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May



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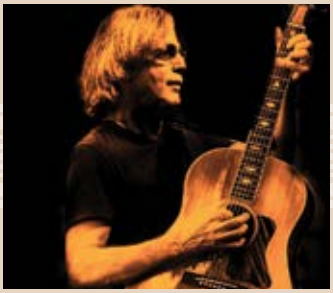
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Mikayla Whitmore

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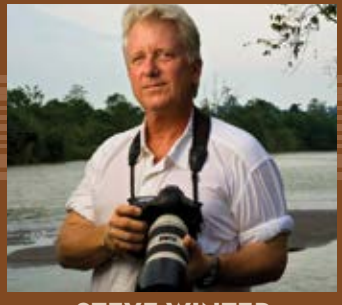
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Editor's note

FLAVOR FOR MILES

The phrase "road food" doesn't exactly ring with promise. It typically calls to mind the functional fare of burgers and fries, eggs and hash browns, humid sandwiches of various species and combinations — the kind of stomach-filling substrate whose only hint of adventure lies in the grim prospect of unleashing a supernova in your lower GI tract later on mile 1,317. Not exactly an Instagram moment.

But I'm happy to report there's road food out there that's not only digestible and even palatable — it's so downright delicious that it's worth driving for. Intrepid road-trippers and food-eaters Heidi Kyser and Kristy Totten profile five such destinations in our feature story, "A Taste for Adventure" (p. 53). Whether it's a tongue-in-cheek diner perched on Route 66 or an artsy café improbably sprouting up in a former silver-mining boomtown, these seemingly modest eateries will surprise you — and not just with what's on the menu. As much as an accent or an iconic landmark, food tells a story of place. But it's not always a simple story about a cuisine reflecting the roots, tradition, or history of the region. Sometimes the story is one that unfolds in fruitful tension with the region; sometimes the story is about what the place is becoming. I mean, you can now get housemade frappés in 18 flavors in Pioche served by the founding bassist of Quiet Riot. These food stories are about both roots *and* restlessness, tradition *and* transition — and each one is worth savoring.



Andrew Kiraly
EDITOR

NEXT MONTH Say "eye!" to our Focus on Nevada Photo Contest issue!

LETTERS

APRIL 2018

Reader Elizabeth Becker responds to "Is Strong Enough?", an essay by Nicholas Russell, in the April issue:

As a member of Nevada's chapter of Moms Demand Action and an outspoken advocate for common-sense gun violence-prevention legislation, I take issue with the statement that there has been "no push for new legislation … no sense of urgency" since the 1 October tragedy. We had a very active community before the shooting, and we were even more energized and determined to see change after so many in our city were killed and injured seven months ago.

The Background Check Law that was passed in Clark County in November 2016 by more than 100,000 votes began as successful legislation in the 2013 session, which was vetoed by Brian Sandoval. Literally thousands of supporters worked for several years to see background checks on private gun sales, only to have the will of the people of Southern Nevada denied by politicians who receive donations from the NRA. Three citizens sued the governor and the attorney general in October 2017 for their failure to implement the law. That case was heard on February 23, and a ruling is forthcoming.

Furthermore, several bills, including one similar to the referenced law in Oregon, were introduced during the 2017 legislative session, only to die in committee. One bill addressing domestic violence and gun rights was passed and signed into law. There is clear support from Southern Nevada residents for more to be done to address the gaping loopholes that prohibited purchasers are walking through every day to obtain weapons. The thousands of folks who turned out locally for March for Our Lives are proof of that. It may take us longer than seven months, but we will have "something to show for" all of our continued work on this issue.

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

By the time you read this — but after we sent this issue to the printer — we all should know whether contributor Kim Foster brought home a prestigious James Beard Award for her piece "The Meth Lunches," which appeared in these pages last July. It was one of three finalists in the Personal Essay category. A toast!

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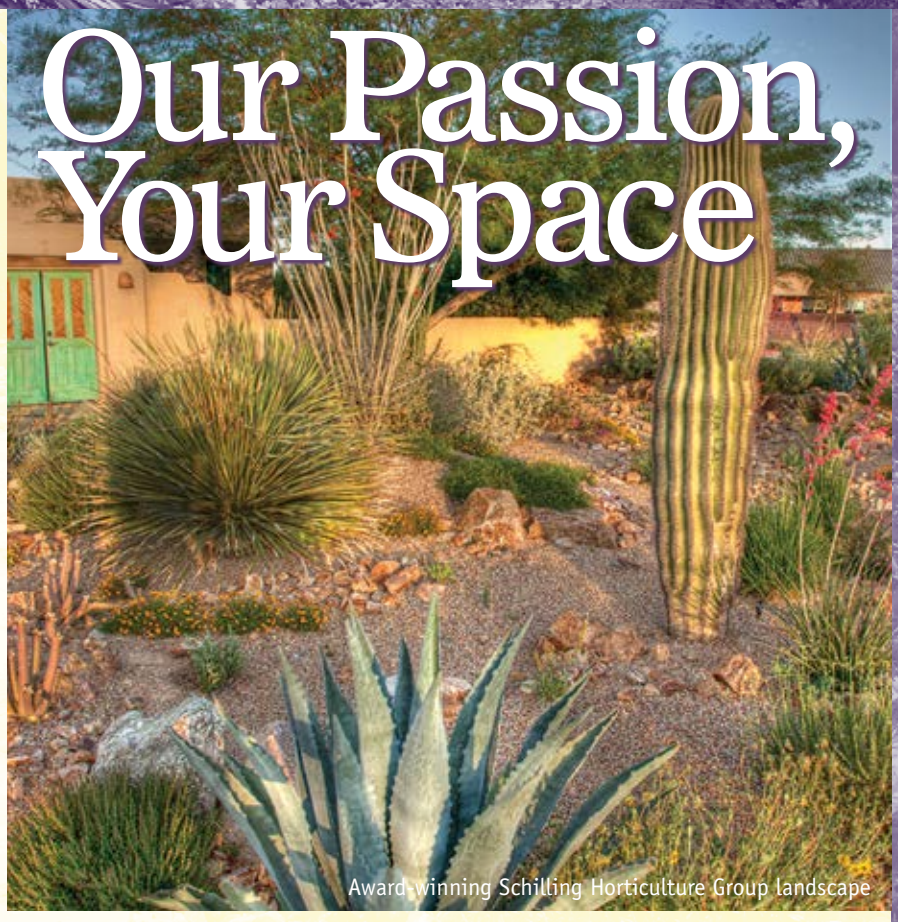
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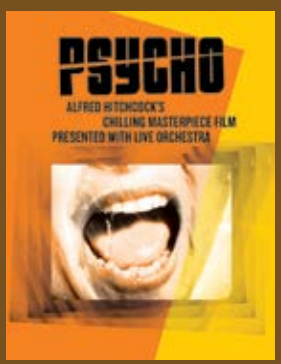
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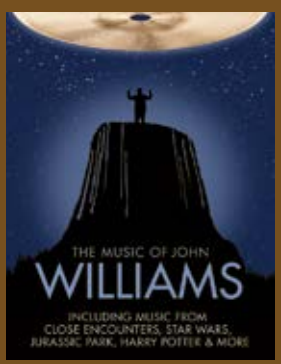
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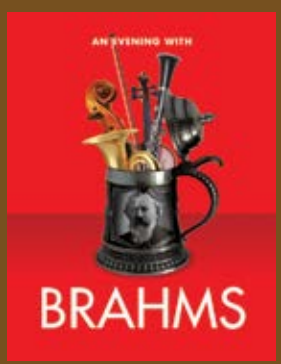
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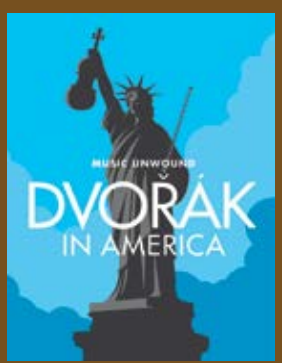
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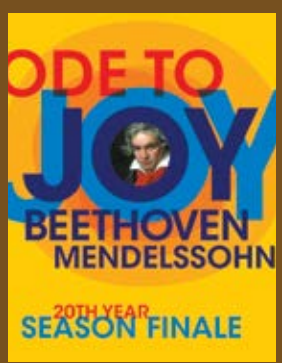
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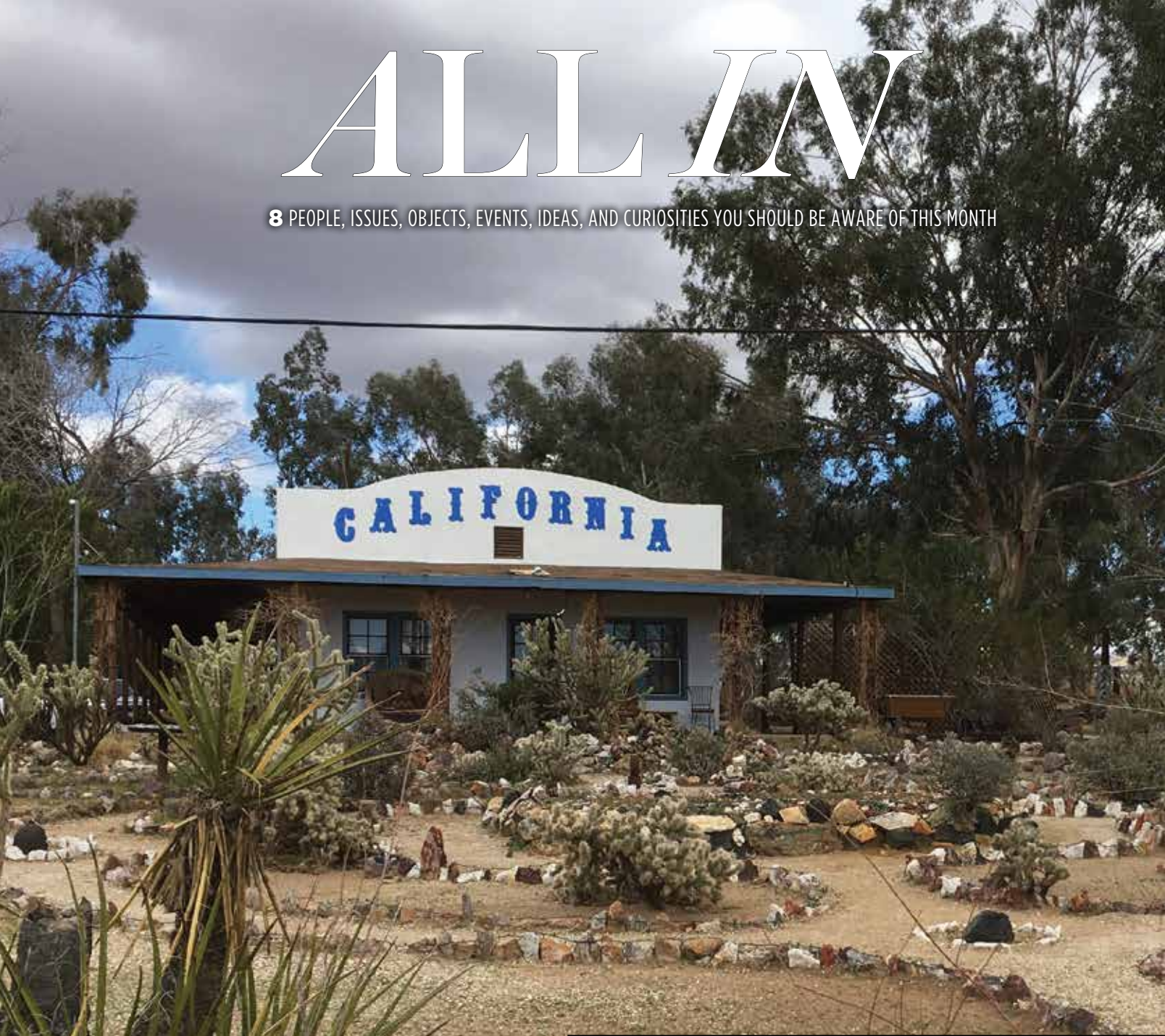
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ALL IN

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



ONE | **FIELD NOTES**

Nipton in the Bud

Can marijuana revive this sleepy desert burg?

BY ***Mike Weatherford***

PHOTOGRAPHY ***First Last Name***

Let's check out some of your Canadian roll, bro!" Stephen Shearin says to Theron, a visitor who walks up with a joint and a ballcap advertising his fondness for Kush. "I got fire. And I got more weed if you need it." The joint passes across the pathway of a rock garden in Nipton, California, the ceremonious start of a stockholders' meeting — or at least a meeting with *a* stockholder.

Theron and his wife, Yasmin, are from Vancouver, British Columbia, visiting this desert outpost that grabbed headlines with last year's sale to an Arizona company that plans to convert this historic, near-ghost of a mining town into a hub of "cannabis tourism."

"The whole concept of it was intriguing," says Theron, who does indeed own shares of the penny stock American Green, which paid $5 million for 80 acres on Highway 164, aka Nipton Road, between Searchlight and Interstate 15. Their tour is being led by Shearin, American Green's project manager. A ruddy, weather-beaten 50-something, Shearin has lived everywhere from Tonopah to South Africa, and declares Nipton "the greatest thing that ever happened to me. My spiritual home I just hadn't run into."

You'd have to be a frequent visitor to notice much change to the general store, café, and five-room hotel that all date back to 1905. Trains still rattle along the railroad tracks that gave rise to the hamlet, periodically blocking the two-lane road and prompting drivers from the Searchlight side to pull over for a pit stop. Jim Eslinger rings up sodas as he has for nine years, and says he no longer even hears the train that created his short line of customers.

But the trading post now displays bongs in the glass case topped by a model locomotive, and head-shop paraphernalia, such as "anti-stink" stash envelopes, is sold alongside the coffee and lottery tickets. So far, Nipton — previously owned by the same couple for 30 years — has been mostly a clean-up project for its new owners. "We kept finding things to fix," Shearin says. Oblivious to the chilly March wind, he's talking a mile a minute about topics as diverse as Nelson Mandela, the outmoded concept of the 40-hour work week, and Montmorillonite clay, which he says will keep the town pond clean without chemicals.

But the cannabis connection? It's complicated.

Nipton's sale came with green-rush talk of yoga retreats, cannabis-infused bottled water, marijuana vending machines, and a concert amphitheater to nudge the town down a Burning Man path. But San Bernardino County officials, Shearin says, jumped to the alarming assumption of "acres and acres" of a new desert bloom amid the Joshua trees in the Mojave National Preserve. So the situation crossfades into a mutual head-scratcher for both the new owner and government regulators. Nipton sits just a couple of miles over the California side of the border, and the state's young recreational marijuana laws are still unsettled.

"You don't smoke over there. That's public property," Shearin says, pointing to the general store. "Why is it public? Because we have a lottery and a liquor license. California law. No consumption in public areas." But here, in the rock garden not 20 yards away? "Over here is private. If you want to consume cannabis as the state law allows, step over here."

Shearing even brought in Paul Coffey, a veteran of Colorado's dispensary industry, as a compliance consultant — and a total buzzkill when he points out things like, if they someday allow hotel guests to spark one in the cozy little lobby, then the carpet and curtains are fire hazards and will have to go.

The trading post isn't yet allowed a dispensary. And distributing more marijuana than the state's six-plant personal-grow limit is dubious in a location surrounded by federal land.

So Nipton has a new business plan: *flip this town*.

On the very day that Shearin plays tour guide, a press release announces the $7.73 million sale of American Green's Nipton holdings to Delta International Oil & Gas, a fully-reporting Arizona company that will assume $3.73 million of the historically low-performing American Green's debt, and let it continue managing the town for up to 10 years.

"Delta will probably change its name to Canawake," Shearin says. "Through cannabis we awake small economies by buying half-megawatt towns ... implementing a successful solar system, fixing the water, and sparking the economy.

"We take a small percentage off of what you earn as a town," he explains, then eventually sell the town after raising the value through upgrades such as off-the-grid solar power and converting trash into "post-consumer product."

"It's only one town, but we're going to go do another one and another one," Shearin says. Buying a ghost town is good for a quirky headline. "But you have to breathe some life back into that town."

The publicity — and maybe the new billboards pointing the way to "Magical Nipton" — at least drives new customers to the re-

GOLDEN KNIGHTS: COURTESY; NIPTON: MIKE WEATHERFORD



2 Civic PRIDE

TEN GREAT THINGS ABOUT THE GOLDEN KNIGHTS' FIRST SEASON

BY *Jacob Lasky*

#VegasStrong: Five days after October 1, Knights win opening home game of the season against the Arizona Coyotes. Team opened game with ceremony for first responders and victims with 58 seconds of silence.

Record Setters: Team breaks record for most wins by expansion team with its 34th following their victory, over Winnipeg Jets. Regular season record: 51-24-7.

858,816: Potential number of free donuts given out by Krispy



ALL ROADS LEAD TO NIPTON
Or, as this sign seems to indicate, from Nipton.

modeled cafe, which serves up high-end burgers deserving of the munchies, including a "breakfast burger" topped with a fried egg and a thick slice of gourmet bacon.

And Shearin says the little town that's mostly a mobile-home community has "a housing crisis" on its hands, expanding from eight to about 40 since the sale. He'd like to see it grow to maybe 2,000, but "we can only support so many people. We're not going to build condos."

We stand on the hotel's battered porch. Shearin notes that Clara Bow, the silent film star and one-time neighbor at the Walking Box Ranch, once stood here, as well. "You can't pour concrete that looks like this," he says. "It has to live for a hundred years to look like this. You can't tear that out. If there's a story here, it's that American Green is keeping Nipton Nipton, while showing that a cannabis-driven city can succeed."

Theron gets it. "We see a clear vision," he says. "We see more here than just what you actually see." His words give Shearin something worth more than a joint: respect, a word that has come up over and over. It sounds like Shearin has been waiting for some. A penny-stock company with negative cash flow in an industry facing both skepticism and well-funded start-ups will bring you stress, long hours, even death threats, he says. Still, "We worked our asses off believing there was a better future." Now, maybe he has found it.

"We ask for respect, and we give you a safe place to come," he says. "Please come here and enjoy your life the way you want to. If you can take that sense home, tell your neighbors, and we roll it forward, maybe we'll have the world we want. At least we tried." ✦



Kreme, which promised a dozen freebies to every ticket-holder for home shutouts. There were four, multiplied by the average game attendance, 17,892.

268: Goals scored by Golden Knights this season. League average: 244.

Amazing Shot: With score tied 2-2 in the third period against San Jose Sharks, William Karlson made a breakaway goal between his legs for the game-winner — clinching a postseason berth.

Perfect Mix: Team has big-name players, including forward James Neal, forward David Perron, and three-time Stanley Cup-winning goalie Marc-Andre Fleury. Otherwise, most are little-known role-players.

Shooting Ducks: Golden Knights beat five-time division champs Anaheim Ducks in its thrilling first-ever shootout victory.

300-ish: Number of hats collected after scoring Golden Knight's first-ever hat trick on New Year's Eve against Toronto.

Goal Spree: In closing moments of third period of January match against Calgary, Golden Knights score three goals in 53 seconds to rally to 4-2 road win.



Stanley Cup Playoffs: Unprecedented and downright remarkable for an expansion team.





THREE | **GET ACTIVE**

Motivators

Tanesha Williams and Sandra Todd of Black Girls Run aim to get women on their feet

BY ***Sonja Swanson***

Black Girls Run is a national organization founded in 2009 to combat the obesity epidemic in the African-American community, along with the chronic diseases that accompany sedentary lifestyles. We sat down with Tanesha Williams (left) and Sandra Todd, ambassadors for the Las Vegas chapter of BGR.

How did you start running?

TW: I actually started running about nine years ago after I had my second daughter. I just knew I had to lose weight. There was a gym at my apartment complex, and I just got on the treadmill. I ran my first mile, and I was so excited. After that, my goal was just to run farther and farther and farther.

ST: I started, oh, I guess about 10 years ago. I was diagnosed with breast cancer. And after that was all done, I wanted to lead a healthy lifestyle, start eating right, so I just embraced running through a coworker. She said, hey, let's train for a half-marathon. After that, I just really embraced it. Then I found Black Girls Run. It was started by another group of ladies who have moved on. So I became a part of Black Girls Run, and then Tanesha and I became ambassadors, what, three years ago?

What's the mission of BGR?

ST: Basically to promote a healthy lifestyle, for all women, but primarily for women of color because of the rate of diabetes and high blood pressure in African-American women. And I just think it's important because of what we're eating in this day and age, and the sedentary lifestyles we lead.

