



STAFF REPORT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING DATE: 04/25/12

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Report by Department of Planning regarding public outreach items

BACKGROUND

No relevant case history.

ANALYSIS

Please enjoy the attached articles.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No action required.

BACKUP DOCUMENTS

- Newsletter, Preservation Association of Clark County, March 2012.
- Elementary school name honors jeweler and civic leader, View-ReviewJournal.com, February 7, 2012.
- Elementary School named for LVCVA legend Manny Cortez, View-ReviewJournal.com, February 7, 2012.
- John J. McDonald Football Complex honors Pop Warner enthusiast View-ReviewJournal.com, March 6, 2012.
- Several southwest-area streets named on a whim, View-ReviewJournal.com, March 6, 2012.
- Sister serves as namesake for Whitney-area elementary, View-ReviewJournal.com, March 6, 2012.
- White Cross Drugs closing its doors after more than 60 years, www.ktnv.com, March 6, 2012.
- Golden Gate renovations include expanded casino floor; new lobby next, Business-ReviewJournal.com, March 19, 2012.
- Public health pioneer Dr. Otto Ravenholt dies at 84, News-ReviewJournal.com, March 19, 2012.
- Downtown casino renovations maintain Old Vegas vibe, Las Vegas Sun, March 20, 2012.
- Atomic Testing Museum explores Area 51, Living-ReviewJournal.com, March 25, 2012.
- For many, two mob tours is one too many, Business-ReviewJournal.com, March 25, 2012.
- Eldorado Canyon holds history, rugged scenery, Living-ReviewJournal.com, March 25, 2012.
- Mob Attraction and Mob Museum both worth experiencing, News-ReviewJournal.com, March 26, 2012.

CM

- BLM moves to protect fossils in Tule Springs area, News-ReviewJournal.com, March 30, 2012.
- John Mull's Meats a family business since 1954, View-ReviewJournal.com, April 3, 2012.
- Lorna Kesterson, Henderson's first and only female mayor is the namesake of a Henderson school, View-ReviewJournal.com, April 3, 2012.
- Over a century, Four Mile has gone from trailside oasis to brothel to bar, View-ReviewJournal.com, April 3, 2012.
- Walt Lott Drive honors off-road racing enthusiast, View-ReviewJournal.com, April 3, 2012.

Preservation Association of Clark County

March 2012

History Big and Small

By Chris Macek

Seventy-six years ago, on September 30, 1935, Franklin D. Roosevelt came to southern Nevada to dedicate Hoover Dam. Hoover Dam was built in the midst of the depression, providing jobs for thousands of men from around the country and the world. It was and remains a wonder of engineering and beauty. It created Lake Mead, which provides water for cities and agriculture in the dry Southwest and to this day, provides electricity for a million homes. It controls the floods that at one time ravaged the Colorado River Basin. It provides recreation for millions and provides jobs for thousands more. Annually, more than 900,000 people from throughout the world tour the visitor center, power plant, and the interior of the dam, or just stroll along the top, marveling at the view. And it arguably can be said that it built Las Vegas.

I spent several months this past summer working at Hoover Dam as a tour guide. I gave tours to thousands of visitors. I was permitted access to parts of the Dam few people ever get to see. There is nothing as spectacular as standing on the outside deck of the power plant looking up at the grand sweep of a concrete arch dam rising nearly 700 feet above your head; or standing in the shaft gallery underneath the rotors watching 65 foot long steel shafts spinning at 180 revolutions per minute producing electricity; or standing in a dank, dark diversion tunnel with a 30 foot diameter steel pipe above your head carrying up to 96,000 gallons of water per second to the turbines.

What is even more astounding, is that all of this was constructed more than 75 years ago by young, mostly inexperienced, men. Working ten hour shifts, six days a week, in a hostile environment, and making \$4 to \$8 a day, these men built a dam the likes of which the world had never seen before, and all of this was accomplished without the aid of computers and all of the technical innovations we take for granted today. You cannot understand Las Vegas today, without understanding the history of Hoover Dam. This is a historic site; one that is protected, is a major contributor to the economy of

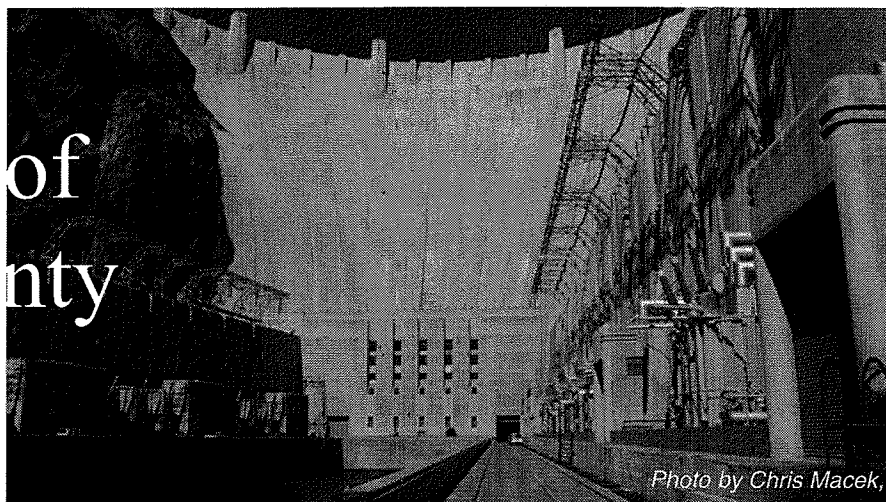
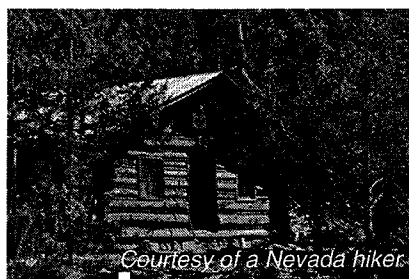


Photo by Chris Macek,

southern Nevada, and is a major tourist destination. If you have never been there, go. If you have been there, go again.

Every so often I load my pack, lace up my hiking boots, grab my hiking staff and head up to a remote little piece of Clark County called Hidden Forest Canyon. Up a steep, narrow canyon in the Sheep Range, four miles from the end of the road, you suddenly find yourself in a forest of Ponderosa Pine. Right in the middle of this grove of tall trees, is a cabin. It's commonly referred to as the Hidden Forest Cabin and its history is almost unknown. Probably built in the early 1900s by miners, or maybe hunters it has remained in use for about a hundred years. It may have been used by bootleggers during prohibition, and it was used by the United States Fish and Wildlife

Service in the 1930s. Today, it is used by people like me who take the time and effort to get there. Even though we don't have a wealth of information about this cabin and it didn't play a major role in the history of Clark County or Las Vegas, it is still an important piece of history. When I'm up there, I can't help but marvel at the fact that someone came up here in this remote canyon and with a few crude tools built this little cabin. I wonder



Courtesy of a Nevada hiker.
volunteer4wild.blogspot.com

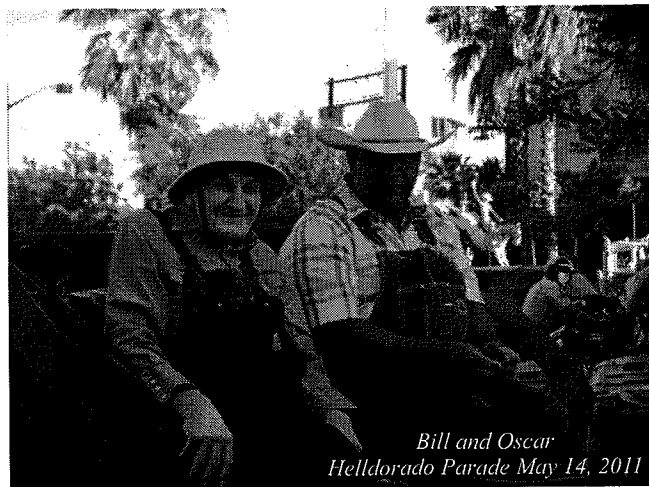
why they would do that or who would do that and imagine being up here on some quiet summer day in the early 1900s when Vegas was still only a dream.

Due to its remote location, it has withstood the ravages of time and been spared the damage and destruction many Clark County historic sites have suffered. Over the last several years, the cabin has been repaired and stabilized by some dedicated volunteers and a little federal money and remains a true historic gem in Clark County.

As members of PACC, we should all go out and visit historic sites wherever they may be, whether or not we had a direct hand in their preservation. After all, why bother preserving history if we don't enjoy and appreciate it. (For directions to the Hidden Forest Cabin visit bird&hike.com).

Grand Marshall Bill Gilcrease

By Corinne Escobar



William Orr Gilcrease will soon turn 93. He became a resident of Las Vegas before he was a year old. His family and their contributions to this community span over nine decades, so it was fitting that he was selected to be the Grand Marshall of last year's Helldorado Parade, held on May 14, 2011.

Helldorado Days is an event unique to Las Vegas. It began in 1935 to encourage tourism and community involvement with a parade, rodeo and other Western themed activities. Bill, who always fostered a community spirit through his non-profit foundations, the Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary, and the Gilcrease Orchard, was honored to participate in this famous Las Vegas tradition.

Bill is the only surviving member of his family that came to Las Vegas in 1920. His brother Ted, who passed away in 2003, established the Gilcrease Orchard Foundation in 1998 to preserve the Gilcrease Orchard, a local pick and pay orchard for the community to enjoy inexpensive but fresh, home grown produce. Bill continues to serve as a trustee to the Orchard Foundation.

Bill also serves as a director for the Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary, which he founded in 1970 to preserve and protect exotic birds and other animals.

For more information on the Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary, located at 8103 Racel (and Cimarron) visit their website, www.naturesanctuarygilcrease.org or call (702) 645-4224 for hours of operation and fees. For more information on the Gilcrease Orchard located at Tenaya and Whispering Sands, call (702) 409-0655 or visit their website, www.thegilcreaseorchard.org.

For more history on the Gilcrease family, visit our website, www.pacc.info, click "Newsletters," then January 2004, October 2005 and April 2009.

Helen Stewart Statue Dedicated

Press Release from Dr. Linda Miller

Helen Jane Wiser Stewart (1854-1926) moved to Las Vegas with her husband Archibald Stewart in 1882 to take over the "Los Vegas Ranch," which in 1856 was originally the Mormon Fort. Two years later Archibald was killed at the Kiel Ranch and Helen took over running the ranch. In later years, Helen and her father, Hiram Wiser, began buying land in response to rumors of the railroad going through the Las Vegas Valley. In 1902 Helen sold over 1800 acres to Senator Clark of Montana, who had ties to the railroad. In May 1905, a land sale occurred and Clark's Townsite of Las Vegas developed.

On December 3, 2011, a statue of Helen Stewart was dedicated at the Old Mormon Fort for her contributions to the community. Helen was the first postmaster of Las Vegas beginning in 1893. According to Joan Powell, former President of the Mesquite Club, Helen was an early member and president of this service organization and was responsible for suggesting the name of the club. She also valued education and was the first woman to serve on the school board in 1916. Helen was also active in the Christ Episcopal Church and was involved in the founding and naming of the church in Las Vegas.

Helen Stewart was a civic leader who had governors, state legislators and U.S. Congressmen in her home. She was known as a friend to the Paiute and a beloved member of the community.

Funding for the statue was provided by the City of Las Vegas Centennial Commission who awarded the Friends of the Fort \$99,000 to oversee the project. Also working on fund raising were Linda Miller with the Southern Nevada Women's History Project, League of Women Voters, Daughters of the American Revolution, Nevada Council for History Education, the Mesquite Club and the Christ Church Episcopal Ladies Guild.

