County, by special permit.

Licenses and Information—This year's resident licenses are \$13 and non-resident \$75. Junior resident licenses for ages 12-15 are \$3, and those for hunters age 65 and over are \$2. Contact sporting goods stores or the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Box 10678, Reno, NV 89520 (phone 702-784-6214). Information is available also at Wildlife's regional offices in Las Vegas (385-0285), Fallon (423-3171), Elko (738-5332) and Ely (289-3281). □

Nevada Magazine's full-color calendar for 1982



This striking calendar features a wide range of Nevada scenes photographed by David Muench. Each of the 12 full-color photographs is beautifully printed on high quality stock and the 11x14 inch format allows plenty of room for appointments. Order your 1982 David Muench calendar now as supplies will be limited.

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Images of Nevada



Tony Gleaton

Photographs
(See pages 59-62)

Craig Sheppard

Sumi Drawings
(See pages 40-42)

August 28-September 5

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Nevada Magazine • Capitol Complex • Carson City • Nevada • 89710



For the gamester whose moxie is bigger than his bankroll, a good bet may be the new array of casino classics. By Daniel B. Murteza

A new style of gambling has arrived on the Nevada scene. The games are familiar ones—blackjack, craps, poker, baccarat, gin rummy—but they have a special twist. All are played tournament style.

Anyone with a modest bankroll can play, and win, in these casino classics. Sometimes as much as \$500,000 is at stake. Tournament rules usually give casual players and experienced gamblers an equal chance. Since the formats combine casino gambling with head-to-head competition, there is double pleasure for sometimes half the cost of a typical gambling jaunt.

For some tournament gamesters the goal is to take home the title of blackjack champ, or be known around town as the world's best gin rummy player or dice shooter. Delton Miller, 67, a retired plasterer from Denver, Colorado, knows the feeling. In 1978 he became the first world champion of tournament 21 and in many circles is honored as a kind of folk hero.

These casino events are easy to enter and take place throughout the year. Most tourneys involve only mod-

erate sums of money—and a good deal of fun. Here's a look at some of the state's gambling classics.

BLACKJACK

For amateur players, the most popular gaming tournament in casino history has been the Sahara World Championship of Blackjack. Spring, summer and fall classics are held at the Sahara hotels in Las Vegas, Reno and Tahoe, with the annual world championship in December.

In December 1978, the first blackjack tournament held in Vegas attracted some 2,000 players to the Sahara casino to compete for \$150,000 in cash and prizes. From that crowd of diverse players emerged champion Delton Miller, the Denver retiree who took home \$65,175 after three days of competition. The exciting memories have faded somewhat for Miller, but he says, "I'm still spending the money."

Since 1978 the tournament's contestants have pocketed \$1.7 million in cash and prizes. Only amateurs are allowed to play. Everyone is eligible to win—the odds are one in seven—as long as he or she plunks down the \$250

entry fee and plays with a \$500 bankroll.

According to the rules, each player is allowed to play \$500 per two-hour round. Once the money goes, so do you. There are successive elimination rounds until only one player is left or has accumulated the greatest sum. There are "second-chance" rounds with smaller reentry fees and prize money. Every contestant keeps his or her winnings, regardless of finish.

CRAPS

A craps tournament? Some experts said it couldn't be done. But the Riviera in Las Vegas threw its first dice tourney last May, and it was a smash. More than 900 craps players entered the \$150,000 contest, which was hosted by Ed McMahon. Ken Meserve, Jr., a Palo Alto native, won \$73,273 for his first place finish.

For the most part, normal craps rules prevail in the Riviera event, with slight variations in betting order and minimums. Entry fees are \$250, and buy-ins \$750. There are three rounds of play with 14 players at each table, with players advancing according to ac-

cumulated money totals.

The next craps tournament scheduled is January 25-28, with the world championship set for July 11-14.

POKER

Nevada's most famous casino tournament is the World Series of Poker held each spring at Binion's Horseshoe in downtown Las Vegas.

This one you shouldn't miss.

But unless you consider \$25,000 to \$50,000 a modest bankroll (or bet), then you'd better just watch, which anyone can for free.