Do you think there's a representation issue in the media with who is seen as a runner or a hiker?

ST: I don't necessarily agree, because when I watch the Olympics, I see a lot of people of



GET MOVING
blackgirlsrun.com and facebook.com/groups/blackgirlsrunvegas

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Brent Holmes***

color on those tracks. And there's a professional black marathoners page — there are tons of people there. So I don't know if I agree that they're not represented. Now, maybe some of the outdoors sports, yeah.

TW: There are definitely a lot of runners. When I started, I didn't know that there was a Black Girls Run Las Vegas. As soon as I saw someone post about it, I went and joined. So it's about the information — if people know about it, they'll try to join the group.

What does a group like BGR does for the black community in Las Vegas?

ST: I think it promotes sisterhood. Sometimes there's a stigma — we don't stick together. But when you're out there just walking and running, everybody's sweating, everybody looks jacked up, it's just about finishing the task at hand. We said we were going to run or walk two miles, c'mon let's get it done. It's about supporting that sisterhood.

TW: I think we're motivators. Honestly, if I post to my personal social media, I get friends, family in different states just saying, "You motivated me to go walk today." "I ran my first 5k." "I want to train for this." Or "I went to the gym today." When I run with Sandra, she's motivating me, because I believe she's a stronger runner than me.

ST: We represent the gamut. So I'm older, I'm in my 50s, and a lot of women think, *Oh, this is all a group of young girls.* No, it's not.

To the black woman thinking about joining BGR but hesitating, what is your message?

ST: You just have to take baby steps. It's kind of like eating an elephant — don't think about the whole thing, just take one little bite at a time. And before you know it, you have walked a mile. You've walked two miles. You've run 500 yards. It just takes the initiative. And there's lots of support. That's the thing. There're a million other people like her thinking those same thoughts, but there's so much support in our group. There really is.

TW: Go buy you some shoes, go buy you a nice workout outfit, whatever's going to motivate you. Go buy you a dress that's maybe a size smaller, whatever's going to get you out there. And have fun — don't make it like a chore! It's not beating yourself up. It's about enjoying what you're doing. ✦



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Someone's Listening

Making it easier for students to report bullying and other problems in a post-Parkland world

BY ***Chantal Corcoran***



Today's teenagers were mere toddlers, if they were yet born at all, when the post-9/11 warning *If you see something, say something* became a nationally recognized motto. This means Nevada's children have known this advice their whole lives. But *Snitches get stitches* is another common phrase — particularly among bullies — and saying what you've seen isn't always so easy.

The people at the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) realize this, which is why, in support of Nevada's anti-bullying laws, they spent a full year seeking an effective communication model to implement here. They found one in Safe2Tell Colorado, an anonymous reporting platform created in response to the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, when investigations confirmed that several students knew about the shooters' plans, but none spoke up.

Since its 2004 implementation, according to Colorado's Safe2Tell.org, 30,253 tips have been received. Most commonly reported, in the 2016-2017 school year, were suicide threats, bullying, drugs, cutting, and depression, in that order. But there's a long list of lesser-reported concerns, like child abuse, sexting, anger issues, dating violence, and vandalism. Also that year, officials responded to 294 tips concerning planned school attacks, possibly thwarting tragedies and saving lives.

Now, NDE is rolling out its own safe-to-tell program, modeled after Colorado's. SafeVoice is a 24/7/365 anonymous tip line that will be available to students, parents, and the community just in time for the 2018-2019 school year. And, likely, just in time to save lives, considering Nevada's suicide

FOR THE CHILDREN

5 Happy KIDS

May is Mental Health Month, and May 10 is Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. Here's one way you can mark the occasion: a two-day summit on the subject, May 10 and 11, open to parents and professionals alike. Panels will focus on topics including bullying and suicide prevention; children's safety issues; and substance-exposed infants. Representatives from mental health boards will discuss provider network adequacy. A reception the evening of May 10 will see youths, parents, and providers discuss the mental-health needs of children and families in Las Vegas and how best to increase these much-needed resources. The event is sponsored by the Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium and the Nevada Executive Committee to Review the Deaths of Children. (Location still to be announced.) For more details, and to register, visit eventbrite.com and search children's mental health summit. **Chantal Corcoran**

ILLUSTRATION ***Brent Holmes***

rates have spiked, again; cyber-bullying is at an all-time high, in an age when sharing nude pictures has become as prevalent in teen culture as drugs and alcohol; and school shootings are happening at a rate of 1.4 per week in America.

"There are three mechanisms for reporting," explains Kenji Okuma, a sergeant with Nevada Department of Public Safety, and the operations and communications manager of SafeVoice. The first is with a phone call to the Safe Voice Communications Center; the second is through the website; and the third, and most popular among kids (in Colorado), is a SafeVoice app that enables students to anonymously live chat with SafeVoice staffers. The platform also allows for receiving uploaded photos and videos, and app information will be handily available on the back of student I.D. cards. (Because the program isn't fully running yet, SafeVoice isn't widely releasing the phone number, web address, or app info to the public.)

Already, half the students in Nevada have access to SafeVoice, the first phase of the program having rolled out in January. As of early April, 1,650 anonymous tips had been received — an average of about 18 a day.

"We were surprised by the amount of tips that were coming in," Okuma admits, and he explains that the program plans to expand its personnel and resources for the rollout of the second phase, in August, when it stands to reason incoming calls could double.

Thus far, bullying has been the number one concern, according to Christy McGill, director of the NDE's Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment (OSRLE), followed by suicide threats, then school safety issues, which include threats of attack.

"Across the board, we see the same types of tips coming in from elementary school all the way up to high school," Okuma says. "It's funny because we get tips where kids call in (because) they're upset with a teacher. They give them too much homework or they're just not nice. At the same time, we get tips, at a very young age, where kids are talking about wanting to hurt themselves or are planning to kill themselves."

Suicidal ideation in younger kids — as young as 9 and 10 — has become a real problem, according to Dr. Debora Barney, a psychiatrist with the Center for Emotional Health who specializes in child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry. While she can't say definitively what's causing this, she believes bullying, depression, and

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low self-esteem from underperforming in school are all factors.

"I think children, when they've been bullied, tend to isolate," Barney explains. "Once they start isolating and internalizing, it escalates to anxiety and depression, and the more alone they are the less they know how to cope. That's when things continue to deteriorate and lead to suicidal thoughts."

A primary concern Barney had when she learned of SafeVoice was that the kids' reports were received as seriously as they are delivered. "If they report, and they don't see any action, where does that leave them?" she asks.

SafeVoice response times are pretty much immediate — as in mere minutes. Then, each tip is analyzed to determine the appropriate organization to forward it to: law enforcement, perhaps, or three-person multidisciplinary teams at the relevant school, or behavioral-health professionals who will visit the school or home to assess a child's danger and institute a safety plan. Depending on the issue, the tip might be forwarded to all of them.

SafeVoice will also follow up with a school if a tip report maintains open status for more than a few days, thus enforcing accountability. Each school also has a SafeVoice liaison to step in, if necessary. For tips alleging adult to child bullying, OSRLE has oversight responsibility.

"We wanted to make sure we did not have that gap here, in Nevada," McGill says, referring to the February 14 shooting in Parkland, Florida. In that case, the shooter, who had a history of making threats, appears to have slipped through the cracks.

Even in its introductory phase, Okuma is impressed with the program's success. Kids, too, are live-chatting their appreciation in response to being heard. "What it comes down to," he says, "is a good communication platform like this, coupled with the diligence of our partners. That's how we stop bad things from happening." ✦



SIX | **EXIT INTERVIEW**

Joseph Pepe

Retiring bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Vegas

BY ***Paul Szydelko***

A plaque marking Bishop Joseph A. Pepe's final resting place has been engraved with his birthdate of June 18, 1942-, and set near the front of the Guardian Angel Cathedral on the Strip. Early in his almost 17-year stewardship of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Vegas, Pepe decided he wanted to be buried here as a symbol against the transient nature of the city.

Having recently reached mandatory retirement age at 75, Pepe offered his resignation to Pope Francis, who appointed the Most Reverend George Leo Thomas of Montana as the new Bishop of Las Vegas. Thomas will be installed on May 15.

Pepe, a native of Philadelphia and not nearly ready for the "hole," will become Bishop Emeritus and continue to serve on several boards, including the International Dominican Foundation, the Vatican Library and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. Pepe reflected on his time in Las Vegas.

What has surprised you about this city?

Everybody throughout the world looks at the Strip and thinks that's it. Some bishops believe that my major job is to go through casinos pulling people away from slot machines, getting the dancing girls from the stage and saving their souls.

That was my first impression. But I leave knowing that our people are very active in the services of the church and also in the outreach of the church. That's what struck me — you'd go to a parish, and it would have a sophisticated program to help people who were homeless or hungry.

I never saw this in Philadelphia. It was paper and glue in other dioceses. At St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, a woman who has been volunteering for more than 20 years filled a room as big as this (conference room) every week with all kinds of food, and it would all go on Thursdays to Catholic Charities. She's now doing that at Holy Spirit.

Plus, the participation! My mother, who's 96, cried when she (used to go) to her church

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Brent Holmes***

(in Philadelphia). It has a 1,500-seat capacity, as big as the Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer, and there, she sees about 200 people at their major Mass. Can you imagine what that looks like? It looks like three people are there. She would come here, and on Thanksgiving, St. John Neumann would be packed with people.

Young people recently led demonstrations against gun violence. What's the intersection of Catholicism and political activism?

We're a nonprofit, so you have to be careful about how you engage. It's been a fallacy in American society to sidestep religious organizations to have a place in the political forum. Everybody has a voice. It's wrong to say this one does not have a voice because it's religious. You want to hear all the religions so that you have some idea of the diversity.

We should have a voice; you don't have to accept it. Pope Francis has pushed this a lot in his encyclicals and the responsibility for us to do that — to have a voice, to explain (our) values.

Your time here was punctuated by 9/11 and the October 1 shooting. When horrific things happen and people may tend to lose hope, what's your message?

First, recognize the power of evil in the world. It is so intrusive and so subtle that it makes us callous to certain things and puts in our community people who are probably very deprived and weakened.

We have games (and other entertainment) that are violent. I was looking at a television show, and this guy was mad. He throws lamps on the floor and pushes a bookcase over. We're saying, "Boy, this is a great movie." But it's making us callous and insensitive, and making it more open to a person who has these sicknesses and saying, "You know, everybody does it, so I will objectivize it."

It's like a video game. That man (the October 1 shooter) felt that those bodies were nothing to him except something that has got scores on the top. That's the dangerous thing. It's very persuasive.

What can we do?

What we have to tell people is this: You have to be the sign in the world. You have to be the sign of people who have stability in your life, a sense of love and appreciation, a sense of gentleness and kindness — to bring that into your community and make it a reality.

That's the thing you have to remember: People have deep within themselves a sense of God, and that's what we have to bring out. We can't answer the evil in the world by being flippant. The more that we put into our own human values and sense of dignity of other people, the more we'll have a better world.

Pope Francis seems to have an appreciation for symbolic gestures that don't change the church's dogma but shift the tone. Is that his intent?

That is his intent. That is his gift. He gives a sense of an engagement of people that they can identify with. ... Francis is building on those perceptions. ...

He is putting in a very practical way the message of the traditions of the church. He's making us stop and say, "We have to question what we look like and how we have to change that look so people will be attracted to it."

What is the state of the diocese?

It's in excellent shape as far as the people participating (going to church almost regularly). The number that the Holy See has is 605,000. When I came, I don't think it was 400,000 yet. So it really grew. ... There are a total of 800,000 Catholics here.

With only 77 active priests (about half on loan from other dioceses or semi-retired), how have you addressed the shortage?

That's one of the big puzzles here. Because it's such a transient community, it's hard to get a legacy of stability. Compare it with Bishop Thomas, in a rural culture like Montana: He ordained 14 priests and has a larger number of candidates for priesthood. ... What we're trying to do here is build a true Catholic community that has stability and has a base in which we can get vocations. That was my strategic plan, and I don't know how far we got.

You have made plans to be buried at Guardian Angel. Why?

I saw there was so much transience. It's hard here because of the culture; it makes things unsettled. Most of the other bishops looked for another place as they went through here. This was a stepping-stone. I said, I'm not going to have that happen. In my second year, I said I wanted to be buried in this cathedral, so I got the permit to be buried. ...

So now I have a hole, and that's the next big thing that's going to happen to me. Last night (March 27) was the last time I had the Chrism Mass (in which the Bishop blesses holy oils used in sacraments in diocesan parishes throughout the year). It was nice to think that this year, all the blessings received from the sacraments will have my blessing. ✦

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SEVEN | **OPEN TOPIC**

Swiss Army Teachers

There doesn't seem to be a limit to the extra duties we pile on educators

BY ***Lissa Townsend Rodgers***

The first meeting of Nevada's School Safety Task Force takes place this month. Created in response to the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, that left 17 dead, the group of politicians, policymakers, and principals will, per Governor Brian Sandoval's executive order, "identify and recommend those school safety practices best suited for implementation in some or all of Nevada's schools." But whatever this blue-ribbon group decides, whatever action it mandates, it will fall to the teachers of Nevada to enact it.

It's unlikely that teachers will be asked to carry weapons in the classroom. Sandoval's already said, "the consensus was that most of the school districts chose not to do that." For good reason. There have already been incidents of teachers forgetting guns in bathrooms (to be found by students) or accidentally firing a weapon in class (injuring a student). Heck, ask any teacher how many times they've lost their keys or had their stapler jam or misfire. I used to be a teacher, so I know.

Still, asking teachers to be armed security guards would be par for

ILLUSTRATION ***Brent Holmes***

the course. After all, teachers are already expected to be therapists, secretaries, fundraisers, statisticians, actors, lawyers, writers, waiters, custodians, IT guys. It's an awful lot to put on people who can't even go to the bathroom when they want, and it's also unique to the teaching profession. We don't assume the DMV clerk will arrange for kids' school uniforms; we don't expect hospital nurses to direct parking-lot traffic before their shift. Yet we have no compunction about asking educators to do so.

There seem to be two schools of thought behind this. One: Many still cling to the notion that a teacher's workday is only the hours they're with students — and, besides, teachers spend three months of the year lounging in swimming pools, wearing designer sunglasses, and nibbling on imported bonbons. Which is not, shall we say, entirely accurate. A 2015 study by the Trades Union Congress found that teachers are more likely to put in unpaid overtime than members of any other profession, at an average of 13 hours a week. Many work second jobs year-round, and that three-month vacay is more like six or eight weeks once you factor in room breakdown and setup, year-opening preparations, and required continuing-ed classes.

The other reason teachers wind up carrying the extra weight is, frankly, they're the only ones who will. A survey by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation found that 85 percent of teachers entered the profession because they "wanted to make a difference," not just earn a paycheck.

Practically, teachers know better than anyone that being hungry or scared, needing glasses or a coat hurts a child's ability to learn — but they're also among the few who see that child as a name, a face, a fondness for string cheese and books about elephants, and not just a data point or dollar amount. As they struggle to be therapists, secretaries, fundraisers, statisticians, actors, lawyers, writers, waiters, custodians, and IT guys, being a teacher can sometimes make Sisyphus' gig seem like carrying a box of Kleenex up a short flight of stairs.

Those who figure that the camel's back can bend just a little more ought to cast a wary eye on the teacher strikes in West Virginia and Oklahoma. You only have to look at Oklahoma's tattered textbooks, the four-day school schedules, and the gaping holes in the education budget to realize that, once again, teachers are stepping up to fight for their students when no one else will. West Virginia teachers even assembled care packages (on their own time and with their own money, as usual) to make sure that students who relied on school breakfasts and lunches didn't go hungry while schools were closed.

Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos lambasted teachers, telling them they had to get back to work to "serve the students" — once again, relying on teachers' sense of duty and desire to "make a difference" to make up the difference while others pass the ever-shrinking buck. Oklahoma teachers pulled the second-lowest starting salary in the nation and hadn't had a raise in a decade; and spiraling health-insurance premiums were eating ever-increasing chunks of West Virginia's teachers' paychecks. A desire to make a difference can only ward off those realities for so long. Teacher Appreciation Week (May 7-11) seems like a good time to reflect on this state of affairs.

Whatever Nevada's School Safety Task Force finally decrees, the Silver State's teachers will no doubt do their best to execute it, carving another little sliver out of an already stretched-out and subdivided day for another round of training, another folder full of paperwork. They'll try to strike the right note of soothing and scared as they guide 8-year-olds through active-shooter drills. They'll stay late to talk to that teen who's been especially on edge lately — and even later to track down a counseling referral. They'll keep doing whatever needs to be done … so other people don't have to. ✦

EIGHT | **FEEL-GOOD IDEAS FOR TROUBLED TIMES**

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ALL OUT

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



FASHION

One Haute Summer

Five local style bloggers pick their favorite seasonal trends to explore for the hot season

COMPILED BY ***Christie Moeller***
ILLUSTRATION ***by Kristina Collantes***

Rainbow stripes Bright, colorful stripes are everywhere this season, from vertical to horizontal, broad-banded to pencil-thin, duo-tones to full rainbow. The key to wearing them right is to choose a silhouette that flatters your frame and focuses on your physical pluses. My favorites this season are from Alice + Olivia (Neiman Marcus) and Marc Jacobs (Forum Shops at Caesars). ***— Christie Moeller, icanstyleu.com/blog***

Mixing prints The easiest prints to mix for men are checks, stripes, houndstooth, and polka-dots. The key is to stay in the same color palette to avoid any clownish clashing. When it comes to mixing prints of the same pattern, the rule of thumb is to play with proportion. For example, mix little checks with big checks, small stripes with big stripes, and so on. Nordstrom and Zara are our go-to spots for men's prints. ***— Lindsey Simon Gurk, thenomisniche.com***

Hawaiian prints Channel your inner Raoul Duke (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*) this season in the Big Kahuna of men's trends: Hawaiian prints. The "aloha" trend can be found everywhere from the edgy cuts at DSQUARED2 (The Shops at Crystals) to timeless classics at Tommy Bahama (Town Square, Fashion Show, Forum Shops at Caesars, Miracle Mile Shops). Choose an accent color in your tropical shirt and find pants in that color, or take the background color of your patterned shirt and pair it with matching shorts or pants. ***— Christie Moeller***



Ruffle details Ruffles used to be considered feminine, and as someone whose style is far from girly, I used to steer clear of them. But this season, ruffles with a dash of flair and dare cannot be ignored. Whether you prefer a lot or a little, bold or subdued, you'll be sure to find something that fits your style. One of my favorite shopping spots is Target. Their "Who What Where" collection has great ruffle pieces right now. ***— Marisela Altamirano, diversecitystyle.com***



Florals Floral prints will forever be a spring staple, but if you want to add a modern twist, wear the trend on unique and unexpected pieces. A full floral pantsuit is the perfect mix of masculine and feminine. I've found some of my best floral suits at Zara and TOPSHOP. ***— Lindsey Simon Gurk***

Pointy-toe heels The always-classy and completely sophisticated pointy-toe pump is on trend this season. How could you not adore this leg-flattering trend? DSW has a fantastic selection, and I love pairing them with flouncy dresses from Ted Baker. ***— Jeanette Radmall, jeanetterenee.com***

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DINING WITH DAD
Left, "Big Henry" Rodgers at Emeril's Fish House in the MGM circa 2001 (far left, the author); below, Rodgers and wife Reenie at a Poughkeepsie bar in the '70s.

DINING | MEMOIR

An Education, Bite by Bite

With every filet mignon and flaming meringue, my father was teaching me to eat well — and live grandly

BY ***Lissa Townsend Rodgers***

My mother, my grandmother, a few roommates, and a half-dozen books taught me how to cook. My father taught me how to eat. When I remember him, it's at a table, a plate of steak or scallops in front of him, a glass of single-batch bourbon or seasonal microbrew at his elbow, friends and family on either side, and a wide grin on his face. He liked to eat and to listen, which is how he wound up married to a woman who could cook a five-course gourmet meal and keep the conversation going all the way through it. (Sometimes single-handedly.)

When I was about 6, my parents began training my brother and me at home for "fancy dinners": having us dress up, practice our manners and our table conversation. My mother had grown up in the Hudson Valley. Her father was an engineer; she'd gone to one of those '50s "women's colleges." Ask me where my father Henry's family comes from, and my short answer is "10 minutes from where they shot *The Deer Hunter*." He developed his appreciation of single-malt Scotch and oysters Rockefeller, Miles Davis and David McCullough the same way he earned academic awards and football trophies: He went out and did it himself.

