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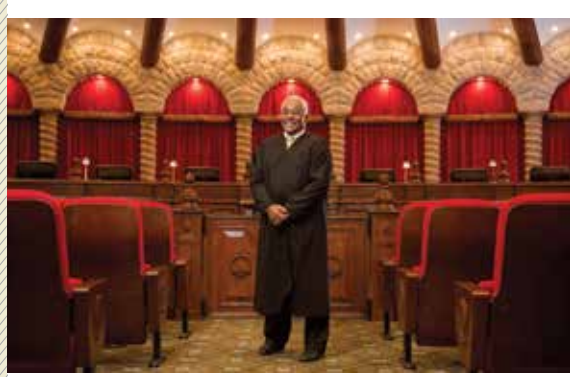

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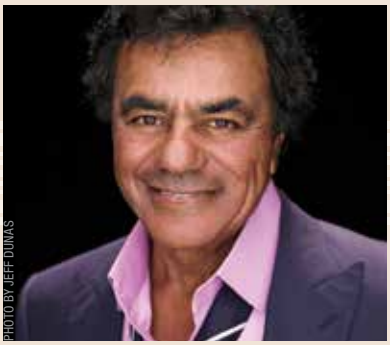

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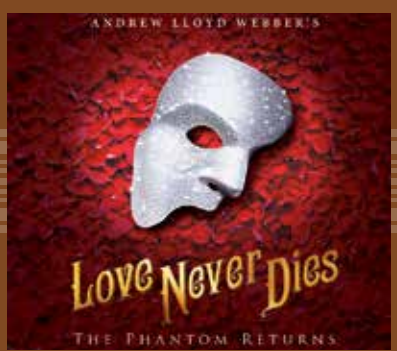

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06

Editor's note

LATEST FLAME

I spent a heroically lazy Christmas week on the couch, possibly in the same clothes for several days in a row but that's not a confession, alternately reading and napping in a state of what I told myself was a silently transformative chrysaloid stasis. When I emerged, there were a bunch of texts from a friend who was in town and wanted to party. Always down for that! But it turned into a slight micro-embarrassment-fest because he kept asking Mr. Supposed Editor-About-Town about all these cool new and not-so-new places that I hadn't been to yet. Long story short, we went, ate and drank like royal pigs, and now I have a quiver of new enthusiasms that I've since been evangelizing.

Anyway! It got me thinking about the relevance of personal recommendation in an age when online reviews crowd so much of our collective headspace. What *is* the point of old-fashioned word of mouth when anyone can surf to Yelp for 7,029 reviews on that new ramen spot? With word of mouth, I suspect the saying is as important as what's said; beyond a mere consumer report card, I like to imagine the transaction is an organic part of a larger conversation about the city. Think of our annual Best of the City feature (p. 43) as a slew of personal recommendations by people — our people, your people, *Desert Companion* people! — who've been having conversations with and about the city for a long time. From Thai food to tailors, bands to barbers, these are our longtime favorites and latest flames. If you disagree or want to cry snub on a pick, call or email me — after all, the conversation is what it's really about.

Andrew Kiraly
EDITOR

NEXT MONTH It's your outside chance — with our sports, leisure, and outdoors issue.

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ALL IN

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

ONE | **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Silent Minority

Will fear of Metro's relationship with immigration authorities hamper policing in the Latino community?

BY ***Dan Hernandez***

Las Vegas attorney Kathia Pereira has represented many undocumented immigrant women who were arrested during domestic violence incidents with their husbands. Often in those cases, the man, a U.S. citizen, is released on bail, whereas the woman is placed in deportation proceedings and faces her worst nightmare: separation from her kids.

"That's when I come to learn that the woman has been abused for over 10 years and just couldn't take it anymore, so she answered back," says Pereira. "They end up detained as aggressors when in fact they are victims of a cycle of violence."

If a record of the abuse exists, Pereira helps the women apply for U-visas. The "crime victims visa," as it's known, offers a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants who help law enforcement prosecute violent crimes like rape, murder, or assault. Often, though, there is no record. Undocumented immigrants who experience violent crime are increasingly afraid to call Metro, activists and lawyers say, because of its partnership with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

"The fear to report crime is a problem that I've seen for the 15 years that I've practiced," Pereira says. "But it's at its worst now since President Trump came into office, and ICE started this huge campaign against immigrants. The fear has escalated to a point where these women are not going to call, people are being robbed and assaulted and they're not going to call the police to report it because they are afraid."

Under the Trump administration, ICE is mandated to remove everyone who is in the country unlawfully, including "Dreamers" whose Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) protections are expiring, veterans, minors, and women like Pereira's clients. This is a significant escalation from President Obama's standards, which stated that only undocumented people convicted of serious crimes should be deported.

The Homeland Security Department's enforcement arm partnered with Metro in 2009. Through its 287(g) program, Clark County Detention Center officers act as ICE agents. But Metro insists that it's not applying ICE's standards. "We're focusing on violent crime, not on jaywalkers

ILLUSTRATION ***Brent Holmes***

2. PERSONAL BEST

BEST MURAL I'D LIKE TO SEE TRANSPLANTED TO A MORE PROMINENT PLACE

Jw Caldwell's "Time Heals All Wounds"

The mural by Las Vegas artist Jw Caldwell that stretched outside the *Tilting the Basin* exhibit on Commerce Street Downtown last year was twice as big as its first incarnation the year prior at Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, nudging the question: How big *could* it be? And where?

Forget, for a moment, the Downtown murals and street art. Caldwell's painting — the phrase "Time Heals All Wounds" bookended by cowboys riding dinosaurs — would be spectacular on the side of a large building along the I-15 or 215 Beltway, where they cut through town.

His humorous wordplay on existential angst is refreshingly direct, but with layers to unfold. *Time Heals All Wounds* (still up on Commerce Street) speaks of humility. Time may heal all wounds, but time also runs out. Time makes us extinct. The dinosaurs are long gone, and, as Caldwell says, "cowboys aren't really a thing anymore." We're all just riding this planet until our time is up.

But, rather than be morose, the artist's colors, style, and lettering settles instead somewhere in the realm of a calming haiku, a Johnny Cash song, or philosophical contemplation. Caldwell has a tendency to get to the meat of things that way. *Chew on this*, the mural seems to say, and then, *Lose your illusions*. But have fun, too. *Kristen Peterson* (see more bests on p. 43)

MURAL: BRENT HOLMES

or people with traffic tickets," says Richard Forbus, deputy chief of detention services. "A lot of these folks are operating under the radar in their own community, victimizing their own folks, and I think we've actually made a safer community by identifying these people and getting them into the system."

But that's at odds with Metro's 2016 agreement to "process for removal aliens who fall into ICE's civil immigration enforcement" — a wide-open scope. And in any case, Metro isn't the only local law enforcement entity in contact with ICE. Undocumented people are regularly arrested for low-level crimes like unpaid parking tickets within Las Vegas city limits, and after fines are paid or time served, transferred by the city jail to ICE custody in Henderson, Mesquite, or Pahrump.

Stories of minor offenses dovetailing into deportations are circulated widely in the immigrant community as cautionary tales. Then, when domestic violence calls end with victims separated from their kids, other battered women feel scared to call police, neighbors don't speak up, and violence goes unreported.

"Batterers use a victim's immigration status as an opportunity to control them," says Liz Ortenburger, CEO of Safe Nest, a domestic violence treatment center. "We have cases of batterers who tell their significant other, 'You can't call the police because then you'll be deported.' Within the undocumented community that's a very common element of coercion."

U-visas are intended to safeguard against this problem by providing legal protections to victims who assist law enforcement. Either Metro or the District Attorney must certify that the victim was helpful, though, and immigration lawyers say the police department is increasingly stringent in the way it interprets that aspect of the law. Whereas most applications were certified in the past, they say most are rejected now.

"Police and the DA depend on the victims making themselves available to testify, but they're not there for the victim when the victim needs it," says attorney Sarah Perez. One of her clients had a U-visa request denied by Metro even after he took the witness stand against a gang member who killed his son.

"Undocumented people already think the police will turn them in to immigration. This is a protection from that. But they're not even going to try anymore," says Perez.

Metro doesn't track the number of U-visa forms it certifies or rejects, and the department says its standards are consistent with federal guidelines. Yet the perception in the immigrant community is that President Trump's tough immigration stance is influencing local police.

"We're hearing more fear in the voices of our (undocumented immigrant) victims," says Safe Nest CEO Ortenburger. "It makes sense given the current political climate that they may be reluctant to put their hand up."

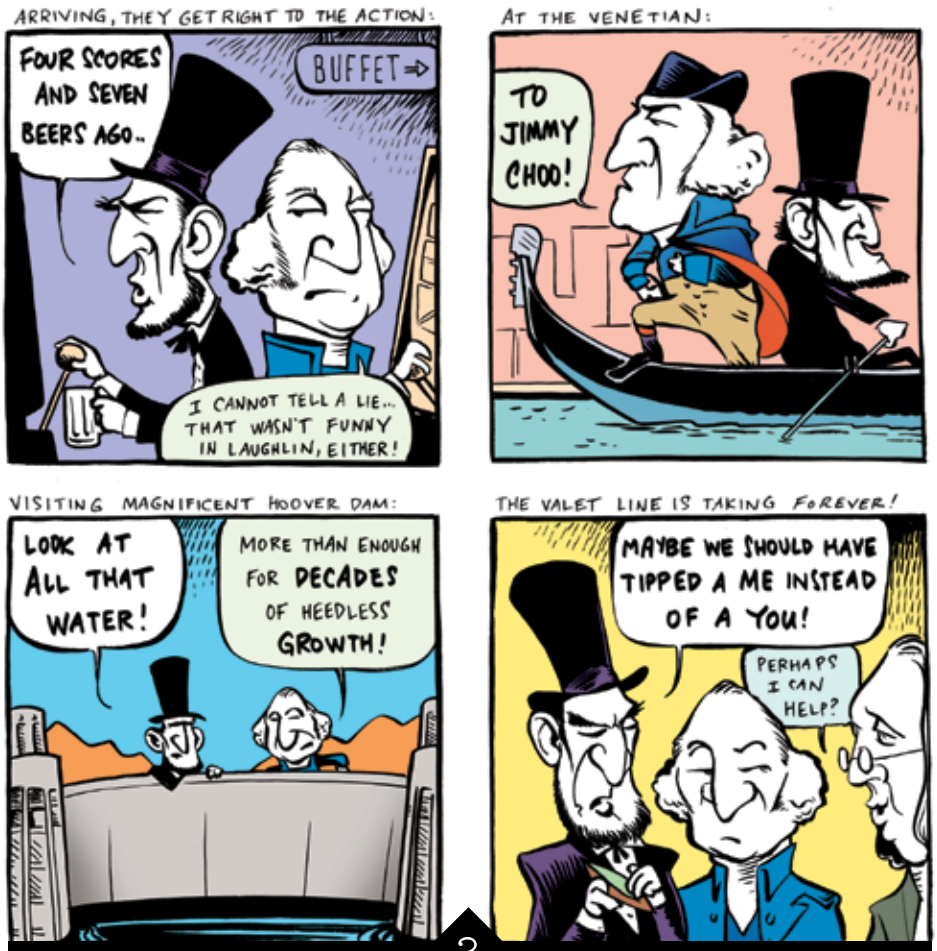
This fear of police among undocumented immigrants, the majority of whom are Latino, is not unique to Las Vegas; it's a national phenomenon. In 2017, Los Angeles and Houston police departments saw notable declines in crime reports from Latino communities despite steady call rates from other ethnic groups, and FiveThirtyEight.com found similar trends in Denver, Philadelphia, and Dallas, which experts associated with a mistrust of law enforcement stemming from tough immigration policies.

Metro doesn't yet know if crime reporting dropped in 2017. The effect of that trend might be especially pronounced in Nevada if it has. On a per capita basis, the state has the largest percentage of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. — about 8 percent of the population — and that ratio is likely to grow in the coming months as several of the President Trump's executive orders take effect. An estimated 6,300 Nevadans from El Salvador and Honduras will lose their temporary protected status (TPS), an order that many of them have lived on for more than 20 years in the U.S. Some 13,000 DACA recipients may go into the legal shadows, too, if that program expires without a legislative replacement.

"We're going to have higher crime in the city whether we like to admit it or not," says Hardeep "Dee" Sull, former chairperson of the American Immigration Lawyers Association's Nevada chapter. "Undocumented people may not do the Good Samaritan deed anymore because that may just put their families at risk."

These tensions were on display at Metro headquarters when the department hosted a public steering committee meeting with ICE on December 19. During the Q&A session, a man named Carlos stood and, through an interpreter, asked: "How do I know when an officer is working with ICE? And how can I feel safe if I don't know that?"

Under the lights of Spanish- and En-



3

PRESIDENTS' DAY CARTOON

GEORGE AND ABE'S VEGAS VACATION

glish-language news cameras, Forbus tried to assure the man that law-abiding immigrants shouldn't be afraid since Metro only collaborates with ICE inside its detention center, that no one is jailed without probable cause, and that even then, the department prioritizes serious criminals. Still, questions pertaining to trust and fear came up again and again.

"After that meeting we decided we're going to do more public outreach to let people know that we're there for them," Forbus says. Metro sometimes holds a Hispanic Citizens Academy at Latin American consulates to educate immigrant communities on their policies. "We're not asking for their immigration status when we're out on a call," he added. "We're there to try to help the next victim of a crime and be a partner with that community. People should never be afraid to call us when they need help."

Alicia Contreras, interim state director for Mi Familia Vota, said that undocumented people's fear of law enforcement is affecting her work, too. When Mi Familia Vota and its partners held naturalization workshops in 2016, they saw record turnout, but participation has dwindled as people have grown wary of what might happen in rooms where a large number of undocumented people are gathered at the same time. Now when activist organizations plan events, they change locations to make attendees comfortable and ask themselves, Do we invite the police department? How is that going to affect turnout?

"The community doesn't differentiate with 287(g) as to whether it's just in the jails or out in the community," she says. "All they know is that Metro is working with ICE. They don't want to answer [police] questions. They're just more fearful. Some communities are moving back to the shadows." ✦

ILLUSTRATION *Chris Morris*

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FOUR | **DISCOMFORT ZONE**

Bear-Skinned Lug

After years of covering entertainment, a veteran journalist tries the other side of the stage

BY ***Mike Weatherford***

Somehow I have talked Mac King into letting me be the bear that delivers a memorable jump-scare in his comedy magic show at Harrah's. This was gonna be hilarious, I thought. A major brag.

But now, crouched in position, sweating in a furry onesie and trembling from complaining knees and near-panic, the playful irony of an entertainment reporter's anonymous cameo has evaporated into my own hot breath huffing inside a heavy mascot head. I've already done this twice, but my performance anxiety hasn't dissipated:

Don't screw this up. For the sake of Mac. And the audience. Please don't screw this up.

Mac gives the cue. I lunge.

❄ ❄ ❄ ❄ ❄

A FEW DAYS earlier: "Welcome to show business," Mac said with his wry Kentucky slow-burn as I entered the Harrah's showroom, where his act has been an afternoon staple since 2000. "This is the pinnacle."

Joke aside, for me it really was a pinnacle. As much as King's onstage persona — the wide-eyed Kentucky rube — is an amplified version of the big kid most magicians are at heart, there's a Peter Pan aspect to entertainment journalism, too. I mean, I see shows for a living. Now, after 17 years of getting close enough to the stage to wonder what it's like on the other side, I was about to find out.

Mac was more worried about my knees.

"It's pretty hard," he warned me. The squatting, the duck-walking. "I'm worried we may not still be friends after."

When he had mentioned that one of his two assistants was on the road, I cajoled my way into being the stunt bear for one of my favorite magic tricks — a genuine scare from out of nowhere. (Spoiler alert: If you haven't seen it, let's just say there's a camping tent, inspected by a youngster pulled onstage. Turns out there's a bear inside.) Among magicians, it's considered a classic.

As I spend a couple of days practicing with Mac and his other assistant, Tristan Redding, I'm reminded of eighth-grade wrestling practice. "It's simple, but it's hard," Mac explained. "It's so much more precise than you think."

"To be able to pop out and scare those kids was awesome," says entertainer Adam London, who was in on the trick's development and played the bear for nearly five years before opening his own magic show at The D. "How evil is that? There would be times Mac could hear me laughing in the bear head."

The first of my four bear stunts, on a Thursday afternoon, turned out to be the best. I jumped out. I scared 9-year-old Darius. The audience gasped. And me? This was the fulfillment of my Peter Pan dream, and it was ... *okay*. I was too focused on not screwing up to savor the moment. Thankfully, I managed to not charge off the front of the stage. The 46-inch mascot head didn't drop to the floor. Mac flashed a discreet thumbs-up from the stage. I was elated. Was that rush I felt maybe my first taste of what makes show business so addictive?