The players—oil millionaires, gamblers and cowboys who can afford the \$10,000 buy-in—come to play Texas Hold'em, the most tension-filled and richest poker game in town. At times the antes alone are \$1,000. And that betting level usually continues for three days with breaks only for food and rest.

Usually, the pashas of poker enter: Thomas "Amarillo Slim" Preston, Doyle "Texas Dolly" Brunson, Chip Reese and Maverick Bamrich. Television star Gabe Kaplan joined the game last year and almost won the event. He was defeated after losing a \$125,000 pot.

The 1980 and 1981 champ, Stuart Ungar, is 27. He won \$365,000 last year and \$375,000 this May. For a college dropout who failed to become a lawyer, he has done well money-wise.

Del Webb's Sahara Reno also stages a poker event, promoted by flashy Amarillo Slim. A cousin to the World Series of Poker, the Sahara Reno's tournament is called the Superbowl of Poker, a seven-day event with a \$190,000 first place cash prize.

Recently, plans were announced to expand the tournament to two weeks, including a no-limit, high-stakes game. The next Superbowl of Poker is scheduled for February 1982.

BACCARAT

Baccarat and its variation, chemin de fer, have long been favorites of casino players in Europe and Latin America. Last May, 22 years after the game was introduced in Nevada, the Desert Inn held Las Vegas' first baccarat tournament, and 54 players from around the world turned out for the three-day affair. The two top winners were from Mexico. Diana Padilla, a 30-year-old boutique owner from Mexico City, played her nines correctly to win the \$135,000 first prize, while runner-up Eduardo Olmos took \$65,000 home to Torreon Coahuila.

The next tournament is scheduled for August 27-30, 1981, with room for



SCOTT HENRY

Johnny Hale checks the cards during the World Series of Poker. The retired investment counselor from Tulsa won \$29,000 in 1980, but last May he lost the first day.

108 players—and a first place prize of a quarter of a million dollars.

The Desert Inn tournament is something of a high rollers' affair, with invitations, a \$5,000 entry fee and the glamour associated with baccarat. Directed by casino exec Rafael Acosta, it's an invitational largely for the hotel's regular guests, but anyone interested can contact the DI for applications. And spectators are welcome to watch the action.

GIN RUMMY

The Tropicana Hotel is hosting its Gin Rummy Classic on September 7-11. On the line will be \$50,000 in prize money. Rules have been set by Chet

Wander, a world authority on gin rummy, and payoffs range from \$25,000 for first place to \$3,500 for third. There are 32 cash prizes plus a \$5,000 second chance round.

Many of the contestants are skilled gin rummy players, so novices are discouraged. But for the thrill of competing against some of the world's best, the \$300 entry fee is not a bad bet.

The Landmark Hotel offers gin rummy tournaments three times yearly, in March, July and December. These gin rummy gatherings, which are produced by gin rummy king Wander and directed by casino host Bob Boyce, are easy to enter and an economy buy. The

\$250 entry fee includes some meals, cocktail parties and an awards reception.

Prize money for the hotel's tournament last July totaled \$40,000 cash, with a first place prize of \$20,000. As in other tournaments, there are second chance rounds and additional entry fees for sweepstakes and prizes.

There is no limit on the number of contestants, which usually averages about 150. After the players' eight-game opening round, the field is cut to just 32 finalists. There are successive elimination rounds until the last two players face off on the hotel's 31st floor in the glass-enclosed Sky Room, which has a 360-degree view of the Las Vegas Valley.

BACKGAMMON

For the last five years backgammon players have been rolling into the Dunes Hotel for tournaments that let both the top-ranked and the rank amateur find the right competition.

“

Usually the pashas of poker enter the World Series: Amarillo Slim, Texas Dolly Brunson and Chip Reese. Television star Gabe Kaplan joined the game last year and almost won the event. He was defeated after losing a \$125,000 pot.

”

Last June more than 3,300 players packed the Sea Horse Terrace and other second floor playing sites for a five-day tournament, which featured close to \$500,000 in prize money. The big winner was Bill Kennedy of San Francisco who won the Plimpton Cup (named after George, the paper tiger) in the amateur contest. Another richer-than-before contestant was Las Vegas David Ashley, who parlayed his \$25 entry fee into a \$7,500 first prize in the kick-off tournament.

