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09 SEPTEMBER 17



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10 writers reflect on the past 10 crazy, sad, strange, funny years

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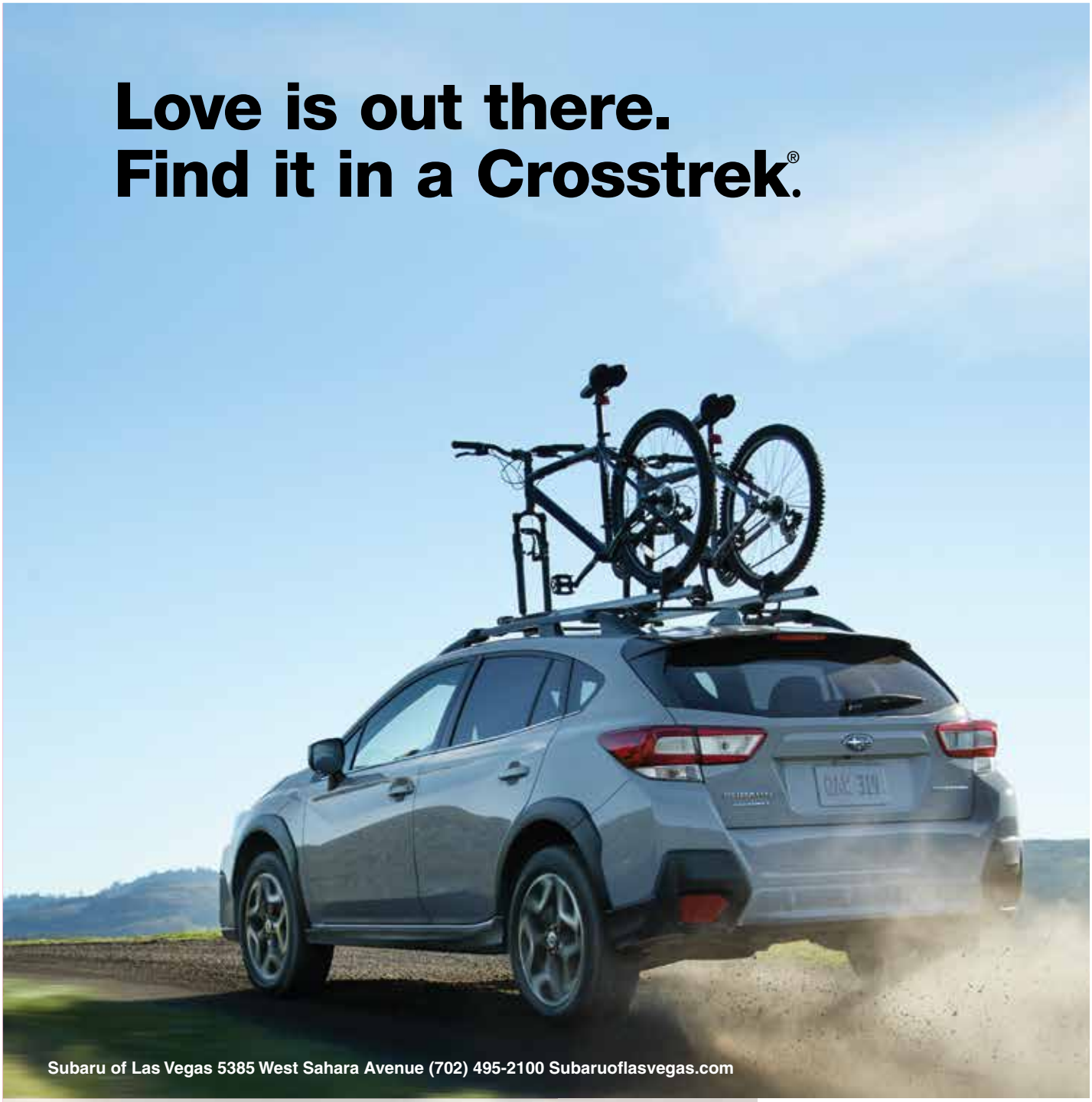
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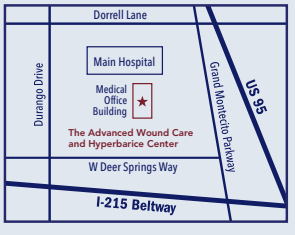
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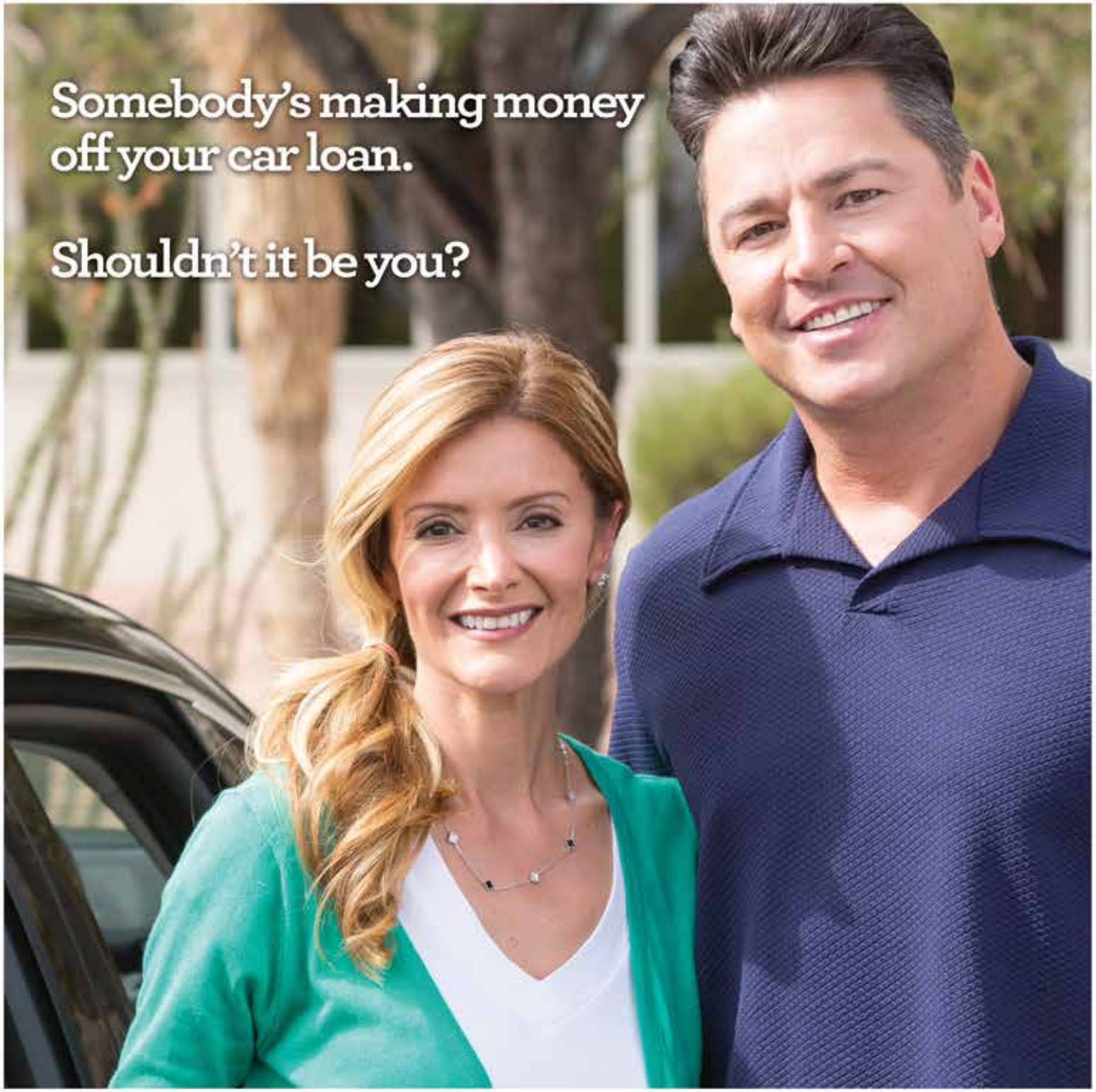
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Dawson was life changing. Before Dawson, I was used to being at the top of my class effortlessly, but Dawson taught me that there is always room to grow, lessons to learn, and worlds to discover. From the first day, I was challenged academically in the best way possible. Perhaps the biggest lesson that I took away from Dawson was that I should not be afraid to take risks, whether it be in art, academics, or life in general. I have taken that lesson with me everywhere I go, from boarding school to college.

Naomy Pedroza
Dawson Class of 2012
Brown University

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My time as a Dawson student helped me develop my interest in science at a young age, especially in the fields of biology and anatomy. One of my favorite experiences at Dawson was our dissection unit in science. Seeing the anatomy with my own eyes was a surreal experience, and inspired me to continue pursuing my interest in anatomy and physiology. Now in my second year in USC's Doctor of Physical Therapy program, my curiosity and thirst for learning hasn't wavered, and pushes me to improve myself to better serve my future patients. It is thanks to those amazing learning opportunities that Dawson provided that I continue to pursue science and to serve others as a physical therapist.

Tyler Eng
Dawson Class of 2007
USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy



While at Dawson, I was able to explore all of my academic, athletic, and artistic interests through their diverse and holistic curriculum. My interest in biology and medicine was developed early through the advanced and comprehensive science program, but it was the abundant opportunities to participate in creative courses, such as ceramics and musical theatre, that I feel contributed significantly to my well-rounded education. Gifted and caring teachers in a variety of fields prepared me for a future of higher education by providing me with a strong foundation in reading, writing, research and more. These skills have been instrumental throughout my time at USC, and now at UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine as I pursue my MD. I truly believe that I would not be where I am today without Dawson and the experiences I had there.

Kylie Shaw
Dawson Class of 2007
UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine

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Christopher Smith

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EDITOR'S NOTE

IMAGINE CONFETTI HERE!

January 4, 2010, was my first day at *Desert Companion*. Christopher Smith and I, comprising the magazine's entire editorial staff, took up our cubicles in a nondescript backroom that was formerly Nevada Public Radio's music library. We'd presumably been hired as the magazine's first in-house talent because of our deep well of publication editing, production, and design experience, but I distinctly recall Chris and I staring at each other in mute bewilderment and paralyzed clueless-ness for, like, 19 minutes. But, I should say, bewilderment and cluelessness imbued with a sense of possibility. *Desert Companion* had launched in 2007 as a seasonal guide to arts, culture, gardening, and food, an evolution of the station's annual *Southern Nevada Almanac*. Under the zealous vision of Publisher Melanie Cannon, we were charged with rapidly growing *Desert Companion* into a full-feather city magazine. Long story short: Blah blah blah, worked super hard, music montage of adventure and happy toil, put out a bunch of issues. Ten years later, we've grown both in staff size and relevance, and we've become home not to just service features that celebrate the valley's vibrant arts, culture, and dining scenes, but home, too, to serious narrative journalism and thoughtful perspective that, particularly in an era where discourse is angry link-spamming on Facebook, seems increasingly rare. Happy 10th birthday to us!

I'll leaven that flurry of self-congratulation with this confession: Putting together *Desert Companion* is actually pretty easy. Oh, it's certainly *work* — not infrequently, it's voraciously time-eating, soul-stretching work. But it's never felt *hard*. I think that's because our work is a natural expression of our relationship to Southern Nevada — the collective curiosity, wonder, frustration, enthusiasm, cynicism, weird defensiveness, and other points on the gauge that our needle quivers over every day. In that sense, I feel lucky to work with colleagues who vibrate on the same frequency and do incredible work — shouts out to Art Director Christopher Smith, Deputy Editor Scott Dickensheets, Staff Writer Heidi Kyser, Senior Designer Scott Lien and Graphic Designer Brent Holmes. And I also feel lucky that what interests, amazes, and intrigues us strikes a chord with you.

Anyway, this fat berfday issue has just too much to properly hype in the 200 or so words I have left. Highlights: First and foremost, we — and by *we* I mean Christopher Smith coming in hella early for months and working at home on the weekends — have completely redesigned the magazine from flag to folio. The idea is freshness, yes, but also fluidity in how we tell stories, bringing in more visual flair, and experimenting with form. We mark the milestone in other ways, too. On page 79, we consider the past decade through a series of essays, some refracting through public, personal, and political strata, others mining the love/hate thing with Las Vegas for sometimes giddy, sometimes uncomfortable laughs. But they all illuminate, in some way or another, this strange, radiant place. On page 44, veteran political reporter and commentator Steve Sebelius interviews Gov. Sandoval, who discusses both policy and the more personal dimensions of public service. On page 68, Heidi Kyser checks in with the Trump administration's possible rollback of national monument designations in Nevada, considering in particular the often-marginalized point of view of our state's native tribes, whose long stewardship of the land suggests that they might have some wise counsel to offer. And I'd be remiss not to mention our Fall Culture Guide (page 94), the spiritual nucleus that gave rise to the *Desert Companion* of today. In it, you'll find a burgeoning calendar of art, music, dance, theater, and festivals well through the new year. It's an issue you'll want to keep around. Which reminds me: Thanks for keeping *us* around.



Andrew Kiraly
EDITOR

NEXT MONTH IN DESERT COMPANION Drinks are on us! Well, drink blurbs, anyway.

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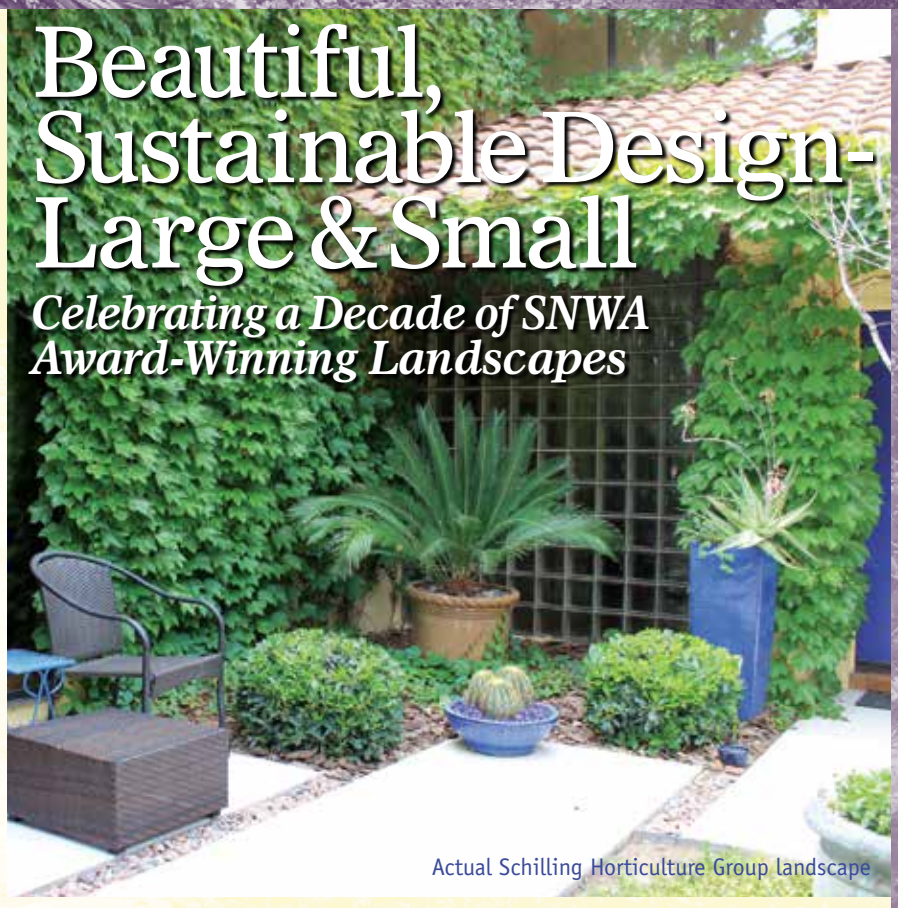
Desert Companion is published 12 times a year by Nevada Public Radio, 1289 S. Torrey Pines Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89146. It is available by subscription at desertcompanion.vegas, or as part of Nevada Public Radio membership. It is also distributed free at select locations in the Las Vegas Valley. All photos, artwork and ad designs printed are the sole property of Desert Companion and may not be duplicated or reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. The views of Desert Companion contributing writers are not necessarily the views of Desert Companion or Nevada Public Radio. Contact Tammy Willis for back issues, which are available for purchase for $7.95.

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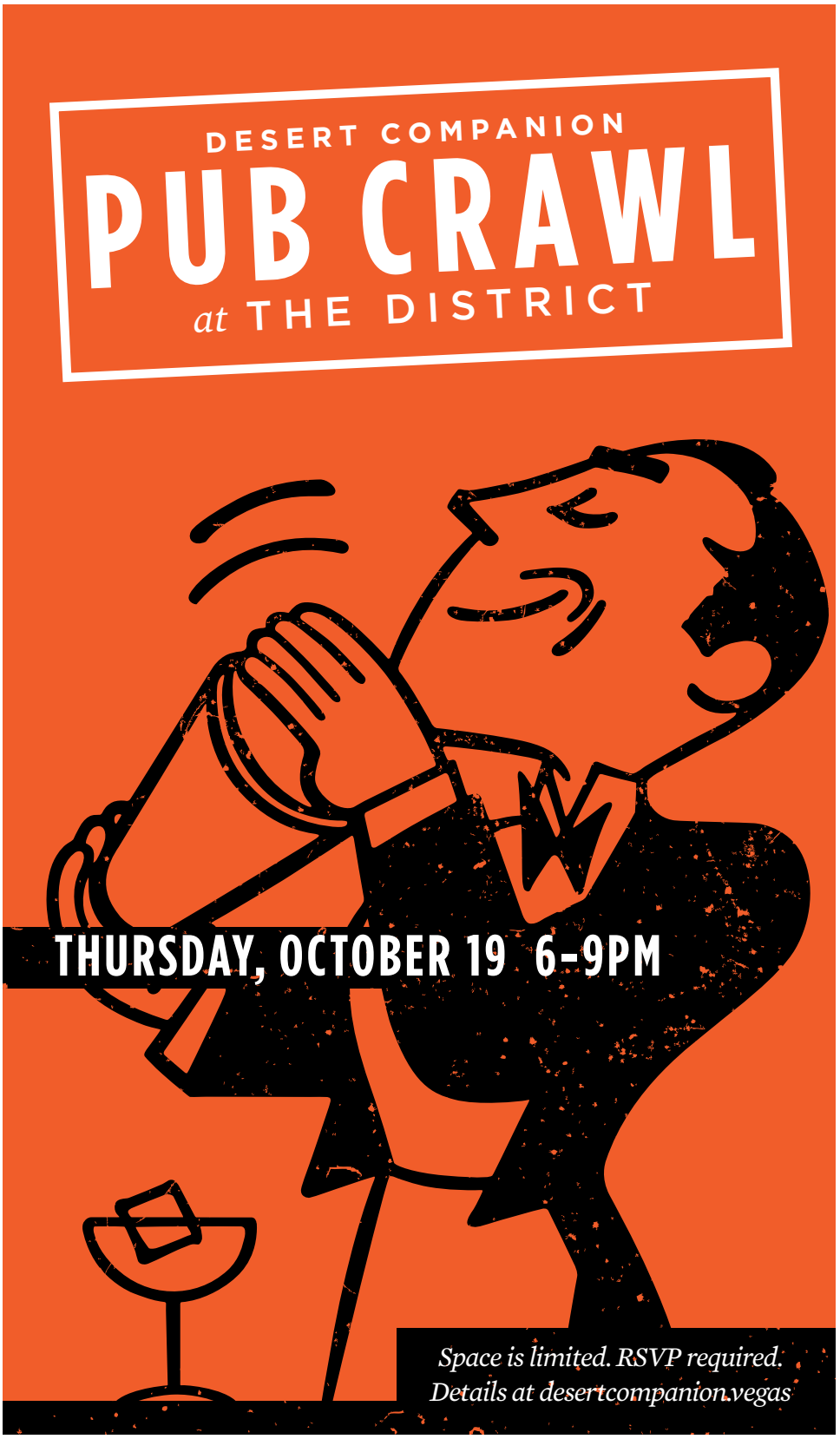
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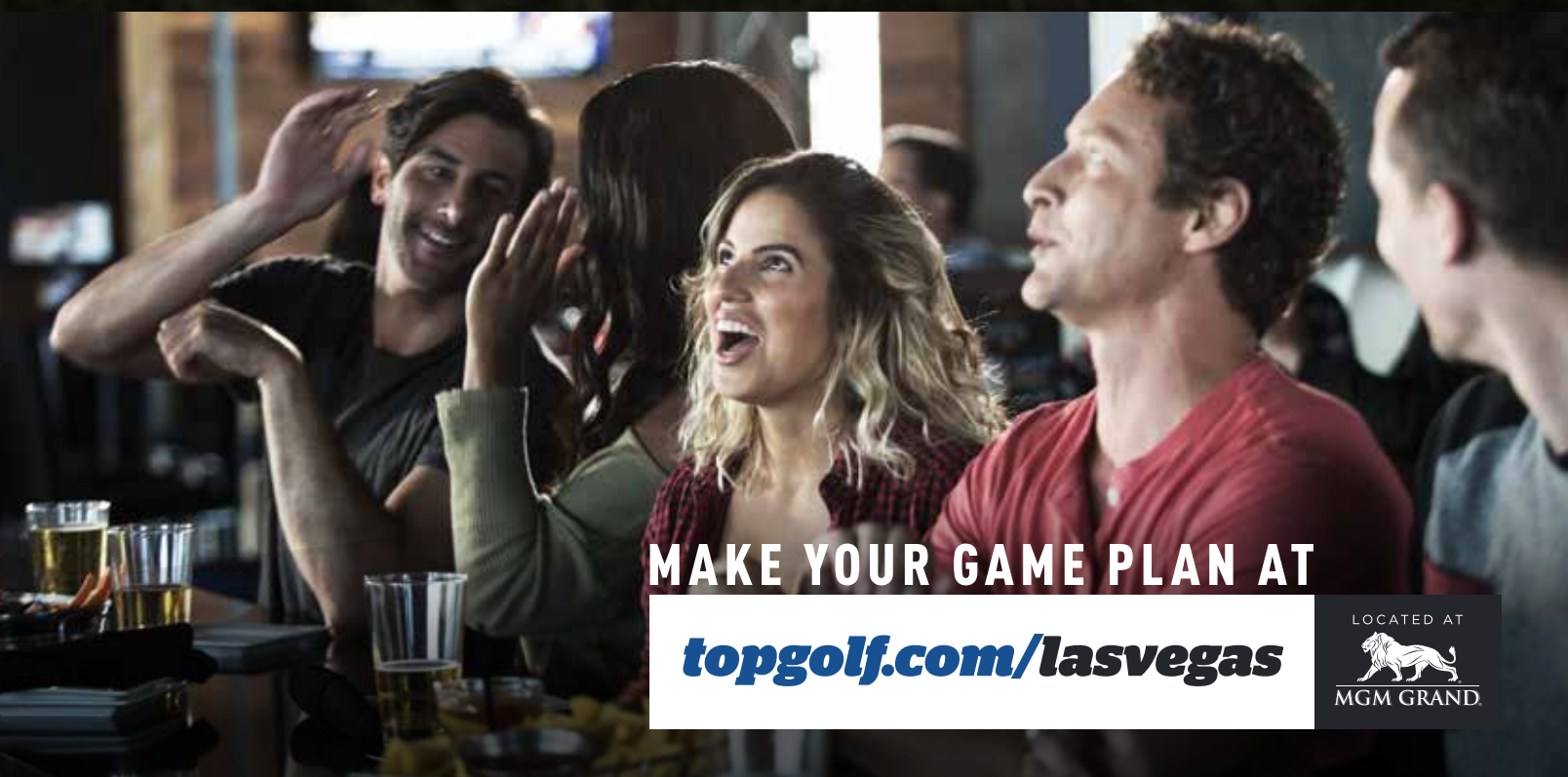
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ALL IN

10 PEOPLE, ISSUES, OBJECTS, EVENTS, IDEAS AND CURIOSITIES YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF THIS MONTH.

ONE | **SPORTS**

Game On!

It's Golden Knights time in Las Vegas. Here's what you need to know.

BY ***Matt Jacob***

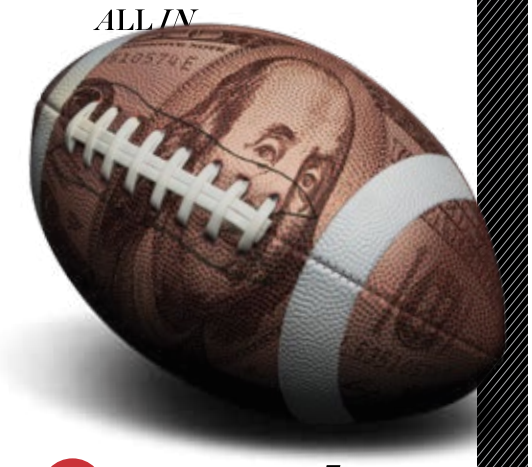
The season tickets and lavish suites were swiftly snapped up. The merch is flying off the shelves. And the social-media firestorm ignited by the selection of a team name that was condemned as both uninspiring and confusing has long since been extinguished.

Make no mistake: Las Vegas has Golden Knights fever, and nobody is smiling wider than Bill Foley. Foley is the man responsible for bringing Las Vegas its first major professional sports franchise, in the form of a National Hockey League expansion team that debuts October 6 in Dallas (the Knights' first home game at T-Mobile Arena is slated for October 10).

But as we inch closer to this historic moment, we wonder: Just who are these Vegas (don't call them Las Vegas) Golden Knights? Sure, we've learned quite a bit about Foley over the past couple of years, and we're certainly familiar with his minority owners, the Maloof family. But what sort of team have they constructed?

OTHER REASONS LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL THIS MONTH *The Hitman's Bodyguard* was released *last* month • Dave Hickey, sage grouse, back in town • Bacon

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Sabin Orr***



2 Bettor days

THESE ARE WILD times on the sports-betting front. It stars a diverse cast ranging from the U.S. Supreme Court to former sportscaster Brent Musburger (who headlines a sports-gambling talk show in a specially built studio in the South Point sportsbook) to Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones (investor in DraftKings fantasy sports). Indeed, sports gambling has become so mainstream that even NBA Commissioner Adam Silver argues it should be legalized, regulated, and taxed. But there's no uniform set of regulations from state to state.

Trying to make sense of this evolving landscape will be a two-day UNLV course, September 20-21, at the International Center for Gaming Regulation. It will weigh the implications of a recent Supreme Court decision to hear a New Jersey sports-gambling case, discuss whether fantasy sports is gambling or a skill-based game, and include a stop at a Vegas sportsbook.

Jennifer Roberts, the center's associate director, says the Supreme Court decision could potentially open the door to sports wagering in New Jersey — a hot topic in the industry.

"Sports wagering is embedded into our culture," Roberts adds. "And some people think that if you're going to gamble, it's better to do it in a regulated environment."

(The course costs $925; call 702-895-2445). ***Alan Snel***

Alan Snel is the founder/writer of lvsportsbiz.com, which reports on the business and politics of sports and stadiums in Las Vegas.

Lookback

September/October 2010: Timothy Pratt considers the significance of soccer to the Hispanic community — and how sports can divide us or unite us. Read this and more highlight sports stories from our 10 years at desertcompanion.vegas.

Who are the marquee players? What style of hockey will they play? And what should we expect during this inaugural season (and beyond)?

Let's body-check these questions into the boards, so that when the puck finally drops, you'll be an informed Golden Knights fan.

Who's calling the (slap) shots? Foley and the Maloofs may be pulling the financial strings, but they aren't in charge of day-to-day operations. Those duties fall to general manager George McPhee and head coach Gerard Gallant.

One of Foley's first hires, McPhee joined the Knights in July 2016 after spending one season in the front office of the New York Islanders. Previously, McPhee had a 17-year run as GM of the Washington Capitals, helping construct a team that won seven division titles and reached one Stanley Cup final.

Hear More
knpr.org, search "las vegas hockey"

While McPhee, 59, had an undistinguished NHL playing career — he tallied 24 goals in 115 games across parts of seven seasons from 1982-89 — Gallant was a mainstay in the league for 11 seasons (1984-95). In 563 games with the Detroit Red Wings and Tampa Bay Lightning, the hard-nosed left-winger had 207 goals and 260 assists (467 points) before a back injury forced him to retire. Gallant then made a smooth transition to coaching, first at the elite junior-hockey level, then as an NHL assistant. He was an assistant with the Columbus Blue Jackets when they entered the league in 2000, so he has experience working with an expansion team.

Gallant, who landed the Knights job in April and turns 54 this month, has had two previous NHL head-coaching stints with the Blue Jackets (2004-06) and Florida Panthers (2014-17), posting a combined 152-141-4 record.

Fast and furious. Foley was wise to turn to experienced guys like McPhee and Gallant, as both know the modern NHL game very well. Which is to say they understand that pushing the puck across the goal line can be more challenging than getting Congress to come to a consensus on healthcare reform.

So when it came time for McPhee to select players in the expansion and amateur drafts in June, as well as sign free agents, he put speed and quickness at the top of his priority list.

Of course, in hockey, you'll only go as far as your goaltender will take you, so McPhee made sure to pluck a good one in the expansion draft: two-time Stanley Cup champion Marc-André Fleury, a 2003 No. 1 overall draft pick who had spent his entire 14-year career (691 games) with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

So ... who are these guys? As of late July, the Knights had 36 names on their roster (21 forwards, 12 defensemen, three goaltenders). Per NHL rules, that roster must be trimmed to a maximum of 23 players when the 2017-18 season begins. Barring trades or injuries, Fleury will don the black and

3 WHAT THE PUCK?!

Hockey has a distinct lexicon. Here are some of the terms you'll need to know.

BISCUIT
The puck.

CHECKING
When a hockey player slams into an opponent with his body. It's a penalty when done too severely — say, if player leaves his feet in order to maximize impact.

CROSS-CHECKING
When a player uses his stick, held in both hands, to check an opponent. Penalty!

FREEZING THE PUCK
When a player holds the biscuit against the boards with his stick or skate, stopping play

HAT TRICK
When one player scores three goals in a match

ICING
For some reason, it's illegal to whack the puck over the center line *and* the opposing team's goal line without scoring. Watch a few matches, maybe you can explain it to us.

OFFSIDE
Occurs when an attacking player skates into the offensive zone before the puck.

POND HOCKEY
Derisive term for when a team isn't playing up to potential

SLAPSHOT
A shot involving a mighty windup, then letting the stick hit the ice *just behind* the puck, so the bending stick's kinetic energy is released into the shot. Also a 1977 Paul Newman movie.

OTHER REASONS LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL THIS MONTH AccuWeather predicts *three days* in the 80s this month • Dave Chappelle at The Cosmo, 9/3 • Bacon

gold on, ahem, "Opening Knight," as will marquee forwards and fellow expansion draftees James Neal (Nashville Predators), David Perron (St. Louis Blues) and Jonathan Marchessault (Florida Panthers).

Neal has scored at least 20 goals in all 10 of his NHL seasons, and his 238 goals are more than any other Knights player. Perron (159 goals in 10 seasons) and Marchessault (career-high 30 goals last year) also provide firepower.

These four players figure to quickly become fan favorites. Unfortunately, it may not be for long: At 32, Fleury is on the downside of his career, while the trio of forwards are all in the final year of their contracts (and thus may become trade bait).

On the bright side, good young prospects await, thanks to McPhee's work in the amateur draft. Led by first-ever pick Cody Glass — an 18-year-old center from Winnipeg, Canada — the Knights' draft was ranked tops in the league by several respected hockey publications. Alas, it will be several years before Glass and his draft mates land in Las Vegas, which brings us to ...

Check those expectations. This being Vegas, we're obligated to check the odds board, which shows that the Golden Knights are a 100-to-1 long shot to win the 2018 Stanley Cup. It might as well be 100,000-to-1.

The cold, hard truth is expansion teams struggle — usually for several years. Case in point: The NHL's last two entrants, the Blue Jacks and Minnesota Wild in 2000-01, finished their inaugural season in last place in their divisions, with 28 and 25 wins respectively. It took Columbus eight years to qualify for the 16-team playoffs; Minnesota did it in three.

This reality, of course, doesn't exactly jibe with the notoriously fickle nature of the Las Vegas sports fan, who exhibits as much patience as a 2-year-old on an airplane. However, Knights fans who can tolerate the growing pains figure to be rewarded in time. For one thing, McPhee has a record of building teams that sustain success. Most important, Foley — who played the high-stakes finance game into a reported net worth of $600 million — isn't used to losing. And that won't change now that his business has moved from the boardroom to the ice.

"When I hired George McPhee as general manager, he asked me, 'Will you spend to the (salary) cap?'" Foley was quoted as telling Forbes.com in a July article. "I told him, 'Bill Foley wants to win, and he's going to win. There is no budget.'" ✦

• 15th anniversary of The Killers forming







ALL *IN*

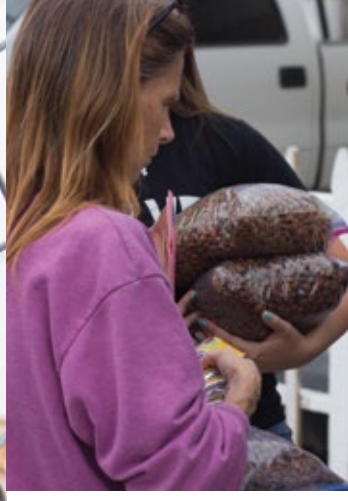
4

To The Dogz

An afternoon with the volunteers of Street Dogz, helping disadvantaged and homeless pets

BY ***Bruce Gil***





Clark County Detention Center welfare case worker Cheryl Noori started Street Dogz with two friends during Thanksgiving weekend of 2014. Her mission: to help feed the pets of homeless and low-income people in Las Vegas. Not a small goal, given the valley's high rate of homelessness. Now the nonprofit has 15 regular volunteers and distributes some 1,500 pounds of dog food every month to homeless and low-income pet owners. They also give out supplies like dog shoes, coats, and beds, as well as help coordinate and fund medical care for pets, spaying and neutering, and even emergency sheltering. On August 11, we tagged along with volunteers Leann Maiolo and her daughter Gabby as they distributed supplies at a trailer park in northeast Las Vegas.

3:41 p.m.
Rocky, a 15-month old pitbull, received a large bag of food and doggie treats. The shy dog took one of his new treats and hid under the deck of his trailer. "He loves it down there," says his owner.

3:44 p.m.
A loud family of dogs: Junior, Chucky, Hanky, Darth, and a cat named Kit living between two trailers receive eight zip-lock bags of dog food and one of cat food. *The big ones won't bite; it's the small ones you need to watch out for,* advises their owner as he lets the volunteers through the chain-link fence. No volunteer has ever been bitten, Street Dogz says, and that doesn't change today.

3:55 p.m.
"Congratulations on Bruno," Gabby says to the proud owner of a brown Chihuahua that just graduated from service-dog



5 Quick READ

'NOT SOULLESS, LIKE THIS DUMP'

From: *Welcome to the Slipstream*, a novel by Natalka Burian. **Summary:** Van, her mother, Sofia, and their friend Ida move to Las Vegas so brilliant, erratic Sofia can consult on the remodel of the Silver Saddle casino. **Setup:** Van's chaperone, Alex, takes her to the Venetian. **Excerpt:** *The smell inside the Venetian was not much better than the fume-riddled parking garage. Scented, violently conditioned air swirled around us. … The floor of the lobby gleamed, polished to an Olympian ice-rink shine. Alex gave me a little nod, telling me to look up. I tilted my head back and scanned the array of cherubs and anonymous robed figures relaxing among enormous clouds. "Pretty ridiculous, huh?" he said. I nodded. "It gets worse. Come on." … "This is nothing like the Silver Saddle," I said. "I know, this is so much worse." "That's hilarious," I said. "No, I mean it. Our hotel is something special, not soulless, like this dump." Alex moved his arm like a weatherman demonstrating the movement of a storm system. "These big operations are all the same. If you've been to one, you've been to them all. So, Van," he said, "now that you've been to every casino in Las Vegas, we should probably eat lunch."*

OTHER REASONS LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL THIS MONTH The Writer's Block's Bourbon Book Club tackles Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*: "Molly was a woman

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Brent Holmes***



training. At the owner's call, Bruno emerges from the trailer with a bandana around his neck. Gabby rewards the amiable dog with treats.

4:01 p.m.
On this cloudy but warm day, the owners of Bootsy, a pitbull mix, and Timber, a puggle, ask for a small pool to keep the dogs cool. Leann says she'll get it delivered soon.

4:07 p.m.
The quietest dogs in the park, Havoc and Iris, sit patiently behind the fence of their trailer. The black pitbull and Labrador pant as they watch Evelyn, Street Dogz's contact for the trailer park. She accepts the food on behalf of their owner, who isn't home. *(streetdogzlv.org)*

Melodies and Memories

Using music therapy to help elderly patients recall the good old days

BY ***Bruce Gil***

Escaping the heat of a Wednesday afternoon in July, a 91-year-old World War II veteran enters the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health for his first musical therapy group session. He takes a chair in the circle of other patients.

Dr. Becky Wellman fiddles with two TV screens connected to a computer, in case someone joins remotely. At her feet are tote bags stuffed with music books and binders. Once the group of about 20 patients and caregivers settles down, she picks up her guitar and strums a warm-up song. The group quietly sings along to Patsy Cline's "Side by Side."

Wellman leads this program every Wednesday, combining her background in music and psychology to help the center's patients trigger memories, reduce stress, and improve relationships with caregivers.



HEALING SOUNDS
Dr. Dylan Wint, left, and Dr. Becky Wellman say that music therapy has cognitive, social, and stress-reducing benefits.

Two volunteers pass out neon-colored nylon scarves. Wellman plays instrumental music on the computer to free her hands as she waves a scarf up and down. The group follows along. She says the rhythmic foundation of music can help patients regain motor skills.

Everyone gets to pick a song for the group to sing. One man on a motorized wheelchair, who was previously involved with theater, went with "Oklahoma!" "Didn't you work on a production of *Oklahoma!*," Wellman asks. The man can't remember, but he remembers the lyrics.

"I'm using music to reroute what we're doing, through a different pathway to get to where I want to go," Wellman says. Music is not processed through any one part of the brain, so it can bypass damaged areas. Instead of asking direct questions, Wellman uses music to pull out memories or start conversations.

It's the veteran's turn. Wellman suggests he pick a card from a deck of music genres. He picks country. They start the song, and he joins in on the chorus, belting, "*Crazy for loving you*."

In addition to music therapy, the Ruvo Center also hosts a weekly art therapy program and has partnered with The Smith Center.

"Fundamentally, our job is not to give medications or do surgeries. We do those things as a means to improve people's quality of life," says Dr. Dylan Wint, a neurologist at the center. "We're supposed to be a comprehensive service center, so we try to use resources like the incredible Smith Center."

Hear More
knpr.org, search "brain health"

About a year ago, The Smith Center developed three workshops with the Ruvo Center based on the touring Broadway production of *The Bridges of Madison County*, and provided discounted tickets to patients. "This is absolutely a large part of the community that deserves to be here, and they deserve to have these experiences, and oftentimes it's hard for them," says Melanie Jupp, program manager for The Smith Center's education and outreach department.

Music therapy can benefit younger populations, too. The UNLV School of Medicine Ackerman Center for Autism also partnered with The Smith Center. In March, the center hosted dance and drum circle workshops. The Ackerman Center's clinical director, Dr. Julie Beasley, says programs like music therapy help patients with language deficits and expands their limited interest range. "They have a hard time learning language and being able to express themselves. So any way that we can help them learn how to express themselves benefits everyone." ✦

much on the telephone." **SHOT!** • Family drum circle, 9/10, Windmill Library • The hella bueno tacos at Bajamar Seafood & Tacos



Profile

Ally R. Haynes-Hamblen

Director, Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Las Vegas

"Some people might say I'm a little pushy," says Ally Haynes-Hamblen, who's half a year into her job running the city of Las Vegas' Department of Cultural Affairs. Hmm, she seems perfectly pleasant to us. But she's pitching this pushiness as a key part of her toolkit — being assertive about expanding her department's role, whether that means partnering with other city departments to include public art in their projects, or meeting with cultural entrepreneurs about changing municipal policy. "I get to go to a lot of meetings," Haynes-Hamblen says, and notice the gung-ho phrasing: *get to*. She's talking about *meetings*. That tracks with her upbeat take on Vegas, after 13 years of nonprofit work in Phoenix. "What I found when I came here is that there are a lot of well-kept secrets," she says. Quality artists and performers ready for the culture scene to catalyze into something bigger. She has some specific plans to spur that — more classical and jazz programming being a small-scale example of change she wants to see — and a general urge to ramp this mother up. When it's noted that "ramp up" generally translates to "spend more money," she has an answer: more excellent art. "My experience," she says, "is that money tends to follow great work." ***Scott Dickensheets***

OTHER REASONS LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL THIS MONTH Gotta love the Ides of September! • Lo-fi popsters Broncho, 9/12, Bunkhouse • Driving without oven mitts

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Lucky Wenzel***

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EIGHT | **DISCOMFORT ZONE**

32B or not 32B?

That is the question that women no longer have to answer on their own. A tale of two bra fittings.

BY ***Helen O'Reilly***



You never forget your first.