Benjamin Victor was chosen to design and sculpt the Helen Stewart Statue.

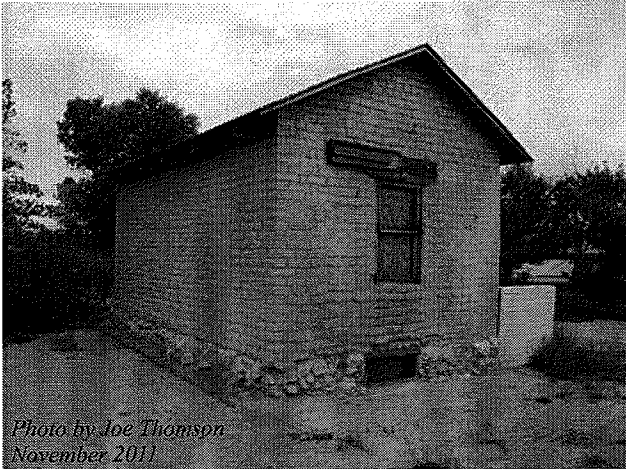
Attending the Ceremony were former Gov. Richard Bryan, Rep. Shelly Berkley, State Senator Ruben Kuehen, and Dr. Linda Young, Clark County School District Trustee, among others.

To view the statue contact the Old Mormon Fort at (702) 486-3511 for hours of operation and entrance fee. The Fort is located at 500 E. Washington (and Las Vegas Blvd).



Kiel Ranch Update

By Corinne Escobar



The Master Plan for the restoration and development of Kiel Ranch as a historic park has two completed phases. First was the master plan itself, second was the restoration of the adobe by Green Contracting LLC. To view impressive images of the process visit their website, www.greenconllc.com. Click "gallery."

The reconstruction of the north wall, which collapsed several years ago, is completed and the dilapidated canopy over the adobe has been removed. The next phase is to clean the brush around the spring and landscape the site, but staffers at North Las Vegas do not have a clear plan for when that can be implemented.

The city of North Las Vegas has experienced a financial crisis that required the closing of recreational centers and substantially downsizing the administrative staff within Parks and Recreation. The parks planner, Michelle Mennart, who oversaw the funding applications and progress of the development of Kiel Ranch was laid off several months ago. The Kiel Ranch project is now under the umbrella of City Planning.

At a recent City Council meeting, a budget of over \$380,000 was approved for Coe Van Loo to do the construction drawings for the restrooms, kiosks and pathways. Funding for the drawings came from a \$336,200 SNPLMA grant, \$35,000 from the State of Nevada Land and Conservation grant and \$10,000 from the Kiel Ranch Preservation Fund, the remaining money left from the \$1.5 million sale of the ranch's 22 acres in 1988. Originally the city bought 27 acres with a federal Bi-Centennial grant in 1976. The ranch is now about seven acres.

In 2004 North Las Vegas received a \$2.4 million SNPLMA grant to develop Kiel but a short sighted mayor and city council returned the funds in 2005. At this point the city is lacking funding to complete the entire master plan, and the focus to generate more grants for Kiel by City Planning staffers just isn't there. A recent conversation with Mayor Buck and Joe Thomson

indicated that Mayor Buck feels she has more pressing priorities for the city of North Las Vegas than Kiel Ranch.

A nearly forty year history of North Las Vegas spending money on planning Kiel Ranch but not actually implementing a historic park continues but so will we to advocate for its preservation. (See PACC Newsletter October 2005 for the history of Kiel Ranch at www.pacc.info).

PACC: is there a future?

Editorial by Chris Macek

What is the future for PACC? The current Board is the same board that has been in place for years and we need more support. The economy has tanked, and the effect on Las Vegas has been devastating. The appetite for historic preservation by local government entities has been trumped by economic realities. We seem unable to attract new, active members to our organization although we are grateful for the continuing support of longtime friends and members.

Many of the historic buildings in Las Vegas were destroyed in the name of development and the remaining ones are under constant threat. There still doesn't seem to be a public consensus in Las Vegas that preserving the historic fabric of a community is a positive endeavor that enriches the community. Many of the great cities of the western United States including Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Diego, and Sacramento all have thriving historic areas that are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. I make it a point of visiting these places myself.

Is PACC just being swept away by a tide of indifference and 21st century reality. Really, is there a future for PACC?

We answer with a resounding yes. There is indeed a future for PACC. If all we do is raise awareness among a few dedicated individuals or the media about threats to significant historic resources, we have been successful. Look what happened at the Kiel Ranch in North Las Vegas. Relegated to the dustbin of history by that city, PACC and its dedicated members revived efforts to preserve and develop the site as a park. PACC has been heavily involved in the planning for the project and we are on the brink of seeing success. If PACC isn't keeping an eye on the historic buildings and sites in Clark County, who will? In this age of shrinking government budgets, economic pressure, changing demographics, and apathy about historic preservation, PACC is more relevant and necessary than ever. We hope you agree and will continue to support the Preservation Association of Clark County through your continuing membership and with your voice.

PACC Annual Meeting: Walking Box Ranch Tour

This year we have a special event arranged for our Spring Annual Meeting. PACC will sponsor a tour of the Walking Box Ranch near Searchlight, Nevada.

DATE: April 21, 2012

TIME: 11:30 - 1:30

DIRECTIONS: Take US 95 south towards Searchlight before Boulder City. Turn right at Highway 164 (west). Go about 7 miles to the "Walking Box Ranch Rd" sign, turn left. Follow a dirt road and the entrance is to the left. Please park by the Walking Box Ranch sign above the gate. Plan on at least one hour travel time for the trip.

Refreshments will be provided. This event is free admission to PACC members and their guests but an RSVP is required to CorinneEscobar@pacc.info or 702 595-7135.

The Walking Box Ranch is jointly managed by UNLV Public Lands Institute and BLM. The Public Lands Institute's website states, "The Walking Box Ranch was built in 1931 by legendary silent film stars Rex Bell and Clara Bow. The name of the ranch and brand are symbolic of a camera box on a tripod. During the 1930s, it covered nearly 400,000 acres and supported 1,800 head of cattle. The Ranch was also known as a rural escape destination for the couple's famous Hollywood friends. When they separated Bell pursued a career in Nevada politics." The ranch was added to the National Register of Historic Places on January 30, 2009.

Membership Dues Needed

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

Sustaining250.00

Contributing100.00

Institutional 50.00

Family 25.00

Regular 20.00

Student/Senior Citizen..... 10.00

Send to: *Preservation Association of Clark County*
P.O. Box 36365 Las Vegas, NV 89133
or go to www.pacc.info and click Membership

Please join or renew your PACC membership!

Your tax deductible dollars are used for newsletters and programs that advocate for the preservation of our local history.

The Preservation Association of Clark County, a non-profit organization established in 1974 for the preservation of Clark County heritage, publishes this newsletter.

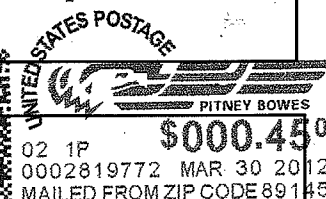
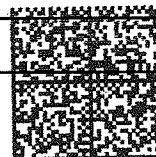
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Elementary school name honors jeweler and civic leader



JAN HOGAN/VIEW

MJ Christensen Elementary School, 9001 Mariner Cove Drive, lies silent during school break Dec. 29. The school's namesake, MJ Christensen, was a jeweler whose stores dotted the Las Vegas Valley. There are now two shops, one in Henderson and another in the Summerlin area in Boca Park. Christensen began building his business as a watch inspector for the Union Pacific Railroad in the early 1930s, a job that brought him to Las Vegas.

BY JAN HOGAN
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Feb. 7, 2012 | 12:16 a.m.

When MJ Christensen Elementary School broke ground in October 1988, its namesake was well-known, having six jewelry stores in the Las Vegas Valley and being a civic leader.

"We get asked that all the time -- 'Is that your school?' " said Jennifer Miller, marketing director for MJ Christensen Jewelers, of the school at 9001 Mariner Cove Drive.

For years, Las Vegans knew MJ Christensen Jewelers as one of the top jewelers in town. The company was sold in 2007 and now has two branches. The new owners opted to keep the name, saying it had "such a sterling reputation."

But what most people don't realize is that MJ Christensen owes his start in Las Vegas to the Union Pacific Railroad.

MJ Christensen was born the son of a carpenter in February 1899 in Brigham City, Utah. His full name was Marcus Joy. The middle name underlined his parents' state of mind at having a healthy baby after their first two children were stillborn.

Their joy was short-lived. The next pregnancy resulted in another stillborn child, and MJ's mother died, as well.

He was sent to live with his grandparents.

Christensen graduated from Box Elder High School in 1918 and did a brief stint in the Army before receiving his education at The University of Utah. He went on a two-year church mission to Denmark for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and then married his sweetheart, Hazel Johnson.

Like his father, he worked as a carpenter and cabinet builder. His interests turned to watch repair, and Christensen interned with a jeweler in Milford, Utah, who also was a railroad watch inspector.

In the days before computers and GPS units, being on time was of the utmost importance to the railroad industry. Trains going in either direction needed confidence that on-coming trains had reached the sidings (pull-off points) at the times predetermined by the schedule. To do that, their watches had to remain accurate within 30 seconds every two weeks or 30 days, depending on whether the employee was an engineer or a line foreman.

After his apprenticeship, Christensen took over the watch inspecting contract in 1932. As the Union Pacific continued to grow, it opened a base in Las Vegas and asked Christensen to move his family there.

He agreed and moved here first but was called back a month later by the railroad. It had acted too prematurely, the railroad said. The Union Pacific called him back a month later with orders to return to Las Vegas. They were ready to go full steam ahead, they said.



MJ Christensen also helped set up the Better Business Bureau and served in the Assembly and state Senate, chairing the Ways and Means Committee for the latter. VIEW FILE PHOTO

So, Christensen returned to Las Vegas and made a quick trip back to Milford to start moving household items. Hazel greeted him with disturbing news: The railroad had called while he was en route and canceled the orders ---- again.

Christensen had had enough. He called a buddy in the liquor business, described his predicament and asked if there was anything he could do.

The buddy went straight to the Union Pacific president, reminded the official that he distributed a lot of liquor throughout Utah but that he could just as easily deal with the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad.

The result was almost immediate. Christensen was moved permanently to Las Vegas, his family closing up the Milford house to join him. That was in 1939. Christensen opened a jewelry "store" inside a drug store at First and Fremont streets ---- it actually consisted of two display cases ---- and serviced the railroad, as well. By 1941, he opened his own store at 225 Fremont St. The family lived behind it for a time, and Hazel kept the books.

Before the advent of air conditioning, the Christensen family endured the summer nights at 10 Bonneville St. by hanging wet sheets in the window so the breeze would cool off their rooms. MJ and his wife slept on the enclosed porch. Their sons ---- Don, Vern, Carl and Paul ---- slept two-to-a-bed in bunk beds, and the daughters ---- Anne and Adele ---- shared a couch.

In 1958, Christensen bought 3 acres near the Anderson Dairy on South Fifth St. and built a house at 706 Lacy Lane. The house included a 16-foot-by-20-foot room for his prized possession: a slate billiard table.

The house also was built with an extra-large kitchen, highly unusual in those days but a practical move. The kitchen was the spot where visitors gravitated. At the same time as they built their house, they constructed four others nearby, one for each son.

Grandson Dave Christensen, a doctor who tended to MJ in his final years, recalled him as a man who could be, at times, the life of a party or reserved and quiet.

"He was quite a storyteller, too," he said.