The training made sense when my parents took me to New Orleans. After a long day as an executive at IBM, my father helped run the local credit union (yes, he was the kind of guy who took on massive fiduciary duties as a hobby). He got to go to banking conventions several times a year, bringing my mom and either my brother or me along. We flew south on one of those old Boeing 747s where first-class had its own private cocktail lounge, reached by a whirly little spiral staircase. I was eight years old, wore a tiny houndstooth suit, swilled Shirley Temples, and chirped at businessmen about what I'd learned from reading all the books about New Orleans in our school library twice.

The highlight was dinner at the legendary Antoine's restaurant. We sat in a high-ceilinged room whose glossy white gingerbread cornices glowed under gas lamps. I ate filet mignon, marveling at this perfect little steak I could cut myself. The pinnacle of the evening was when the waiter approached our table bearing something called baked Alaska, a flaming meringue with the legend "Antoine's 1868" scrolled across in it icing. I was enthralled. I understood why a dinner was worth traveling for, worth dressing up for, worth spending money on. I realized that food didn't just fill your stomach, but could feed some other part of you. (For the next several years, I demanded baked Alaska for my birthday cake, much to the chagrin of the mothers of little girls who went home from my parties and, in turn, demanded baked Alaska.)

When I turned 16, I didn't want a party: I wanted dinner at Le Pavillon, an old-school, big-occasion French restaurant located in a countryside mansion. I still ordered filet mignon, but also escargot because it was sophisticated. When I graduated high school — again, no party: I wanted dinner at the Culinary Institute of America. Not the classic French Bocuse Room, but the American Bounty, then a fresh example of new American cuisine and an early groping toward farm-to-table in the era of artichokes and sun-dried tomatoes. (I wore a tuxedo my dad's tailor had altered; my mother still teases me about how all the CIA sophomore busboys tripped over themselves refilling teenaged Marlene Dietrich's water glass.)

My tenure in New York City (first at NYU and then at a range of now-defunct magazines and websites) became an extended tour of the city's best steakhouses. We ate at Peter

PHOTOS COURTESY THE AUTHOR


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Luger's, the Brooklyn temple to surly waiters and minimalist menus — steak for one, steak for two, steak for four, everything doused in Luger's steak sauce or dollops of schlag. (My father's Peter Luger credit card was the only sliver of plastic in his crammed wallet that he felt carried any real prestige.) At Sparks Steakhouse, wise guys with cellphones the size of shoeboxes gave me a once-over and nodded respectfully in dad's direction, and I switched from medium to medium-rare, from filet mignon to sirloin. We joined the Knicks' pre-game crowd at Keens Steakhouse, where "Big Henry" blended in with the other former athletes, now graying, in custom sports coats. We'd get a shellfish platter to start, Courvoisier to finish, and Chateaubriand somewhere in the middle.

It wasn't all red meat. We'd go to Calle Ocho, a Latin fusion restaurant with Beetlejuice decor, hipster bistros like Café Luxembourg or Balthazar, eat roasted salmon from Beacon's wood-fired oven. When I moved to Las Vegas, dad was unhappy that we'd no longer have visits on weekends, but: Vegas! When I was a kid, he'd often told us of his business trips here in the '80s, all Bacchanal buffets and Siegfried & Roy making tigers disappear.

The Golden Steer became his designated steakhouse (or, as he called it, "the Purple Cow"), and Dean Martin's booth was our usual seat. He'd get a porterhouse, mom the filet. I'd have to divide six months' worth of what I'd been up to over several nights' dinner conversation, so I was always grateful when the waiters rolled up their carts and allowed us to be an appreciative audience for the tableside Caesar salad or Bananas Foster. Dad dug the golf-course views, heaps of shellfish, and Dixieland combos at the Wynn Country Club's brunch (once we had a table next to Paul Anka and Steve Wynn, who were accompanied by a squad of statuesque women on stilettos).

My father's favorite spot was likely Sinatra at Encore. Cioppino and tiramisu were two of his favorite dishes anywhere, and he loved the timeless versions served there. The atmosphere and soundtrack also met with his approval; even the most jaded of my New York journalist friends described him as "like the last of the Rat Pack." (When we went to Frank's favorite Palm Springs steakhouse, the owner wound up coming out to talk Sinatra and Steelers with my dad until closing; when we spent one Thanksgiving dining with a few retired burlesque queens from Frank's Vegas years, they cooed over my father like he was at least Dean. My mother just smiled benignly.)

When he passed away, a month before my birthday, my father was speculating on where we should go to celebrate — Sinatra, "the Cow," somewhere new. He wasn't sure he'd be able to make the trip, but he was thumbing through the most recent Las Vegas restaurant guide just the same.

My mother has been packing up the house in New York where she and my father lived for 44 years, the appeal of being nearer to my brother and the grandbaby and living without stairs having grown too great to resist. Over the holidays, we went to Schuler's, a restaurant near the new home in Michigan and, by way of coincidence, the site of my father's first fine-dining experience. It was back in the late 1950s, when he was going to Wabash College on scholarship: His coach knew the owner of Schuler's and took the team there after games. I imagine my father taking it all in, the white tablecloths and the dark-paneled walls, the shrimp cocktails and thick steaks, and deciding that this was something special, something worth traveling for, worth dressing up for, worth working for ... and worth sharing.

I have a number of things to remember my father by: a cat, cufflinks, two pocket watches, half a bottle of Johnnie Walker Blue, and a collection of vintage vinyl that would make any DJ's fingers itch. But, more than that, he's left me hundreds of memorable dinners — and an appreciation of the sheer occasion of sitting down to eat. ✦

Two great tastes

May is a great month for getting a taste of the town. Two culinary events — the venerable Strip-centric Vegas Uncork'd and locally focused Vegas UnStripped — serve up multiple courses of chef meet-and-greets, themed dinners and parties. Which one is right for you?

VEGAS UNCORK'D BY BON APPETIT MAY 10-13
Vegas Uncork'd returns to the Strip for its 12th year, a whirlwind of fine food, high-concept mixology, and culinary starpower. Headliners include lots of high-wattage names — Guy Savoy, Michael Mina, Giada De Laurentiis, Julian Serrano, to name a few, and includes events such as "An Anniversary Celebration at Nobu," and "Rao's Remembers Frank Sr." The roster also includes Hell's Kitchen at Caesars Palace, Sunset Clambake at The Cosmopolitan, The Mob Museum, and CUT by Wolfgang Puck at The Palazzo.
GO IF YOU'RE: a jet-setting foodie who unabashedly embraces the term "foodie" and knows someone who knows someone who once ate at El Bulli.
THIS KINDA CAPTURES THE VIBE: "The Chefs of Thomas Keller Present a French Soirée."
GLAM TO NOM RATIO: 1:1
SUGGESTED INSTAGRAM FILTERS: Valencia, Amaro
TICKETS: vegasuncorked.com



VEGAS UNSTRIPPED MAY 12
This inaugural, one-night food festival aims to be a celebration of the Las Vegas Valley's independent, off-Strip talent. Slated to take place in Downtown's Arts District, chefs include Chefs Brian Howard (Sparrow + Wolf), Chris Decker (Metro Pizza/Lulus Bread & Breakfast), Dan Krohmer (Other Mama), James Trees (Esther's Kitchen), Jamie Tran (The Black Sheep), Jason Olson (Paid In Full), Sheridan Su (Flock & Fowl/Fat Choy), Khai Vu (District One/Le Pho/Mordeo Boutique Wine Bar) and more.
GO IF YOU'RE: an earthy, unfussy gastronome who sees the major food groups represented in a legit bowl of pho and an Old Fashioned.
THIS KINDA CAPTURES THE VIBE: Chef Howard might just roast an entire pig.
GLAM TO NOM RATIO: 1:3
SUGGESTED INSTAGRAM FILTERS: Lo-Fi, Brannan
TICKETS: unstripped.brownpapertickets.com *Andrew Kiraly*



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BOOKS | BIOGRAPHY

The Builder

Biography of Kirk Kerkorian adds rich detail to a life of historic scope

BY ***John L. Smith***



As private men in a public business, it's inevitable Kirk Kerkorian would draw a comparison with Howard Hughes. Both were aviators and gamblers who made a reputation in the movie industry and rose to prominence in Las Vegas in the latter part of the 1960s. They were wealthy beyond most imaginations, and the press commonly called them reclusive.

But as readers of William C. Rempel's fascinating *The Gambler: How Penniless Dropout Kirk Kerkorian Became the Greatest Dealmaker in Capitalist History* will soon appreciate, when it came to foundational impact on Las Vegas, there's really no comparison.

This isn't a dismissal of Hughes' historical importance to Southern Nevada. Certainly his rapid purchase of a string of hotel-casinos helped Las Vegas shake its mobbed-up shadow at a critical time. Although Hughes was no builder, the company that bears his name is a testament to the great potential he had for development — but never fulfilled — during his four-year residency here. In simple truth, his Las Vegas life was too shrouded in strangeness to compare much at all to the real Kerkorian story.

The two were friends who became rivals. Kerkorian's understated doggedness brought out the pettiness in Hughes, who imagined himself as the new king of Las Vegas. But Kerkorian was built of sturdier stock.

Born Kerkor Kerkorian in 1917 in Fresno, California, he inherited his gambler's entrepreneurial spirit from his father, Ahron, an illiterate Armenian immigrant who won and lost a fortune as a farmer and producer of raisins during World War I. Young Kirk dropped out of school after the eighth grade,

KERKORIAN: ASSOCIATED PRESS



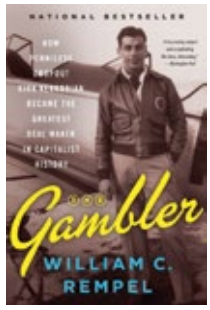
LOVE AT FIRST KAPOW!

A heartwarming story for Free Comic Book Day

Comic books have a funny way of impacting lives. I play tabletop games and collect comics, which is why I spent much of my free time at Avatar Comics & Games on Charleston and Rainbow. I was playing in a Magic: The Gathering event in October 2015 when a woman came in looking for Captain America comics. She heard the nerd banter coming from my friends and me, and was somehow captivated. She messaged some friends, who told her she couldn't leave until she knew three strangers' names. She stayed for six hours. Soon she was a regular visitor to the shop. Less than two months later, we began dating. Still are. ● Comics and games have an abnormal capacity for bringing people together from all walks of life. Some of my greatest friends I met in comic and game stores. Though Avatar has closed, what I gained from it will stay with me for a long time. Free Comic Book Day, May 5 (freecomicbookday.com), is a wonderful event that pulls together new and old fans of the culture to celebrate stories and hobbies together. If you've ever been on the fence about graphic storytelling, take the plunge. You might find something — or someone — to love. **Jakub Cernoch**

hawked newspapers, sold watermelons, and boxed in smoky undercard fights as "Rifle Right Kerkorian."

He flew with the Royal Air Force Ferry Command, bought and sold airplanes and airline stock, and became intimately familiar with post-WW II Las Vegas. He had a winning track record as an investor and was a millionaire several times over by the time he took his architectural plans for the International Hotel and Casino from the drawing board to the construction site next to the Las Vegas Convention Center. It was the biggest gamble of his life, and his finances weren't secure.



MYTH BUSTER
The Gambler dispels the idea that Kerkorian was a Hughes-like recluse, and portrays him as a multifaceted man.

Worse, Hughes was playing with Kerkorian's mind by announcing an even larger project. Despite his mounting eccentricities, the Hughes machine managed to keep his image sparkling in the media. While Kerkorian was chided as "a ham sandwich Howard Hughes," Hughes received overhyped headlines and breathless coverage.

But Hughes's one-time chief cheerleader, *Las Vegas Sun* publisher Hank Greenspun, would eventually provide invaluable insight to the up-and-coming Kerkorian. "They had a series of evening conversations," Rempel writes. "The newspaperman was sure his friend had 'spent a few sleepless nights worrying about Hughes' new plans.' Kirk acknowledged he was pondering whether to fold and walk away from the International, but Greenspun pressed him to call his rival's bluff. Hughes, he said, 'doesn't build — he merely buys.'"

Kerkorian stayed in the game, got the International financed, and made Las Vegas history by not only opening what was in 1969 the largest hotel in the world, but by polishing the stars of Barbra Streisand and Elvis Presley in the process.

Although he had too few skeptics in the press, by 1970 it was clear the Hughes promise to build a new Las Vegas was more hot air than reality. Greenspun was right about him. By the time he left town that year, the only thing Hughes had built in Las Vegas was his reputation as a deeply troubled man. Kerkorian, meanwhile, was just getting started with a new chapter of his amazing American success story.

While the author is clearly intrigued by his subject, *The Gambler* is no Horatio Alger romance. Rempel brings the remarkable reporting chops he honed as an award-winning investigative reporter with the *Los Angeles Times* to the biographer's craft. He's written a lively rags-to-riches story filled with anecdotes of Kerkorian's many business gambles.

Some losses transcended any spreadsheet. The November 21, 1980, fire at the first MGM Grand killed 85 people and devastated Kerkorian. He rebuilt and spent two years actively attempting to settle with the affected families. Although he eventually sold the resort to Bally, Kerkorian's effort protected the brand.

The book helps fracture the image of Kerkorian as a Hughes-like recluse. He wasn't a guy who remained locked in his suite. In addition to building the largest hotel-casino in the world three times, Kerkorian rose from poverty to become a billionaire, served his country, traveled the world, dated impeccably, enjoyed rock-solid friendships, gave generously to charity, maintained a healthy lifestyle, and lived to a remarkable age of 98, dying in 2015.

"He avoided press interviews most of his life, making him appear reclusive," Rempel writes. "He hated being compared to hermitlike Howard Hughes, whom he otherwise admired. Kirk had a thriving social life with celebrity friends and business associates — among them Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Tony Curtis."

While I never questioned Kerkorian at a press conference or landed a one-on-one interview, we had brief but pleasant exchanges at Piero's and the late, great Nicky Blair's. He didn't arrive at those restaurants in an armor-plated Maybach with bulletproof windows and a phalanx of bodyguards, but in a late-model American-made sedan of the kind your parents might have owned.

Kerkorian's bittersweet late-life relationship with former tennis professional Lisa Bonder, something he came to regret deeply, is also detailed in the book without excessive sensationalism. Frankly, I found Kerkorian's obsession with tennis — he won senior circuit tournaments well into his 80s — more interesting. It was a reminder that a competitive fire still burned in that formerly poor boy from Fresno.

With *The Gambler*, Rempel has done Las Vegas and a generation of business entrepreneurs a great service, adding rich detail to the business titan's deals and controversies. Kerkorian's life is a reminder of how far Americans can go if they keep punching and learn to go all in at just the right moment. ✦

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ANIMAL FARM
by George Orwell (adapted by Ian Wooldridge), May 17-June 3, $15-$25, 1217 S. Main St., majesticrepertory.com

No More Mr. Nice Sty

Ear cocked to the political zeitgeist, Troy Heard shepherds Orwell's searing Animal Farm *onto the stage*

BY ***Scott Dickensheets***

If power *oinks*, absolute power *oinks* absolutely. This enduring truism plops us right into the piggish heart of *Animal Farm*, Orwell's satire of tyranny, which, like other works of his — recall the Trump bump in *1984*'s sales — seems so newly relevant to so many. From school, you may remember, if hazily, the basic summary: The livestock on Manor Farm drives off repressive farmer Jones and sets about creating a workers' paradise. Soon, predictably, Napoleon the pig seizes power, there's a purge, utopia is in tatters, the cowed animals learn that some animals are created more equal, oppression returns, and the big pig sinks to the level of humans.

This is the story Troy Heard is putting on the Majestic Repertory Theatre's stage this month, closing out the company's second season. If you mostly remember Heard as the madcap impresario of such shows as *Blood Orgy of the Chainsaw Chorus Line* and other macabre, out-there theatricals from his tenure at the Onyx Theater, you should know that these days — and this political climate — find him going for a little more "heft."

After negotiating fruitlessly with the Orwell estate for the rights to adapt *Animal Farm* himself, he eventually settled on an existing version that works in Majestic's small — let's say *intimate* — space on Main Street. We spoke to him recently to ask the very obvious question ...

Will this show be *Troy Heardified* — will there be chainsaws and zombies?

I've taken a step back from chainsaws and zombies this year. (Laughs.) Honestly, I don't know what people would expect from *Animal Farm,* because not many have seen the stage adaptation. They all know the book, and everyone has their own movie in their mind from the book. We've approached it with a strong sense of Americana. There's original music in the show, songs composed by Peter Fand. His background is in folk and Americana. So he brings a very interesting sound to it.

It's still the basic story. The reason this

ANIMAL FARM: COURTESY MAJESTIC REPERTORY

is a classic is that it's applicable to any country that has a ruler, be it Stalin, which was what Orwell was writing about, or Castro ... there's a lot of Trump in it. One of the main characters is Squealer, Napoleon's press secretary. When I cast it, I cast a guy who reminded me of Sean Spicer. But now he's had to become Sarah Huckabee Sanders. The guy who plays Napoleon asked me, "Do I have to play Trump?" I said, "Nah. We're going to play *this* the way *this* is, we're going to create this world, and everyone who sees it will be able to draw their own conclusions." It could be Trump, it could be their high school principal. It works across the board.

The subtitle of the book is *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*. It's very much a fable. These are animals going through this. Which is another reason why it's applicable to any dictatorship.

What made you want to do *Animal Farm* in the first place?

We call this our "revolutionary" season. We started planning it in November 2016. So we'd just gotten out of the election — you asked about zombies and chainsaws. Actually, it was nice to create a season that had a little more heft to it. The first season had *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Cherry Orchard* with zombies, *Carrie*, and so on. But that was a holdover from the Onyx, and it was very outré — I figured if you were coming to Commercial Center (where Onyx was located), it wasn't to see high art. (Laughs.)

But to be able to tell a story of our county, and reflect our community, reflect our state, reflect our nation onstage, that was a very interesting challenge. So I picked a slate of shows that reflected different elements. We opened up with *Hair* because it was the 50th anniversary of the summer of love, and in 2017 we found relevance, through race, through international relations. Even though we were still telling the story of '67, you draw your own conclusions. Take it through *Kid Sister*, which was about poverty in Florida, and *An Octoroon*, which is a modern representation of race, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, which is the flip side of *Octoroon*, and *Marie Antoinette*, which is the 1 percent onstage. And now we have another revolution. What a way to wrap up the season.

Do you have a sense that audiences are more primed for, as you say, "heft" and political meaning than two or three years ago — did something in the audience's mind turn with that election?

Absolutely, absolutely. I think we have a





whole new generation of young audiences who are more attuned to the political atmosphere than they were in the past 10 years. The key, though, is not to produce a didactic diatribe. It still has to be entertaining. *Octoroon* was one of the funniest scripts I've read. *Marie Antoinette* has 'em rolling in the aisles — until Act 2, when the revolution begins. You're gonna find that with *Animal Farm*.

What are the challenges of putting *Animal Farm* onstage?

Well, it's definitely a physical acting challenge, because you're portraying animals. They're playing honest emotions, the truth of the moment, but how do they convey which animal they are without a full animal costume? They're not walking around with a horse head on.

Will the actors incorporate animal *sounds* into the dialogue?

Some. We're playing around with what's the appropriate neigh, what's the appropriate oink. It'll take the audience a moment to adjust to the language: What does an oink mean in that world? Is it a negative thing, a positive thing? You've got to interpret it yourself. It's a little bit like Shakespeare.

Does it change the experience when the audience is so intimate with the production?

It does! When you see a show on the proscenium like at The Smith Center, you see things on a grand scale. And while you may be emotionally engaged, there's still a distancing. But when you're in such a small space, it's like having a conversation. And the other cool thing is, you see everybody else in the room. That's the one thing theater has over Netflix or anything you could watch at home — you're sharing the room with strangers. That's always been fascinating to me, to sit in an audience and know that at any moment you could stand up and shout. What keeps us from doing that?

Good question.