The next installment at the Dunes takes place December 9-14 with four events—championship, intermediate, beginner and doubles—so players can compete near their level of skill.

Entry details will be announced. In the June contest, entry fees ranged from \$500 for the advanced “open” tournament to \$100 for doubles teams and \$60 for beginners. The tournament

is coordinated by New York-based American Backgammon Championships Inc.

THE WORKS

This winter the Dunes also hosts the first Master of Gambling Tournament, an ambitious event involving three games—craps, blackjack and baccarat—and \$150,000 in prizes. The entry fee is \$250, and each player must have a bankroll of \$750 and enter at least two games. A player must compete in all three to qualify for the title of Grand Master and the \$75,000 first prize. There's also a special Annie Oakley award, a \$5,000 designer wardrobe, for the highest ranked woman. “It's on the basis of earnings,” says coordinator Leonard Fellman, “so money management will be very important.”

AND THERE ARE OTHERS

Around Nevada you'll find many other tournaments that have smaller money totals and are more frequently staged. Most of these gambling gatherings are limited to poker.

A short list of casinos that hold such tournaments in Las Vegas begins with the Golden Nugget, Stardust, Imperial Palace, Sam's Town, Silver Slipper and Tropicana. In Reno, the Eldorado and Harrah's offer weekly competitions. Details about these events can be obtained from each casino's publicity department or promotions office. □

Daniel B. Murteza is Director of Advertising and Publicity at the Hacienda Hotel in Las Vegas.

THE STRAIGHT DEAL

Here are the contacts for information about Nevada gaming tournaments.

Sahara Blackjack Tournaments: World Championship of Blackjack, 4045 S. Spencer St., Suite 126, Las Vegas, NV. 89109. Call toll-free 800-854-2003.

Binion's World Series of Poker: Eric Drache, Binion's Horseshoe, Las Vegas, NV. 89114. Call 702-382-1600.

Sahara Reno Poker Tournament: Sahara Reno, Promotions, Box 1291, Reno, NV. 89504. Call 702-322-1111.

Riviera Craps Tournament: International Gaming Promotions, 4045 S. Spencer St., Suite 126, Las Vegas, NV. 89109. Call toll-free 800-854-2003.

Landmark Gin Rummy Tournament: Bob Boyce, Landmark Hotel, Las Vegas, NV. 89114. Call 702-733-1266.

Tropicana Gin Rummy Classic: Chet Wand-er, Box 803, Woodland Hills, CA. 91365. Call 213-789-1702. Or, Tropicana Hotel, Publicity, Las Vegas, NV. 89119. Call 702-739-2222.

Desert Inn Baccarat Invitational: Rafael Acosta, Desert Inn, Las Vegas, NV. 89109. Call 702-733-4488.

Master of Gambling Tournament: Leonard Fellman, 5019 Mesaview Dr., Las Vegas, NV. 89120, or c/o Dunes Hotel, Las Vegas, NV. 89109. Call 702-458-1959.

Dunes Backgammon Tournament: Louise Goldsmith, American Backgammon Championships Inc., 575 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022. Call 212-486-1489.

Denton Miller, a retired plasterer from Denver, won the Sahara's first “21” championship in 1978. Below, he celebrates the \$65,175 victory with his wife Della.