MJ Christensen was instrumental in establishing the Better Business Bureau and served in the Assembly and the state Senate, chairing the Ways and Means Committee for the latter.

He died in 1987. Hazel died six years later.

"He was 87 when he died," said his grandson.

"He always said that he wanted to live in three centuries because he was born in 1899 ... he wanted to live long enough to see 2001. He didn't make it."

Contact Summerlin/Summerlin South View reporter Jan Hogan at jhogan@viewnews.com or 387-2949.

Elementary School named for LVCVA legend Manny Cortez



[VIEW FILE PHOTO](#)

Manny Cortez served as president and CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority for 13 years.

BY [F. ANDREW TAYLOR](#)
[VIEW STAFF WRITER](#)

Posted: Feb. 7, 2012 | 12:16 a.m.

Building namesakes typically have achieved some level of success in their career. Manny Cortez, namesake of Manuel J. Cortez Elementary School, made his mark in several careers.

"Manny Cortez committed his life to the betterment of Las Vegas," said Rossi Ralenkotter, president/CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, in an email. "Whether it was through his work with the taxi authority, as a (Clark) County Commissioner, or leading the LVCVA, Manny's focus was always on his hometown."

Cortez and his family came to Las Vegas from Las Cruces, N.M., in 1944 when he was 5. He graduated in 1956 from Las

Vegas High School at the school's old downtown location, which is now Las Vegas Academy. After serving for three years in the Army, he returned to Las Vegas to continue his education at Nevada Southern University, the institution that was eventually renamed the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

After graduation, Cortez worked with the Clark County district attorney's office before moving over to the other side of the courtroom to the Clark County public defender's office.

He was appointed administrator of the Nevada Taxicab Authority by Gov. Mike O'Callaghan in 1973, and three years later, he was elected to the Clark County Commission. At various times during his four terms on the commission, he served as chairman of the commission and chairman of the Clark County Sanitation District and the Clark County Liquor and Gaming Licensing Board.

Cortez served on a number of boards and organizations, including the governing board of University Medical Center, the governing board of the Las Vegas Valley Water District, the board of directors for the local Boy Scouts of America, the board of directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Nevada, the advisory board for the Children's Advocacy Alliance and the Fiscal Affairs Board of the Metropolitan Police Department. He was president of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas.

In 1991, Cortez began yet another career: president and CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. He held that position for 13 years, retiring in 2004. During that time, he worked to expand the view of Las Vegas from a bastion of gaming to a resort destination. It was under Cortez's leadership that the slogan "What happens here, stays here" was launched.

"As the head of the LVCVA, Manny showed the same commitment he did in his efforts to improve our community," Ralenkotter said. "He strived to make Las Vegas the greatest destination in the world and instilled the same passion in all of us

who worked for him. Under his vision and leadership, we worked closely with our resort partners to evolve from a regional gambling destination to a world-class resort destination known around the globe."

In August 1998, the school named for Cortez at 4245 E. Tonopah Ave. opened. He was more than a namesake. He was a positive presence before his death at age 67 in 2006.

"He was very, very involved in the school," said Ariel Villalobos, principal of Cortez Elementary School. "He participated in functions and fundraising. His family is still involved. His wife, Joanna, and his daughters still visit. There are a number of aunts and cousins who are involved, also."

Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto is one of Cortez's daughters.

The school dedicates an annual carnival to Manny Cortez. This year's event is scheduled for May 18.

"I think his commitment to the youth of our community, through his work with the Boys & Girls Club and Big Brothers Big Sisters, as well as his work to establish the Academy of Travel and Tourism magnet school at Valley High School, showed his vision for the future of our industry and our youth," Ralenkotter said. "It was very appropriate for the Clark County School District to honor Manny and his legacy by naming an elementary school after him."

Contact Sunrise/Whitney View reporter F. Andrew Taylor at ataylor@viewnews.com or 380-4532.

John J. McDonald Football Complex honors Pop Warner enthusiast



SPECIAL TO VIEW

John McDonald holds a vintage football during a dedication ceremony for the football complex named for him at All American Park, 1151 S. Buffalo Drive, Jan. 12.

BY JAN HOGAN
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Mar. 6, 2012 | 12:19 a.m.

When the John J. McDonald Football Complex at All American Park was officially dedicated on Jan. 12, its namesake was unaware of the reason he'd been invited.

"He thought we were going to do something to honor (former mayor pro tem) Gary Reese," said Michael McDonald, his son. "When we got there, they said, 'No, this is for you.' "

The elder McDonald, who will turn 87 in June, was involved with Pop Warner Football for years and acted as an unofficial coach.

His son, Michael, who would go on to be a city councilman and is now working with the Republican Party effort in Nevada, recalled what it was like to have his father

"It was difficult; I had to be the example," he said, "not that my dad was hard on me."

Jordan Ross is a friend of the family. He said everyone refers to John McDonald as "Mr. Mack." What strikes people when they first meet "Mr. Mack?"

"His amazing cheerfulness, his graciousness," Ross said. "And when he shakes your hand ... he still has that firm, worker's kind of grip."

John McDonald grew up in Butte, Mont. That's where he met and married his high school sweetheart, Doris.

He served in the Navy in World War II on an aircraft carrier. His ship was one of the escorts when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

After the war, he moved to Reno, where he became a dealer in a casino. He followed the industry to Southern Nevada and dealt games in various casinos -- the Golden Nugget, the Thunderbird, the Dunes -- and worked his way up to casino manager.

Meanwhile, he and Doris raised their family of two daughters in the area around Washington Avenue and Decatur Boulevard, a middle-class neighborhood.

When Michael was born, his father was 40, older than everyone else's parents. But John McDonald was active in his son's life, especially where sports were concerned. When a child was not performing well and was pulled out of the football lineup, John McDonald would give him individualized coaching on the sidelines. He was known to sponsor teams.

After work, he'd be at Ed Fountain Park at Decatur Boulevard and Vegas Drive to assist with after-school sports. He was involved in coaching baseball, track and football, but football was near and dear to his heart. John McDonald's favorite professional teams are the San Francisco 49ers and the New England Patriots. The latter is a favorite because Boston was where he was honorably discharged from the Navy.

When Michael McDonald was growing up, their home was called "the Kool-Aid house," a magnet for neighborhood children.

"Mom would have dinner on the table at 5 every night," Michael McDonald said. "I'd always had a friend over ... there would be no TV on. We'd talk about what had happened that day, how everyone's day had gone. He kept us all involved."

In quieter moments, John McDonald enjoyed storytelling, describing how tough life was during the Great Depression. He often used those stories as examples of life lessons and the importance of making the right choices.

"Integrity was big with my father," Michael McDonald said. "If you did something wrong, you had to own up to it."

He recalled being especially close with his father, kissing him goodbye each day before heading off to school and again when he went off to bed.

"I thought every kid did that," he said.

The newly dedicated football fields at 1151 S. Buffalo Drive almost didn't become a reality. In the late 1990s, area residents were adamant that no commercial zoning be allowed in the area. It took a number of community meetings to iron out the details. John McDonald worked with neighbors to see that the vacant land would become a youth football-designated complex. That dream was realized in 2001, when All American Park, which features six fields for youth football, opened.

Reese also was involved in many of those efforts to find a happy medium, the reason John McDonald thought he was going to an event to honor the councilman.

"Thanks to the vision of the City Council and John McDonald, youth from all over the community are able to enjoy the beautiful fields at the football complex at All American Park," said Steve Wolfson, then city councilman, at the event. "It is fitting that we name the fields for John because he has supported youth football for his entire life and helped see that youth got recreational opportunities they may not otherwise have had."

Contact Summerlin/Summerlin South View reporter Jan Hogan at jhogan@viewnews.com or 387-2949.

Several southwest-area streets named on a whim



JEFF MOSIER/VIEW

Clark County planning aide Paul Gentile named several streets in the valley in the 1960s. He is attributed with naming Ford and Torino avenues, Gomer Road, Pyle Avenue and Fort Apache Road.

BY JEFF MOSIER
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Mar. 6, 2012 | 12:16 a.m.

Naming streets used to be a lot simpler. It was one guy's job.

For a time in the 1960s, it was the job of Clark County planning aide Paul Gentile to name several small streets in the southwest area of the valley, including Gomer Road, and Pyle, Ford and Torino avenues.

Gomer Road and Pyle Avenue were named after the TV character of the same name. Gomer Pyle was a friendly gas station attendant in "The Andy Griffith Show" and a Marine Corps enlistee in "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C."

"It was always tongue-in-cheek," said John Vornsand, former director of the Clark County Zoning Department, who worked with Gentile beginning in 1968. "He had a chuckle about them."

Gentile was a fan of those shows,

Tarkanian Middle School, 5800 W. Pyle Ave., used to be between Gomer and Pyle. Principal Darren Sweikert said Gomer Road ran parallel to Pyle Avenue when the school opened six years ago. The section of Gomer Road between Jones Boulevard and Interstate 15 was renamed to match its eastside counterpart, Silverado Ranch Boulevard, once the I-15 overpass was constructed. The newest version of Gomer Road begins west of Rainbow Boulevard.

Gentile died within a few years after Vornsand joined the county, and the responsibility of naming streets went to planning aide Joyce Avery, Vornsand said.

Gentile was responsible for Ford and Torino avenues, named after the car produced from 1968 to 1976.

Vornsand said Gentile may have owned one or just liked the car.

The busiest street that Gentile named, that Vornsand is aware of, is Fort Apache Road. It was named after the 1948 Western film directed by John Ford, starring John Wayne and Henry Fonda.

Gentile was a John Wayne fan, Vornsand said.

There are probably many more streets that were inside jokes to Gentile, but Vornsand is not aware of them.

Starting in the 1970s, street names needed approval by the county planning department after a public hearing was held, and land and housing developers named streets in most cases.

Vornsand even has a street named after him by a developer in the northeast part of the valley.

Mark Hall-Patton, director of Clark County Museums, said developers used to have little to do with it.

"Developers used to bring in a blank map and say, 'Name them what you want,' " Hall-Patton said.

Street names also are vetted by a committee to make sure that proposed names are not too similar in spelling and sound with existing streets, Hall-Patton said.

The committee consists of representatives from the city, county, fire and police departments, the Postal Service and more.

"Eventually they were getting up to three-name streets," Hall-Patton said. "Like Blue Evening Mist Street. The reason for those is they couldn't come up with one- or two-word names in the last few decades. Street names were way too close together in terms of sound."

Contact View education reporter Jeff Mosier at jmosier@viewnews.com or 224-5524.

Sister serves as namesake for Whitney-area elementary



VIEW FILE PHOTO

Sister Robert Joseph Bailey, photographed in her office in 1997, is the namesake for the Whitney-area Sister Robert Joseph Bailey Elementary School at 4525 Jimmy Durante Blvd.

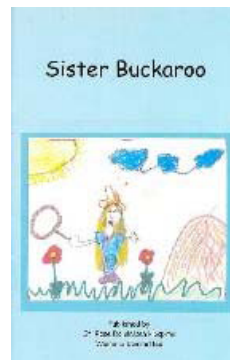
BY F. ANDREW TAYLOR
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Mar. 6, 2012 | 12:15 a.m.

The name Sister Robert Joseph Bailey might sound strange to some, but the woman who took a man's name had a deep and lasting impact on the Southern Nevada community. In 2007, four years after her death, the Whitney-area Sister Robert Joseph Bailey Elementary School was named for her.

"There was some resistance at naming a public school for her, as some people wondered if it was going against the separation of church and state," said Sheila Moulton, who served on the Clark County School Board at the time. "As soon as they found out what she had done, they were readily supportive of the school being named for her."

Moulton served from 1999 to 2011 during a time of explosive growth for the school system, and she said around 100 new



schools were built and named during her tenure.