Well, that's the next step in entertainment: immersive theater that *involves* the audience. ✦

THE Hot Seat

Cinco de Mayo

EMELY LOTFE

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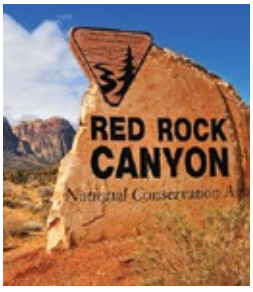
Not Mexican Independence Day, as many gringos assume, Cinco de Mayo celebrates an 1862 victory by the Mexican army over France's occupying army. Lotfe, a singer and TV personality, will perform Mexican and French songs from the period. **May 5, 6p, free, lvcclid.org**

Outdoors

FOSSIL RIDGE NIGHT HIKE

RED ROCK NAT'L CONSERVATION AREA

The 2.5-mile hike is considered "moderate difficulty" — right off the bat you gotta get up a 400-foot rise. But, oh, the payoff: Red Rock at sunset, followed by a full moon hanging over the desert. Worth it! **May 27, 702-515-5367**





Multimedia

12 INCHES OF SIN

NEW ORLEANS SQUARE

Sex is everywhere! From the headlines to the cineplex, from the Stormy-lashed White House to *winkwink* your house. Into this hothouse milieu comes Laura Henkel, gallerist, curator, and scholar of erotica, with a go-big-or-go-home iteration of her annual *12 Inches of Sin* sexapalooza. Begun years ago as a visual art exhibit in her tiny Sin City Gallery at the Arts Factory, *12 Inches* is now making the most of its newish home in New Orleans Square by utilizing a whopping 35,000 square feet not only for exhibits, but for performances and classes. The free juried exhibit includes many locals, such as Ali Fathollahi, Nanda Sharifpour, Amanda Keating, Brent Holmes, Clarice Tara, Nancy Good; others are from such exotic locales as Los Angeles (Eric Minh Swenson) and Salt Lake City (Eric Wallis); there may even be a Canadian. Friday will close with a two-hour cabaret ($30) featuring burlesque, performance art, and drag — locally recognizable names might include Aaron Sheppard, Blue Ruin, Cheyenne Sia Desoto. Saturday will feature classes on the value of erotic art, femme fashion basics, and 101s on pole-dancing and BDSM. The festival concludes with a gonzo performance ($30) by infamous band Tippy Elvis, plus related madness. "Art provides people the opportunity to explore, express, and learn," Henkel says. "(The event) provides a platform to engage in a manner that is not normally available to (the artists); *12* is all about art, and it's about really good art!" **May 11-12, various times, 900 E. Karen Ave., 12ofsin.com**

Atomic Art. Naval artist Arthur Beaumont's compelling watercolor of an atomic test on the Bikini Atoll is on temporary display at the Atomic Testing Museum. His son, Geoffrey, a Las Vegan, talks about his father's work. **May 11, 6:30p, $5, National Atomic Testing Museum, 702-794-5151**

Visual Art

KAREN Q. MILLER

WINCHESTER GALLERY

Miller's video installation, I Am Great?, zooms in close to its subjects' faces to explore shifts between self-confidence and anxiety — seeking the precise moment when that internal dialogue becomes external, in revealing microexpression. **May 24-June 29 (opening reception June 7), free, 702-455-7340**

Madeleine Peyroux. She's described as a "chanteuse," a word that evokes a jazzy but eclectic repertoire and a sultry stage presence. Check and check. **6 and 8:30p, The Smith Center, $39-$69, thesmithcenter.com**

Dance

CHUTHIS. DANCE

WEST LAS VEGAS LIBRARY

Peter Chu's choreography, as expressed by his Vegas-based troupe, Chuthis., balances fluidity and sharpness, while drawing inspiration from different dance milieus: urban, theatrical, contemporary. Sounds like it should command the stage. **7p, May 4 and 2p, May 5, free, lvccld.org**





ENTERTAINMENT | THE STRIP

Some Like It Hot

But will enough people like a Monroe-themed casino musical to help *Marilyn!* beat the odds?

BY ***Mike Weatherford***

So many possible reasons why casino-based entertainment is in a slump. So many more when it comes to explaining why Broadway musicals come *to* Las Vegas, not *from* Las Vegas. Might as well start with the funny one.

"As soon as you land at McCarran airport, you're all of a sudden cheesy. There's a cheese mist on the runway." This is from Tegan Summer, who knows what he faces as the writer, director, and producer of *Marilyn! The New Musical*, which officially debuts June 1 at Paris Las Vegas. (Previews begin May 23.)

"I've heard from every single naysayer, every single Cassandra, every prophet of doom," Summer says of his stage bio of the screen goddess, produced in conjunction with Authentic Brands Group, the keepers of Marilyn Monroe's estate.

The subtitle *New Musical* spells out both the novelty and challenge of a legit "book show" that must distance itself from Marilyn's long history of cameos in *Legends in Concert* and Rat Pack tributes. But that might be the least of the British impresario's concerns. You can debate whether Cirque du Soleil has reached saturation on the Strip, but no one is confusing Cirque's quality with the *Nudes on Ice* era of Vegas camp.

And, yes, Broadway musicals have a long track record in casinos, including long-term runs for *Jersey Boys* and *Mamma Mia!* Certainly, the *Marilyn* cast is deep with Broadway transplants, including lead Ruby Lewis, who moves over from The Venetian's *Baz — A Musical Tour de Force* (the closest genre competition to *Marilyn*).

But the last two attempts to launch a new musical on the Strip? They were the kind of bombs *The Producers* huckster Max Bialystock prayed for. *Surf the Musical*, with a Beach Boys-licensed jukebox, lasted two months in 2012. And a musical spin on the redneck reality-TV hit *Duck Dynasty* ran just six weeks in 2015.

Perhaps they were isolated cases, with no common cause for failure. The first-time producers of *Surf* had more dollars than sense, blowing through a reported $10 million without a trial run or workshop. *Duck* was simply a terrible idea — neither

Broadway buffs nor the TV clan's fans wanted to see it.

Still, you can't fault the Gloria Estefan bio *On Your Feet*, or last year's new musical *Bandstand* for sticking to the established paths to Broadway, with trial runs in Chicago and New Jersey, despite their local ties: Siegfried & Roy manager Bernie Yuman is a *Feet* producer, and Vegas-based *Bandstand* composer Richard Oberacker tested songs in The Smith Center's *Composers Showcase*.

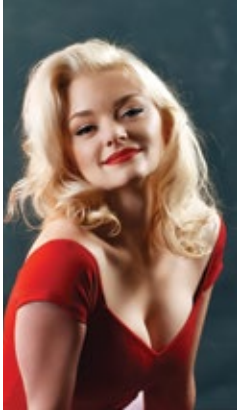
But Summer cites the saying, "Be the change you want to see." He moved his production company, Prospect House, to Las Vegas, and plans to put up two more new works: a burlesque revue about cult pin-up queen Bettie Page, and an EDM musical with star DJ Steve Aoki.

"Why get up in the morning if I'm a producer and I don't want to produce?" he says.

The Strip's craze for concert star residencies is the only real suspect to blame for creative doldrums in the showrooms. Ticket-buyers in general seem more cautious and in search of a sure thing, whether it's branded fare such as *Frozen* on Broadway, or The Cosmopolitan's new *Opium*, a variation on the comic acrobatics of sister show *Absinthe*.

"No one has a magic wand," Summer says. "I certainly don't."

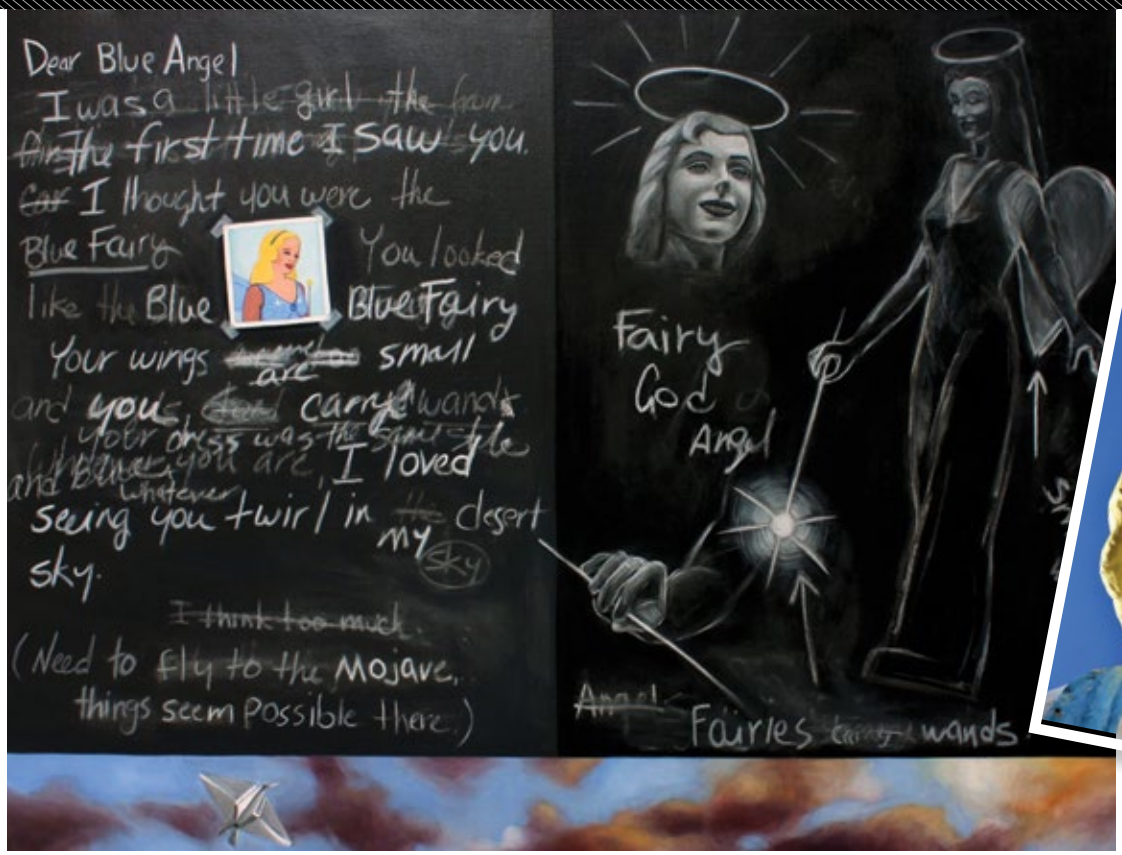
But maybe he has a secret weapon. After opening *Marilyn!* and making sure everyone likes it — "We're a quality show, but we can't prove it yet until it's on its feet" — his plan is to bring in a pop, country, or film star to headline for a month or six weeks. (*Pitch Perfect* co-star Kelley Jakle starred in the musical's Pasadena trial run.)



REGALLY BLONDE Ruby Lewis plays Marilyn Monroe in Tegan Summer's *Marilyn!*

It's an idea that hasn't been fully tested on the Strip since *Chicago* opened Mandalay Bay in 1998 with Ben Vereen and Chita Rivera (unless *Seinfeld* fans count John O'Hurley top-lining *Monty Python's Spamalot* back in 2007).

"I'm not sitting here saying we have the answer," the producer says. "All I'm saying is we have a shot. The rest is down to life, luck, and hard work." ✦



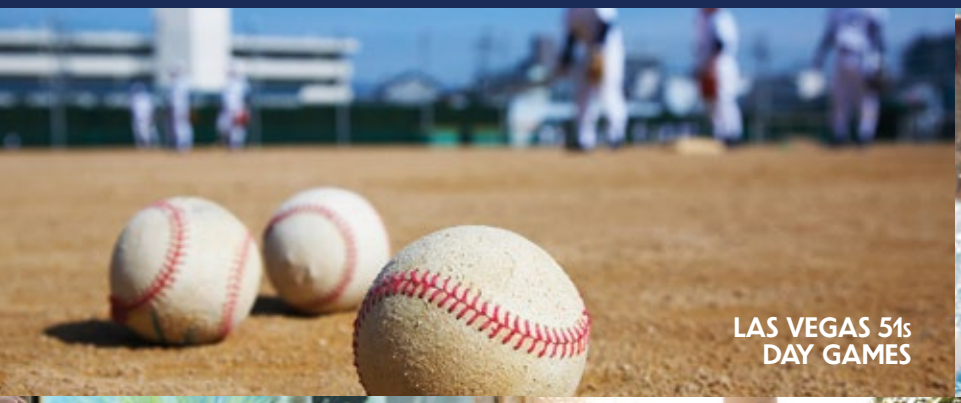


THE ART OF THE ANGEL "Dear Blue Angel," left, is by artist Montana Black; the photo below is by Joshua Abbey.

Return of the Blue Angel If you're a certain kind of Las Vegan, you feel an absence in the sky where the Blue Angel used to hover, above Fremont and Charleston, keeping watch. Which is why it's such a genuine Vegas moment that she's back. Taken down in March 2017, she'll return for an extended encore beginning May 24 in the Neon Museum's new warehouse space. The statue, designed by the legendary Betty Willis (and modeled on the Blue Fairy from Disney's *Pinocchio*), will be complemented by projections of work by many artists who've depicted her, as well as a video profile of Willis. Brought to you by the Desert Space Foundation, the Neon Museum, and the City of Las Vegas. **Opening reception 5p, May 24, neonmuseum.org**

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PROFILE

THE BURRO WHISPERER

Death Valley park officials consider wild burros a scourge. To activists like Diana Chontos, the misunderstood creatures embody the soul of the West

BY ***Krista Diamond***



It's a breathtakingly cold January morning on this isolated ranch in the Eastern Sierra. The burros are moving slowly in the early light, exhaling steam in the 27-degree air. This is where Diana Chontos lives alone with 180 burros. The ranch is Wild Burro Rescue, a last outpost for burros removed from nearby Death Valley National Park.

Alpenglow on the freshly fallen mountain snow turns the jagged peaks pink, but Chontos has little time to stand and marvel at the sunrise; she's wondering if the water troughs will be frozen when she steps outside. If they are, this means extra work on top of distributing grain, cleaning stalls, providing special care to elderly burros, and bringing in firewood before dark so that she and her 11 dogs can stay warm through the windy, bitterly cold night.

Mercifully, the water isn't frozen. The burros perk up at the sight of her, gathering together and letting out low sounds, like a murmuring crowd. Behind them, the Inyo Mountains glow, marking the western boundary of Death Valley National Park, the 3.4 million-acre expanse of desert they once called home.

How Chontos and the burros ended up together on the ranch in Olancha is a story hundreds of years in the making.

Chontos' part began in 1985 in Washington state, where she was living when she found out about a burro roundup taking place in Death Valley. The park service had long seen the animals as an invasive species, and they were taking another stab at extinguishing them for good. She and her then husband adopted two, both of whom turned out to be pregnant.

"Seven months later I had two baby burros," she says, smiling. "Happiest time of my

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Brent Holmes***

life. And then I found out two years later that Death Valley had started shooting them."

Incensed, she and her husband quit their careers and decided to take their burros on a walk — a 500-mile walk from Mt. St. Helens in Washington to Mt. Lassen in northern California.

"We got so tired of people saying, 'What are burros good for? Why do you want burros?'" she says. "We decided to just take the burros out and show them."

They traveled all summer in a sort of educational road show. Each day they'd educate people on trails and in towns, and each night, the burros would lay down beside their sleeping bags.

"A lot of times when I didn't even trust myself, I'd let the donkeys go and say, 'You pick the trail. I'll follow you," Chontos remembers. "And they always would."

That journey led her to a wild horse rescue in Shingletown, California, where she had learned of 14 recently rounded up burros that the sanctuary couldn't take in. Over a campfire and a bottle of Jim Beam, she and the sanctuary owner struck a deal: The burros were hers to care for.

"I wasn't going to walk away and have that on my head for the rest of my life," Chontos says. "So I went home (to Washington) and I founded Wild Burro Rescue to offer Death Valley an alternative to killing."

Chontos is a Pacific Northwesterner at heart, but she established Wild Burro Rescue in Olancha, California, just outside of Death Valley National Park, to give the burros a chance to live as close to their home as possible. Originally from North Africa, the burros thrive in the harsh environment, which is brutally hot in the summer and freezing in the winter. For humans, it's not so easy.

"I'd much rather live in the rainforest of Washington state," Chontos says. "Rain there goes into the ground. Rain here takes the mountain away. But it's the burros' country, so I live here for them."

Since starting Wild Burro Rescue in 1991, Chontos has taken in hundreds of burros from Death Valley, many of which might have otherwise died. She remains at the windswept ranch in Olancha, ready to take in more should the need arise.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE BURROS

THE NEED MAY arise soon. Not everyone loves burros like Chontos does. In December of 2017, the first rumblings of a burro roundup began with a Facebook post from the park service. Accompanied by images of a desert spring, hoofprints in the dirt and a herd of burros standing resolute among sagebrush, it read, "Feral burros, which are not native, cause significant damage to these precious resources." The social media post included a request that visitors to Death Valley report the location of burros to the park service, for the purposes of "resource protection." In other words, they were looking to get rid of the burros.

Abby Wines, management assistant for Death Valley National Park, says the park service is getting ready to conduct the first burro roundup since 2005.

"Death Valley's goal is a zero burro and horse population in the park," she explains. "Burros are not native, and the national park service has direction that we are supposed to preserve the natural environment of the landscape. Burros damage springs and compete with desert bighorn sheep for both food and water."

It would be more fitting to say that burros *appear* to compete for food and water because few major studies on burros have been carried out in the United States since a 1974 review by the California Department of Fish and Game, which describes "spring and waterhole disturbance, and competition with native wildlife for food, water and space." The report suggests that burros are one threat among many, including respiratory diseases, parasites, drought — and humans: "mining activities, usurpation or occupation of water sources, highway construction, fencing and other barriers, and poaching." Another 2008 literature review, conducted by UNLV Life Sciences Assistant Professor Scott Abella, cited studies between 1972 and 1988 that noted burros' grazing impact on native grasses and competition with desert tortoises.

But it's not so straightforward. Research conducted by Erick Lundgren in 2015 offers a different picture. Then a master's student in biology at Arizona State University, Lundgren wondered whether burros might benefit the environment by increasing access to water for other species. He placed trail cameras on wells dug by wild burros in the Sonoran Desert, and found that more than 40 native species use the wells. The footage, which can be found on YouTube, shows burros digging wells. As the video continues, we see javelinas, bighorn sheep, cattle, coyotes, and mule deer drinking from the wells, occasionally alongside the burros. Lundgren also contributed to an October 2017 article in the journal *Ecogra-*

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phy, "Introduced Megafauna Are Rewilding the Anthropocene." Lundgren, now a Ph.D. student in ecology at the University of Technology Sydney, says his research doesn't answer whether wild burros are, on the whole, good or bad for Death Valley. But it certainly complicates the conversation, and suggests that perhaps the reigning paradigm of park wildlife management — keep everything as "natural" as possible — isn't very realistic or useful.

"The simplistic good/bad distinction when it comes to talking about native species and introduced species is starting to fall apart," he says. "I think the next generation of land management professionals and ecologists will start to question these paradigms." He adds: "It would be nice to see if we could create a new mandate that allows nature to change and evolve as it does. It seems much of our effort is to resist that change. The very least Death Valley could do is study burros."



DESERT SURVIVORS
When miners in 19th-century Death Valley set their burros loose, they didn't necessarily expect them to survive. In fact, the burros flourished.

THE SURVIVORS WHO FLOURISHED

TO UNDERSTAND HOW Death Valley arrived at its latest attempt to remove the burro, you must go back to a time before the park was even a park. Burros arrived in Death Valley in the mid-19th century, brought there by white settlers determined to extract gold from the unforgiving mountains, even if it meant driving out the Timbisha Shoshone natives who had been there since 900 A.D. The settlers eventually used mammoth burros — a giant breed of burro — and draft horses to create the iconic Twenty Mule Teams often associated with the early days of borax mining in Death Valley. After the burros had served their purpose, the miners and settlers let them go, not giving any thought about whether the animals would survive or perish.

The burros did more than survive. They flourished — or at least they did until 1933, when Death Valley became a national monument. The burro roundups began in 1938 and continued periodically until 2005. Roundups were conducted by setting water and food traps and later by corralling them via helicopter. Roundups included relocation to government auction sites, attempts at adoption, and, in many cases, killing. According to a 1985 *Los Angeles Times* article, federal officials acknowledged that as many as 700 burros may have been unintentionally killed during roundups at the time, with some shipped to a slaughterhouse in Oregon. Up through the early 1990s, the park service occasionally shot burros as part of its management plan.

According to Chontos, this often involved deliberately shooting pregnant female burros (called "jennies") in the stomach. "It takes hours to die if you gut shoot them," she says.