Mine was all innocence. White, with just a blush of pink, and purchased for 11-year-old me by my mother, in the Young Miss department at Macy's. Which was just as quaint and goofily charming as it sounds. Macy's was where we shopped for "good" clothes — white cotton gloves, straw hats for Easter, princess coats with velveteen collars for winter. And underwear. And socks. And what would be my first bra.

My first brassiere was a simple affair of white cotton and elastic — I don't think spandex had been invented yet — with metal adjusters on the straps, a delicate pink bow where my cleavage would have been if I'd had one, and just a touch of exquisitely scratchy nylon lace edging on the (ha-ha) "cups." As unnecessary as it might have been, that bra was my first, and I cherished it.

It came from a time and a place when department stores were retail palaces, staffed by ranks of tight-permed, red-lipped saleswomen, who fought each other off to serve you. Creepily glamorous women who tapped scarlet nails against their teeth as they considered whether they might have your size "in the back," and whose necks were draped with tape measures, at whose bodices were pinned lace handkerchiefs, who exhaled the mystery odors of Violets lozenges or Sen-Sen gum, and whose presence was announced by clouds of White Shoulders, or L'aire du Temps. These were the scary, magnificent keepers of the secrets of feminine attire and allure. Life was different then. Very different.

My first bra fitting was carried out in 1964 by one of these girdled gorgons. (She herself had a bosom like a pair of antiaircraft guns.) That was the first, and sad to say, the last time I was fitted for a bra for 50 years. It was probably also the last time I had a bra that fit in 50 years. Like a reported 85 percent of American women, it seems I've been innocently bouncing along in the wrong-sized bra since the '60s. But considering the changes roiling society since that first fitting, not to mention the changes roiling my figure, I really don't think I'm to blame.

Hear More
knpr.org, search "civic life"

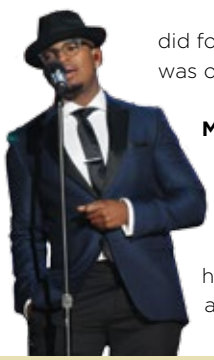
1967 was the Summer of Love, and by the time that fall rolled around, I and a million other hippie chicks had abandoned anything as bourgeois as a brassiere for two handkerchiefs and a piece of string. Then the '70s saw the hippie chicks marrying or moving in with hippie chaps, and babies ensued. Our hippie desire to do things naturally meant that we'd be breastfeeding our babies, of course. Suddenly, a generation of free spirits found ourselves in dire need of "foundation garments," with no idea what size we needed anymore. But the retail palaces of yore had turned into self-service big-box stores, which offered no help. The best we could do was phone for a grim volunteer from La Leche League, a terrifying cross between a prison matron and a field-hockey instructress, who gave us a lecture and handed us a gargantuan nursing bra, a *device* more than a garment, one seemingly designed by the Army Corps of Engineers. And even that only fit until the baby was weaned. Then once again we were left to slouch along, until the end of our childbearing years, in a seemingly endless cycle of boom and bust.

Marriage and motherhood made many more changes to our lives and our bodies. We got degrees, we got jobs, we got divorces,

These familiar, famous faces have one thing in common — they've all got Vegas connections. (Represent, mostly!)

In our Fall Culture Guide (page 94), we profile six Ones to Watch — rising stars in arts, music, dance and more. Putting together that feature never fails to spark a "Hey, remember … " conversation about talents who either grew up in Las Vegas or did some creative gestation here. Talents such as …

Ne-Yo: The R&B artist attended Las Vegas Academy before transferring to Rancho High School. In 2009, he told the *Las Vegas Sun*, "You know what Las Vegas Academy did for me? It showed me that it was okay to be an individual."



Matthew Gray Gubler: An LVA grad, Gubler is best known for his role as Dr. Spencer Reid in *Criminal Minds*. Fun Fact: One of his first roles was as Nico, an intern, in Wes Anderson's *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*.

Alissa Nutting: Okay, so her LV tie is that she "only" got a Ph.D. from UNLV, but we think her time here fed the author's satirical novels *Tampa* and *Made for Love*.



OTHER REASONS LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL THIS MONTH Epic three-day festival called Life Is Sitting In My Own Filth & Binge-Watching Netflix • You can go

ILLUSTRATION ***Brent Holmes***



we got grandkids. Our average clothing size went from 8 to 14, which was evident even to ourselves; all we had to do was try on a pair of jeans and we knew. And the remedy was evident too — yoga pants, leggings, sweatpants, or mom jeans did the job from the waist down. But on top, most of us kept slumping around in the same old stretched-out 36B.

We thought it was just part of woman's lot to have grooves in our shoulders, to have to lock ourselves in the breakroom at work to have a good scratch under the band. We could hardly wait to get home to tear off the too-tight and yet somehow unsupportive garment from hell. Our underwires stabbed us until we thought we were having heart attacks. We had Underboob. We had Quadroboob. In a bid for comfort, we went to the big-box store and bought ourselves a cupless wonder, an all-stretch bandeau, and then, we had the final indignity. Uniboob. What was a girl to do?

Until recently, not much.

But the professional bra-fitter, once eclipsed by the siren of self-service, has reemerged as a foundational element of the well-dressed woman's style. And although bra manufacturers have publicized their fitting algorithms ("take your measurement around your chest, then the measurement of the fullest part of your bust, and if there's less than five inches difference, you may be a 12-year-old boy..."), I have a confession. You might as well ask me: "If a train leaving Boston travels to Orlando at 70 mph, and a train leaving Orlando travels to Boston at 70

TEN

Not dead yet!

With Yucca Mountain once again the subject of debate, and, some hope, renewal, let's review a few key points in its history

2017
With Republicans controlling White House and Congress, talks of reviving Yucca Mountain resume; Nevada fights Texas lawsuit that aims to restart repository process.

2009
Yucca Mountain deemed not a workable site by President Obama's energy secretary.

2008
Sen. Harry Reid's plan to make Nevada an early-primary state sensitizes Democratic presidential candidates to state's anger over repository.

2002
President Bush approves the DOE's recommendation to proceed with the project.

2001
As the DOE is hit by allegations of colluding with the nuclear industry to promote Yucca Mountain, Nevada sues over what it claims are inadequate radiation standards for the site.

1994
DOE begins tunneling into Yucca Mountain; five miles of tunnels will eventually be dug.

1987
Yucca Mountain, initially one of nine sites to be studied, is singled out as the sole site by Congress in a politically motivated act known as the "Screw Nevada bill."

1982
With toxic waste building up near reactor sites, Congress passes the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, beginning the process of finding a single repository site.



hiking again with the 100,000 other people who had the same goddamn idea

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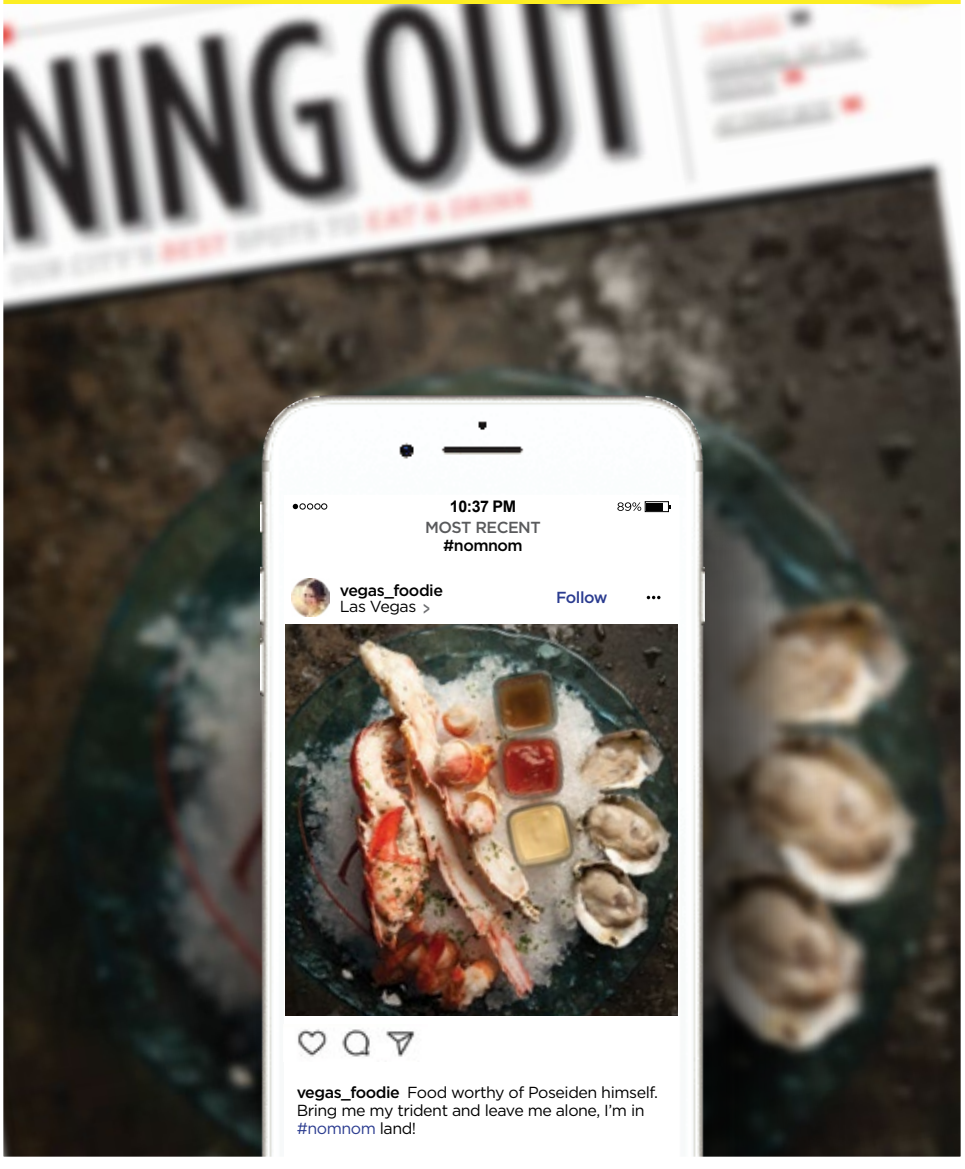
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mph, will they meet before the conductor's ice cream melts?"

Today, women no longer have to struggle, however endowed they are with math aptitude. Professional bra fittings can be obtained at lingerie boutiques and retailers that specialize in post-mastectomy wear. Who knows women's needs for sensitive and accurate bra-fitting better? At 4 Real Lingerie on Durango Road, a mother-daughter-in-law team educates and entertains customers with humor as well as professionalism. Who wouldn't crack a smile when being instructed on the "scoop and swoop" maneuver after a lifetime of "trap it and snap it"?

Their streetfront signage is not subtle: "BRAS — Up to a K Cup!" Wow. Even if I hadn't been in the market for new underwear, this, I thought, I've got to see.

Now, I come from a family filled with bosomy women, so I've seen (and worn) my share of large lingerie, although I now know that most of it was the wrong size. But the women of 4 Real Lingerie were ready to remedy that.

A quick lunge around my thorax with a tape measure and the saleslady-owner determined my band size. Let's just say it doesn't quite match my age, but if I don't lay off the caramel macchiatos, it soon could. The cup size was also a surprise. The sign didn't lie.

But it was actually the way the entire bra was constructed that was the biggest eye-opener, so to speak. The elastic is far less forgiving than that of most brassieres, but here's the thing: When a bra is the right size, the elastic is not doing the heavy lifting, so to speak. It's just there to make the wearer a little more comfortable and the bra itself a little easier to get into.

The best part of the experience was learning that what I'd always thought was underarm fat adjacent to my "batwings" was actually breast tissue that had somehow migrated to my armpit. (Well, that's what the saleswomen said.) Kind of like an empty-nester moving from Brooklyn to Boca. No longer do I have to feel apologetic about my "chicken cutlets." Now I can bend over, swoop down and scoop them into their rightful place inside my 42-G, properly fitting, $50 bra, and walk out into the world, striding forth with my head and my chest held high!

So here's to well-fitting bras, the women who wear them, and the professionals who fit them; long may they help women of all sizes and shapes stand tall, shoulders back, chests bursting with pride. ✦



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ALL OUT

FOOD, CULTURE, STYLE, AND OTHER PULSE-OF-THE-CITY STUFF



DINING | ESSAY

The food abides

The restaurants that survived a decade of turmoil and turnover may lead the way to Vegas' next culinary renaissance

BY ***John Curtas***

Ten years is a long time — and for restaurants, it's practically a lifetime. Laboring under their own set of unique pressures and stresses, restaurants age in dog years, and those who make it past a decade deserve a trophy for longevity.

2007 seems like an eternity away. It was the last boom year before the big bust of 2008. Social media was a harmless novelty; Facebook and Twitter were just gaining traction with adults, and Instagram was years away from becoming the app that launched a trillion food pics.

A decade ago, two of the best restaurants in town were Alex and Bartolotta Ristorante di Mare in the Wynn. Rosemary's was firmly ensconced as our most popular off-Strip eatery, and Bradley Ogden and Valentino were still basking in the glow of their James Beard awards from 2004. Boulud Brasserie, also in the Wynn, was as fabulously French as you could get, Circo rang all of our Tuscan chimes at the Bellagio, and Hubert Keller was wowing us with his Alsatian-Californian cuisine at Fleur de Lys in Mandalay Bay — at the time, perhaps the prettiest dining room in town. Today: They're all gone.

It's wild to think that all those restaurants have closed, as well as plenty of off-Strip eateries from Henderson (David Clawson, Bread & Butter, Standard & Pour) to Downtown (Glutton). It confirms the idea of Las Vegas as a wildly unpredictable restaurant market where no seemingly sure thing is safe. Or does it?

ILLUSTRATION ***Red Nose Studio***

Great food, service, and setting. What went wrong?

CIRCO, BELLAGIO (1998-2013)

The licensing/management deal with the Maccioni family expired after 15 years, and with it went our only authentic Tuscan cuisine — replaced by the decidedly less magical, but more profitable Lago. If you miss Circo, try Ferraro's Italian Restaurant and Wine Bar.

BARTOLOTTA RISTORANTE DI MARE, THE WYNN (2005-2013)

Paul Bartolotta's masterpiece was expensive to create and maintain, and fell victim to the Wynn going all-in on nightclubs and bottle service. The restaurant that took its place is but a pale imitation of what was once the best Italian seafood restaurant in America. If you miss Bartolotta, try Estiatorio Milos in The Cosmopolitan.

BRADLEY OGDEN, CAESARS (2002-2012)

Caesars had a choice: Continue with a sleek, stylish place with a world-class chef and his groundbreaking American cuisine, or slap a TV star's name (Gordon Ramsay) on a downmarket facsimile of an English pub. Guess which won out? If you miss Bradley Ogden, try Blue Ribbon in The Cosmopolitan. ***JC***

NUMBERS GAME

ACTUALLY, THERE ARE plenty of valley success stories that contain some valuable lessons. What keeps these places alive while other, equally worthy restaurants fold their tents? Rosemary's went under, but Grape Street Café kept itself afloat, and is now thriving in a new Downtown Summerlin location. Circo and Valentino bit the dust, but Ferraro's and Carbone (a relative newcomer) are both flying high. Standard & Pour didn't make it even a year in Green Valley; Downtown's Carson Kitchen, with a similar menu, is packed day and night. Glutton closed but, just across the street, EAT thrives. What separates the casualties from the survivors, and what can the past tell us about the future of dining in the valley?

When it comes to casualties, I have two theories. The less sexy theory involves real estate, contracts, and accounting. The Strip is a numbers game, pure and simple. The big hotels are dominated by a need to maximize the profitability of every inch of their real estate. Wall Street demands it, investors demand it, and food and beverage executives think of little else. Restaurants to them are amenities just like swimming pools and high-end retail stores — something to be looked at through the prism of profit margins. When the lease is up (as it was at Valentino, Bradley Ogden, Osteria del Circo, and others), the focus shifts from how wonderful a restaurant is to what prospective new tenant can move the most numbers through the space with the highest cover average. Romantic notions of dappled lights in an architecturally perfect, Adam Tihany-designed room where you fall in love over a subtle Tuscan fish stew and Mama Egi's ravioli with brown butter sauce mean nothing to the bean counters — especially during a post-recession hangover when every one of those beans count. Exit the Maccioni family's renowned Circo at Bellagio, enter Lago, a restaurant with all the charm of a bus station. But it's a crowded bus station, slinging pizzas and pastas at the nightclub crowd, and that's all that matters. When the recession hit, that's really all that mattered. Circo, Valentino, and Bradley Ogden never had a chance.

BACK TO THE PLATE

THEORY NUMBER TWO concerns food — specifically, what sells and what doesn't. Off the Strip, you need a hook. And you need perceived value, the sense that what you are paying for is worth it, or more than worth it. For instance, at Marché Bacchus, it's the outdoor dining, the wine shop, and never-fail French bistro food. (That's three hooks. Four if you include the cheesiest, gooiest onion soup in town.) Daniel Krohmer's Other Mama has been a hit since its doors opened a couple of years ago, in no small part due to his Strip-quality oysters, straight-from-the-Pacific seafood, and fusion concoctions such as French toast caviar that get your attention. Ferraro's has patriarch Gino at the door (and its 30-year-famous osso buco and a world-class wine list), and Raku

Lookback

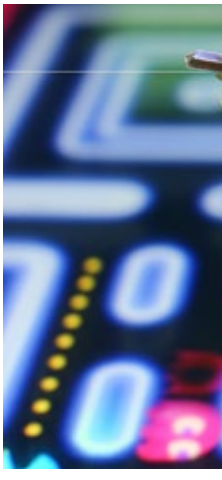
December 2009: What began in January 1998 as John Curtas' annual year-in-review segment for KNPR would eventually evolve into the magazine's Restaurant Awards. Read those and more highlight dining stories from our 10 years at desertcompanion.vegas.

Cocktail OF THE MONTH

THE JOY STICK

AT HI SCORES 65 S. Stephanie St., 702-522-7766; 4785 Blue Diamond Road, 702-888-1999, hiscoreslv.com

You don't go to the clamorous, corrugated bro cave Hi Scores for anything resembling chill ambience, but hey, you can try your hand at the original Mortal Kombat on free-play and see if you still know Scorpion's fire-breathing fatality move. An added bonus: sugary alco-buzz. I tried the Joy Stick, a plain-looking but decently potent sweetbomb made with a base of cucumber vodka and watermelon schnapps. Properly fortified, I was not only hurling Scorp's grappling hook like a pro — GET OVER HERE! — but I even remembered Liu Kang's bicycle kick. Drinking wins — flawless victory. ***Andrew Kiraly***



became instantly known for its house-made tofu and tender, glazed yakitori skewers that taste like they came straight from a Shinjuku alleyway. Glutton's only hook was its terrible name and logo. Its neighbor EAT has yeasty pancakes and dense corned beef hash; one bite of either and it becomes your favorite breakfast spot.

On the Strip, the hook used to be a chef's name. Today, the food gets the attention, not some network star. Many of the celebrities that made our food famous have seen their brands diminish over the past 10 years, and the big splashes these days are made by plates, not personalities — by the over-the-top spectacle of Mr. Chow's Peking Duck, the tableside ministrations of Carbone, or the extraordinary meat and seafood bars of Bazaar Meat.

Hear More
knpr.org, search "curtas"

Big and showy is what Vegas does best, but the places that last another 10 years are going to be all about what's on the menu, not whose name is on the marquee. That's the way it should be, and that's where we were headed before the recession derailed our restaurant renaissance.

Now it feels like we're picking up where we left off. Consider: Rainbow Boulevard south of the 215 has become its own mini-Chinatown; Andre's Bar & Bistro, Sparrow + Wolf, and Elia Authentic Greek Taverna have all opened recently to great and deserved acclaim; and Other Mama, Japaneiro, and Rosallie Le French Café continue to draw passionate foodies. And on the Strip, some venerable joints — such as Cut, Picasso, and Le Cirque — just keep getting better, while newcomers such as Libertine Social and reboots such as Blue Ribbon further bolster my hope for Vegas' dining future.

At long last, a decade of downsizing is over. It's time to get cooking again. ✦





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DINING | EAT THIS CITY

Every Dough People

Pizza is so much more than cheese and sauce slathered on bread (though that's perfectly fine!). These pros bring distinct craft, flavors and traditions to the pie

BY ***Greg Thilmont***



YEAST OF EDEN
You won't find Giò Mauro, of Old School Pizzeria, using commercial yeast in his dough. His is sourced partly from Italy. "I am obsessed with natural fermentation," he says.

Some American cities are known for their distinct pies, like New York City, New Haven, Chicago, and Detroit. But what about Las Vegas? It might surprise you, but we're a hotbed of the pizza pie. Each March, the pizzeria industry flocks here for the International Pizza Expo — call it an edible equivalent of CES. More important for us, there's a cadre of top pizza makers who ply their trade in valley eateries every day. Meet a handful of our superstar *pizzaioli*.

Chris Decker: The Experimenter
Metro Pizza NW

Earlier this summer, Metro Pizza's Chris Decker blew up the internet with a mad-scientist creation: a giant pie with one half classic pepperoni, the other half a sealed dough chamber that steamed Chicago-style frankfurters and buns inside. A row of garlic knots made for a separating line. Once done, he cut the "steamer" side open, garnished the hot dogs with giardiniera, and piled on French fries in a tribute to National Hot Dog Day.

Decker, who hails from Binghamton in Upstate New York, oversees Metro Pizza's location near Centennial Hills. This northwest location is something of a test kitchen, where he's whipped up everything from Sicilian pan-style pie with roasted mushroom, garlic cream, and truffled ricotta to a New York round with yellow squash, fresh thyme, and fried egg.

"I just want people to think about (pizza) differently," says Decker. "I don't want them to think it's just tomato and cheese ... it's an edible canvas." *6720 Sky Pointe Drive, metropizza.com*

Giò Mauro: The Philosopher
Old School Pizzeria

The restaurant business is frequently a family affair — and sometimes the family spreads out. Giò Mauro, whose parents own Nora's Italian Cuisine, operates Old School Pizzeria in North Las Vegas. Talking about pizza with Mauro is like stepping into a living food almanac, especially when it comes to the dough.

"I am obsessed with natural fermentation; I use zero commercial yeast in my dough. It's all done with a mother dough," Mauro says. His handcrafted dough rises due to heritage yeast strains from the Italian island of Ischia in the Gulf of Naples, as well as local single-celled micro-organisms from apricots grown in Logandale. The dough is topped with an array of combinations, including rapini, black Mediterranean olives, truffle salt-cured egg yolks, and white anchovies — a mix otherwise known as the "Hard Core."

Mauro also specializes in delectable porchetta, a rolled roast of pork and savory spices. Served simply on bread roll, it goes perfectly with the housemade lemonade infused with grilled rosemary. *2040 E. Craig Road, pizzaoldschool.com*

Vincent Rotolo: The Visionary
Evel Pie

Reared in the heady pizza culture of Manhattan, Vincent Rotolo specializes in the borough's time-tested and true street tradition of big slices with a sturdy crust that folds over perfectly.

"I've been really been blessed with my team here at Evel Pie. They recognize how dedicated I am to making a great pizza, and it's harder to do things right," says Rotolo. "It's an art form; it's a way of expressing ourselves."

Evel Pie celebrates the outsized life of the original daredevil, Evel Knievel. Fittingly, the menu includes a few maverick items not seen in your average pizzeria, including rattlesnake sausage and candied pork belly. So, it might seem incongruous that there's a stunning gluten-free Sicilian pie on the menu, too. Light and airy, it garnered Rotolo second place in

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Sabin Orr***

the gluten-free category at this year's International Pizza Expo. Rotolo recently built a wood-burning oven in his backyard, so he even bakes pies on his days off. "I'm obsessed with pizza culture. It's been my whole life." *508 Fremont St., evelpie.com*

Fabiana Bianco: The Internationalist
La Bella Napoli

If you get hungry after a session of shopping at Town Square, take the escalator up to La Bella Napoli. That's where pizzaiola Fabiana Bianco helms the kitchen alongside husband and fellow restaurant owner Adriano. She hand-pulls dough, adds toppings, and places the fresh Neapolitan-style pies in a wood-burning oven imported from Italy. Hailing from Brazil, Bianco trained at a famed pizzeria in Naples.

"We had a lot of people in the line," says Bianco, recalling her training where a shift could mean helping make a thousand pizzas in a day. "It was crazy." Bianco specializes in the whimsical *racettas*, pies with a cheese-stuffed crust handles that make them resemble a tennis racket — thus names such as "The Wimbledon" and "Australian Open." She also pays homage to Brazil's foodways with *coxhina*, fried potato croquettes filled with chicken. *6599 S. Las Vegas Blvd. #210, labellalv.com*

Maurizio Di Cicco: The Traditionalist
Settebello Las Vegas

For someone who grew up in Naples, it took a transoceanic move to Las Vegas for Maurizio Di Cicco to dive deep into the world of crafting pies. As *pizzaiolo* of Settebello Las Vegas, he's in charge of producing pizzas that adhere to the guidelines of the Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana, an organization that defines the ingredients for traditional Neapolitan-style pizza, such as soft white flour, San Marzano tomatoes, and buffalo-milk mozzarella cheese. But he didn't wield the pizza paddle on his first day. He started out as a dishwasher, learning the craft between shifts. Di Cicco is known to go beyond the Neapolitan rules for daily specials, including inspired works featuring fresh peaches adorned with edible flowers, and a Halloween-themed pizza with black-tinted crust and squash. "It never ends. We learn something every day," he says. *140 S. Green Valley Parkway, settebello.net*

Christopher Palmeri: The Entrepreneur
Naked City Pizza

While Buffalo, New York, is revered for its

STREET FOODIE

Swap meet eats

Offbeat food and drink we found at Broadacres Marketplace, August 13

PHOTOS & CAPTIONS BY
Brent Holmes



COCO LOCO, $8

You get a bag full of shaved coconut and your selection of toppings (shown: cucumber and pickled pigskins), plus half a young coconut. It grows on you! Don't forget the hot sauce and lime.



CARNITAS EL CUÑADO, $8

This sandwich of minced pork bits would remind Street Foodie of sloppy Joes if sloppy Joes had personality and a mouth-scalding amount of chilies.



TEJUINO, $6

Briny fermented corn spiked with lime and garnished with lime sorbet. You had Street Foodie at "fermented." Refreshing, and tastes like nothing else.



Hear More
knpr.org, search "italian las vegas"

spicy chicken wings, it's also filled with mom 'n' pop pizzerias. It's a tradition that Christopher Palmeri brought to Las Vegas. Starting with a hot dog cart outside Dino's Lounge in Downtown, he eventually opened full-fledged restaurants like his headquarters on Paradise Road, a block south of the Hard Rock Hotel. His specialty is the Guinea Pie, featuring meatballs, spinach, ricotta, mozzarella, and white garlic sauce. It's something he enjoyed in Buffalo, and a close friend urged him to introduce the combination to Las Vegas diners. "That was the first pizza that we put on the menu. It was cool because I was able to incorporate my grandmother's meatballs that she used to make," Palmeri says.

While his Sicilian-style pan pizzas have gained worldwide acclaim on shows like Food Network's *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, Palmeri also has a knack for creating upscale Mexican tacos. He's also the singular engineer of the remarkable Bacon Candle — a flickering, savory votive of rendered pork fat that melts into a scrumptious dip for crostini. *4608 Paradise Road, nakedcitylv.com*



PIZZA MAVERICK
Befitting a pizzeria named for Evel Knievel, Vincent Rotolo's Evel Pie offers some daredevil toppings — rattlesnake, anyone? His pizza, he says, is "a way of expressing ourselves."



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STYLE

From 9-to-5 to a Night on the Town

Dashing stylishly from work straight to the show is easy with the right accessories

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Christopher Smith***
STYLING ***Christie Moeller***
HAIR/MAKE-UP ***Zee Clemente***
MODELS ***Dan & Lexi / TNG Models***



WHAT HE'S WEARING

Theory "Wellar" New Tailor blazer, $435

Theory "Kody 2" New Tailor pants, $180

Robert Graham tonal jacquard sport shirt, $198

Bally Latour classic leather derby shoe, $495

Neiman Marcus in the Fashion Show Mall

WHAT SHE'S WEARING

Adelise crossover sleeveless sheath dress, $495

Aquazzura dancer suede lace-up pumps, $795

Neiman Marcus in the Fashion Show Mall

9 TO 5:



Suit Supply Men's Portfolio, $369, **Suit Supply in the Shoppes at the Palazzo**



Nixon "Brigade" watch in black/lum, $200, **nixon.com**



Suit Supply burgundy silk tie, $49, **Suit Supply in the Shoppes at the Palazzo**

NIGHT ON THE TOWN:



"Brooklyn" leather chukka boot, $228, **John Varvatos in the Forum Shops at Caesars**



Maison Margiela "Replica" By the Fireplace cologne, $126, **Nordstrom in the Fashion Show Mall**

9 TO 5:



Tory Burch "Juliette" satchel, $558, **Tory Burch in the Forum Shops at Caesars**

BCBG "Lloyd" easy layered jacket, $228, **BCBG in the Fashion Show Mall, the Forum Shops at Caesars, and Town Square**



NARS all-day powermatte lip pigment in "Just What I Needed," $26, **NARS Boutique in the Forum Shops at Caesars**



NIGHT ON THE TOWN:

Jimmy Choo "Finley" glitter mini bag, $750, **Jimmy Choo in the Forum Shops at Caesars and The Shops at Crystals in CityCenter**





Tom Ford Velvet Orchid Lumiere fragrance, $171, **Neiman Marcus in the Fashion Show Mall**



Swarovski "Heroism" necklace, $169, **Swarovski in Miracle Mile Shops**



Swarovski "Heroism" earrings, $89, **Swarovski in Miracle Mile Shops**



Jimmy Choo "Romy" pump, $675, **Jimmy Choo in the Forum Shops at Caesars and The Shops at Crystals in CityCenter**

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Streetwise

Maryland Parkway from Desert Inn to Twain

BY ***Greg Thilmont***

Now squarely in the middle of the Las Vegas Valley, Maryland Parkway was an eastern hinterland in the early '60s. It was also where a growing young town embraced Midcentury Modernism as a residential style in the nearby Paradise Palms neighborhood, and kicked shopping into high gear at the Boulevard Mall. Just north of UNLV, the stretch between Desert Inn Road and Twain Avenue is the heart of the thoroughfare.



BOULEVARD MALL

4300 E. Sunset Road

Animal Rides of America
What just whizzed by inside Boulevard Mall, a monkey? A leopard? A panda bear? A lion? No, a zoo didn't get loose — it's Animal Rides of America. Kids and their adults can rent these fuzzy scooters and tool around between shops. 702-983-6011, *animalridesofamerica.com*

SeaQuest Interactive Aquarium
There are plenty of gigantic, sea creature-filled tanks in the Tourist Corridor from Mandalay Bay to the Golden Nugget, but this attraction is geared toward local families. And, unlike most collections of swimming critters, many of these can be touched by inquisitive visitors — kids can even snorkel with stingrays. 3528 S Maryland Parkway, *seaquestaquariums.com*

John's Incredible Pizza
Las Vegas is filled with buffets, but this is one squarely designed for families, as it's filled wall-to-wall with arcade games of all sorts, plus glow-in-the-dark mini-golf and bumper cars. You might even meet the mascot, IncrediBear, while munching of slices of Hawaiian pie complete with pineapple. 3700 S. Maryland Parkway, *johnspizza.com/las-vegas*

NKEM AFRICAN/ CARIBBEAN MARKET

3585 S. Maryland Parkway, 702-914-0404

For expats from Africa and the Caribbean (or foodies from everywhere) looking to cook homeland traditions, this bodega is packed with imported ingredients. From palm oil to cassava flour for fufu, cross off grocery lists here for authentic dishes like those served from Nigeria to Jamaica.



GRANNY'S KITCHEN

3333 S. Maryland Parkway, 702-740-0184

Heaps of authentic soul food are served up at Granny's Kitchen, a homestyle eatery tucked back in an older strip mall. Louisiana-style fried chicken, including platters smothered in hearty gravy, is the specialty. Try a side of collard greens with smoked turkey for a serving of veggies.



MOLASKY "ROUND" BUILDING AND "FLASHCUBE" BUILDINGS

3111 S. Maryland Parkway

One of the remaining Googie buildings that once bloomed about town as architectural celebrations of the Space Age, this circular edifice across the street from Sunrise Hospital was the former office of uber-developer Irwin Molasky as he built the Boulevard Mall. Now it's an emergency health care center flanked by two gleaming International-style multistory office cubes further back.

MOLASKY FAMILY PARK

1065 E. Twain Ave.



This green space is relatively sparse compared to big hitters like Sunset and Desert Breeze, but it plays a valuable role in the nearby area. While there are certainly tony homes and upscale towers nearby, many streets close to Maryland are dotted with lower-income apartments, making the civic amenity a much-valued space for residents looking for quality time outdoors.

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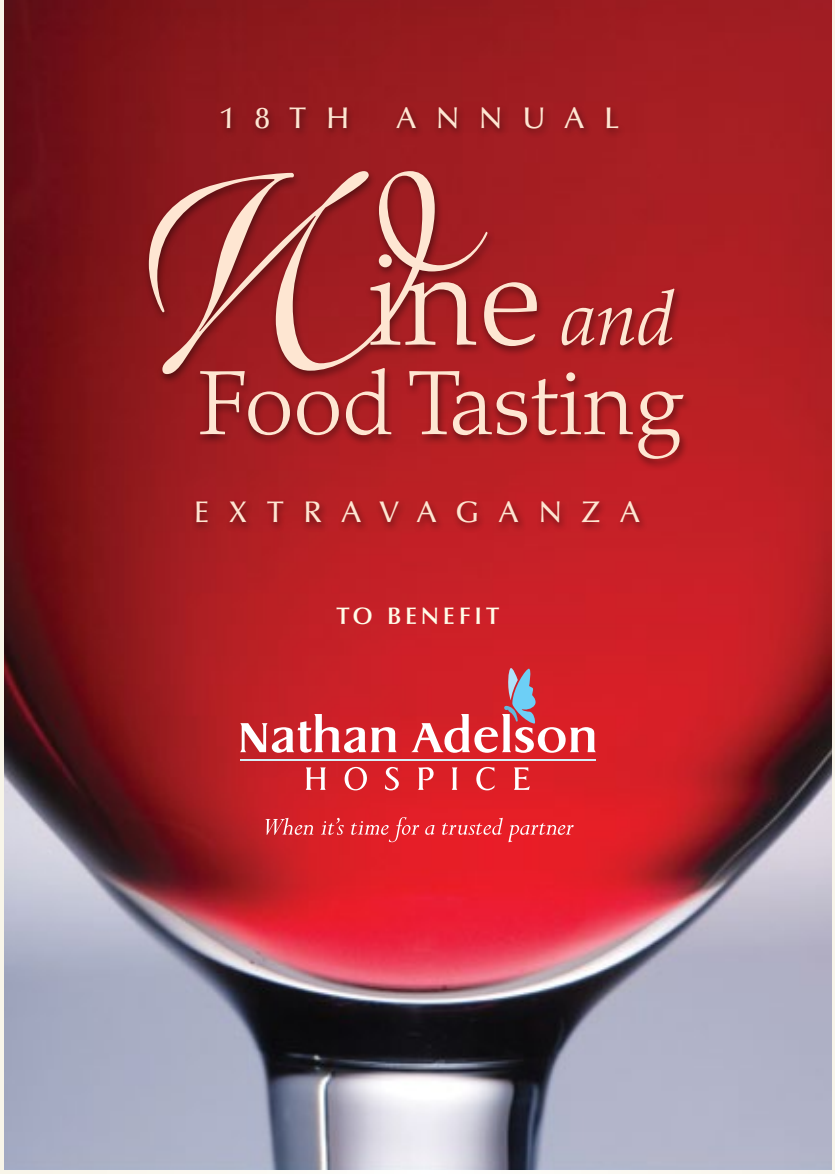
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MY SPACE

Anthony Bondi

On the eve of the iconic Las Vegas artist's career show, a look at his creative space

BY ***Scott Dickensheets***

If you were to make a list of artists most associated with Las Vegas, Anthony Bondi would be equivalent to the paper you jot that list on — which is to say, indispensable to the project. He's a genuine Vegas character whose early collages and art-music-performance happenings did as much to define the cultural sensibility of those pre-boom and early-boom years as any artist's work. (See *Desert Companion*'s profile, December 2013.) His work melded a love of history — Las Vegas' and the world's — with an eye for the visual and psychic juxtapositions and disjunctures of modern Sin City.

On September 15, The Studio at the Sahara West Library, the large, upgraded gallery spaces that once housed the Las Vegas Art Museum, will host a career-spanning look at Bondi's work. We checked in at his Downtown home to see what his creative space looks like.

1 Toy Figures This wall unit holds a collection of old figurines — pirates, heroes, toy battleships. They're still a source of inspiration: "When you invest something with 10 years of meaning, as a child, and you come back to it as an adult, that power is still there," Bondi says. One playful arrangement groups a virgin Mary, the Blue Angel, and a lusty *Pirates of the Caribbean* gal.

2 Photo of Courtney Love and daughter Frances Bean Cobain He calls it a "goddess shot" and says it puts him in mind of the passage of time between generations. Speaking in the voice of the girl, he says, "I'm brand new, but mom's wrecked." It's about cycles of renewal.

3 Computer screen Bondi is best known for his handmade collages and the playful, interactive pieces he built for Burning Man. Less recognized is his digital photography, which he shoots in his backyard and manipulates here. He sees it as a logical extension of the collage work, which he felt he'd played out. "I had nowhere left to go with them."

4 Photo of child soldiers in Africa "How do you survive that?" Bondi wonders. The image serves him as a real-world reality check, reminding him where he falls on a scale of real suffering. "There are larger problems in the world than mine," he says. "I may have the blues, you know, but I'm not a refugee."

5 Antlered skull Bondi found this while hiking deep into the mountains near Malibu, California. Just sitting there! Picked clean, it had clearly been in the open for a long time. Which he took to mean he'd gone to the edge of where anyone else had gone in a long time — and was about to "trespass into territory of animals that didn't have direct experience of humans. I had a choice, to keep going or turn back." He turned back, taking the skull.

6 Historical images This batch of representations of previous human eras — structures from ancient Egypt, the Aztecs, the Renaissance, the Vatican — feeds his historical imagination. And the African huts? "It's like, the people who live there don't live like us. How cool is that?"

7 Burning Man plaque For Burning Man one year, Bondi built a merry-go-round. It proved to be popular, he says, with people riding on it, screaming in delight, 24 hours a day. It was near a sector called Illumination Village — "where a lot of the fire acts hung out" — and that group was so impressed with the enjoyment Bondi had created, "they gave me a plaque to celebrate it."

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Brent Holmes***

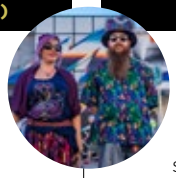
YOUR ENTERTAINMENT DOLLAR

Festivalpalooza

Making sense of this fall's three big music festivals

BY *Andrew Kiraly*

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (Sept. 22-24)



Now in its fifth year, Life Is Beautiful is a three-day bash that takes over 18 blocks of Downtown for a multi-stage event with hipster-mandatory doses of food, street art, and even lectures. *lifeisbeautiful.com*

I HEART RADIO (Sept. 22-23)

At T-Mobile Arena, iHeartRadio trots out blockbuster acts such as Coldplay, Pink, Kings of Leon, and other future *Dancing with the Stars* contestants. *iheartradio.com*

ROUTE 91 HARVEST (Sept. 29 - Oct. 1)

Twang meets pop at the Route 91 Harvest festival, a celebration of … mainstream country? New American country? Country-pop? Country lite? Popmericountry? *rt91harvest.com*

NONMUSICAL METAPHOR FOR MUSIC YOU'RE LIKELY TO HEAR

That guy with a beard *and* a man-bun *and* tattoo sleeves *and* who is a DJ who's conspicuously into old-school funk.

Tootsie Pop that tastes frivolous, then elated, then vacuous, then sensitive, then frivolous, then elated, then vacuous again. Candy center is an Instagram selfie.

A frayed, weathered Brixton Manufacturing Co. trucker hat … bought from Zumiez in the outlet mall for $28.

TMZ MOMENT LIKELY TO OCCUR

Lead singer of Gorillaz unleashes drunken, profanity-laced rant expressing outrage that more people aren't into Gorillaz.

In most outlandish and explicit stunt yet, Miley Cyrus pulls mouth open and turns herself inside out.



Grainy cellphone recording of inebriated fans erupting into civil, thoughtful roundtable discussion of white privilege and legacy of systemic racism in U.S.

OKAY, SERIOUSLY — SOME COOL ACTS ON THE ROSTER

Colombian-American singer Kali Uchis joins pop hooks to a voice that's both sultry and ethereal. Check out: "Tyrant."

Formerly of boy-band One Direction, Harry Styles is a surprisingly torchy balladeer. Check out: "Sign of the Times."

Ashley McBryde's last-call jukebox tunes also glimmer with the wit and wordplay of a poet — or a hip-hop artist. Check out: "Fat and Famous."

IN THIS LINEUP LIST, FIND AT LEAST TWO MADE-UP BAND NAMES!