"We had what I thought was a very fair name application process," Moulton said.

Bailey was born Margaret Bailey in Detroit in 1923 and took the name of her beloved younger brother Robert when she entered into the Dominican Order of Sisters in 1940. At the time, masculine names were not an unusual choice.

In a June 27, 1997, Las Vegas Sun article, Bailey noted that she declined to switch back to her birth name when offered the opportunity to do so 20 years earlier.

"(Robert's) blue eyes looked at me and he said, 'Sis, are you gonna keep my name or go back to your own?' " the article quoted her as saying. "What would you do?"

Bailey's brother was an electrician who died in 1996.

The article also added that around St. Rose , Bailey often went by the nickname Bobbie Jo.

Bailey began teaching in 1941 and served in several elementary schools across the country, including schools in Illinois, Michigan, Florida and Arizona.

She came to Henderson in 1951 and taught fourth and fifth grade at St. Peter's Elementary School, at the time a part of St. Peter the Apostle Church.

When the school closed in 1960, she began work at what is now the Rose de Lima Campus of St. Rose Dominican Hospital. She took on the responsibility for dietary services and eventually community education.

Sister Michael Thomas Watson, volunteer supervisor at the Rose de Lima Campus, said she knew and worked with Bailey practically all of her religious life, a length of service that has spanned 61 years. She keeps a stack of letters detailing Bailey's many contributions to the wellbeing of the community in general and children in specific.

Bailey developed health education programs for children at the

"Sister Buckaroo," a children's book written by Carol Bower and illustrated by Henderson schoolchildren, was written to honor Sister Robert Joseph Bailey in 2003.
SPECIAL TO VIEW

Rose de Lima Campus and presented health programs to public schools all over the district for many years. She is also credited with starting and pushing forward several community programs for children including the Positive Impact Program, which provides free medical and dental care to children of low-income families, and the Positive Impact Reading Program, which pairs senior volunteers with children having trouble with reading.

Watson remembers Bailey as someone who always looked out for children.

"Just a few weeks ago a man came in here with his wife and asked if I'd known Sister Robert," Watson said. "He wanted to tell me how much he'd admired her."

He told Watson that he'd been the principal of a school and he brought one of his students who had injured his arm on the playground to the hospital. Bailey met them at the emergency room and when the principal informed her the boy's parents had no insurance or money, she told him, "Don't worry about that now. Let's just look to this boy for now."

Bailey took the case under her wing and made sure the boy got first-rate medical attention. The principal wasn't sure how she did it, but the boy's parents never saw a bill.

Bailey did not live to see the school at 4525 Jimmy Durante Blvd. named for her, but just a few months before her death in May 2003, she received another unique honor. For several years the hospital celebrated Women's History Month by creating a children's book, written by local author Carol Bower and illustrated by Henderson schoolchildren. That year it created a book titled "Sister Buckaroo" in honor of Bailey's love for Western style and her days cheering up sick children with Buckaroo Day activities.

At the time she was retired and living in Michigan and was too ill to comment on the honor.

Moulton said that the while she never got to meet Bailey, her colleagues at the hospital adopted the school named in her honor.

"The staff of Rose de Lima are still great supporters of the school," Moulton said. "They made great commitments to help students and to provide extra resources to the school."

Contact Sunrise/Whitney View reporter F. Andrew Taylor at ataylor@viewnews.com or 380-4532.

White Cross Drugs closing its doors after more than 60 years

By Joyce Lupiani

CREATED MAR. 6, 2012



Las Vegas, NV (KTNV) -- A Las Vegas landmark is scheduled to close its doors at the end of the month.

White Cross Drugs on Las Vegas Boulevard, a little north of the Stratosphere, has been at the same location for the past 60 years and is a favorite of many locals and a tourist destination for others.

The location features a pharmacy, a small store, and a 24-hour cafe with a old-fashioned lunch counter, a soda fountain and a few worn booths that is popular with the late-night crowd.

Historic photos and signs line the walls of the store and customers can buy souvenirs as well as a few staples, snacks and personal items.

According to local lore, Wayne Newton used to spend his breaks between shows having a soda at the cafe in 1959 when he was just a teenager performing at the Fremont in the Carnival Lounge.

It is also said that many of the showgirls used to come into the store because it had a large selection of cosmetics.

Scenes for of the movie "Lucky You," which featured a hotshot poker player trying to win a tournament in Las Vegas, were filmed there in 2005.

The pharmacy will serve its last customer today and the store is scheduled to close by the end of the month.

According to the store, Walgreens will take over the medication records for current customers. They will have to visit a local Walgreens to have any prescriptions filled.

Tiffany's Cafe, which has a different owner, is scheduled to remain open.

Golden Gate renovations include expanded casino floor; new lobby next



DAVID BECKER/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

A construction worker marks out his spot Monday to hang an artist's rendering of the remodeled Golden Gate. As part of a \$12 million expansion, the Golden Gate will add a 35,000-square-foot, five-story hotel tower with 14 new suites and two penthouses, which will open in June. *(enlarge to view more photos)*

BY CAITLIN MCGARRY
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Mar. 19, 2012 | 1:44 p.m.

Visitors to the Golden Gate in downtown Las Vegas on Monday caught first glimpses of the casino's makeover with final touches planned to be complete by early summer.

But the famed shrimp cocktail is staying.

Some of the upgrades that Golden Gate owner Mark Brandenburg showed include a 7,000-square-foot casino floor expansion, a high-limit gaming pit that opened Thursday and a new hotel lobby, which will be ready to check in guests next week.

A 35,000-square-foot, five-story hotel tower with 14 new suites and two penthouses will open in June, adding to the property's 106-room portfolio. The casino will also gain a new porte cochere

property plans to hire 25 to 30 new employees to staff the expansion, which cost upward of \$12 million.

Other downtown properties, including the Golden Nugget, Plaza and El Cortez, have also added rooms and remodeled in recent years.

"There's no question that the downtown renaissance was a big part of our decision to go forward with this expansion," Brandenburg said. "When Derek and Greg Stevens became my partners in 2008, that was a big reason for them joining me as partners, to give us the ability to renovate and expand this property into a first-class boutique hotel."

The Golden Gate has a storied past, which Brandenburg and the Stevens brothers, who also own the D Las Vegas casino downtown, plan to acknowledge. The first downtown casino, at 1 Fremont St., opened in 1906 as the Hotel Nevada with Las Vegas' first telephone and its first phone number, 1. History buffs can check out a 1906 Kellogg telephone in the new hotel lobby, along with the Hotel Nevada's original hotel registration and gaming ledgers.

The Golden Gate has undergone a handful of remodels and name changes since 1906, but the hotel expansion is the property's first in more than 50 years.

The Golden Gate will keep its dark interiors reminiscent of early 20th century San Francisco, but the new hotel rooms will have elements of the 1920s, art deco designs, pinstripes and nods to Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack. Not every amenity will have a vintage Vegas vibe; hotel rooms will include high-definition televisions and iPod docks, too.

David G. Schwartz, director of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' Center for Gaming Research, said it's difficult to gauge if downtown's hotel-by-hotel face-lift will have any effect on gaming revenues. But the Golden Gate's decision to remodel and add more rooms is a positive sign for both the property and for downtown as a whole.

"It shows that they are confident that downtown's future looks good," Schwartz said. "Hopefully, the recession is over. Hopefully, as room rates on the Strip go up, downtown's more value-oriented approach will be more effective."

Downtown gaming revenue was up 13.7 percent in January compared to the same time last year. Brandenburg said revenue at the Golden Gate is also up.

"Business these last three days (since the expanded floor opened) has been amazing," he said. "We've never seen numbers like this."

On Monday morning, Frank Blair from Tucson, Ariz., was playing slots, oblivious to the changes occurring around him. Like many longtime Golden Gate customers, Blair, who comes to Las Vegas to gamble three to four times a year, had just one concern: the fate of the shrimp cocktail.

The Golden Gate temporarily closed its deli for remodeling, moving the famed appetizer to Du-par's.

The casino's owners are still rethinking food and beverage concepts for the deli's space, but the shrimp cocktail, first added to the casino's menu in 1959, will remain a staple at the property.

"We are of course going to preserve our shrimp cocktail," Brandenburg said. "That's something that's very meaningful to us."

Contact reporter Caitlin McGarry at cmcgarry@reviewjournal.com or 702-387-5273.

Public health pioneer Dr. Otto Ravenholt dies at 84



Clark County public health pioneer Dr. Otto Ravenholt, 84, died Sunday after suffering a heart attack at his Las Vegas home. In 1963, Dr. Ravenholt was appointed as the first chief health officer of the Clark County Health District, forerunner of the Southern

BY KEITH ROGERS
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Mar. 19, 2012 | 7:10 p.m.

Dr. Otto Ravenholt, Clark County's public health pioneer who tackled a wide range of issues from fighting contagious diseases and advocating restaurant sanitation to launching the coroner's inquest system, died Sunday after suffering a heart attack at his Las Vegas home, his family said. He was 84.

"He certainly was a true icon of Southern Nevada. We'll miss him dearly," his son, Jon Ravenholt, said Monday from Emmett, Idaho.

Dirk Ravenholt, a Las Vegas lawyer, described his father as "one of the most notable public servants in Nevada history."

Not only was he chief health officer and coroner for more than 30 years, but he also volunteered as administrator of University Medical Center and helped Gov. Paul Laxalt oversee state employees

"His interest was in the job and accomplishing things for the community but never pursuing monetary gains," he said. "He was a straight shooter."

Michael Green, College of Southern Nevada history professor, said Ravenholt "was our community doctor for a long time. He was the person who told us about health care more than anyone else in our time, and he did it in a way we could understand.

"He did his best to keep the politics out of what was good for us," Green said. "If there was a flu outbreak, he'd be the one we'd see on the news keeping us calm. He was good at it."

In 1963, Ravenholt was appointed as the first chief health officer of the Clark County Health District, forerunner of the Southern Nevada Health District. Before he retired in 1997, he had served as the first doctor in charge of the coroner's office, where he established an inquest system for officer-involved shootings.

As chief health officer, he reformed the state's outdated mental health laws and reduced the infant mortality problem by providing better parental and infant care for the poor. He also oversaw programs to curb air pollution, including one that required water trucks to spray construction sites to keep dust levels down.

He also raised the bar for restaurant sanitation, spearheading the fight against food poisoning by hiring credentialed sanitarians and never knuckling under to hotel and resort managers who thought he was meddling in their business.

"I think he built the public health authority here from the ground up as a valued institution in the community," said Dr. Lawrence Sands, chief health officer of the Southern Nevada Health District.

Sands noted Ravenholt's role in getting children immunized against diseases and establishing training for food service technicians.

Dr. Donald Kwalick, who was appointed chief health officer when Ravenholt retired in 1997, said Ravenholt's "biggest contribution was holding the health district together for more than 30 years and making it one of the best in the country. "I had big shoes to fill," Kwalick said. "He always knew when to do what. He really knew how to work the system and get things done."

Otto Hakon Ravenholt was born May 17, 1927, on a farm in Luck, Wis. He was one of nine children of Ensgar and Kristine Peterson Ravenholt.

He graduated from high school in 1946 and enrolled in the University of Minnesota, working full time to pay his way.

He enlisted in the Army in 1947 and was sent to a training school to learn Japanese. He pursued a medical degree after his discharge in 1952, earning the degree in 1958. He served his internship at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Seattle.

He was hired in 1960 to head the Shawnee County Health Department in Topeka, Kan. He supervised Shawnee County's new health department before accepting the job as Clark County's first chief health officer in 1963. He arrived in Las Vegas two months before his scheduled start date to help persuade voters to approve a \$1.2 million bond issue for construction of a new health center.