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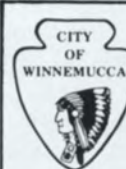
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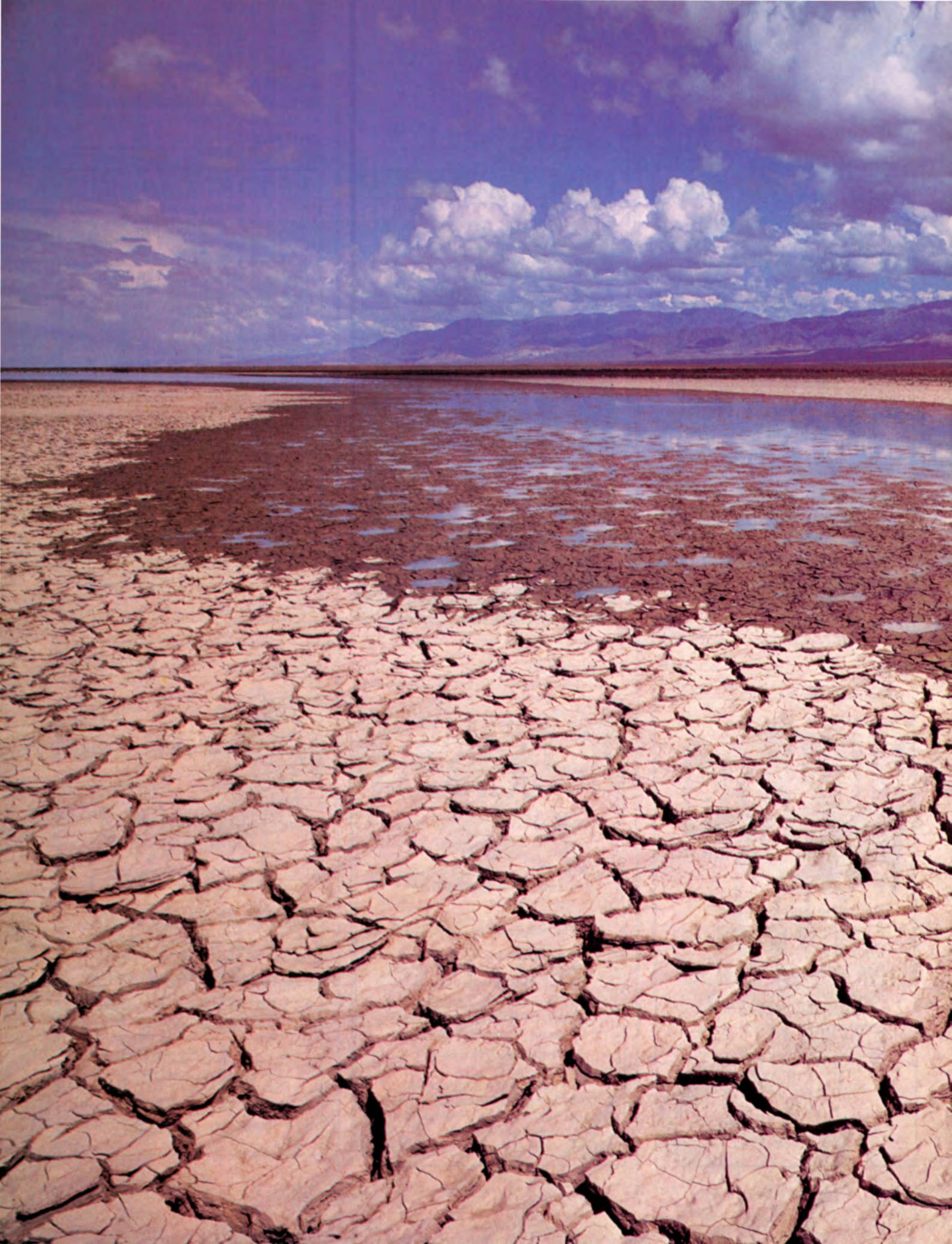
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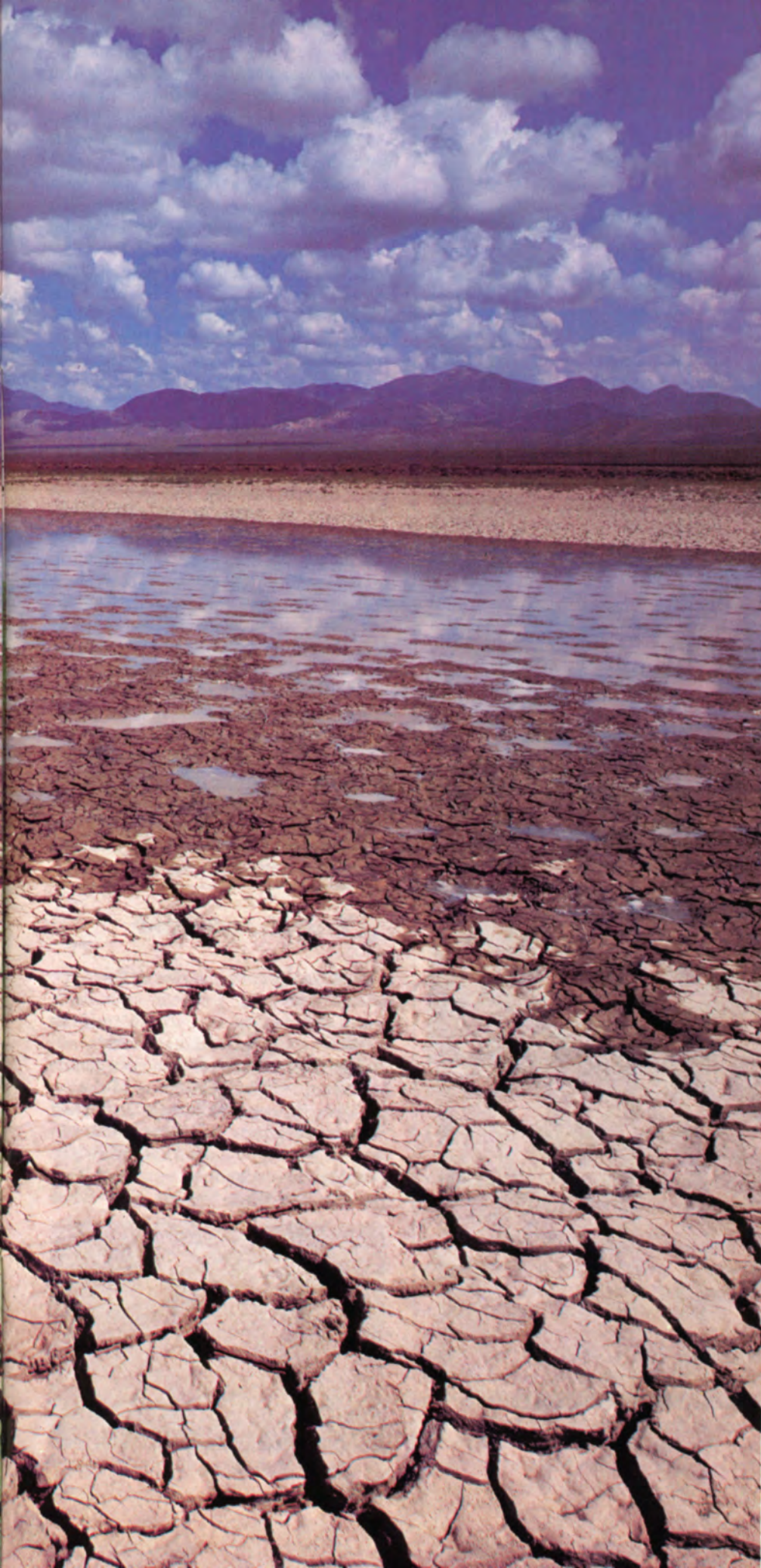