Chance the Rapper, Muse, Dreamcar, The Prolapse, Troyboi, Coin, Hippo Campus, The Dildonics, Wingtip, They., Sigrid, Shy Girls, Mondo Cozmo, Chum

The Weeknd, Thirty Seconds to Mars, DJ Khaled, Kesha, Dubstep Pete, Big Sean, The Dads

Brothers Osborne, Drooling Banjos, Big & Rich, High Valley, Tucker Beathard, Hat Hair Trio, Bobby Bones and the Raging Idiots, Smithfield



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THEATER

Teach a Dog

A musical tale of canine bigotry

BY **Scott Dickensheets**

"One hundred percent, the reaction was laughter," says playwright and director L.A. Walker, recalling telling people the premise of her play *No Labels*. No surprise: It's about a homophobic dog adopted by a gay couple. As it happens, laughter is the response she wants — *No Labels* is a musical comedy, which will be presented by the library district this month. You probably have some questions. A dog ... what? Why? How? Some answers:



MY DOG'S NAME is Austin. Very talkative dog. He just comes up to me and makes little noises. And it dawned on me that some of the issues we face, if they were addressed through a *dog*, which most people love, they might be a little easier to receive. I started writing based on that, and based upon all the curiosities and the fears we have about sexual orientation, and all the gender bias.

I'M A PART of the LGBT community, and I've been directly affected by some of the hatred and bigotry toward homosexuals.

WITH THIS PLAY, we open a door while people are in the safety of their seats and let them take a peek at people who are quite normal, just like themselves, who love each other, their animals, their community. And we do it through laughter.

THERE ARE TWO dogs, and they're both (acted by) humans with dog makeup and dog behavior. They got into it right away — it's an uninhibited role, and it's kind of fun for them.

PEOPLE, WHEN THEY laugh, are far more receptive to accepting information than with a drama — drama causes way too much thought sometimes. Laughter gives you the opportunity to give them short bursts of information. People have received it even before they realize what has occurred.

WE PRESENTED 20 minutes (of the show) at the Fringe Festival in 2015. We were beaten up badly by the critics — and we deserved to be. One pointed out something that really helped a lot, and that was, I had an opportunity with this topic to really *say something*. Initially, I went more for laughs. When I got corrected (by critics), I began rewriting until I finally came up with a script that I felt promoted laughter but also gave lessons. We're proud of where we are now, and we invite those critics to come back.

THIS PARTICULAR CAST is the very best I've ever worked with. I've learned to let go, because everyone has something to contribute, and they bring so much to something if you allow them to. I don't squelch that. I'm getting so much better at stuff because I'm learning from them.

OH, MY GOSH, (the show is) *so* diverse — in our sexuality, in racial background, in genre of expression, whether it's country, R&B, whatever. We are just diverse.

WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT the opportunity to just say, "Come on, guys, we're all just human beings trying to do the best we can to have a good world. Let's just live and enjoy it."

09 24 **NO LABELS** September 24, 4p, Windmill Library, free, *lvccld.org*

THE Hot Seat

lecture

Dave Hickey on art and writing

BARRICK MUSEUM

You can empty a big bucket of descriptors on writer and critic (and former Las Vegan) Dave Hickey, and a lot of them would stick: genius, raconteur, contrarian, quote-machine, infuriating, brilliant essayist. With his long-awaited collection *Perfect Wave* due out in November, he's back at UNLV for a pair of lectures at the Barrick Museum: one about art (Sept. 25) and one about writing (Oct. 2). If you care about either or both, he's a voice worth listening to. **7p both nights, free, *unlv.edu/barrickmuseum***

comestibles

GRAPES & HOPS FESTIVAL

SPRINGS PRESERVE

Leave your under-21s at home for this evening of slosh and nosh in the preserve's fetching autumn setting. Fine wine, curated beers, and foodie bites from restaurants to be named later, all to raise money for breast-cancer research. **Sept. 30, 5-9p, $30-$115, *springspreserve.org***



sports

UNLV FOOTBALL

SAM BOYD STADIUM

While never a powerhouse program, UNLV football can still uncork some entertaining moments, and sporty Las Vegans must live in the hope that the team, under third-year coach Tony Sanchez, can find a winning groove — maybe in home games against Howard University (Sept. 2) or San Jose State (Sept. 30, the Mountain West conference opener), though probably not against Ohio State on Sept. 23 (an away game). **Sam Boyd Stadium, *unlvtickets.com***



music

Las Vegas Philharmonic

THE SMITH CENTER

No soft season opening for this ensemble! The Phil comes out of the gates big, with Richard Strauss' classic *Don Juan*, which marked the rise of his mature voice; plus, *Common Tones in Simple Time*, a 1979 John Adams number meant to evoke the feeling of gliding over a landscape. Also in there somewhere: a hit of Brahms. **Sept. 9, 7:30p, $30-$109, The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

art

JENNIFER KLEVEN

WINCHESTER GALLERY

In addition to being a Downtown gallerist back when it was cool — *shoutout to Kleven Contemporary!* — Kleven is a skilled artist, and this show, *Urban Naturalism, Again,* finds her displaying her recent mixed-media/photo pieces. **Sept. 5-Oct. 12 (opening reception Sept. 8, 5:30p), Winchester Gallery, free, 702-455-7340**





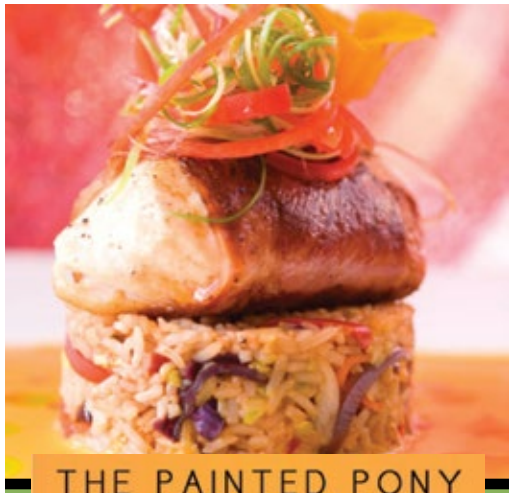
books

UNCENSORED VOICES

CLARK COUNTY LIBRARY

"Celebrating Your Freedom to Read" is the theme of this year's Banned Books Week, September 24-30. It's tempting to think of censorship as a problem modern society has put behind us — Orwell's been dead for 67 years and counting — but at press time, Florida had just passed a law making it easier for people to challenge schoolbooks they find objectionable. Freedom to read shouldn't be taken for granted, that being the point of this event. **Sept. 26, 7p, free, Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

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Q&A

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

Governor Brian Sandoval opens up about partisanship in the internet age, his practical philosophy of governing, and how cleaning sheep pens can prepare you for a political career

BY ***Steve Sebelius***

Governor Brian Sandoval is a fan of history. And why not? He's made a fair bit of it himself.

He was Nevada's first Hispanic statewide elected official when he won the race for attorney general in 2002. He was the first Hispanic governor when he was elected in 2010. And he was the first person in state history to defeat an incumbent of his own party in a primary when he ousted then-Gov. Jim Gibbons.

He was also the first Republican governor to decide — after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act — to expand Medicaid in Nevada and establish a state-based health insurance exchange. His support of the program was a factor as national Republicans debated an ultimately unsuccessful effort to dismantle it. And he was the governor who oversaw the implementation of the first tax on business revenue in state history in the unlikely crucible of a Republican-dominated state Legislature in 2015.

The young man who once eagerly researched reports about U.S. presidents has since had the chance to lead as a chief





PHOTOGRAPHY ***Marcello Rostagni***



THE LONG VIEW
Gov. Sandoval at his office in Carson City. "There are members of my party who frankly don't agree with my methods," he says. "But I have to do what I think is in the best interests of the state."

executive himself. And while there are critics, many stipulate Sandoval will be remembered as one of the best governors the state has had, the right man at the right time with the right temperament to lay the foundation of what the governor relentlessly calls the New Nevada.

With just 16 months to go in his second and final term, *Desert Companion* sat down with the governor in his Carson City office to discuss politics, policy and his legacy. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Let's start at the beginning. You're a federal judge, you're on the bench. Some friends come to you and say, "You know what, you ought to run for governor." Had you thought about it before that?

Seriously run for governor? Yes. I was loving my experience on the bench. I was coming into my own. I'd been on the bench for almost four years. I had had the privilege of serving as a visiting judge on the Ninth Circuit three times. I had had between 15 and 20 jury trials and was, in my opinion, doing well.

Was it a difficult decision to give that up? That's a lifetime job that so many people who are lawyers would die for and would cling to.

It was the most difficult professional decision that I had ever had to make. You're right, it is a lifetime appointment, I had been recommended by our senators, I had been nominated by President Bush, I had been confirmed unanimously by the U.S. Senate. As I said, I think I was doing well as a federal judge, but at the same time, the state was in its worst economic situation that it had ever been in in its history. I mean, it was a very personal decision, one that, frankly, I wasn't going to do it, I was going to stay on the bench, and, after a conversation with my wife, we decided to go to dinner, and she said to me, "Brian, if you don't do this, you'll be driving to that courthouse every day for the rest of your life thinking you could have made a difference."

You mentioned the state of the state and how that kind of weighed into your thinking. Was that something you'd been thinking about for a while as you went about your daily life?

Well, yeah, as a judge, I'm handling my docket, but at the same time, you read the paper. You know what's going on. And I'm a proud Nevadan, I love my state, it's given me everything that I have. And it really hurt me to see the situation that we were in. And as part of that calculus of me making that decision — you know, I had served in the Legislature, I had served on the Gaming Commission, I'd served as the attorney general, I'd served as a member of the TRPA (the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency) — I felt like I had a good strong book of experience to perhaps make a difference.

What would you have done if you'd lost that race?

Probably be practicing law. Because that's the thing, a lot of people think I could have

gone back to the bench. I mean, you step away from a federal judgeship, it's over. And the only way to get back is to get recommended, to get nominated and to get confirmed. So it was leaving a very good position, and, as you said, a position that is the pinnacle of an attorney's career. And that's the thing, Cathleen said, "We'll be OK." I mean, I like to tell people I actually was a pretty good lawyer in my own right. But I would have gone back to practicing law and rebuilding things.

When you ran in 2010, you ran on a fairly conservative platform. As I recall, every candidate did. Was that a function of the times that you were in, the recession and things of that nature, or was it because you were running against Jim Gibbons and you didn't want to give him any quarter as somebody who might raise taxes at some point?

I would say it was primarily a function of the times that we were in. We've talked about this, we had 14-plus percent unemployment, there was an unemployment deficit of between $500 million and $1 billion at the time, people were struggling, small businesses were struggling, the economy was struggling. It was the worst time to consider a tax increase.

I talked to a few people before I came up to see you today, and they all used the same adjectives — pragmatic, practical, moderate, judicial in terms of temperament, that's the Brian Sandoval that Nevada knows today. Talk about that transition, from saying, "We can't have any new taxes" to "Okay, now we have a problem, and we have to do this."

Well, one of my thoughts is that there is a difference between campaigning and governing. And another thing you have to recognize is that when I came in, we had a $2 billion budget deficit. I'm sure you're alluding to the sunset taxes; those are something that had been built into the budget, and we had already had to make some pretty devastating cuts to get the budget to balance with regard to K-12 and higher ed. You're also familiar with the Clean Water Coalition decision that essentially said that the way that we had built the budget wasn't going to work. And this was with three weeks to go in the (2011) legislative session? And so, I made the decision to go ahead and continue the sunsets for that first budget in 2011.

There are some politicians who would not have done that. They would have said, "I ran on this campaign pledge, and that's the most important thing." One of the people I talked to said, "Look, what makes this important and significant is he did not have to do that. He could have continued to cut."

No, there's no doubt. As I said, I love my state. And when you sit in a kindergarten classroom or visit a middle school or go to a high school, visit the universities and talk to those students, and look them in the eye and talk to teachers and see that we can do a lot better for them, and again, you have to do this in the context of diversifying the economy and bringing in the companies that we have, we have to have an education system to match. Absolutely, it was a difficult decision for me to do that, but I knew that it was the right decision for our state. As I thought about it more and more, it became very clear to me that there really was no other alternative that I felt was in the best interests of Nevada.

We had an education system, essentially, and a funding system that was 50 years old. And we have a student population that is completely different from that which we had 50 years ago. We have a lot more diversity, we have a lot more English language-learners, we have a lot more children in poverty, all things that in order to improve a graduation rate that was in the low 60s — and, by the way, is close to 80 percent now — we had to make those types of investments. Certainly we could putter along as we did before and kind of be stuck in less than mediocrity, or be a state like we are now, that's leading the country in growth.

So, in 2014, the Democrats could not find someone to run against you. The candidate they finally found, Robert Goodman, was defeated by "None of These Candidates" in the primary. Did you take that as justification?

I'm not going to speculate. I hope that it was a show of confidence in the job I've done.

One statewide elected official I talked to described himself as a "Brian Sandoval Republican." What is a Brian Sandoval Republican?

I think you said it before, it's someone who's pragmatic, somebody who does their homework, somebody who is a solutions person, somebody who cares deeply about people. For me, it's looking people in the eye, and learning what their problems are, what their challenges are, and then coming back here, and this office is a gift, it is an incredible privilege and opportunity to be able to solve (problems) and help people. So that's what I would say — pragmatic, solutions, a lot of empathy for people, and hard work. I also have to say I have an amazing staff. You have to have a strong team with you, it's not just me, and I have a great cabinet and people who are willing to put in the hard work to make all these things happen. None of this happens in a vacuum.

I think I just heard the perfect description of the anti-Trump. I mean, someone who is self-effacing, crediting others, doesn't take credit for saying, "I'm the greatest, the best that's ever been."

Well, I want people to be proud of their governor, I want the people to be proud of their state. And I want them to be able to wake up in the morning and have a job to go to, so that they can provide for their family, that they can drop their kids off at school and know that they're going to get a proper education and that they will then go on to a respected higher education system, and when they graduate from there, on to a career. So that's what I care about. I mean, it's not about me. It just simply is not.

You're known to appreciate history. Could you imagine that a young man growing up helping to raise sheep would someday be the attorney general of the state, and the governor of the state during

Hear more Listen to Gov. Sandoval's interview, with analysis from Steve Sebelius, on "State of Nevada" at *desertcompanion.com/hearmore*

Lookback

March/April 2010: With Harry Reid up for re-election, Hugh Jackson ponders the implications for Nevada if he were to lose. Read that and more highlight political stories from our 10 years at desertcompanion.vegas.

its 150th birthday?

It never occurred to me. It never occurred to me growing up. And it's true, I grew up in East Sparks, and we lived on five acres of land, we had a little flock of sheep, and my brother and I were responsible for them. Those sheep belonged to us. That's how I paid for my first car, that's how I paid my way through college. My job was to clean the sheep pens. And I always tell the joke, it was good practice for what I'm doing now. But in any event, it never occurred to me. I hoped, someday, that I would be in a position where I could help people and make a difference.

Did there come a time that you recall, after you'd been elected, when the weight and the responsibility of the job kind of became real to you?

My first year as governor was hard. It was hard in the sense there was the (Reno) air race disaster up here, there was a train crash in Fallon, there was the IHOP where the three National Guardsmen and National Guardswoman were brutally murdered. I think there were some fires — there was a fire, at least. There was the legislative session, and so, I was thrown into it right away. When you start to put all those together, you start to realize that there's a massive responsibility that you have.

If you were, like some past presidents, to follow the tradition of leaving a letter for your successor in your desk, what would that letter say? What advice would you give to the next governor?

My advice would be to put your mouthpiece in, put your helmet on, bring your lunch pail to work every day because in order to do this job right, in my opinion, you have to work really hard. You have to be informed, you have to build a really strong cabinet and staff that you can rely upon, but at the same time you've got to laugh, you have to get out there, you have to visit the communities, you have to meet with people and get a good understanding of their day-to-day lives.

You are the first Hispanic governor of Nevada. Do you feel like you are a role model in that sense? Do you feel like you need to set a good example?

Well, I feel like I should set a good example for everybody. But it really is, from what people have told me, a source of pride within the Latin community. But I try to do the best I can do on a daily basis, and I want to make everybody proud. But I hope that it gives some hope to some young men and women in the Latino community that if you work hard — and I tell them this — that everybody should have a dream, it comes with a lot of hard work, but Nevada's still a place where if you are willing to work hard, you can do whatever you want to do.



SIGN AND SIGNAL
Sandoval signs a bill during a ceremony June 15, 2017, in North Las Vegas. "There's a difference between campaigning and governing," Sandoval says of his pragmatic political philosophy.

You've been elected to the Assembly, elected attorney general, now you've been elected governor twice. Do you enjoy politics?

I enjoy governing more. But in order to govern, you have to politick. I don't know of anybody who enjoys raising money, but you know, that's something that you have to do in order to run an effective campaign. I enjoy getting out and shaking hands and meeting with people and visiting schools and learning. The part I don't enjoy is being away from my family. I guess when you mentioned about advice to the next governor, it is a big sacrifice for your family. My kids have been in the public eye since they were born.

Do you try to shield them from some of the more negative aspects of politics?

You can't. And that's the hard part. They hear it at school, and it's hard for them. They're proud of their dad, they love their dad, they know and they understand that I have to make decisions. That's part of what I tell people as governor: If you're pleasing everybody, you're lying to somebody. And you have to make decisions that are going to make some people unhappy. As you know, social media is a big deal and this generation is very involved in social media, so they read it, they see it, they hear it. That's one of the hard parts of politics. But as I said, you can't shield them from that.

That's got to be hard on everybody.

And my wife — I'm so proud of her, she is the first full-time working first lady in the history of this state. She has been almost personally responsible for the passage of juvenile justice legislation and the opioid legislation. She works with at-risk kids and families on a daily basis, so she's balancing a family, she's balancing a full-time job, and she's balancing being first lady, all at the same time, so that's hard. But those are some of the things that I don't talk about, but you asked the question. For them, they want to have their own lives. They want to have their own identities, they don't want to be the governor's son or the governor's daughter. They want to be their own person.

You are the titular head of the Republican Party in Nevada. And there are a lot of people in that party who criticize you. They call you the RINO, for Republican in Name Only. What's your reaction?

I hear all that. I'm not deaf to that, I'm not blind to that. When you're in politics long enough, you come to understand and appreciate and know there's going to be a difference of opinion, even in your own party. But, as I said, at the end of the day, I have to do what I think is in the best interests of the state, and I think that, at least up until now — I don't want to jinx anything — the state is better. I mean, we have improved

PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

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economically, we have improved education, the state is in a much better position than it was six and a half years ago. There are members of my party who frankly don't agree with my methods, and my challenge to them, for the ones who want to cut the taxes, is then they have to be honest about what they're going to cut. Are you going to cut K-12 education? So, I understand the criticism, I appreciate the criticism, I respect the criticism. But I have to do what I think is in the best interests of the state.

Do you ever get the sense that you're kind of talking past each other?

Well, it goes back to what we talked about before. There is a difference between campaigning and the ideology that you've discussed, and governing. And when you sit in my chair, you come to appreciate very quickly the needs of the state and how people are counting on you who aren't just members of the Republican Party. I still believe, in light of everything we've talked about, that I'm conservative at heart. These guys know, my staff knows, that I'm pinching every possible penny. But at the same time, there are just some fundamental requirements and needs that you have to ensure for the state to move forward.

I'm not trying to get you to criticize the president, but with politics in the age of Trump, it's a zero-sum, winner-take-all type game, where you have people who support one candidate because they hate the other candidate, and the viciousness that sometimes attends the debate in public. How do you govern in a space like that, in a time like that?

It is a different environment. Twenty-five years ago, it was a 24-hour news cycle, you'd book your story at 5 p.m., it would be in the paper the next morning, and it would be another 24 hours. And now, with Twitter, and blogs and the internet, it's literally moment to moment. And the environment has definitely changed, and, as you said, some people applaud that type of approach with regard to politics in terms of demonizing your opponent. That's an individual choice. That's not an approach that I have ever taken. Certainly, criticism is fair game in politics, but I think you can take it too far.

Do you think the system is broken and that's why we're seeing what we're seeing, or is this just a particular moment in history where these forces have kind of come together as the perfect storm and it will play itself out eventually?



TALKING POINT
Sandoval speaks about sage grouse conservation Sept. 22, 2015, in Commerce City, Colorado. He sometimes disagrees with party members, but says, "I will always be a proud Republican."

I think it's cyclical. I read a lot of history, and you'd be surprised about what things people said and did 100 years ago, 150 years ago. It was probably worse than now.

You mentioned that you're a proud Republican. Was there ever a time when you said, "You know, I don't know if I can stay a Republican?"

Never. Never. No, I'm proud of my party and, as we've talked about already, there are going to be people within the party who aren't going to agree with you. But I'm as strong and proud a Republican as I've ever been. I think there is just as much divisiveness within the Democratic Party, but I will always be a proud Republican.

Let's talk about some of your vetoes. You've had 93 vetoes over eight years, four legislative sessions. There is some partisanship involved. But is there a leadership issue in that as well?

You're right, there is a big element of partisanship in that. And you have to understand in four sessions of the Legislature, I had Democratic majorities in three of those. And I get it, the Democratic leadership has a base, too, and they have to say that they tried. And that they got something passed and the governor vetoed the bill, so I think that's most of it.

So some of it is for a political flyer, and less for legislation?

I think, if I understand what you're saying, the Democrats have to be able to show their base that they tried to pass a minimum-wage bill, a sick-leave bill and some of these other bills that I had to veto. There were conversations about these bills. But again, I understand and respect their position, and I hope they understand and respect the position I took.

It seems to me, if I was in the Legislature, and I had a bill that I thought might be controversial, I might come to you first and say, "Governor, here's what I want to do. I want to have paid sick leave. I don't know how you might feel about that. What kind of a bill could I write that you would support?" Do you get those kind of conversations?

Some. And I'll give a perfect example of that, with Senator (Yvanna) Cancela and her bill for diabetes (drug prices). She came to me, I identified to her what my concerns with the bill were, there was a decision to pass that bill anyway. And I wrote a very detailed veto message, and to her credit, she read that veto message and she also went back and worked with Senator (Michael) Roberson. And she came back with a bill that I could sign.

In the last session, there were two solar energy bills you vetoed — one would have raised the renewable energy standard, and the other would have created a system for community solar programs. You have directed the energy choice committee to look at those and come back with a report. Was that sort of a punt?

PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

No. No, no, no. You're talking to the governor who signed three bills that increased the net metering rate. And then, at the same time, we have installed $5 billion to $6 billion of solar projects in this state since I became governor, which involves $300 million, $400 million in incentives through our energy office. So I've always felt, and I am, a very strong supporter of renewable energy.

Some if somebody were to say these vetoes evidence a lack of commitment to renewable energy, that would be wrong?

True. You also have to understand the ballot question with regard to energy choice, which will go back on the ballot next year. If it's approved, essentially, buying energy will be like buying cable or your phone — you'll be able to pick your energy provider. But that question also requires the incumbent utility here, NV Energy, to exit. And they will have, when they exit, assets that have to be sold, and if they're sold at a deficit, it's the ratepayers who have to make that up. Well, if you increase that renewable portfolio standard, it likely would require the construction of new renewable energy projects by the incumbent utility, which it would have to turn around and sell if the Energy Choice initiative passes — which it will, because it passed by 70 percent (in 2016). This is probably one of the most tumultuous times ever in energy policy with the prospect of energy choice. And to overlay that with a 50 percent renewable portfolio standard would have been, in my humble opinion, very problematic. So that was one of the biggest issues in my veto message, and it was probably the longest veto message in the history of Nevada. That was eight pages.

And you personally wrote that veto message?

I did. I did. It's not because I don't support a robust renewable portfolio standard, because I think that Nevada is going to be the leader in the country with regard to renewable energy given our solar assets, and our geothermal assets, and our wind assets and the rooftop solar, et cetera. But the timing wasn't right. It was probably the right bill at the wrong time. And that's why I appointed that commission to study the consequences and what we have to anticipate as a result of energy choice.

Do you think the public, when we're talking about renewable energy, gives the renewable energy industry a pass? NV Energy is supposedly the evil utility, they're the ones who send me the $300 bill every month in summer, but the green energy companies want to save the planet. Do they get a pass because people perceive them as the good guys versus NV Energy, the bad guys?

You're right, it's very easy as a green energy provider to cloak yourself in all the good things; I think there has been an acknowledgement that there has been a subsidy that goes in, that the other 90 percent do pay a higher rate to allow for more rooftop solar. I understand that. I think the day will come that rooftop solar and solar is absolutely economical and is the same if not cheaper than some of the fossil fuels and natural gas, et cetera. But we need to build toward that, and that's why that (net metering) bill was designed the way it



is, is that there are more installations, the reimbursements on the retail rate are going to come down to recognize that.

There are people to this day who say, "Brian Sandoval never really supported Education Savings Accounts. If he had supported ESAs, he would have threatened to veto the 2017-2019 budget, which did not contain ESA funding." What's the truth about that?

Well, I sponsored ESA bills. In 2013, I sponsored an ESA bill that got a hearing and no vote. So school choice is something that I've talked about from Day One. In 2015, the school choice bill was passed, and it was the subject of litigation. It went all the way to the Nevada Supreme Court. And so I made a commitment and followed through with that commitment and put $60 million in the budget to fund ESAs. So if ever there was a supporter of school choice, if you count the top five, I would hope that I would be in those top five.

Now you mentioned about trying to force that issue. And as I said, I've got a state to run. There are teachers who need to get paid, there are school districts that need to be able to develop their budgets, there's higher education that needs to develop their budget, there are a lot of people who are counting on stability within the state. And so, frankly, during the course of the session, I think there was a time when we would have had ESAs, and it didn't happen because there were some within the Republican Party who felt like it wasn't enough and wanted more. So I will say that we could have had ESAs. It didn't happen. But at the end of the session, I was able to negotiate $20 million more for Opportunity Scholarships, which is going to open up at least a couple thousand more seats for children who are 300 percent or less of poverty to be able to attend the school of their choice.

One of your campaign promises when you ran — it was a recession — was to put Nevada back to work. Unemployment has dropped considerably since you took over. Do you consider that a campaign promise fulfilled?

I don't know if it's ever fulfilled, because I'm not done yet. So, when I was elected in November of 2010, the unemployment rate was 14.3 percent, and today it's 4.7. We had lost 175,000 jobs, we've replaced that with 230,000 jobs, our average weekly wage is the highest that it has ever been, the amount of unemployment claims is almost the lowest that it's ever been. And we brought in companies; Tesla is the one that everybody knows. You know I tell this story as the chairman of the economic development board: Our first board meeting took 20 minutes. And now they take hours because of the number of the companies that want to come to Nevada.

There are always risks, though. The state was not put at financial risk because of Faraday Future not coming, but the state takes a hit when things like that happen, doesn't it? Everybody thought it was going to happen, but in the end, it just didn't work out.

Fair enough. I mean, there is nobody who is more disappointed than I am in Faraday. Faraday got all the attention, but for me, the bigger priority was developing Apex. And one of the reasons that we couldn't bring a Tesla-like project to Southern Nevada is because there was no infrastructure at Apex. So, for me, just as important — actually, more important than Faraday — was getting that infrastructure into Apex so that we could attract and market Southern Nevada for a Tesla-scale project. And I'm hopeful that the Faraday site will be very attractive to other companies, because it's ready to go, and they'll be able to go vertical right away.

This question is going to sound like it's not serious, but it is a little bit serious. You were the first governor to ride in a driverless car, you've championed bringing companies like Apple and Tesla to Northern Nevada, UAV research to Southern Nevada, Switch to both ends of the state. Tesla founder Elon Musk recently came out and said that he thinks that artificial intelligence is a threat to people. What was your reaction to that?

I'm the incoming chairman of the National Governor's Association. As part of that, I have an initiative called "Ahead of the Curve." And it talks about some of this disruptive technology and how it's going to affect decision-makers and state governments. Elon agreed to come to Providence, R.I., and we did a comfy couch-type interview where I asked him questions, and I asked him a question about robots, and should people be concerned about -robots taking their jobs? And that's when he gave that response with regard to artificial intelligence. I am nowhere near qualified to be able to respond to that, but if he's concerned and given what a visionary and how knowledgeable he is, then it's something that we should perhaps pay attention to.

You'll probably be remembered not only for embracing the Affordable Care Act, after it was upheld by the Supreme Court, but for expanding Medicaid, establishing a state insurance exchange and then defending those programs when other people said we need to get rid of them. Is that going to be your legacy?

People hopefully have not forgotten that there was a time when UMC was $50 million to $100 million in the red. I visited the emergency room at UMC, and saw people literally lying on gurneys in the hallways. I am one that, with Mike Willden, my chief of staff, confronted a mental healthcare crisis. So part of my motivation for opting in was making sure that people who were getting their medical care in emergency rooms could get preventative health care and live higher-quality lives. (Medicaid expansion) has brought billions of dollars into the state in terms of improving our healthcare systems; it has taken rural hospitals and UMC from being in the red to being in the black. So I've seen the difference that it's made in our state and how it's improved the quality of life. People are living healthier and happier lives. It's pretty hard to go to work when you're sick. And that's why I took a very firm position that we had to be held harmless. I don't want the flexibility to have to make cuts. That's not flexibility to me. I want to maintain what we've been able to establish and build in this state, and I think the proof is there, that we are better off as a result of that.

Was that a hard decision to make, at the time?

It was. And we did a lot of homework prior to making that decision. And although some members of my party were disappointed in me being the first Republican governor in the U.S. to make the decision to opt in, after having done my due diligence, it was a decision that had to be made in the best interests of the state. And so, again, everything that we thought would happen has happened in terms of improving the delivery of healthcare in the state. Is it perfect? Absolutely not. Am I happy with what's happening on the exchange, our providers leaving the state? Absolutely not. Am I happy with the premiums that are being charged for people? Absolutely not. But those are things that we could work on and improve. But in terms of the Medicaid population, it has been a game-changer, so that's why I've been so aggressive in jealously guarding the people of Nevada.

Looking back, is there something that you wished you would have gotten done but didn't get done?

I would have liked to have gotten ESAs done. I think it's an important component within the education system, to give parents and give kids the ability to attend the school of their choice. But these past two sessions, there was only one item on our checklist that I talked about in the State of the State that we didn't get done, and that was ESAs. So, every single thing that I talked about we got done. In the 2015 session, if my recollection is right, the only thing that we couldn't get done was appointed school boards. But other than that, I've been very blessed, and we've been able to improve education, we've been able to get higher education back on track, build a medical school at UNLV, we've been able to build a new hotel and hospitality school at UNLV, we're going to build a new engineering school at UNR, we're going to build a new healthcare facility at CSN, we're going to be able to build a new building at Nevada State College, so all of it is coming together.

Is there an accomplishment that you think has not gotten the recognition that it should have gotten?

I'm not looking for any credit. What I care about is that the state's doing better. And so that's a question that would be better answered after I'm gone. And people will hopefully look back and see that the education system is better, that we've diversified our economy, that we've righted the ship. I mean, when I came in, we had a $2 billion deficit; now we're putting $200 million in our rainy day fund. And we're building a new state park. We're finally in a position — I've kiddingly said the next governor gets to be conservative, because I have made some really hard decisions that have hopefully put this state in a position where it is set for the next 10, 20 years, in terms of higher education, K-12 education, the economy, the budget, the types of companies that are here.

What about you? What are you going to do? Would you ever run for president?

I don't know what is next for me. I'm getting asked that a lot recently. I guess the point being, I still have 17 more months as governor. And we're not coasting to the finish line. We're not going to coast through the tape. And I want to make sure some of the things, or most of the things, that we've talked about during this conversation get implemented. So, a year from now, I better start having an idea, so I think your question is a little premature in terms of what's next for me. You know, I'm not a wealthy man. I've got to work; I've got to be able to provide for my family. I have two kids in college and a daughter who's in eighth grade, so I've got to make a living. And so I'll probably start to think about that next spring, the beginning of next summer, about what's next.

If you could have any job you wanted, what would it be?

It would be a job where I feel like I'm helping people and making a difference. As I said, I've been blessed with having a job where I can do that on a daily basis as governor, and as a federal judge as well, so that's going to be hard to beat. But wherever it is, I just have to feel like I'm making people's lives better. ✦



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FIELD NOTES

WALK WITH ME

This is how you ground yourself in an elusive, unfamiliar city — on foot, walking it into focus in all its specificity and wonder

BY ***David L. Ulin***



There was a homeless guy in my neighborhood. He called himself the Facebook President of the World. Every now and again, I would see him, a burly man with close-cropped graying hair, pushing a shopping cart or sitting at an outside table at the Starbucks on Maryland and Dorothy, sipping from a container of coffee, wearing what looked like a Runnin' Rebels basketball shirt, slit up the sides all the way to the armpits, with that designation — Facebook President of the World — hand-painted on the back. Like Las Vegas itself, he was elusive; I'd see him, and then I would not. Just when I began to believe I had invented him, just when I began to doubt the evidence of his existence, he would reappear.

It was the same with everything. I had come to Nevada, as is my tendency, without preparation. I was living a short walk from UNLV for four months, the length of a semester, on a fellowship from Black Mountain Institute. The day I left Los Angeles, I was at such loose ends I missed the turnoff for the 15 north, in Ontario, and had to double back, using the 215. By the time I reached Las Vegas, it was dark. On my phone, I have a slow-motion series of photographs tracing the sequence of my arrival, taken through the driver's side window of my car. First, the Ivanpah solar power station, just on the other side of the state border, the last landmark in California before you cross over into Primm. In the gloaming, the three boiler towers rise from a field of mirrors that glimmer like an artificial lake. Next, an image taken 40 minutes later: the Statue of Liberty holding her torch aloft at the corner of the Strip and Tropicana, gateway to New York-New York. I grew up in New York, but only visited the actual statue one time, when my children were younger, many years after I moved away. Chalk it up to resistance, perhaps, or skepticism ... of being a tourist, of doing the expected, of buying into any vision of a city other than my own. The Statue of Liberty has never made me feel at home, either in New York Harbor or on Las Vegas Boulevard, where it stood squat and compressed as I drove past, a facsimile in incremental scale.

This preparation, or, more accurately, its lack — this was the key to my disquiet. I had imagined Las Vegas, if I had imagined it, as a dream space: not the Strip (for months before my arrival, I would tell whomever might be listening that I was eager to discover the other Las Vegas, the *real* Las Vegas, although I did not possess the slightest notion what that was) but the neighborhoods. And yet, what were these neighborhoods? How were they defined? I had a small apartment on Elizabeth Avenue, in a cluster of side streets named, I had decided, for the developer's daughters: Deirdre, Heidi, Roberta, Lorilyn.

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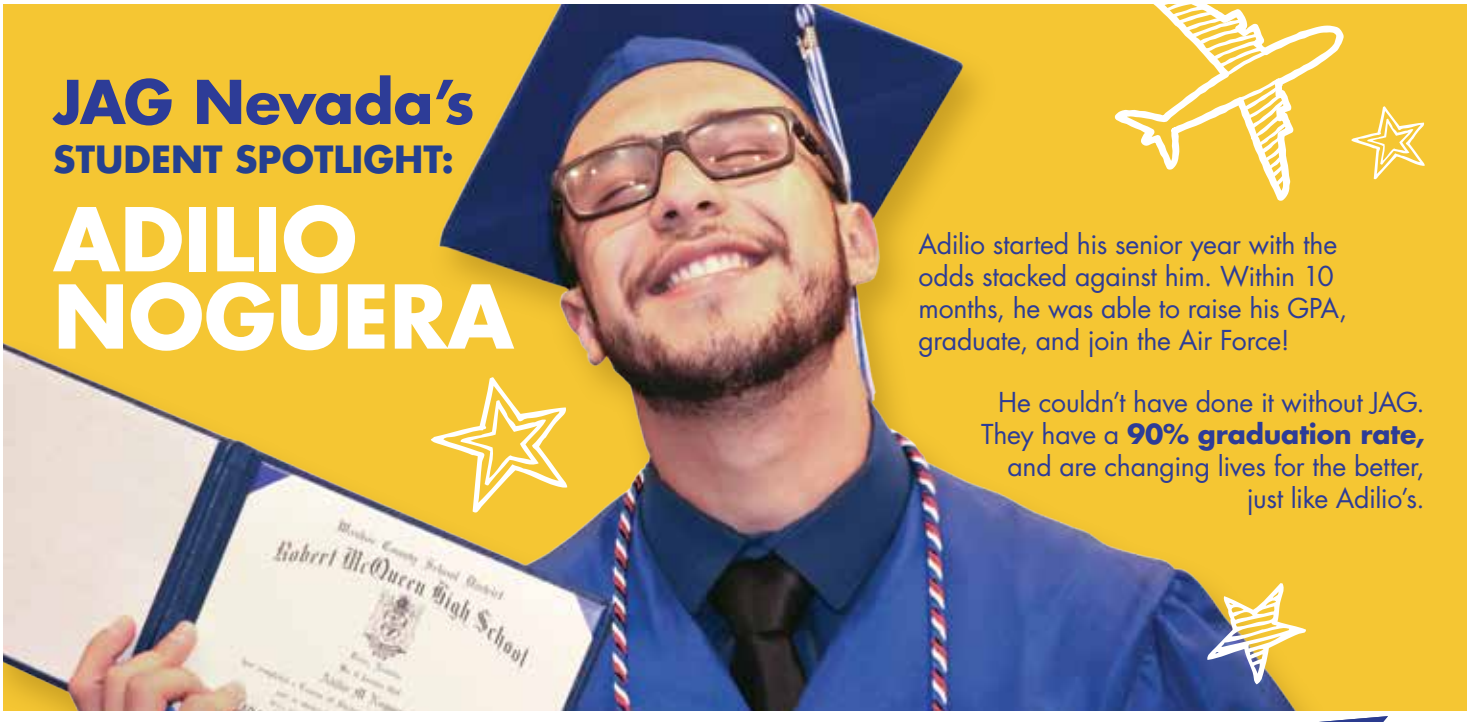
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There were only a few ways in or out of the subdivision: Elizabeth or Dorothy, which opened onto Maryland, and Gabriel Drive, three or four blocks east, which led to Spencer Street, and then north to Harmon Avenue. I had been warned, before I came, that Las Vegas isn't a walking city, but what was I to do? I am, to borrow a phrase from Alfred Kazin, a walker in the city; it is how I ground myself.

That was why I had chosen the place on Elizabeth, because of its proximity to campus; I anticipated quiet. Strange, I know ... it was not as if I had never been to Las Vegas, not as if I didn't know where the university was. Across from the airport, just east of the Strip, the whole conglomeration like some strange amorphous triple junction, designed for tourists or, at least, for visitors: easy in and easy out. Still, when I thought about where I'd be living — no Googling for me, no mapping and no photos, not a single search to see the street, the façade of the building, the pocked ribbon of Maryland Parkway stretching north toward Downtown, pavement dusted white with alkaline, homeless huddled at the intersections, hiding first from the piercing winter wind and later from the sun — the image that arose was that of a college town. Town? No, neighborhood, that word again, as if the city were (as it likes to sell itself) a template for my desires. Then I showed up in the gloom of a January evening, sidewalks scoured empty, shadowed by the Strip. I drove east on Tropicana, past the Thomas & Mack Center and the Vons. I found the address, moved my stuff out of the car: a suitcase and a pile of books. The air was thin, the darkness brittle. I was alone. The solitude felt crushing, as if I had driven off the edge of the known world. The feeling grew more pronounced once I returned to the car to explore the territory: Tropicana to Eastern, Eastern south to Russell, and back around. I was looking for somewhere to eat, but all I encountered were shopping centers, no visual cues to orient myself, just façade after façade of what looked like the same chains. It wasn't, I would later learn, that there was nothing to discover, just that, like the Facebook President of the World, the city had a way of concealing itself, of hiding in plain sight. This may be the truest thing I have learned about Las Vegas, that all the spectacle is only that, a distraction, a sleight of hand, a way by which the place refuses, or resists, being revealed. To see more than these chimeric glimpses, you have to peer beneath the surface. You have to make the city small. You have to walk the streets in daylight. You have to get out of the car.

I wanted air, I wanted space, I wanted to feel the city breathe around me, I wanted to see the afternoon pass as slowly as the weather, I wanted to walk right through the middle of it.