He tried his hand in politics in 1970, running unsuccessfully in the Democratic primary against Walter Baring for a chance at Nevada's

only seat in the U.S. House Representatives. Baring ultimately won the seat.

A public viewing will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday at Palm Eastern Mortuary, 7600 S. Eastern Ave. A memorial service will start at noon Friday at Palm Eastern's chapel.

He will be buried in West Denmark Cemetery in Luck, Wis.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara Ravenholt of Las Vegas; sons Garth Ravenholt and Dirk Ravenholt, both of Las Vegas, and Jon Ravenholt, of Emmett, Idaho; a daughter, Kim Ringland of Grass Valley, Calif.; and several grandchildren. He also leaves behind his first wife, Marie Ravenholt of Emmett, Idaho.

The family prefers that donations in Ravenholt's memory be made to Three Square food bank, 4190 N. Pecos Road, Las Vegas, NV, 89115.

Contact reporter Keith Rogers at krogers@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0308.

Downtown casino renovations maintain Old Vegas vibe



LEILA NAVIDI

The Golden Gate Hotel in downtown Las Vegas on Monday, March 19, 2012.

By Ron Sylvester (contact)

Tuesday, March 20, 2012 | 2 a.m.

Downtown Las Vegas is trying to shake the city's reputation as a place that likes to blow up old buildings.

While the Strip has been [imploding casinos](#) and replacing them with shiny new resorts, downtown is trying to update its image without forgetting the character of its past.

The Golden Gate, the first hotel and casino in Las Vegas, is adding a new entry and lobby, refurbishing rooms and expanding the casino on the site where it [opened in 1906](#).

It follows renovations at the [El Cortez](#), the Plaza and a new branding of Fitzgeralds as [The D](#).

"People have a certain feel they expect from Vegas, and they get that here," Mark Brandenburg, president and CEO of the Golden Gate, said Monday.

With streets lighted by preserved neon signs from long-gone casinos and its penchant for renovation over demolition, downtown has the vibe of the Vegas of a 1960s James Bond movie.

Many of the casinos are playing off the recently opened [Mob Museum](#), embracing a notorious and colorful past in a city known for shaking off shame like a bad hangover.

Brandenburg still talks proudly of the Golden Gate's famous shrimp cocktail, which his stepfather, Italo Ghelfi, and his partners brought from the San Francisco Bay area and introduced in Las Vegas in 1959.

The historical aspects could be what draws people back downtown after years of billion-dollar buildings on the Strip, casino and tourism experts say. Downtown could position itself to lure repeat visitors and those willing to venture away from the larger resorts.

"If they can add a more upscale type of an experience, downtown can draw people who may have already stayed on the Strip but are coming back looking for something new," said Seyhmus Baloglu, an assistant dean at [UNLV's Harrah Hotel College](#) who studies tourism and marketing.

"By adding festivals, music and other special events, they can draw people who might be staying at the [Aria](#) or the [Bellagio](#) to come downtown and increase the amount of money they spend while they're here," Baloglu said.

The [Smith Center for the Performing Arts](#) and a growing arts district help provide those extras, as the hotels continue to revitalize themselves.

Behind the yellow construction walls and scaffolding marking the Golden Gate's first major renovation in 50 years, a new, more spacious lobby is taking shape, along with a five-story luxury tower that includes more than a dozen new suites and two high-roller penthouses.

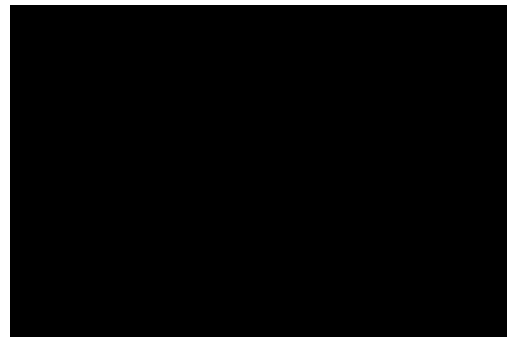
The hotel and casino at 1 Fremont St., which began new construction in December, will have 122 refurbished rooms and a new high-limit gaming area by the time the project is finished mid-summer.

"It's difficult to say you're a boutique hotel when you have 2,000 rooms," Brandenburg said. "But with around 100 rooms, you can offer a higher level of personal experience. I'm not knocking the Strip, but people are starting to learn there are other properties in town besides the mega-resorts that can offer a Vegas experience."

Vegas visitors are finding an upscale experience that's a bit more affordable than a few miles south on Las Vegas Boulevard. Renovations at [the Plaza](#) include expensive furnishings purchased at discount prices from the recession ravaged and stalled [Fontainebleau](#) project.



Golden Gate undergoes renovation



KSNV coverage of downtown's Golden Gate hotel undergoing a renovation and expansion, March 19, 2012.



Mark Brandenburg, president and co-owner stands in front of a new mural in the new entrance of the Golden Gate Hotel in downtown Las Vegas on Monday, March 19, 2012.

"The Plaza is a great example of downtown benefiting from the Strip," said David Schwartz, director of the [UNLV Gaming Research Center](#).

Schwartz and Baloglu agree that modern makeovers of the historic properties could pay off for downtown, especially if they can deliver luxury at a more affordable price.

"If the visitor counts continue to rise, as they are projected to do, and the Strip prices go up, as they may do, then there's a real opening for downtown," Schwartz said. "But it's important that the properties follow through by giving people an experience that will keep them coming back."

Atomic Testing Museum explores Area 51



COURTESY PHOTO

When visitors enter the "Area 51: Myth or Reality" exhibit, they'll be treated as new employees to the site.

BY HEIDI KNAPP RINELLA
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Mar. 25, 2012 | 2:02 a.m.
Updated: Mar. 25, 2012 | 9:23 a.m.

Most newspaper stories about museum exhibits tell you what you can expect to see.

Yeah, this isn't going to be one of those.

That's because "Area 51: Myth or Reality," which opens Monday at the National Atomic Testing Museum, will, by design, carry almost as much mystique as its subject. If you knew all about it in advance, it would ruin the fun.

"We want it to be more of an experience than an exhibit," said Allan Palmer, museum executive director and chief executive officer. "It's both fun and a little spooky at the same time."

Despite the order of the words in its title, "Myth or Reality" will focus on much of the latter, almost in reply to the former.

"This exhibit is about the real parts of Area 51 that we can now talk about,"

by the CIA and the Department of Defense, through the Air Force, about two or three years ago. For the first time, we can talk about a lot of what happened out there up until about 1968 or the early '70s.

"Part of it is the fascinating true story about what happened at Area 51."

Which, for the most part, remains shrouded in mystery and rumor. But it included, Palmer said, mainly the development of nuclear weapons, the Stealth bomber, the high-altitude A-12 spy plane and a lot of spying on the Soviets during the Cold War, "which was really, really a touchy thing." The work had to be kept secret, he said, and "the more you do that, the more people want to fill in the blanks."

T.D. Barnes of Las Vegas sees some humor in that. Barnes, who did an interview for the "Myth or Reality" exhibit, worked at Area 51 for about five years as a radar specialist, "among other things." He's heard all the stories: Are there aliens out there? Alien autopsies? Some sort of supernatural portal to another universe?

"It's kind of amusing," Barnes said, "because for the first 30 years they" -- that would be the public, the media and any other outsiders -- "didn't even know we existed."

"I think what's brought on a lot of the stories is they were surprised the base existed for three decades and nobody knew about it," Barnes said. "What in the world could they be doing out there?" Their imaginations ran wild because they didn't have any information. They stretched it a bit, trying to make it fit what they wanted to believe."

For all those years, Barnes said, he, and the workers who came before and after, were attempting to toil in obscurity. They'd fly out to Area 51 on Mondays and return on Fridays. Most of the workers, he said, couldn't even live in the area, so as not to draw attention to the project.

"Originally, everybody had to live out of state except the CIA guards, the communications people and our group of 23 people," Barnes said.

Palmer said that even beyond the imagination-filling-in-the-gaps-of-knowledge factor, it's understandable that rumors ran rampant. Among the research being conducted, he said, was examination of Russian aircraft and development of highly advanced technology.

"You'd fly in there, and there's a Russian MiG -- wow," said Palmer, who did just that when he was in the Navy. When the Stealth technology was developed, its borderline-creepy bat-wing design looked very much like an unidentified flying object.

"Were some of those mistaken for UFOs?" he said. "Certainly they were. But they couldn't talk about it at the time."



Visitors to "Area 51: Myth or Reality" will "travel" on this depiction of the Extra-Terrestrial Highway. COURTESY PHOTO



This illustration of glyphs commonly found in Southern Nevada will help visitors merge myth and reality. COURTESY PHOTO

Barnes, who said very little of the work at Area 51 has been declassified, thinks that part of the mystique came about because it took so long for such advanced technology to be developed.

"We were inventing everything -- fuels, everything about the planes," he said. "Now they crank it out and put it to work and you know about it right away."

Palmer said the exhibit will, in a sense, put the visitor in Barnes' shoes, while working in plenty of the myth aspect.

"When people first walk in, it's going to be like you arrive as a new employee at Area 51," he said. "You're the recruit who's going to walk through the doors when the light goes on. You'll be greeted by somebody who's going to say, 'Here's what you're going to be doing,' " whether that's a pilot flying an A-12 or even an alien.

Then visitors will encounter the Extra-Terrestrial Highway -- or at least a painting of it.

"The highway takes you down a path where you are going to be exposed to sights and sounds, some of which you recognize, some of which you don't," Palmer said. "There's a lot of ambiguity in this whole exhibit. Something you might see looking around a corner that looks like an alien might not be. Or vice versa."

And the exhibit will cover some of the myth that, well, might not be myth. Among the displays is one of glyphs taken from areas around Southern Nevada.

"Some of them, if you look really hard at it, might look like they were from other places," Palmer said. "There are some things that they're just going to have to come to conclusions themselves. That's kind of the whole process -- you want people to think about all those things that are known and unknown at the same time. This is a really different kind of museum exhibit. Something like this has not been done in any other museum."

So, if only a little bit of it has been declassified, does that mean that there really were aliens eating in the canteen at Area 51?

"No," Barnes said.

And then, after a beat: "We wish."

"Most of them," Palmer said, "will tell you it was kind of exciting at times, but a lot of their work was repetitive and mundane. If there had been alien spacecraft, I'm sure it would've been much more exciting."

Contact reporter Heidi Knapp Rinella at hrinella@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0474.

For many, two mob tours is one too many



DAVID BECKER/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

One of the displays featuring an image of Al Capone at the Mob Museum in downtown Las Vegas is seen in February.

BY TIM O'REILEY
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Mar. 25, 2012 | 2:02 a.m.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, Jim Talbot of South Deerfield, Mass., emerged from the Mob Attraction in the Tropicana Las Vegas to give it a thumbs-up for its blend of information and entertainment.

A few hours later, Carol Fast of Santa Ana, Calif., stepped out of the Mob Museum in downtown Las Vegas and praised it for emphasizing history and going light on the hokum.

But both said they had seen enough organized crime for one trip.

"I wouldn't want to go to both," Fast said.
"There are so many things to do in Las Vegas, you just have to pick and choose."

Talbot, who had not previously heard of the downtown museum, showed no interest in taking a look.

"I am only here for five days, so I don't want to go to two attraction of the same type," he said.

With the official opening of the museum on Feb. 14, followed by the full reopening of

the rechristened attraction a couple of weeks later, the city now faces a more subtle form of mob warfare than the days of when business rivals could end up taking a long dirt nap in the desert.