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MUENCH'S GALLERY

David Muench, one of the Southwest's great landscape photographers, presents selections from his Nevada portfolio in each issue.

One of Nevada's greatest surprises are the phantom lakes that appear in the desert after a storm. The cement-like soil of the dry lake beds hold the rain water, creating a shimmering oasis. From a distance this lake in the Big Smoky Valley south of Austin gives the illusion of watery abundance, but up close the shallow covering of water is already disappearing, leaving only the shriveled earth.—AH

The Rooster of the Chicken Ranch

Why Walter Plankinton won't be invited to be a guest on 'What's My Line.'

By George Larson

By his own measure at least, Walter Plankinton is a happy and successful man, an individualist who has finally found his place in life and brought his own uniquely American vision to a role that hasn't seen his brand of razzmatazz since the last century. Walter Plankinton may be a leader in his chosen trade, but he is unlikely to make any respectable lists of top executives. Unfortunately, despite his having achieved such prominence,

what he does makes too many people blush.

Walter Plankinton, you see, runs a whorehouse; but not just *any* whorehouse, nossir. He runs a place in Pahrump called the Chicken Ranch, and in the only state in the U.S. where local laws make such a "public convenience" (that's what Plankinton calls it) legal, the Chicken Ranch is one of the best little whorehouses in Nevada.