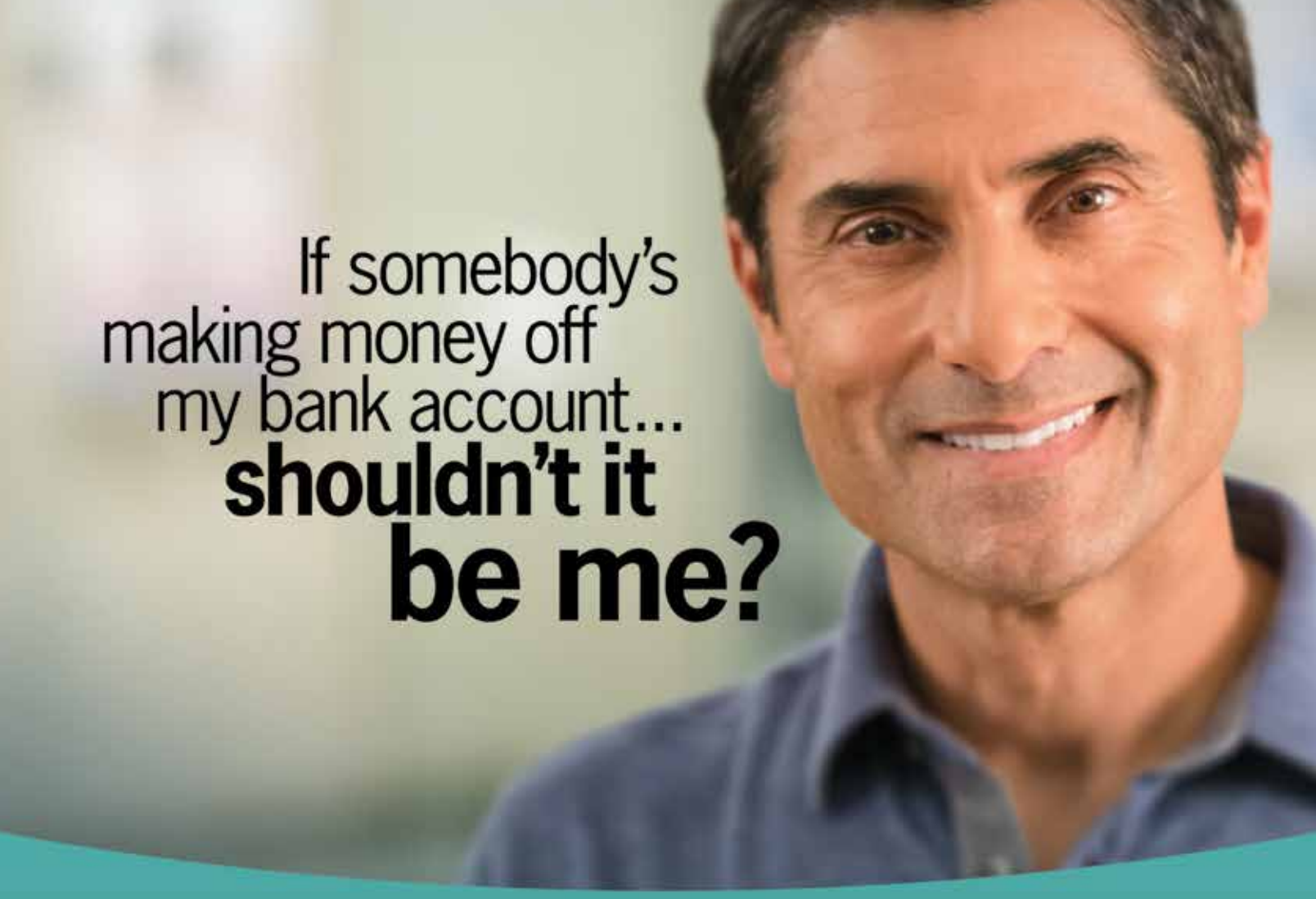
Then came the second show. "I saw you in the tent," announced the girl brought onstage. You didn't scare me." Nothing any female ever said has broken my heart more. But Mac later said it wasn't my fault. He and Tristan set to work with gaffer's tape to fix the gap in the tent before my third and fourth shows the next day.

❄ ❄ ❄ ❄ ❄

MAC GIVES THE cue. I lunge.

And, despite my complaining knees and near panic, my third show is my best pop-out yet. I hear the gasp. And I'm clear. Peering through the mesh-screen eyeholes, I track the young volunteer for the high-five

ILLUSTRATION ***Brent Holmes***



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we're supposed to share. She backs away. I don't know when to give up. I bear-stalk her until she uses Mac as a human shield. Then, as I head toward the wings, I lose my sense of direction ... and walk right off the stage.

The audience gasps again.

I land on my feet, but painfully hard on the left foot — and the bear head pops off. *Uh, hi, everyone?!* Mortified, I grab my head and bear-tail it into the wings.

Mac is howling onstage, can barely talk. He brings me out and lets the audience in on the joke, smoothing it over as only he can. And, it turns out, he had grabbed a hunk of bear suit in time to slow my fall from the three-foot stage. "In the aftermath, it feels like you didn't fall so much as get ... lowered quickly."

In his dressing room, he is uncharacteristically serious. "My big concern is that it's a genuine live experience," he says. "It's not watching TV. Stuff can happen. And it did. That was a genuine moment, and they realized that." He insists I do the trick again for the 3 p.m. show, when my wife and daughter will be watching.

The only thing endangered this time is the goldfish bowl parked in the wings, and Mac steers me clear before I run into it. The bit goes well enough onstage. Jump, scare, gasp. I manage to keep my head on straight. But after the post-show autographs and photos, Mac asks, eyebrows arched, "Are we done yet?"

Sounds like. A part of me wants one more chance to get it perfect. Another part, a complaining left ankle, says we should not lunge anymore. It's also Mac's way of reminding me I don't really belong in this world. Show business requires a special mix of creativity and discipline; there's little margin for error, and very real chances of getting hurt. At least I have a new appreciation for the work that goes into even the most basic illusions.

There is also, inevitably, the dreaded review. After hammering out so many B-minus critiques over the years, it was my turn to be on the receiving end. It was showroom usher Katie James who supplied the blurb I could pull out of context and scream in big promo type across my imaginary billboard.

"This show," she proclaimed, "will go down in history." ✦

5

All Rise

Talking with the first black justice of the Nevada Supreme Court as he takes the reins as chief justice

BY **Steve Sebelius**

Michael Douglas never dreamed of being a judge while growing up in Los Angeles in the 1960s. If anything, he was going to follow in his father's footsteps and become a teacher and coach. But extra pay for advanced degrees led him to the Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, which led him to a legal practice, Las Vegas and, ultimately, the robes of a judge. This year, Douglas — the first black justice of the Nevada Supreme Court — will wrap up 14 years on the state's top bench as chief justice. He spoke with *Desert Companion* in his spacious office in the new Supreme Court building Downtown.

So what are the perks of being chief judge?

There are none. You sit on *en banc* matters [cases heard by all seven Supreme Court justices], but as chief, since you're not on a panel, you sit on a panel if somebody else has a conflict. So the tradeoff is you get all the administrative headaches.

What do you think of the state of the judiciary in Nevada right now?

It's doing well right now. It can do better. We are under the same crunch as the rest of the folks who work for the state government in terms of staffing, having adequate staff to do what we're charged with doing. Our primary function is to adjudicate matters, rule on things. So we're in a situation if we had more people we could turn more cases.

In your tenure with the courts, how have things changed?

A number of things. The easiest thing is we have more women involved in the law than we had before. In the state of Nevada, unlike some other states because of ethnic population, we have more minorities involved in the law, as lawyers, than we had in the early 1980s when I first got here.

Have things [with respect to minority judges] changed enough?

At some points, no. Reno has still never had a black District Court judge. But again, it's based on their population of blacks in the law. ... I think they have about 10 black attorneys up there now, and the majority of them are out of Boyd Law School, so they're going back home. They came down here and got educated, and they're going back home. So there's growth up there.

Tell me how, if at all, being that historic first [black justice] impacts you as a justice of the Supreme Court. Or does it?

It does and doesn't, all at the same time. It doesn't in one way because your job is ruling on the law, making decisions. It does in another way because any time you're the first at anything, people look at you more, they want to analyze you more, so as they say, they're grading your homework, whether you want them to or not. So that's one thing, you didn't set

Edited for length and clarity.

PHOTOGRAPHY **Sabin Orr**

out to be necessarily somebody's role model, but you're looked at and held up both ways, good or bad, as the job that you do.

One of the most common voter complaints I hear at election time is "I just don't know how to decide who is a good judge."

We're in a time where, I like to say, you're only as good as your last ruling. But depending on where people feel on an issue, they think you did the right thing or the wrong thing. So with the Supreme Court, when we issue a decision as to public financing of private schools, we issue a decision on eminent domain, people are on one side or another. And if your vote went this way, they like you, or if it went that way, they don't. And that's the odd thing for judges: A regular politician runs on "I will do this for you." A judge runs on "I will be fair and impartial and listen to both sides before I rule."

Where do you see yourself [politically] and does it matter in terms of how you do your job?

I think it matters in how you do your job, but, by the same token, if people really take a look at your body of work and not just one or two cases, then they have to come to a conclusion, are you willing to follow the law or are you not willing to follow the law, liberal or conservative, both ways? Because you may be liberal, but if you're following the law, you have to be willing to say, "I can't get there from here." And the same if you're conservative, sometimes, it's like, "I don't like this, but that's what the law says, I'm going to follow the law." Those are the people you want on the bench. That's hopefully at the end of the day what I'm viewed as.

Would you say those who are in power in Nevada get what they want, more often than not?

They have a better shot at it, because they have the tools. I mean, it's like a bumper sticker that says "My lawyer can beat up your lawyer." That's a concern ... if something happens, who can you afford to have represent you? And depending on who the other side is, who do they have represent them? You get your day in court. What kind of day you get in court is the question.

What will you do after you leave?

I'm not going to go into full retirement. Right now, I will probably sit senior, which means as a former District Court judge I can go back and sit cases as people need time away from the bench and things of that nature. I still enjoy doing what I'm doing. I enjoy the puzzle, finding the answer. ... Even after I walk out of this place, I'm still going to be interested in access to justice, I'm still going to be interested in drug courts, I'm still going to be interested in educational opportunities for minorities who want to go into law. That's not going to change.

Would you ever think of teaching, like at Boyd?

I would think about it. ... Somebody took time out of their day to coach me, and for me at this point and at other points, this is my opportunity to return what was given to me, the giving back. And that's how you help keep the place a nice place to live if you're willing to do that. Corny or not, that's what it is. Yeah, you get as much as you give. ✦

6. PERSONAL BEST

BEST COMMERCIAL JINGLE THAT SERVES AS A SECRET HANDSHAKE BETWEEN LONGTIME LAS VEGANS

Carpet Barn

If you remember the jingle for "Carpet Barn" ("The Carpet Barn ... we won't be undersoooold!"), maybe we can get together and talk about whether you, too, as a kid, didn't know what "undersold" meant, didn't even have it in your vocabulary, and so you and your siblings thought the commercial was saying, "We won't be *at the store*," and you wondered: Why won't they be at the store? Is this some kind of recondite grown-up prank? Are people being lured to an empty store, only to be terrified by carpet salespeople leaping out from behind carpet displays? Or worse, lured to an empty store, only to be terrified on a higher, finer existential register *by the menacing emptiness itself*? Misheard and misunderstood, The Carpet Barn commercial was an emblem of the inscrutable adult world of an adult city. Yeah, you sing the jingle to a fellow native and you exchange a clairvoyant look that speaks of a shared darkness. *Andrew Kiraly* (see more bests on p. 43)

SEVEN | **PROFILE**

Patrick Donnelly

Nevada State Director, Center for Biological Diversity

BY ***Heidi Kyser***

A meeting facilitator calls Patrick Donnelly to the podium for his comment on the Bureau of Land Management's local resource management plan. Facing the half-empty Santa Fe Station ballroom with a giant three-minute timer ticking down on a projector screen above his head, Donnelly gets right to the point: "We have grave concerns about the way that the environmental review processes are playing out across the Department of the Interior under the corrupt and heavy-handed leadership of Secretary Ryan Zinke and industry cronies like (Deputy Secretary) David Bernhardt. The department has become a political tool, with haphazard slashing of bedrock environmental regulations in order to appease a small handful of radical, far-right Trump donors."

Apparently, Donnelly didn't get the memo that the Wilderness Society, Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, and other environmental nonprofits did about playing nice with the BLM. He also doesn't seem to care that the bureau pulled discussion about the management of Gold Butte National Monument from the agenda, citing President Donald Trump's decision — based on Zinke's recommendation — to trim an as-yet unknown amount of acreage from the area designated by former President Barack Obama. "What is the status of Gold Butte? Is the lawlessness that pervades DOI and this administration going to result in the loss of part of our precious national monument?" Donnelly asked, during this comment, eliciting a gasp (and a couple of snickers) from the audience.

Likewise, most of Southern Nevada's conservation groups would rather talk about anything other than Cliven Bundy, the cowboy-hatted scofflaw who faced off with law enforcement on his Bunkerville melon farm in 2014 when the BLM tried to round up Bundy Ranch cows that had long been illegally grazing in, among other places, Gold Butte. Off the record, these groups' leaders worry about connecting the inflammatory Bundy with the national monument. But not Donnelly. The week before Christmas, he and a handful of other Center for Biological Diversity staff held a protest on the steps of the courthouse where Bundy and his supporters were being tried for crimes related to the standoff.

After the judge dismissed the case due to prosecutorial misconduct, Donnelly was undeterred: "The Trump administration is coddling violent zealots and preventing the public from feeling safe to enjoy our new national monument," he

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION ***Brent Holmes***

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said in a press release urging the Interior Department to once again try getting the cattle off public land.

Where does Donnelly, who will celebrate a year on the job in March, get his chutzpah? From the Center for Biological Diversity's 1.6 million members and their mandate for the organization: "We take an aggressive front-lines approach to defending the environment. If there are ways that the government or corporations are breaking the law, we will take them to court and sue them, and we win most of the time."

But where does *he* get it? From his parents, both Episcopal ministers, maybe? He says he likes to use the religious-flavored "fervor" to describe his passion for speaking on behalf of the animals and plants that he defends.

"In the desert, everything is totally apparent, because it's laid bare in front of you," he says. "And yet, it's also mysterious: How did these plants survive? How do these animals eke out a living? I've spent 15 years unlocking those secrets, and there's a whole lifetime of them left to discover. I tell people that the Mojave Desert is the love of my life. … If I didn't have this job, and they weren't paying me, I'd probably do it anyway."

EIGHT | **OPEN TOPIC**

Senior Moment

Moving into an age-restricted community made me realize: I'm officially old. And I'm okay with it.

BY ***John M. Glionna***

I live in — shudder — a 55-and-over community. Yes, I've taken up residence in the used car lot of life, among the other heaps far past their prime, long-forgotten junkers, their glory days lost in the rear-view mirror. At least, that's how I used to look at it.

When I moved to Las Vegas in 2012, there was no way I saw myself as someone who was about to turn 55. Looking in the mirror, I ignored the encroaching wrinkles and age spots, and fooled myself into seeing a 35ish hepcat, still on his game.

Married with no kids, I was a journalist, a storyteller, a self-proclaimed raconteur-with-attitude who had traveled the world in pursuit of the story — and I wasn't done yet. I came here to work as a national reporter for the *L.A. Times*, and needed to live near McCarran because the job required lots of last-minute travel.

In 2012, the housing market was just starting to heat up again after its long descent, and I knew I had to act fast. I considered a condo off the Strip, then a Downtown loft where I could live among the coffeehouse-and-craft-brew hipsters, that tribe to which I still claimed membership.

There was (sigh) another option: a house in the suburbs. I saw a lot of places, mostly in Henderson. When the real estate agent suggested that we drive higher into the foothills to a retirement community, I resisted. But in the end, we found a place I knew was the one: Perfect price, awesome floor plan, pool and jacuzzi in a manicured backyard, even a casita I could use as my office.

The bad news: It was in Old Peopleville — Sun City Anthem, where 12,500 retirees live in a massive master-planned community. I sucked up my pride and signed on the dotted line — barely a month after I'd officially turned 55.

I'll admit, I copped an attitude at first. These people were hardly my tribe. I made jokes about the little old ladies who look through the steering wheel as they careen around Anthem Parkway. When my nieces came to visit from Los Angeles, I pointed out other drivers on the road as old farts and old bats — my Lenny Bruce moment, being purposefully caustic, trying to evoke a response.

It worked. My 12-year-old niece, Isabel, turned to me.

"What's that make *you* then, Uncle John?"

She had me; everyone could see that. Everyone except me.

I had joined a gym on Eastern Avenue, where most members were in their 20s. One day, my wife (who lives in San Francisco for work) said, "Why don't you work out at the gym in your community? You could meet some new friends." I scoffed. Working out among 20-somethings gave me energy — I needed my young people's gym.