Management at both attractions acknowledge that a only small portion of their audiences are so enthralled with all things Mafia that they will visit both, so snagging that single visit will play a crucial role in meeting the 300,000 annual attendance targets that each has announced.

"I just love mob stuff," said Las Vegas resident Sandra Fulton, the only one of about 20 people interviewed after their tours who said they had seen both.

But more typical is Mary Dawn Vandebush of Port St. Lucie, Fla., who noted after going through the museum, "It was worth doing, but now I'm all mobbed out."

A local professor says it's a matter of time.

"When people come to Las Vegas, it is not only an issue of getting them to spend money but also a matter of spending time," said University of Nevada, Las Vegas marketing professor Jack Schibrowsky.

Compounding the marketing challenge for each: rampant mistaken identity, considering each has similar attractions and the same first name.

NO, THAT'S THE OTHER ONE

Museum executive director Jonathan Ullman said his people regularly receive phone calls for the attraction.

Earlier this month, attraction marketing director Spence Johnston met patrons who were unhappy that the tickets cost more than advertised. After talking with them, he discovered that they had confused his prices with those of the museum. Last year, Johnston recalled, a TV crew showed up at the attraction's foyer looking for a museum news conference.

"Of course, a concern of ours is confusion in the marketplace," Ullman said. "Visitors may know they want to come here but may not know which location it is."

Jay Bloom, who created the predecessor of the Mob Experience but was ousted last year because of its financial problems, frequently depicted an us-versus-them showdown. However, attraction and museum officials now shy away from predicting whether there are enough Mafianados to support both.

The experience, which opened one year ago, quickly buckled under the weight of heavy debt and attendance much lower than expected. For a while, everything but the gift shop and the artifact displays were closed as cost-cutting measures. A Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing came in October. The attraction was brought out of bankruptcy early this year with the help of fresh dollars by a previous investor, concessions by a major contractor and a rewritten lease by Tropicana Las Vegas.

Hollywood's enduring romance with the mob, plus the success of television series such as "The Sopranos" and "Boardwalk Empire" create what they consider a proven market.

Layered on that is the grip that the real thing, not a nostalgic recreation, exercised for more than three decades over many of the city's casinos and hotels starting in the 1940s. Even today, longtime residents or visitors speak wistfully about the indulgent service and naughtiness of the Old Vegas under mob control compared with the bottom-line image of today's corporate, Securities and Exchange Commission-registered management. Of course, former Mayor Oscar Goodman, the museum's chief

sponsor, made his reputation as a mob lawyer and frequently regales audiences with tales about his clients.

Then there's the tourist base: 40 million visitors to Las Vegas each year.

"Las Vegas is the place that could support both if any place could," said Tom Zaller, president of Imagine Exhibitions Inc., who played a major role in rebuilding the experience into the attraction once it emerged from bankruptcy proceedings.

For example, he noted that audiences have been large enough to support several magic acts and multiple Cirque du Soleil productions on the Strip.

Then again, he recalled there were several competitors to the "Bodies" exhibition on human anatomy that his company helped to create, which helped determine where the show would be booked.

"When we saw one of the other versions in a city, we dropped consideration of it right away," he said.

DIVERGENT TACTICS

The Mob Attraction and the museum, officially titled the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement, have taken divergent paths in trying to create distinct identities and get people in the door.

Museum officials often use the word "quality" to describe their approach, from the historic status of the restored federal courthouse to the attempt to cover a broad range of organized crime history with dozens of descriptive panels that explain a topic in three paragraphs or less. For example, the museum in March touted the Internal Revenue Service's donation of a rare photo of the agents who worked on the tax evasion case that sent legendary Chicago gangster Al Capone to prison.

The museum also has lower ticket prices, particularly for locals, and is pushing individual and corporate memberships -- a standard cash-generating tool for museums -- along with events for several groups they hope will sway visitors. In March, for example, the museum hosted cab drivers, letting them tour the building with refreshments in hand, while handing out mementos such as logoed air fresheners to hang in their cars.

To land customers, Schibrowsky said, "The (hotel) concierges are crucial."

The museum has been far more active on that front, said Doug Ward, the current president of the Southern Nevada Hotel Concierge Association. While receptions for concierges may put the museum in the "forefront" of a concierge's mind, "A lot of factors come into play when we assist our guests," he said.

Johnston said the attraction has focused on other forms of marketing, but plans to work more with concierges in the future. Further, it will start to woo meeting and party planners to book the 5,000-square-foot space that the attraction created when it eliminated some of the prebankruptcy exhibits.

The attraction has also been placing discount coupons in tourist-oriented publications to help bring its admission price closer to that of the museum. And it's selling tickets through Tix4Tonight discount booths.

STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY

Inside, the attraction promotes its artifacts as coming directly from descendents of prominent mobsters, such as handwritten letters by Meyer Lansky. But its signature is the front part of the attraction, where visitors pass through sets and play a game with character actors that determines whether or not they get "whacked" at the end.

Perhaps most important, the attraction is in one of the busiest parts of the Strip, albeit in the back of the Tropicana Las Vegas.

"Let's face it, the attraction has a better location," Schibrowsky said. "You really have to look for the Mob Museum," a couple of

blocks north of the Fremont Street canopy.

Veteran marketing executive Tom Letizia expects advertising to play a critical role in the struggle for supremacy.

"The one that has the best ads, and you will be able to feel it just by seeing it, they will do the best overall," he said.

Without predicting which might best the other, Schibrowsky concluded, "I suspect they are competing, but they don't offer the same experiences. I would say that people would go to the attraction more for entertainment, while people going to the museum are looking more for historic accuracy."

But Sandra Fulton, the rare person to visit both and understand they are separate entities, came away with a different conclusion.

"I would say they are both pretty much the same, pretty much equal," she said.

Contact reporter Tim O'Reiley at toreiley@reviewjournal.com or 702-387-5290.

Margo Bartlett Pesek | TRIP OF THE WEEK



Eldorado Canyon holds history, rugged scenery



MIKE MILLER/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Eldorado Canyon Mine Tours offers daily tours of Nevada's oldest mine, the Techatticup.

Posted: Mar. 25, 2012 | 2:04 a.m.

Ruggedly beautiful Eldorado Canyon lures visitors seeking unique outdoor experiences close to Las Vegas. Its somewhat lurid past adds Old West flavor to such activities as touring the area's oldest mine, horseback rides through striking backcountry, exploring the Colorado River's coves by canoe or kayak or heading upriver by motorized raft. The area also attracts hikers, birders, photographers, off-highway enthusiasts and anybody looking for a satisfying short scenic drive.

Eldorado Canyon lies off U.S. Highway 95 south of Railroad Pass. Follow us U.S. 93/95 toward Boulder City. Near Railroad Pass, head south on U.S. 95 and drive 10 miles to the junction with Nevada Route 165. This road climbs 11 miles to a 3,000-foot pass near old Nelson, where weathered remnants of buildings from the late 1800s and early 1900s mingle with modern residences. The highway then drops into the colorful canyon named for the fabled city of gold that Spanish explorers sought for centuries.

The highway follows a major wash with unusual eroded rock monoliths as it winds seven miles to a viewpoint overlooking the Colorado River where Nelson's Landing once served the sturdy little steamboats that plied the river. For some 40 years, steamboats putting in at Nelson's Landing

provided a lifeline for the remote mining camp and surrounding mines before there were highways and long before dams harnessed the river's flow. Hikers, horseback riders and off-roaders use the area's old mine roads to explore the hills and river coves.

The road through Eldorado Canyon often boasts more spring wildflowers than elsewhere in our area. Even in dry years like this one, visitors enjoy a fair showing of blossoms at this time of year. Roadside perennials like brittlebush crowd the pavement, their mounded gray-green foliage topped with golden flowers. Purple fiddle-necked phacelia, blue spires of lupine, red Indian paintbrush, orange mallow and fuchsia penstemon paint the desert landscape. Beavertail cactus bearing hot pink flowers are the earliest among several varieties. For a closer look, find a place to park well off the pavement and stroll about.

Fascinating glimpses of the past await those who visit the underground adventure offered by Eldorado Canyon Mine Tours at Nevada's oldest mine, the Techatticup. Long before American acquisition of the desert Southwest, native people and early Spanish explorers dug for prized minerals in Eldorado Canyon. When American explorers reached the area, prospectors soon followed. By the 1860s, promising claims drew miners to the canyon. Soon the Techatticup and other nearby mines employed about 300 men in unruly camps far from the reach of the law. Order had to be kept by federal troops, who came up the river from Fort Mohave in Arizona Territory and deployed for a while at their own camp.

Spend an hour underground exploring the past with a well-informed guide. Mine tours are offered daily from 9:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., as often as at least four people wanting a tour arrive at the tour center on the left side of the highway. Tours cost \$12.50 for adults and \$7.50 for children 12 and younger. The mine tunnels remain at about 70 degrees all year. Wear closed shoes. The family-owned enterprise also offers self-guided blue-water river excursions by canoe or kayak. Rentals range from \$25 to \$30 for the first day and \$15 to \$20 each day thereafter. For either adventure, reserve online at eldoradominetours.com or call 291-0026.

The mine tour should soon be part of a new tourism package starting in April. The operators of the popular Black Canyon Raft Trips will bring their tourist vans to the mine for the tour before putting their rafts in the water at Nelson's Landing and heading upstream to Willow Beach. Return will be by van with a stop at Hoover Dam. Call 294-1414 for information and reservations.

The old roads and washes around Eldorado Canyon make for good horseback riding. Guided rides start at 9 a.m. from a stable just down the canyon from the mine tour center. Riders pay \$129 for a half-day ride with a picnic lunch and round-trip transportation from Las Vegas. Call 527-8342 for more details.

Margo Bartlett Pesek's Trip of the Week column appears on Sundays.

Jane Ann Morrison



Mob Attraction and Mob Museum both worth experiencing

Posted: Mar. 26, 2012 | 1:59 a.m.

The Mob Attraction and the Mob Museum are not one and the same. But tourists and locals, even the Las Vegas news media, don't seem to know that.

The Mob Attraction at the Tropicana is, in my humble opinion, more kid-friendly and less gruesome, more the warm and fuzzy side of mob life.

The Mob Museum downtown is more museumlike, taking a broader look at mob connections across the country and including more of the law enforcement angle.

Both have fans and detractors.

The museum opened with hoopla Feb. 14. Since then, I've heard from people who loved it and others who didn't.

I took a second look Thursday at the Mob Attraction (formerly the Mob Experience when it opened a year ago) to see what changes had taken place since coming out of bankruptcy.

Mainly, the technology had improved and was working. Actor James Caan was the featured guide, combining tough guy with funny guy in his video presentations. But basically it was the same as last year, except somewhat shorter.

The interactive portion -- about 35 minutes of wandering through a Disneyland-style portrayal of back alleys, a cop shop and the backrooms of a casino -- still was the most fun.

The collections of mob paraphernalia including rare home movies of Bugsy Siegel in a pool with his kids, of Meyer Lansky's pajamas and Tony Spilotro's religious materials, were much the same as when I visited last May.

me was the documentary about the making of the movie "The Godfather." I could have stayed for the whole 45 minutes if the benches had backs. The tales of the challenges the filmmakers had with the Italian-American Civil Rights League combined the reality of the mob with the fantasy of Hollywood and how they intertwined in New York's Little Italy.

Remember the flap when the league insisted that the word "mafia" be cut from the script? The producers, knowing it was only said once, readily complied, making it seem they blinked first.

Which would I recommend?

If kids are involved, the Mob Attraction trumps the Mob Museum (aka the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement).

Spence Johnston, director of public relations for the Mob Attraction, said his children 11 and 8 love it. The actors play to kids in a different way than they do with adults.