Making the city small: This is how I've lived in Southern California all along, which suggests one characteristic Las Vegas and Los Angeles share. I don't want to make too much of this, don't want to frame comparisons between places that are so distinct. And yet, the commonalities — from the chains (bank, supermarket, restaurants) to the sprawl, the nebulous lack of center, the insistence each city offers that we must



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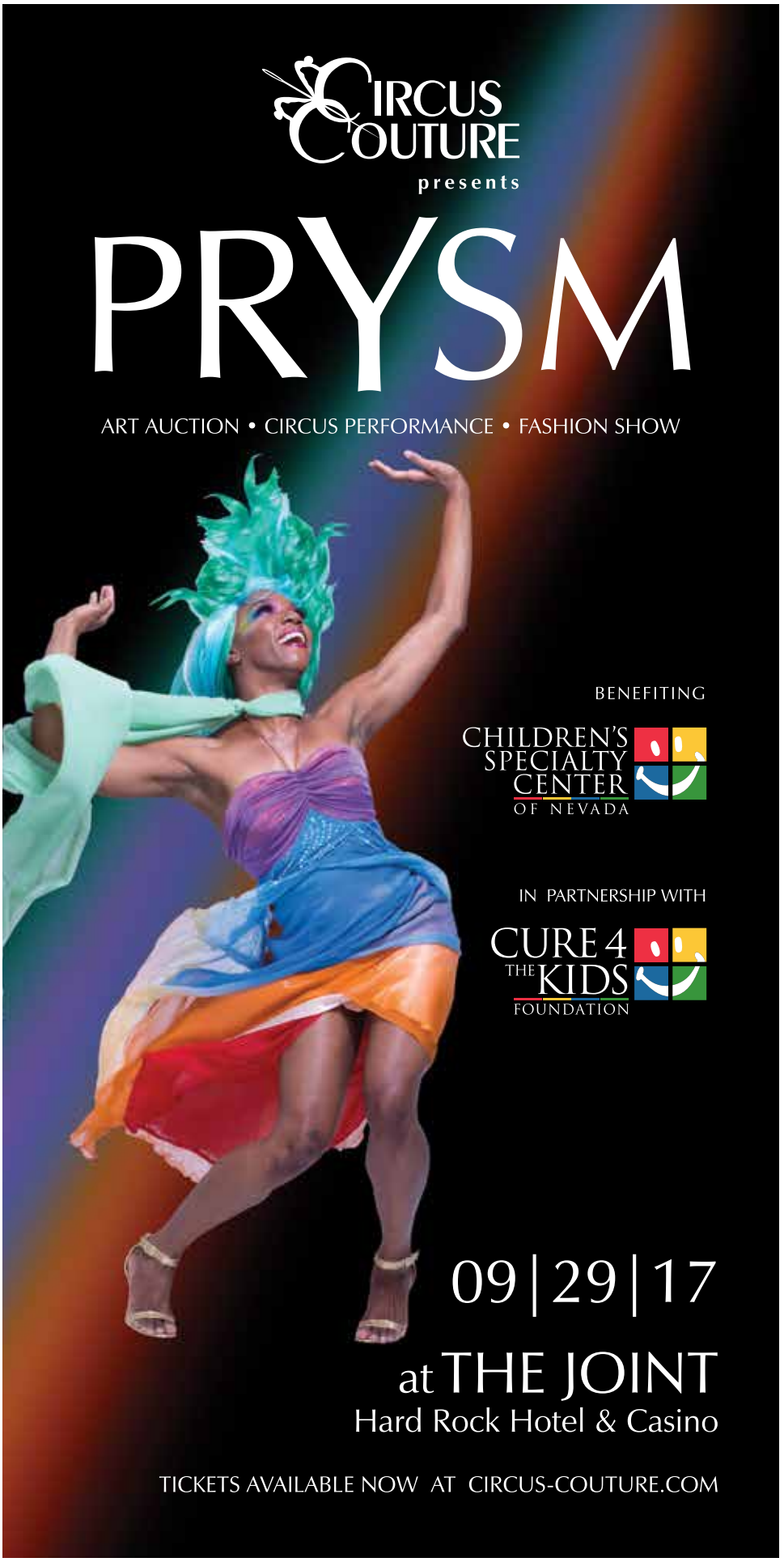
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make it up as we go along. My first weeks in Nevada, I met a bunch of people, other writers mostly, journalists or university faculty. I spent a lot of time on Fremont Street, although I did not walk to get there — too far, the blocks along Maryland too long, too industrial. I did, however, start to recognize the landmarks: the Boulevard Mall, the Las Vegas Country Club, Sunrise Hospital, all built in the 1950s and 1960s by Moe Dalitz, who wanted to be remembered not as a bootlegger but as a philanthropist.

Dalitz was my kind of guy, a tough Jew from Boston, by way of Michigan and Cleveland. In another world, he could have been my grandfather ... or, more likely, a distant uncle, someone we talked about but never saw. My father had cousins named Buchalter, and as an adolescent, I often fantasized that one of them might be Lepke, notorious founder of Murder, Inc. I ran across his name at the Mob Museum, along with Dalitz, Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel. Theirs were stories I recognized, which led me to the second truest thing I have learned about Las Vegas, that its most outlandish bits of narrative may in fact be the most down-to-earth. Las Vegas is a new city, or a cluster of new cities (Paradise, Summerlin, Henderson); it wears its myths like a psychic skin. They exist as origin story, in the sense that what we make of them says a lot about who we are. They assert that the past — or at least, tradition — doesn't matter, that image, or reinvention, is everything in the glittering pleasure dome of the New World. For me, though, the past is useful because of what it tells us of the present, where we are and how we arrived. Dalitz, the Mob Museum, even Tony Hsieh and his elusive Downtown Project: I needed a way to pierce these public narratives, to find a passage to the private narrative inside. This was the issue with which I wrestled each time I walked to campus, or drove past Sunrise Hospital. I thought of Hunter S. Thompson: "A little bit of this town," he wrote in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, "goes a very long way." That was part of the history, too, although I never realized it until I landed here and reread the book, recognizing all the landmarks I had once glossed over, that I had once imagined not as geography but archetype.

The key, of course, was walking. I thought about that as I cut through alleys and parking lots to reach my campus office, past Jimmy John's and the Stake Out, Chewy Boba and the Army Recruiting Office, Mr. Sandwich and the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf. This was urban walking after a fashion, repetitive



and serendipitous at once. This was the only way I knew to connect with the city on my terms. Headed home in the afternoons, I would stop at the Town Mini-Mart, pick up a six-pack or a couple of quart bottles of beer. I am looking at a photograph of it right now, courtesy of Google, sky above Elizabeth Avenue overcast and that flimsy promotional flag fronting the sidewalk: *SMOKE SHOP*, it declares in block letters of black and red. What I am seeing is evidence of a double vision — not just past and present, although I am no longer in Las Vegas as I write. No, equally important is a sense of reshaping the environment to fit my requirements, most essentially that of navigating at the level of the streets. In Los Angeles (I almost wrote *Las* Angeles; do you see how landscape blurs and overlaps in my imagination?), I have always lived within walking distance of the basic amenities: bank, mini-mart, coffee shop, bar. It was luck, or coincidence, to find I might do the same in Las Vegas, and then intention once I realized this could root me to the place. I was looking for the familiar, a city that felt like home. I was away from everything, but still: By retracing these footsteps, I might sketch out, or start to, the shape of something (community, let's call it) every day when I set out for work. I began to walk the campus on the weekends, for exercise and recreation, but also as a strategy. Back in Southern California, I often walked through Hancock Park, past the La Brea Tar Pits, and there was something about UNLV that felt if not reminiscent, then at least equivalent: the green of the North Mall, the long stretch of it, and the quiet on the other side of the Student Union, after escaping the traffic rustling north and south on Maryland.

One Saturday in mid-winter, I decided I should visit the Springs Preserve: relic of a different history, predating Dalitz and legal gambling, stretching back to Mormon days. Las Vegas, the Meadows, oasis in the high desert, trading post between Los Angeles and Salt Lake. I hadn't expected that (again, the lack of preparation), nor the rain that pebbled the sidewalks, spit from the February sky. I spent the morning waiting out the weather; it was a lazy Saturday, no reason to do anything but drink my coffee, pace my small rooms, stare out at the grayness of the day. I hadn't meant to leave until the afternoon, at any rate. The Preserve was not far from a sushi place I liked, on Spring Mountain Road in Chinatown, and the idea was to end up there when I was done. This felt like an ordinary thing to do, the activity of a resident, the sort of plan I might make on any given Saturday, anywhere. For all the people I met, I spent much of my time in Las Vegas by myself, less transplant than alien, so let's call this an attempt to normalize. The rain, though, it would not cooperate — or perhaps it's more accurate to say that nature doesn't care. By mid-afternoon, I felt antsy, cooped up, if less than eager to trek the Preserve. Instead, I pulled on a hoodie and a leather jacket and went out into the misting drizzle, thinking I might wander campus for a little while. I wanted air, I wanted space, I wanted to feel the city breathe around me, I wanted to see the afternoon pass as slowly as the weather, I wanted to walk right through the middle of it. The streets were empty, damp with precipitation; the pavement gave off that wet concrete smell. I was the only person on the sidewalk, and if I'm being careful with



the details, it's because the whole thing feels like a dream to me now. Yes, a dream, one more layer of concealment ... or revelation, take your pick. Like the Facebook President of the World, who I may or may not have encountered on the walk to UNLV; I want to say I did, but I cannot recall.

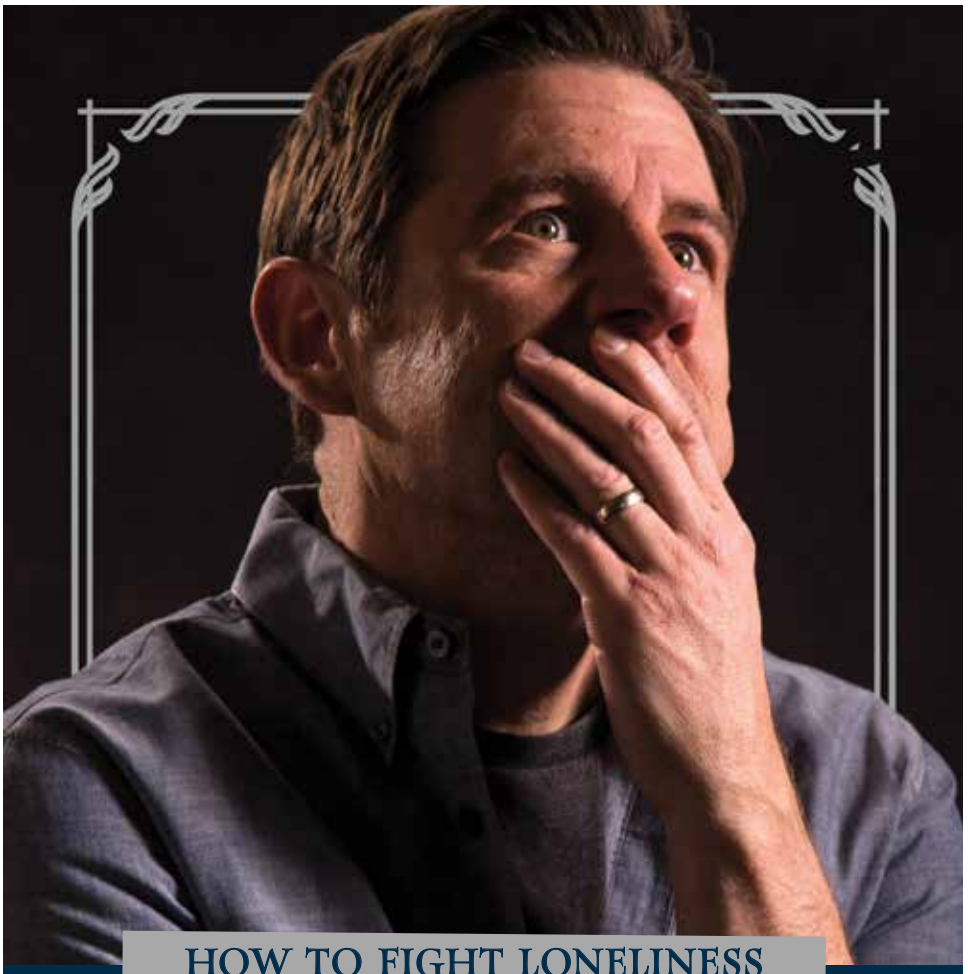
The university paths were empty, as they often are on weekends. Or no, not empty but almost — which can be lonelier, a reminder of our fundamental isolation, the distances that don't collapse between us, although today the opposite was true. Not that I felt connected, or part of something ... except that in a way I did. It was a communion based, in some odd way, on a set of shared separations: Everyone was here for reasons of their own. First, a student film crew, shooting kids on skateboards as they did tricks on the Student Union stairs. I watched briefly in the drizzle, listened to the director call out *Action* and *Cut* and *Action* again, the skaters pouring onto the East Mall like water off the back of the world. Their boards kept clattering as I moved more deeply into campus, past the art gallery and the enormous *Flashlight*, by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, which stands like an obelisk in the plaza of the Concert Hall. I knew Oldenburg's work, although I hadn't thought about it for decades; his *Split Button* had been installed at the University of Pennsylvania shortly after my freshman year. His name felt unexpectedly familiar, as if he were an acquaintance I hadn't anticipated seeing again. Near the Chemistry building, a group of South Asian students played cricket: a regular Saturday engagement, I would come to learn. I stood for a few minutes here as well, took in the looping motion of the bowler, the joshing exhortations of the players, tamped down and softened by the rain. I could have been anywhere — Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Central Park — which felt, in this moment anyway, like the point.

Anonymity is the whole idea. I could remain here four months or four decades and it would be the same, a series of concentric circles, the patterns by which we mark ourselves in civic space.

At the Lied Library, an exhibit celebrated the city's literature, which I was getting to know a little bit. Before moving to Los Angeles, I had read everything I could get my hands on. If the same was not true of Las Vegas, I was making up for it now. My nightstand was stacked with a small pile of books about the city: Thompson, yes, but also Geoff Schumacher, William Fox and Dave Hickey, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. All the same, what I was experiencing now felt most exhilarating because it existed outside those narratives, because it was mine alone. I was reminded again of Hancock Park, the Tar Pits, all those circles I liked to walk in that other city, a reflection of the paths I was traversing here. This is how we find ourselves, I remember thinking, by way of these small instants or interactions, which have less to do with other people (how could they?) than with us.

I don't recall how long I stayed on campus, or what time it was when I left. I know the rain had stopped and twilight was descending, a thin gray blanket dropped over the face of a grayer day. I wandered south on Maryland to Tropicana, stopped in at the





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Photo: Brian Vaughn as Brad.

Crown & Anchor for a drink. Afterward, I crossed the avenue and went to Vons to buy groceries: meat and cheese, bread, soup, and bottled water, which I carried back the way I'd come. Standing on the corner, across from the Chevron station with its standard Vegas Valley come-on — *Beer • Cigarettes • Poker*, a sign I'd photographed my first week in the city, as if it might tell me something useful — I watched as a Southwest jet arced out of McCarran into the blankness of the sky. I thought about taking another picture: faded white lines of the crosswalk, broken surface of the roadway, phone and power lines suspended above traffic signals, gas and fast food joints. *Glamorous Las Vegas*, I would call it, a postcard for the city in which I lived. Then, the light changed, and I started across Tropicana, and the moment ... it was gone.

I didn't see him until I was partway up the block to Elizabeth, plastic bag handles cutting into the creases of my fingers as I dodged the fenced construction north of Jack in the Box. I was wrangling with the bags, shifting them from one hand to the other; when I looked up, there he was. Facebook President of the World, in his basketball shirt, shopping cart almost toy-sized in his heavy hands. *Hello*, I mumbled, but he didn't hear me, or didn't want to acknowledge that he had. It didn't matter, I would never know him, regardless of how long I stayed in town. This is the third truest thing I have learned about Las Vegas, although really, it's the case no matter where you are. The city, it doesn't care about you, any more than nature does; anonymity is the whole idea. I could remain here four months or four decades and it would be the same, a series of concentric circles, the patterns by which we mark ourselves in civic space. Later, I would drive to Chinatown, sit at the sushi bar of the place I liked, feel like I belonged. This had been the plan all along, to find a way to be connected, but if the Facebook President of the World had anything to tell me, it was that I could just as easily end up lost. I watched him push his cart down Maryland and disappear around the corner, gone. By the time I could think more about it, I was already home. ✦

David L. Ulin is a 2015 Guggenheim Fellow and the author of Sidewalking: Coming to Terms with Los Angeles, *shortlisted for the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay. He spent the winter and spring in Las Vegas as a Tom and Mary Gallagher Fellow at UNLV's Black Mountain Institute.*

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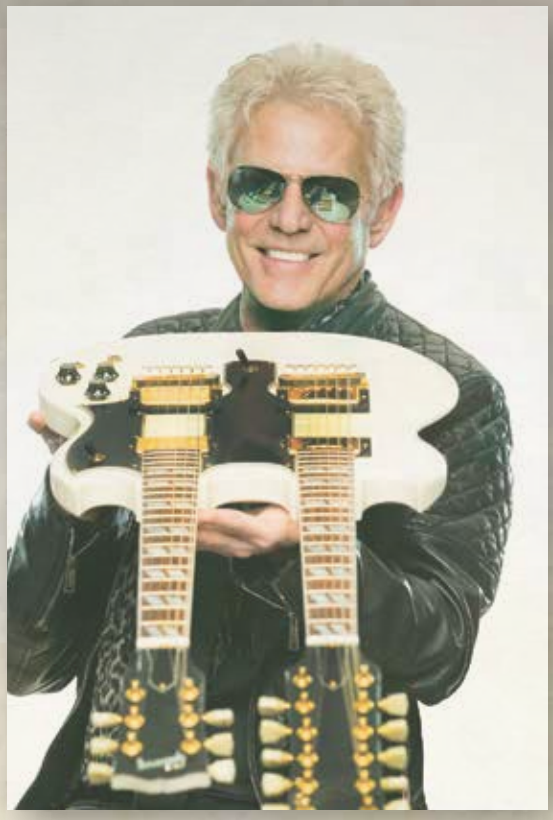
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TRAVEL

SPRINGS TO LIFE

Once a sleepy stopover known for its hot springs, Tecopa is being remade as a creative oasis and culture-rich escape

BY ***Dave Clark***

TECOPA

Beneath a star-spackled sky, a singer slinks across the stage, belting out Concrete Blonde's goth-rock dirge "Bloodletting." A couple dances in the cooling desert air. Someone yells, "God is good. Life is great!"

This unlikely scene is happening in Tecopa, a rustic speck of a town situated on the cusp of Death Valley. And the performers? They're part of the talent-studded cast running the local motels and campgrounds, many of whom formerly made their living as full-time musicians and artists.

Tecopa is best known for its selenium-spiked hot springs, but these days, creativity and cultural entrepreneurship are bubbling to the surface. A steadily growing collection of musicians and artists are pouring themselves into reviving this former mining town.

"The interaction with nature here when it comes to the water, sky and air — it's the perfect way to unplug," says Lara Murray, a resident and member of the Tecopa Hot Springs Conservancy.

Tecopa's quiet renaissance has been long in the making. The town began luring a trickle of newcomers in the early 2000s, after artist Amy Noel launched a gallery there. Other transplants soon followed, some with an eye to breathing new life into some of the town's disintegrating attractions, forming the Tecopa Hot Springs Conservancy in 2015. Wild West relics such as Marfa, Texas, and Rangely, Colorado, have repurposed themselves as artistic magnets, and now Tecopa stands on the cusp.

"The locals here are very colorful, very intelligent," says Nancy Good, a musician, artist, and partner in the conservancy. "They've found a way to thrive in an area that is actively trying to kill you."

The intense heat and isolation couldn't kill the enthusiasm of Murray, who recalls the moment she became enraptured by the area in 2006. She was accompanying her husband, who organized dirt bike excursions nearby.

"The next day we were flying back to the

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Jenna Dosch***





HOT WATER MUSIC
Opposite page: Locals and visitors gather at The Bistro in Tecopa for live music. Left and above: After years of neglect, the hot springs facilities have been repaired and refurbished.

East Coast, and I asked, 'Why aren't we here all the time?'" she recalls. "The space and the air is good for the soul."

Their quest for permanent residency spanned eight years as they worked through the process of buying property. Today, her husband, Ryan Thomas, is the executive director of the Tecopa Hot Springs Conservancy. Aside from maintaining and upgrading the Tecopa Hot Springs Campground and Pools, he's involved in all manner of life in the town, from responding to emergencies with the fire department to fixing Tecopa's internet. "He's the person the entire town calls," Murray says.

Those calls fluctuate with the seasons. The population peaks during winter at 475 before shriveling in the summer swelter to roughly 100. However, the 24-hour hot springs and night sky remain a year-round draw, attracting an especially high number of tourists from Asia. Thomas points out that the volcanic springs in Tecopa are one of just two public selenium springs in the world; most others reek of sulfur.

"Selenium is good for the bones and skin," Thomas says. "Geology students and professors have studied it, and the one thing they agree on is that the water is ancient — coming from a far-down underground river."

This primordial water source has rippled through the region's history, first luring Native Americans before resulting in perhaps some of the cleanest miners in the Old West.

Longtime local Crystal Aldrich's prospector father discovered gold, silver and talc mines in the area. When she wanted to take a dip in the springs, he would check the tin structure that formerly covered it, lantern in hand, searching for scorpions and snakes. "I learned to swim in there," she recalls.

At one point, the springs and town were struggling to stay afloat. According to Thomas, the county ran the springs as a free public bath for years before a park concessionaire bought it, curtailing the hours and getting lax on cleanliness.

"It was almost a ghost town when I came back here in 2001," Aldrich recalls. "Now they put the springs back to 24 hours, relying on volunteers. I'm so thrilled to see the crowds of people coming back in." Aldrich herself is part of that renaissance, volunteering in Tecopa's general store in addition to her daily dips.

"Some Cirque du Soleil members will come out and soak," Murray says. "Some locals have health conditions and rely on it to walk."

'NUDITY IS THE EQUALIZER'

THIS WATER GUSHES from the springs at a rate of 3,000 to 4,000 gallons an hour, at a temperature ranging from 104 to 108 degrees. The voluminous water source also courses through the sinks, showers and toilets. Aside from a couples room (available by appointment) at the Tecopa Hot Springs Campground, bathers are separated by sex and are required to enter the water fully nude after showering. That policy stems from the springs' high mineral content, which would leach chemicals from clothes



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WELLS OF TALENT
Top: Photographer G.H. Nation at his recent exhibition in Tecopa's art gallery. Left: Handmade items at the gift shop. Right: Guitarist Paul Barnes and his wife Nancy Good, both Tecopa transplants, perform at The Bistro.

and detract from the purity of the water. For locals, it's a routine part of everyday life to see your neighbor naked. "Sometimes you don't recognize people with clothes on," Murray jokes.

"Nudity is the great equalizer," says Good. "You're not being judged on what you're wearing or driving. There are people you would never ordinarily meet from the Middle East or Japan that you're sitting next to."

For Pahrump resident G.H. Nation, the springs are a link to his Native American ancestors. These sentiments were woven through the desert photos he recently exhibited at Tecopa's art gallery, which evoked a boundless sense of time and space.

"It was a spiritual vision that led me here in preparation for my passing over," he says. "This is a tribute to returning to the home of my ancestors and returning to consciousness."

Artists here are enthralled by the incongruity of abundant water in the otherwise desiccated landscape. These forces attracted art gallery owner Noel, who fled her Venice Beach home and job at L.A.'s J. Paul Getty Museum. She had worked for 20 years as a collections information manager when she was offered the opportunity for a sabbatical. Noel discovered the Tecopa hot springs in 1984, and jumped at the chance when she was offered a volunteer position at the nearby Shoshone Museum in 2000.

"I wanted to see if I could get sick of this place, if I could handle the heat and the cold," she said. "I wanted 40 acres in the desert."

She bought 160 of them, a spread encompassing a dormant resort, grocery and laundromat that had shuttered in the early 1990s. The property was first developed by a former sighting foreman for the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad in 1945 and expanded over the years. However, its fortunes sagged with the decline of the nearby mines, the last one closing in the late 1980s. Noel renovated the property, launching the business just before 9/11. Today, Tecopa Hot Springs Resort comprises 12 motel rooms with baths, cabins, RV hookups, a bathhouse and a labyrinth. The dramatic life change and the property's drastic makeover stunned her parents.

"I showed (my mother), and she said, 'Your dad and I never thought you'd pull this off,'" Noel says.

But Tecopa is bursting with such surprises. Ten residents are part of the artists guild, and they regularly volunteer with everything from answering phones to schlepping to the hardware store. "It gives you the opportunity to be what I call a 'social recluse,'" Noel says.

That unique breed of desert dweller now includes the performers of Teatro El Grande, a seasonal circus of fine art that just took up residence on her property. Locals helped construct the backdrops and stage, where ballerina Jenna McClintock and others astound audiences who would never expect to find such talented performers near their campground. Noel had previously seen McClintock perform her one-woman show at the Amargosa Opera House, and she had heard McClintock would be willing to shift her creative energy to Tecopa.

"You plant a seed, and you make room for beauty to happen," Noel says. "It's been so fun to make space for people to experiment."

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Lookback

March 2016: That one time Heidi Kyser, Andrew Kiraly and Chris Smith drove around Nevada in an RV for 10 days, seeking the soul of the Silver State (and kitschy souvenirs). Read that and more highlight travel stories from our 10 years at desertcompanion.vegas.

'EVERYONE WAVES'

NOEL ALSO SEEKS to inform people about the beauty of the natural area, and works on an advocacy project to designate the nearby Amargosa River as a scenic and wild river. She notes that many naturalists and scientists pass through, studying the local geology and the vestiges of the ancient Lake Tecopa. One close riparian remnant that any visitor should see is the China Ranch Date Farm, a lush oasis of date palm trees shrouded by brown mountains bereft of vegetation. The family farm was established by a Chinese pioneer, who raised fruits, vegetables and livestock to supply the local mining camps. According to legend, he was driven off the land at gunpoint by someone eager to claim the ranch for himself. Today, visitors can sample multiple varieties of dates as well as date cookies and the ranch's famed date shakes. The Amargosa Canyon also features stunning scenery with trails pockmarked by old mining ruins and the railbed of the Tonopah & Tidewater, which traversed the area until 1939.

Noel spends much of her free time hiking and flower-hunting. Like the other transplants, she's meshed with life in the desert, missing only sushi and the symphony, cravings she satisfies on excursions to Las Vegas.

"When I go back to Venice and wave at people, they are like, 'What do you want?'" she says. "Here, everyone waves. You just stop in the middle of the road and have a conversation."

Those conversations often include Nancy Good, a singer whose winding musical journey began in Montana. There, she opened for bands like Blue Öyster Cult and Night Ranger before venturing to Vegas to work the covers circuit. Her onstage sidekick on guitar is also her husband, Paul Barnes, who initially introduced her to Tecopa before relocating there a few years ago. Good is also a photographer and mixed-media artist who takes inspiration from the landscape.

"It's never the same," she says. "Over time you grow a deeper relationship to what you're looking at — the harsh lines, the softness."

Those characteristics informed the most recent show Good hosted at the gallery alongside Murray. Murray has converted her bedroom into a studio; her photography explores the desert wind and Tecopa's glittering night skies. It's an irresistible subject: Here, the intense darkness reveals the cloud-like cluster at the heart of the Milky Way. "I remember coming back the third night I was here and opening my car door," Murray says. "I was taken aback and almost startled. It's breathtaking."

THE ART OF INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEN NOT CREATING art, conservancy members are crafting the infrastructure of the town. Their desire to lure greater numbers of tourists is seen most prominently in the town's lone year-round restaurant, The Bistro, which reopened in 2015. Barnes, who built nightclubs and restaurants in Vegas, typically supplies the food. Thomas initially did most of the cooking. In fact, he would scramble to prepare dishes in between performing songs on the nearby outdoor stage. "We just did what we had to do to keep it running," Thomas says. Later,

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Thomas convinced his parents to uproot themselves from the East Coast to supervise the kitchen. His father is executive chef, and his mother is sous chef.

That spirit of cooperation is baked into the essence of the conservancy, Thomas says, noting that none of them are currently getting paid. Upon helming the conservancy, Thomas was determined to return the pools to their former 24-hour availability, in addition to upping standards of cleanliness.

"Everybody volunteers their time," Thomas says. "The first step was to keep things from going away and then grow them in a sustainable way to keep the feel of the town." Like the other conservancy members, Thomas has many talents. An accomplished drummer, he also directs an off-road adventure company called Kiltman Adventures, which has been subsumed by the responsibilities of running the campground and pools. When the conservancy took over, the property was in a serious state of disrepair. Dilapidated bathrooms had been screwed shut, and picnic tables were crumbling.

"The main improvement has been bringing the spirit of the place back," Thomas says. "It's still rustic but it's a friendly, welcoming place."

Now, the revamped resort even boasts two glamping ("glamorous camping") cabins with a/c, electricity and a fire pit, and are just a short walk from the outdoor stage and The Bistro. On weekend nights, that area serves as the epicenter of social life here, as the old downtown, which housed a saloon, butcher and grocery store, vanished decades ago. "It's just a natural place to hang out," Thomas says. "The whole town comes together and enjoys the weekend."

While the musicians are plugging in, visitors can relish the opportunity to do just the opposite. Cell phone service is virtually nonexistent, and the Internet is spotty. After all, the signal is transmitted from a Vegas hotel rooftop, crisscrossing multiple mountain peaks until finally reaching Tecopa. Serious cyber problems are not resolved with rebooting one's router. In fact, they demand a crew of locals to hike a mountain just to re-jigger the receiver.

It's a reminder that, while Tecopa is only an hour and a half from Vegas, the distance from the distractions of modern life is far greater. Murray experiences this separation often during her 36-mile commute to her nursing job in Pahrump.

"You're two steps away from being off the grid," she says. "We've simplified our life quite a bit. It's a beautiful magic that's kind of intangible." ✦





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VOICES OF THE



by
HEIDI KYSER

LAND

WHILE A TRUMP ADMINISTRATION REVIEW OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS STOKES CONFLICTING PASSIONS OVER PUBLIC LANDS, NEVADA'S NATIVE TRIBES CONTEMPLATE THE BIGGER PICTURE. WHY AREN'T WE LISTENING?



We pulled up to the secret spot at around 10 a.m. on a warm July morning — Checko Salgado, codirector of the nonprofit Friends of Basin and Range; Patrick Naranjo, a specialist in American Indian cultural artifacts who works in UNLV's multicultural center; Scott Lien, my *Desert Companion* colleague (and, as owner of a Jeep Wrangler, our driver for the day); and me. We walked over the gravel lip on the side of the road and through the sagebrush and Mormon tea to get closer to a canyon wall made of huge stone spires lined up like organ pipes. Salgado pointed up to a flat rock face, and we all squinted and shaded our eyes.

A drawing came into focus: slanted checkerboard lines in chalky-looking red pigment. We walked a few yards down the wall, and Salgado pointed out another drawing. Then another, and another.

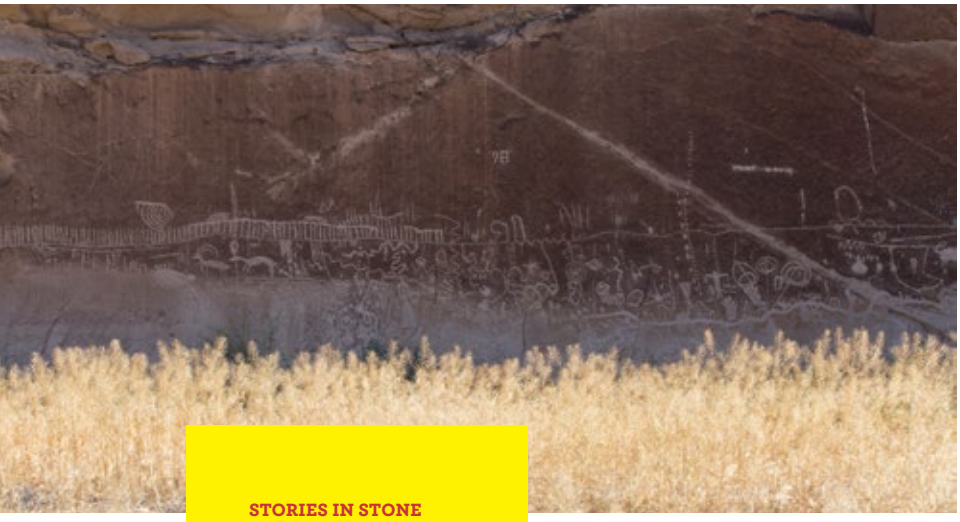
"Don't put in your story where these are, please," he said. The pictographs haven't been documented yet, and he doesn't want vandals, like those that defaced the White River Narrows petroglyphs not far away, to find them.

Naranjo, a wiry long-distance runner of 38, scrambled up into the rocks to get a closer look at one image. Standing on a ledge, he turned and shouted down to us, gesticulating enthusiastically, "This is serious shit, man!"

A member of the Santa Clara Pueblo tribe in New Mexico, Naranjo was seeing Basin and Range National Monument for the first time, and he was completely mesmerized by the place. Since we'd left the highway — traversing a couple miles of typical Mojave scrubland before finding ourselves in a tight canyon lined by anthropomorphic boulders — he'd been peering through the window, pointing out the art and life forms that sprang up unexpectedly, and holding forth on the meaning of it all.









STORIES IN STONE
Top left, Artifacts specialist Patrick Naranjo examines a petroglyph at Mt. Irish; top right, Naranjo in his office at UNLV; bottom, petroglyphs in the White River Narrows National Register District

"They're showing themselves to us," Naranjo said, after he picked his way down from the organ-pipe rock. He was referring not just to the pictographs, but also the red-tail hawk that had flown low over our heads as we entered the monument, the owl we'd spotted in the Valley of Faces, the countless lizards, rabbits, and petroglyphs all around.

Seeing and being seen are key elements in Naranjo's philosophy of Native American rights, and they apply as much to Southern Nevada's indigenous people as to any other. As William Logan Hebner writes in his book *Southern Paiute: A Portrait*, a predominant issue "persists throughout their homeland: Many of their neighbors have no idea that the Southern Paiute remain there at all. They have become virtually invisible."

This invisibility has been, well, apparent in the recent public debate over national monuments — the reason I spent eight hours touring Basin and Range that July day. Three months after taking office, President Donald Trump ordered Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to review all national monuments of more than 100,000 acres created since 1996. That includes both the 700,000-acre Basin and Range, established north of Las Vegas in Lincoln and Nye Counties in July 2015, and the 300,000-acre Gold Butte, designated in northeast Clark County last

PETROGLYPH AND HIKE: CHECKO SALGADO; NARANJO PORTRAIT: BRENT HOLMES



Hear more Conservation activists discuss the protection of Gold Butte's cultural artifacts on "State of Nevada" at *desertcompanion.com/hearmore*

December. Zinke was supposed to make his recommendations to Trump by late August; as of press time, he hadn't made his official report on the Nevada monuments. (See the sidebar on p. 73 about Trump's potential power to repeal or scale back previous presidents' proclamations.)

Salgado and other conservationists believe that President Barack Obama used the Antiquities Act to proclaim Basin and Range and Gold Butte national monuments as a way of ensuring that their landscapes, wildlife, and cultural sites will be preserved for future generations. But not everyone shares this view. Many Lincoln and Nye County residents, along with those of rural Clark County near Gold Butte, oppose the monuments, arguing that they're just another form of federal government interference in their favored pursuits, from mining and ranching, to target-practice and ATV-riding.

This conflict was evident well before Trump issued his executive order. The Sagebrush Rebellion started in Nevada in the late 1970s, after the Bureau of Land Management proposed millions of acres for wilderness area protection, aggravating disgruntlement that had been festering since the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. Its most recent episode took place in 2014, when Bunkerville rancher Cliven Bundy instigated an armed standoff with the BLM to prevent the agency from rounding up his cattle that had been illegally grazing on federal land (more on that in the sidebar on p. 74).

The trial of several men charged with crimes related to the Bundy ranch standoff was just getting underway in a Las Vegas federal court when the BLM held a town hall meeting about Gold Butte National Monument in Mesquite on February 9. The gathering was to have been informational, with government officials answering the public's questions about the designation and taking suggestions on how to make it work for the community. Instead, it turned into a near-brawl, with opponents of the monument accusing the BLM of secretly planning to close off the 360 miles of roads set aside in the proclamation for recreational use, and Bundy supporters decrying the feds' jurisdiction over the land.

Sitting at the back of the room was Greg Anderson, vice-chairman of the Moapa Band of Paiutes tribal council whose grandfather was born in Gold Butte. Early in the meeting, Anderson had stood up and suggested that, if the white people couldn't agree on what to do with the land, maybe they should just give it back to the Indians. But as the meeting descended into chaos, his voice was drowned out. The BLM canceled subsequently scheduled town halls and declined to give me any interviews or information about the national monuments for this story.

The meeting was supposed to have been informational, but instead it turned into a near-brawl, with opponents accusing the BLM of secret plans to close roads.

Moapa Band of Paiutes Tribal Chairman Darren Daboda says that what happened at the Mesquite town hall is typical: White voices take up most of the oxygen in the room, while the Indian point of view is treated as an aside, bonus, or footnote. He acknowledges that preservation nonprofit Friends of Gold Butte has always included Southern Paiutes in its efforts, but he adds that the Indians' greater concerns often take a back seat to those of ranchers and outdoors enthusiasts in broader forums, such as the meetings that Zinke was supposed to hold in Las Vegas as part of his review. The Interior Secretary had originally planned to spend a few days in Las Vegas in late July, but he cut the visit to one day and canceled most meetings, including one at the Moapa Band's reservation, so he could return to Washington, D.C., for a cabinet meeting with then-newly appointed White House Chief of Staff John Kelly. To make up for it, Zinke scheduled a later phone conference with tribal leaders.

"We felt like our input was an afterthought," Daboda says of the call.

All the Southern Paiutes interviewed for this story favor upholding the Basin and Range and Gold Butte national monument designations, because that would mean maintaining government-sanctioned protection of their ancestral lands. At the same time, they have issues with the Antiquities Act — and the larger process of federal land management — that they feel are being ignored. In this sense, Trump's executive order doesn't just reopen the debate between miners, oilmen, and ranchers, on one hand, and environmentalists, hikers, and wildlife advocates on the other. It also offers an opportunity to really hear from the people who've been here the longest and know the land the best — people like Greg Anderson. He's showing up, but too many of the other people there fail to see the significance of his presence.

America owes its natives an equal voice in the conversation about public lands, in part because it's the law. President Bill Clinton signed an executive order in 2000 requiring federal agencies to consult with Indian tribes on matters that stand to affect

Lookback

Summer 2007: The feature package of the inaugural issue of Desert Companion celebrated recreation on public lands, including kayaking at Lake Mead, camping in Dixie National Forest and biking Bootleg Canyon. But appreciating the outdoors is about more than just having fun. Over the years, our stories have considered public lands through the lens of history, politics and people. Read those and other highlight stories from our 10 years at desertcompanion.vegas.



LIVING LANDSCAPE
Right, Las Vegas Paiute artist and activist Fawn Douglas; below, landscapes of Basin and Range National Monument





them; Daboda hinted at this responsibility in his public remarks following Zinke's meeting cancellation.

And there is practical value beyond the legal obligation. The Paiute, Shoshone, and Washoe were in Nevada when white settlers arrived, and some 40,000 natives are here today, providing a direct, living connection to our state's oldest historical record. Why not tap into that collective knowledge?

But perhaps most important, there's a moral obligation. During a town hall meeting held at the Las Vegas Paiute community center two weeks before Zinke's visit, Naranjo brought up the secretary's proposal to scale back Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, against local Indians' wishes. (As a concession, Zinke proposed that the tribes "co-manage" the smaller monument with the federal government.)

"This reaffirms an historic application of who's included in the American dream and who's not," Naranjo said. "That application just isn't working. It has never worked. ... I think it's critical that we revisit the first story of diversity in North America, because it just doesn't fit with reality."

'I FEEL MORE COMPLETE'

LAS VEGAS PAIUTE artist and activist Fawn Douglas was in the lineup of speakers at a pro-monuments press conference at the Las Vegas Springs Preserve in late July. She presented her remarks, about the importance of both Basin and Range and Gold Butte to her people, with apparently equal ease to Nevada Congressional representatives Dina Titus and Ruben Kihuen, and arguably greater impact. Tall and dark, with piercing eyes and tribal tattoos, Douglas cuts a striking figure in the conservation community, despite having become a familiar face there. I'm the first of several reporters in line to interview her one-on-one following the conference.

"I feel more connected to it every time I go there," she says, answering my question about why she supports the monuments. "The more I go out there, the more I question, and then I ask our elders, or I ask my family, and they talk about the history of it ... We have some tribal members who were born in Gold Butte. So, to go there is really to get a sense of yourself, a sense of our history. I just feel more complete there."

I think I understand what she means, but not just because of that quick interview. I'm also remembering Douglas in a less polished moment. It was April of 2016, and I'd gone to the fourth Paiute Culture Walk, an annual gathering of the Southern Paiute tribes to honor their shared heritage. It took place in Gold Butte that year. Douglas was the only Las Vegas Paiute Tribe member planning to do the full 12-mile walk, so she carried her tribe's flag. It was a heavy banner on a long pole, she was not in the habit of making long-distance treks early in the morning, and I felt for her when, hitching a ride with a trail monitor back to my car, we passed her, trudging alone uphill on obviously tender feet.

Yet in a phone interview a few days later, she described the event as magical, transformative: "There were times when I would just put the flagpole across my shoulders and smile, because it was such a good day," she said. She talked about the power of so many tribes (nine were represented) uniting behind a common purpose; about carrying the flag in honor of her mother, whose bad leg prevented her from walking, and being helped by her daughter, who took the flag for the last two

BASIN AND RANGE: CHECKO SALGADO; FAWN DOUGLAS PORTRAIT: BRENT HOLMES

REVERSING COURSE

Can the president change the national monuments designated by a previous president?

IN APRIL, PRESIDENT Trump issued an executive order calling for the review of 27 national monuments designated by Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama under the federal Antiquities Act. While conservationists see these designations as necessary to protect historical and scientific artifacts, ranging from Native American wall paintings to the Grand Canyon, conservatives have called them federal land grabs. As with the Grand Canyon, some monuments eventually become national parks.