Then one day, without time to schlep down Eastern Avenue, I reluctantly hit the gym at Sun City Anthem. And boom — I

9. PERSONAL BEST

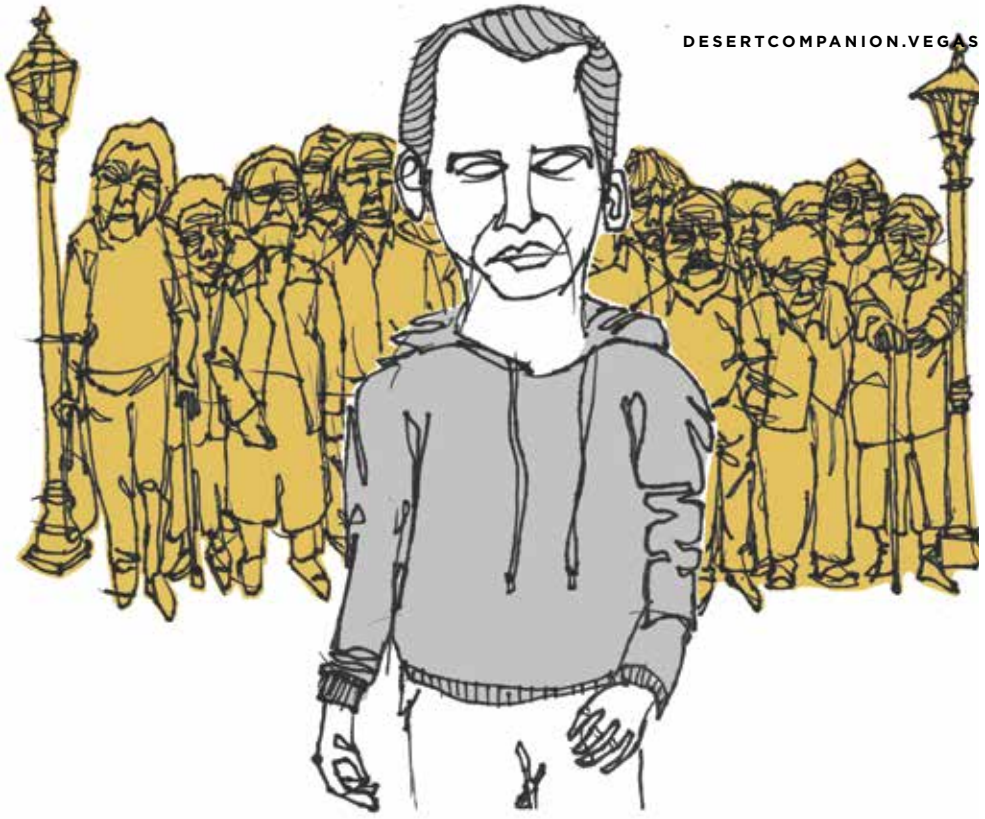
BEST PLACE TO EXPLORE WITHOUT REALLY MOVING

Lied Library

I have a few favorite spots at UNLV: The entire green side of campus, the weird umbrella tree near the art department, the building with the airplane in it. But the best is the fifth floor of Lied Library. The entirety of Lied is great — with its robotic book-fetcher, its floating study rooms, and its generally impressive design — but the fifth floor, up against the west wall, is best. That's because the large-format art books live there, and it's almost always empty.

I don't know how I first stumbled upon this hideout, but I do know I returned often as a student. It's a quiet refuge from the bustle of UNLV's small-city-sized student population, and it's a great way to learn by chance, plucking whatever catches your attention from the shelf. It was there I found *Inferno*, James Nachtwey's troubling photos of suffering around the world. It was there I dove into various art movements. Sitting down, screenless, and flipping through random art books feels especially luxurious these days; I can't recommend it enough. I'm due for a visit myself. If I see you there, I'll show you the umbrella tree. *Kristy Totten* (see more bests on p. 43)

LIED LIBRARY: BRENT HOLMES



went from being one of the oldest people at the gym to one of the youngest. I never went back to the other place.

It was a superficial comfort, but it triggered something else: I began to open my eyes and actually *see* my neighbors — and they're not as alien or otherworldly as I thought. As I huffed and puffed on the elliptical, I saw men and women 25 years my senior coming in every day. One man could hardly walk; he showed up with a cane and got on the treadmill. It looked like he was barely moving. But I could see the effort etched on his face. It was heroic. At the gym and elsewhere in the community, I got to know a few folks, and you know what I found? That people don't change all that much, even when they get older. They're essentially the same personalities as when they were kicking up their heels in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. Like my neighbor Charlie, a Minnesota transplant who loves talking politics at his 7 a.m. coffee klatch — he hasn't stopped being an early-morning social animal and armchair pundit just because he's retired. And there's Lisa, a former Vegas showgirl who, at 80, still has the same sassy demeanor and sexy, searching eyes she had when she wore all that glitter.

I suppose it helps that I was, fortunately, raised to see the elderly not as castoffs. I've visited extended family in Italy, where the institution of the three-generation household is going strong. My wife is Chinese, a culture in which grandparents, parents and children living together is still a common arrangement.

I used to visit my older sister, who worked as an aide in an upscale retirement home in Orange County. I'd come home on visits from reporting assignments in Asia, and she would take me around to meet the residents. Their backgrounds were amazing: big-time corporate lawyers, actors, chemists, poets. But now, they were all relegated to being just old. Nobody asked them about their achievements, their experiences. The aides knocked on the door to alert them to dinner hour, and after that, they were solved problems until the next feed time.

It sort of pissed me off back then. But I'd forgotten all about that when I moved to Sun City. My shtick with my nieces about old farts and bats was, I suppose, a defense mechanism against facing the reality of getting old. It's a fact and process I'm learning to accept as I live it myself: Now I'm 60, a number our culture tells us is over the hill, no longer on the team, *old*. But the longer I live in my 55-plus community, the more I feel I belong here, the more I fit in.

The other day, I was taking my usual walk when I was passed by a man half my age. He was running, dripping sweat. I was there once. I used to road-bike 70 miles in an afternoon. But not anymore. These days, I walk, a pursuit that's more my speed.

I let the younger guy go on ahead, content with my own pace. Then I encountered a gray-haired woman walking her dog. She remarked on the gorgeous afternoon, which was true, and I smiled. She was one of my tribe. ✦

ILLUSTRATION ***T.G. Miller***

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CULTURE | NEW STUFF

Made Museum

Make that *re*made, as the Mob Museum debuts a strikingly interactive — and maybe a bit controversial? — renovation

BY ***Scott Dickensheets***

Everyone calls it the Mob Museum, but the other half of its mission — technically, it's the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement — will see its share of the spotlight grow come February 14, when the museum debuts a $9.2 million renovation. Two major new interactive exhibits, a forensic lab and a use-of-force training scenario, will take visitors deep into vital aspects of law enforcement. A third, a 16-foot touch-screen wall loaded with text, photos, and video, explores contemporary manifestations of organized crime, from drug cartels to the Yakuza. All are significant upgrades, educationally, and in terms of interactivity — the use-of-force attraction will position users as a police officer with a (laser) gun, not only in a digital scenario, but in a live-action situation. More notoriously, the museum will open a distillery and speakeasy in its basement come April. We asked Executive Director Jonathan Ullman if there was an overall goal for the remodel that helped him decide what new exhibits to include.

Edited for length and clarity.

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Brent Holmes***

Was there an overall goal for the remodel that helped you decide what new exhibits to include?

That process actually started back in the summer of 2014. We've known for years that we wanted to be refreshing the exhibits to update the stories we tell, and give people more reasons to come back. And then delve into other topics that we weren't covering. And the opportunities for us to make it a more comfortable visit, and a longer visit, provide other amenities like food and drink, places for people to sit. Many other museums, as I'm sure you realize, have different, separately ticketed experiences in which you can add elements to a visit, make it more robust, and also generate additional revenue.

And so one overarching goal is, how do you properly end the narrative about traditional organized crime in America in the 20th century? The exhibition space we've had since opening did a nice job of extending the story into the legacy of the mob, and how it continues to manifest in popular culture, in particular. But we recognize that there is a better way to kind of put a bow on that traditional 20th-century mob story. One thing that is very important to us is to find ways to make the content and the opportunities to educate the public truly relevant. One way you do that is to make certain you're addressing more contemporary issues. So it is natural that we create a larger exhibition space devoted to organized crime today.

When I heard about some of the exhibits — crime lab, use-of-force training — my first thought was, **They're trying to get past the "romance of the mob" phase.**

I think it was more about how you continue the narrative. To have this story just stop — you don't want to stop at 1990, because that leaves you with the giant question of, well, what happened next?

Looking at the actions of Mexican drug cartels today, for example. Being able to see the reality of it now also reminds us that there's nothing romantic about the violence that occurred as a result of organized crime in the 20th century. We've had a lot of popular-culture influence and a lot of distance or separation that makes us sometimes think that that was some kind of kinder, gentler organized crime. But there was an awful lot of violence in the 20th century that isn't romantic and shouldn't be admired.

Let's talk about the shooting simulator.

First and foremost, it's not a shooting simulator, though I can understand where you might think that. There are two components to that area. One is the training experience; the other are the exhibits that address issues and information related to use of force.

We had firearm training simulators when we first opened; there wasn't a lot of context that went around that. You can't minimize or exclude use of force as a component of how law enforcement does what it does. So certainly it's very, very relevant. But we don't just stop there. It's not just about conveying information because it's compelling and interesting — it's also about how you apply this information. What's the takeaway that makes you think differently about the world?

Are you prepared for any controversy?

If we are doing this properly, it will make people think, and it may create different reactions. But, from our perspective, that's not a reason to shy away from it. If anything, it's a reason why you need to help shed more light on what's important for people to understand to be able to formulate informed opinions about when force is or is not appropriate.

I can see a critic saying that you're positioning the museum-goer to be sympathetic to the officer using force, rather than the person who might wrongly or rightly be at the receiving end of it.

We know there's no way to avoid people coming in with certain beliefs and perhaps taking issue. So this can be a way not just of providing people with the perspective of the officer, but also understanding that *training* is really important, and good training can help minimize bad outcomes.

And the exhibits that surround this experience touch on things like racial disparity. We address topics like implicit bias, perceptual bias, and other things that affect officers' ability to make good decisions. What we're ultimately hoping is for the general public to understand the complexity. But also understand that there are opportunities to make this better.

Looking ahead to April, are you breaking new ground by having the speakeasy and distillery in your basement?

We're not the first museum to have a distillery. I think we're probably the first museum to have a distillery *and* a speakeasy. (*Laughs*)

When we thought about how we would do this, we came at it from, you know, *content is king*. It's got to be an educational experience. So thinking about what narrative to continue into this space, a speakeasy is a no-brainer. We talk (elsewhere in the museum) about Prohibition as being an era in which organized crime took off, amassed great wealth, and used that wealth to seed its expansion. But there's so much more we could be covering about that. Speakeasy culture is compelling, but there's also the smuggling, bootlegging, and manufacturing that we can address in the context of the distillery. So it provides that exhibit experience. ✦

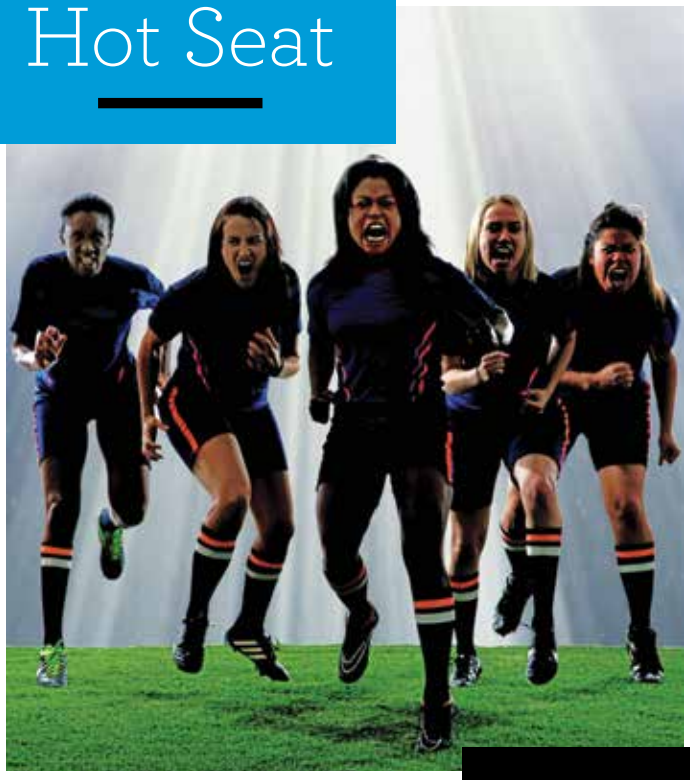
PERSONAL BEST

BEST HYPOTHETICAL COMPOSITE MOVIE THEATER

Eclipse + Village Square + Galaxy

The complete pleasure of my favorite pastime — going to the movies — is thwarted in Las Vegas by the separate existence, in three different theaters, of the things that make up a perfect cinema: amenities, film selection, and neighborhood. The best theater for me would have the Downtown location of Eclipse, which is bike-riding distance from my house. It would screen the foreign and independent films that I now have to drive all the way to Regal Cinemas Village Square to see, films like *The Florida Project* and *The Square*. And it would have the unpretentious creature comforts of Galaxy Green Valley Luxury. I dream of my husband and I walking to this imaginary amalgam of theater heaven hand-in-hand on a sunny October afternoon, ordering a hefeweizen each and small popcorn to share, finding our reserved, reclining loungers among the 100 available, and settling in to watch Steve McQueen's next movie, *Widows*. That one is scheduled to open in the fall — time enough for someone to make my dream come true? *Heidi Kyser* (see more bests on p. 43)

THE Hot Seat



theater

THE WOLVES

COCKROACH THEATRE

Well, that was quick — this play, by Sarah DeLappe, was a Pulitzer finalist just last year, and already it's on a local stage. And not a moment too soon: The story of a women's soccer team "battling their inner demons," it's a timely production in this #metoo, women's-march moment. Featuring an all-female cast, director, and technical crew. **Feb. 1-18, 8p on Thursdays-Saturdays, 2p on Sundays, $15-$25, cockroachtheatre.com**

art

OFF THE PAGE

SAHARA WEST LIBRARY

The link between art and literature is made literally solid in this exhibit of ceramics evoking books and writers, by members of Clay Arts Vegas. Write on! **Feb. 22-April 21 (opening reception, Feb. 22 at 5:30p), free, lvccld.org**

The Importance of Storytelling in a Digital World Even with attention spans and narratives cracked by digital media, storytelling fills a deep human need. Filmmaker and UNLV communication specialist Shahab Zargari explains. **Feb. 22, 7:30p, UNLV's Barrick Museum, free, unlv.edu/calendar**

poetry

"LOVE POET" LEE MALLORY

JANCO BOOKSTORE

Love poetry is all you need, at least on Valentine's Day, at least if you ask Mr. Mallory, whose show *The Love Poems: Lee Mallory Unplugged* will also include percussionist Daniel Williams and a "surprise musical guest." He's no Hallmark-grade homily-slinger, this former pal of Charles Bukowski — look for his poems to gaze unflinchingly at what he calls "the illogic of love and the underbelly of desire." **Feb. 14, 6:30p, 2202 W. Charleston Blvd., free, 702-522-9286**

music

LETTUCE

BROOKLYN BOWL

Instrumental, psychedlic groove-jazz by a hot seven-piece — including sax, trumpet and two guitars — with the versatility to wheel from hip-hop influences to touches of Led Zep, but keeping it distinctly Lettuce the whole time. **Feb. 13, 7p, Brooklyn Bowl, $27-$32, brooklynbowl.com**

heritage

BLACK WEEKEND

WEST LAS VEGAS LIBRARY

Three days of talks examining black and African life, traditions, and culture in a global context. Speakers include actor Antonio "Huggy Bear" Fargas, international scholar Runoko Rashidi, Ashra and Merira Kwesi, and others. Plus cultural offerings that explore African diaspora traditions. **Feb. 22-24, various times, free, lvccld.org**

music

FROM THE TOP

THE SMITH CENTER

For those needing another reminder that there's always someone younger and better, NPR's *From the Top* will put local classically trained musicians, ages 8-18, onstage to showcase their ridiculous sums of dedication and affinity for classical music to an all-ages audience. **Feb. 25, 2p, $19-$79, thesmithcenter.com**

Ranger Hike in St. Thomas Join a National Park Service ranger for an educational traipse through time as you explore what's left of the small town of St. Thomas, drowned by the creation of Lake Mead. **Feb. 10, reserve a space at 702-293-8990**

LEE MALLORY: COURTESY OF LEE MALLORY; THE WOLVES COURTESY OF COCKROACH THEATRE; CERAMIC ART COURTESY OF LIBRARY DISTRICT; LETTUCE COURTESY OF BROOKLYN BOWL

VISUAL ART

We *Built* This City

Writers riff on images from photographer Aaron Mayes' broad new exhibit examining LV's built environment

BIG GAME

We built these paths for speed and scale and speculation. The 15 has always had to be two steps ahead of today, because tomorrow comes so swiftly. The liminal spaces, the empty zones between resorts and roads, become realized, one after another: a Park north of the Big Apple, the Knights' ice clad in bronze. It's hard to imagine that once the Hacienda horseman rode this route, that his modest home greeted our guests and they called it a resort, that some of them said their vows at the Little Chapel in the horseman's shadow. This was long before Mandalay, back when resorts had backlots that extended forever in their purposelessness and possibility. Now the Events Center is hard against the 15, and the boxers and singers and sharks have been performing for nearly two decades, and the Aces are coming to play basketball. Our mother road has always been up to the task of our growth. Do you see the Big Empty west of the freeway? The desert scraped clean of its crust, stripped and purified. The Raiders are coming. They always come, in every generation, dreaming, arriving, transforming. We never turn them away. The road was built for raiders. *Greg Blake Miller*

(Aerial view of Interstate 15)

UNDER A WATCHFUL EYE

If you come here, tired and huddled, poor and yearning, put a gate on your own door. Pull your blinds closed. Build your cozy fortress with brick and stone and stucco, and we will drop in at the front door but once a year, wearing masks and demanding candy. You'll pretend we're entertaining. We'll laugh and run and, just this once, we'll make light of the fear embedded in liberty.