"None of them have been killed since 1993 due to public outcry," Wines points out, describing the phases of the current management plan. Wines says the park service is currently involved in phase two of that plan, which involves working with nonprofit organizations that will help with the roundup process.

Part of the quandary is, well, an image problem. People don't view burros the same way they view wild horses — even though both are non-native equines.

Despite the fact that Wild Burro Rescue would offer the remaining Death Valley burros a chance to live in the same environment they've called home since the 19th century, the park service has not contacted Diana Chontos for assistance with the current roundup. Instead, they plan to work with Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue, a nonprofit based in Texas. The reason for this, Wines says, is money or, rather, the park service's lack of it. "Peaceful Valley is able to fund this one on their own," says Wines.

Peaceful Valley plans to use the water trapping method to capture all of the wild burros in Death Valley (a number estimated at 600 to 4,000, depending on who you talk to). Burros will then be domesticated and offered for adoption all over the country, from Connecticut to Washington. Any burros that can't be domesticated will live out their lives in sanctuaries in Texas or Louisiana. The initial roundup was set for March through May of this year, before scorching summertime temperatures. Assuming funding is available, subsequent roundups will continue until the park's zero-burro policy is met.

Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue has been involved in burro roundups across the country for over 20 years, but this is their first foray into Death Valley.

"This isn't a government project," says Mark Meyers, executive director of Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue. "This is a donkey rescue project. We put the safety of the burros first. We don't want to go out and cowboy around."

If phase one is the government roundup, and phase two involves help from nonprofit rescue groups, what's phase three? "Direct reduction" — government-speak for shooting the burros — an action which the park service is still legally able to take.

"If it wasn't for us, they would shoot them," Meyers says. "That's the only way they can meet the letter of the law. They have no money, they have a skeleton crew."

'WE OWE IT TO THEM'

PART OF THE burros' quandary — they survived and flourished, only to be chased out, rounded up, or shot — is an image problem. People don't view burros the way they view wild horses, even though both are non-native equines.

"Horses are beautiful and magnificent, and the wind blows in their tails and manes," Chontos says. "Burros just stand there and look at you with great big brown eyes. I don't know, it's just some romantic Western thing, the wild horses."

She's right. There is something to be said for the image of a mustang running wild in the Western landscape. But there's also something to be said for a burro, all stocky limbs and sturdy spirit, plodding along and carrying settlers across Death Valley, methodically climbing steep mountainsides to help build railroads and carry silver from mines.

"Without the burro, there would be no westward expansion," Meyers says. "They've lost their place in society, and we owe it to them to treat them with respect."

To Chontos, the burros are more than just the patient, slow creatures who carried settlers across the unforgiving desert.

Looking back on that long walk from Mt. St. Helens to Mt. Lassen, and to the burro she played with on her mother's farm as a child, she says, "They were my companions."

When the park service calls burros non-native, it's hard not to think of another non-native being: the white settler making his way across the West, seeking to drive out native people, to tame the wild land, to build resorts, raise livestock, unearth minerals, and test military weapons. In Death Valley's Cottonwood Range, it's not uncommon to see cows grazing among the Joshua trees, with the blessing of the park service. The next valley over, you can expect to be buzzed by F-18 fighter jets while soaking in the Saline Valley hot springs, all within park boundaries. In the Panamint Mountains, an active gold mine sprays the cliffs with cyanide, mere miles from the border of the park. And yet the burro is characterized as a threat to Death Valley's ecology.

For Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue and Wild Burro Rescue, going along with the park's zero-burro policy is the only way to save the animals, even if that means driving them from somewhere they never asked to be brought to in the first place.

"Nobody wants to shoot an innocent animal," Meyers says. "This isn't hunting. This is shooting an animal that will stand there and stare at you. That's the threat that hangs over your head, but as long as I'm here, it won't come to that. They'd have to shoot me, too."

"They're very much like elephants," Chontos says. "Their whole social structure is like elephants. They celebrate birth, they mourn death. They can even die when their best friend dies. And they love people. The biggest downfall of burros is that they love people."

If you drive through Death Valley, to the place where the sprawling desert floor meets the endless blue wall of the Eastern Sierra mountains, you'll find an unmarked dirt road beside a gas station in Olancha. And if you take that road — the kind of rambling, rock-strewn road that threatens to rip out the belly of your car — you'll find yourself at Chontos' ranch, among nearly 200 burros who once ran free in Death Valley. As you consider their trumpeting brays, their sturdy forms, the thought that struck Chontos decades ago may strike you, too: The spirit of Death Valley doesn't just exist in an abandoned mine shaft or in the ruins of a boomtown from the Gold Rush; it lives just as much in the footprints, the comically long ears, the gentle eyes of the burro. ✦



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POLITICS

‘WE HAVE POWER’

New dynamics are coming into play as African-American groups unite to rally the black vote

BY ***Michael Lyle***



BEYOND THE BALLOT BOX
Political strategist Leisa Moseley hopes to tap the rising political influence of the African-American community.

“How will you deal with the issues here in Las Vegas for black people?” It was a February evening, and a predominantly African-American crowd partially filled the theater at Cheyenne High School to listen to candidates for Nevada’s 4th Congressional District attempt to woo their votes.

This wasn’t a collection of stump speeches, either. Candidates were pressed on tough topics about healthcare, unemployment rates, mental-health resources, and re-entry services for those leaving prison. If the person asking the question wasn’t satisfied — which was the case for one person who asked about the number of top-ranking African-American campaign officials each candidate employed — they’d simply rephrase and ask again.

While the questions were broad, they always came back to how those issues affect the lives of African-Americans. “Anyone who knows me well has heard me say that voting is not the totality of the political process,” the night’s moderator, Leisa Moseley, told the gathering. “What you’re doing tonight is a part, an important part, of the political process.”

The night was part of a larger collaborative effort to better engage black voters and encourage them to cast their ballots in the upcoming elections.

African-Americans have typically had high turnouts in elections nationally. “Not just African-Americans, but black women in particular,” says Roxann McCoy, who heads the Las Vegas chapter of the NAACP. Recently, black voters, specifically black women, were widely cited as the reason underdog Democrat Doug Jones, and not embattled Republican Roy Moore, became a senator in the December special election in Alabama. African-American voters were almost 30 percent of the vote, and 98 percent of black women (who were 17 percent of the overall vote) cast their ballots for Jones. It was the type of turnout usually seen in a presidential election year rather than a special election cycle.

Similarly, midterm elections, like the one coming up in November, usually don’t see a high turnout. But several organizations in Southern Nevada (the local NAACP,

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Brent Holmes***

the Clark County Black Caucus, and Faith Organizing Alliance among them) are working together to change that. They've set up forums in school auditoriums and churches, partnered with black-owned publications and radio stations to get the word out, and canvassed door-to-door to talk with residents in efforts to focus the collective power of the community.

"You're seeing all around the country that we have power when we show up," says Rev. Leonard Jackson, executive director of the Faith Organizing Alliance. "African-Americans, in particular African-American females and young people, are making a difference in elections."

Faith Organizing Alliance launched in 2014, combining faith-based partners (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic) along with some community partners. The goal was to register and educate voters.

Jackson remembers shadowing one of the volunteers going out to register voters. Clipboard in hand, she approached an African-American woman. "The woman just looked at us and said, 'You can stop right there. I don't vote. I never have and don't want to,'" Jackson says.

The woman berated the volunteer, arguing that voting is a waste of time. Jackson says the volunteer hung in there and laid out her case. "She told the woman to at least register in case she changed her mind," he says. "And sure enough, the woman grabbed the clipboard and filled out her information. Sometimes, you just need to give people an extra push."

That wasn't the first person to decline to register to vote, and it won't be the last. "It's actually something I hear many times," he says.

During the 2016 election, the group also helped organize voting drives called Souls to the Polls. "We told people to call us and we would arrange for them to get a ride to the polls," he adds. "This eliminates any excuse they have." The group also organized an event at the Pearson Community Center to attract more voters. "On Election Day, I was pleasantly surprised we got 300 people who needed a ride to the polls," he says.

Faith Organizing Alliance has also hosted issue-driven town halls and community meetings. But it also does smaller, more intimate gatherings in people's living rooms to find out what issues are impacting them personally. Ahead of this election, the group's goal is to register 3,000 more voters.

The Clark County Black Caucus has been cultivating voters since 2008. Originally,



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it had been affiliated with the Democratic Party, but Moseley, a board member with the black caucus, says the organization decided to go more nonpartisan in 2013 after feeling overlooked by many politicians. "The Democratic Party is usually associated with the African-American community," Moseley says. "I think they've become so complacent with the community because they know they are going to get our vote."

This isn't an isolated feeling. Despite strong voting records nationally, Moseley says issues faced by the African-American community (anything from the double-digit unemployment rates to educational disparities) go unaddressed. While politicians might campaign on those topics or political parties might include information to address these issues, she says most party platforms can be broad and don't home in on the impact of the black community.

As a result, many black voters have become discontented with parties and systems. Moseley says some people have opted to become independent or nonpartisan. "With this discontentment from African-Americans, you're seeing we are becoming a swing vote," she says. "We might not vote for another party, but we won't vote at all."

For organizing groups like the black caucus, it just means being more neutral and working across the aisle. Moseley says being nonpartisan has gotten a lot of positive feedback from the black community. It's also allowed the caucus an opportunity to work with politicians from different parties to advocate for legislation that would benefit African-Americans.

Moseley says in the past the caucus canvassed door-to-door, though it now relies more on social media outreach.

The NAACP Las Vegas has been active for years, hosting monthly meetings to talk about anything from policing and bail reform to voter registration. It has also frequently invited candidates to engage with members. It's nonpartisan, as well. "We want to give people all the information so they can decide what works for them," McCoy says.

While these organizations have worked individually to engage African-Americans, McCoy says it's only more recently that they have collaborated on projects. "It



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seems more like a united front this year," McCoy adds.

Less than a month after the congressional forum, another town hall took place. Inside Victory Missionary Baptist Church, located in the predominantly African-American Historic Westside community, nine of the 11 candidates for the city of Las Vegas Ward 5 special election showed up to engage with prospective voters.

When running for office, people typically come into predominantly black districts a few weeks before election to campaign. McCoy says it's the politically correct thing to do. But, historically speaking, Moseley says, some have relied on stereotypes to do so, such as hosting a fish fry. "The thing is, we allow it," she adds. "We accept this."

Nevertheless, another group of candidates, who are all African-American, have come to the church to court voters. It was the second time African-American voters got to listen to these candidates before the March 27 election.

"We don't just have politicians come in and do an old-fashioned stump speech," Jackson says. "We know they are good at that." Instead, moderators had prepared questions. Audience members got to ask about affordable housing, efforts to boost African-American entrepreneurship, and employment and safety.

For her part, McCoy wants to make sure the community is educated on other offices that often go overlooked. District attorney, for instance. Not to mention the next choice for Clark County School District superintendent, even though that's not an elected position. "The African-American community underestimated the power of our presence and of our voices being heard during public comment," McCoy says. "This new superintendent will have a direct impact on our children. As of late, it's not all that great." While people can't vote on a superintendent, the candidate is chosen by the board of trustees, which are elected positions.

These organizers want candidates to not only pay attention to the African-American community during an election cycle, but to have a deeper, longer-term understanding of its issues and to offer practical and specific solutions. "We aren't holding them accountable," McCoy says. "We are setting a pattern, saying, You can come in during election season, smile and tell us all the great things you're going to do. We support you. We vote. Then when the election is over, we never see you again."

That's why they agree that voting is just one part of the political process. Education on the issues is just as vital, to hold politicians accountable. "So we can come back and say, 'You didn't vote for this, this, or this,'" McCoy says. "We need to stop giving them a pass if nothing has changed."

Though the NAACP gives out a report card ranking how congressional leaders voted, there hasn't been an effort from the local chapter to rank actions of state legislators and city officials.

But first things first. There is a still a battle convincing people their vote does matter.

With the primary election June 12 and the general on November 6, the groups will continue to reach out so the community knows who is running and what issues are at stake. "This way, you have no excuse," McCoy adds. "You can't say, 'Well I didn't know.'" ✦





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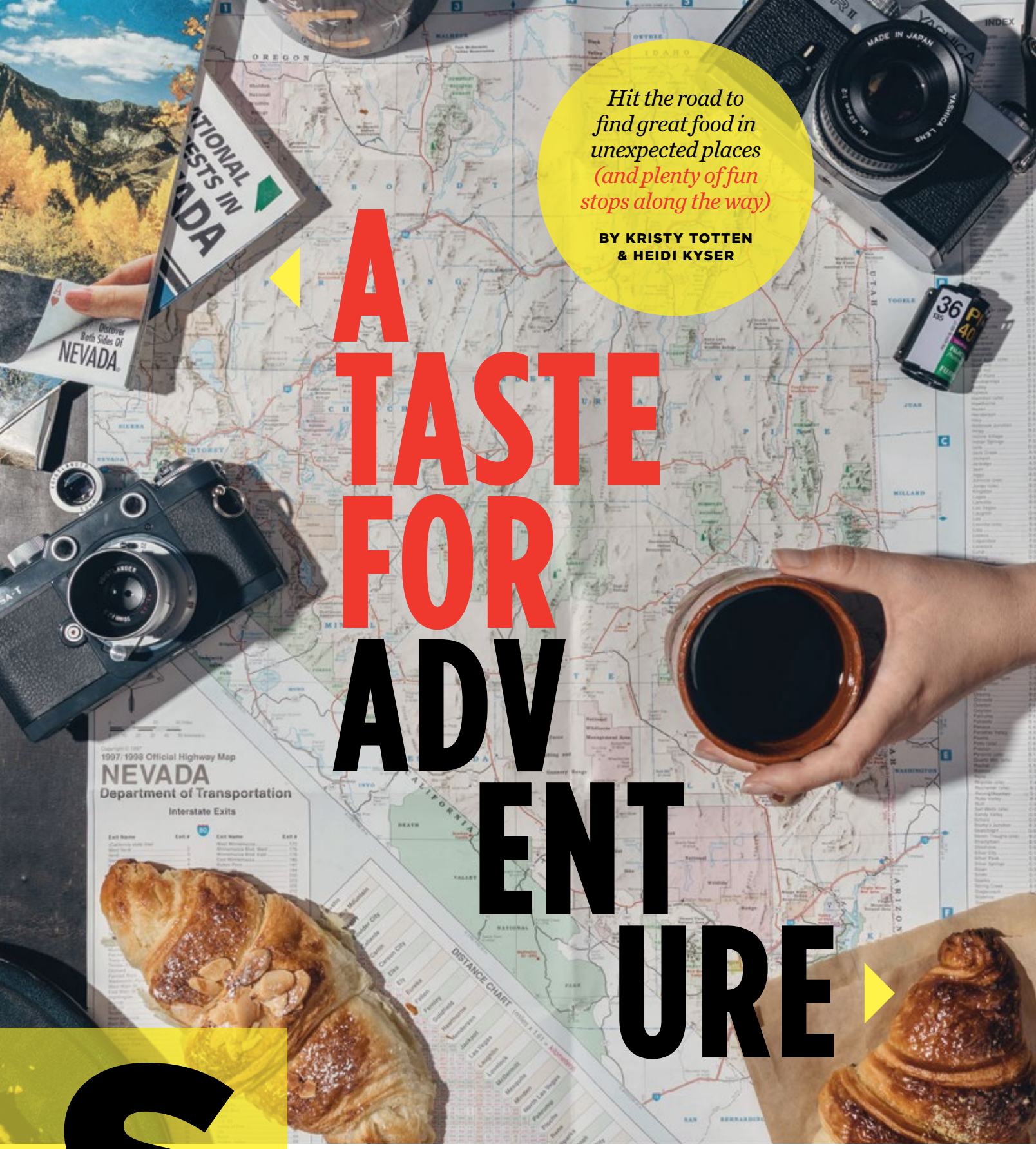
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Hit the road to find great food in unexpected places (and plenty of fun stops along the way)

BY KRISTY TOTTEN & HEIDI KYSER

A TASTE FOR ADVENTURE

Sure, Las Vegas is a global dining destination and dynamic culinary yadda yadda etc. etc. But sometimes you want your entrée with a side of rooooaaad trip! These five Southwest destinations don't just boast great eats, but also heaping helpings of history, personality, and soul. If you're hungry for adventure, consider these spots the next time you hear the call of the road.

Tecopa (CA)

78 MILES
1.5 HOURS

STEAKS & BEER

Strip-quality gourmet dining at a desert crossroads







Tecopa is best-known for its natural, mineral-rich hot springs, many of which have been corralled into bathhouses anchoring a mile-long strip of motels, campgrounds, art galleries, and eateries. But a stone's throw south, where Tecopa Hot Springs Road runs into the Old Spanish Trail Highway, another attraction is luring visitors from Death Valley to the northwest and Las Vegas to the northeast. Here, at the intersection dubbed "downtown Tecopa" (it consists of around a dozen buildings), travelers can enjoy a Strip-quality dinner at Steaks & Beer.

Native Las Vegan Eric Scott opened Steaks & Beer two years ago. Scott learned to use a knife at 16 from California Noodle House's Peter Woo and has been cooking ever since. His numerous Strip gigs include a two-year stint with Jean-Louis Palladin at Napa in the Rio.

"French (cuisine) is probably my favorite, and I have a lot of experience with it, but I don't like to have boundaries," he says. Asked to describe his ideal diner, he replies, "A hungry one."

The name of Steaks & Beer reflects Scott's simple vision, which also comes across in the ambience and menu. There are only two small tables inside, along with some outdoor seating in a gazebo-like structure that sits above a fishpond. Contemporary rock music plays — not too loud — as Scott simultaneously hustles appetizers, salads, steaks, and desserts through various stages of preparation with seemingly effortless timing. Despite this pressure, on an unusually busy March evening, Scott took the time to chat with patrons at the bar about which steak he recommended and why. He opened a bottle of Merlot — one of the only four wines served — while explaining that he preferred the T-bone, but American diners mostly go for the fat-marbled rib eye. (They went for the rib eye.)

"I love it here," Scott says. "I love this little kitchen, and I love the sense of community."

Steaks & Beer is his second venture in Tecopa. In the late 2000s, on a weekend trip to the hot springs, he came across John Muccio, whom he'd cooked with at Ferraro's when it was on Flamingo. Muccio had opened Pastel's Bistro (now Tecopa Bistro) on the grounds of the Tecopa Hot Springs Resort in 2006. A couple years later, Scott followed, opening his own place, the Death Valley Internet Café, on the grounds of Delight's Hot Springs Resort. A gastronomical renaissance was underway in the former mining town.

"Tecopa is becoming a great place for food," says Jon Zellhoefer, who runs the Death Valley Brewing Company next door to Steaks & Beer. Downtown Tecopa property has been in Zellhoefer family hands since the late '60s, and when Jon retired in 2003, he decided to move there and, among other pastimes, start brewing beer. When one of the buildings he owns became available two years ago, he was thrilled to see Scott move into it.

"Before, it was like people were coming through here, and they'd have a beer," Zellhoefer says. "Now, they're coming here for the steaks and the beer." ***HK***

79 Old Spanish Trail, 442-261-1414

Tecopa has much more to offer than hot springs. **Lower left:** Eric Scott preps in the kitchen; **right,** Steaks & Beers rib eye



MIKAYLA WHITMORE



STAY

While there are other, quirkier, lodging options in the area, the Tecopa Hot Springs Resort is the place most likely to satisfy the broadest range of tastes. The motel has the most recently renovated rooms in town, and the resort also has both cabins and a campground for those who prefer more rustic accommodations. All include access to bathhouses. **Tecopahotsprings.org, 760-852-4420**

PLAY

Art walk: Tiny Tecopa is packed to the gills with art. Between hot springs soaks and delicious meals, you can wile away an hour or two popping in and out of the galleries, rock art shacks, and other hidden treasures strung along the town's main road.

Day hike: There are several hikes that start at China Ranch Date Farm and Bakery **(chinaranch.com),** about 15 minutes south of Tecopa. Ranging from easy to moderate, they offer a variety of experiences, from observing wildlife in its natural Amargosa River habitat, to viewing ruins of the defunct Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad. And every route ends with an obligatory date shake at the ranch's thrift shop and bakery.