Trump has ordered Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to review monuments larger than 100,000 acres designated since 1996. Specifically, he asked Zinke to determine if those designations received enough public input and meet the Antiquities Act's requirement that designations must only be large enough to protect the artifacts they house. Zinke recently completed his review of Utah's Bears Ears National Monument and called for it to be "right-sized."

But how? Nevada Congresswoman Dina Titus says that any modification would have to go through Congress: "They could try to overturn the Antiquities Act, narrow it, or do some specific legislation geared toward a specific project, but it would be legislation."

The question of whether the president can bypass Congress and modify already designated monuments has been a long unanswered legal mystery. The Constitution gives Congress the sole authority to manage public lands, but Congress occasionally delegates that power. Through the passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906, Congress gave the president limited authority to declare national monuments. However, it does not explicitly give the president power to revoke a designation.

By email, Mark Squillace, professor of natural resources law at the University of Colorado, Boulder, pointed out that two delegations of that power enacted around the same time — the 1897 Forest Service Law and The Pickett Act of 1910 — include language that gives the president broader authority to rescind and modify public lands withdrawals declared though those acts.

Squillace said the Antiquities Act was developed to ensure the president had the power to protect public land resources before they could be exploited by developers, since he could act more quickly than Congress. "Conversely," he added, "it does not make much sense to allow a president to authorize the exploitation of important public lands resources that had been protected by a previous president until Congress has had the chance to pass on the wisdom of the original reservation."

In 1938, President Franklin Roosevelt considered rescinding the Castle-Pinckney National Monument in South Carolina, and asked Attorney General Homer Cummings for his legal opinion. Cummings' response: "The act does not authorize the president to abolish monuments after they have been established." The president, he said, had no implied authority.

Still, there is no definitive legal opinion from the courts on this issue because no president has tried to rescind a monument, and the 18 times that monument borders were modified through executive orders were never legally challenged. They all also occurred before the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, where Congress reaffirmed that they have the final say regarding monument designations.

But various groups have said they will challenge monument changes made by the Trump administration. Squillace said that the plaintiffs of a challenge would have a strong case arguing that the Antiquities Act grants the president only one-way authority to reserve national monuments.

Two attorneys, John Yoo and Todd Gaziano, argued in a paper for the American Enterprise Institute that President Trump could claim some of these monuments are invalid because they don't meet the act's original intent of reserving the smallest area compatible with the protected objects. Squillace said this argument is hard to make considering that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the designation of the 800,000-acre Grand Canyon National Monument in the 1920 Cameron v. United States case.

It would also force a court to favor the judgment of one president over the other, since Presidents Clinton and Obama carefully defined the objects they wanted to protect in broad terms like landscapes and ecosystems. "They will likely conclude that this was the role that Congress reserved for itself," Squillace said.

He does concede that there is a chance that a court could side with the Trump administration, "if only to give deference and respect to executive decisions." ***Bruce Gil***

STANDING THEIR GROUND

The Bundy clan as the voice of opposition to Gold Butte

"FREEDOM! FREEDOM! FREEDOM!"

You hear them before you see them. There are maybe 100 of them, 150. They've been at the Lloyd D. George Courthouse in Downtown Las Vegas since 7 a.m. on this Saturday, July 15, gathered for a "Stand with the Bundys" event. A few weeks from now, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is expected to announce the future of Gold Butte National Monument, which he is reviewing under the executive order President Trump made back in April.

They are not protesters, they say, but supporters of the Bundys. They wear shirts that read, "Beware, you might be next" and hold signs that read, "Free Bundy" and "Held Without Bail." Each carries an American flag as they march around the courthouse. Passing drivers beep in support.

Why are they here? On July 10, the retrial of Bundy supporters Eric Parker, O. Scott Drexler, Richard Lovelien, and Steven Stewart began. They are in court because of the infamous 2014 standoff with the BLM at the Bundy ranch. The BLM arrived to gather up Cliven Bundy's cattle because he had refused to pay grazing fees for two decades, and all hell broke loose when law enforcement realized the militia gathered at the ranch was armed.

Briana Bundy, wife of Cliven Bundy's son Mel, is at the event, taking a break from marching to get some shade. Mel was detained on March 3, 2016. He's pleaded not guilty for the 2014 standoff, his lawyer reasoning that Mel is innocent because he was carrying a flag, not a gun. Fourteen of the 17 defendants face charges of conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States, conspiracy to impede and injure a federal law enforcement officer, use and carry of a firearm in relation to a crime in violence, and other offenses.

According to Briana, their rights have been violated.

"They have violated our due process," she says. "They denied our right to a speedy trial. They have hand-selected the jury without allowing us to have a say so in it. They've abused (the men on trial) and violated their rights for pretrial release."

This isn't Briana's first rodeo. Back in January, she joined residents of Moapa Valley and Virgin Valley to protest President Obama's designation of Gold Butte as a national monument.

On May 26, Briana wrote a letter to Zinke, in which she addressed her concerns and discontent with the monument.

"Much like Bears Ears (in Utah), the Gold Butte Monument, set in place by President Obama, will destroy generations of blood, sweat, and tears, and take our dated waters, as we will lose access to them," Briana wrote. However, according to the Gold Butte National Monument proclamation, "The establishment of the monument is subject to valid existing rights, including valid existing water rights."

Mesquite and Virgin Valley were concerned about their water right access because five of six district springs are located within the Gold Butte boundaries, but they eventually came around to supporting the monument.

The Mayor of Mesquite, Allan Litman, is fine with the Gold Butte designation. According to Litman, all that would need to be done for the Virgin Valley Water District to continue accessing its water is carve out relevant areas of Gold Butte, so they would no longer be part of the monument.

Another of Briana's concerns is the land access.

"Our community will lose access to the land that they hold dear," her letter continued. "For generations, the people of this community have played in these hills, drank from these waters that my family has established. Our community has traveled these trails with their families, and established memories that will never leave them. We fear that our children and grandchildren will never know the joys of swimming in the holding tank up at Rabbit, or running in the tall grass up at Nickel Creek, seeing the spring flowers in meadows of Gold Butte, or hunting mule deer with their daddies on Bunkerville Mountain."

"That's why I stand," she says at the STAND event. "What national monument can you freely enter, and come and go as you please?"

Well, Gold Butte.

"For now," she says.

Briana says Gold Butte should be handled by the state and not by the federal government. However, the BLM may be a federal agency, but the proclamation declares that the monument is still under the state's jurisdiction:

"Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to enlarge or diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Nevada, including its jurisdiction and authority with respect to fish and wildlife management, including hunting and fishing." ***Desiree Sheck***



PLAIN SIGHTS The Virgin River and Lime Canyon Wilderness Area in Gold Butte

VIRGIN RIVER/LIME CANYON: JOSE WITT

miles; and about the feast that followed, with traditional singing and dancing.

I kicked myself for leaving early and missing the point. All that I'd experienced was a long walk in nice weather with pretty scenery. But even if I had stayed for the whole thing, it wouldn't have meant to me what it did to Douglas. I don't have the same relationship with the land as she does.

Neither does Lincoln County Commissioner Varlin Higbee, a fifth-generation Nevada rancher, who, along with the rest of the commission, opposes Basin and Range National Monument.

"I hate to see (the BLM and monument proponents) lock up the natural resources like they're doing," Higbee told me over the phone in August, referring to a common belief that there are minerals, oil, and gas to be extracted from the area, in addition to springs and grass for herds like his. "It's possible to use these resources in a responsible manner. If you don't take care of it, it won't be there for you. I'm a religious man, so this may sound funny to you, but I believe the Earth loves the gentle caress of a man's hand. You can't just abuse it."

Higbee's argument that he must operate his cattle business sustainably or lose his livelihood is persuasive. But underpinning it is a belief system that is fundamentally different than that of Fawn Douglas. Whereas white settlers came to tame the land and profit from its bounty, Paiutes see themselves as one type of Earth dweller among others. Their ability to do things like forage and hunt implies the responsibility to give back, to maintain balance with the animals, plants, and rocks.

"I believe the Earth loves the gentle caress of a man's hand. You just can't abuse it," says Varlin Higbee, a fifth-generation Nevada rancher and Lincoln County Commissioner who opposes Basin and Range National Monument.

"This land — it didn't belong to us," said Linda Shoshone, a Washoe Tribe elder, in a recent episode of Vegas PBS show *Outdoor Nevada*. "It was here for us to take care of, and it, in turn, takes care of us."

"Mankind is not taking care of Mother Earth. We're poking all these holes in her, and she's starting to burp," Anderson said to me during one call, referring to earthquakes near fracking sites.

But Anderson and Higbee have similar feelings about one thing: The federal government's inability (or refusal) to incorporate the knowledge that those who live off the land have gained from that experience. Higbee grazes cattle on 450,000 federally owned acres — now inside the monument — that are attached to his 40 acres of private property. He'd like to move his herds to the best grazing sites according to current conditions, as his predecessors did, but government regulations related to wildlife habitat conservation won't allow it. He fears that the monument designation has irrecoverably diminished the value of his operation.

For his part, Anderson talks about the environmental science contained in his culture's oral tradition, giving the example of the bighorn sheep, an animal that was historically very important to the Paiutes. Elders passed down lessons about how to hunt sheep without destroying the ecosystem. Today, the Fish and Wildlife Service works to manage bighorn sheep herds through study, refuges, and hunting permits, but the sheep populations remain fragile. Why, Anderson wondered, doesn't the agency get the Paiutes involved?

The critical difference between Higbee's complaint and Anderson's is that the Basin and Range National Monument proclamation essentially allows ranching to continue in its current form, whereas the Paiutes gain no bighorn sheep hunting or management rights. (The proclamation notes that the state has jurisdiction over wildlife management.)

Questions of stewardship aside, Higbee is totally convinced that the establishment of Basin and Range National Monument was political, a last-ditch effort by former U.S. Senator Harry Reid to thwart development of the nuclear waste storage facility at Yucca Mountain, which Lincoln and Nye Counties support as a source of economic development. On the most recent Yucca



LIVING LINK
Moapa Band of Paiutes Tribal Chairman Darren Daboda

Mountain maps available, a rail line for shipping waste is shown passing through the northern section of what's now the national monument, which precludes that railroad's construction. Coincidentally, artist Michael Heizer's massive land sculpture, "City," is also located in the northern portion of the monument, but Higbee sees the art work as nothing more than a convenient excuse to extend the monument so that it would block the rail line.

"Why was this monument created? To protect Michael Heizer's private property?" he asks. "The public will never have access to 'City.' Never. Even the foundation that's going to buy it has said it will never be open to the public. Strictly by invitation only, or by permit. So, they created this monument (as an obstacle to Yucca Mountain), and they threw in one or two Indian art sites that this whole state is covered with."

Paiute leaders don't deny that the cultural sites they hold dear are scattered around Southern Nevada. To them, it's all the more reason to protect the land where they're located. Daboda points out that the U.S. government gave the Paiutes 2.1 million acres when it first recognized the tribe in 1873, acknowledging the vastness of their territory. But that area was reduced to just 1,000 acres two years later, and none of the original millions were restored until the 1980s, when the total rose to nearly 72,000 acres, where it remains today. The Paiutes are hoping to regain another 26,000 acres through a land conveyance bill that's stalled in Congress.

"Gold Butte was originally part of our reservation," Daboda says. "Basin and Range was our ancestral land. So, we have real ties to both national monument designations."

Those ties are memorialized in the Salt Songs, traditional, day-long tales that are sung upon the death of a Paiute tribe member. As the songs accompany the spirit through tribal lands on its way to the afterlife, they outline a territory that confirms the U.S. government's original allocation of Paiute land. Anderson, who sings for his tribe, says the epics roam from Lincoln County down to Northern Arizona, Eastern California to Western Utah, mentioning familiar mountain ranges, valleys, and other landmarks along the way.

And while the Paiutes are linked mainly to the southern portion of Basin and Range, the northern part is just as important to the Shoshone.

"For the Indians to say it was their native land — maybe it was," Higbee says. "But you know what? Maybe somebody's going to come along some day and take it from us and do something else with it."

"Like the government?" I ask.

"Yeah," he laughs.

He also repeats a story I've heard from other rural ranchers about their ancestors arriving in Nevada to find the Paiutes in a sorry state, eating lizards and bugs, and being captured and sold into slavery by other tribes. Hebner quotes Mormon missionary Jacob Hamblin, who wrote about the Southern Paiute in 1855, "They are in a very low, degraded condition indeed; loathsome and filthy beyond description."

Other writers offer different accounts, noting that the harsh conditions of the Mojave Desert honed the Paiutes' remarkable resourcefulness, their numbers were decimated by diseases that white settlers had introduced, and their way of life was destroyed when they were isolated on reservations. Nomadic hunter-gatherers, they went where the sheep, pine nuts, water, and other means of subsistence could be found at any given time. As Anderson put it, their eating lizards may have demonstrated not that they were starving but, rather, that they were survivors.

"(Non-natives) don't know who we are," Anderson told PBS's Burke. "Their history doesn't tell the true stories."

Even if the story of the miserable Paiute were true, it'd be worth asking what the point is in repeating it. Is the implication that the natives were somehow better off after white settlers arrived?

It's also worth noting that the natives are adapting to new economies and technologies more successfully than some of their white rural counterparts. This year the Moapa Band opened the Southern Paiute Solar Project, a 250-megawatt renewable power plant that exports enough electricity to the L.A. Department of Water and Power to supply 111,000 homes, displacing 341 metric tons of carbon dioxide (the equivalent of taking 73,000 cars off the road).

Choking back tears at the flip-switching ceremony, Daboda said, "This is something I'll never forget... It took us seven years to get here." The facility employed 600 people during construction, including 115 Indians.

'WE SEE YOU'

THERE WAS ANOTHER press conference in late July: one held by Interior Secretary Zinke on a private ranch in Bunkerville at the end of his curtailed Nevada visit. Waiting for the secretary to arrive for the outdoor event, photographers and reporters clustered in the 110-degree shade chatting. Logandale resident Lindsey Dalley, who was there taking photos for the *Moapa Valley Progress* newspaper, told *Nevada Forward* Editor Andrew Davey and me that we in the mainstream media were missing the bigger picture by focusing too much on the Native American perspective of the national monuments. There were families spread all over the Moapa Valley, Dalley said, that had been there for several generations. They consider the places where they've

DARREN DABODA PORTRAIT: BRENT HOLMES

fished and hunted and picnicked to be part of their history.

"It's a living history," Dalley repeated several times. He explained that this meant they don't want familiar areas to be cordoned off, like in a museum. They want to be able to continue going there, reminiscing with their children and grandchildren.

My reaction was puzzlement: Nothing I'd read in the Basin and Range or Gold Butte national monument proclamations led me to believe that a family visiting favorite spots would be forbidden. But Dalley said he and others believed the BLM intended to whittle away access by closing roads and enshrining historical sites such as the Gold Butte Township, curtailing their ability to roam freely over the land.

Interestingly, the Southern Paiutes fear exactly the opposite: too much access. They'd prefer to keep their historical places hidden, or at least pristine. It saddens them to think that people might walk or drive through significant sites, ignorant of the pottery shards or agave roasting pits underfoot. Anderson gave the example of the famous Falling Man petroglyph in Gold Butte. People hike out to see it, he says, without realizing that, unless they go a certain route, they're trampling an area where Indians used to gather to make arrowheads for hunting. Paiutes go there to commune with the spirits of those hunters.

Patrick Naranjo was horrified. "This is terrible!" he said, waving his arms between the ancient art and cow wallow. "How would you guys feel if I kenneled my dogs in a room in the Louvre?"

These opposing desires — access versus preservation — converge in both of Nevada's national monuments. During my visit to the Logan ghost town site in the Mt. Irish section of Basin and Range, Patrick Naranjo, the American Indian cultural artifacts specialist who works at UNLV, spotted a petroglyph-covered rock just a couple yards from where a rancher had installed a watering tank for his cattle. Nearby, a patch of ground showed signs of cows having gathered there: the foliage was flattened and the dirt dimpled with hoof prints.

Naranjo was horrified. "This is terrible!" he said, waving his arms between the ancient art and the cow wallow. "How would you guys feel if I kenneled my dogs in a room in the Louvre?"

Adding insult to this injury is the European descendants' sense of entitlement, Daboda says: "When they talk about, you know, three or four generations, we've been here since time immemorial, so to us that's a slap in the face. ... When they say, 'We've been doing this farming, agging, cattlemen, and utilizing the public lands,' they don't understand that, with their cattle they're impacting our culture, because the hoofing from the animals is eroding springs, and the artifacts that have been left over time are being damaged and can't be replaced. ... So, when they bring that issue up, to us, their ties are overseas."

Still, Daboda and Dalley share a mistrust of the federal government. It's easy to understand this from the Paiutes' historical perspective, and their sense of betrayal gets continual reinforcement. Daboda points out that U.S. protection of Indian artifacts, for instance, generally privileges scientific study over preservation, turning the objects over to anthropologists and archaeologists rather than entrusting them to the care of tribes who believe they have a more legitimate connection.

"Everybody wants to see the historic Native American and study him from an ethnographic standpoint," Naranjo says. "But when it comes to pipeline issues or social justice issues or things that are happening in real time ... there's an uncertainty about validating these (connections) for what they are."

To put it less academically, people of European descent are fine with objectifying the Indian experience to serve their own narrative (or for their own entertainment), but not with opening a dialog about the Indian experience with those actually living it today — particularly if that dialog could result in losing a valued asset or practice.

Consider Chaco Canyon, one of the first areas to be proclaimed a national monument under the Antiquities Act, in 1907. Chaco Canyon was the hub of a huge ancient Puebloan civilization that stretched for hundreds of miles. Today, it's called Chaco Culture National Historical Park and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Despite that, and objections of the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, and other Pueblo Indians, the BLM leased 850 acres of land within 20 miles of the park for oil and gas drilling in January of this year, earning nearly $3 million. Some 90 percent of the ancestral area has already been developed.

"How can we continue to entertain these kinds of economic interests that represent settler colonialism?" Naranjo asks, "If 100 years ago you started this (act), and it has international and North American interests and scientific value, then we have to say, in 2017, 'You guys gotta stop drilling for oil next to our sacred sites'?"

None of the Indians that I talked to expects the government to turn Basin and Range and Gold Butte's collective 1 million acres over to the tribes; they just want a substantial say in the process. Daboda would like to see more collaboration like the partnership the Paiutes have developed with Friends of Gold Butte, which is aware of culturally sensitive areas and helps to guard them from damage. The nonprofit lobbied for inclusion of Paiute cultural liaisons in the national monument management plan, so that the natives can help educate visitors and provide maintenance and security for special places. Daboda hopes for a similar arrangement at Basin and Range.

But another reason he was disappointed that he didn't get to meet with Zinke during the secretary's visit was that he had planned to address issues beyond the national monument review: the hunting and water rights that the tribe lost when the government shrank its reservation, for instance, and the land conveyance act that would restore an additional 26,000 acres. However the national monument review turns out, the tribe's desire for restitution will remain. The tribe will remain.

Fawn Douglas was one of several locals who traveled to the Standing Rock Sioux reservation to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota last winter, and she has stayed active in the national movement that grew out of the protest. Social media allows groups like the Indigenous Environmental Network to easily gather support from far and wide. It also highlights common causes shared by groups coalescing around separate issues. For instance, it gives Douglas a chance to share her view of cultural oppression — seen through the lens of her desire to protect public lands — with those who have a similar view as they fight for the removal of Confederate statues from the public square.

On August 14, Douglas reposted a Womxn of Color LV Facebook message, a response to the white supremacist march in Charlottesville, N.C., and the violence that followed: "To all of our people: We have seen this. We have lived this ... We have been fighting for our lives for hundreds of years. ... We have resisted and have come out stronger. We were resilient in the face of this war of attrition. We will reclaim our traditions and our long-lost birth rights. We are with you. We see you." ✦

desert COMPANION

BEST DOCTORS + TOP DENTISTS



















On August 10th we hosted Southern Nevada's **Best Doctors and Top Dentists**, along with guests and readers, at Roseman University. See the photos on Facebook @NevadaPublicRadio







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TEN YEARS.

TEN WRITERS.

TEN PERSPECTIVES.

The valley took on many guises during the decade that Desert Companion *has covered it. Foreclosure capital. Party town. City of ambiguity. Some of our favorite writers look back at the years that were important to them.*

2007

IGNORANCE IS BLISS

Oh, the things we didn't see coming!

BY **HUGH JACKSON**

"RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION REMAINS in the dumps," stated a second-quarter 2007 report from UNLV's Center for Business and Economic Research. "Slowly, however, job growth will turn things around."

"Southern Nevada's residential market is experiencing one of the worst downturns in the region's history," local consultant Jeremy Aguero confided to homebuilders later that year, the *Las Vegas Sun* reported. But Aguero anticipated "a gradual recovery by late 2008."

I didn't see the crash coming, either. By 2007, the foreclosure rate was rising fast, kitchen-table conversations routinely included the word "underwater," and ominous reports about some manner of weirdness having to do with subprime mortgages were surfacing in the media. Like a lot of folks, I'd long presumed, if only casually, that overinflated housing prices of the preceding years were unsustainable. But in 2007, the popped housing bubble still looked more like a correction than a cataclysm.

The housing bubble was big, but the financial bubble, in which mortgages had been furiously purchased, bundled, and packaged into exotic investment products, was bigger. Some people foresaw that in 2007, but few if any of them were Nevadans, and I certainly wasn't among them. Nor did I know that within months the global economy would plunge into the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression, and that nowhere would be hit as hard, and for as long, as Las Vegas.

Neither, evidently, did Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, and other Democratic presidential candidates who visited Las Vegas regularly throughout 2007.

Nevada's "first-in-the-West" presidential caucus was created by Harry Reid as a party-building mechanism to help, well, him. But it put Nevada in the thick of the presidential nomination contest as never before. The caucus took place in mid-January 2008, so throughout 2007, Democratic candidates were giving Nevada an unprecedented amount of attention. (Republican candidates all but ignored the Republican caucus, which turned out to be an irrelevant flop.)

That year, I was doing some freelance writing and editing, but mostly I was blogging. In 2007 blogs were still a thing. Candidates took my questions, my interview requests — *me* — with as much seriousness (or lack thereof) as they did reporters from the state's newspapers, also, then, still a thing.

In a press conference I got to pepper the then-inexperienced candidate Obama about raising income caps on Social Security taxes so that the rich would pay their fair share. He didn't have an answer. "You stopped him like a clock," a reporter with one of the local dailies said as we were leaving the room, which is the sort of remark a lowly blogger remembers. I also got a couple of one-on-one interviews with Obama, and remember pressing him about what some on the left perceived as a wishy-washy commitment to getting U.S. forces out of Iraq. "I've answered your question," he brusquely responded at one point. Only in retrospect did I realize I'd triggered his version of getting snippy.

I interviewed most of the candidates, including Edwards (the guy I ended up caucusing for because, oh yeah, I can pick 'em) and Joe Biden (close talker, went on and on, was wearing the same frayed tie every time I saw him), along with Bill Richardson, Dennis Kucinich (single-payer, anyone?), and … not Clinton. She had a bubble of her very own in 2007, the inevitability bubble. Convinced she would win the nomination, she and her team granted comparatively few one-on-one interviews, and none to a blogger who mocked her presumption of inevitability by routinely referring to her and her campaign as "the Borg."

Clinton's inaccessibility notwithstanding, never before had presidential contenders showered so much love on the state. In subsequent cycles, and thanks to Nevada's swing-state status, the novelty of presidential politics has worn off a bit. And I confess, the older I get, the less patience I can muster for politicians. But perhaps at no time over the course of my almost successful career did I have quite so much good, clean fun as I did covering candidates in 2007. It was a blast.

But it wasn't about the economy. The Democratic campaign, at least in 2007, was mostly about healthcare and — the issue that would deprive Clinton of the nomination — U.S. militarism.



Foreclosures did start to emerge as a minor campaign issue late in 2007. But during a November Democratic debate at UNLV, broadcast on CNN, foreclosures never came up. (While reviewing blog archives to write this piece, I took some very, very small solace in learning that I at least noted that omission the night of the debate.) The exchange that got the most media play involved drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants. In what was the very first nationally televised debate in Nevada among candidates for president, the economy barely reared its soon-to-be abominable head.

So I guess the thing that strikes me most about 2007 is how pretty much everybody, including me, managed to remain clueless about what was really going on in 2007.

A decade later, Southern Nevada's economy has clawed out of the depths, at least by some measures. But it hasn't recovered its swagger or, more important, that relatively broad access to, and distribution of, prosperity that in some ways once distinguished Las Vegas from other U.S. cities. The post-crash market economy fails to provide perhaps as much as a third of Nevada's adult workers with adequate wages and employment conditions.

A decade from now we'll know if local establishment-preferred economic initiatives — low taxes and tax incentives, education "reform," a new football stadium, etc. — are up to post-crash challenges, or if we are, yet again, missing the plot.



ILLUSTRATION: BRENT HOLMES

2008

YEAR OF CHANGE

Life in transition: marriage, home, job, self

BY **ERICA VITAL-LAZARE**

THIS IS EITHER a love story or fated social suicide, confession or accusation, a tying together or total unraveling: I almost left here in 2008, one of that year's many dispirited Vegas casualties in the great shakeup of marriages, careers, and real estate.

Like the city itself, the time was jury-rigged, pieced together by mishaps and scandal.

On the Strip, the rebar of one of the last new properties to emerge financially unobstructed in the midst of the Great Crash was just beginning to rise, most of us yet unaware that tourists would one day burn in the shadows of its beauty as the convergence phenomenon known as "the death ray" bounced the sun's rays off the concave face of Vdara to dive kamikaze-like into the pool. Further up the block, the Trump International residential tower opened amid lawsuits and protests, while on the other side of the continent, New Jersey apologized for slavery. Credit markets froze, the valley constructed snowmen rather than homes during that December's record snowfall, a local doctor spawned a hepatitis outbreak, endangering nearly 60,000 patients with infection after reusing syringes and medical vials at a clinic that was already questionable, and visions of Criss Angel flew through the open windows of a valley where one out of 10 homes neared foreclosure, to descend, arms outstretched, messianically, atop the Luxor, where the entertainer's magical stylings then took up and now remain in residence.

Like the pyramid property, 2008 seemed made of papier mâché, each tick of the clock a match set to burn as I transitioned from writing for the

Review-Journal's Real Estate section — pages gone thinner, hours longer — which itself had been a transition from the *View* community newspapers and back again. In the gap, I had taken a position with a public-relations firm that promised to compensate me with numbers I had thought unimaginable. An office with windows came with lunch ordered in, cocktail parties, show tickets, and all-day golf among lovely people whose dark hearts under shiny exteriors soon toyed with the genuine love I have for humanity. I am sure they were as lovely as they appeared, and only the year itself lent the situation a sense of marketeering darkness. They endured my puzzled silences and inability to BS with the brittle patience of consummate professionals. For that I am grateful.

I left a husband and purchased a condo in a complex that later became embroiled in an infamous indictment of HOA executives, ending with the investigation of a kingpin who had always been very nice to me. I search my memory for the occasion on which I may have met any of the other key figures in this debacle. I come up blank as the year itself — 2008 is a scribbled-over canvas best left to hang alone, unlit, in its corner.

I quit the PR firm, stayed up those few weekend nights my sons spent with my ex-husband, and moved in with my mother.

That year was the fabled fault line through this town we have been told about but do not quite believe exists, until we are shaken.

It occurs to me I had only pretended to live here until then. My peerage and I had come out West with degrees and new husbands in the fevered rush of the late nineties, had found meaningful work in law firms and budding home offices, classrooms and executive parlors. We'd hung out our shingles, signed up for preschools and Gymboree, bought cars and Humvees, redecorated already fine homes, took trips to Yosemite and Disney — swam with the dolphins.

Drawn to the neon by soft greed and history, we'd blinked sweetly into the face of previous years; 2008 came in blinding. It was the true solar convergence where all that once glittered was made thankfully more clear.



2009

ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES

If you're lost, the three Lionels will bring you back

BY **DANIELLE KELLY**

IN 2009, THE Las Vegas Contemporary Art Center took a risk on an idea: the Off the Strip Festival. While most years can seem hard for the arts in Las Vegas, 2009 was particularly difficult. The closure of the Las Vegas Art Museum early in the year was a crushing blow, casting a long, dark shadow in its wake. Off the Strip was an emergent glimmer of hope, offering the city of big shows and even bigger lights a festival of new media and performance-based works.

What felt like a gamble at the time fit seamlessly into the city that performs itself nightly. And for a few short years, three to be exact, Off the Strip drew art and artists from all over the world to the belly of the American spectacle for video and experimental performance. It also drew people out of their homes and together at time when the Las Vegas visual arts community was desperate for a sense of agency, some small faith in the ability to propel itself forward into a new future it so desperately needed.

2009 is also the year that artist Joe Nanashe created the video piece "3xladyx3" (later screened during the 2010 iteration of Off the Strip). It remains, for me, a most perfect and unforgettable Las Vegas art experience.

If you aren't a fan of Lionel Richie, then you should really stop reading now. Because if you aren't a fan of Lionel Richie, you simply won't understand the lure of his voice, casually ping-ponging across the unique geometry of Commercial Center. The burning orange-pink desert sun sliding into the western horizon, replicated in hue by a glowing empty storefront, recessed in the deepest corner of Las Vegas' weirdest and most wonderful strip mall. Lights flashing to the rhythm of a song, familiar but difficult to pin down. A tune repeated in triplicate, chasing itself over seconds and years.

I remember meandering across the lot and barely catching the voice — not once, not twice, but three times a lady. I gasped and whispered, "Lionel."



JOE NANASHE

Nanashe's video was installed inside a tiny 1960s storefront. Imagine projected on a cinder-block wall, immediately adjacent to the giant glass window, three versions of Lionel Richie singing "Three Times A Lady." At the bottom, anchoring the image, is a darkened stage and a spectral sea of lighters, matches, and tiny blinkering lights. In the top left corner, the Commodores appear in costumed splendor on a daytime variety show (*Merv Griffin*? *Mike Douglas*?). Richie sits at the piano. At the top right is 1987 Richie, basking in the adoration of fans, arguably at the height of his post-Commodores solo career. The three Lionels launch into the song, one man yet three different men all at the same time. The ensuing complexity defies description. Commodores Lionel is earnest and intimate, a little shy and perhaps lip-syncing, but truly feeling each word of the song. Eighties Lionel plays to the audience, physically prowling the stage as he confidently works the crowd, throwing the song at them, expertly giving the people what they want. From the darkened stage at the bottom of the configuration emerges the '90s Lionel, fully actualized and serenading the camera. His face has changed, thanks to time and surgery, but it is Lionel and he performs himself only for you. It is slick and slightly arch, the song a mere vehicle for delivering the Superstar direct to your living room. The three faces of Lionel.

I sat in a wheeled desk chair across from the projection in the middle of the room, watching the video again and again. Losing my earnestness, my hunger for life, terrifies me. I wonder if it fades with youth, and we wake up one day and it's gone, while we simply perform a version of ourselves as time floats by. Or maybe we hone a set of tics and gestures that simply become the language of the self, slowly sloughing off the sharper edges until we drown ever deeper inside of our bodies, looking outward, watching the self demonstrated in a series of actions and reactions repeated, finally by instinct, thousands and thousands and thousands of times over the course of a lifetime.

The front of my body was warmed by light, flickering on my face as it bounced off the wall. And the city light I love so well reached for me, lunging at arms and legs through the window. At times behind the beat, at others ahead, the combined voices of the three Lionels united only once, for the chorus, at the very end. I almost cried every single time.

2010

MY RECESSION

After heartbreak, it took a retreat into memory to find the way forward

BY **ANDREW KIRALY**

ONE SATURDAY MORNING in February 2010, I was sitting on a bench outside a Centennial Hills Walgreens, clutching a garbage bag hastily stuffed with clothes. You know that feeling when you're waiting impatiently for a ride, whether it's the bus, a friend, or a taxi, and you shift into this mental gear of actively desperate waiting that some part of you believes will help alchemically conjure the very vehicle you're waiting for? That times 10: My ride was an escape pod to flee the debris field of a shattered marriage.

My mom finally pulled up in the truck. On the long ride back to my parents' house on the east side, she didn't say anything and just let me cry.

In 2010, I moved back into my childhood home and lived there for two years. It was a strange, sad, happy, difficult time. I played a lot of cribbage with my dad, getting to know him in a new way. He was ex-military and had always been a terse and gruff disciplinarian, but things were different now. He was mellowing with age, and I was, well, naked and raw with humiliating need and desperation. He showed me compassion, patience, and warmth. I drank a lot at night. Often it was cocktails out with friends, but just as often it was a therapeutic bottle of Trader Joe's wine in the blue-carpeted living room, numbly watching *NCIS* with my mom. They gave me a house key; they gave me the truck. They never asked how long I planned to stay, even when boxes started appearing in the garage.

In the mornings, I went running to clear my head. Sunrise Manor had decayed: dead lawns, foil in windows, cars in front yards. There seemed to be a halfway house on every street now. It was easy to tell the halfway houses. The garage door would be open, and the men and women were shuffling around, smoking, watching the street with bright-eyed, medicated vigilance. They never bothered anybody, but it gave the neighborhood a sense of surreal languor. I'd run west along the Las Vegas Wash, where we used to catch frogs and crawdads, smash bottles, experiment with

four-letter words, savor our first tastes of adolescent misadventure. (Just north of the wash used to be the Desert 5 drive-in theater, where mom took us to see *The Empire Strikes Back* in our hulking turquoise Buick station wagon.) In the urban creek now there were homeless men, trash, and graffiti, but also lush stands of willow, and hidden places where the water would purl and murmur over mossy rocks. One time I was startled by a violent rustling to see a heron launch from the reeds into majestic flight. Near Boulder Highway, I would pass by the sagging, leering old mansion that was once a brothel called Roxie's. Growing up, we thought it was a satanic coven guarded by demon dogs, and we'd scare ourselves by walking or driving by the house at night. I'd pass my old elementary school, Walter V. Long. On the weekend, I'd hop over the fence to visit the old blacktop playground, where we'd played countless matches of tetherball and four-square. I'd pass the 7-Eleven where we'd spent summer afternoons playing Defender and Dragon's Lair, wired on whatever was in Slurpees. On these morning runs, I was moving through time as well as space.

I felt a hunger for memories. I think I was unconsciously convinced that, somehow, visitation with these phantoms of the past would point me the way forward through a divorce and toward new love. It was as though I'd veered off somewhere and became the wrong character, and I had to go back to pick up the plot that led to the true Andrew. Thinking back on this time when every day was a swirl of *then* and *now*, it seems unreal, yet precious. My parents have since died, and our house on Boston Avenue has been sold. I'd like to say I managed to successfully retrieve some proper sense of self, *the right me*, but I'm simply grateful for having had the chance to visit that world once more before my portal to it vanished.

Beyond this small world, Las Vegas was trying to smile and bluff its way through the recession. CityCenter had opened in December 2009; I attended the opening-night bash, smiling and bluffing, too. The Smith Center held its topping-off ceremony in February 2010; I went, and scrawled my name on the memorial girder. The Cosmopolitan was under construction for a December 2010 opening, teasing us with a cryptic ad campaign. I think of 2010 as a year when such compulsive, errant, maybe even defiant persistence was necessary.

(There was a woman who went to The Cosmopolitan opening party whose date was a grown man living with his parents. They ended up getting married.)



CREEK: MATTY NEWTON; WEDDING: JARED AFRICA

2011

THREE SCENES

'Like some kind of reality show'

BY **SCOTT DICKENSHEETS**

1. AND I FEEL FINE

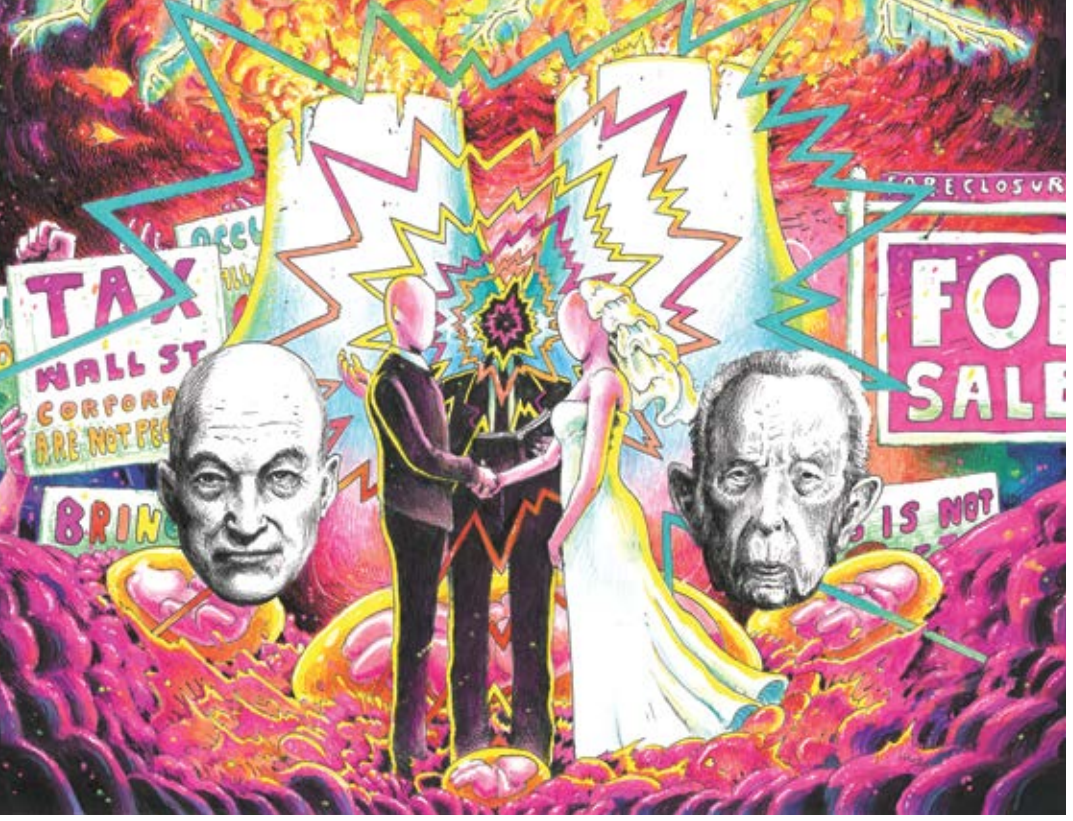
REMEMBER EXACTLY where I was when the world didn't end. Sure, there were a lot of times in 2011 that the world didn't end, though there were several moments when it seemed about to, and even a few when I wished it *would* — mostly those dark, dark hours when I calculated my house's negative equity. But the day I'm thinking of is the day it was *supposed* to end: May 21, 2011, right around 6 p.m. You remember, right? Harold Camping, religious crackpot? Predicted The Rapture would happen then?

In case you hadn't noticed, it fizzled.

For me, 2011 wasn't a flashbulb year, indelibly time-stamped by seismic life events. I changed jobs, yeah, and went to my one and only session of yoga, got called "Chickensheets" by a local blogger — just another so-so season of this reality show we call life. Still, bits of 2011 stuck to me in stubborn ways. I recall the skin-crawl of seeing horrid paintings by serial killer John Wayne Gacy hanging in the Arts Factory. Of receiving, out of the blue, fevered, illiterate emails from a woman named Carole in New Hampshire, who was apparently unhinged by Obama: "Has SATIN taken an office in the White House?" Of picking up an apocalyptic backbeat in that year's events — Fukushima, the foreclosure crisis, the futility of trying to escape "Rolling in the Deep."

And I remember what was supposed to be this wicked world's final, keel-over, clutch-the-chest, thud-to-the-floor, flatline moment. Indeed, I remember 6 p.m., May 21, because the blithe nihilism of Camping's prediction — I'm never clear whether people like him are more excited about ascending to heaven or watching the rest of us broil in fire — contrasted so perfectly with where I was at the time: on the patio of a Henderson country club, watching two young friends get married. Watching two young friends spend a sweet spring evening betting everything on the possibility of a long, fruitful future, and then eating catered chicken.

Looking back, I wish I'd made more of that moment, and others that year. I wish I'd have



considered how imagining the end of the world gives us the chance to reflect on what's worth saving about it. I wish I'd have seen the prehensile grasping of Carole from New Hampshire's paranoia as the warning sign it probably was (*save yourself, 2016!*). I wish I'd have decided, in true Chickensheets fashion, to skip Gacy's crap. Instead, I threw rice and toasted my friends, which was enough.

2. FUNNY/NOT FUNNY?

ONE MARCH NIGHT in 2011, back when my home was so far underwater it was like living in a bathysphere, I went to see Doug Stanhope perform at Sunset Station. Not only because a blast of uninhibited, piety-shredding comedy sounded just right to clear my recession-addled skull, but, I guess, as a kind of mental/emotional status check. (Also, a friend had tickets.)

See, what interested me about Stanhope's act was the way it forces an ongoing, real-time self-appraisal: *What will I laugh at now?* There in the dark anonymity of a club, what boundaries of taste would I observe voluntarily, if any? Would I laugh at jokes about Fukushima drowning victims if everyone else did, if no one would disapprove?

That night, Stanhope wound down with a bit premised on the shattered economy: If the rest of us become broke and desperate, we can sell our bodies — but what Plan B do prostitutes have?