The name is borrowed from the world-famous brothel of the same name in Texas, the one upon which the musical *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* is based. According to Plankinton, the place got its name when local Texans who couldn't trade in currency would instead pay for the services of

the establishment in live chickens. The exact exchange rate at the time is deservedly obscure.

Plankinton is an enigma wrapped in sincerity and candor, and that makes it difficult to judge whether it is out of a sense of tradition or pure hype that motivated him to preserve what he says are the actual paintings from the wall of the Texas ranch; they now adorn the lounge of his place in Pahrump. And where some brothel owners flee from publicity, Plankinton unabashedly seeks it, promoting the benefits to all who will listen.

Plankinton was 51 years old at the time we met, the father of seven and the grandfather of 11. Born in Kansas in 1928, he ran a trucking operation for a time before running for governor of Colorado in 1970 on the American Independent ticket. Along the line he has picked up the basics of huckstering mixed with that uniquely western manner that can only be called neighborliness; he's a "howdy, podnuh" kind of fellow but without the accent.

As he narrates the rehearsed and abbreviated tale of his life to date, there is no pause before the part about the brothel business, which he says he got into simply for its profitability. Capitalism, pure and simple, you see? It is the way he explains this principle that leaves you wondering why General Foods has not yet diversified into this promising new venture.



Chicken Stew

For Plankinton, his own entry in the business was far from smooth. In a series of events that is steeped in mystery, violence and nationwide notoriety, Plankinton's first Chicken Ranch was set afire in 1978 by some Molotov-cocktail-pitching hoodlums who pushed through the front door one night. No matter who you sided with in the eventual investigation, one fact is as clear as the blue Nevada sky—three



A hawk's eye view of the crossroads landmark.

George Larson is a writer and editorial consultant based in Hendersonville, North Carolina. Baron Wolman is a photographer based in Mill Valley, California. Their work has appeared in many national publications.

men including a rival brothel owner were convicted of perjury for misstating their involvement in the affair. They are facing prison sentences; Plankinton is still in the brothel business and thriving, thank you very much, with a take reported at more than \$200,000 a year.

“
He used to offer a free limousine ride for customers in Las Vegas, but the ride was long and lacked that certain touch of class. So the Chicken Ranch started a free airline.”

Plankinton goes about running his business with the style of a young Jaycee. For example, out in back of the group of four house trailers that are surrounded by chain-link fence (a measure he took *after* the firebombing) is a plot of ground laced with neat rows of tiny trees.

“Peaches,” says Plankinton. “I want to make this desert green.”

As you enter the lounge area, the first thing to greet you is a Heart Fund canister for donations; Plankinton suffers from a heart ailment.



Chicken Wings

Plankinton used to offer a free limousine ride for customers in Las Vegas, 50 miles away, but the ride was long, and besides, it lacked that certain touch of class. So the Chicken Ranch now runs what may well be the world's only free airline. Customers can pick up their free tickets in Vegas and board the Cessna 207 on one of its round trip flights—they run every three hours—then relax to the sounds of a stereo tape system that delivers recorded music and introduces the ladies of the house during the 25-minute trip from McCarran. The flights have become such a part of the tower's routine that the pilot now requests a clearance for a “Chicken Ranch departure procedure.”



Fox in the Coop

While he greets visitors at the Ranch, Plankinton circulates constantly,

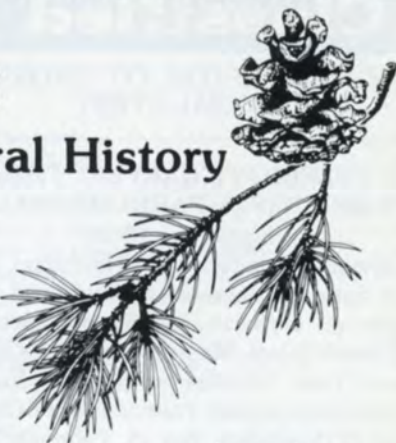
(Continued on page 78)

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By Ronald M. Lanner

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The Piñon Pine concludes with a section on pine-nut gathering and pine-nut cookery by the author's wife, Harriette Lanner. 160 pp. Cloth, \$13.50. Paper, \$8.50.

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MAPS

Map of 359 **Nevada Ghost Towns**, \$2. Ghost Town Publishing Co., Box 113, North Salt Lake, Utah 84054.