If you're looking for the big picture, go to the downtown museum, but kids are going to see more gore than a parent might want.

The cost comparison: I paid \$25 to see the Trop attraction and \$10 to see the downtown museum, both locals' rates.

Before you meet someone at one of these joints, make sure you know which is which.

In the winter, Channel 3 showed up at the Trop for a news conference which was supposed to be at the Mob Museum at 300 Stewart Ave.

On the downtown museum's opening day, Channel 8 was running pictures of the Trop attraction.

Also, reviews on TripAdvisor don't seem to distinguish one from the other, Johnston said.

One couple told me they "loved it" and it was worth the cost. Others said the same.

A Massachusetts man thought the cost should be more like \$12 or \$13. Had he been to the Mob Museum? "There's another one?" he said with surprise.

Las Vegas tries to cover bases for all types. But these are two distinct operations, and tourists are the ones who, by their ticket purchases, will decide which one survives, or if there's a need for both, or a need for neither.

The Mob Attraction averages 300 to 350 people a day, Johnston said.

The Mob Museum won't disclose admission numbers except in an annual report, so it's impossible to tell if it's on track to hit a goal of 300,000 customers. Or not.

Jane Ann Morrison's column appears Monday, Thursday and Saturday. Email her at Jane@reviewjournal.com or call her at (702) 383-0275. She also blogs at lvj.com/blogs/Morrison.

BLM moves to protect fossils in Tule Springs area



JESSICA EBELHAR/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

From left, Sandy Croteau, a founding member of Protectors of Tule Springs, Lynn Davis, Nevada program manager for the National Parks Conservation Association, and Rob Mrowka, public lands conservation advocate in Nevada for the Center for Biological Diversity, look over a site where camel fossils were found in Tule Springs on Dec. 7. » [Buy this photo](#)

BY HENRY BREAN
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Mar. 30, 2012 | 9:12 a.m.
Updated: Mar. 31, 2012 | 7:34 a.m.

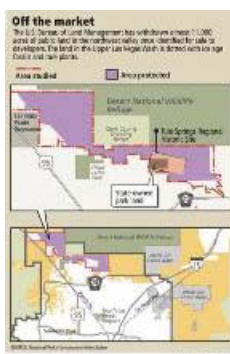
No homes will be built on top of the mammoths of Tule Springs anytime soon.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management announced Friday that it won't allow the auction of almost 11,000 acres of fossil-rich federal land at the valley's northern edge.

Tule Springs and the Upper Las Vegas Wash are dotted with ice age fossils and rare plants.

Conservationists hailed the decision as a first step in securing the area until it can be designated as a national monument.

"This is an important day for conservation," said Rob Mrowka, a Nevada-based ecologist with the Center for Biological Diversity. "These lands are truly the last remaining opportunities for



heritage of the Las Vegas Valley."

The Arizona-based environmental group has joined with the local Protectors of Tule Springs and others to push for the creation of a 23,000-acre Tule Springs National Monument that would border Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Floyd Lamb Park and the Desert National Wildlife Refuge.

The proposed monument would take in a sawtooth-shaped swath of land that includes areas littered with the fossils of animals that lived and died between 7,000 and 200,000 years ago.

Three rare plants native to the Mojave Desert -- the Las Vegas bearpoppy, Merriam's bearpoppy and the Las Vegas buckwheat -- also are found there.

The Center for Biological Diversity has petitioned for the Las Vegas buckwheat to be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

In a summary of its decision published Friday morning in the Federal Register, the bureau said 10,670 acres of public land would be withdrawn from possible disposal to protect sensitive features "including fossils, cultural resources, the natural functioning of the wash, and endemic plants."

Mrowka called the news "a vindication for those of us who were shocked in 2004 to learn the BLM was going to actually auction off those lands for development."

He and others say the next step is for the land to be placed under the protection of the National Park Service.

Lynn Davis is program manager for the Nevada office of the National Parks Conservation Association. She wants the Park Service to manage the Upper Las Vegas Wash in part because that probably would block NV Energy from building a new transmission line through the proposed monument.

"While the BLM's decision has stopped plans to allow for the construction of homes over irreplaceable fossils, it's a far cry from providing the protection and enhancements that would come with a National Park Service designation," Davis said in a statement.

Backers insist legislation concerning Tule Springs is imminent. All Sen. Harry Reid's office would say is the Senate majority leader still favors the idea.

"Sen. Reid supports efforts to designate the Tule Springs area a national monument and hopes to work with the Nevada delegation to do so," Reid spokeswoman Kristen Orthman said.

Gov. Brian Sandoval and leaders in Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Clark County also have thrown their support behind the creation of a monument. So has the U.S. Air Force, which wants the area protected as a flyway for Nellis Air Force Base.

The land skirts the northwestern boundaries of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas and wraps around the Clark County Shooting Range. It is hemmed on one side by the Sheep Mountains and on the other by rows of houses marking the edge of development.

The landscape in between forms chalky white badlands cut by the braided wash bed and strewn with fossilized bones from

mammoths, camels and early horses. A former paleontologist for the National Park Service estimates at least 10,000 mammal fossils from the past several ice ages await discovery in the Upper Las Vegas Wash.

There are signs of disturbance everywhere.

Tracks from dirt bikes and other off-road vehicles crisscross the hills -- rolling, in some cases, directly across the old bones of ancient animals. Broken glass sparkles in the sun. A row of NV Energy transmission towers marches from west to east through the heart of the property under a sky split by military jets and helicopters.

The BLM based its findings on a final environmental impact statement that also was released Friday after several years of study and public input.

Under the decision, which does not take effect for at least 30 days, almost 2,700 acres within the roughly 13,000-acre study area could be made available for development. The largest parcels identified for disposal bracket the Las Vegas Paiute Indian Reservation on U.S. Highway 95 northwest of Las Vegas.

Mrowka said the collapse of the housing market has quieted calls for more public land to be auctioned and new subdivisions built. But the lull in Las Vegas is not expected to last forever.

Mrowka said the BLM deserves credit not only for this decision but for an overall change in attitude about Tule Springs.

Back when the land appeared destined to be covered with homes, the bureau "didn't give two hoots in hell" about the Upper Las Vegas Wash, he said. Now the site is fenced and regularly patrolled.

John Mull's Meats a family business since 1954



SPECIAL TO VIEW

John and Lois Mull work in John Mull's Meats butcher shop, 3730 Thom Blvd., in

BY MAGGIE LILLIS
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Apr. 3, 2012 | 12:20 a.m.

Chuck Frommer has "story after story," he says, about what he bills as the oldest meat market in Las Vegas.

Almost 50 years ago, his grandfather, John Mull, dotted an open map of land near Gowan Road and Decatur Boulevard with a slaughterhouse and meat store.

He shipped prized beef in from Utah. Sometimes, the animals were herded to the front door of 3730 Thom Blvd. -- and sometimes more than once.

"He had stories of chasing beef in the middle of town," Frommer said. "It was a slaughterhouse, but sometimes beef got

out."

John Mull's Meats remains on the same parcel of land, now hugged by development. Instead of steering future product back to the stockyards, staff members often have to wave lost and wannabe customers into the tucked-away lot, Frommer said.

"They're lost, or they stumble upon us," he said, "or we have people who have been coming here for 40 years."

Family-owned since 1954, Frommer is the fourth owner and third generation manning the store.

"I was actually born next door," he said, hitching a thumb at the ranch-style house due north.

Each owner has made his mark in John Mull's Meats' history.

Patriarch John Mull was raised in a Dutch-Amish portion of Pennsylvania. A carpenter by trade, Mull moved to Southern Nevada in 1938 to work on Hoover Dam, Frommer said.

"Instead of working on the dam, he would work on the casinos (built) to satisfy the construction patrons," he said.

He started working in meat processing in the 1940s and first applied for his own business license in 1954. Mull owned land in Utah, where he would raise beef and sell it in his Las Vegas shop.

Alongside choice cuts of beef were "old school" products such as blood sausage and scrapple, a mush of pork and cornmeal served with syrup, common in Pennsylvania, Frommer said.

In 1957, Frommer's father, Don Frommer, took over the business. He kept his father-in-law's business model until 1964, when Bill Mull took over.

"My uncle was more a producer," Frommer said. "He wanted to get it in and out."

Bill Mull introduced a wider range of meats to be slaughtered, processed and sold. He also rendered beef bones and tallow and sold the grind to buyers such as cosmetics companies.



From left, Lois Mull, former showgirl Virginia Gans and an unidentified woman work in the meat shop in 1960.
SPECIAL TO VIEW

Chuck Frommer took over in 1981. Since, Frommer has ushered in his own era of business.

Animals are no longer slaughtered on property. Frommer accepts and processes wild game from permit-holding hunters, though.

John Mull's Meats' product is shipped in from stockyards and farms around the country.

Frommer tumbles the meat in his own blend of seasonings. He seeks particular varieties of peppers and roasts them for a day before grinding them up to a fine powder with salts, sugars and other ingredients.

"We break them down and put them back together," Frommer said. "Everyone has a gift, and I guess that's my gift."

The meats then take a 16-hour slow cook. Last Thanksgiving, 2,000 turkeys were slow-roasted in their ovens, Frommer said.

Frommer also introduced the Road Kill Grill, the name of John Mull's Meats' catering wing, to the business. For decades, the company was providing meat to area caterers and remaining on the losing end of the deal, he said.

"We were doing all the work, and they were making the bigger margins," he said. "I never wanted to be a chef, by any means."

Frommer has a staff of about seven. The crew cooks and processes barbecues and all the fixings for events involving as many as 4,500 people.

The former slaughter room is now where cured meats and the company's signature hot sticks hang, awaiting purchase.

He has moved the business into the computer age and is working to establish a website.

Frommer said he hopes to introduce a take-out option to the business as well.

Although he has made a lot of changes in the 31 years as owner, Frommer has kept some things intact. The building has remained the same hue of yellow. There isn't a meat counter, and customers often think they entered the back door of operations, Frommer said.

"It's impossible for us to have rude servers," he said. "We want to be different."

Patrons often get to see the whole cut of meat before their section is sold, Frommer said.

He competes with big grocers and bargain-basement sellers, but Frommer believes his product keeps customers.

"Fresh can intimidate people," he said. "But there is still a group out there that wants quality, and they come back."

Frommer suspects the business will remain in the family.

"My daughter already says things like, 'When I own it ' " he said.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. It is closed Sunday.

For more information, call 645-1200.

Contact Centennial and North Las Vegas View reporter Maggie Lillis at mlillis@viewnews.com or 477-3839.

Lorna Kesterson, Henderson's first and only female mayor, is the namesake of a Henderson school

BY MICHAEL LYLE
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Apr. 3, 2012 | 12:20 a.m.

Known for her service and political achievements, former Henderson mayor Lorna Kesterson's name is also featured on a Henderson elementary school.

Kesterson was born Dec. 30, 1925. After graduating from Boulder City High School, she attended Utah State University and earned a degree in journalism.

In 1947, Kesterson was awarded a certificate of merit from President Harry S. Truman for saving the life of a California Boy Scout who was drowning in Lake Mead.

She married Robert Kesterson on Jan. 17, 1953, and they moved to Henderson.

Kesterson worked as a reporter for the Boulder City News and the Henderson Home News for 30 years. She also worked as the managing editor for the Henderson Home News.

Kesterson was 49 when she began her political career. She was first elected to the Henderson City Council in 1975.

During her term, she was recognized as the city's woman of the year.

In 1985, Kesterson ran against incumbent Mayor Leroy Zike. She won, collecting 2,863 votes, 60.6 percent, according to the Henderson Home News.