Gates beg to be opened, right? Or is shelter really a place to hide from the wilds of freedom, whether physical, cultural, or psychological? Can you come to the home of the brave to hide? Or is there in our social contract an understanding that the Mother of Exiles has some expectation of you?

Knock-knock.

Who's there?

Liberty.

Where?

I'm standing right behind you, watching.

Stacy J. Willis

(A house on Via Vaquero Avenue.)

GONE WITH THE FLOW

The invisible made visible: That's what I can't stop seeing in Aaron's photo of a homeless man losing his belongings in a flood. As a physical entity, our flood-control system is so slight — manmade versions of the basins and channels sculpted so casually by nature — and it exists so peripherally to our daily life, that it barely registers as engineering. It has more presence as irony than infrastructure: the hilarity of an arid desert city spending hundreds of millions to protect itself from … water. Yet, water is what makes the system visible, these temporary rivers appearing suddenly in our midst. It's also brought into view this homeless man, representative of an interstitial, unseen population — however often we see them, we rarely *see* them. Now we can't miss him. Cowled in a wet blanket, bereft of stuff, he's a searing scarlet reminder of all the protective systems we've failed, or worse, declined to build. Even the viewing dynamic indicts us: Our inability to help the guy, because we're just looking at an image, becomes the perfect aesthetic complement to our unwillingness to confront the problem in real life, where we'd rather just go with the flow. *Scott Dickensheets*

(Homeless man near Las Vegas flood channel)

02/09 **BUILT** A survey of the built environment by photographer and curator Aaron Mayes. Opens Feb. 9, 5:30p, in UNLV's Lied Library, with a talk by Brookings Institute director Robert Lang. **Through summer. unlv.edu/calendar**

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You Need These Noodles

Six soul-warming Korean dishes to cozy up with this season

By Sonja Swanson

YOU CAN BE CHEW-SY Left, bibim-naeng-myeon at Soyo; right, Gomtang at E Jo

Just about every culture along the Silk Road has its version of noodles (it's why the Korean suffix for noodles, *myeon*, is related to the Chinese *mein* and Japanese *men*). In Korea alone there are dozens upon dozens of noodle recipes, but these six dishes are especially familiar standbys — easy lunches, comfort food, a whole meal in a giant bowl.

Noodles used to be a delicacy. Wheat was scarce and making noodles was time-intensive, so they were served at feasts and on holidays. But during the Korean War, U.S. food aid flooded the market with wheat flour. Noodles became (and still are) some of the cheapest meals you can buy in Korea. And, of course, in Las Vegas, where Korean noodles come in countless forms.

(Hint: Koreans traditionally use metal chopsticks, making noodles a special challenge for your skills. Don't be ashamed to ask for wooden chopsticks if you're struggling.)

MUL-NAENGMYEON

Thin buckwheat noodles are doused in an icy broth and garnished with cucumber, egg, brisket and sometimes pear and radish. Originally from North Korea, it's equally popular in the South and inspires raging debates around which noodles (more buckwheat or less? sweet potato starch or no?) and which broths (cloudy? clear? beef? pork? both?) are best. Use the scissors to cut your bed of noodles into halves or quarters, then season your broth with a generous dash of vinegar and mustard. It's especially popular in summer, but is eaten year-round. Try it as a palate-cleansing second course after a round (or several) of Korean barbecue.

BIBIM-NAENGMYEON

While this dish typically uses the same noodles as *naengmyeon*, there's no broth here — these cold noodles are generously slathered with a spicy *gochujang*-based dressing. Warning: It can get spicy and messy. One overly-eager slurp will send bright red sauce flying in all directions. Cut and mix your noodles, and devour with caution. Both *mul-naengmyeon* and *bibim-naengmyeon* are often served as a final course to a dinner of Korean barbecue, but also make for a refreshing lunch. Bonus points (and extra protein) if you opt for *hwe-naengmyeon*, the version served with raw fish.

Mul-naengmyeon and bibim-naengmyeon ($10 each) at Soyo Korean Barstaurant, 7775 S. Rainbow Blvd. #105

JJAJANGMYEON

Oh, *jjajangmyeon*! A childhood classic,

PHOTOGRAPHY ***Jon Estrada***

it's what you eat when you're hungry and nostalgic and don't want to break the bank. It's the meal you have while sitting on your floor when you've just moved to a new house and you're surrounded by boxes. It's what parents feed toddlers and regret while cleaning up. While this is originally a Chinese recipe, Koreans put their own twist on this hot black bean-and-onion sauce served over long, chewy wheat noodles. Comfort in a bowl.

JJAMBONG

Jjambong is the Mr. Hyde to *jjajangmyeon*'s Dr. Jekyll. Where *jjajangmyeon* is placating and sweet, *jjambong* is a fiery orange broth over the same chewy wheat noodles, loaded up with a medley of shrimp, mussels, squid, and more. But it gets better: If you can't choose, most restaurants will now let you order half and half, dubbed *jjam-jja-myeon*. For best results, order either of these noodle dishes with a side of *tangsuyuk*, sweet and sour fried pork.

Jjanjangmyeon ($7.99), jjambong ($9.99), and tangsuyuk ($15.99) at Tae Heung Gak, 6870 Spring Mountain Road #10

KALGUKSU

Kalguksu literally means "knife-cut noodles." The flour noodles, rather than being pulled and stretched for maximum glutinous chewiness, are rolled and cut for a slightly more tender texture. *Kalguksu* is usually made with summer squash, small clams, and a hot, savory anchovy broth that thickens as the noodles release their starch. Clam *kalguksu* is a little hard to come by here in Las Vegas and tends to be a seasonal special, but you can find hearty chicken *kalguksu* more readily — it's a chicken noodle soup for the soul.

Chicken or seafood kalguksu ($9.99) at Kkulmat, 5600 Spring Mountain Road #A

GOMTANG

While not typically considered a noodle dish, this beef soup almost always comes with a handful of noodles, either the thin, white flour noodles (*somyeon*) or clear rice noodles (*dangmyeon*). *Gomtang* broth is made from ox bones boiled for hours, resulting in a milky color and rich, almost creamy flavors. The broth usually comes unseasoned, but you'll find green onions, salt, pepper and chili paste on the table to season however you like. Dip the meat into the small bowl of seasoned soy sauce on the side.

Gomtang ($10.99) at E Jo Korean Restaurant, 700 E. Sahara Ave. #D

PERSONAL BEST

BEST DINER WAITRESS

Patty at Lou's Diner

Lou's Diner serves up soulful, filling, comfort food (see p. 52), but I also go for its quirky, welcoming personality. For instance, become a regular and they'll hang your very own coffee mug up for use on return trips. Mind you, you have to provide them the coffee cup (mine is the one with Deadpool riding a unicorn), but it's well worth the tariff. And they can't seem to top off your mug often enough during a visit. Whatever you order, make sure to save room for one of Patty's cinnamon rolls — and be sure to say hi to Patty herself. The Boston-area native is a fixture at Lou's, serving there for the last 16 years. And the cinnamon rolls aren't the only menu item she has her hands in, taking part in the pot pie and chicken noodle soup with recipes from the previous owner and restaurant namesake Lou herself. But she contributes to more than the menu. She's a storybook Las Vegas diner waitress, made up to the nines, flittering about humming and singing songs, chatting with everyone. She's the epitome of the hardworking Sin City, a personification of our best qualities in a valley institution. 431 S. Decatur Blvd., lousdinerlv.com *Jim Begley* (see more bests on p. 43)

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Street Foodie

The Soul Food of MLK

If you know where to look, this area offers soulful sustenance

PHOTOS & CAPTIONS BY
Brent Holmes

CHICKEN AND WAFFLES, $10, GRITZ CAFE

This version of the soul-food standard makes for a satisying start to any day. The wonderfully seasoned chicken and spongy, crispy waffle comes with a side of smooth, savory grits. ***1911 Stella Lake St., 702-255-4748***

FRIED CATFISH, $7.58/LB, MARIO'S WESTSIDE MARKET

You can't talk MLK and food without noting Mario's, which has served the area for 20-plus years. This fried catfish is the standard by which the rest should be judged — and at a price you cant beat. Add four hush puppies for $1. ***1960 N. Martin Luther King Blvd., 702-648-1482***

PORK EGG FU YOUNG, $6, SOUL FOO YOUNG

I disliked egg fu young — untill I had it here. Fluffy and rich, it will have the hardest fu young hater saying, *Never have I ever.* Try the fried rice, too — it's dirty and delicous! ***1216 W. Owens Ave., 702-539-0333***

OYSTER PO' BOY, $10, FISH CAGE

Briny, unctous fried oysters atop a lively slaw. Add a squeeze of lemon to up the contrast, and you have a champion sandwich. ***3940 N. Martin Luther King Blvd., 702-586-1400***

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Bottiglia RISTORANTE & ENOTECA

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Just My Type

We have the perfect Valentine's Day gift for your loved one — because we relied on the Myers-Briggs personality test to make this list!

BY ***Christie Moeller***

THE COUNSELOR

(Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Judging) INFJs are visionaries and idealists who ooze creative imagination and brilliant ideas.

BRIGHTON HEART HANDBAG FOB
$45, Brighton in the **Miracle Mile Shops and Forum Shops at Caesars**

HUG WINE
$19.99, **Smith's, Lee's Liquor, Von's and Albertsons**

BRIGHTON MINI ROUND JEWEL CASE
$44, Brighton in the **Miracle Mile Shops and Forum Shops at Caesars**

THE INSPECTOR

(Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging) ISTJs love traditions and old-school values that uphold patience and hard work.

THE PERFORMER

(Extroverted, Sensing, Feeling, Perceiving) ESFPs are born entertainers who don't mind bucking tradition.

SWAROVSKI LOVE HOOP EARRINGS
$119, Swarovski in the **Fashion Show Mall, Forum Shops at Caesars and Miracle Mile Shops**

THE NURTURER

(Introverted, Sensing, Feeling, Judging) ISFJs are reserved, generous and responsible.

TORY BURCH MESSAGE BRACELET
$228, Tory Burch in the **Forum Shops at Caesars and Fashion Show Mall**

SEPHORA COLLECTION BLEEDING HEARTS MAKEUP BAG
$20, Sephora in **Downtown Summerlin**

GUCCI BLOOM EAU DE PARFUM FOR HER
$124, **Neiman Marcus in the Fashion Show Mall**

THE GIVING KEYS LOVE CLASSIC KEY NECKLACE
$42, **thegivingkeys.com**

TIFFANY X STEIFF "RETURN TO TIFFANY" TEDDY BEAR
$375, Tiffany & Co.in the **Fashion Show Mall, Forum Shops at Caesars and The Shops at Crystals**

ETHEL M'S CHOCOLATES IN PLUSH SATIN HEART BOX
14-piece, $24.99; 28-piece, $39.99, **ethelm.com**

TORY BURCH "EMBRACE AMBITION" BRACELET
$30, Tory Burch in the **Forum Shops at Caesars and Fashion Show Mall**

BOUQS CO. JE T'AIME MIXED PINK GARDEN ROSES
$75, **bouqs.com**

32
CASHIER
CIGARETTES
A
Morlbor
6.05
CHACHO BAR
BOOTYTOOTS

ESSAY

MY OWN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE

Notes from the postmodern anywhere of a suburban convenience store

BY ***Kristen Peterson***

My colleague is mopping the floor and muttering obscenities about the customer who tracked mud into our gas station. *How would you feel if someone came in and trashed your office?* is the sentiment here. He has a point. It's a matter of principle. We may be lowly gas station clerks, but we still don't want your muddy shoes slopping up our shining floors.

"A pack of Marlboro Gold, please."

"Can I get some tokens for the air machine?"

"Where's your restroom?"

And we hear this at least once a week: "I remember when nothing was out here."

Tom Petty's "Free Falling" pipes through the speakers, and I stretch my aching legs.

* * * * *

THE GAS STATION and convenience store is a nerve center at the edge of Green Valley servicing a nexus of gated communities. Nearby, the mountains were lopped and terraced to accommodate high-end custom homes. The new manses look down on miles

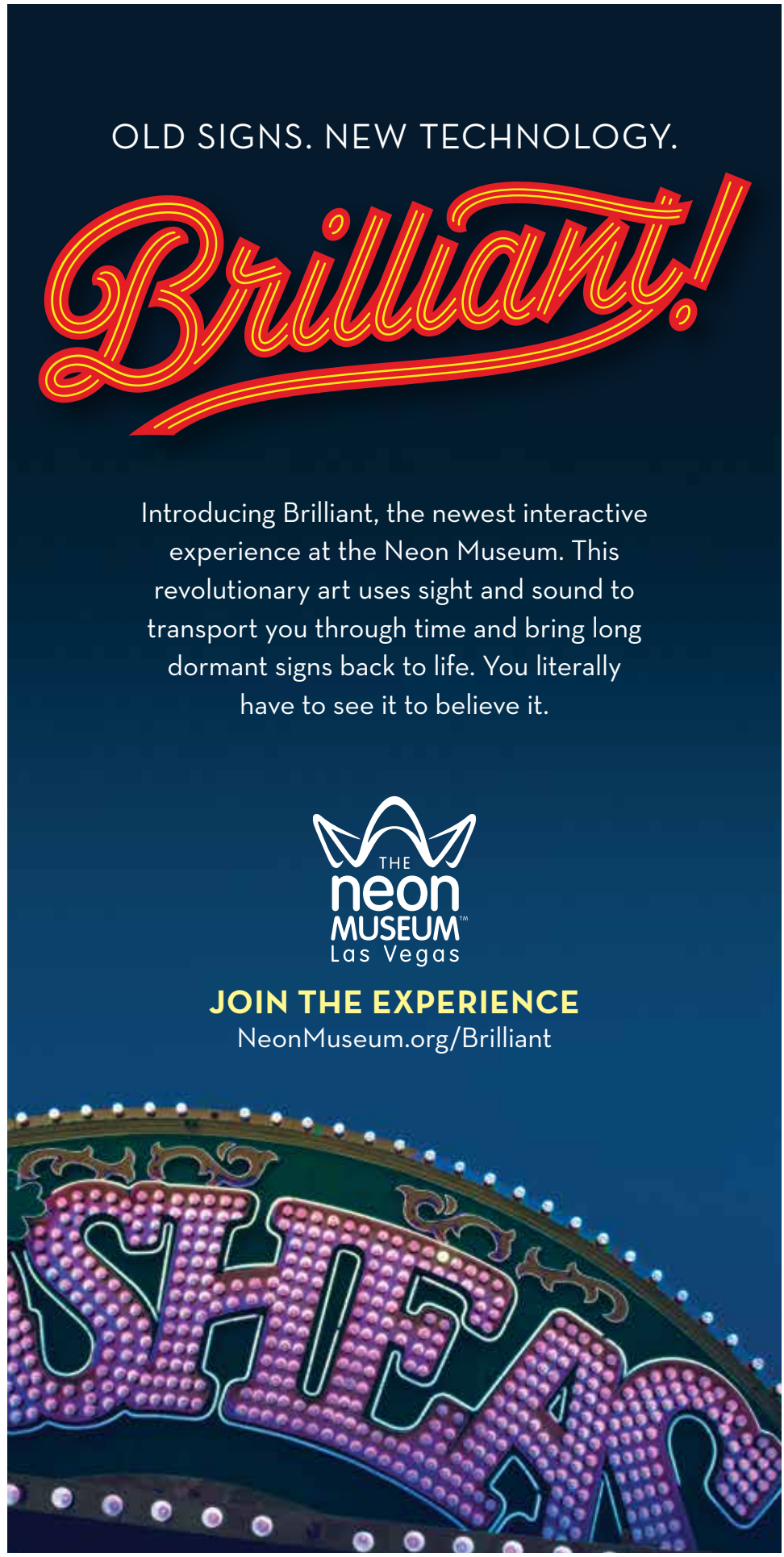

ILLUSTRATION ***Kristina Collantes***

of stucco, with the Strip in the distance.

As clerks, we're officers at the intersection of needs and wants. Residents emerge for chips, beer, hot dogs, sandwiches, and the soda fountain. Candy for the cologned nightclub workers heading to the Strip; cigarettes for the waitress getting off shift; beer or Gatorade for nearly everyone else. They talk about their double shifts, terrible hangovers, mothers' illnesses, and discuss summer vacation options. We see them before their workday, after their workday, when they're on the way to barbecues, or just getting on the freeway to L.A. for the weekend. We know their routines and are reliably here for them.

The gas station is postmodernism on speed. It fits in nowhere, and everywhere. "What," I often ask myself, "would Kafka say about a place of trinkets like this?"

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"I DON'T WANT to scare you, but there is a woman behind you in the window. I think she needs help," a customer says one night.