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ROOSTER OF THE CHICKEN RANCH

(Continued from page 75)

a kind of maitre d', joking with his ladies and pointing out the features that he has personally added to the house, and oh, could you pardon us for just a moment, please, but I have to take a phone call and yes, the term "cat house" dates from ancient Egyptian times, when the keeper of the harem was the cat god and so on.

He recites the list of hospitals who've sent spinal patients with serious psychological depression, tells of how a single visit and the company of his ladies has sent these patients back spiritually renewed. He tells of the underground newsletter that circulates among patients at veterans' hospitals, how the Chicken Ranch has become synonymous with salvation for disabled combat veterans who have nothing else to spend their pension checks on, certainly not in the average singles' bar.

Plankinton will list the virtues of the Nevada system. He cites the fact that in most American cities, houses of prostitution, call girls, massage parlors—call it what you wish—exist in one form or another, while the Chicken Ranch pays some \$30,000 in annual licensing fees and offers the assurance of frequent medical examination for its ladies. He also claims that one of his ladies saved enough to strike out on her own—not in the brothel trade but in real estate, where she has attained a net worth approaching a million dollars.

You query the house mother, a local housewife who has been a loyal retainer of Plankinton's since the beginning. What does her family think?

"At first, they were *very* unhappy, but their attitude has changed," she says. "The ladies who work here are first and foremost, *ladies*, and there is not a single one of them who I would hesitate to invite to my own home. They're like daughters to me," she says. It is said with a mixture of pride and a certain rehearsed quality, but you find yourself admitting that it *sounds* as if she means what she says.



The Oldest Trade

Prostitution can incite a wide range of emotion in any community, depending upon the prevailing attitude. It was not long ago when the brothel was considered a respectable institution in many communities; and in most other nations, such attitudes are vastly more

relaxed than they are in contemporary America. Nevada has always been the frontier, and Nevadans have always prided themselves on a rugged individualism that can borrow an institution of the past and make it look like the future. That may be at the root of the local acceptance of the regulated and legalized brothel in those Nevada counties that continue to allow the trade.

So for Walter Plankinton, there can be no other place to call home. His oddly quaint mixture of idealism and hype fits perfectly, and he may even bring back a certain element of respectability to the most ancient profession. He has already brought it a whole new way of doing business (even the use of alcohol is carefully controlled at the Chicken Ranch) and a refreshing honesty and openness. Whether or not you approve of what he does, you are forced to admit that he is not hiding it from you. You can roam the interstate highway system across the U.S. and seek out the hidden places where the truckers and sailors and assorted transients find their comfort. Some are merely depressing, some downright awful. Most assuredly, you will find none but the Chicken Ranch with a grove of baby peach trees out back.

Whatever Walter Plankinton is up to, one thing is certain. He sure is different. □



Ranch Report

The trial of the three men accused of torching the Chicken Ranch brothel ended last New Year's Eve, but Walter Plankinton hasn't exactly subsided from sight.

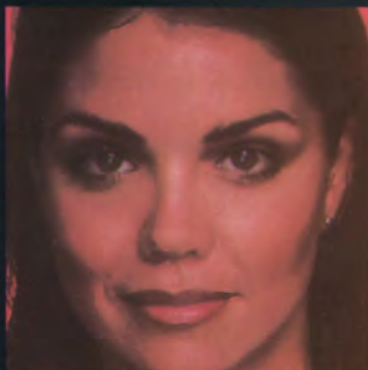
Last March, the day after the trio was sentenced to prison, Plankinton filed a \$21 million lawsuit claiming the three and various Nye County officials had conspired to discriminate against him, treating him differently than other brothel owners.

Later he was a familiar figure in the Las Vegas federal courts, successfully fighting to re-open the Ranch after the Nye County Brothel Board ordered it closed for violating advertising statutes.

He also fought tooth and nail against going to jail in Tonopah to serve a 60-day sentence for initially opening his brothel within Pahrump city limits in 1976. It was decided he could serve his time in a North Las Vegas half-way house.

In spite of all the people who would like to see the Chicken Ranch closed, it is celebrating its five-year anniversary October 12—five years of turmoil and publicity for Walter Plankinton.—Ed.

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