More (surprisingly great!) food: Steaks & Beer hasn't cornered the market on good eats in Tecopa. Breakfast at Tecopa Bistro (tecopabistro.com) is top-notch, as is the barbecue at Tecopa Brewing Company on the grounds of Delight's Hot Springs Resort **(delighthotsprings-resort.com).**

Shoshone (CA)

85 MILES
1.75 HOURS

CROWBAR CAFÉ & SALOON

Simple, wholesome food is giving this post-mining town a second act





BRENT HOLMES

Susan Sorrells is careful to stress that her husband Robert Haines co-manages, with her, the corporation that owns Shoshone Village. Nevertheless, the town has passed down through three generations of Ralph "Dad" Fairbanks' female descendants to Sorrells, and a distinctly feminine touch permeates the burg of 30 permanent residents with its well-kept lots and brightly painted storefronts. It's a refreshing, if diminutive, oasis on an out-of-the-way desert road between Las Vegas and Death Valley. At its heart is the Crowbar Café & Saloon.

Sorrells went to college in Northampton, Massachusetts, did an internship in Washington, D.C., went to Africa with the Peace Corps, was an exchange student to what was then the Soviet Union, and worked for six years in Sweden before returning to Shoshone to take care of her ailing mother in the late '70s. She still spends a lot of time in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas, and on the East Coast.

After her mother died of colon cancer in 1979, Sorrells and her brother made a deal that allowed her to acquire the town. When Shoshone's mining industry went belly up in the '80s, she drew on her international experience to create a place where cultivated travelers would feel at home.

"Our economy was completely devastated after mining cratered," she says. "I changed the Crowbar fairly dramatically. It had been a crazy miner hangout, a boomtown saloon."

She tapped the culinary expertise of West Coast friends to develop spec books that would allow the Crowbar's three rotating chefs to create a consistent taste. The focus is on simple food — omelets, burgers, sandwiches, pasta — but made from scratch with fresh ingredients every day.

Sorrells says, "I wanted food that would appeal to film industry folks from L.A., students on a budget who wanted beer and nachos, vegetarians. We use only butter, safflower oil, and olive oil, no trans fats. Our potatoes are made from real potatoes. It's not gourmet, but we try really hard to make good, wholesome food."

The philosophy fits in with her larger worldview, which is reflected in the numerous conservation efforts that Sorrells and her husband have contributed to in the area. The one she's most proud of is the restoration of the Shoshone pupfish, which had been previously declared extinct.

"Not everything we do is historically perfect," she says, "but our motto is to restore a damaged spring ecosystem in a way that will support biodiverse life, including people." ***HK***

112 N. State Highway 127, 760-852-4123

STAY

Shoshone Inn is the most impressively upscale element of little Shoshone, with its sleek, contemporary interior design, including custom-built furniture, location-wide WiFi, and a fire pit guests can gather around in the evening. **Shoshonevillage.com, 760-852-4335**

PLAY

Tiny history tour: The brainchild of Susan Sorrells and her cousin Brian Brown, who own China Date Ranch, the Shoshone Museum **(shoshonemuseum.com)** is a nonprofit run by a board of anthropologists, geologists, and historians from institutions around the Southwest. The museum owns 7,000 painstakingly catalogued specimens and features an exhibit of prehistoric mammoth bones from a nearby excavation, which it manages on behalf of the BLM.

Nature preserve: To the north of town on Old State Highway 127, past the school and RV Park, is a charming boardwalk leading to a spring-fed pond full of Shoshone pupfish, which were at one time declared extinct.

Day hikes: Sorrells was a founding member of the Amargosa Conser-







vancy, and she and various members of her family have devoted considerable resources to transforming the Shoshone-Tecopa tourism economy into an eco-tourism economy. Evidence of their work can be found in the birding hikes around Shoshone.

Shoshone has found life after mining by appealing to cultivated travelers. **Top:** The veggie burger at Crowbar. **Above left:** a pupfish preservation pond. **Above right:** the Shoshone Museum

Pioche (NV)

180 MILES 3 HOURS

GHOST TOWN ART AND COFFEE CO.

An ex-rocker runs a happening hangout in a sleepy old town

Driving to Pioche is a little like traveling through a time warp. There's the *is*: the lights of Las Vegas, the twin prisons as you turn off the Interstate, and the eerie industrial structures that could only be more startling if they were submerged in water. There's the *might've been*: the triumphant Coyote Springs master-planned community sign, announcing nothing in the middle of nowhere. And then there's the *was*: Pioche, a once-lawless mining camp, known for its brothels, gunfights, and being one of the toughest towns in the West.

Today, Pioche is a quiet desert community, with a half-vacant main drag and a population of about 1,000. Among the shuttered buildings lives Ghost Town Coffee, a bustling sandwich shop owned by an unlikely character — Kelly Garni, the original bassist for Quiet Riot in the 1970s. Garni ran photo studios in Las Vegas for 20 years before the shift to digital put him out of business. So he closed up shop and moved 175 miles north to make art. He repurposes metal he finds in the desert, some of it dating back to the 1800s and the area's early settlers.

BRENT HOLMES





"I sold 10 times more up here than I ever did in Vegas and Boulder City," Garni says. "And so, it made me think, 'What else can I sell?'"

He asked around, and the answer was clear: Pioche lacked a coffee shop, and the closest Starbucks was 100 miles away.

"I wasn't a coffee drinker, but I learned everything I could about coffee," he says. "When I first started, I didn't know the difference between a cappuccino and a frappuccino." He studied intensively for two months, learned about beans from all over the world, and renovated one of the town's oldest surviving buildings, a 150-year-old former blacksmithing shop that doubles as his studio. Now he serves 18 frappuccino flavors and a dozen or so sandwiches with Lay's chips, all in view of his workbench. The Pioche burger with cheddar, bacon and pepperoncinis is a favorite, as is the Rockin' Reuben, a half-pound of light pastrami topped with swiss, sauerkraut and honey dijon.

The cafe draws locals and a steady stream of visitors from nearby states and faraway places in Europe, Asia, and Australia. Garni even says he has regulars from England and Norway. The food is good — it has 32 mostly five-star reviews on Yelp — but its true appeal is the unexpected intersection of art, history, and people in this "living ghost town." ***KT***

597 Main St., Pioche, 775-962-5229, ghosttownart.com

STAY

If you're brave, try the Overland Hotel & Saloon, which is said to be haunted. The Travel Channel filmed a *Ghost Hunters* episode there, and employees and guests have reported misty apparitions, dark figures, and a poltergeist who likes to hang around Room 10 and once tried to smother a guy in his sleep. Like your rooms ghost-free? Check out Hutchings Motel for a small, clean cabin. **Overlandhotelnv.com, 775-962-5895; hutchingsmotel.com, 775-962-2853**

PLAY

Learn: The Lincoln County Museum **(775-962-5207**) is free, and is one of the only Pioche businesses besides the town's three bars that's open during the week. The extensive collection includes state historical documents, vintage household items, minerals, and a life-size diorama that shows how early homes in the area were furnished.

Get outside: Cathedral Gorge State Park gets its name from the beautifully eroded bentonite clay slopes that tower over the valley floor. Take a hike or walk to the bottom of Miller's Point for the full effect on a shorter schedule.

Explore: Boot Hill Cemetery gets its name from the gunfighters who died in their shoes and were buried with their boots as their only grave marker. Later, the town added primitive wooden tombstones that tell who's buried there and how they died. The site overlooks the valley below, and old mining trams crisscross the land, making for a great photo.





BRENT HOLMES

Kanab (UT)

204 MILES
3.25 HOURS

SEGO

Fine dining from the heart in a low-key getaway

Fancy attire isn't required at Chef Shon Foster's globally inspired small-plates restaurant, Sego. In fact, hiking gear is welcome. Located off the lobby of the Canyons Boutique Hotel, the restaurant's dining room doubles as a continental breakfast nook in the morning, and that sets the scene for a casual and completely unexpected upscale dining experience.

Foster's rise to food fame is equally unlikely. He's an audio engineer by training, and spent years touring with punk bands like Pennywise and NOFX before settling down in Utah and buying a deli on a whim. The shop's success launched Foster into a career he never dreamed of, cooking at the hyper-luxe Amangiri resort in Canyon Point, Utah, before he decided to go back on his own. What Foster lacks in formal training he makes up for with heart, and a 1,000-percent-in work ethic. It also helps that his partner, Chef Harryson, went to catering school in Indonesia and worked in Dubai and the Middle East before coming to work with the Aman group, where the two met.

"The things that I do tell stories — they come from somewhere," Foster explains. "If you look at the menu, maybe it's not the whole dish, but parts and pieces have real life and vibration and the emotion that created them. I'm not just doing a recipe I learned from somewhere else."

Foster has cooked with Michelin-starred British chef Gordon Ramsay, and he's catered to celebrities like Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel, whom he says he taught to make ramen. Luckily for diners, those experiences make it onto the menu. Ramen was a weeknight special in April, and world cuisines made with local ingredients are always in rotation.

The charsiu Chinese barbecue pork dish is made with meat and lettuce from Red Acre Farms in Cedar City, Utah; his signature Sego rice noodles are brought to life with Hawaiian red crab and house curry oil; and he uses his own herbs to make soft cheeses featured on the charcuterie plate, alongside cured meats, Utah cheeses, dried and fresh fruit, and a house baguette.

MIKAYLA WHITMORE





Once a rough-and-tumble mining camp, Pioche now serves crazy good sandwiches, like the Rockin' Reuben, above. **Below:** Cathedral Gorge State Park.



In liquid offerings, almost all of Sego's whiskeys and gins are made in Utah. And the hot cookie sundae is not to be missed, a masterpiece of chocolate-chip cookie, ice cream, smoked almonds, caramel, and cream that Foster says took two years to develop.

Sego is an impressive destination, and rightfully deserves the "best fine dining concept" award the restaurant is soon to collect from the Utah Restaurant Association. Utah's state motto is "Life elevated," and Sego absolutely raises the bar. ***KT***

190 North 300th West, 435-644-5680, segokanab.com



Kanab is one of Utah's best-kept secrets. Previous page, salmon at Sego. **Top:** Canyons Boutique Hotel. **Bottom:** a hiking trail in Kanab

Seligman is all about Americana turned up to 11. **Right:** Roadkill Café's fried chicken

MIKAYLA WHITMORE





STAY

The recently renovated Canyons Boutique Hotel is conveniently connected to Sego Restaurant, offering comfortable, classically decorated resort-style rooms in an intimate setting. Hop on a free beach cruiser to explore downtown Kanab, and return by sunset for wine on the patio and the occasional live band. **Canyonshotel.com, 435-644-8660**

PLAY

Pet: Best Friends Animal sanctuary is a five-minute drive from Kanab. Guests can tour the property, volunteer, or even stay on site for a more immersive animal-lover experience. Dogs, cats, birds, and barnyard animals are available for adoption, and the organization hosts kids camps and special events like Bunny Yoga and Paint Your Pet's portrait workshops. **Bestfriends.org**

Tour: Experience Kanab from the comfort of your car on Johnson Canyon Road. The 18-mile stretch is packed with sights, including the dilapidated Western-themed *Gunsmoke* set, Native American pictographs and petroglyphs, and colorful cliffsides belonging to the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Browse: Downtown Kanab is home to a handful of art galleries, perhaps most notably the Raven's Heart Gallery, which showcases skillful animal and landscape-based artworks.



MIKAYLA WHITMORE

Seligman (AZ)

180 MILES 3 HOURS

ROADKILL CAFE & O.K. SALOON

Comfort food on a kitschy strip of pure Americana

Like many small towns in the middle of the desert, Seligman started out as a train station. Before that, it was a Havasupai Native American settlement, and today it's a trove of mind-boggling kitsch, and a must-see stop on the way to the Grand Canyon.

Dubbed "the birthplace of Route 66," Seligman isn't where the highway actually began, but its residents fought for the road's historical designation, which put their town back on the map, so to speak, after Interstate 40 bypassed it.

Decades later, it's still hanging on, slinging mugs, magnets, and free cups of coffee from almost every shop. Gas stations and nostalgic fast food are idolized here, along with 1950s celebrities and anything with an American flag motif. The town is heavy on hand-painted murals and makes a point to share its history wherever possible; more is simply more in Seligman.

Take, for example the Snow Cap burger joint with its inexplicable backyard toilet garden. Or the World Famous Black Cat Bar, reportedly loved by bikers, truckers, and at least one cowboy who will let you ride his horse, Elvis, for a tip.

But for food, the Roadkill Cafe & O.K. Saloon can't be beat. Its slogan is "You kill it, we grill it," and the menu consists of comically named entrees like the "Caddie Grilled Patty" hamburger, the "Long Gone Fawn" ribeye steak, "Fender Tender" chicken strips and "Tire Track Snack" shrimp, though seafood is on its way out.

"I'm in the process of creating a new menu," says Aaron Ryan, who started as a dishwasher and is now running the business. In place of seafood, he'll offer 16 gourmet burgers made from Black Angus beef.

Ryan recommends the Roadkill Platter appetizer, with wings, zucchini, poppers and onion rings, or any of their steakhouse offerings, which includes ribeyes, sirloins, a giant rack of ribs and fried chicken.

The food is solid, but the restaurant's crown jewel is its over-the-top taxidermy display in the adjacent saloon, a detailed nature scene with a wolf, bear, mountain lion, elk, badger, and other animals, most of them caught by the owners, the Pope family, who moved to Seligman in the '80s and bought several businesses.



Outside the restaurant is a faux Wild West town, complete with a bogus but believable jailhouse and a number of "shops." Between the menu and the photo-ops, it turns out eating is more fun when you know it was hit on the run. ***KT***

22830 West Route 66, 928-422-3554, route66seligmanarizona.com



STAY

If you plan to explore the Grand Canyon area, Flagstaff and Tusayan have plenty of chain hotels. If you want something different, check Airbnb for quirky accommodations, like the Red Garter Inn, a turn-of-the-century brothel in Williams, or Airstream Dreaming, an adorably renovated 1960s travel trailer complete with an outdoor fire pit, stringed lights, and three goats you'll want to take home with you.

PLAY

Drive: Sedona is worth a day trip, or even a short stay, with its stunning red rock formations and its mystical "vortex" areas. Drive down Highway 89 through Oak Creek, stopping at Slide Rock State Park for a picnic or one of the quaint cottage cafés for lunch. In Sedona, the Chapel of the Holy Cross is worth a visit, as is Bell Rock for a short but challenging hike with phenomenal views from the top.

Walk: The Grand Canyon is a scenic hour-long drive from Seligman, where you can stroll along the rim from the Visitor's Center to the Yavapai Geology Museum for a stunning view of the canyon.

Shop: Clothing boutiques, art galleries, and outdoor outfitters make up the bulk of Flagstaff's downtown, which make for a relaxing afternoon of retail therapy.



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Pack light, gas up and queue your playlist for these four epic, daylong Vegas escapes

BY JAMES P. REZA

EPIC DAY TRIPS

Exhausted by Las Vegas life? It happens. Escaping the indignities of dusty wind, harrowing Project Neon commutes, and $20 martinis helps. Miraculously, the rejuvenation of the road trip is but one long day away. Aching to laze away on the beach? Score some quirky boutique finds? Conquer a mountain hike? Do it!

Epic day trips require strategy and some deliberate, attentive driving. Corral a Sunday funday (no holiday weekends!), a driving partner, a backpack (or beach bag) bursting with sunscreen and snacks, and a zen attitude that says, "The trip, the destination, they are one." Trip on, friends.

Note: These trips are less than four hours each way. Check Google Maps or Waze before departure to ensure roads are clear of construction and accidents.

BEACH, BOOZE & BOUTIQUES: THE LAGUNA RUN





Left, fresh seafood from The Deck at Driftwood Beach; right, views of endless blue at Laguna Beach. Lower right: Pappy & Harriet's roadhouse in Pioneertown

At 276 miles, it's the longest (and most tedious) drive of the bunch, but it's worth it when you arrive at Laguna, an upscale beach town boasting an artsy vibe.

5:30 a.m. You're on I-15 now, because in 60 minutes, it'll be heavy with tourists heading home.

7:15 a.m. Road trips were once an adventure of odd roadside attractions. Welcome to the new Eddie World in Yermo! You have 10 minutes at this outsized superstore of snacks and fast food. Gas up, use the wonderful facilities, grab a bag of nuts, change drivers, and get back on the road.

8:45 a.m. Slip onto CA-91 toward "Beach Cities." Smell the ocean yet?

8:55 a.m. Take exit 41B (CA-241). It's a toll road (pay online or with the app), but totally worth it for the time saved, the relaxing drive, and the views. Frequent flyer? Open an account: thetollroads.com.

9:05 a.m. Exit at CA-133 and into Laguna Canyon. Open the windows (and the convertible, if you're equipped). Cue up some reggae. Relaxation begins!

9:25 a.m. Where CA-133 meets the Pacific Coast Highway. To the front is Main Beach; to the right, Newport. Turn left to Cress Street, head inland a couple blocks.

9:53 a.m. Park and lock, without blocking anyone's driveway. Slather on the sunscreen, even when there's a marine layer.

10:00 a.m. Grab a *Laguna Beach Independent* (free!), and peruse it like a local over a latte at Cafe Heidelberg (heidelbergcafe.com). The chill vibes and sea breezes are transforming you. You fantasize about spending the day on a standup paddleboard.

10:30 a.m. You've never been on an SUP, so instead, you are first at the bar at The Rooftop at Casa Del Camino (lacasadelcamino.com), where sublime ocean views and a stacked Bloody Mary await. Selfie time!

11 a.m. Perhaps you chose to linger over your latte. No worries; skip The Rooftop and stroll straight to The Deck at Driftwood Kitchen (driftwoodkitchen.com). This lovely hotel spot might remind you of home, if it wasn't for the stairs leading to the sand. Score bar or table seating, but get there at opening regardless.

12:30 p.m. Look at that! You have an afternoon to spend on Cress Street Beach (you brought a towel, right?), or browsing the boutiques and galleries along the PCH. Don't miss Sound Spectrum (soundspectrumlaguna.com), a record store established in 1967.

4 p.m. Time to leave if you don't want to drive in the dark.

6 p.m. No, really, you should head home.

10 p.m. Stop at the classic Vegas joint, Bootlegger Bistro. You're hungry, and it's good to be home! Now, pay your tolls.



DON'T DESERT THE DESERT: PALM SPRINGS AND JOSHUA TREE

It sounds absurd, escaping the desert by going to the desert. But from the moment that vast field of Joshua trees envelops your view to when you glide down Palm Canyon Drive like Sinatra, this trip will rejuvenate your juju, reminding you of the parts of desert living you love. Note: I travel through the Mojave National Preserve, via Amboy. You can split the day

FISH COURTESY OF THE DECK AT DRIFTWOOD KITCHEN; BEACH COURTESY OF THE CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH; COURTESY OF PAPPY & HARRIET'S; HOTEL COURTESY OF ACE HOTEL



Left, minimalist chic at the Ace Hotel in Palm Springs. Right, downtown Flagstaff offers hidden gems in dining and drinking.



between the laid-back luxe of Palm Springs and the cowboy boho of Joshua Tree, or pick one.

6 a.m. Head south on I-15.

6:45 a.m. Escape the interstate rat race by exiting at Nipton Road. Turn left. Although you may not see another car for hours, turn on your headlights.

6:50 a.m. Turn right onto Ivanpah Road, into the desert. Savor the quickly shifting scenery, a forest of Joshua trees thickening on both sides.

7 a.m. Pay attention. This road has dips, curves, and desert tortoises.

7:30 a.m. The historic Kelso Depot, now the Mojave National Preserve Visitor Center, is on your left. Worth a look, if you get caught by a train.

7:55 a.m. Turn right onto Route 66 toward Amboy. Look to your left. Did you see that lion?

8 a.m. At Amboy, shoot an Instagram photo of Roy's and switch drivers. Don't buy gas unless you're desperate.

9 a.m. Yucca Valley gas stop?

9:15 a.m. Jump on the I-10 briefly, then exit for Palm Springs.

9:30 a.m. Cue that Cocktail Nation playlist and cruise Palm Canyon Drive, soaking in the style. Ring-a-ding-ding!

10 a.m. Roll up to the Ace Hotel (acehotel.com/palmsprings), enter through the lobby, and slide out back to the Swim Club for a DJ-fed brunch by the pool.

10:10 a.m. Or, perhaps you favor disappearing into the gorgeous gardens of the Parker and its patio cafe, Norma's (theparkerpalmsprings.com).

12 p.m. Decision time! Palm Springs is packed with museums, short hikes, Mid-Century architecture, the Aerial Tramway, and the boutiques of Palm Canyon Drive.