I turn and look. It's D. A regular, she lives in a nearby apartment. A now-retired competitive downhill skier, she is waving to my colleague through the glass before heading into the bar in the strip mall behind us. But it's late at night, the lights inside and out were illuminating her oddly, and I can see how this might look unusual to someone who got off the freeway and fell into our little enclave.

I was once a customer here, too, a freelance writer working alone in my home nearby, and this gas station became my lifeline, my social outlet, my office break room. It was a chance to get out, stretch, check in with others. These were my people.

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I PREP FOR each shift as if going into battle, and tend to my wounds afterward. I bandage my feet, slip more support into my ultra-shock-absorbent running shoes. I wrap my knees with compression bandages during the shift and wrap my calves before going to bed at night. I read about the hazards of extreme standing. I talk to other clerks. I talk to pharmacists and to hairdressers. I hear about their aches and injuries, blood clots and varicose veins. At the end of the day, I stretch in the quiet of my living room. The silence throbs in my brain. It feels so good.

"You'll see a lot of me," a man says on my first shift. "I'm in here every day."

By the end of the second week I realize that this is a portal to the community. I know names, schedules, daily struggles. There are working moms, construction workers, family men, bus drivers, schoolteachers, medical professionals, executives, construction workers, sanitation workers, the unemployed, the always working, or the retired and leisurely.

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"ISN'T IT AMAZING how the most mindless jobs can be so mentally challenging," one of my favorite customers asks one day, knowing I'm new to this line of work. I understand completely. Between the customers, the daily chores, and the momentary counseling sessions for those struggling with the pumps, the physical and mental demands of this job merit more than a kick in the face. According to a national association overseeing convenience stores and gas stations, labor is already the highest cost. From this side of the counter, the argument seems jacked. I've worked low-wage gigs in my 20s, but this is asking a lot for little.

I'm learning how to survive (and not survive) in low-wage America. After 20 years in a professional career, I'd been set out to pasture while dealing with a health condition, and stayed out there to recover. I have little left to lose. But my colleagues are my mentors. They teach me everything.

"People think we're idiots," one of them tells me. "They treat us like shit."

"I used to love people," another says one night between rushes. The honeymoon can last years and then, suddenly, you're done.

"You don't know which customer is going crazy or going to snap until they do," my colleagues tell me. "They can be completely normal, and then they're not."

The unpredictability of people is exhausting. Customers don't always know how to use card readers. They pay for the wrong pump inside and now someone is getting their gas. They don't know where the latch is to open their fuel door. They drive away with the gas hose attached to their car and bring it in apologetically. They come in expecting a power struggle over a pump that's running too slow. Nine times out of 10, it's the customers slowing the line, but the clerk takes the heat. Somebody has to be accountable for the 20 extra seconds they had to stand there, tapping their feet and glaring.

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MY FIRST DIFFICULT customer is a quiet, unassuming, professionally dressed woman in large dark glasses who walks in near the end of my first week. Incensed that the card reader on the gas pump asked for her ZIP code, she comes through the doors ready for a battle.

I kindly tell we can take care of her at the register, but she is in a quiet stew. Why did nobody trust her? Why did the world want her ZIP code to verify her authenticity? She saw us as representatives of the system, equally guilty for not believing her.

"It's not that we don't believe you," I say. "The transaction won't clear without a ZIP code."

In barely audible murmurs, she stands defiant. I feel for her. She's frustrated: First outside, now inside. The line is growing behind her, and she leaves the counter to stand at the end of it. I void her transaction and ring up the others. When she's before me again, we are alone in the same awkward dance. The afternoon has stopped, and it's just us and this ZIP code thing.

A convenience store staffed by poorly paid employees is a place where customers feel their power when something's not going right. I let them get it off their chest. Somewhere, a schedule is weighing them down, a boss is weighing them down, a job is weighing them down. What's it going to hurt me if they let off a little steam in my face? I have nothing else to do but be kind.

I ring her up again and when I lift my head, she pushes her driver's license into my face, holding it inches from my eyes without flinching. It was all I could see. She was expecting rage, but I moved my head from behind her driver's license, looked at her and said, "This is great! Your ZIP code is right here. All we have to do is punch it into the machine."

That simple. She didn't need to leave the line in the first place. She was worried the customers behind her were getting mad. "But you're a customer, too," I say. When I hand her the receipt, she leans forward and into me. For a moment, I think we're going to kiss. "God bless you," she whispers, and walks out.

"What was that about?" my colleague asks.

"No idea," I say, watching her walk away.

Not all customers are like this. So many of them are great and the friendships are symbiotic. "I always fill out these surveys because I just love you guys," a woman says one day, punching the computer-screen questionnaire facing her.

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SOME OF MY colleagues are careerists. They take me under their wing and show me the ropes. They have skills I envy. They're like super computers who also clean the floors

and stock the cooler and clean the hot dog machines and make the ice and clean up spills and make sandwiches and ring up several hundred customers, all in one shift. Veterans of the game, they know who smokes what, chews what, drinks what. They know idiosyncrasies of customer behavior, and that a lot can go wrong between people and gas pumps. In the Venn diagram of society, gas station convenience stores are the overlap. Everyone comes in. You never know what kind of logic they are working with. There are more than two million convenience store clerks in the country. And we're all expected to be super human.

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SOCIETY IS ESPECIALLY interesting from behind the counter of a gas station. You witness a kind of absurdist theater version of America. I operate the register but double as a concierge inside America's pantry, surrounded by Cosmic Brownies, Grandma's Cookies, Carl's Donuts, and the Reese's candy bar repackaged in King Size, Bites, and hybrids. I'm in the last box in a flow-chart of capitalism: the last to touch a product before it's used by a consumer. (My next job should be at a landfill, I tell myself. I want to see where all of this goes.) There are four shelves of chips stretching an aisle long; hot dogs rolling on the machine in the corner; a nacho pump oozing melted cheese. We have candy bar-flavored gum, fruit-flavored M&Ms, flavored sunflower seeds, condoms, Sour Patch Kids, Charleston Chews, more than a dozen brands of various strengths, sizes, and flavors of Marlboros. Then there are flavored Swisher's and White Owls, Black and Milds, snuff, Mountain Dew, 20 million different energy drinks, branded water, nonperishables, tampons, and a few hundred gallons of beer chilling in the cooler or stacked along the walls. Most importantly, there are four types of packaging for the same brand of cinnamon gum. Americans are ridiculously spoiled. There are too many options.

"Why is there a worm in this sucker?" a little boy, standing next to his mother at the counter, asks in regard to the tequila-flavored lollipop. There was so much I want to say to him about this, but where do I begin? It was a good question.

"Do people buy them?"

"Never," I said. "They don't." He's mostly ignored the box of fidget spinners, but notices it when he sets down the worm sucker.

"You don't need another one," his father says. "You have 27 already."

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"HEY, YOU GUYS have a tire gauge?"

"No. The customers kept breaking it off."

"What? How can you be a gas station without a tire gauge?"

I wish I knew that answer so we could sit and discuss it, but instead I'm standing witness to an uncomfortable moment with a confused and angry stranger. I get it. Even I've punched a pump. Gas stations are convenience stores, a title that's taken literally by customers who need to be somewhere else five minutes ago. Every emotion is on display here. They're vulnerable, captive to our abilities, bound to expectations that don't always play out as smoothly as expected. All you do is ask a customer to reswipe their card and you'd think from their expression that you just told them their best friend has drained their bank account. Bewilderment and anger collide in their minds as they stare at you.

I want to hear my colleague handle the tire gauge guy, while I'm try to figure out if I

should tell the friendly middle-aged regular at the counter that he has a small kernel of marijuana resting on his beer belly. I ring him up and decide to let it go. It's no longer illegal. He'll be okay.

The customer behind him, noticing the clock above the register is not set right, takes it upon himself to fix the big hand and little hand. "There," he says to his friend standing next to him.

There, I think. *We're now in concert with the universe*.

Did I say that out loud? "Here's your receipt. Thank you. Have a great night. Be careful out there." Wherever that is. I spend 40 hours a week in a well-lit fishbowl listening to rock 'n' roll and wearing plastic gloves because I'm allergic to the soap. I'm not really sure what "out there" means anymore.

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BUT AMID THE insanity, I'm reminded that there is a world outside of social media, that people aren't just waiting to gang up on the next vulnerable victim by Facebook or viral memes. One night, a woman in her early 20s comes to the gas station asking for bus fare. Odd; few panhandlers hit this neighborhood. She's gaunt, emaciated, has no idea how she got here and wants to get home, but will only say home is "down the street." Concerned, we accommodate her. "When will the bus come," she asks. A customer looks it up on a phone, wanting to help. But as the minutes tick away we realized we can't let her get on that bus. Drugs or mental illness, we didn't know which, but she is simply too vulnerable. Anyone could get her in this condition. The customers have become concerned. She won't drink the water we gave her and keeps setting down the envelope of bus fare we've given her. She roams fawn-like, as if in a meadow, occasionally stopping customers to talk about the bus. A guy named Kent spends 20 minutes outside talking with her to keep her from disappearing into the night.

"Remember that conversation we were having?" one of them says discreetly when I walk out to check on things in the parking lot. "I think it's time." An hour later, the ambulance will drive her away, the police cars will leave, and the parking lot will be silent again.

My day began with a $100 tip from the manager. I'd been secret-shopped for the first time in my life and passed with flying colors. Even my colleagues got $20 each. It started out great, but I go to sleep tonight wondering where that woman's head will be in the morning.

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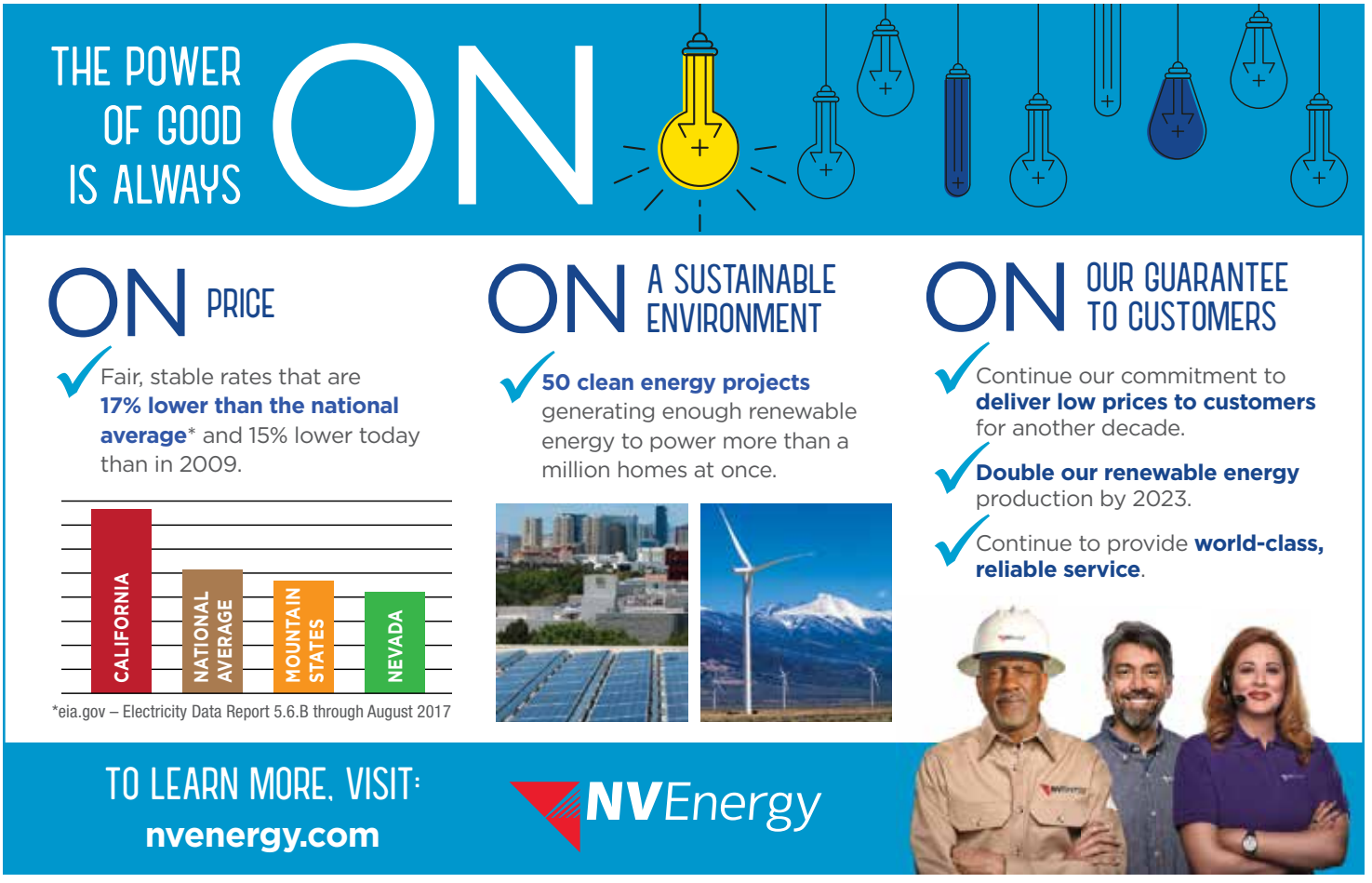
I DON'T PEG them as robbers when they come to the counter on a Saturday afternoon.

As I ring them up, and without my noticing, she carries half of the groceries out to the truck. But it turns out that they're paying with food stamps and certain items can't be paid for with them. They know this already. It's a common trick, I would learn, for some people to confuse the newbie by coming to the counter already sipping Icee's and fountain sodas that they know can't be rung up on food stamps. One guy would hand such items to his kid in the stroller, knowing I'd be forced to literally take candy from a baby.

So while the woman carries their stuff away, the man tries to add tobacco and other forbidden products to the order. I have to



void the transaction and ring it up again. I mention the other bags, and her accomplice laughs and says he hoped I'd forgotten about them. The situation went downhill from there. Before long, the woman is unhinged and screaming. We hadn't gone over this in training. At this point, she's only yelling, but who knew if she had a weapon in her truck. "Clerk dies in Saturday afternoon gas station heist," the newspaper brief would say.

My colleague calls the police. I've had enough and am now angry as they bolt to their expensive truck with the unpaid-for merchandise. She flops on the truck bed, hanging her legs over so we can't see the plate number. But a regular out there pumping gas wrote down the plates when he saw them dashing out of the store. "Nobody runs out of a gas station that fast without something bad happening," he later says. I'm rattled.

Amazingly, an hour later the man is back, dressed exactly the same but wearing a disguise of mirrored sunglasses and a baseball cap. Friendly and smiling, he waves and nods from the back of the store. He pretends to be someone else when I tell him he isn't allowed back in the store. "I know it was you," I say. He wonders what I'm talking about, but leaves.

An hour later he's back again, same disguise, this time playing slots. My colleague sends him out.

A week and a half later, here he is at the counter, seeming happy to see me. "Your surveillance photo is hanging up," I tell him. He looks confused and I close the open cupboard door, revealing the photo taped there, so he can see himself, large and in black-and-white. He pleads with my colleague to not be 86'd. It was his brother's girlfriend, and not him, he says, who took the items.

A few nights later he comes in again while I'm mopping. Standing at the counter he turns to me and asks politely if we'd please take his surveillance photo down. It embarrasses him. I set the mop down and stand next to him. We look at his photo together. I kind of liked him, despite the difference in our shopping habits and methods of paying and not paying. His family and friends shop here. The photo isn't appropriate, he says. "We're good people."

❊ ❊ ❊ ❊ ❊

THEY'RE ALL GOOD people, really. The customers never quite leave your head; they float in and out long after specific moments with them are forgotten. I no longer work there. I quit after a month and a couple more weird situations. But I still wonder how they're doing. I'm curious as to where one of my favorite regulars ended up taking her kids for family vacation. I think about the Flamboyant Clairvoyant, who did retail during the day and psychic work at night. His cheeriness made me smile, without fail.

After the incident with the couple, when the manager came in to assure me that the thieves probably weren't going to come back and pop me over a $12 grocery bill gone wrong, he reminded me not only of the police substation down the street, but of the loyal regulars who look out for us. "This is their gas station, too," he said. "They take ownership of this place."

I drive past the gas station occasionally, seeing it as a testament to humanity amid the walled-in, matching neighborhoods of Tuscan design, a somewhere indistinguishable from anywhere else. ✦

TRAVEL

A LIVELY MIX

The many sides of Scottsdale — cowboy, hipster, outdoorsy — come together in a downtown filled with food, cocktails, art, and shopping

BY ***Greg Thilmont***

The three distinct personalities of Scottsdale, Arizona — the picturesque horse town with a cowboy spirit; the hipster playground of midcentury modern architecture, effervescent nightlife, and Rat Pack-era vibe; the palm-filled athletic wonderland — converge at its historic hub, the lively streets of Old Town. When you visit this distinctive Southwestern vacation spot, 31 miles long and home to 250,000, Old Town is where you want to be.

Easily reached by a quick flight into nearby Sky Harbor International Airport or a five-hour drive down scenic U.S. Route 93 (someday to be Interstate 11), Scottsdale's downtown is filled with abundant lodging options, ranging from the posh Phoenician resort to the clean lines of the Aloft Scottsdale. In my recent visits, I've stayed at the gorgeous **Hotel Valley Ho** (hotelvalleyho.com), a AAA Four Diamond destination.