Never mind that economists had declared the recession over in 2009 — tell it to my 2011 mortgage. To the people who feared that year's Legislature would force UNLV to cut whole academic departments. To the Economic Policy Institute, which reported that Las Vegas had the nation's highest rate of black unemployment in 2011. To Governor Sandoval, who was still talking about "shared sacrifice." In the gambling hall of our Wall Streeted economy, there's over and there's *over*.

The prostitute's only option, according to Stanhope, was a series of ever more depraved acts that I won't sully our time here by describing. In my memory, Stanhope's really getting into his characterization of the woman, working the stage back and forth, his voice and accent making it clear his prostitute was a poor minority woman who could imagine no other option.

Now, I dig Stanhope's battering-ram style, and I believe there's a real value to breaching decorum the way he does — after all, good taste probably isn't the same as morality, though we'd often like to think otherwise. And it was very obviously a *linguistic construct* — no actual sex workers were degraded in the making of this bit — and the target of his bitter satire was ultimately, I think, the architects of the recession. Everyone laughed.

Almost everyone.

3. ENGAGE!

LATE JANUARY. "Who's the coolest person you met today?" I asked my son.

"Well —"

"PATRICK STEWART!" I barked, triumphant. "That's who *I* hung with today." *In! Your! Face!*

He looked blank.

"'Engage'...?" I murmured, making a wan Capt. Picard gesture.

He looked, if anything, blanker.

Wait. "Professor Xavier, from *X-Men*."

Whoa! "*Him?!*"

Him. Stewart was in town researching a Sin City-themed version of *The Merchant of Venice*. He wanted to get the place just right, which meant acquiring a deeper understanding of recession-ravaged, spectacle-driven, money-mad, growth-crazy, over-the-top Las Vegas. He was talking to a lot of people, including me and then-*Las Vegas Sun* reporter J. Patrick Coolican.

The three of us sat in a window seat in the Mandarin Oriental's tea lounge, indulging my love of being questioned in a manicured British accent. Stewart asked about Las Vegas' history and politics, its economics and social issues. Culture. Growth. Oh, and gambling — Stewart preferred blackjack. "I have a system," he said.

I don't like meeting people whose work I admire, though not because I fear they'll disappoint me. They usually don't. Stewart didn't. But me? I'm an ordinary guy, with an ordinary life and finite energy reserves, and I suck at small talk with strangers. So I've come to detest the effort required to make myself interesting to interesting people. And yet I could have floated indefinitely in the magnetic field of Stewart's sculpted diction, his generous attention. Alas, it had to end: The remainder of 2011 required my attendance, with its whole weird juggling act of joys and armageddons — real and imagined — its negative equities and foregone confusions, the daily dice roll and crapshoot of life in these United States. It's okay, though. I have a system.

Also, you know, Stewart had to leave.

As we stood up, Coolican said, "We thought this might be a hoax. We've been telling people about our meeting with (air quotes) 'Patrick Stewart.'"

He laughed. "Like some kind of reality show," he said.

2012

OBAMA, AND EVERYTHING AFTER

Shaking the hand of the first president who looked like me couldn't prevent my hand from being cuffed

BY **NICHOLAS RUSSELL**



AUGUST 22, 2012, Canyon Springs High School, North Las Vegas.

It's a relatively cloudy morning, with the vague scent of rain filling my nostrils. My mom and I have just parked in a neighborhood some distance from the school grounds. She still has the Acura TSX, with its cracked leather seats and questionable passenger-seat legroom.

The shirt I'm wearing, emblazoned with a stylized rendering of the face of the man we've come to see, won't fit me a year from now. It's four years old; the man on it is running for reelection. As we walk inside, onto the creaking, polished-wood basketball court that's been adorned with flags and campaign banners, I notice the familiar smell of sweat that high school gyms have. The bleachers have been retracted. Rows of folding chairs face a small stage where a podium stands, the presidential seal not yet hung on the front.

It's strange thinking about what this place must look like on a normal day. In a movie, this would be where I flash back to a memory of my dad yelling from the sidelines as I run up and down the court with a stitch in my side. But this gym is new to me, and I haven't played basketball in a long time.

The building fills up. My mom and I stand together, away from the seats, waiting. Eventually, after an introductory speech by a local schoolteacher, amid the hubbub and chants of "four more years," I hear the crowd applaud and scream. I'm 16 and much shorter than I will be. He's here, but I can't see him yet. My mom lets out a "*Woo!*," an exclamation she saves for charismatic presidents and Sade.

Among the many things I mimicked as a child, the specific smooth gait of a black man was highest among them. It always belied a confidence and a sense of belonging that is hard to describe to people who can't see it. Denzel Washington didn't just walk. My dad and my uncle didn't just walk. And, apart from the little jog he does up to the podium, neither does Barack Obama.

HIS SLEEVES ARE rolled up. The auditorium is silent for a moment before someone shouts, "We love you!" The president doesn't break, responding effortlessly, "I love you back," before he begins to speak.

Obama's first remark about the city is, "... I didn't know it rains in Las Vegas."

At the time, I hadn't clocked the significance of seeing a president speak in person, let alone the first American president in 219 years to look like me and countless others around the country. I remember having a headache that morning because I hadn't gotten enough sleep. My mom came into my room to wake me up more than once. If I had complained enough, I could have stayed home. Even after the rally was over, after the talking points and strategic pauses, after we unexpectedly joined the sea of hands President Obama shook as he walked by, I couldn't qualify how it applied to me beyond the feeling that someone famous had touched me. I wasn't old enough to vote. What did it matter to me, really, whether he was reelected or not?

There are many ways to interpret Obama's two terms, and none are simple. The perspective that has stayed with me through the years, the one I finally wised up to after the rally, is explicitly racial. As time passed, as my body grew, as I began to look less multiethnic and simply black, and as the consequences of that appearance began to affect me, I couldn't help but wonder what it was that Obama had navigated, was navigating in his life, both as leader of a country with such an unavoidably racist and painful history, and as a man of color. Even with his own biracial makeup, the verdict had already been passed by almost everyone: Barack Obama was simply black, and, as much as many, including himself, may have tried to downplay that at times, there was no getting around it.

I HAD MY first racially charged encounter with the police a couple of years after the rally. Though there are occurrences that could be chalked up to being in the wrong place at the wrong time, this wasn't one of them.

One day, on my way to class at the CSN Henderson campus, driving my then-girlfriend's car as she sat in the passenger seat, an NHP vehicle pulled into the lane behind us. There's a paranoia that comes with driving while black; it's been well-documented many times over. You're hyper aware of your speedometer, of your turn-signal usage, of where your hands are, of what an undercover police vehicle looks like. At the time, I didn't yet have that paranoia.

The navy-blue Ford Explorer flashed its lights and turned on its sirens, the driver pushing in dangerously close to our rear bumper. I pulled into the emergency lane, parked, and checked the side mirror. The officer stepped out of his vehicle, one hand on his pistol as he yelled at me to come out with my hands above my head. This was already steps above what I had expected. I assumed I was

speeding, maybe had a broken taillight. I was nervous, not about any wrongdoing, but about the fact that I was tall and, unlike most of my life before that moment when I had never had to worry about it, that I wasn't white.

As I stepped out, my hands raised, the officer took a step back, looking me up and down before telling me to put my hands on the trunk, legs spread. My arms were pulled behind my back, a pair of hard metal cuffs fitted around my wrists as I was asked if there were any weapons in the car or on my person. I nearly laughed as I replied no; I was in flip flops and shorts. I saw my girlfriend staring from the passenger seat. I was on the verge of tears.

Minutes passed. I was told to sit on the hood of the car, though I couldn't bring myself to put my full weight down. When a second patrol car came, and the arresting officer went to talk to my girlfriend, the difference in interactions was stark. He seemed almost bored when before he was jittery, radioing for support while staying uncomfortably close. It may have been because my girlfriend was white that she was being treated so civilly, but, even in that situation, I doubt it. After my innocence was assured, they let us go.

A man in a car of the same model and color as my girlfriend's had been driving recklessly on the highway. At one point, he waved a gun at the person who called the police.

No apologies were given as they uncuffed me. The man they were looking for was driving alone. He was also white.

SINCE THAT INCIDENT, I have had numerous encounters with the police, all of them trivial and pointless: stopped on my way home from a friend's and questioned about my whereabouts; stopped on the way to school and questioned about the contents of my car; stopped for a broken taillight that wasn't broken.

The latest happened in February. I was standing on the pedestrian bridge connecting The Cosmopolitan to CityCenter. Three yellow-shirted Metro bike cops had gathered at the end of the bridge, putting their heads together and pointing at me before coming over. Surrounding me on all sides, one of the officers said some tourists had accused me of inviting them to "have a good time." Needless to say, no one had approached the officers; I had been watching them well before they approached. Compared to my first police encounter, this one left me irritated. Most cops wouldn't have deigned to come up with an excuse at all; this one was just unimaginative.

When I tell my father about these things, he becomes practical. He asks if I write down badge numbers, if I was told to consent to a search even though I'm not legally required to. On some occasions, he acquiesces to the realities we both face as black men. He's also a cop. But being a member of that club doesn't guarantee safety or respect.

It would seem that only when becoming president of this country does a black individual find him or herself protected. Even then, it's not out of a common understanding or implementation of the law; it's because the president is an asset and a leader.

How strange it must have been to know that for eight years, the same forces that watched over you and your family were terrorizing and crushing the lives of those who shared the same skin as you, were even darker than you, were ultimately helpless, unlike you.

I wasn't ready to articulate that notion in August of 2012. Being black, among other things, is an acknowledgment and celebration of culture and community, and of survival. It is also a struggle with the notion that the exceptional among us tend to be just that, isolated and taken as outliers. You shouldn't have to be president to receive fair, civil protection under the law. However, in this country and, yes, in this city, at least for now, being black is not something incidental. To many it is seen as a choice, and an unfortunate one at that.

ILLUSTRATION: BRENT HOLMES

2013

2013, AS I'LL DESCRIBE IT TO STRANGERS IN 2033

Starring overpaid DJs, vanishing vinyl, horny Millennials, and the decline of EDM

BY **DOUG ELFMAN**

I'M GOING TO answer, now, the journalism query I have fielded more often than any other entertainment intrigue on the Strip.

"Why do some Vegas DJs get paid half-a-million dollars a day to stand around in clubs and push buttons? I could do that."

To solve this old puzzle, let's Snapchat ourselves back to The Bronzer Age of Daytime Pool Clubbing, 2013.

It was a simpler time.

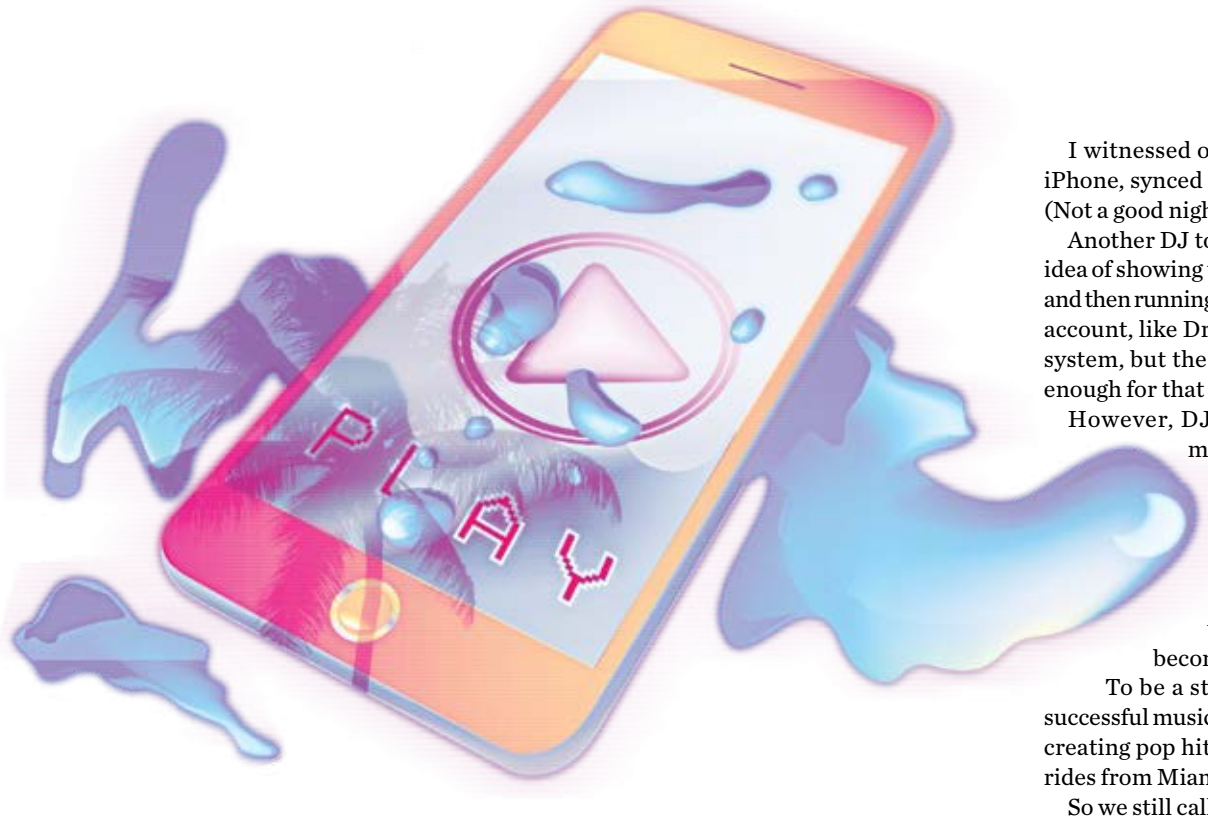
The economy was churning.

Barack Obama was in his second popular term as president.

Historians may regard this epoch as, "Before America Stepped on a Banana Peel and Died, Sad."

It was the final year nightclubs and dayclubs meant something profound about music, before Calvin Harris (the Hakkasan DJ) and Taylor Hicks (the paparazzi Rasputin) walked into a Nashville Whole Foods wearing matching outfits, thus puréeing artistic credibility into oblivion.

Anyhow, this is what it was like for your brain as you (A Professional News Person) walked past 7,000 young, glistening, bikini and board-shorts bodies at the luxurious hotel pool party known as Encore Beach Club, during a typical summer Saturday, while DJs pushed buttons.



Your brain:

"The women and men here are really into their bodies."

"Heyyy. ... Those are boobs."

"I feel fat. Aaand, now I'm hungry."

"Those are this year's *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit models in the VIP section."

"Hold on. The cocktail servers waiting on the *Sports Illustrated* models are more glamorous than the *Sports Illustrated* models. How do they find these servers?"

"Oh, that's right. They cast head-shot 'AUDITIONS' for cocktailers."

"I can't believe electronic music finally became popular. It always sounds like robots mating. Who doesn't love that?"

Those are approximations of my memories, not verbatim notes. Notice I'm not quoting conversations from Encore Beach Club. I'm not sure when was the last time you listened to two beautiful 22-year-old tourists in drunken heat flirting in swimwear. But the convo is pretty limited.

Encore Beach Club's raison d'être was (is) to be sexy pants. Great idea.

But this lascivious, spring break-ish club scene was very different than techno parties from the olden days.

Way back during the George H.W. Bush years, I had fallen in love with underground electronic music at a dance club in New Orleans. I put on a collared shirt and tie, passing the "rude boy" dress code. There was no air conditioning in the joint. The sweaty nihilism felt almost as liberating as slam dancing. (Nothing beats slam dancing.)

Then, in 1999, at an illegal warehouse rave in Atlanta, I stayed up many rapid heartbeats past sunup to take in the best dance-music DJ set I've ever heard, starring Paul van Dyk. He did it vinyl-style. Kids on the dance floor jumped on "E" (molly/ecstasy). Kids lying against the wall were floating through "heroin pills" and "special K" (ketamine, the horse tranquilizer).

The music was a dream so captivating it spawned a beautiful subgenre called "progressive trance," lulling us into a therapeutic wonderland of "happy-happy-joy-joy."

Drug lunatics aside, I yearned for electronic music to become popular on the radio and in mainstream clubs, so I could hear it everywhere.

But it wasn't until Barack Obama's first term that Las Vegas hotel clubs poured fountains of riches onto DJs to exploit the finally exploding music genre.

Consequently, for about five or six years here, we electronic music lovers swam through the same kind of heavenly pool of talent Nirvana fans experienced during the grunge wave.

Deadmau5. Skrillex. Justice. Armin van Buuren. Kaskade. Diplo. Zedd.

We hoped this butterfly would never flutter bye.

The music slowly worsened, though.

Vinyl disappeared. DJs began pre-programming set lists on thumb drives. Instead of flying the world with crates of records, they arrived in Vegas with a laptop, a USB flash drive full of formulaic remixes, and an itchy libido. (Restroom stories are as routine as swimming pool tales, wink-wink.)

I witnessed one DJ do his set from his iPhone, synced to the club sound system. (Not a good night.)

Another DJ told me he'd toyed with the idea of showing up in Vegas with zero gear, and then running his set list live from a cloud account, like Dropbox, through the club's system, but the cloud wasn't dependable enough for that yet.

However, DJs weren't just DJs, anymore. In the old days, DJs exclusively spun other people's music. They were curators. Now, DJs were writing, producing, and performing their own hits. They had become creators.

To be a star, a 2013 DJ had to be a successful musician in his or her own right, creating pop hits on laptops during plane rides from Miami to Tokyo.

So we still called them DJs.

But it's more, like, oh, imagine if Beatles producer George Martin had written all the Beatles songs himself, and then flown around the world every 12 hours to press play on existing Beatles albums in front of the prettiest party animals in existence.

That's what DJing morphed into, a touring opportunity for studio musicians.

In other words, when you watched studio producer David Guetta push buttons as a "DJ" at Encore Beach Club, you knew him from his songs stored on your Samsung Galaxy Note II.

Basically, Encore Beach Club (like all Vegas clubs) had a choice to make between the old marketing model and the new marketing model. Old: Pay the cast of *Jersey Shore* to walk around the VIP section in gold chains. New: Pay a producer to craft music for the whole club.

The DJ gambit worked. Vegas clubs were earning $100 million in a year. That's not equal to what one big whale would throw away in a gambling bender in a casino, but it's still a tidy fortune.

In 2013, if you were lucky, you could rent a not-private Encore Beach Club balcony space overlooking this festival of flesh for five grand a day.

If not: How about $20,000?

That was the price libidinous people paid (with corporate credit cards and bachelor party budgets) to cruise for fatless abs at 1 in the afternoon.

And there's the crux.

The greatest strength of DJs was serving as bait for hot bods and credit cards.

It was, for sure, a Millennial moment.

Millennial stereotypes: salacious, experiential, smart, upbeat revolutionaries.

If you want to get all college professorial about Millennials at dayclubs, you could posit:

1) Millennials (like flappers and hippies and disco ducks before them) survived great upheaval (911/Bush/war/Katrina/recession/iPhone/Twitter).

2) So, to repair the anxiety, they escaped into existential rabbit holes (fetishized hobbies, Marie Antoinette costume gatherings, Earth's-going-out-of-business parties).

No, they're not all like that. But maybe think of club Millennials as among the most gregariously lustful of their age.

So now you can see the DJ cliché in toto:

The selfies generation could go to clubs to share mating heat with other well-coiffed survivors of America.

But (and this is equally important) the club's famous DJ was social media wallpaper and mustn't overshadow club-goers' lust for each other.

That is the biggest crowd difference between DJ shows and rock shows.

Baby Boomers stared at Mick Jagger like a god.

Gen-Xers looked at Eddie Vedder like a leader.

Millennials took social videos of Kaskade for the first song, then sauntered off to pick up that cute person over there.

To paraphrase a comically bad old rock song, it was all about the nookie.

A postscript about DJs after the Vegas money flood:

Most clubs eventually pared down DJ expenditures. Hot bodies continued to go to clubs for meat marketing, of course. It worked out about as well, and proved cheaper.

On the sliding scale of "cool," DJs went from innovators (Reagan/Bush years) to early adoptors (Bill Clinton's time) to early majority (George W. Bush period) to late majority (Obama era) to laggards (today's hacky Chainsmokers, et al).

By 2017, even the best DJs chose to sell out to showbiz, writing unlistenable nursery rhyme pop drivel, just as previous music industry sell-outs squandered rock, rap, grunge, and country movements.

As it happens, the worst thing that can come of anyone is cleaving one's way to the top of the zeitgeist.

That's the Calvin Harris Rule: As soon as people earn what they're worth, they're no longer worth what they earn.

ILLUSTRATION: BRENT HOLMES

2014

DON'T MIND THE SUITCASE

The year I definitely committed to Vegas, no regrets

BY **HEIDI KYSER**

IT'S NOBODY'S FAULT that I moved to Las Vegas but my own. I don't blame Peter. I clearly remember thinking it through with him on the phone as I sat in my little red Honda outside Hollywood's Virgin Records in late 2003. I'd just bought Outkast's *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below* CD, and was listening to "I Love the Way You Move" while we talked. We mulled it over for a good 10 minutes. He told me there were several Trader Joe's and yoga studios in Las Vegas, and I was like, "Sold!"

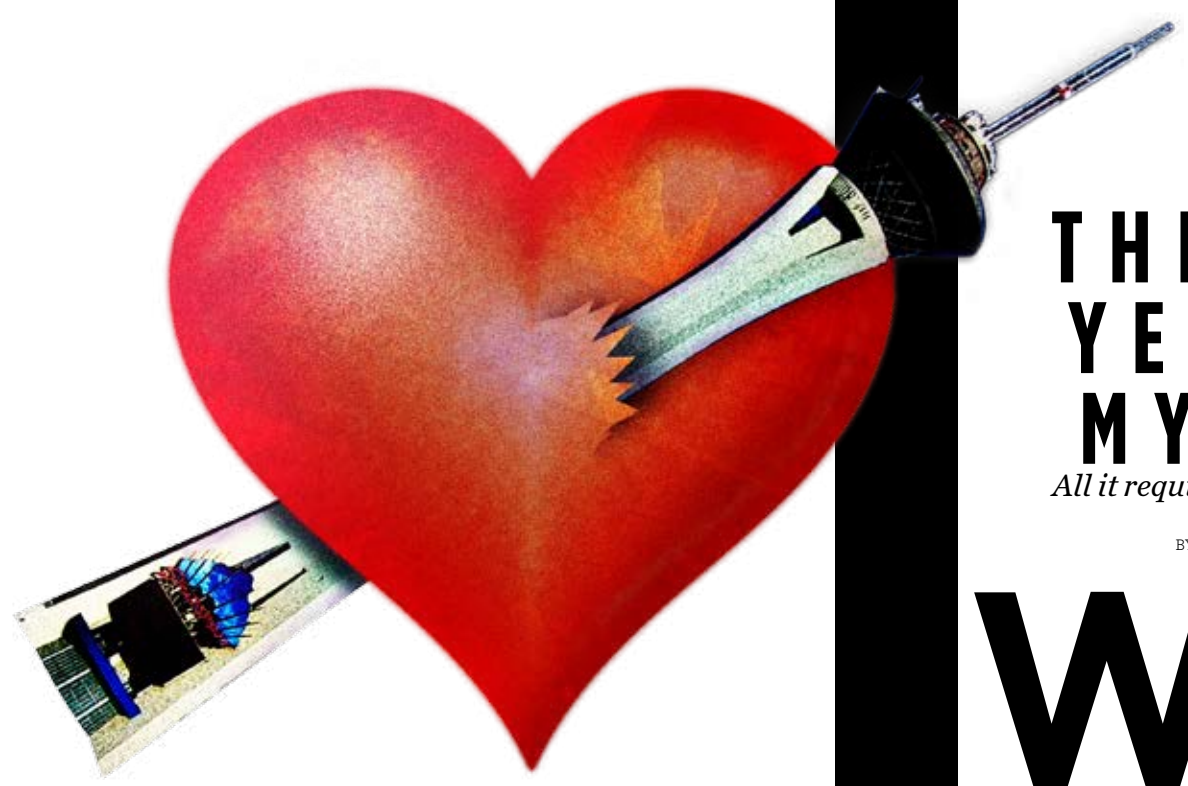
Then he asked about the kids — you know, if I wasn't afraid of moving in with him and his 6- and 9-year-old, leaving a carefree, childless lifestyle behind for a joint-custody insta-family, complete with ex-wife. Totally not a deal-breaker, I told him. I liked kids. I'd done some babysitting as a teenager. How hard could it be? I thought about how Peter looks like Paul Newman and Anderson Cooper rolled into one.

I'm not sorry I left L.A. in 2004, even though I make less money now in Vegas than I did then. I have the best writing job in town. Literally! And that whole "big fish, little pond" thing pays off in surprising ways. For instance, I was once invited to judge a Halloween pug-costume contest. And my housesitter asked me to autograph last month's copy of *Desert Companion*. She friended me on social media and shares my stories with all her Millennial friends. You can't buy that kind of publicity.

And let's face it: The cost of living is much lower here than in L.A. Thanks to the mortgage reorganization Peter and I had to do after the housing bubble burst, our monthly payment is $100 less than the rent I was paying on a much smaller house in West Hollywood. We just don't think about our dream home having lost half its value and still being underwater 10 years later. Or the recent closing of the nearest Trader Joe's. Utilities are so cheap!

Making friends in Las Vegas was kind of hard, but who among us hasn't struggled with that for her first five years in a new place? I was working at home, which made it especially hard, though I got to meet some mighty friendly contractors and delivery people. I remember one guy who hung around after fixing our kitchen sink to tell me about how he ended up in Vegas when his truck broke down near the Strip. He'd left Utah because of an ex-wife he owed money to and some outstanding warrants, as I recall. Thankfully, some great bars and restaurants have opened near our Downtown neighborhood now, so Peter and I get to know lots of cool people before they leave town.

One of the big payoffs of my decision to move here is the outdoor recreation. I like to tell my friends in Boston and



Pasadena about how, if I wanted to, I could get on my bike and ride 100 miles, almost entirely in dedicated bike lanes. They're so jealous, I don't ruin it for them by noting that I could only do that four months out of the year due to scorching heat and pummeling wind the rest of the time. Instead, I focus on the natural beauty of nearby sites like Red Rock, with its scenic loop — which definitely won't be ruined by traffic from the 5,000-home community that a developer is planning to build out there. It's his private property, and he should be allowed to do whatever he wants with it. As we say in Nevada, "Live and let live!"

Despite my obvious happiness, I think Peter was worried that, deep inside, I wished I was somewhere with an independent movie theater. Sure, I kept a rolling suitcase full of clothes and toiletries in the closet, but that was just a reminder of my days as a traveling reporter. And everybody here indulges in a little moving porn from time to time. I guarantee you can find "best places to live in the U.S." and "top 10 cities for jobs" in plenty of browser histories besides mine. I hear Salt Lake City is nice. Have you ever lived there? What was it like? (Text me later.)

Anyway, after 10 years of Sin City cohabitation, I felt it was time to show Peter that any vague, fleeting reservations I had about living here had nothing to do with him. *Let's get married*! I said. We decided to elope to Utah — but only because we knew this cool farm-to-table bed-and-breakfast in Boulder that just happened to have a Buddhist monk who could officiate, and a great backpacking trail nearby. It had nothing to do with how it would look, my starting a third marriage in a town famous for drive-through weddings and hassle-free annulments. Any local will tell you, it's critical to get out of town for a couple weeks every summer.

That was three years ago, and my devotion to this city is as strong as ever, as is Peter's. We're never jealous when friends and coworkers move to Austin or Charlotte. Sure, those places have social safety nets and abundant natural water resources, but do they have legalized pot and 24-hour access to liquor? Those things come in handy whenever you're tempted to worry about climate change or another recession. And as we like to say, "If we can make it here, we can certainly make it in Albuquerque or Tucson!" Not that we consider moving to those cities, of course. Why would we?

2015

THE BEST YEAR OF MY LIFE

All it required was leaving home

BY **KRISTY TOTTEN**

WHEN I SAID it, I was joking. I wasn't going to leave town every weekend, all summer long. I couldn't, or at least I didn't think I could.

But then I did. (This was in 2014, but bear with me.)

The decision was fueled by a slurry of factors: a job I didn't like, a living situation I didn't like, and a whole bunch of personal failures magnified by Las Vegas' unforgiving heat. So I left. I tolerated my job during the week, and hopped in my car each Friday, looking for a new escape.

I hiked Flagstaff's forests. I fought a skunk in Laughlin. I shuffled up the Virgin River in Zion until I could feel my hip flexors, a muscle I didn't know I had. I cliff-jumped into alpine lakes above Bishop. I boated in Utah wearing a fox onesie, and later saw a real one, my first, trotting up a path in Boulder. It was magical. I napped on a beach in San Diego, where my pallor revealed my tourist status more so than my sensible shoes. I found a secret swimming hole in



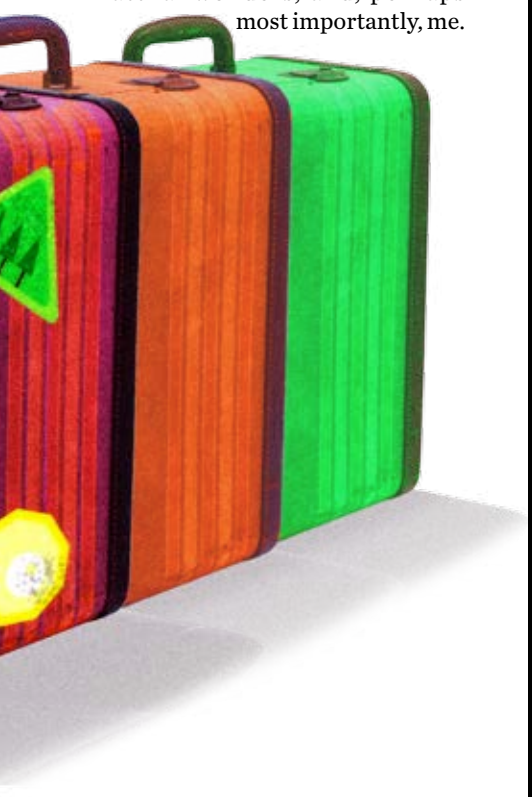
Sedona and rented a geodesic dome from two conspiracy theorists who had met in a Ron Paul chat room. (Because if anyone had the real intel on 9/11, it would be a former escort and an engineer from Arkansas.)

It was the most exciting summer of my life, and when it was over, I gradually began to realize something about the place I was determined to leave: It's not so bad. This was an important set-up for 2015, the best year of my life here in Las Vegas. That year, I found a job I loved, a home I loved and a person I love, all because I realized this is a city I love.

It's hot, yes, and I had changes to make, but overall, I was able to travel so often because it's an affordable home base. Work is easy to find here, rent is easy to make here, and the natural beauty is unrivaled, to say nothing of the restaurants.

And then there are the people. I always forget this part of the equation when I start to think Las Vegas is the worst place on Earth. The people are the best. They're pioneers and geniuses and scrappy adventurers with great stories to tell. They're weird, and accepting of outsiders, and they're my people.

I used to view Las Vegas as desolate, geographically isolated and depressing. It took getting away from home to realize Las Vegas is connected — to amazing day trips, stunning natural wonders, and, perhaps most importantly, me.



ILLUSTRATIONS: BRENT HOLMES

2016

HE RUBBED OFF ON ME

What I learned from a famous writer

BY **JOSHUA WOLF SHENK**

IN THE FALL of 2016, I hosted the writer William T. Vollmann at UNLV. He came for a literary conversation on the "spectacle of violence." I've seen writers wear a variety of outfits for these panel conversations. Some take up the role of the Distinguished Figure, and wear a dapper jacket and dress shirt, or a dress picked out with care. Others go for Cultural Casual, and wear something sensible but sharp. Vollmann wore sneakers, jeans, and a loose-fitting tan shirt, untucked, over a tee.

Vollmann writes, paints, and makes photographs in a former Mexican restaurant in downtown Sacramento. He has a phone line in his studio but no internet. He doesn't email or use the web, and he doesn't use credit cards. He has traveled the world, though, including an adventure in his early twenties when he went to join the mujahadin fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Though I've chosen a few select details pointing in this direction, it's hard to emphasize just how much Vollmann is his own person, how little regard he has for piety, how little concern he affects — and, though I can't know the man's soul, how little concern he really seems to feel — for others' conception of his work, his ideas, his person. I knew these things before Vollmann came to UNLV. I knew he had a thick FBI file, because he was once suspected as the Unabomber. I knew he brought a gun to a podium for a reading tour and shot blanks at the ceiling. I knew he has an alter ego, named Dolores, and made a book of self-portraits as her, in dresses and thick makeup. I knew he had spent copious time with skinheads and prostitutes.

And so it was strange thing to learn what I learned from him, which is what it feels like to really listen. At the event itself, and around a long, white-clothed table at Ferraro's afterward, and in the bright midnight lights of a casino diner with the other members of the panel, I watched Vollmann watch others, and sit still in a way that might be described as a kind of Zen slump. The next morning, we had chilaquiles and coffee, and the questions he asked me seemed like he had a kind of infrared gun sight set to focus on what's important to me. I told him secrets, and they came out like water from a tap, and I began to ask him questions — practice, I realized, for offering back what he was offering me: I asked him what I most wanted to know.

A few hours later, after a conference with graduate students at the BMI office, I felt a sensation which was, I realized, what curiosity feels like when you feel it in your chest.

It's strange how disparate qualities are actually the norm. The most generous are so often the most needy, the most courageous the most vulnerable, etc. These tensions are heightened in people we generally consider remarkable. But when you get to know someone, you see that it's not a contradiction but the operation of disparate gears toward some common end. We had Vollmann to town because of his work on violence, and yet I found him so tender, and we admired him for his literary voice, but he seemed so interested in listening. But I realized this was all part of the same project — the listening in order to speak of what's most truthful. "If possible," he said at our event, "we want to know something about the entire range of human experience. If you're trying to solve an equation, it's good to plug it in for zero and one and infinity — and then a couple of random numbers. And if it works for all of those, you might have some confidence that your solution might be right."

WHAT A LONG, STRANGE TRIP IT'S BEEN

We were going to do a ponderous retrospective of our best work. Boring! Instead, enjoy this Category 5 whirlwind of images from the 10 years of our existence that express DC's freewheeling, creative zeitgeist!



This is an October 2013 portrait of Rx Boiler Room mixologist Nathan Greene by Christopher Smith. Yes, the drink he's making in the glass skull is real. It's called the Smoked Whiskey & Cola, and uses actual smoke. (But not a real skull, phew.)



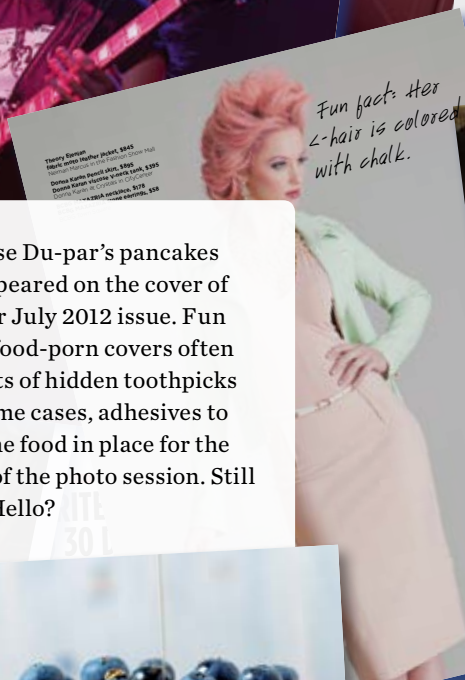
These Du-par's pancakes appeared on the cover of our July 2012 issue. Fun fact: Our food-porn covers often involve lots of hidden toothpicks and, in some cases, adhesives to scaffold the food in place for the duration of the photo session. Still hungry? Hello?