VIEW FILE PHOTO

Known for her service and political achievements, former Henderson mayor Lorna Kesterson's name is also featured on a Henderson elementary school.

According to the Henderson Home News, the voter turnout was larger than expected. Of 10,800 possible voters, 4,838 cast ballots.

She was the first, and so far the only, woman to become mayor of Henderson.

Kesterson was sworn into office June 18, 1985, and took office in July. She served until 1993.

According to the Henderson Home News, her platform was to have an open-door policy where she could be reached by the people.

During her time in office, current Mayor Andy Hafen served as Ward 2 city councilman, starting in 1987 .

"Lorna Kesterson was one of the finest ladies I've had the privilege of working with during my career in public service," Hafen said in a statement after she died in January . "She was a Henderson icon and pioneer both in politics and in our community."

The year Kesterson became mayor, she also was named Henderson's Woman of Distinction.

Aside from her involvement in the city, Kesterson served on the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority board , Daughter of Utah Pioneers, the Henderson Development Association and Visitors Authority and the Nevada League of Cities.

In 1991, Kesterson was named the state's public official of the year.

In 2000, Lorna J. Kesterson Elementary School, 231 Bailey Island Drive, was named for her.

Kesterson died Jan. 16 at 86. A service was held Jan. 21.

She was survived by her sons Don Kesterson and Roger Kesterson.

Contact Henderson/Anthem View reporter Michael Lyle at mlyle@viewnews.com or 387-5201.

Over a century, Four Mile has gone from trailside oasis to brothel to bar



UNLV SPECIAL COLLECTIONS/SPECIAL TO VIEW

A 1912 photograph labeled as taken at Four Mile Spring indicates that the area bore that name a century ago. Four of the six visitors to Four Mile Spring are J. Beckley, A. Beckley, Maybelle Park and L. Beckley. The other two are not identified.

BY F. ANDREW TAYLOR

VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Apr. 3, 2012 | 12:20 a.m.

People stopping at the 4 Mile Bar for a cold beer or a night of karaoke might not know that the name is one of the oldest place names in the Las Vegas Valley. It's a name that is both historic and infamous.

The little community of Formyle has been in the valley as long as the city of Las Vegas, and the name Four Mile has been associated with the area for longer than that. It predates the Boulder Highway and U.S. Highway 95 that flank it. Originally, the area was called Four Mile Spring for the natural spring there, approximately four miles from the center of town.

Mark Hall-Patton, administrator for the Clark County Museums, said it's possible that the springs were named before Las Vegas was here, as it's also approximately four miles from the Old Mormon Fort, which later became the Stewart Ranch.

"A lot of the older names in town are named for actual features," Hall-Patton said. "That's how we end up with things like Grapevine Spring."



The 4 Mile Bar at 3650 Boulder Highway is the most obvious remaining landmark at the little community of Formyle. F. ANDREW TAYLOR/VIEW

Old maps show a meandering dirt road leading from Charleston Boulevard toward Searchlight. The tiny communities are strung out nearly evenly along the road, around two miles apart. Beyond Four Mile Spring were Whitney and Pittman. On a 1932 map, they're all about the same size, a small grid of three or four streets in each direction. The road crosses the northeast corner of Four Mile Spring. Later maps show the proposed Boulder Highway crossing the southwest corner of the community that was known as Four Mile Park. Then that was later shortened to Four Mile, and by the 1950s it was called Formyle.

The community has always been outside of the boundaries of the city of Las Vegas, and for much of its history, it was outside of the city's laws, too.

When the U.S. government was planning to bring in federal workers to build Boulder Dam, it insisted that the city clean up Block 16 and other well-known areas of ill repute. The brothels moved to Formyle and similar places. For more than a decade, a joint owned and operated by Eddie and Roxie Clippinger was the place to go to drink, gamble and rent women by the quarter-hour.

The property was called the Roxie Club, Roxie Motel and Roxie's Resort, but more commonly, in the many articles written about it in the Las Vegas Review-Journal

The book "Green Felt Jungle," co-written by Ovid Demaris and Las Vegas Sun reporter Ed Reid, lays out the downfall of Roxie's in great detail and with hyperbolic language. Although the papers ran numerous stories over the years announcing the imminent closing of Roxie's, it was a thriving business bringing in around \$1 million a year by Roxie's estimate.

On April 28, 1954, the FBI raided Roxie's, making it a federal case by citing the Mann act, which made it illegal to transport women across state lines for immoral purposes. That was the beginning of the end for the brothel and the politicians, most notably Clark County Sheriff Glen Jones.

In an April 30, 1954, editorial, Hank Greenspun, editor of the Las Vegas Sun, attacked the corruption that had allowed the brothel to operate as an open secret.

"After a brief stakeout of only 10 years, the sheriff's office amassed sufficient evidence to suspect that Roxie's was not on the list of the Automobile Association of America as one of the approved motels," Greenspun wrote.

Greenspun later accused Jones of having a financial stake in the brothel, and in the subsequent election, Jones finished last out of five candidates for sheriff. Jones filed a million-dollar libel suit against Greenspun.

The subsequent legal mess exposed corrupt politicians and sent several people to jail, including the Clippingers. It also transformed Formyle from a hidden den of inequity into a quiet rural community.

Don Loughlin's parents bought the property in 1955 when he was 13, and he has lived there ever since, which makes him one of the longest residents of Formyle. For several years his parents used the building that had been the prostitutes' dormitory as a boarding house.

"It was a rooming house for 15 years, \$10 a week. Some of the guys stayed for years," Loughlin said. "We had plumbers,

carpenters, dealers, cooks ... I still remember some of them."

Loughlin had a second dormitory building torn down when vandals and curiosity seekers made the structure a liability.

"After the freeway (U.S. Highway 95) opened up, people could look straight into our yard and knew we were here and we had beaucoup trouble," Loughlin said. "Teenagers came out at night and broke things and busted into the buildings. They shot three of my dogs."

Loughlin said things have been fairly quiet in the last few years, but civilization has spread and enveloped Formyle, which is a far cry from the bucolic days of his youth.

"It was nice here when I was a kid," Loughlin said. "There was nothing from here to Nellis (Boulevard) and Charleston (Boulevard) except sand dunes and mesquite trees."

He remembers the spring, which was a little thing trickling in the wash. The spring was probably a long-established watering hole as he recalls tales of archaeologists digging for Native American artifacts.

"A guy named Rathbone who surveyed this place for my parents said that when he was a kid, they used to get arrowheads down here," Loughlin said. "I heard that in the '30s or '40s an archaeologist found ovens on the bank near where the cathouse was later. Of course, that's all been bulldozed now."

A May 1956 Review-Journal article said that Roxie's was in ruins. A 1966 map noted the location of Roxie's but said it was abandoned. Today, it's a dirt lot behind an apartment complex.

Contact Sunrise/Whitney View reporter F. Andrew Taylor at ataylor@viewnews.com or 380-4532.

Walt Lott Drive honors off-road racing enthusiast

BY JAN HOGAN
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Apr. 3, 2012 | 12:17 a.m.

Walt Lott Drive, near U.S. Highway 95 and Lake Mead Boulevard, may not elicit instant recognition, but add the words "Mint 400," and there are sure to be nods of familiarity. Lott was instrumental in the formative years of the famous desert race.

Lott was inducted into the Off-Road Motorsports Hall of Fame in ceremonies in Reno in August 2007. Both that honor and the street naming were done posthumously.

Norm Johnson created the race in 1967. He knew Lott well.

"As a person, he was what you might call a 'jolly old fart' ... he was a good guy," he said. "He expected you to do what you were hired to do, and he ran a fair race."

Lott served as chief steward of the Mint 400. Officially, he was responsible for enforcing the rules, securing the permits and staffing the volunteer positions as well as laying out the course and marking it. Unofficially, he was the guy who was always at the starting line, shaking everyone's hand and wishing them good luck.

Lott died of a heart attack July 2, 1988, while manning a checkpoint at the Fireworks 250 off-road race in Barstow, Calif. He was 68 and had had suffered two previous heart attacks. Lucas Hand, his grandson, recalled that day. He was 13 at the time and had been at summer camp in



JAN HOGAN/VIEW

Walt Lott Drive near U.S. Highway 95 and Lake Mead Boulevard, is named for the founder of the Oasis Racing Association, the Western Racing Association and the High Desert Racing Association. Lott was also instrumental in the Mint 400 off-road race.

grim news and bring him home.

"I really don't remember the ride back (to the race grounds)," he said. "What I remember was that all the corporations were represented -- Ford, Chevy, all of them -- and all I remember was seeing the semis with their flags at half mast. That was pretty intense, to see that."

Lott was always a part of Hand's early years.

"He taught me how to drive when I was 6 or 7 years old," he said. "We started off in an old dune buggy, and he let me drive it around. We were out in the desert where I couldn't do any harm ... when my parents got divorced, he was like, 'Let's go. Let's keep you busy.' "

Lott was born Dec. 13, 1919, in Santa Ana, Texas. He worked in appliance sales. He and his wife, Edna, lived in Sloan, where they raised their two children, Jim and Londa.

His idea of a fun vacation? Taking off into the desert and poking around old ghost towns.

Lott's interest in racing was sparked when John Herda, a family friend and owner of Herda Appliances, invited him to Baja California for a desert race. Lott helped out the Herda pit crew and was bitten by the racing bug.

"The funny thing about the Mint (400), it was when dune buggies were just becoming popular, and the whole culture," Hand said. "And Norm Johnson came up with a staged press deal, and they ran dune buggies from Las Vegas to Reno. It was so popular, it added to that craze, and it just blossomed from there."

But a once-a-year race wasn't enough to satisfy Lott's love of the sport. He began promoting his own events, hosting them in numerous formats -- lap races of varying distances, night racing and a 24-hour endurance race -- all developed to give the racers new challenges in the sport.

"He was an innovator in the fact that he

liked to see things progress instead of stay at the status quo," Johnson said.

Organizing races brought him only so much excitement, so in 1969, Lott entered the grueling Mint 400, acting as co-pilot to his daughter, Londa.

He went on to create the Oasis Racing Association in 1972, in partnership with Pete Simon, who owned Pop's Oasis Casino in Jean. In 1974 he also created the Western Racing Association, which later morphed into Walt's Racing Association.

Lott also founded the High Desert Racing Association in 1976. The HDRA promoted desert racing series in the Southwest, including the Coors Off-Road Series. After his death, Lott's wife of 47 years, Edna, who also was an off-road racing enthusiast, assumed the presidency of the HDRA.

The Mint race evolved, as well, adding its own "Mint 400 Girls" for that Las Vegas flair. The lineup changed but at one time included Vanna White of "Wheel of Fortune" fame and Linda Carter, who would go on to star in "Wonder Woman."

Hand spoke of the excitement that preceded each race and how the town geared up for the festivities.

"I remember being a kid," he said. "And it was the Friday before the race. You've got to be downtown for it, so we ditched, basically. Other kids got to go to Disneyland, but I got to the race."

Hand told how two racers, who were high in the standings, wanted to enter the Mint 400 but didn't have the entry fee. His grandfather said they could pay it after they finished the race and earned the prize money. The team ended up taking second place. When they tried to pay up, his grandfather waved them off and told them to use it to enter their next race.

Lott was community-minded. He arranged for a high-performance vehicle to be donated to the vocational school in Las Vegas so students could learn advanced automotive design. He got one donated to a school in Beatty and another one to a Tonopah school.

Hand said he tries to emulate his grandfather now that he, too, is involved with off-road racing.

"He never met a stranger," Hand said. "He put everyone else in front. He said, 'Here's the shirt off my back. Now, what else can I do for you?'"

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