Built in 1956, this is a classic example of post-WWII architectural exuberance, complete with Space Age style and Googie flourishes. Restored just over a decade ago to its original glory, its seven-story central tower, porte-cochère, and retro signage are photogenic symbols of Scottsdale and its heritage as a resort mecca. The lobby is airy and filled with natural light, accenting a beautiful stone-lined wall with a dramatic metal-flued fireplace. Throughout the property, exposed brick, abstract stone lintels, and geometric banisters extend the exciting midcentury aura, something that's also reflected in the property being named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to its prestigious Historic Hotels of America roster.

The Valley Ho hosts an lively social scene, beginning at its signature restaurant and lounge, **ZuZu**, which is open to the handsome lobby area. It specializes in American cuisine made with local produce. Standout dishes I've enjoyed include Planks + Eggs, a savory breakfast skillet with red chili-beef short-rib stew, potato planks, eggs, cotija cheese, and tortilla crisps. For lunch, the house burger comes with bacon, bleu cheese, and caramelized onion. The star of the dinner menu is the braised duck and mushroom ragout, uniting succulent shreds of poultry with tender pappardelle pasta. A confit leg nestles in the middle as a crowning gesture. And then there's the glittering **OH**

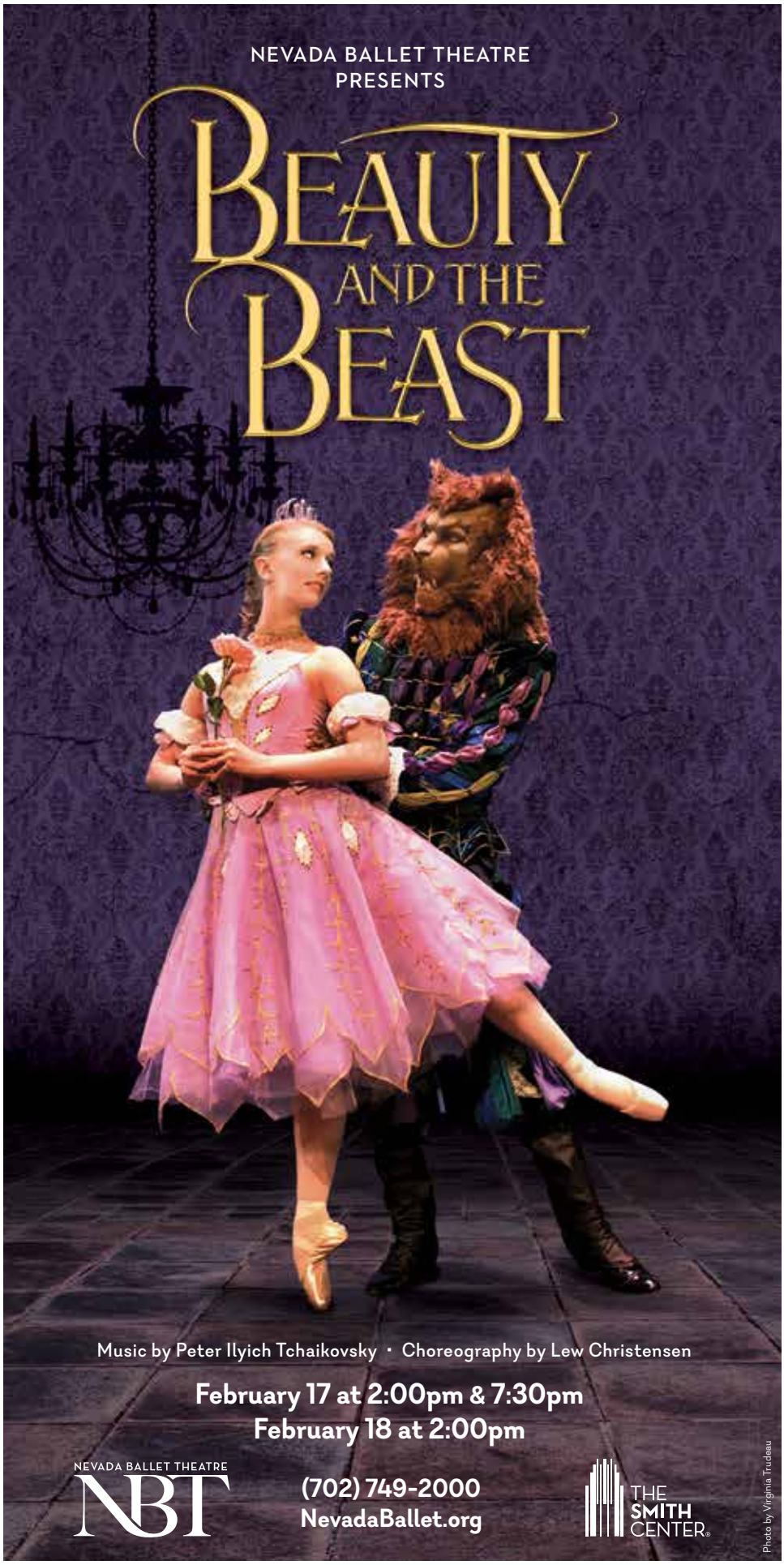
WATERFRONT: DAVVID LEMMON FOR EXPERIENCE SCOTTSDALE; HOTEL COURTESY OF HOTEL VALLEY HO; BAR COURTESY OF THE RUSTY SPUR

GREAT SCOTTS
Left, Scottsdale's waterfront canal; below, Hotel Valley Ho; bottom, The Rusty Spur Saloon

Pool Bar + Cabanas, complete with a pair of whirlpools and a full bar. It's a favorite for sunseekers looking to kick back in the Sonoran Desert with a margarita or mojito.

An up-and-coming culinary hotspot, Old Town is made for roving gastronauts. It's replete with homegrown restaurants, starting with coffee and pastries in the morning. Two particular espresso-focused nooks stand out: gleaming **Berdena's** (berdenas.com) and arty **Cartel Coffee Lab** (cartelcoffeelab.com). For a handcrafted bagel, chocolate chip cookie made with mesquite flour, or tart lemon kombucha gelato, pop into cheerful **Super Chunk Sweets & Treats** (superchunk.me).

Some of Scottsdale's leading sit-down restaurants line the Arizona Canal, which flows languidly through the downtown district and makes for a pretty waterfront in the Valley of the Sun. At either side of the Soleri Bridge and Plaza, diners can find the globally inspired **Herb Box** (theherbbox.com) and the Mediterranean-focused **Olive & Ivy** (foxrc.com), both of which offer charming (and very popular) patio seating. Also close



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FEAST FOR THE SENSES
Above, Scottsdale's Museum of the West; right, pork belly and kimchi taco from CRUjiente Tacos

by is bustling **Barrio Queen** (barrioqueen.com) with its Mexican-influenced menu.

As for mixology, Old Town is packed with drinkeries. One of the most exquisite cocktails I've savored recently is the Aristocrat, at the opulent but welcoming **Cafe Monarch** (cafemonarch.com), located just a block from the Valley Ho. Made with hard-to-find WhistlePig 10-year-old rye whiskey, Fernet Mentha, blueberry purée, lemon, and Angostura bitters, it's a classy sipper to match its swanky surroundings. At shimmering **Counter Intuitive** (counterintuitiveaz.com) — which not only has glowing chandeliers and a stamped tin ceiling, but an impressive jackalope behind the bar — my go-to potable is I'm Your Huckleberry. It's a bang-up blend of Eagle Rare Bourbon, tawny port, amaro Montenegro, huckleberry, Angostura bitters, and lemon oil. For additional, more advanced handcrafted adult beverages, ascend a flight of steps to the atmospheric **Second Story Liquor Bar** (secondstoryaz.com) for a snappy yet floral Violette Reviver with Hayman's Old Tom Gin, Lillet blanc, Cointreau, crème de violette, and lemon. For microbrews, amble into **Citizen Public House** (citizenpublichouse.com); it has a great happy hour, complete with small plates like heirloom popcorn with a hint of pork belly nuance, Castelveltrano olives, and rosemary-roasted nuts.

For a watering hole with a Wild West flavor, mosey over to the **Rusty Spur Saloon** (rustyspursaloon.com) on Main Street for twangy hoedown sounds from the house headliners, the Psychobilly Rodeo Band. In a similar vein, cold ones go down nicely on the huge porch at the rustic **Coach House** (480-990-3433); like the Rusty Spur, it has been around since the '50s. And then there's Scottsdale's vino culture. As Arizona has a growing winemaking industry, including two American Viticultural Areas to the south near Tucson, Scottsdale is home to a handful of tasting rooms, including the aptly named **Aridus Wine Company** (ariduswineco.com), where imbibers can sample individual vintages for a nominal fee in its stylish Main Street space.

For an epicurean side trip, it's worth driving into the adjacent Phoenix neighborhood of Arcadia. There, scratch corn tortillas get a gourmet treatment at **CRUjiente Tacos** (crutacos.com). Think proteins like

MUSEUM COURTESY OF SCOTTDALE'S MUSEUM OF THE WEST; TACO COURTESY OF CRUJIENTE TACOS

lamb, duck, tuna poke, and even lobster, along with more traditional fillings. For an extravaganza of edibles, visit **Le Grande Orange Grocery** (lagrandeorangegrocery.com); it's a gourmet market fused with a pizzeria, deli, gelateria, espresso bar, and lounge. The adventurous pies are made with a tangy, three-day fermented dough and artisanal toppings, from shaved fennel and crimini mushrooms to sausage made in-house.

When it's time to work off all those calories, you're in luck: Old Town embraces the outdoors. A **bike-share program** has fat-tire cruisers ready for rental at seemingly every corner in town. Merely download an app to start riding; as a bonus, the first hour is free. For hiking among stately saguaro cacti, **Echo Canyon Recreation Area** at lofty Camelback Mountain (phoenix.gov) is a short jaunt in a car, as is immense **Papago Park** (phoenix.gov) a mile or so to the south. For fans of America's national pastime, Major League Baseball's **Cactus League** spring training season is a big draw to the overall Phoenix area, including the San Francisco Giants, who play in Scottsdale Stadium on the eastern edge of Old Town (cactusleague.com).

Old Town is also noteworthy for its vibrant visual arts scene, and its sidewalks are lined with independent galleries, like **Altamira Fine Art** (altamiraart.com). A quick walk from the Valley Ho, it specializes in paintings with a New West aesthetic. For a touch of the abstract, stroll into **Gebert Contemporary** (gebertartaz.com) — you can't miss the titanic head sculpture out front. For a stunning collection of paintings and artifacts from west of the Mississippi, spend time in **Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West** (scottsdalemuseumwest.org). While the moniker is a mouthful, the institution is a Smithsonian affiliate and has artistic treasures like a large-scale painting of Kit Carson by modernist Maynard Dixon in the lobby, and landscapes by Thomas Moran, the 19th-century master of depicting America's wild lands. Four blocks to the east, along First Street, the **Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art** (smoca.org) showcases recent aesthetic trends. And scattered about the neighborhood, stores like Bischoff's Shades of the West and the plainly named Mexican Imports sell Southwestern wear and tchotchkes. If you're in the market for shiny new cowboy boots, find sizes and styles galore in Saba's, pardner. Indeed, whichever side of yourself you're ready to indulge, Scottsdale has you covered. ✦

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SHOPS & SERVICES

BEST SUIT STORE

STITCHED

Sure, they stock the strong names (Tom Ford, John Varvatos, Ted Baker), but Stitched is so much more than an off-the-rack retailer. On-staff stylists, clothiers and tailors create so many stylish made-to-measure looks for local VIPs — from shirts to full suits — that almost every time we see a gentleman sporting something we admire, it's come from here, leaving us both envious and appreciative. ***The Cosmopolitan, stitchedlifestyle.com*** (JPR)

BEST TAILOR

LINH'S ALTERATIONS

For a long time I was a "suit guy," and I still am a "short guy." That meant every suit I bought needed to be shortened, tapered, or cinched. I shopped around a great many tailors, discount to premium — I even tried a retired Vegas treasure who claimed to have pinned the inseam of Mr. Oscar Goodman back in his mobster-lawyer days. The place I settled on that did consistent, quality work for low prices: Linh's Alterations in Henderson. I don't think I'd look nearly as well-fitted if Linh's Alterations weren't around. ***1310 E. Silverado Ranch Blvd. #104, 702-888-5464*** (MW)

BEST OUTLET STORE

JOHN VARVATOS COMPANY STORE

For the second year in a row, John Varvatos steals this category (and my heart) by continuing to offer great service and selection in its signature rock 'n' roll boutique setting, with wood floors, rock posters, and great tunes. Of course, outlet shops are all about the prices, and you'll find clothes and edgy accessories at half, and sometimes a third, of what's on the tag in retail. ***Las Vegas Premium Outlets North, johnvarvatos.com*** (CM)

BEST CLOTHING STORE

TOPSHOP/TOPMAN

Once again, TOPSHOP/TOPMAN takes the cake for peddling impeccable British High Street style and trendy looks with low prices that can inspire double-takes. Admittedly, the store's size and selection can be daunting — so it helps that they offer complimentary personal shopping services in lux, roomy suites. Thanks to the split-floor layout, ladies can go wild on the TOPSHOP side, whether it's for a night out or stylish workwear, while men can browse everything from three-piece suits to skinny jeans, all accented with that signature British style. If braving mall parking sounds too scary, there's valet parking just outside with direct entry to the store. Now that's shopping in style. ***Fashion Show Mall, topshop.com*** (CM)

BEST DRY CLEANER

TIDE DRY CLEANERS

Eco-friendly and convenient, Tide Dry Cleaners backs the iconic brand name with some sustainable cred, partnering with GreenEarth Cleaning to offer an alternative to traditional dry-cleaning. Instead of petroleum-based chemicals, Tide uses liquid silicone solvents, said to be gentler on fabrics, better at cleaning, and free of chemical odors. (Of course, you can request that your clothes be suffused in classic Tide scent.) The technology is balanced with great service, including a seven-point inspection for every garment and 24-hour pick-up and drop-off at their kiosks. ***10010 W. Sahara Blvd., 10140 S. Eastern Ave., tidedrycleaners.com*** (CM)

BEST BUDGET SPA

SPA AT THE LINQ

Set your second-sight on relaxation with Spa at The Linq's complimentary Intention Ritual — simply drop a piece of pink Himalayan salt in the matching bowl upon entry and let the hustle and bustle of the Strip fade away. Nestled on the sixth floor, this boutique spa offers weekday discounts, 50- and 80-minute treatment packages, and a free visit to their Pink Himalayan Salt Cave with any spa or salon service over $50. ***The Linq, caesars.com*** (JH)

BEST HAIR SALON

SQUARE SALON

Whether it's blowouts, cuts, or color — I've been trusting my locks to Square Salon for years, particularly because their colorists are artists when it comes to creating the perfect custom shade. They've got a highly trained team of stylists, including nail techs and estheticians who bring that sense of polish to any look. ***1225 S. Fort Apache Road #160, squaresalon.com*** (CM)

BEST LUXURY SPA

Sahra Spa and Hammam at The Cosmopolitan

The Turkish tradition of Hammam lives on with Sahra Spa's 130-minute Moroccan Journey. An eight-step treatment begins on the radiant heated stone bed with black neroli soap, followed by dual exfoliations, light mud mask, and Kalahari melon hydrator foam. Two trips to the steam room and a soak in the tub prepare you for the Sahra Signature Massage to stretch away your stress. **The Cosmopolitan, cosmopolitanlasvegas.com** (JH)

SPA COURTESY OF COSMOPOLITAN OF LAS VEGAS

READERS' POLL

SHOPS & SERVICES

BEST THRIFT STORE
Assistance League of Las Vegas

BEST WOMEN'S CLOTHING
(tie) Chico's, Nordstrom

BEST SPECIALTY FOODS
Sprouts

BEST KITCHEN GOODS
Sur La Table

BEST BICYCLE SHOP
Pro Cyclery

BEST DOG GROOMING

ALL DOGS GO TO BEV

All Dogs Go to Bev's open floor plan, where patrons can see some pooches being groomed while others wait in cozy cages, inspires confidence from the get-go. My dog's willingness to be led away by Kayla (Bev's daughter), despite his severe separation anxiety, keeps me going back to this old-school, mom-and-pop operation. ***3050 E. Desert Inn Road, #111, alldogsgotobev.com*** (HK)

BEST ACCESSORIES SHOP

I ADORN U

Art teacher, custom jeweler and soon-to-be first time mum, native Las Vegan Mary Beth Heishman has been crafting her unique line of accessories since 2007. Inspired by the decorative bricks ubiquitous in mid-century architecture throughout the valley and the natural elements of our desert, Heishman makes sterling silver, gold, mineral

and gemstone keepsakes with a distinctive Las Vegas flair. ***etsy.com/shop/iadornu*** (JH)

BEST VINTAGE STORE

RETRO VEGAS

Sure, you can scour the shelves at Savers, but if you prefer your vintage decor curated, you'll find everything you want in Downtown's Arts District. Our fave shop is in the former home of Phil's Salvage Emporium. Retro Vegas is a decidedly more upscale experience, showcasing the kind of mid-mod kitchens, furniture, and bar goods to perfectly outfit your Paradise Palms dream home with fondue dreams and whiskey wishes. ***1131 S. Main St., retro-Vegas.com*** (JPR)