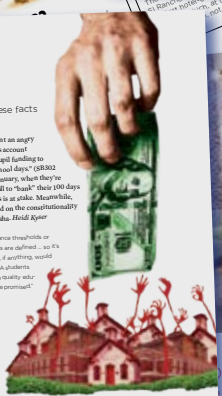




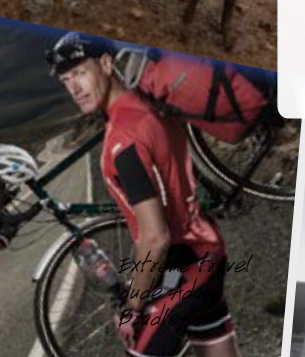






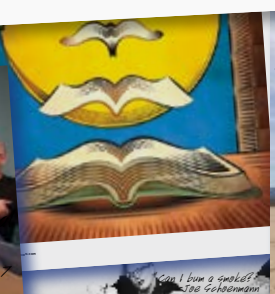








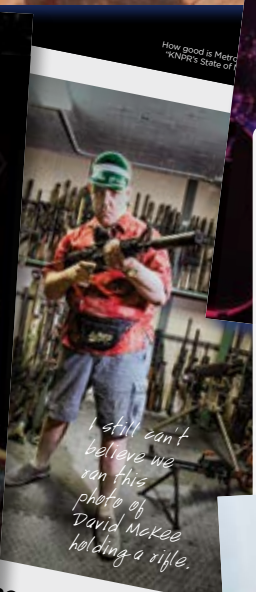













Brent, up against the wall
Here's a page from our April 2011 feature story, "15 Great Hikes (Practically) in Your Own Backyard." To this day, it's still one of the most-searched stories on our website. (If you get lost on the way to Muffin Ridge, sorry about the bad directions — call Andrew's cell!) But about that Frenchman Mountain photo: We had to get up, like, at 5 a.m. and hike an hour and a half up a calf-destroying incline to reach this vantage point! Hope you're happy!
Hidden Treasures
9. CLEAR LIGHT CAVE/ PORCELAIN WALL
MT. POTOSI
A CHALLENGING CLIMB AMID STONY SOLITUDE
10 Frenchman Mountain
EAST LAS VEGAS
THINK OF IT AS MOTHER NATURE'S STAIRMASTER
Scott doodles hella at every meeting.
Actress Breon Jen
Chris shoots tasty bisque. See how food porn is made?
[Bionic Man sound effect]
Talking with UNLV researchers for a story about their discovery of asbestos in the soil near Boulder City, for a story in the February 2015 issue, Staff Writer Heidi Kyser and Designer Brent Holmes felt a foreboding chill — Kyser bicycles in the area a lot. "And it certainly changed my mind about how harmless dust storms are," Holmes adds. Art Director Christopher Smith shot this portrait of the scientists.
Our long reach: Kingman, AZ
Logan Hendrickson welds his OWN FURNITURE.
Yes, his mustache is real.
Yumz!
Heidi thinks Andrew eating raw corn is weird.
Heidi over Gold Butte
Here's the cover of our September/October 2009 issue about the state of the arts scene, with gallerists Brett Sperry and Jennifer Cornthwaite, and artist Brian Porray. Fun fact: the gritty-looking Downtown warehouse space this was shot in (by Christopher Smith) is now La Comida. So, at least Downtown has more burritos, if not art!
NEVADA PUBLIC RADIO
desert COMPANION
2009
25 REASONS FOR ART OPTIMISM
GREAT IDEAS, BIG EFFORTS AND HOT ARTISTS
THE MOB MUSEUM: A SNEAK PREVIEW
THE LATE BLOOMERS
THE NEW DESIGN DEAL
Scott hanging out in Sedona, AZ
Our story about Dungeons & Dragons won a Maggie award. Nerds rule!

fall culture guide

ONES to WATCH

PORTRAITS BY
AARON MAYES

VISUAL ARTS

Through September 30

School yourself

They don't call it the Historic Fifth Street School for nothing — built in 1936, it was the valley's first permanent (archaic terminology alert!) "grammar school." Get a glimpse into history with this retrospective of photographs of one of the city's preservation victories. *(SD) Historic Fifth Street School Mayor's Gallery, 702-229-ARTS for appointment*

September 8

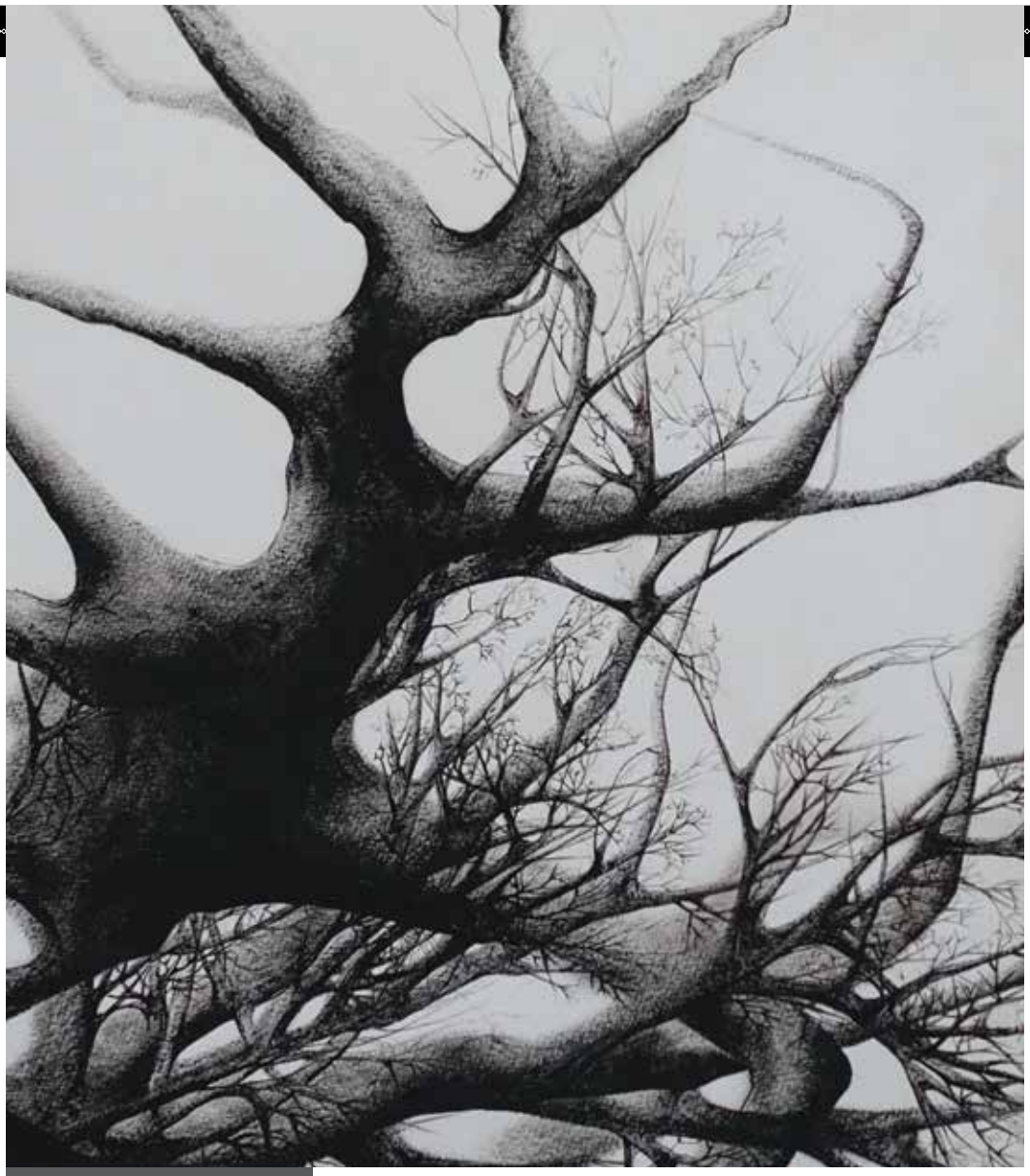
John Wayne has left the building

Prepare to have your clichéd mythologies of the cowboy expanded. Timed to National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations at CSN, this black-and-white photo exhibit — *Charro, Portrait of a Way of Life* by CSN photography prof Antonio Gomez — takes viewers into the lives and struggles of Mexican cowboys. *(SD) Opening reception September 22. Through October 28, CSN Fine Arts Gallery, csn.edu/artgallery*

September 11

Don't meddle with metal's mettle

Okay, that's a dumb bit of wordplay atop this item, but if you're reading this, it did its job, which is to bring your attention to this show of quirky metalwork by artist Kim McTaggart. Drawn to the "many fascinating and mysterious qualities that metals offer," McTaggart has bent silver, copper, brass, bronze, and even a bit of gold to whimsical storytelling uses. Delightful stuff. *(SD) Artist talk September 22, through November 3, Clark County Government Center Rotunda, 702-455-7340*



November 17

DREAMING TREES

In Dreamy Solitude is the title of this show by French artist Marianic Parra. That seems like an apt description of her gouache drawings of stark, denuded tree limbs, tangles of branches that manage to seem, yes, dreamy instead of purely melancholy. *(SD) Artist's reception January 25. Through January 27, CSN Artspace Gallery, csn.edu/artgallery*

September 14

Living clay lights

Fired clay is wonderfully versatile. You can use it to make dishes, vases, or the ever-popular teapot; but it can also take on forms more artistic, whimsical, decorative, or mysterious. Bet on members of the Nevada Clay Guild to run that gamut in this show. *(SD) Opening reception September 22. Through December 28, City Hall Grand Gallery, 702-229-ARTS*

September 15

Anthony Bondi three ways

Big show for a favorite son. While many Las Vegans are familiar with Anthony Bondi's collages of the 1990s,

which perfectly captured the city's wild pastiche zeitgeist, fewer are aware of his more recent, freewheeling photo work, and fewer still — basically, those who've attended Burning Man — have experienced the interactive pieces he did for that festival. For the first time in memory, he'll be able to present all three phases of his long, creative career. Worth the trip out West Sahara. *(SD) Through November 11, Sahara West Library, lvccld.org*

{ *September 22*

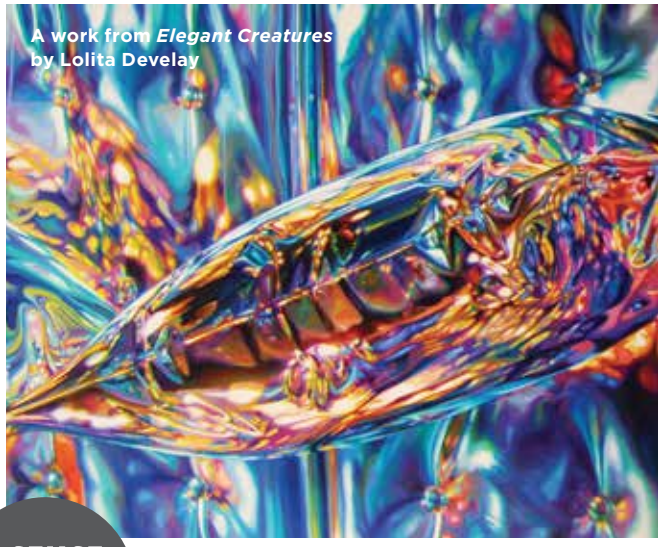
The culture of nature

As Martina Shenal's camera wends through areas of Japan, seeking out places where human activity mediates the experience of nature, it poses questions about the human-natural interaction. If humans are natural, are the things we create also natural, and how does that affect the way they impact the wild? The exhibit is titled *Secondary Nature* as a reference to culturally determined — as opposed to instinctive — responses to nature. *(SD) Artist's talk September 21. Through November 4, CSN Artspace Gallery, csn.edu/artgallery*

{ *September 28*

No SkyNet jokes, please

Instead, just take in the coolness of this band of little delta robots, programmed by kinetic artist Sarah Petkus and engineer Mark Koch to react to movements made by viewers. Groovy. *(SD) Through November 28, Enterprise Library gallery, lvccld.org*



A work from *Elegant Creatures* by Lolita Develay

I SENSE A THEME

As that philosophical collective known as Smash Mouth puts it, "Fashion is the passion of the with-it and hip." **Pause to let that sink in. It's also a strong preoccupation for these artists.**

September **16**

Whaaat? Fashion advertising isn't on the up-and-up?!

The painter and art critic Walter Robinson talks about his work, which includes paintings that deconstruct the layered truths and falsities of fashion advertising. *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

November **21**

The painting's so bright you gotta wear shades

Look at the razzle of those colors and the dazzle of those surfaces! Lotta retinal sizzle in artist Lolita Develay's chromatic style, which she uses to interrogate luxury fashion displays and the portal they provide into consumer desires. *(SD) Through February 4, Summerlin Library, lvccld.org*

{ *September 29*

Bring your high-waters

As midsummer events — flooding, deaths — made clear, rainfall can have serious consequences here. Years ago, valley officials responded with a vast network of flood-control basins — more than 100 of them — and concrete channels designed to help tame the flow. These facilities are the subject of *Peripheral Flood Control Structures of Las Vegas*, a show of photography and video, organized by the Center for Land Use Interpretation. *(SD) Through November 10, UNLV's Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery, free, unlv.edu*

{ *October 12*

This old (abandoned, signifying, idea-generating) house

A lecture by artist Jeana Eve Klein, who has taken as her subject the theme of *value* — how it's created, how it's sustained, or isn't. Visually, she creates embroidered pieces based on her photographed and painted images of abandoned houses. In *Past Perfect*, she's fascinated by the stubs of narrative that remain, and what they say about value: "I wonder when the first broken window was left unfixed," she says, "when the first roof tile wasn't replaced, and why the former inhabitants fled." *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 6p (reception), 7p lecture, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

{ *October 17*

We have met the curators, and they are us

Full disclosure: We're the *Desert Companion* referred to in the title *Desert Companion's Focus on Nevada Photo Showcase*. Some great photographers submitted excellent work in this iteration of our annual photo contest — a look at this exhibit will reassure you about the level of talent in Southern Nevada. *(SD) Through January 9, Centennial Hills Library gallery, free, lvccld.org*

{ *October 18*

A gallery filled with death!

Life, death, and art —three richly resonant topics— combine with a delightful mix of fun and morbidity in Mexican Day of the Dead festivities. This year's *Day of the Dead Juried Exhibition* will be juried by *Las Vegas Weekly* journalist Leslie Ventura. *(SD) Reception 6p Nov. 1; through Nov. 8, Winchester Cultural Center, free, 702-455-7340*



ONES *to* WATCH

VISUAL ARTIST

Natalie Delgado

A painter and sculptor whose work has animal magnetism

THERE ARE A LOT OF DEAD BIRDS outside of Natalie Delgado's classroom. She doesn't know why. But she does know they make an eerie, splattering sound when they fall from the sky. And she knows they inspire her.

It's a little morbid, admittedly, but her fascination is rooted in science: Delgado is a Las Vegas Academy art major turned Las Vegas Academy art teacher who briefly taught high school biology — and it screams from her work, whether it's a painting, a drawing, or a sculpture. Her subject matter is often dark and anatomical, part Audubon Society and part forensics lab. "Coming from a biology background, I find the whole system interesting," she says. "I like the repetition, the symmetry in nature. I like trying to replicate the feathers in clay then cast that in glass."

Under a microscope, her work is a mix of inspirations. "I really like biology. I really like systems. I like evolution," she says. "I'm trying to bridge my biology background, my art background, symmetry and pareidolia," the phenomenon of seeing familiar images where none exists, like spotting a face in a popcorn ceiling, or an elephant in the clouds.

She exercised that skill recently in "Valley of the Faces," a group show at the Winchester Cultural Center where artists interpreted images they found in the rocks of Basin and Range National Monument. Delgado settled on a human lung, and a bird stiffened by rigor mortis. Both were rendered in graphite. For Clark County's Zap! Project, she painted symmetrical desert hares, leaping into ethereal gardens. Now, she's creating work for a solo show.

Delgado is shy about her own work, but becomes animated when discussing her students — ninth and 10th graders whom she teaches to draw, paint, and sculpt with infuriating skill. "She's probably the best drawing and painting teacher in Nevada," says Sierra Slentz, a fellow artist and art teacher at Las Vegas Academy. "If you see the progress in incoming freshmen in just nine weeks, it's breathtaking, it's mind-blowing. No one is producing the level of high-quality students she is."

Delgado's teaching philosophy hinges on method and discipline, and each lesson builds upon the last. In one exercise, she prompts students to follow an imaginary man walking along the edge of a drinking glass and illustrate his path. In another assignment, blindfolded students feel their way around a mystery object, and translate the shape to paper.

"It helps them become one with their pencil," Delgado says. "It helps them to trust the pencil, that it'll guide them to making their best art."

She speaks from experience, after all. She was in their seat not too long ago, and clearly it's guided her. ***—Kristy Totten***

Lookback

September/October 2010: This issue marked our first "Ones to Watch" feature in which we profiled up-and-coming talents. Some of them are now local fixtures in the culture scene; others have moved on to exciting new horizons. Read these and more highlight culture stories from our 10 years at desertcompanion.vegas.



ONES *to* WATCH

VIDEOGRAPHER

Rachel Aston

Visual storyteller with an eye for character

WHEN RACHEL ASTON WAS AN UNDERgraduate at San Francisco State University, Roland De Wolk, her reporting professor, told her that she was going to do great things. Those words of encouragement turned out to be prophecy: Since then, the 28-year-old originally from Martinez, California, has won four Pacific Southwest Emmys and has been nominated for eight for the work she's done as a videographer at the *Review-Journal*.

In 2015, the paper hired Aston fresh out of college because it wanted someone who could shoot photography and video. "I was really lucky that they hired me, because I didn't even intern at a daily before," Aston says. "They took a risk in taking me on."

Aston has a weekly series called *Vegas Stripped*. Her goal is to show the world that Vegas contains much more than just the Strip, that there is a city of people living here, and they have dreams and struggles. In "Brothers Are Radically Superb," Aston profiles a group of limb-contorting dancers on Fremont Street. One of the dancers tells her dancing keeps him from joining a gang. In "Gang Banging at 10, out at 13," she examines a young man's struggles to overcome a dark past and strive toward a better future. "I like covering people. I like finding the universal element that connects you to that person," she says.

Aston says her best profile so far is "Ella," which isn't a part of *Vegas Stripped*, but a part of a series about rural healthcare the *Review-Journal* is working on. The closing of the Nye Regional Medical Center in 2015 in Tonopah left Ella, who has a rare genetic disorder, without treatment, and her family can't afford to move because their business is there. Ella's mother, Acacia Hathaway, opens up in the interview, saying that she feels like she's a bad mom because of the circumstances preventing the family from moving closer to a different hospital. She's afraid her daughter is going to die. Aston still keeps in contact with Acacia and Ella.

Even with four Emmys under her belt, she wants to continue improving her craft and finding her style. "I definitely don't have one yet," Aston says.

Her mentor David Larson, from Early Light Media, describes her style as character-driven. "When you watch her films, she puts a lot focus on her character and their environments, showing you the struggles of the characters."

Larson is confident that Aston has the chops and the drive to one day shoot full feature-length documentaries. Aston, however, is into shorts right now — because her attention span is short, she says. "It would have to be an interesting topic to do something bigger." Her dream is to end up at noteworthy Brooklyn-based production company Blue Chalk Media, but she wants to stick around Vegas for a bit longer and continue to grow at the *Review-Journal*. "I definitely want to get better work done here," she says. "I feel like I'm just starting the kind of work I want to be doing." ***—Desiree Sheck***

October 24

This pixeled world

At first the premise of *Low Res* might sound too clever by half: paintings that examine pixilation. Har har — exploring a visual phenomenon primarily found in photography using a medium in which that phenomenon doesn't occur! Cute! But then you begin to imagine the creativity-spurring challenges the assignment presents, and you think maybe you have to see it. *(SD) Through January 16, Whitney Library gallery, free, lvccld.org*

October 24

Made you think!

For his talk, titled "Desert Cathedrals: Rhetorical Structures that Make America," artist Adam Bateman opens a wide aperture: American identity, manifest destiny, Mormon churches, utopian communities, and the Hoover Dam. Sounds wonderfully discursive, associative, and stimulating. See you there! *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

October 26

Jean manipulation

Brooklyn painter Wendy White presents a talk about her work, which playfully flits around the high-low dynamic by giving pop culture detritus — denim, sports logos — a high-art makeover. Says a critic for *The Guardian*, "I don't think there's anyone better than Wendy White." *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*



{ October 6

AND YOU THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T LAST

Big day for the Barrick Museum. Marking its 50th anniversary (as well as UNLV's 60th), the museum opens two new exhibitions, *Preservation* and *liminal*. A group show featuring boldfaced art-world names such as Max Hooper Schneider, Candice Lin, and German sound artist Moritz Fehr, *Preservation* explores themes of survival, an apt topic for Las Vegas. For *liminal*, the museum and curator Shelly Volsch look within, creating a show, from the Barrick's collection, about "the enigmatic territory between different modes of being." There will also be a tour of the show in sister facility the Donna Beam Fine Art, *Peripheral Flood Control Structures of Las Vegas*. Break out the (artisan) party hats! *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 5p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

{ November 9

Film at 11

Filmmaker Brigid McCaffrey discusses her work, which includes a portrait of a geologist who's spent years developing a deep, scientific intimacy with the Mojave Desert, and the enigmatic human and natural relationships along the shores of a reservoir. *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

{ November 10

Vinyl destination

Sound as art. Here's one example of a piece in Margaret Noble's *Resonating Objects* series. Discarded bits of field recordings and lectures that were recorded on vinyl are digitized into decontextualized sound bites that can be triggered by pushing buttons on a line of circuits. These sounds have been further depersonalized and reduced to a series of numerical descriptions, which are attached to the piece. Each describes, in some fashion, the identity of the person recorded, but which gets closer to the truth? *(SD) Artist talk November 9, through January 20, CSN Fine Arts Gallery, csn.edu/artgallery*

{ November 29

Never forget

AIDS is no longer a constant presence in the headlines, and in many cases modern medicine has prevented it from being an automatic death sentence. So, with our all-too-human tendency to move on from tragedy, it might seem as though we've put the disease behind us. That would be a mistake, as the AIDS Quilt reminds us; its ongoing tally of the toll AIDS has taken is a powerful antidote to our cultural amnesia. *(SD) Through December 12, West Charleston Library, lvccld.org*

{ November 30

If only there were recent developments to give this some topical urgency

Basin and Range comprises artistic visions and interpretations from the eponymous Nevada national monument — now under review, with an eye toward diminishment, by the Trump administration. Curated by Checko Salgado and Jerry Schefcik, it brings together some of the valley's top artists. *(SD) Through January 22, Windmill Library gallery, lvccld.org*

{ December 1

Hiya, playa!

Do Burning Man sculptures like "Big Rig Jig" and "Bliss Dance" retain their aura of art beyond the playa, or are they empty spectacle? Opinions vary. But we're pretty sure that if anyone can make art of Burning Man, it's Nancy Good. The pieces in *See, Touch, and Go Dream: The Burning Man Tapestries* — tapestries comprising manipulated photographs — promise to both document the festival and perform the functions of art. *(SD) Through January 1, Winchester Cultural Center gallery, free, 702-455-7340*

{ November 17

TAKES YOU OUT OF YOUR BUSY DAY

You're plodding through the Clark County Government Center in the midst of some banal interaction with civic bureaucracy — or maybe you work for the banal civic bureaucracy — when, in the building's vast, echoing rotunda, you encounter something weird. Three house-like structures, featuring mirrors and plexi, that create a large-scale kaleidoscopic effect. Look, you can rotate pieces of it to change the effect! How fun! If you wind up spending a few enjoyable minutes doing that — living in the moment — artist Holly Rae Vaughn will be pleased. *(SD) Artist's reception December 14. Through January 19, Clark County Government Center Rotunda, 702-455-7340*



FOOD, FESTIVALS & FAMILY



{ *September* 15-17

Feel the kefi!

Kefi is a Greek term for a feeling of elation, joy, spirited happiness, maximum mojo. And the kefi will be raining down in gigantic, feta-like chunks at the 45th annual Las Vegas Greek Food Festival. Originally held at the Stardust hotel starting in 1973, the annual event has quickly grown into a joy-infused valley staple. Some of this year's musical talent includes The Olympians and Etho Ellas; and a diverse sampling of Greek delights, from tiropita to pastitsio, will fuel your turns on the dance floor. *(AK) Various times, St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, $7-$12, 5300 El Camino Road, lvgff.com*

{ *September* 23

Asian culture, in sound and sight

The diversity of Asian culture will be on full display at The Springs Preserve's Asian Heritage Celebration: lion dances and *taiko* performances, tea ceremonies, games, face-painting and henna tattoos, live cooking demonstrations, Chinese drum and Korean mask craft activities are just a sampling of what's on offer. *(AK) 10a-4p, The Springs Preserve, $6, springspreserve.org*

{ *September* 30

Pass the haggis!

Okay, yeah, went for the easy haggis joke. But, seriously, Scottish culture entails much more than kilts, bagpipes and sheep-guts pudding. It's also exhilarating highland games, awe-inspiring castles and whiskey. Come learn about the rich realm of Scottish culture and history at the 17th annual Something Scottish festival. *(AK) 11a, Windmill Library, 7060 W. Windmill Lane, free, 702-507-6030*

{ *October* 3-8

Cue the waterworks

An inspiring tale of home and hope based on a classic by Hans Christian Andersen, *The Little Mermaid* is enchanting enough on its own as a love story. Add in the costumes, dance and music that define the stage production, and you've got an utterly immersive experience for kids and adults alike. *(AK) Various times, Reynolds Hall in The Smith Center, $36 and up, thesmithcenter.com*

{ *October* 6-7

Taking flight

Now in its fourth year, the (cute capitalization alert!) RiSE festival sees hundreds of glowing paper lanterns take to the desert sky in an emotionally plangent display worthy of a Coldplay video. The event also features live music by local and national acts, and food and beverage vendors. *(AK) Various times, Mojave Desert, $69-$109, risefestival.com*

{ *October* 7

Oompah like nobody's watching

Oktoberfest, that heady whirl of beer, oompah music and lederhosen, returns to the Historic Fifth Street School for another year of festitude. This year's talent roster includes DummKopfs, the Alphorns, Hubert Gall, and the Las Vegas Bavarian Dancers. Also on tap: lots of traditional food, beer and activities for the kids. *(AK) 3-9p, Historic Fifth Street School, free, artslasvegas.org*

{ *October* 11

Dino-might!

To call Erth's Dinosaur Zoo a mere educational puppet show would be an understatement of paleolithic proportions. This interactive show's life-like, full-body models


Life is Beautiful 2016

I SENSE A THEME

Music festivals used to be about the sounds. Today, they're multi-faceted experiential circuses with culinary wizardry and high-concept art. Here are two marquee fall festivals.

{ *September* 9

A perfect mix of music, food and more

Mix 94.1's Bite of Las Vegas 2017 edition features a solid slate of musical artists — Neon Trees, LeAnne Rimes, Vertical Horizon, Eve 6, Lights, just to name a few — as well as, of course, great food from local purveyors and nationally known names. *(AK) 11a-10p, Desert Breeze Park, $20-$80, mix941fm.cbslocal.com*

{ *September* 22-24

More Beautiful every year

The three-day festivalzilla that takes over a sizeable footprint of Downtown is already sold out of single-day, general admission tickets, so if you're feeling the VIPness, as of this writing, there's still a chance to nab some of those tickets. Some of this year's marquee names: Gorillaz, Muse, Lorde, and Blink-182. And, of course, more art and food than you can shake an RFID-chipped wristband at. *(AK) Various times, Downtown Las Vegas, $655-$2,495, lifeisbeautiful.com*

from T-Rex to triceratops — designed and operated by experts — offer kids and adults alike a glimpse of how dinosaurs foraged, hunted and mated millions of years ago. Presented by Erth Visual & Physical of Sydney, Australia, the show promises to be an edutainoramic dino-tastic blast from the past. *(AK) 6:30p, Reynolds Hall in The Smith Center, $14.95-$75, thesmithcenter.com*

{ *October* 13-29

A spirited time at the Springs Preserve

The Springs Preserve, that cheerful interactive monument to environmental awareness, gets its scary on every October with the Haunted Harvest. Featuring trick-or-treat stations, carnival games, circus activities, a petting zoo, crafts, live entertainment, and much more, this harvest delivers a bumper crop of fun for the kids. *(AK) Oct. 13-15, 20-22, 27-29, 5p, Springs Preserve, $4 members, $8 nonmembers, springspreserve.org*

{ *October* 21

Brew ha ha

Beer has come a long way. Once upon a time, it was liquid bread for monks. Then it became something that people really into sports would drink in great quantities to quell the howling spiritual void inside. Today, it's a hipster culinary realm unto itself, with as many types and varieties as there are affectedly stylish porkpie hats. This year's Downtown Brew Festival will feature more than 70 breweries and 200 craft beers, as well as culinary artists and live music acts. *(AK) 5-9p, Clark County Government Center Amphitheater, $35-$75, downtownbrewfestival.com*

{ *October* 21

Pass the face paint!

The Summerlin Library Fall Festival has quickly become a centerpiece seasonal event of the community, and this year's roster of events and attractions are worthy of the tradition. There'll be great food to eat, music to dance to, pumpkins to decorate, faces to paint, books to buy, balloon artists to delight in, and mimes to subtly avoid. *(AK) 10a, Summerlin Library, 1771 Inner Circle Drive, 702-507-3860*

{ *October* 28

That skull is suh-weet!

Literally. At this Sugar Skull Workshop (dibs — my next band name!) celebrating Hispanic culture and heritage, kids will learn about the Mexican tradition of sugar skulls, and color and decorate a sugar skull to take home just in time for the "Dias de los Muertos" Mexican holiday. The process is messy (read: fun!), so dress the tykes accordingly. *(AK) 1-3p, Charleston Heights Arts Center, 800 S. Brush St., free, artslasvegas.org*

{ *November* 3-5

A day of the dead to remember

It's always good to take time to remember friends and family members who have passed on, and that's what "Day of the Dead," a 3,000-year-old Hispanic celebration, is about. But we're not talking mopey, morose, dolorous remembrance; we're talking spirited and sanguine recollection. This festival at The Springs Preserve will feature live theater and dance performances, altars, mariachis, face painting, sugar skull decorating and an art exhibition. Bonus coolness: One of the highlights is the altars that Las Vegas residents, community groups and artists create to honor deceased relatives. Participants decorate the altars with photographs, burning candles and incense, and display favorite foods of their loved ones. Irreverent

poems, music and dance ensure that these remembrances elicit smiles. *(AK) 4p, Springs Preserve, $6-$10, springspreserve.org*

{ *November 12-January 7*

Children bringing change

What can a child do to help change the world? More than you think. In "The Power of Children: Making a Difference" exhibit at The Springs Preserve, kids can explore the stories of three amazing children: Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges and Ryan White. Anne Frank's courage and eloquence in the face of evil made her diary a 20th-century classic; activist Ruby Bridges braved the epicenter of the New Orleans school desegregation crisis in 1960; Ryan White became the face of childhood HIV/AIDS as he fought ignorance and discrimination that kept him from attending school. *(AK) 9a-5p, Springs Preserve, free for members, general admission otherwise, springspreserve.org*

{ *December 30*

Hopes, culture, values — and a great party

The theme of this year's Kwanzaa celebration is "Affirming African Values, Culture and Community with Purpose," with the highlight being a Boys and Girls Rites of Passage graduation ceremony. Think of it as a great holiday party with a crunchy community spirit-affirming center. *(AK) 2-4:30p, West Las Vegas Library Theatre, 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd., free, artslasvegas.org*

LITERATURE AND IDEAS

{ *September 5*

There's a man with a gun over there

There are two elements of American life you can't discuss without talking about guns: the Warren Zevon songbook, and the story of crime and law enforcement. Since there's no Warren Zevon Museum in Las Vegas, the Mob Museum will pick up the slack. Ashley Hlebinsky, curator with the Cody Firearms Museum at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming, will discuss and demonstrate specific firearms associated with mobsters and cops, from the Tommy gun to Tony Spilotro's .22 pistol. This is your chance to see some of the weapons in the museum's collection. *(SD) Mob Museum, 7p, $20, themobmuseum.org*


Tod Goldberg

I SENSE A THEME

It's no mystery why crime writers set their tales in Vegas. Where better to whack someone than a city famous for sin, spectacle, and a risk mentality?

October 20

Rabbi Glock, I presume?

Tod Goldberg, author of the best-seller *Gangsterland* (recently optioned for TV), will sign copies of his highly anticipated follow-up, *Gangster Nation*, which continues the violent misadventures of a Chicago mob hitman hiding out in Vegas, pretending to be a rabbi. In addition to being a fine writer, Goldberg is a hoot in person. *(SD) Mob Museum, 3p, $20, themob-museum.org*

November 7

Murder most Megan

Local novelist Megan Edwards, who launched her Copper Black mystery series this year with *Getting Off on Frank Sinatra*, is already back with her follow-up, the prequel *Full Service Blonde*. Prostitution, long-distance romance, the homeless, Christmas — Copper's got a lot of balls in the air. Edwards reads and signs. *(SD) The Writer's Block, 7p, free, thewritersblock.org*

{ *September 8*

The words are coming from inside the city!

The Writer's Block bookstore hosts its monthly *Expo* reading series, in which selected writers read for five minutes apiece. It's briskly paced, enjoyable, and lets you sample the variety of literary industry taking place in Las Vegas. Future dates: October 13, November 10. *(SD) The Writer's Block, 7p, free, thewritersblock.org*

{ *September 13*

Literary infusion

It's always a good thing when good writers are introduced into the city's bloodstream, even temporarily, which is why we're fans of the Black Mountain Institute's fellowships. The latest: Lesley Hazleton, author of *Agnostic: A Spirited Manifesto* ("vital, mischievous," says *The New York Times*), and Tayari Jones, whose forthcoming novel *An American Marriage* continues her revitalizing of Southern literary traditions. *(SD) UNLV's Rogers Literature & Law building room 101, 6:30p, free, blackmountaininstitute.org*

{ *September 15*

Hey, everyone, Olivia's back!

How worthy of notice is Olivia Clare's new volume of short stories, *Disasters in the*



ONES *to* WATCH

AUTHOR

Noah Cicero

Deadpan prince of the indie-lit underground

Of *The Collected Works of Noah Cicero Vol. 1*, Amazon reviewer "mungscum" writes, "i already feel better about my life. i feel like i am going in a good direction, or at least a better direction than i was previously to purchasing the book." Keyword: purchasing. Mungscum had barely ordered the book, much less received it, much less read it. But he/she had a good feeling about it. That's not atypical of the kind of ardor Cicero's writing — "think Hemingway meets Joe Strummer in a cubicle full of cat calendars," writes another Amazon reviewer, not necessarily helpfully — inspires among a certain strata of indie-lit readers.

Here he is in a northwest valley Starbucks, the man himself, vibing neither Hemingway nor Strummer. We want to describe him as a sweet guy, because that's how he comes off: alert, guileless, not attention-needy in the slightest. Ask about his fame — of which he's accrued a modest measure — and he demurs. "I'll never win a National Book Award," he says, not begrudgingly. *That's* his idea of fame. He's just a guy who writes, who *can't stop* writing — he dictated poems into his iPhone on the drive to this interview. Beginning with 2003's *The Human War*, he's put out 10 books so far, story collections, novels, best-of anthologies, a book of poetry, all on indie presses you've probably never heard of.

As it happens, Hemingway's fussily sculpted style may not be the exactly right reference point for Cicero's minimalism. There's a more loose-limbed, uncalculated quality to Cicero's stories of anomie and dissolution, most often set in Youngstown, Ohio, where he grew up. "Youngstown is considered the saddest place in America," he says. "There was so much violence, the parents were on drugs, there was no hope. It all went into the writing."

What emerged was a kind of craphole vérité, his characters adrift in the region's spiritual and economic limbo, dribbling away their mundane lives in empty motion and rote sex. A character in *Burning Babies* speaks for many of Cicero's people: "To stare into space at Denny's is just demoralizing."

There's a #nofilter directness to Cicero's writing, an eschewing of the narrative artifice and showy erudition of contemporary literature — there's nothing in his work you'd call "Updikean." In the mid-2000s, this lo-fi realness placed him alongside similar writers, such as Tao Lin and Sam Pink, in a movement forming in the many online venues and tiny presses festering beyond the literary industrial complex, as typified by swank New York publishers and the Iowa Writer's Workshop.

"We were on the outside," he says. "We were all kind of deadpan people, very sarcastic, very ironic. We loved Samuel Beckett, and old French modernist books where everything is dying and industrialism is killing everyone. We didn't want to write like David Foster Wallace or Pynchon, we didn't want to write the Iowa kind of literature, so it made us go a certain direction. We had that in common, and we found a bunch of kids." Turns out there are a lot of places as sad as Youngtown.

If writing hasn't made him Pynchon money — he's still published by small presses, whereas Lin and others have mainstream publishers now — Cicero did see *The Human War* turned into a 2011 indie film, and he's regularly whisked off to overseas book festivals or literary residencies.

Las Vegan Kris Saknussemm, author of *Private Midnight*, *Zanesville*, and other novels, is a fan. "I enjoy the squalor and the hopelessness, which is somehow cheering," he says. "Cicero can make Youngstown, Ohio, seem like a spiritual condition."

But for how much longer? He's been here four years, arriving from Ohio by way of a teaching stint in South Korea. When he's not writing at Starbucks or having a beer with friends at Atomic Liquors, he supports himself as a paralegal. He's got a couple books coming out soon, a metaphysical treatise and a second book of poetry. the Midwest is behind him, he hasn't talked to family in years — he loved writing in part because his father didn't understand it well enough to criticize — and he's thinking it's time to move on from Youngstown. Thirty-six now, "I don't want to be writing for 22-year-olds forever," he says. But he feels like he's going in a good direction.

—Scott Dickensheets

POET

Vogue Robinson

An eloquent ambassador aiming to unite the poetry community



ONES *to* WATCH

On a recent Saturday afternoon at the West Charleston Library, Vogue Robinson is reading "For Eryn," a poem she wrote for a friend's daughter's 16th birthday: "Apparently, the manual on being a woman / Reads like the back of a shampoo bottle ..." Her face tightens with emotion and she begins counting on her fingers: "Step 1: Find a man / Step 2: Keep 'em / Step 3: Make babies." She points to the sky and swings her hips, encouraging the young woman to embrace instead a broader definition of happiness and womanhood: "Let the moon be your DJ / The stars your disco lights / And dance to the crashing of waves."

Robinson is reading at the book release event for *Clark: Poetry from Clark County, Nevada*, an anthology showcasing 95 local poets. She's not just a contributor. She helped edit the book and serves as host of today's event. Robinson is used to playing multiple roles. Since moving from San Diego to Las Vegas four years ago, she has not only emerged as a major Vegas spoken-word artist, she's also helped to bridge the gap between the written, spoken, and slam poetry communities. She serves as the executive director of Poetry Promise Inc., co-organizes the Battle Born Poetry Slam, and recently signed on to be a teaching artist with the Nevada Arts Council. Most recently, she was named the second Clark County Poet Laureate.

"Her impulse for truth and emotional honesty is unrivaled," says poet Bruce Isaacson. He's glad Robinson took on editing the anthology, a project that began when he was county poet laureate. "She saw enough value in it to organize all these readings. She didn't have to do that."

Robinson quotes U.K. Poet Laureate Adrian Mitchell when talking about her mission to get poetry to as many spaces as possible: "Most people ignore poetry because most poetry ignores most people." Robinson explains: "There is a lot of older poetry from old dead white men who were mostly thinking about themselves." Alternatively, she seeks inspiration from African and Hawaiian oral traditions that bring people together. "When you (write and perform) from the perspective of storytelling, it gives it another meaning and makes it accessible. It shows that you are thinking about your reader."

As the county's second poet laureate, Robinson aspires to take poetry to all corners of the valley, including local schools, retirement homes, and often-overlooked North Las Vegas. She's also organizing Vegas' first 24-hour poetry event, slated for 2018, which will include competitions, trivia, and open mics, as well as workshops helping women submit work to poetry journals and apply for grants.

And, amazingly, amid all this, Robinson finds time to write. She's currently at work on a follow-up to her 2013 collection of poems, *Vogue 3:16*. It will explore storytelling and faith through the theme of fairy tales. Unlike a princess, however, Robinson is actively crafting her own story.

"I think I'm finally rooted," she says about the home she's built and the future she continues to shape in Las Vegas. "In a place with very little water, I decided to take root." ***—Bruce Gil***

First World? *The New York Times* busted out a Sunday review of it not long ago, and it was a good one. Now's your chance to see why. Plus, Clare used to live around here and deserves a hearty welcome back. *(SD) The Writer's Block, 7p, free, thewritersblock.org*

{ *September 18*

We the (sigh) people

Few things in American life are more contested than our Constitution — a sacred document to some, to others a shield or club with which to engage one's opponents, and to others still, an enshrined hypocrisy — "ain't no Constitution in Ferguson," says an African-American man in the new documentary *Whose Streets?* How this document came to be is George William Van Cleve's subject in his University Forum lecture, "The Tumultuous Road to the Constitution." A professor in law and history at Seattle University's School of Law, he ought to know. *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

{ *September 28*

Bzzz (yes, yes!) bzzz (yes, yes!) bzzz (oooh, YES!)

UNLV women's studies professor Lynn Comella discusses her new book *Vibrator Nation*, about how pioneering women entrepreneurs changed the paradigm of women's sexual empowerment. *(SD) The Writer's Block, 7p, free, thewritersblock.org*

{ October 2

When the man comes around

➤➤ However irascible Dave Hickey may be as an art critic, this blurb yields to no one in its respect for Hickey as a writer. A contemporary master of the essay form in such books as *Air Guitar*, *Pirates and Farmers*, and the forthcoming (in November) *Perfect Wave*, his prose manages to be dense with ideas yet musically nimble in expression, and frequently quite funny. So when he gives a lecture on writing, as he will this night, it's worth braving UNLV's crappy parking situation to hear. *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

{ October 5

If only there were recent developments to give this some topical urgency

➤➤ Cybercrime. Who hasn't fallen victim to it in one way or another? In this *Courtroom Conversation*, a panel of experts will discuss the global scope and monstrous impact of online crime, from identity theft and malware to gambling and hacking. They'll also address measures that can be taken to curtail it. *(SD) Mob Museum, 7p, $25, themobmuseum.org*

{ October 10

Somewhere, a Pixar executive turns to another and says, "This could work ..."

➤➤ A wolf eats a mouse and a duck — who, smartly, decide to live merrily in the wolf's belly. What sounds like a parable for maintaining sanity in modern America is actually the premise of kids' book *The Wolf, the Duck, and The Mouse*, the latest collabo between Mac Barnett and Caldecott medalist Jon Klassen. *(SD) Venue and time to be announced, thewritersblock.org*

{ October 10

One to watch

➤➤ The Amazon page for Lesley Nneka Arimah's debut collection *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* features nearly a book's worth of praiseworthy blurbs. No wonder. One story is about a woman who wants a child so much that she weaves one out of hair; the title story is set "in a world ravaged by flood and riven by class." See what the fuss is about. *(SD) UNLV's Rogers Literature & Law building, 7p, free, blackmountaininstitute.org*

{ October 14

We have nothing to fear but fear itself. Also spiders. And heights. And dentists. And guys wearing hockey masks in non-hockey contexts. And flying. And commitment. And airborne sharks. But mostly spiders.

➤➤ Welcome to StorySlam, in which ordinary Las Vegans are invited to the stage to share true stories from their lives, based on the theme "facing your fears." To get involved, email cgoble@lasvegasnevada.gov by September 9. Unless you're afraid of public speaking, that is. In which case, what better way to face your fear? *(SD) Charleston Heights Arts Center, 7p, $5 suggested admission, 702-229-ARTS*

{ October 19

The book on Vegas

➤➤ Launch event for Volume 8 of the Las Vegas Writes series, published annually in conjunction with the Las Vegas Book Festival. This year's anthology, *Back to Where You Once Belonged*, features 10 local writers contributing essays on the theme "the weight of the past on the present." Topics range from ancient petroglyphs to black culture to personal tragedies overcome. Full disclosure: The volume was edited by this guy —> *(SD) Clark County Library, 7p, free, lvccld.org*



{ October 6

MOSS GROWING

P Moss is a real-life Vegas character of the first rank, and in Jimmy Dot, raconteur hero of his new novel *Vegas Tabloid*, he's created a classic fictional Vegas character. Hear him read and talk about it. *(SD) The Writer's Block, 7p, free, thewritersblock.org*

{ October 20

Murder times four

➤➤ True-crime author Cathy Scott — whom long-timers will recall from her stint as a reporter at the *Las Vegas Sun*, as well as her books about Vegas-related mayhem — takes a look at four murders connected to Las Vegas: the mob's whacking of Fat Herbie Blitzstein; the shooting of Tupac Shakur; the kidnapping and homicide of local salsa queen Ginger Rios; and the execution-style death of Susan Berman, daughter of a Vegas mobster. Scott knows her stuff. *(SD) Mob Museum, 1p, $20, themobmuseum.org*

{ October 24

Seems kinda quaint now

➤➤ The Kennedy assassination is the big conspiracy of modern America, generating theory after theory of varying crackpottery. With declassified documents related to the event going public this year, the Mob Museum is gathering a pair of experts to debate one of the most enduring Kennedy-killing notions: that the mob was involved. Author Gus Russo will argue that Oswald acted alone, while author Dan Moldea will suggest that Jimmy Hoffa and organized crime was behind it. Maybe they'll settle it once and for all. *(SD) Mob Museum, 7p, $20, themobmuseum.org*

{October 24

Area man peddles book

But when that area man is Brian Rouff, it's worth a look. His new novel, *The House Always Wins*, sounds like a grab-bag of delights: a love story, a ghost story, a mystery, and more. Plus, he's a heck of an engaging guy in person. *(SD) Clark County Library, 7p, free, lvccld.org*

{October 30

If only there were recent developments to give this some topical urgency

Tonight's talk, by Brown University professor Sergei Nikitich Khrushchev, is titled, "The Significance of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On." *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

{November 4

Cultural exchange

We hate to sound like a post-Trump togetherness meme, but there is a tremendous upside to learning about other cultures — particularly Native American. Well, here's your chance. Cree medicine man Sean Wei Mah and Ann Vannoy share such aspects of native life as connection with nature, spirit animals, and the concept of "walking in balance." You gotta go if you want to know. *(SD) Centennial Hills Library (11/4) and Summerlin Library (11/12), 2p both days, free, lvccld.org*


Sharon Draper


Walter Kirn

{October 21

ONE BOOK FESTIVAL TO RULE THEM ALL

The Las Vegas Book Festival, where to start? It's bursting with significant names: Kevin Young, a major poet (and poetry editor of *The New Yorker*); Daniel Handler, novelist and Lemony Snicket creator; important children's author Sharon M. Draper; *New York Times* book critic Dwight Garner; novelist and essayist Walter Kirn; romance writer Sylvia Day; *Washington Post* journalist Wesley Lowery; novelist Britt Bennett; and dozens more. It's bursting with significant themes: race and justice; writing in the age of Trump; LGBT youth; the future of journalism; plus plenty of genre writers, an overflowing raft of YA authors; fun; food, and more. Plus-plus, stay for the evening program at Inspire Theatre. Presented by the City of Las Vegas, the Las Vegas Clark County Library District, Black Mountain Institute, and Nevada Humanities. *(SD) Historic Fifth Street School, 10a, free, vegasvalleybookfestival.org*

{November 4

If only there were recent developments to give this some topical urgency

Barbara J. Risman, sociology professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, discourses thusly: "Where Will the Millennials Take Us? A New Generation Wrestles with the Gender Structure." Relevant, much? *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

{November 4

Nerdgasm!