12:45 p.m. Alternatively, return to the artsy outsider enclave of Joshua Tree. Park near the Joshua Tree Saloon (joshuatreesaloon.com), and stroll a few hundred yards in either direction for boho boutiques and vintage oddities (The Crochet Museum! The Beauty Museum!). The entrance to Joshua Tree National Park is nearby.

4:30 p.m. A few miles into the hills lies Pioneertown, home of the legendary Pappy & Harriet's (pappyandharriets.com). This Western movie set turned roadhouse is a must-see and the place to be after 5. Great food, too.

6:45 p.m. Gas up and head back the way you came. It'll be dark when passing through the Mojave Desert Preserve, and you've likely never seen so many stars.

9:45 p.m. Home, sweet desert!

ELEVATED FOOD, BREW AND VIEWS: A FLAGSTAFF ADVENTURE

Despite mountainous surroundings, a historic downtown, and the campus of NAU, Flagstaff has mostly been a road-trip whistle-stop. Until recently, that is. Leveraging its proximity to the Grand Canyon with a growing desire for small-town authenticity (and the thirst for craft brews and foodie destinations), Flagstaff is gaining traction as a quirky standalone stop for a modern crop of outdoor enthusiasts and vagabonds. (Note: Flagstaff is one hour ahead of Las Vegas during Daylight Saving Time.)

6 a.m. Are you a quirky outdoor enthusiast or foodie vagabond? Get on US-95, now!

6:32 a.m. The Boulder City bottleneck

is the slow section of the journey. Keep that foot light until you pass Hoover Dam.

7:25 a.m. Change freeways in Kingman, to I-40.

7:45 a.m. Exit at Blake Ranch Road for the Petro Stopping Center, an old-school truck stop. Washroom, Slim Jim, fuel up, swap drivers.

8 a.m. Along with the elevation change, comes wide, green ranch land. Barns! Cows! Sheep!

9:25 a.m. Begin your day-stay by staging your departure: Park in the Flagstaff city parking lot (free on Sunday) across from Pizzicletta.

9:34 a.m. Marvel that Flagstaff, a town of about 72,000, boasts three free alternative newspapers.

9:35 a.m. Step into Macy's European Coffeehouse (macyscoffee.net), a vegetarian-friendly, organic cafe, opened in 1980. Pleasantly, more hippie than hipster.

10 a.m. Savor your coffee. Read. Relax. At nearly 7,000 feet in elevation, Flagstaff can go from sunshine to torrential downpour and back to blue skies in the course of one bagel. You prepared, right?

11 a.m. Head across the tracks to the Hotel Monte Vista (hotelmontevista.com). Here, a coffeehouse-bar entices locals on laptops at Rendezvous. Bypass the Bloody Mary for an Irish Cold Brew: Coffee, house-made heavy cream, and a shot of Jameson, over ice. Careful.

1 p.m. Stroll around downtown and discover local boutiques (from custom saddles to healing crystals), adventure outfitters, restaurants (Criollo, Tinderbox), bookstores, bakeries, and butcher shops. The NAU campus (1899) is walkable with some interesting buildings.

3 p.m. Beer o'clock? Hop to Mother Road, Flagstaff Brewing Company, or Hops on Birch. All stage occasional live music on their patios.

4:45 p.m. Head toward the car.

5 p.m. Caleb Schiff's pizzeria Napoletana, Pizzicletta (pizzicletta.com), opens. It's tiny, they don't take reservations, and Caleb is almost always at the oven. Sit at the community table and make friends. Order a salad, then one wood-fired pie at a time. Don't be embarrassed if you end up eating two.

6:30 p.m. On the mother road, again.

10:05 p.m. Back down to 2,001 feet. How's that for decompression?



For ambitious daytrippers, Zion's iconic Angel's Landing, right, is a must-hike. For a relaxed stroll, take the paved Riverside Walk to the mouth of the Narrows.

SUCH GREAT HEIGHTS: ZION AND ON AND ON

It's hard to believe that our shortest drive offers the most dramatic destination. Yet just 160 quick miles north lies Zion National Park, an indescribably beautiful pocket of towering Utah peaks and grassy meadows, with a river running through it.

5 a.m. Head north on I-15. It's early, but you lose an hour in the time change, and you want to be on a trail before the crowds.

5:15 a.m. Traffic uses every fraction of the 80 mph limit. Stay right except to pass!

6:07 a.m. The bucolic ranching, gambling and golfing hamlet of Mesquite.

7:10 a.m. Three minutes later (or is it 63?) ... hello, Utah!

7:20 a.m. Enter the Virgin River Gorge. This narrow, twisty stretch is an incredible feat of engineering. It's also gorge-ous. Sorry.

7:30 a.m. Exit the Gorge into a sliver of land we like to call "Speed-Trap-A-Zona."

7:37 a.m. The picturesque town of St. George is more than halfway, but the drive slows from here, so switch seats.

7:52 a.m. Exit I-15 onto UT-9 East and 13 miles of fits and starts through "Hurri-kun."

8:15 a.m. The final 20 miles are breathtaking, the scenery switching from towns to ranches to open land, before closing in again. You'll shadow the Virgin River as you approach Springdale, which looks a lot like Mayberry, with cows in the front yard.

8:40 a.m. You're early enough to score a spot in the main Zion lot. Pay your fee, get a map, pick your hike.

8:45 a.m. Board the canyon shuttle and listen for your stop. Feeling ambitious? Angel's Landing or Hidden Canyon. Less so? The river walk to the Narrows. Enjoy!

1 p.m. Post-hike, head down-canyon (via the shuttle, the road, or scrambling along the river) to the Zion Lodge (zionlodge.com) and its requisite souvenir shop and cafe. There's also a beer garden and a grand lawn shaded by a massive tree. Kids are playing, hikers are stretching, and everyone is gobsmacked at the beauty around them. If you packed a picnic, it's nosh time!

3 p.m. You could stay here all day, but no. Hop on the down-canyon shuttle for a quick stop at the Zion Human History Museum.

4 p.m. Back in Springdale, you're feeling a little hungry. Deep Creek Coffee Company (deepcreekcoffee.com) is a familiar cafe. Crave something more substantial? Zion Pizza & Noodle (housed in an old church) and the Southwestern Bit & Spur are solid.

5:30 p.m. On the road again!

7 p.m. Home in time to nurse those muscles with a hot shower and Netflix. That time shift, though. Magic!

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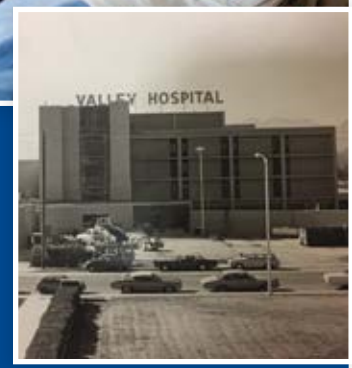
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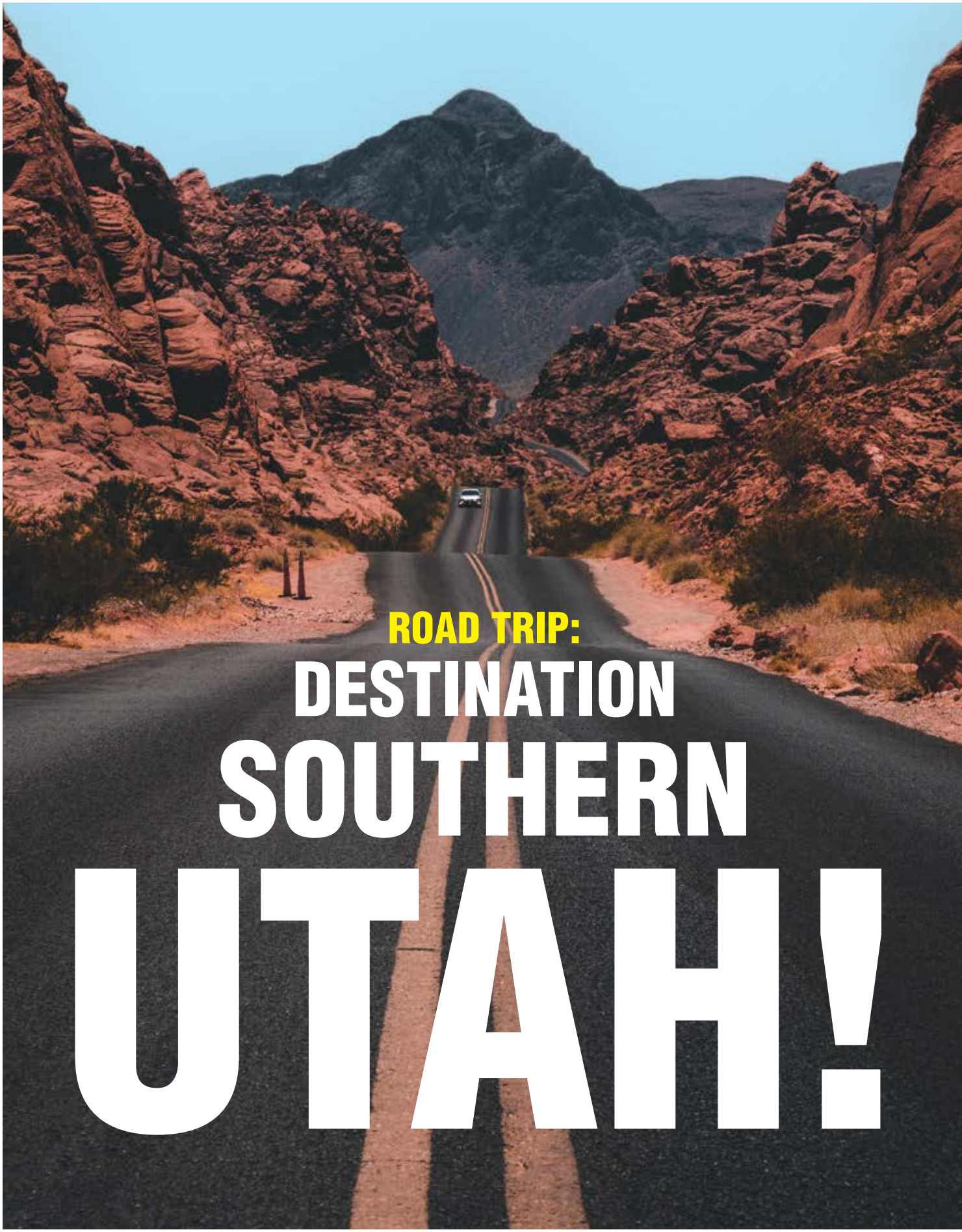
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ROAD TRIP:

DESTINATION SOUTHERN UTAH!



ZION PLEIN AIR ARTISTS ANNOUNCED

Twenty-four award winning artists providing in-park demonstrations, interactive wet-paint exhibits and special receptions with proceeds benefitting Zion's education programs – connecting thousands of children to the Zion experience every year.

Zion National Park Forever Project and Zion National Park have finalized the dates, event locations and artists for the 10th Plein Air Invitational. The week-long event starts on Monday November 5 and culminates on Saturday, November 10, 2018 with the "Art-In-The-Park" Paint Out celebration on the great lawn in front of the historic Zion Lodge.

Experiences and events include in-park demonstrations, instructive evening lectures and interactive wet-paint exhibits. Studio pieces from each artist, are featured in the Zion Human History Museum, and renderings from the Paint Out event and Silent Auction will be featured Saturday at the Zion Lodge. The Plein Air pieces painted during the week will also be on sale at the Museum over the weekend.

"The Plein Air event provides an opportunity for visitors to appreciate the beauty of Zion in new ways through the impressions of these talented artists," comments Jeff Bradybaugh, Superintendent, Zion Na-tional Park. "Their work continues to enhance our perpetual stewardship of this wonderful sanctuary we recognize as Zion National Park."

The Zion Forever Project is the park's official nonprofit partner.



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Audiences can enjoy all three shows with season packages. Call to get your tickets at 800.746.9882 or visit tuacahn.org.



EXPERIENCE "OUR STAGES. YOUR STORIES." AT THE UTAH SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Utah Shakespeare Festival is not just a theatrical presentation—any more than the Taj Mahal is just a house. It's nine of the liveliest, most professionally produced plays this side of Broadway featuring drama, comedy, Shakespeare, contemporary theater and a few genres



Lewis Williams, *Just Leave it Alone* (detail), 2017

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 · Bryce Canyon Country · George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation · Life Utah Elevated



in between.

The 2018 season of the Utah Shakespeare Festival runs from June 28 through Oct. 13. This year's play performances include Henry VI Part One, Othello, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Merchant of Venice, Pearl's in the House, Big River, The Foreigner, An Iliad, The Liar.

Conveniently set in the midst of Cedar City, Utah's stunning new Beverley Center for the Arts, the festival also offers the interactive Greenshow—a free 30-minute frolic of song, dance and laughter; backstage tours; play seminars; panel discussions with world-class cast members and artists; plus enlightening play orientations. Not to mention, there's a nearby renowned national park or two, or three.

No wonder it's called a festival. It's also quite accurately referred to as "The Greater Escape." Plan yours today. Visit bard.org or call 800.PLAYTIX for tickets.

ESCALANTE CANYONS ART FESTIVAL OFFERS SOMETHING FOR ALL



Mark your calendar now to do something off the beaten path this fall and escape to the Escalante Canyons Art Festival – Everett Ruess Days, a gathering of people who celebrate the stunning landscapes of Utah's canyon country through art.

Celebrating 15 years, the festival is hosted in Escalante, Utah - along Scenic Byway 12 – between Bryce Canyon and Capitol Reef National Parks, in the heart of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Events include the plein air painting competition and sale, an arts & crafts fair, a speaker series including writers, scientists and artists, art exhibits, workshops and demonstrations, as well as live music. Something for everyone!

The festival is a wonderful opportunity to kick back and enjoy live music. The entertainment lineup features musicians from across the Intermountain West playing blues, rock and roll, folk and alternative tunes.

10TH ANNUAL
PLEIN AIR INVITATIONAL

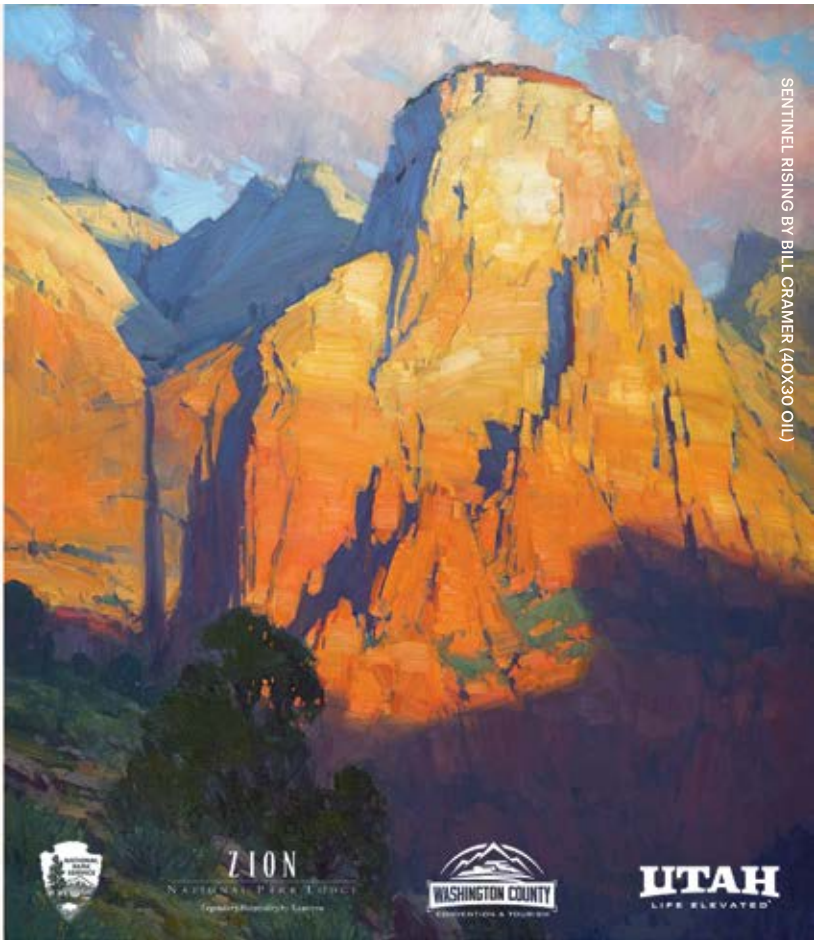
The Canyon is Calling.

November 5-11, 2018

Come witness, enjoy and learn from acclaimed landscape artists as they share their talents and insight within the inspiring backdrop of Zion National Park. Experiences and events include in-park demonstrations, instructive evening lectures and interactive wet-paint exhibits. We extend a welcome to all who seek beauty and wonder.

Hosted by Zion National Park Forever Project

ZIONPARK.ORG



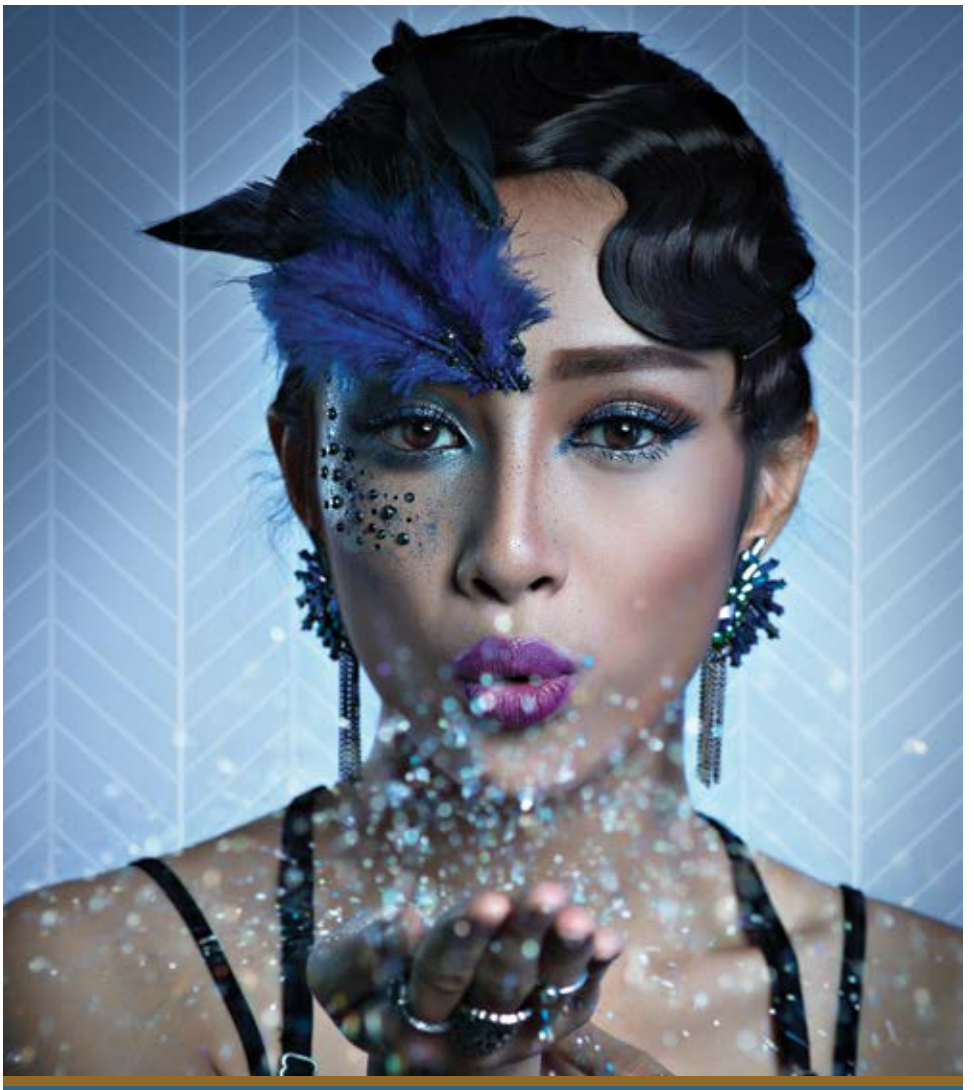
Find out all about the Escalante Canyons Art Festival by visiting escalantecanyonsartfestival.org and make plans now to join us. Most all programming and events are free to the public. Festival runs from September 21 to October 1.