BEST OUTDOORS GEAR SHOP

REI BOCA PARK

When you're ready to get serious about the outdoors, there's no better destination than REI. From rock climbing to camping to wilderness survival, REI has everything you need (including top-notch advice) for when your life hangs on your equipment. ***710 S. Rampart Blvd., rei.com*** (AG)

BEST GYM

TRUFUSION

Through the extremely unscientific method of ClassPass, I spent six months evaluating every gym, yoga studio, spin class and underground sewer-lair-with-weights possible to work out in Vegas. Luckily, I found one gym that executed all of those options (minus the sewer) better than anyone: TruFusion. If you're tired of the mega-gym meat market and, instead, prefer an ever-rotating variety of classes like battle ropes, bootcamp, Pilates, cycling, even aerial courses to stave off work-out routine boredom, then TruFusion is the spot for you. Their studios feature intimate class sizes, inspiring instructors, and a Zen atmosphere that will still make you bucket-sweat, in three locations across the valley. ***trufusion.com*** (CB)

BEST BARBER

MARTIN THE BARBER AT HI-ROLLERS BARBER SHOP & SHAVING PARLOR

It took years for me to find a good cut in Vegas, wandering the valley like a lost mop-headed orphan until I found a home at Hi-Rollers Barber Shop & Shaving Parlor. Martin and Hi-Rollers were early trendsetters in the current old-school-barber-revival wave in men's fashion, and will be celebrating five years in business in 2018. One cut and I haven't been anywhere else since. It sadly (and handsomely) may be my most stable relationship. **1120 S. Maryland Parkway, 702-382-6790** (CB)

BEST BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Vardo

Beauty artisan Alexx Shaw believes chemicals are bad, 100% all-natural ingredients are good. Good for your skin, good for the planet, and good for the free-roaming spirit in every Las Vegan. With products hand-crafted and packaged in eco-friendly glass right here in the valley, Vardo offers a wide array of plant-derived products including daily regimes for all skin types. Online orders only. **vardomagick.com** (JH)

BEST BIKE SHOP

Las Vegas Cyclery

Want your new wheels with a healthy side of green? Las Vegas Cyclery has enough bikes and accessories to satisfy riders from toddler to triathlete, but it's the rest of the building that earns them this year's honor. The LEED Platinum-certified shop generates its own power, has a secluded bike-fitting area, and a test track outside. They even have showers, if you want to squeeze in a few miles on your lunch break. **10575 Discover Drive, lasvegascyclery.com** (AG)

BEST DISPENSARY

The Source

Best dispensary? It's kind of like best restaurant — such a wide playing field, so many factors to judge. There's the atmosphere of the Apothecary Shoppe, the selection of Essence, and the service of Sahara Wellness — but The Source gives us a bit of all of the above. The slick design is reminiscent of an Apple Store, while the staff ranges from middle-aged moms to young hipsters, giving every client someone who speaks to their needs and in their language. And the menu is vast, whether you seek a gram of Grateful Glue, a dark chocolate sea salt candy bar, or just some CBD lip balm. **2550 S. Rainbow Blvd. #8, thesourcenv.com** (LTR)

PRODUCTS COURTESY OF VARDO; LAS VEGAS CYCLERY: BRENT HOLMES; DISPENSARY: COURTESY OF THE SOURCE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

BEST LIVE MUSIC VENUE

The Bunkhouse Saloon

One of the oldest buildings on East Fremont, the hip and popular Bunkhouse Saloon is a buzzing hive of sound. Honky tonk, psychedelia, neo-soul, punk, hip-hop, electronica — this genre-blending venue hosts marquee acts from Ty Segall, Dead Meadow, and Minus the Bear to Surfer Blood, Television, and Built to Spill. Local faves like Indigo Kidd, Tippy Elvis, and Sabriel have played there, and hometown hero Shamir takes the stage this month, on the 23rd. There's even karaoke. **124 S. 11th St., bunkhousedowntown.com** (GT)

BEST NEW BAND

Indigo Kidd

When Indigo Kidd relocated to Las Vegas from Yakima, Washington, they sought a change of scene and were welcomed with open arms and spots on the Neon Reverb and Life Is Shit festivals. Their December debut album, *Sad Daze in Happy Valley,* is raw, catchy, and emotional without taking itself seriously. A refreshing blend of indie, punk, and pop that gives us high hopes for their future. **indigokidd.com** (CB)

BEST BREAKOUT BAND

THE RHYOLITE SOUND

After landing a spot on last year's Life Is Beautiful Festival and burning through every beer bar and whiskey hole in town, The Rhyolite Sound will soon head out to show off in Memphis, where they've been nominated for a 2018 Ameripolitan Award. Larry Reha and crew have worked hard to become the best desert honky tonkin' band in Vegas, and we can look forward to them doing us proud across the country. ***deserthonkytonk.com*** (CB)

BEST BRASS BAND

THE SOUL JUICE BAND

Like any funk band worth its salt, The Soul Juice Band doesn't aim to be fancy; it's just a tight, groovin', throwback dance party. The 11-member outfit, fronted by vocalists Dave Tatlock and Chondell La Land, are horn-driven and high-energy. Catch them performing inspired originals and classic funk mashups in their slamming live sets. ***souljuiceband.com*** (CB)

BEST MAGIC SHOW
PENN & TELLER

Penn & Teller put a Benjamin Button reversal on the standard Las Vegas career trajectory. After 15 years at the Rio, they are more famous than ever, and their show's smart, funny magic reflects the energy of workshopping new material for their fifth season of the CW network's *Fool Us*. (MW)

BEST NON-GAMING STRIP ATTRACTION
TOPGOLF LAS VEGAS

Does TopGolf reinvent golf and expand its silver-haired, Mar-A-Lago image? Or is the high-tech driving range (picture the lazy space station from *Wall-E* hovering a few tee shots from the Strip) really just an excuse for its hedonistic wrappings: four levels of bars, bands, eats, swimming pools, and giant video screens that can be spotted from the mothership? Does it matter? **topgolf.com** (MW)

BEST SINGER-SONGWRITER

MIKE XAVIER

Mike Xavier aims to inspire. His 2017 EP, *Resilience,* was his strongest effort to date, polishing his previously raw emotion into powerfully smooth tracks that buck modern rap trends. It's conscious hip-hop performed with a gospel and jazz influenced live band that will leave you moved. ***mikexaviermusic.com*** (CB)

BEST DJ/BEAT COLLECTIVE

THE RABBIT HOLE

Weird. Unclassifiable. Organic. Genre-spanning. The Rabbit Hole is making .wavs in Vegas by creating a vibrant Downtown community of rhythm producers, DJs, and artists. Their collaborative and inclusive project is home to some of the most exciting and original electronic music, standing in contrast to the mega-club-beat-mills of the Strip. ***therabbitholelv.com*** (CB)

BEST ANNUAL CONCERT FOR A CAUSE

PIGS FOR THE KIDS

I've never needed an excuse to attend a BBQ competition, but the fact that Pigs for the Kids benefits Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation, Cure 4 the Kids Foundation, and Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation gives me all the more incentive to add it to my calendar each year (this year it'll be September 22). Now, tack on some great live funk bands and a beautiful Vegas fall day, and there's no reason not to lather yourself in hot sauce

BUNKHOUSE SALOON: COURTESY OF BUNKHOUSE; INDIGO KIDD: BRENT HOLMES

READERS' POLL

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

BEST DANCE TROUPE
Nevada Ballet Theatre

BEST THEATER COMPANY
Majestic Repertory Theatre

BEST HISTORIC ATTRACTION
The Neon Museum

BEST LIVE MUSIC VENUE
The Smith Center

and meat sweat ... for a cause, of course. ***Craig Ranch Regional Park, 628 W. Craig Road, pigsforthekids.org*** (CB)

BEST ACTRESS

TINA RICE

Tina Rice blew away audiences — and her fellow cast members — in 2017 as Vivian Bearing in *Wit* at A Public Fit Theatre. Rice is versatile, able to carry an emotionally draining show while, offstage, serving as APF's chief financial officer. A formidable actress with both a BFA and an MBA, Rice brings confidence and humility to everything she does. (CK)

BEST THEATRE COMPANY

(TIE) A PUBLIC FIT AND MAJESTIC REPERTORY

A Public Fit keeps its offerings to two full-scale productions per season to retain consistency, but that allows attention to every detail, and quality performances, that bring this company down center. Equally important in this age of digital content is attracting the patrons of tomorrow, and that's what Majestic Rep is doing on a grand scale. ***apublicfit.org, majesticrepertory.com*** (PA)

BEST MOVIE THEATER

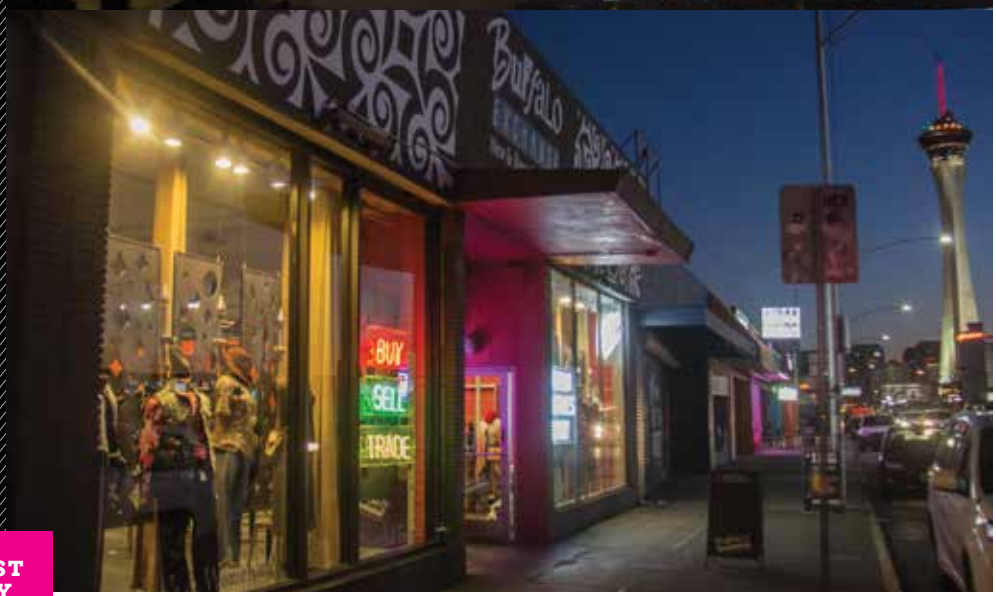
REGAL DOWNTOWN SUMMERLIN 5

Recline in plush, lounger-style seats and sip on adult beverages during a cinematic getaway. While far from being the largest multiplex in Southern Nevada, its prime location in Downtown Summerlin (right next to a parking lot and a valet station) makes it luxuriously handy for taking in Hollywood blockbusters and indie films alike. Plus, it's a quick stroll to eateries like Wolfgang Puck Bar & Grill and Andiron Steak & Sea for deluxe pre- or post-movie snacking. ***2070 Park Center Drive, downtownsummerlin.com*** (GT)

BEST DIRECTOR

TROY HEARD

For last year's *Hand to God*, Heard did an excellent job with this raucous, ambitious, and daring undertaking.



BEST DAY EVER: BRENT HOLMES

BEST DAY EVER

OKSANA MARAFIOTI, AUTHOR OF *AMERICAN GYPSY: A MEMOIR* AND *DONATTI'S LUNATICS* (FORTHCOMING)

My best day ever is a meandering, wanderlusty day, Vegas-style. At Mount Charleston, I take the **Mary Jane Falls** trailhead. The air is fragrant. I stick my nose to the bark of the nearest ponderosa pine and smell vanilla. To passing hikers, I explain I'm not a tree-hugger, but oh. I so am, I can't even. An entire forest of vanilla pines! You bet I sniff and hug all the way up. The trail ends at two waterfalls splashing icy water down the rockface dotted with caves. Rumor has it they host spirits older than manmade stories. I claim a cave and sit cross-legged. A few hours later, at **Makers & Finders** (makerslv.com), I taste an avocado relleno, a warm arepa, and a coconut turmeric latte. Across the street, at **Buffalo Exchange** (buffaloexchange.com), a smiling woman gifts me credit. A Ramones T-shirt and a pair of harem pants cost me ten bucks. At the **Majestic Repertory Theatre** (majesticrepertory.com), I catch a production of *White Rabbit Red Rabbit.* No stage. I sit in the actors' lap. In their living room, their conflict, their resolution, their bows. Once home, I grab the kids and we're off to the **Pinball Hall of Fame** (pinballmuseum.org). Pockets laden with quarters, 'cause let no one say mom isn't ready to destroy Tetris this time. We roam among the games. Take turns, lights flash, balls roll, much '80s music, Tetris remains undefeated. Two hours later, our pockets weep, but we are happy.

Timing is crucial with this script, as is character development, particularly with the lead schizophrenic role. Heard used the tiny, makeshift space to full advantage and brought all elements — detailed production values and performances alike — to culmination in an irresistible and delightful presentation. (PA)

BEST ACTOR

ANDREW YOUNG

Young showed up at a play Troy Heard had directed in 2015 and announced that he had just moved from Texas and wanted to act. Heard cast him in *The Eight* and was so impressed he got the rights to *Hand to God* with Young in mind for the lead, Jason, who found himself sometimes at war with his alter ego in a Christian Puppet Ministry. The role earned him a Valley Theatre Award last year. (CK)

BEST MUSEUM

MARJORIE BARRICK MUSEUM OF ART

Adding "Art" to its name last year underscored the Barrick's new mission following a lengthy transition from natural history museum to robust contemporary art hub. Powerful rotating exhibits (both cerebral and soulful) dig deep into concepts of land, time, objects, and medium. In addition, permanent contemporary and pre-Columbian collections, artist talks, lectures, workshops, outreach, and partnerships have made the Barrick an invaluable force. ***unlv.edu/barrickmuseum*** (KP)

BEST FIGURE IN LOCAL CULTURE

JOSHUA WOLF SHENK

Under Shenk's guidance and greased by funding most literary nonprofits can only fantasize about, Black Mountain Institute has lately made a series of interesting strategic moves: acquiring and reviving *The Believer* magazine, with the intent to make it (and Las Vegas) a hub of contemporary nonfiction; leveraging that title's cachet to create *The Believer* Festival, an audacious, talent-rich event that debuted last year; and becoming an integral part of UNLV's new creative-nonfiction program. It's his vision, and Vegas is the beneficiary. (SD)

BEST ARTIST

Andreana Donahue

A multidisciplinary artist known to thoroughly explore concept, process, and medium, Donahue is wildly intellectual and tenacious in approaching ideas of time, space, and impermanence in her works. Her intricate, minimalist hand-cut paper sculptures, textile works (incorporating elements of vanishing places), and elaborate installations on desert survival with a sci-fi bent have given us brainy art with sentimental undertones. **andreanadonahue.com** (KP)

BEST RECENT PUBLIC SCULPTURE

Dream Machine

In terms of public art speaking volumes to place, Wayne Littlejohn's 26-foot tall, sensual and otherworldly *Dream Machine* at Siegfried & Roy Park hits the Vegas mark. Its organic spiraling form, made of cast aluminum (illuminating differently throughout the day) — painted Oriental Blue Candy — and its dazzling baroque forms under a shiny mushroom top, make the artist's "upside down Venus on a half shell" reference a striking a metaphor for this land of dreams. (KP)

BEST LOUNGE

Cleopatra's Barge

When Niki Scalera sings "Diamonds Are Forever" in the happy-hour "Cocktail Cabaret," she's anchored on a Cleopatra's Barge that's a year older than the 1971 James Bond flick. This enduring vessel of retro-Vegas kitsch survived waves of Caesars Palace makeovers, and is now celebrated by David Perrico's house band and visiting headliners such as Paul Shaffer. The front bar remains a prime stakeout for people-watching, now and forever the eye of the tourist hurricane. **caesars.com** (MW)

BEST VARIETY SHOW

VEGAS! THE SHOW

When *Jubilee!* closed, *Vegas! The Show* suddenly became authentic. Any celebration of classic Vegas is now a re-creation, and this tribute at the Saxe Theater at Planet Hollywood uses sincere nostalgia to bookend a winning showcase of live music, likable singers, Technicolor visuals and — don't forget — the magicians and jugglers that always spelled the big numbers. (MW)

BEST STRIP PERFORMER

LIONEL RICHIE

You snickered in the grunge years. Always knew Lionel Richie was destined for Vegas. What you didn't know was that it would take until 2016 for him to commit to recurring stints at Planet Hollywood. Or that, in the meantime, Lionel Richie became the rare thing we all agree on. The songs are no less sappy, but the man just radiates personality. What he says in between is as much fun as the singing. That's a quintessential Vegas entertainer. (MW)