When you have comic books, comic-book cosplay, comic-book workshops, plus all the trimmings — by which we mean face painting, food trucks, etc. — we have to be talking about the Vegas Valley Comic Book Festival. Now in its whopping 10th year! A full day of nerd-out fun with creators and fellow fans. *(SD) Clark County Library, 9:30a, free, lvccld.org*

{November 6

If only there were recent developments to give this some topical urgency

This lecture, by UNLV assistant professor of family medicine John Christiaan Bester, will tackle the question, "Should My Child Get a Measles Vaccination? Can't I Just Rely on Herd Immunity?" *(SD) UNLV's Barrick Museum, 7p, free, unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*

{November 17

Get out! (And hike, we mean.)

But first, equip yourself with knowledge by sitting in with Branch Whitney, author of *Hiking Las Vegas: The All-in-One Guide to Exploring Red Rock Canyon, Mt. Charleston, and Lake Mead. (SD) Rainbow Library, 3:30p, free, lvccld.org*

{December 4

Awesome times two

Black Mountain Institute recently revived the much-loved (in lit circles) magazine *The Believer* (tip: subscribe now at believermag.org), and it's under that magazine's aegis that the organization pairs two absolutely major contemporary novelists, Paul Beatty, who won the 2016 Man Booker Prize for *The Sellout*, and Viet Thanh Nguyen, who won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Sympathizer*. Topics include: satire, literature as political, and the other. Enter this onto your e-calendar now! *(SD) UNLV's Rando Hall, 7p, free, blackmountaininstitute.org*

MUSIC

September 8

Sonic shapeshifter

There's really no genre label that handily applies to guitar artist Kaki King. Her astounding virtuosity and voracious musical curiosity have steered her career on a winding path that's brushed against categories such as indie singer-songwriter, postmodern classical guitar, deconstructed bluegrass, tone poems and ambient experimental. "The guitar is a shapeshifter," King has said — a description perfectly suited to the artist as well as her instrument. *(AK) 7:30p, Historic Fifth Street School, $12.50-$25, 702-229-2787*

September 15

On the other side of the mic

Emely Lotfe is a TV personality and radio host who's often holding an interview mic at red-carpet events, but the Mexican musical artist is also a worthy subject as well: She herself is a versatile and accomplished singer. At this concert, Lotfe will sing songs that celebrate her Hispanic heritage, and discuss that rich heritage as well. *(AK) 7p, Whitney Library, free, 702-507-4010*

September 25

Wand magic

L.A.-based Wand's epic, operatically hooky wall-of-fuzz sound should play well at The Bunkhouse. Between the venue's potent



Taylor Davis

I SENSE A THEME

Highbrow, lowbrow, popular, traditional — such distinctions don't apply in our mashup-crazed moment. These artists blend metal, pop, rock and classical.

September 29

Pop goes the violin

Taylor Davis is a violin virtuoso and classical music sensation who knows how to connect with the YouTube generation: For instance, by dressing up a Sith lord and ripping out a searing rendition of Star War's "The Imperial March" to millions of views. Davis, a composer and self-professed nerd, melds her talent with a hearty appreciation of pop culture to make violin strong with The Force again. *(AK) 7:30p, UNLV's Artemus Ham Hall, $20-$50, unlv.edu/pac*

October 1

Enter Sandman, adagio

You may know Apocalyptica as "Hey, isn't that the band that does Metallica covers with cellos?," but they're so much more than that. Writing and performing original music since 1998, the Helsinki-based band has since defined and occupied a niche of its own, and — bonus — now features Vegas' favorite son Franky Perez as their lead singer. On this tour, they'll focus on work from their breakout 1996 debut, Plays Metallica By Four Cellos. *(AK) 8p, The Joint at the Hard Rock, $33-$85, hardrockhotel.com*

December 3

Classic rock gets classically rocked

The sweep and majesty of iconic rock hits of Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Queen and more get a symphonic fuel injection at "Symphonic Rockshow Presents: Roll Over, Beethoven." Led by local singer/producer Brody Dolyniuk, a rock band backed by a classical symphony kicks some timeless tunes to 11. Devil horns encouraged early and often. *(AK) 7p, Reynolds Hall in The Smith Center, $29-$75, the smithcenter.com*



ONES *to* WATCH

BAND

Lockout Station

Meticulous prog jazz that's all brains — and beauty

In a town that birthed The Killers, launched a Britney Spears residency, and helped enshrine the nightclub DJ as a serious class of entertainer, Lockout Station comes out of left field. "I called it Lockout Station because I felt like this is locked out of everything," says guitarist and songwriter Dirk Kleutgens. "'Lockout' because I felt like locked out of any kind of genre, any kind of style, any cliché. 'Station'? I'm not sure." He laughs.

The typical genre labels certainly don't apply. The trio plays meticulous, disciplined, liquid improv post-bop couch jams. That's the best I've got, anyway. It's a good sign when even the bandleader puzzles over how to describe their sound. "Most music styles are based on a groove. You have jazz and swing, reggae, rock, pop — everything has a certain beat to it," Kleutgens says. "We don't. In one song, we have 10 of those. In different time signatures. That's why it's kind of hard to say. I think it's just really improvised." He pauses. "But not really, because it's also structured. So it's kind of both. But in a way, it's jazz-based. But then again ..."

See? Which isn't to say Lockout Station's languorous underwater innerspace jazz is all brainy rigor at the cost of being fun or pleasurable. Consider a few tracks from their self-titled album from 2016, such as "7 Cs," a sort of slinking deconstructed theme song to an imaginary noir detective show, or "Questions Answered," in which Andrea D'Angelo's understated but aerobic kit work and Kleutgens' murmuring guitar carry on cocktail conversation while Dave Ostrem's bass nimbly holds the center.

"Dirk is composing music you can't find anywhere in the country, let alone this town," Ostrem says. "Or anywhere in the world, I should say."

Just as important as composition is execution. That's when Kleutgens' structured songwriting gives way to individual interpretation and expression within the group, something he encourages. As drummer D'Angelo explains it, there are some key "destination points" in every song, but the rest is very fluid and improvisational, as though each player is soloing — but with a shared melodic intent.

Their devotion to the band, which formed in 2015, is perhaps explained by the creative thirst that comes with the workaday musician's life. Ostrem and D'Angelo freelance around town with everyone from Clint Holmes to *The Rat Pack Is Back*; German-born Kleutgens is a sound engineer at *Zumanity*, but also has 26 solo albums under his belt and frequently tours Europe. In creative tension with their commercial gigs, playing in Lockout Station gives them an opportunity to pursue pure art and push the limits of technique. "For me," says drummer D'Angelo, "this is a great opportunity to be myself."

(Lockout Station performs Sept. 3 at the Sand Dollar Lounge, 3355 Spring Mountain Road, thesanddollarlv.com)
—Andrew Kiraly

sound system and intimate space, imagine a Pandora's box of ethereal arena garage-rock that never opens, but instead sucks you inside. *(AK) 8p, Bunkhouse Saloon, $10, bunkhousedowntown.com*

{ *September* 28

Pick it up, pick it up

Like all U.S. adults, you've no doubt played in a short-lived novelty ska band, and you look back upon those years with a mix of affection and embarrassment, and you half-wonder whether ska is still a thing. Yes, and then some! Mexico City's Panteon Rococo is one of the global ska movement's standardbearers, blending punk, funk, salsa and mestizo. Favoring solid grooves and woke lyrics over spazz and silliness, Panteon Rococo is what your ska band could have been if you hadn't written it off as a phase. Opening act: Raskahuele. *(AK) 7p, House of Blues, $40, houseofblues.com*

{ *October 6*

French lessons

Las Vegas' own Sylvie Boisel is a fine interpreter of such iconic French singers as Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier. But Boisel is nothing if not versatile: In her show, "I Love Paris," the longtime Vegas-based chanteuse will also sing some American jazz classics, proving that music truly is a universal language. *(AK) 7:30p, West Charleston Library, free, 702-507-3940 (Also performing 2p Oct. 7, Clark County Library, free, 702-507-3400)*

{ *October 12*

The folking truth

Father John Misty's yearning, spacey folk-rock is great just as yearning, spacey folk-rock — but an added pleasure are the barbs and fangs hidden amid all the seeming soulful earnestness. "Bedding Taylor Swift/ Every night inside the Oculus Rift/ After mister and the missus finish dinner and the dishes," he sings on "Total Entertainment Forever." Late-stage techno-capitalism, you just got buuurned! Opening act: Weyes Blood. *(AK) 8p, Brooklyn Bowl, $37.50-$65, brooklynbowl.com*

{ *October 12*

Rollerskates and short-shorts optional

We live in a troubled times, prisoners of an angry orangutan with a Twitter account and a merciless backlog of Netflix shows we'll never catch up on. If, like most people, your impulse is to turn to the internet and anonymously troll commenters on Slate.com, I have a better idea: Hug it out with a night of purgative rollerskate anthems by the First Ladies of Disco, composed of Martha Walsh, Linda Clifford and Evelyn King. The iconic disco/R&B/pop singers will perform classic '70s tunes, as well as original ensemble work. *(AK) 7p, Cabaret Jazz in The Smith Center, $45-$79, thesmithcenter.com*



{ *October 13-14*

GIVE THEM A HAND

Omar Sosa defines the backbone of his custom blend of Afro-Cuban jazz not in any instrument or musical idea, but in the human body: the hand-clap. You'll hear why at his Las Vegas debut with his Quarteto AfroCubano, where they'll perform ballads and scorchers alike that fuse jazz, world beat, hip-hop, electronic, and more. *(AK) 7p, Cabaret Jazz in The Smith Center, $45-$79, thesmithcenter.com*

{ *October 14*

Fall for this music

It's October, and you know what that means — a nip in the air, tricks and treats, and, of course, a resurgent awareness of Austro-German Romanticism. In its second concert of the 2017 season, The Las Vegas Philharmonic conducted by Donato Cabrera presents "Oktoberfest," celebrating some of the more gusty, lusty works of Beethoven, Mozart and Bruckner. Beethoven's *Coriolan Overture, Opus 62*, is a dramatic musical depiction of an imagined invasion of Rome; Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622* features clarinet soloist Cory Tiffin in a work that is emotionally lighter, but no less vigorous; and Bruckner's complex and colorful *Symphony No. 1 in C Minor* completes the bill. Bruckner gave his composition the blithe nickname "the saucy maid" — perhaps deceptively, given that Bruckner obsessively wrote and rewrote what would be his debut symphony. *(AK) 7:30p, Reynolds Hall in The Smith Center, $30-$109, lvphil.org*

{ *October 20*

Word up

If you haven't checked in with hip-hop for a while, here's a quick update: OMG it's become insanely protean, dynamic and absorptive! Run the Jewels is at the vanguard, dusting off classic hip-hop conventions — sweet beats, hot zwerps, layered production — and infusing them with a smart, urgent musicality that's fresh in all senses of the word. Opening act: Denzel Curry. *(AK) 8p, Brooklyn Bowl, $35-$55, brooklynbowl.com*

{ *October 21*

A literal sister act

They got their start as a breakout act in a fateful Calgary battle of the bands competition. Today, they're a global power-disco juggernaut. But Tegan and Sara still do one thing really well — write thinky, high-octane pop inspirationals that make you feel like you're in an uplifting movie montage: Here you are, dangling keys to a new apartment, kissing on a park bench, moving into the corner office, presenting a perfect lobster thermidor, tack-welding a joint on a roll cage, rescuing a baby giraffe from a volcano. You go! *(AK) 8p, The Pearl at the Palms, $36-$143, palms.com*



Melody Sweets

{ *October 21*

The Pixies are still good

No no no no no Andrew don't you write some knee-jerk dismissive cynical blurb about The Pixies being so old they're officially a cover band of themselves — no no no because you logged onto Spotify and saw that, wha?, they came out with new albums in both 2014 (*Indie Cindy*) and 2016 (*Head Carrier*), thereby ripping the cheap-shot premise right out of your blurb. So instead why don't you write about how you checked out both those albums and, hey, no slouching here, Pixies still got that reckless and zany yet at the same time unerring and trustworthy tunefulness that made you play *Surfer Rosa* back in the day until the tape broke. Opening act: Mitski. *(AK) 7p, The Chelsea at The Cosmopolitan, $25-$65, cosmopolitanlasvegas.com*

{ *October 21*

That thing you doo doo doo da doo

There's probably not a catchier breakup song than "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," penned by Stephen Stills of Crosby, Stills & Nash for singer-songwriter/girlfriend Judy Collins (she left him for Stacy Keach). Well, its upbeat, smiling-while-sobbing infectiousness finally worked: They're getting back together. In this concert, the two will not only pull from their own rich catalogs, from "Love the One You're With" to "Send in the Clowns," but perform work from their new collaborative album. *(AK) 7:30p, Reynolds Hall in The Smith Center, $35-$115, thesmithcenter.com*

{ *October 24*

Satisfying your Sweets tooth

Singer, burlesque personality and time-traveling sexybomb Melody Sweets brings classic cabaret stylings with a kinky modern edge to her show. Expect an evening of sophisticated decadence, loads of sex appeal and classic and original tunes from an amazing voice. *(AK) 9:30p, Cabaret Jazz in The Smith Center, $20-$45, thesmithcenter.com*

{ *October 27*

Guided for the perplexed

Over a 30-year career, Guided By Voices, and its creative and spiritual leader, Robert Pollard, have run resolutely against the commercial tides that have shaped popular music — and they've done it with fuzzy hooks and burred jangle that have become their sonic signature. Wear nice shoes — because you'll be gazing at them a lot. *(AK) 8p, Bunkhouse Saloon, $30-$35, bunkhousedowntown.com*

{ *November 4*

Arriba, bravo and encore!

Pleasure, passion and politics are on tap for the Las Vegas Philharmonic's "Copland in Mexico" concert. Copland's populist ideals and omnivorous musical tastes took his material in many directions, and his Latin and Western-inflected work is among some of his most exciting. Conducted by Donato Cabrera, the Las Vegas Philharmonic will perform selections from Copland's "Rodeo," as well as work by Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas. *(AK) 7:30p, Reynolds Hall in The Smith Center, $30-$109, lvphil.org*

{ *November 22-26*

Raise your bacon martini!

The Double Down Saloon — that beloved dive dealing in ear-scouring punk rock, cheap drinks and a spirit of genial mayhem — turns 25 this year. The home of Ass Juice and bacon martinis celebrates with a five-day bash; the lineup includes local faves like Dirk Vermin and legends like The Dickies. *(AK) Various times, Double Down Saloon, free, doubledownsaloon.com*

{ *November 29*

Locals get original

Ever wonder what all those mega-talented Strip entertainers — the singers, songwriters, guitarists, drummers, keyboardists — do

in their spare time? They write and perform mind-blowing original work. And the place to get a peek into their creative lives is at Composers Showcase, an often-bawdy cabaret-style talent showcase. *(AK) 10:30p, Cabaret Jazz in The Smith Center, $20-$25, thesmithcenter.com*

December 1

Globetrotting guitars

The Montreal Guitar Trio is much more eclectic than its name implies. The restlessly curious group is known for celebrating numerous musical traditions with its instrument of choice. Case in point: The trio's most recent album, *Danzas*, is a celebration and exploration of Spanish guitar. *(AK) 7:30p, UNLV's Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center, $45, unlv.edu/pac*

December 2

A Handel on the holidays

We associate Handel's grand, sweeping *Messiah* with the holiday season, but it was originally a staple of Easter. However, its slide toward December is perhaps not accidental. Handel was a man of legendary appetite, but his generosity was outsized, too: He donated a portion of the profits from the debut of *Messiah* to a debtor's prison and a hospital in Dublin, and *Messiah* eventually became a centerpiece of his annual holiday charity concert for London's Foundling Hospital. In this concert, the Las Vegas Philharmonic will perform Part I, as well as selections from Francesco Manfredini, Dieterich Buxtehude, Arcangelo Corelli — a veritable baroque confection of classical music. *(AK) 7:30p, Reynolds Hall in The Smith Center, $30-$109, lvphil.org*

December 14

You're dancing, you're crying

If you could bottle the strange and heady elixir that is prom-night heartbreak and hope, you'd have The Drums. The brainchild of Jonny Pierce, The Drums' jangly, upbeat sadcore recalls the pop melancholia of The Smiths, The Housemartins, maybe Joy Division on a rare sunny day. Go ahead, dance like nobody's watching ... watching you cry, that is. Opening act: Hoops. *(AK) 8p, Brooklyn Bowl, $17-$20, brooklynbowl.com*

THEATER & DANCE

September 24

Something to give you paws

What happens when a gay couple adopts a homophobic dog? That's the premise of *No Labels*, a musical comedy by L.A. Walker. But while there are plenty of laughs and riffs, it's a comedy with heart and soul, exploring the harm done by labeling, stereotyping, and discrimination. See page 42 for an interview with Walker. *(AK) 4p, Windmill Library, free, lvccld.org*

October 6

Music to your ears

If your Las Vegas-born kids think Broadway is a pizza, fix that quick with a trip to the library. *The Young People's Guide to Broadway* will instill some cultural sense into young thespians, with highlights from the famous New York drag's legendary history. Because Chicago isn't just a pizza either. *(KT) 7:30p, Summerlin Library Performing Arts Center, $30-$50, americandance.biz*

October 14

Bollywhat?

Step into the world of Indian dance in this flair-full sampling of Bharata Natyum classical moves, once performed by women to honor the gods. And yes — hold onto your flash mob — there will be Bollywood. *(KT) 2p, Whitney Library, free, 702-507-4010*

October 20-Novermber 5

TTYL

Everyone is talking about the thing that happened to Chloe after the party last Saturday. The problem is, she can't remember what it was. Set in a Midwestern high school in the age of social media overload, *Good Kids* by Naomi Iizuka asks viewers to choose a side — and question what that side says about them. *(KT) Various times, Black Box Theatre, $14.75-$16.50, unlv.edu*

October 20-Novermber 5

Bye-bye, birdie

Why use zombies when birds can spark societal breakdown and the chaos that ensues? Based on a short story that inspired the famous Hitchcock film, *Birds* by Conor McPherson is an unsettling look at what happens when animals attack. *(KT) Various times, Mainstage at Las Vegas Little Theatre, $21-$24, lvlt.org*

October 28-29

Dancing in the street

Get down with Motown in *Detroit '67*, in which two siblings turn their basement into an after-hours hangout. Everything's swell until a mysterious woman shows up, causing the proverbial record to skip. *(KT) 2p, West Las Vegas Library, free, 702-507-3980*

November 2-18

Dark comedy

Race and comedy are a dangerous mix, but playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' goes for it in *An Octoroon*, set in the post-war slave era, which makes things even tougher to pull off. *(KT) Majestic Repertory Theater, times and ticket prices TBA, majesticrepertory.com*

November 4-5

Also, he is your father

Charles Ross doesn't need your help. No, seriously. The one-man actor turned heads portraying *Star Wars* all by his lonesome, and now he takes



ONES *to* WATCH

ACTRESS

Sabrina Cofield

A natural on the stage, embracing the role she was meant for

TV news reporter, personal trainer, magazine editor, art salon owner: All jobs that Sabrina Cofield held while avoiding her destiny as a full-time actor. With a BA in journalism from Clark Atlanta University, the Albuquerque, New Mexico, native went into broadcast news. She'd done performing arts throughout childhood; she acted in her first commercial at age 8. But heading to college on a choir scholarship, she thought, "What am I going to do to get a job?" Journalism was telling stories in front of a camera, so it seemed like a good fit. And it was more stable than acting. That was the start of more than a decade of professional insecurity.

Cofield quit TV news after eight years, succumbing to the taxing pace and emotional drain. In 2010, she moved to Las Vegas to be closer to family. A few years later, she was talking with Daria Riley, her partner at Downtown art salon Selah, about creative work. Cofield remembers Riley saying, "I'll pray for you, that you finally figure out you should be onstage somewhere, stop playing around with all this other crazy stuff, and realize what you were put on this earth to do." It was the first time someone had so bluntly stated the obvious, and Cofield knew her friend was right. Within a week, she dropped out of dental school (did we mention dental school?) and got serious about acting.

In 2015, Cofield made her local stage debut as Agnes in Cockroach Theatre's production of Tracy Letts' creepy psycho-thriller *Bug*, garnering a best-actress nomination in the Las Vegas Valley Theatre awards. She didn't win that year, but she did this year — best supporting actress for her portrayal of Jenny in Lucas Hnath's *The Christians*, also at Cockroach. In between, she's racked up two pages of acting credits, from commercials to corporate gigs to film.

"Sabrina has an openness to her that is so alluring and captivating," says Mindy Woodhead, who directed *The Christians* and is the development director at Cockroach. "She has a presence of spirit, clear thought process, and real devotion to specificity. That's the most important thing to transcend you from doing it as a hobby to doing it as an artist."

Acting full-time has been good to Cofield. She has a film, *Domicile*, that's out on Amazon Prime, and she starts shooting a web series, *Plan B*, in the fall. She's entertaining several offers for roles in the 2017-'18 theater season, and she's on the board of experimental theater company The LAB, which recently staged an interactive version of *Antigone* on the steps of City Hall, drawing around 100 people at 6 a.m. on a Saturday.

"There are so many unbelievably, extraordinarily talented people in this city," Cofield says, "and I think it's our job to get the word out, to show people what's here. As part of The LAB, I hope we're going to do that." ***—Heidi Kyser***

on everyone's favorite flying rodent/hero in *Dark Knight: A Batman Parody*. Get to it, Alfred. *(KT) 3p, Clark County Library on 11/4, Windmill Library on 11/5, free, lvccld.org*

{ *November* 7-9

Ring of fire

This isn't hula-hoops — it's expressive Native American hoop dancing by seven-time world champion Derrick Suwaima Davis, who will share his culture, history and, of course, his hoop moves. *(KT) Various times; various library branches, lvccld.org*

{ *November* 8

Grammar snob

A famous English professor takes a red pen to her life when she's diagnosed with terminal ovarian cancer in *W;t*, a smart, Pulitzer Prize-winning play about a life's work and how semi-colons should be used, dammit. *(KT) Various times, The Usual Place, 100 S. Maryland Parkway, $30, apublicfit.org*

{ *November* 11-12

Too much tutu!

Why go for one ballet when you can have three? In Nevada Ballet Theatre's *Classic Americana*, enjoy the classic "Serenade," the modern "Company B" and the American-themed Russian production "Western Symphony" for two performances only. *(KT) Various Times, Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, $29-$139, nevadaballet.org*

I SENSE A THEME

Who are you? Are you your sexuality, your body, your tastes, your generation? These plays consider the nature of identity and the interplay of our private and public selves.

September 29-October 8

Coming out to the game

Can gay men play baseball? Of course they can. But what happens when a beloved NY Empires star comes out? How will fans react? That's the real question in *Take Me Out*, a thoughtful play by Richard Greenberg. *(KT) Various times, Judy Bayley Theatre, $27.50-$33, unlv.edu*

October 5-29

Monster versus maker

It isn't Frankenstein's fault that he's dumb and ugly, but fault isn't considered when his creator casts him into a cruel world where he finds himself friendless, desperate and determined to make a grim deal with his dad in this updated take on a classic by Nick Dear. *(KT) Various times, Cockroach Theatre, prices TBA, cockroachtheatre.com*

November 2-19

Pills or bills?

Even flower children have to grow up. That's the sad truth in this 1967 London-based play, *Love Love Love*, which focuses on The Beatles' free-wheeling "me" generation, who eventually trade in sex and drugs for lawns ... and yawns. *(KT) Various times, Cockroach Theatre, tickets not yet on sale, cockrocktheatre.com*



{ *November* 14

Dance is magic! No, literally

If you like Cirque du Soleil, you'll love MOMIX, a company of dancer-illusionists who are every bit as impressive as they sound. Dance plus magic?! Come on! In "Cactus Opus," the troupe will pay homage to the American Southwest with vibrant costumes, inventive props and stunning visuals. *(KT) 7p, The Smith Center, $19-$69, thesmithcenter.com*

{ *December* 1-9

Lions and tigers and bears ... oh, hi

I know blurbs aren't supposed to be about the author, but I can recite the entire "Munchkinland" part of *Wizard of Oz*, and it's basically my only talent. It's also why I'm definitely showing up for Dorothy, Toto and tornadoes in this all-ages take on the Emerald City. See you there. In ruby slippers. *(KT) Various times, Charleston Heights Art Center, $5.50, 702-507-3980*

{ *December* 2-3

Up next on Lifetime

Shakespeare plays invented the irresistible formula soap operas follow: a splash of deceit, and cup of betrayal and a flaming 150-proof bottle of omfg-he-did-what?! Urban Noir delivers these top-notch ingredients to your door in its rendition of *Othello*, a favorite for its spicy, struggle-rich themes. *(KT) Various times, West Las Vegas Library, free, 702-507-3980*

{ *December* 16

Holiday cheers

Do the high notes in your Christmas carols break glass? They will at *Christmas at the Opera*, a 90-minute birthday party for Baby Jesus that busts out favorites from *La Boheme*, Werther and Amahl. *(KT) Time TBD, Charleston Heights Art Center, 800 Brush St., $10, sincityopera.com*

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The Guide

ART

THROUGH SEPT. 7

OUTSIDE THE BOX

This exhibit highlights artists who use cardboard as the main medium for their artwork. **Free. Las Vegas City Hall Grand Gallery, 495 S. Main St., first floor, *artslasvegas.org***

THROUGH SEPT. 16

TESTED GROUND

Paying special attention to the region surrounding Las Vegas, five international artists use a variety of media to probe the ways in which our civilization uses the land around us for work, recreation, and waste disposal. **Free. Marjorie Barrick Museum at UNLV, *unlv.edu***

THROUGH SEPT. 17

RARA AVIS

The award-winning artists of the West Coast Drawing Collective present their original drawings. **Free. Art Gallery at Sahara West Library, *lvccld.org***

THROUGH OCT. 8

THE ART OF ROY PURCELL

Roy Purcell's mixed-media paintings combine art with text, for a chronological overview of the history of the Las Vegas Valley. **Free for members or with paid general admission. Big Springs Gallery at Springs Preserve, *springspreserve.org***

THROUGH OCT. 15

INSPIRED BY THE FAMILY ALBUM

Elizabeth Casper's impressionist-style paintings depict moments inspired by photos of vacation scenes and children at play. **Free. Centennial Hills Library, *lvccld.org***

THROUGH OCT. 29

ELEGANT CREATURES

Lolita Develay's installation offers scintillating paintings depicting luxury fashion displays as an investigation into consumer culture. **Free. West Charleston Library, *lvccld.org***

THROUGH OCT. 31

A LAS VEGAS SYMPHONY OF ART

Cheng Yajie's drawings and paintings reflect the early influence of Social Realism, from his studies in China during the 1980s, and the dream-like qualities and symbolism of Fantastic Realism, learned while in graduate school in Austria. **Free. Art Gallery at Spring Valley library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 7–NOV. 19

RAINBOW'S EDGE

A collaborative quilt exhibit by members of the Art Quilts, Etc. Circle within Desert Quilters of Nevada. **Free. Art Gallery at Summerlin Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 15–NOV. 11

THE ART OF ANTHONY BONDI

Bondi's collages, photos, and interactive sculptures encapsulate the wild essence of Nevada, from Burning Man to Las Vegas. **Free. The Studio at Sahara West Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 26–NOV. 26

LAND AND WATER

David Mazur presents realistic watercolors featuring the people and land around him. **Free. Art Gallery at Windmill Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 28–NOV. 28

LIGHT PLAY

Kinetic artist, Sarah Petkus and engineer, Mark Koch present their interactive hive of miniature delta robots which react to participants' physical gestures. Free. Art Gallery at Enterprise Library, lvccld.org

MUSIC

SEPT. 6

X

The seminal Los Angeles punk band returns for its 40th anniversary tour. **18+ only. 7:30p, $30–$35. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 8-9

GRACE KELLY — TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT TOUR

Singer, songwriter, and saxophonist Kelly is a regular on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert.* **7p, $39–$59. Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 8

TALKING DREADS

As the name implies, this band performs the songs of David Byrne and company, with a reggae beat. **7p, free. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 9

OPENING NIGHT – DON JUAN

The Las Vegas Philharmonic opens its 19th Season with Richard Strauss' Don Juan, John Adams' Common Tones in Simple Time, and Johannes Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor. **7:30p, $30–$109. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 13

UNLV JAZZ CONCERT SERIES: HONORS COMBO

The award-winning Jazz Studies department offers their best musicians in concert, sure to please any jazz enthusiast. **7p, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 14

LIL YACHTY

The Atlanta hip-hop artist tours behind the release of his upcoming album "Teenage Emotions." **7p, $35–$50. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 15

EMELY LOTFE LIVE

The Mexican pop singer, artist, and television personality will grace the stage with songs that have deep roots and significance within the Hispanic culture. During her performance, she will also share the meanings of the songs, in both English and Spanish. **7p, free. Concert Hall at Whitney Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 15

CATFISH AND THE BOTTLEMEN

This breakthrough UK band draws from new wave, indie, garage and grunge to create a sound that has earned them platinum status in Britain and an opening stint for Green Day on their current tour. **7:30p, $25–$525. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 15

THE BEACH BOYS

The legendary band is celebrating 55 years of surf, cars, and harmony. **7:30p, $29–$115. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 15

MICHELLE JOHNSON PRESENTS TAPESTRY UNRAVELED

Las Vegas jazz artist Johnson presents her unique take on Carole King's classic album "Tapestry." **8p, $22–$40. Cabaret Jazz at The**



Peggy Trigg, *The Fallow Field* (detail), 2016

Plein Air Painting Competition
SEPT 22–27
Art Collector's Sales
SEPT 29–OCT 1
Demonstrations/Workshops
SEPT 22–30
Arts & Crafts Fair
SEPT 29–30
Speaker Series
SEPT 25–30
Live Music
SEPT 29–30
Wild & Scenic Film Festival
SEPT 22

Escalante, Utah
is located in the heart of
Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument
between
Bryce Canyon and Capitol Reef National Parks.

www.escalantecanyonsartfestival.org

Glen Canyon Natural History Association · Life Utah Elevated · Visit Bryce Canyon Country · Escalante

Smith Center, *thesmthcenter.com*

SEPT. 16–17
FAROFA: ELECTRIFYING BRAZILIAN FUSION
This quartet combines rock, jazz, flamenco, contemporary classical, pop, deep African rhythmic tradition, Balkan music, and, above all, the entire musical universe of their native Brazil. **2p, free. Sat at West Las Vegas Library; Sun at West Charleston Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 16
LIVE, LOVE, LATIN! STARRING JONATHAN KARRANT
Featuring guest vocalist Patty Ascher and a five-piece Latin jazz band, this exciting show will give you an ethnic feel from Brazilian bossa novas to Spanish sambas. **3p, free. Auditorium at Windmill Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 16
KELLY CLINTON, DELIGHTFULLY DISTURBED AND MUSICAL
Actress, singer, comedienne, and impressionist Clinton premieres her new show. **7p, $20, Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

SEPT. 20
THE MAGPIE SALUTE
Former Black Crowes members Rich Robinson, Marc Ford, and Sven Pipien lead their band through their unique style of blues-infused rock. **18+ only. 7p, $27.50–$32. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 22
NEVADA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA — CLASSICAL AND BAROQUE MASTERPIECES
The concert will feature prominent works of the Baroque and Classical periods. Audience favorites by Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven will be included. **7:30p, free. Performing Arts Center at Summerlin Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 22–23
FOURPLAY
The jazz supergroup featuring Harvey Mason, Bob James, Kirk Whalum, and Nathan East. **Fri 7p; Sat 6p and 8:30p. Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 23
MARIACHIS CELEBRATE MEXICO'S INDEPENDENCE DAY
Celebrate Mexican culture and independence with a live mariachi performance by the students of the Clark County School District's Mariachi Program. **6p, free. Concert Hall at Whitney Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 23
MARTIN AND LEWIS TRIBUTE SHOW WITH SPECIAL GUEST "MARILYN MONROE"
A tribute to the legendary comedy-music duo, featuring David Wolf as "Jerry" and Steve Waddington as "Dino." **7p, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

SEPT. 23
FULL CIRCLE; STARRING SUSAN ANTON
Anton shares an intimate evening of conversations and song about the events that shape our lives. **7:30p, free. Performing Arts Center at Summerlin Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 23
DANZIG
Legendary hard rocker Glenn Danzig leads his band through songs spanning their iconic catalog. **18+ only. 9p, $35–$50. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 24
METAL ALLIANCE TOUR WITH OVERKILL, CROWBAR, HAVOK
New Jersey heavy metal stalwarts Overkill headline this show featuring five metal bands, including local band Invidia. **18+ only. 7p, $25–$30. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 26
THE SOUND COLLAGE
This Las Vegas a capella group has opened for Jay Leno, Jerry Seinfeld, and many others. **8p, $15–$35. Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 27
THE MUSIC OF RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN
Singers and dancers perform hits from *South Pacific, Oklahoma, The Sound of Music,* and many more. **7p, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

SEPT. 28
MOTIONLESS IN WHITE
The gothic-based metalcore band is touring behind their recently-released 3rd album "Reincarnate." **6p, $23–$25. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 29
MAKE AMERICA ROCK AGAIN: FEATURING SCOTT STAPP
The former Creed frontman headlines a show

featuring Sick Puppies, Drowning Pool, Trapt, and local favorites Adelita's Way. **7p, $35–$110. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 29

¡VIVA LA OPERA!

A diverse, narrated concert will feature Opera Las Vegas celebrating Latino contributions to the operatic art form. **7p, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 29–30

BETTYE LAVETTE

Soul and R&B singer Lavette's career has spanned five decades. **7p, $39–$59. Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 30

ANDREW W.K.

Rock-and-roll party animal Andrew W.K. appears with his full band as part of his "The Party Never Dies" tour. **7p, $20–$22. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

OCT. 1

LAS VEGAS BRASS BAND: ANNUAL FALL CONCERT

With a repertoire as wide and as varied as one's imagination, don't be surprised if their concert features music from The Beatles to a traditional Sousa march. **2p, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

OCT. 1

JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE

This show recreates a concert featuring the songs of Johnny and June Carter Cash. **3p, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

OCT. 1

THE GREEN

This acclaimed Hawaiian reggae band has topped the charts and now bring their stylings to you live. **7:30p, $22–$35. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

▼

THEATER & COMEDY

SEPT. 9–10

SHAKESPEARE FOR PEOPLE WHO HATE SHAKESPEARE

Community Theatre presents a light and irreverent look at The Bard's works. **Sat 7p; Sun 2p, $10. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

SEPT. 16

AN AFTERNOON OF CLASSIC LILY TOMLIN

The comedic legend presents her beloved characters and tales of a career spanning five decades. **2p, $29–$85. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *the smithcenter.com***

SEPT. 16

BOB SAGET

The stand-up comic and film and TV star delivers a night of dark



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and always by appointment

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comedy. 18+ only. **7p, $35–$100. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

SEPT. 16

LAS VEGAS IMPROVISATIONAL PLAYERS

LVIP delivers family-friendly, on-the-fly comedy that includes vignettes, music, and sometimes even dance. All based on suggestions from you, the audience. **7p, $10 adults; $5 children and military. Show Creators Studio, 4465 W. Sunset Road, *lvimprov.com***

SEPT. 19–24

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

This Broadway hit tells the story of a 15-year-old boy suspected of killing his neighbor's dog, and the aftermath of his search for the true culprit. **Recommended for ages 13+. Tues–Sun 7:30p; Sat–Sun 2p, $36–$127. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 23

INFLIGHT: THE MUSICAL

An original theatrical production about the unique life of flight attendants. **7p, $20–$24.50. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 23–24

URBAN NOIR PROJECT — "FROM SLAVERY TO THE WHITE HOUSE"

The "project vignettes" move you from segregation and Jim Crow to the election of President Obama, bridging periods with dance, music, narration, and great acting. **Sat 7p; Sun 2p, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 24

NO LABELS: A MUSICAL COMEDY

The play shares the adventures of a homophobic dog adopted by a gay couple. **4p, free. Performing Arts Center at Windmill Library, *lvccld.org***

▼

DANCE

SEPT. 8–9

MOOD AZUL, STOLEN MOMENTS, AND DISASSOCIATED

Las Vegas Contemporary Dance Theater offers three world-premiere contemporary ballets. **Fri 7:30p; Sat 1:30p, free. West Las Vegas Library, *lvdance.org***

SEPT. 15–16

INDIRECT FROM NEW YORK: KELLY ROTH & DANCERS!

Roth's special blend of sheer kinetics, neo-classicism, and post-modern sensibilities promise to provide an event brandishing both art and entertainment suitable for the entire family. **Fri 7:30p; Sat 2p, free. Theater at Summerlin Library, *lvccld.org***

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DISCUSSIONS & READINGS

SEPT. 7

LAS VEGAS STORIES: LAS VEGAS NEON LANDMARKS

Tracey Sprague, the Neon Museum's Collections Specialist, will dazzle you with images of historic Strip structures and signs. **Free. Jewel Box Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 14

BOARDWALK PLAYGROUND: THE HISTORY OF ATLANTIC CITY

In this talk, Dr. David Schwartz discusses the long and interesting history of his hometown, Atlantic City, New Jersey. Built as a pleasure resort in the 1850s, it has had many identities over the years. **7p, free. Jewel Box Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 26

AMERICAN WAR LETTERS

During this unique and awe-inspiring lecture, Andrew Carroll will share extraordinary letters, including one from the American Revolution, one written from inside a ship at Pearl Harbor, and a handwritten letter by a woman who was at Ground Zero on September 11, 2001. **1p, free. Meeting Room at Windmill Library, *lvccld.org***

SEPT. 29

LOBBY HERO BY KENNETH LONEGAN: A STAGED READING

A young security guard with big ambitions clashes with his stern boss, an intense rookie cop, and her unpredictable partner. **7:30p, free. Jewel Box Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

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FAMILY & FESTIVALS

THROUGH SEPT. 4

ZOOM INTO NANO — SMALL SCIENCE WITH A HUGE IMPACT

This hands-on interactive exhibit focuses on how engineers and scientists create new materials and technologies at the atomic level. **Ages 8–13. $14.50. Discovery Children's Museum, *discoverykidslv.org***

SEPT. 8–10

THE JUNGLE BOOK KIDS

Broadway in the Hood presents a stage musical adaptation of the classic Disney film. **Fri–Sat 7p; Sat 2p; Sun 3p. Troesh Studio Theater at The Smith Center,** ***thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 16

CHINESE ART AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL

The Nevada Chinese Association presents a fun day full of culture and art. **2–5p, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library,** ***lvccld.org***

SEPT. 23

ASIAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION

This family-friendly event features lion dances, taiko performances, tea ceremonies, games, face painting, henna tattoos, craft activities, cultural displays and exhibits, traditional food, and more! **10a–4p, $6. Springs Preserve,** ***springspreserve.org***

SEPT. 27

GO, DOG, GO!

P. D. Eastman's Beginner Book comes to life in a musical adventure for the whole family. **6:30p, $14.95–$24.95. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center,** ***thesmithcenter.com***

SEPT. 28

TALES FROM AFAR PUPPET SHOW

A fun-filled family puppet show in celebration of National Heritage Month. **10:30a and 4:30p, free. Story Room at Whitney Library,** ***lvccld.org***

SEPT. 30

SOMETHING SCOTTISH

Spend an enchanting day with Mary, Queen of Scots and her court. There will be live bagpipe players, demonstrations of spinning and, and a Wee Bairns Corner for children with crafts, games. **11a–3p, free. Windmill Library,** ***lvccld.org***

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FUNDRAISERS

SEPT. 30

GRAPES & HOPS

Sample fine wines, a unique selection of beers, and food from some of Las Vegas' finest restaurants. Proceeds benefit Par for The Cure, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds for breast cancer research. **5p, $45–$115. Springs Preserve,** ***springspreserve.org***



Ken Burns' The Vietnam War
Sundays – Thursdays, September 17 – 28 at 8 p.m.



Third Rail with Ozy
Fridays at 8:30 p.m.,
premiering September 8



Death in Paradise, Season 6
Saturdays at 9 p.m.,
premiering September 9



FRONTLINE: Abacus: Small Enough to Jail
Tuesday, September 12 at 10 p.m.



NOVA: Death Dive to Saturn
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