CELEBRATING THE ART OF DOCUMENTARY FILM

DOCUTAH celebrates the art of documentary filmmaking, connecting Dixie State University and the community to the world. DOCUTAH offers a unique, entertaining International Documentary Film Festival and year-round programs providing creative, cultural, and educational engagement.

The DOCUTAH Festival takes place every September on the Campus of Dixie State University. Filmmakers attend the Festival to introduce their films, hold Q & A sessions after their screenings, and participate in DOCtalk™ – intimate conversations, where audience members can glean insights into topics, filmmaking and the business of film. The Festival offers students at DSU an enhanced education and easy access to the Festival.





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The Guide

ART

THROUGH MAY 12

Plural

Memory, passion, voice, excess, race, gender, and intersectionality are all brought into question as viewers search for ways in which a museum collection can reflect their own multifaceted understanding of who they are. **Free. Barrick Museum of Art at UNLV, *unlv.edu***

THROUGH MAY 12

Identity Tapestry

Inviting visitors to weave aspects of themselves into a participatory artwork, artist Mary Corey March gives viewers new insights into both themselves and the people they see every day. **Free. Barrick Museum of Art at UNLV, *unlv.edu***

THROUGH MAY 13

Expanse

Artists Sean P. Morrissey and Lenore Thomas present prints exploring the concept of landscapes. **Free. Gallery at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

THROUGH MAY 19

Exhale

Melissa Gaudet's cyanotypes explore the function of memory and the interaction of life and death. **Free. Laughlin Library, *lvccld.org***

THROUGH MAY 27

Hearts4 Vegas Touring Exhibition

A traveling healing exhibition of items collected from friends, family, and loved ones, memorializing the losses from the tragic Oct. 1, 2017 mass shooting. **Free. Mirabelli Community Center, 6200 Hargrove Ave., *artslasvegas.org***

THROUGH MAY 29

Light Play — Robot Army

Kinetic artist Sarah Petkus and engineer Mark Koch present their interactive hive of miniature delta robots, which react to participants' physical gestures. **Free. Windmill Library, *lvccld.org***

THROUGH JUNE 10

Nevada Watercolor Society Spring Show

This exhibit showcases works by outstanding local watercolorists exploring subjects as varied as still life, abstracts, portraits, and landscapes. **Free for members or with general admission. Big Springs Gallery at Springs Preserve, *springspreserve.org***

THROUGH JUNE 15

6th Annual Desert Companion Photo Showcase Exhibition

The final showing of the winning photography that was published in the June 2017 issue and toured throughout Southern Nevada. Free. Mayor's Gallery at Historic Fifth Street School, 401 S. Fourth St., *artslasvegas.org*

MAY 29–AUG 31

Hearts4Vegas Touring Exhibition

A traveling healing exhibition of items collected from friends, family, and loved ones, memorializing the losses from the tragic Oct. 1, 2017 mass shooting. **Free. Durango Hills Community Center/YMCA, 3521 N. Durango Hills Drive, *artslasvegas.org***

THROUGH DEC. 16

VESSEL: Ceramics of Ancient West Mexico

The exhibition is organized by shape; visitors are invited to contemplate how the form of each vessel informs both practical use and communicates ideas of power, identity, and belief. **Free. Barrick Museum of Art at UNLV, *unlv.edu***

MUSIC

MAY 4-5

Kurt Elling

A leading jazz vocalist, Elling is touring behind the release of his new album "The Questions." **7P, $39–$65. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 5

Cinco de Mayo with Emely Lotfe

Mexican pop singer Lotfe explores what really happened during the time of the battle in Puebla, as she performs songs both in French and Spanish. **6P, free. Concert Hall at Whitney Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 6

Slack Key Guitar Concert

Enjoy an afternoon of laid back rhythms as Hawaiian-born musician Gary Haleamau expresses true aloha spirit in celebration of Asian-American Pacific-Islander Heritage Month. **2P, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 8

As The Crow Flies

The former front man for the Black Crowes has gathered five musicians whose musical journeys intertwine with the legacy. **Ages 18+ only. 6:30P, $40–$460. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

MAY 9

Mac Sabbath

Cult followers know what happens when you combine an American fast-food franchise with a tribute to old-school Black Sabbath. Special guest: Strange Mistress. **Ages 18+ only. 7P, $18–$329. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

MAY 11

I Love Paris

Sylvie Boisel performs French and American jazz classics, inspired by the city of lights, including those made famous by Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier. **7:30P, free. West Charleston Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 11

David Perrico — Pop Strings Orchestra "The Music of Disney"

This show features songs from The Lion King, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, and many other classic films. **8P, $25–$40. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 12

Anthrax and Testament

Classic-era metal never went away! Ages 18+ only. 6:30P, **$40–$160. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

MAY 12

The 3 International Tenors

The show is a tribute to some of the finest music in the world and features

performances celebrating the virtuoso and careers of Luciano Pavarotti, Andrea Bocelli, Enrico Caruso, and others. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

MAY 12

The Colors of Sound

Francisco Javier Alvarez Marquez's show includes music from Bach, Mozart, and Chopin. He will also give a demonstration of piano improvisation. **7P, $11 in advance, $13 on concert day. Winchester Cultural Center, 3130 McLeod Drive, *clarkcountynv.gov***

MAY 14

Peter Hook & The Light

Hook, the legendary bassist of both Joy Division and New Order, honors the sounds of both bands with his newest project. **Ages 18+ only. 6:30P, $30–$35. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

MAY 15

Fiesta Del Mariachi

Celebrate Mexican culture, heritage, and community with song and dance performances by talented students from the Clark County School District's Mariachi programs and community ensembles. **2P, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 16

Eva Ayllon in Concert

One of Peru's foremost Afro-Peruvian musicians will perform. **7P, $45–$85. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 16

Los Nocheros in Concert

The pop/folk music group from Salta, Argentina will perform. **9:30P, $45–$85. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 17

Big Sam's Funky Nation

The sound is high-energy funk, rock, hip-hop, all mixed with the jazz of New Orleans. **Ages 18+ only. 7P, $12–$15. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

MAY 18

Una Noche Mexicana (A Night in Mexico)

Let the romanticism and joy of mariachi music embrace you during this special presentation. **7P, $11 in advance, $13 on concert day. Winchester Cultural Center, 3130 McLeod Drive, *clarkcountynv.gov***

MAY 18

Glass Animals

This all-ages concert features the indie-rock band from Oxford, England. **7:30P, $37–$40. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

MAY 19

Opera with Class: The Three Little Pigs

John Davies adapted Mozart arias and duets into this lively, family-friendly show guaranteed to delight children of all ages. **2P, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 19

Solitary Man — The Music of Neil Diamond

Long-time Vegas tribute performer Rob Garrett salutes the iconic singer/songwriter. A portion of the show's proceeds will benefit research for Parkinson's Disease, which led Mr. Diamond to end his touring career. **6P & 8:30P, $30–$40. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 19

Soja

Enjoy a night with this popular reggae band; with guest Eli Mac. A**ges 18+ only. 7P, $30–$460. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

MAY 19

These Guys Worldwide

These four multi-talented men have reinvented the classic sounds from barbershop to funk. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

MAY 19

HaleAmanO & The Delirians

Jam to the beats of island reggae, ska, R&B, and roots-style music with this local group. **7P, $10. Charleston Heights Arts Center, 800 S. Brush St., *artslasvegas.org***

MAY 19

Season Finale — Las Vegas Philharmonic

The orchestra performs Bernstein's "Fancy Free: Three Dance Variations," Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-Flat Major, "Emperor," and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 in B-Flat Major. **7:30P, $30–$109. Pre-concert conversation at 6:30P. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 20

Celtic Woman: Homecoming Tour

Ireland's renowned singers and musicians perform songs classic and new. **3P, $48–$108. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 20

Annual Gala Concert of Renaissance Music Academy Presented by the Classical Music Education Foundation

Academy students ranging from ages 4–18 perform works of Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and more. **4P, $60–$120. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 26

Virtuoso Violinists

Maestro Oscar Carrescia directs genii violinists Dimytro Nehrych and Yestyn Griffith though complex classical violin pieces accompanied by Jaeahn Benton on piano. **2P, $11 in advance, $13 on concert day. Winchester Cultural Center, 3130 McLeod Drive, *clarkcountynv.gov***

MAY 26

Madeleine Peyroux

The jazz chanteuse celebrates the upcoming release of her new album "Anthem." **6P and 8:30P, $39–$69. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 27

The Cool Sounds of Mel Torme

Song stylist Jonathan Karrant takes the stage to pay tribute to The Velvet Fog. **2P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

MAY 28

The Devon Allman Project

Gregg Allman's son carries on his legacy. **Ages 18+ only. 7P, $25. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

MAY 31

An Evening with Menudo

The lineup for this run is Miguel Cancel, Sergio Blass, Rubén Gomez, Robert Avellanet, Rawy Torres, and Jonathan Montenegro. **Ages 18+ only. 7P, $45–$75. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

JUNE 1

Ariana Savalas

The entertainer and emcee

for Postmodern Jukebox's recent concert for PBS (and yes, she's Telly's daughter) performs a solo show featuring her talents as a singer, musician, dancer, and burlesque performer. **7P, $39–$55. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center,** ***thesmithcenter.com***

JUNE 2

'56 Rock 'n' Roll Review

What if all those legends from Sun Records and the Louisiana Hayride never went to Hollywood, never made TV shows and movies, but were still just playing today? Find out at this show. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin,** ***scscai.com***

JUNE 2

Ben Hale and Friends

An album-release party featuring an evening of roots, rock and roll, and country music performed with a band of crack musicians from Nashville and Vegas. **7P, $25–$45. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center,** ***thesmithcenter.com***

JUNE 6

The Divine Divas of Song

The show will feature songs from some of the most celebrated divas in American music history including Ella Fitzgerald, Diana Ross, Barbra Streisand, Céline Dion, Carole King and many more. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin,** ***scscai.com***

THEATER & COMEDY

THROUGH MAY 6

Pippin

Heir to the Frankish throne, the young prince Pippin is in search of the secret to true happiness and fulfillment. **Fri–Sat 7:30P; Sun 2P, $27.50–$33. Judy Bayley Theatre at UNLV,** ***unlv.edu***

THROUGH MAY 13

/'Se-krits/

Over the course of one day, an office manager examines the one thing he and his co-workers all have in common … secrets both ridiculous and profound. **Thu–Sat 8P; Sun 2P, $15. Fischer Black Box at Las Vegas Little Theatre,** ***lvlt.org***

MAY 4–6

A Little Princess

This Rainbow Company Youth Theatre production shares the adventures of Sara Crewe as she begins her journey in "Miss Minchin's



Select Seminary for Young Ladies." Fri–Sat 7P; Sat–Sun 2P, **$6. Charleston Heights Arts Center, 800 S. Brush St., *artslasvegas.org***

MAY 4–20

An Act of God

God is back, and he's got a lot to say. He'll inhabit the bodies of three local actors to deliver 10 new commandments and some comedy zingers. **Thu–Sat 8P; Sun 2P, $24. Las Vegas Little Theatre, *lvlt.org***

MAY 12

Mayday Funnies with LVIP

You will laugh so hard you'll send out an SOS. The Las Vegas Improvisational Players make up the show on the spot based on the audience's suggestions, with hilarious results. **7P, $10; $5 kids, seniors, and military. Show Creators Studio, 4455 W. Sunset Road, *lvimprov.com***

MAY 23

Where I Want to Be

Experience a lighthearted musical of hope and triumph featuring Bruce Ewing. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

DANCE

MAY 5

Gotta Dance

A mixed recital for adults and seniors. 1P and 3:30P, **$15. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 8

Academy of Nevada Ballet Theatre: Legends

Dancers of the Academy pay tribute to Gene Kelly, Twyla Tharp, Bob Fosse, and other icons of dance. **6P, $16–$59. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 11

Academy of Nevada Ballet Theatre: La Fille Mal Gardée

ANBT's pre-professional ballet program presents a classic, full-length, comic ballet in two acts. **7P, $16–$59. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 11

Paraguayan Folklorico Ballet

Accompanied by master harpist Mariano Gonzalez, these stellar dancers will blow you away with their fantastic moves and outstanding choreography. **7P, $11 in advance, $13 on show day. Winchester Cultural Center, 3130 McLeod Drive, *clarkcountynv.gov***

MAY 12

Mother's Day Dance

Dance the night away with a live band and hits by Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, and Woody Herman. Refreshments, wine, and beer available for purchase. **7P, $15. Charleston Heights Arts Center, 800 S. Brush St., *artslasvegas.org***

MAY 14

Capezio Dance Awards: 130 Years in Dance

Show business legends and members of some of the most renowned dance companies celebrate dance in all its forms. Proceeds benefit the Actors Fund and Future Dance. **7:30P, $26–$79. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 16

Maks, Val, & Peta Live on Tour: Confidential

Stars of ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" and FOX's "So You Think You Can Dance" present an all-new show. **7:30P, $35.50–$99.50. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 20

Mele-Hula-Mo'olelo

Enjoy the beauty of Hawai'i nei. **2P, $11 in advance, $13 on concert day. Winchester Cultural Center, 3130 McLeod Drive, *clarkcountynv.gov***

MAY 26

Follow the Farthest Star

Dancers ranging in age from 3 to18 perform a wide variety of works in this 24th annual performance. **9A, 12:30P, 4P, and 7P, $15. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MAY 29

Passages — the Journey of Our Ancestors

Enjoy the world-famous Tamburitzans as they present a stunning show with hundreds of costumes and dances from 11 countries. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

DISCUSSIONS & READINGS

MAY 5

Mormon Mesa: An Expansive Winding Mariposa Lily Bulb Roasting Site at the Virgin-Muddy River Divide

James Kangas, Bureau of Reclamation, speaks. **2P, free for members or included with General Admission. Springs Preserve, *springspreserve.org***

MAY 12

Blue Whales: Their History, Status, and Current Plight

Ecologist Michael Fishbach discusses the pre-whaling global population of blue whales and their current status, distribution, and threats. **3P, free. Windmill Library, (702) 507-6068**

MAY 13

The Whale Pump — Whales' Role in the Oceanic and Global Ecosystem

Michael Fishbach will take an in-depth look at phytoplankton and the role whales play in stimulating these critical blooms. **3P, free. PAC at Summerlin Library, *lvccld.org***

MAY 18

The Poets' Corner

Lablaque Williams hosts this open-mic event for the best poetic talent in the valley. **Ages 17+ only. 7:30P, free. West Las Vegas Arts Center, 947 W. Lake Mead Blvd., *artslasvegas.org***

MAY 26

My Best/Worst Summer Job

Clark County Poet Laureate Vouge Robinson moderates as members of the Las Vegas community share stories of their best or worst summer jobs. **7:30P, donations accepted. Charleston Heights Arts Center, 800 S. Brush St., *artslasvegas.org***

FAMILY & FESTIVALS

THROUGH MAY 31

Art, Architecture, & Design Month

From a sketching exhibit at the World Center to Las Vegas home tours to the AIA High School Awards at UNLV, there are many ways to celebrate design. **Most events are free. Multiple venues and times, *aialasvegas.org***

MAY 4

First Friday

From crafts to food to everything in between, this is the place to celebrate all things artsy. Cockroach Theatre offers 20-minute vignettes, multiple food trucks offer mouth-watering dining, and booths of all sorts offer one-of-a-kind items. 5–11P, **free. 1025 First Street, *fffIv.org***

MAY 12

Ice Cream Festival

The annual all-you-can-eat sweet-treats festival is back with entertainment for all ages, face painting, superhero training, and carnival games. **10A–4P, $8 children; $10 adults. Springs Preserve, *springspreserve.org***

MAY 13

Mother's Day Brunch

Treat mom to an all-frills brunch. **9A–4P (reservations needed), $40.78, adults; $14.20, children 5–10; children under 5 free. Divine Café at Springs Preserve, *springspreserve.org***

MAY 18–19

EDC Las Vegas

Elaborate stages, plenty of music, pyrotechnics, and lots of skin. The Electric Daisy Carnival is the biggest electronic dance festival in the world. **$355–$699. Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 7000 Las Vegas Blvd. N., *lasvegas.electricdaisycarnival.com***

MAY 19

Brews & Blues

Hot music, cold beer, and tasty grub abound at the annual adults-only festival you don't want to miss. **4–8P, $35–$75. Springs Preserve, *springspreserve.org***

FUNDRAISERS

MAY 5

2018 Komen Las Vegas Race for the Cure

The 5K route is open for participants of all speeds. Proceeds go to local programs and national research for breast cancer. **6A, $35 adults, $15 youth. The Llama Lot, Ninth and Fremont *komennevada.org***

MAY 26

Lupus of Nevada's Nature Walk & Run

Funds raised at the event help support outreach, educational awareness, and advocacy in Nevada. **7A, $25. Springs Preserve, *eventbrite.com***



END NOTE

REMEMBERING THE BOOM TIME

Thirty years ago, the Pepcon explosion shook the valley — and revealed a different kind of fracture

By Paul Szydelko



Thick black and rust-colored smoke filled the sky above the southeast Las Vegas Valley shortly before noon on May 4, 1988. A series of thunderous explosions echoed. The ground shook and concussion waves shattered windows, caved in walls, and knocked cars off roads for miles around.

Near what is now Wigwam Parkway and Gibson Road, the Pacific Engineering & Production Company (Pepcon) solid-rocket-fuel component plant and adjacent Kidd Marshmallow facility were destroyed. The blasts killed two Pepcon workers, injured more than 300, and caused losses in excess of $80 million.

"It knocked everybody within 300 yards off their feet," Bob Hampton, Pepcon's manager of design and drafting, told the *Henderson Home News* that day. Hampton said he was behind a car when an explosion shattered its windows and cut up his face.

Pepcon and nearby Kerr-McGee were the nation's only producers of ammonium perchlorate, used in rockets for the space shuttle and the Department of Defense. The Clark County Fire Department concluded that a spark from a welder's torch caused a fire, which spread to stored ammonium perchlorate, igniting the explosions.

In the months afterward, Pepcon and the industrial area it was part of became a symbol of a clash between new and old in Henderson. Green Valley, the area's first master-planned community, was blooming west of the plants. Under the spell of a pervasive marketing campaign, many of its residents did not identify themselves as part of Henderson. A swath of empty desert between the new neighborhoods and the city's core perpetuated the mindset.

Residents in older neighborhoods east of the plants understood the city's very existence stemmed from the industries, built to supply material for World War II. Those whose livelihoods still depended on them clung to a hardscrabble identity.

Former Clark County Commissioner Bruce Woodbury attended a meeting with hundreds of residents shortly after the explosions. "Just as adamant and passionate as the Green Valley people were the union members and the families and a lot of the old-time residents in the area and closer to the plants, (saying) basically, 'Look, we were here first, so deal with it.'" Woodbury tried to assure residents "that we were going to do whatever we can to make everybody safe. But I certainly did not commit to making anything go away."

Clark County Commissioner Jim Gibson, whose grandfather cofounded Pepcon and whose uncle was then its CEO, says the event represented a personal, economic, and political thicket for his family.

"We heard complaints and worries and concerns ..." Gibson says. "What was our housekeeping like? What were our procedures and processes like? But we feel like we answered those questions and stepped up in every material way you could." Understanding that residences were encroaching on the site, Pepcon rebuilt outside Cedar City, Utah, and was manufacturing ammonium perchlorate again by 1989.

"We didn't want to relocate. None of the executives in the company, except the plant manager, moved. They stayed in the corporate offices here, and we continued to be a Nevada company," says Gibson, who served as Henderson's mayor from 1997 to 2009.

Woodbury served on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission to examine laws regulating highly combustible materials. It produced 43 recommendations on air, land, and water quality; chemical storage and transportation; and more. The Legislature in 1991 approved the Chemical Catastrophe Prevention Act, which established a list of hazardous materials and limited onsite storage.

Amid the heightened attention on the industrial area and environmental cleanup, Henderson was among the fastest-growing regions in the country during the 1990s. "The growth was relentless in those days," Woodbury says. "Developers and businesses were looking for any available land to put their projects on, and those regulations would have helped in regard to the safety of any such development."

Within five years, Henderson hit the 100,000 population mark, which encouraged more growth, including the opening of the Galleria at Sunset mall in 1996. The expansion of Interstate 215 tightened the psychological and physical gap between east and west, old and new.

Thirty years later, the Pepcon site is a thriving business park, with nary a sign of the frightening explosions. Commercial and residential areas fill the formerly empty land, concealing the scars of one of the most difficult days in the valley's history. ✦

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