BEST PRODUCTION SHOW/STRIP SPECTACLE

MICHAEL JACKSON ONE

Michael Jackson's best friend? Turns out it wasn't a chimp or even a rat named Ben. It's *Michael Jackson One*, the Cirque du Soleil spectacle at Mandalay Bay that helps time fade the sad, sordid part of the pop legend, and smacks us with a refreshing dose of childlike, Clinton-era optimism that we can heal the world and defeat those tabloid paparazzi cyberbots. (Whatever happened to those guys anyway?) (MW)

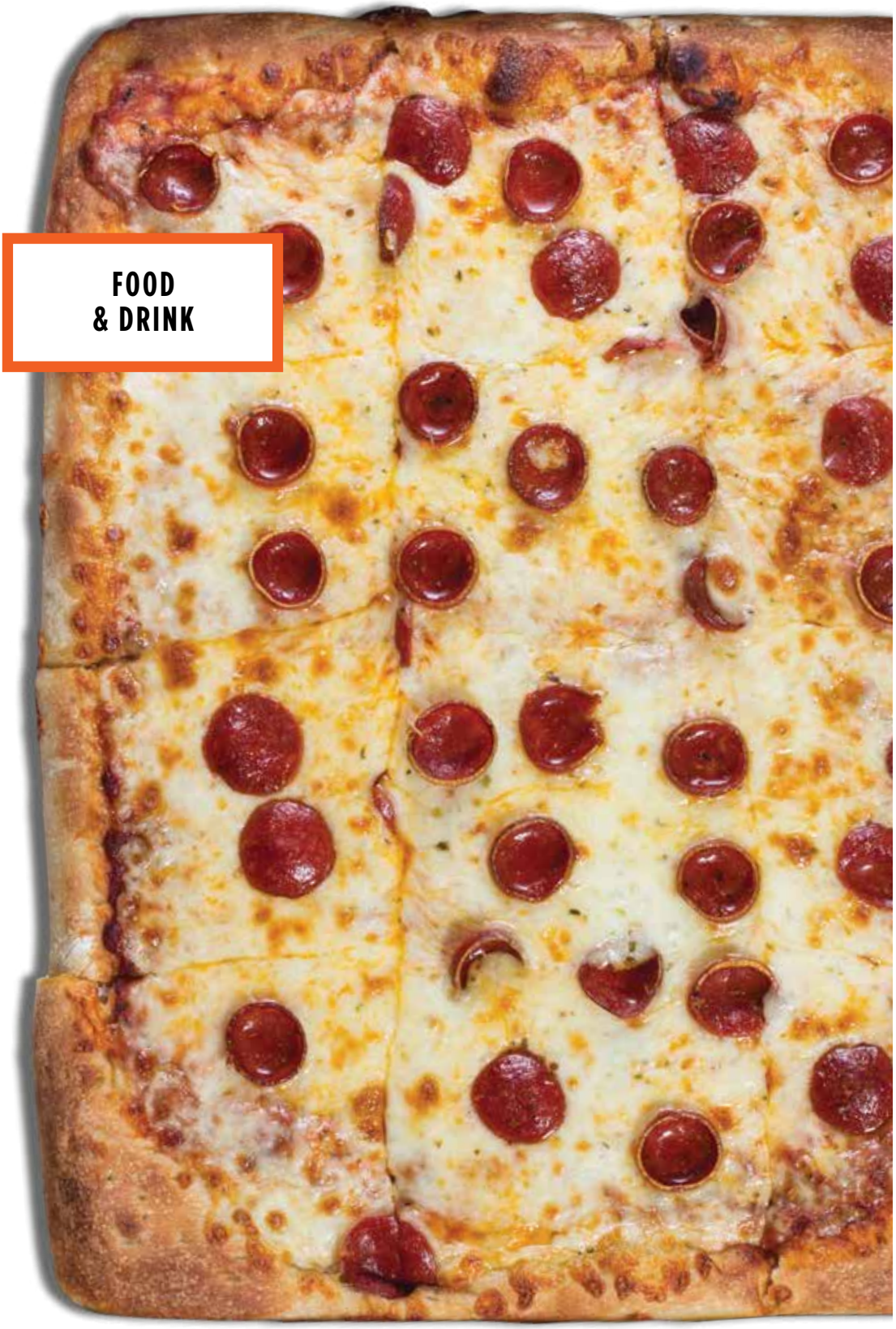
BEST COMEDIAN

RON WHITE

Everyone visits this standup mecca for a night or two, from Dave Chappelle to Ali Wong. But in Ron White's Texas they say "dance with who brung ya." With five weekends booked at The Mirage this year, White's perennial cigar-and-bourbon odes to personal freedoms fit the Strip like a poker room, embodying both a night on the town and the spirit of his old-Vegas mentors. (MW)

ANDREANA DONAHUE AND DREAM MACHINE: BRENT HOLMES; LOUNGE COURTESY OF CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT

FOOD
& DRINK



PIZZA: BRENT HOLMES

BEST PIZZA

Naked City Pizza

From an Italy-certified Pizzeria Napoletana (Settebello) to Sin City's strongest New York slice (Evel Pie), quality ingredients paired with well-executed regional styles have ushered in a new pizz-era in Las Vegas. The pie pinnacle? The gut-busting Buffalo-style rectangles of awesome tossed at Chris Palmieri's Naked City. Credit a daily-from-scratch ethos, top-shelf ingredients, and details like the "cupped and charred" pepperoni, and youse'll love it! **Multiple locations, nakedcitylv.com** (JPR)

BEST TACOS

BAJAMAR SEAFOOD AND TACOS

Hailing from Tijuana via San Diego, Bajamar Seafood and Tacos offers more than just the standard breaded fish tacos. From the wonderfully tender octopus in the pulpo enchilado taco to the cheesy, shrimp-laden *gobernador*, each ridiculously good rendition is a fabulous, glorious mess, spilling out from the handmade tortillas onto your plate. Finish them with fork in hand; trust me, no one will blame you. ***1615 Las Vegas Blvd. S., 702-331-4266*** (JB)

BEST WINGS

CHADA STREET

Wings are ubiquitous bar food, so for something completely different, escape Buffalo for Chinatown, and Chada Street's Peak Kai Saap. This small stack of Thai wings is dry-rubbed with a spice combination that's at once lemony and spicy — a deliciously savory, mild alternative to the slathered wings we love. Pair with an icy Singha and watch the game; different, but the same! ***3839 Spring Mountain Road, chadastreet.com*** (JPR)

BEST BURGER

THE DISPENSARY LOUNGE

The Dispensary Lounge is a time warp of sorts, harkening back to a time when waterwheels and shag carpeting were chic household decorations, and burger patties were always handmade. Their Steak Burger layers a half-pound of charred ground Angus between toasted bun halves atop a mound of house-cut fries served alongside housemade honey mustard for only $8. Let's hope they never change. ***2451 E. Tropicana Ave., thedispensarylounge.com*** (JB)

BEST APPETIZERS

BAZAAR MEAT

Appetizers tend to reflect a kitchen's creativity, as the smaller portions afford chefs more opportunity to explore edgier ingredients and presentations. This remains true even at one of the valley's

BEST DAY EVER

KRYSTAL RAMIREZ, ARTIST AND PHOTOGRAPHER

The best Las Vegas day ever would start off with refreshing summer rain — something about hearing rain hit the pavement just makes me euphoric. I'd drive down to my new favorite coffee shop, **Pour Coffeehouse** (pourlv.com), and pick up a drip coffee and a Breakfast Bombness (a whole wheat muffin sandwich with egg, cream cheese, avocado, tomato, bacon, and spinach). Then, I'd head over to the **Clark County Wetlands Park** for a scenic walk; a friend introduced me to the bird preserve, home to 212 species of birds, 70 species of mammals and reptiles. After working up an appetite, I'd look forward to getting my hands on **Goodwich's** roasted street corn sandwich with chili-lime mayo, salty cheese, and grilled zucchini, with a side of housemade jalapeño potato chips (thegoodwich.com). (The item is seasonal, but in this perfect scenario, it'd be served year-round.) Walking around the newly-minted **Barrick Museum of Art** (unlv.edu) would be a thought-provoking follow up; interim director Alisha Kerlin has crafted a roster of art, events and speakers that's the best I've seen in years. Since one coffee is never enough, **PublicUs** (publicuslv.com) is the next stop, so I can pick up a shaken almond latte before driving over to decompress at the **McCarran International Airport Aircraft Viewing Area**. I find it relaxing to watch massive metal objects take off and land while listening to my favorite recent album, *El Frente Caribe* by Alex Ferreira, a romantic album with bright instruments and beats. The closer: Making jackfruit carnitas tacos for dinner with ingredients from **International Marketplace** (702-889-2888), which offers a vast selection of Asian and European groceries, novelties and kitchenware. I'd end the night snuggling up with my favorite cat (don't tell the others), Quico, as he joins me in watching *Paris Is Burning* for the millionth time.

edgiest restaurants, Bazaar Meat. From cotton-candy swaddled foie gras-on-a-stick to comically large *chicharrónes* to the duo of Ferran Adrià-inspired traditional and molecular gastronomy olives, you could make a meal of their appetizers alone. But why would you? ***SLS, sbe.com*** (JB)

BEST BRUNCH

BARDOT BRASSERIE

With countless restaurants jumping on the brunch bandwagon, this category gets more contentious every year. Well, theoretically. Bardot Brasserie remains confidently and comfortably the best, serving up convivial brunch classics (hearth-baked quiche; smoked salmon with chive mascarpone; ham and Gruyére croque) in a setting of Belle Epoch elegance. I say it often, and I'll repeat it here: Their brunch out-Bouchons Bouchon. ***Aria, michaelmina.net*** (MW)

BEST ITALIAN

ESTHER'S KITCHEN

One of the most-anticipated local restaurant openings in recent memory, Esther's Kitchen has brought hand-crafted Italian cuisine to Downtown. The fantastic pastas are made in-house, from substantial bucatini to puffy gnocchi. There are plenty of seasonal dishes with produce, from spaghetti squash and mushrooms to parsnips and beets, as well as fresh seafood choices like yellowtail crudo. Succulent meat entreés include free-range chicken roasted under a brick and toothsome porchetta. The house tomato sauce and meatballs are both excellent. The advanced mixology program is scratch, too. ***1130 S. Casino Center Blvd. esthersly.com*** (GT)

BEST THAI

LOTUS OF SIAM

Sometimes it's best to stick with the old standbys — even if the standbys aren't standing in the same place. Last fall, the roof caved in at Lotus of Siam's Commercial Center location, forcing the award-winning restaurant to move from its

BEST DAY EVER: BRENT HOLMES

FOOD & DRINK

BEST VEGAN DISHES
VegeNation

BEST MEXICAN FOOD
Mi Casa Grill Cantina

BEST BREAKFAST
Marilyn's Café

BEST SANDWICHES
Capriotti's

home of 19 years. Relocated to the former Roy's on Flamingo Road, the new, high-ceilinged digs are a big change, but the food is as reliably excellent as ever. The extensive menu raises classics to a new level — the fried chicken dumplings are crisp and golden, the Tom Yum Kai soup is as rich, buttery and coconutty as ever. More adventurous diners will still love the peppery Issan beef jerky, the crisp fried garlic prawns, and the celebrated menu of subtly flavored, slow-cooked Northern Thai dishes. The Commercial Center location is set to open its doors until later this year, but we're grateful that we don't have to wait. ***620 E. Flamingo Road, lotusofsiamlv.com*** (LTR)

BEST CHINESE

PING PANG PONG

Call it a delectable blast from the past, redeemed. The long-standing Chinese eatery in the Gold Coast had slipped some in recent years, but Boyd Gaming recently made much-needed upgrades to the décor and kitchen program. Now, the cuisine matches the excellence of yore. The popular lunchtime dim sum service pleases with dozens of small plates delivered by roving carts. The dinner menu ranges seamlessly from mainstream combos like night market fried rice with sliced beef, fresh chilies, bean sprouts, and tomatoes to advanced entreés like stir-fried jellyfish with roast duck in XO sauce. *Xiexie*, old friend. ***Gold Coast, goldcoastcasino.com*** (GT)

BEST JAPANESE
MARUGAME MONZO

While Las Vegas might have reached peak ramen, there is definitely room for more udon noodles. And Marugame Monzo in Chinatown serves them up — fresh-pulled and deftly cut — with aplomb. Served in both hot and cold styles, these thick, chewy noodles can be ordered in a swath of fragrant dashi (broth) with flavorings including bonito, daikon radish, wakame seaweed, and curry. There's even silky, creamy miso-carbonara and seafood-tomato versions. Deep-fried tempura sides including shrimp, fish cake, chicken, and soft-boiled eggs are all standout. Still hungry? Opt for a filling onigiri (rice ball) topped with jewel-like ikura (salmon roe). **3889 Spring Mountain Road, facebook.com/marugamemonzolv** (GT)

BEST BUFFET

Bacchanal Buffet

In the city of buffets, there is one that wins by more than a nose: Bacchanal Buffet. It's for one reason: The quality of the food is precedent-setting, whether it's the fresh Jonah crab, green-applewood-smoked wagyu, or made-to-order dessert crêpes. Sure, there are other "nice" buffets — many of which work on punitively tight budgets that you can taste — but the Bacchanal is the one serving you ingredients worth the price tag. The cheese board alone boasts selections that command $15 a pound and higher at fine foods stores. The price is right, the selection dizzying, the quality amazing. **Caesars Palace, caesars.com** (MW)

BEST COCKTAIL

Jimmie Roosevelt at Rosina

The Venetian's new bar, Rosina, is a small room that glows with mirrored walls, gilded railings, and crystal lamps. Fittingly for such a Gatsby-inspired setting, the drink list runs to classics, such as the Gimlet, the Margarita and the Tom Collins. But their selection of Champagne cocktails puts a modern spin on bubbly that still fits in with the throwbacks. The Jimmie Roosevelt spikes Champagne with cognac, green chartreuse, and a dash of bitters, creating a rich, complex taste out of what is normally pure effervescence. **Venetian, venetian.com (LTR)**

BEST LATE-NIGHT DINER

Peppermill

Las Vegas isn't the late-night party town it once was; all the more reason to make this 24-hour Strip landmark your choice for midnight-shift breakfast or post-night-club grub. Why? Massive portions of tasty diner classics, *Casino*-era fern-and-mirror furnishings, and some still-smiling staff who have been slinging hash here since 1972, when Las Vegas was still Vegas, baby! **2985 Las Vegas Blvd. S., peppermilllasvegas.com (JPR)**

BUFFET COURTESY OF CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT; COCKTAIL COURTESY OF THE VENETIAN; PEPPERMILL COURTESY OF THE PEPPERMILL

BEST MEXICAN

SALUD MEXICAN BISTRO AND TEQUILERIA

Salud shines in this category from its modest strip mall location. Seafood includes ceviche Campechana bursting with shrimp, mussels, octopus, crab, and avocado in ancho-chipotle sauce. The duck carnitas feature red wine-citrus marinade with a berry-jalapeño chutney. Tacos are the main attraction in this culinary *lucha libre* match — think beef cheek, pork belly, mahi-mahi, octopus, chipotle mushrooms, and lobster for fillings. Adventurous? Live it up with the Brochacho Bomb — a shot of mezcal dropped into a glass of Modelo Negro lager with *chapulines* (salted crickets) on the side for a crunchy chaser. ***8125 W. Sahara Ave., saludmexicanbistro.com*** (GT)

BEST BAR FOOD

STARBOARD TACK

In 2017, Bryant Jane and Lyle Cervenka revived classic eastside bar Starboard Tack, immediately establishing it as a mixology destination. But Jane (pronounced ha-NAY) also created an Asian-inspired menu which is way better than it needs to be for a cocktail bar. From Szechuan chimichurri beef skewers with an outrageously addictive coconut milk-laced peanut sauce to fried chicken fried rice (you read that right), Starboard is worth visiting whether you're thirsty, hungry, or both. ***2601 Atlantic St., 702-684-5769*** (JB)

BEST DESSERTS

TWIST

The pastry program at Twist in the Mandarin Oriental nearly outshines the other courses. Beyond elaborate petit fours, *intermezzos*, and breads, the Grand Dessert is a stunning tour of five confections, each as complex as any main attraction — take the manjari parfait with almond nougatine and bitter chocolate foam, or the coconut *panna cotta* with elderflower cream and frozen pineapple. ***Mandarin Oriental, mandarinoriental.com*** (MW)

BEST SPLURGE

RISERVA STEAK AT CARNEVINO

In a city where a "splurge" could mean a bottle of Lafite Rothschild worth the price of every car I've ever driven combined, I can put one life-altering splurge above all others: the Riserva steak at Carnevino. Carnevino keeps prime cuts that have aged particularly well — 200 days and up — for the Riserva program. Priced by the ounce, this is the fine wine of steaks — intense and complex, with fermented notes of truffle and gorgonzola. ***Palazzo, carnevino.com*** (MW)

BEST DINER

LOU'S DINER

For almost 50 years, Lou's Diner has been tucked away off Decatur south of U.S. 95. It's been around forever — and yet under the radar. Nowadays, it's mostly obscured by a Walgreen's, but it doesn't prevent a swarm of locals from filling it daily for a dose of simple pleasures — coffee that's fresh and hot, and spot-on comfort food, including masterful renditions of such classics as a hearty chipped beef on toast and a Monte Cristo reminiscent of the Bennigan's stalwart. Be sure to order some toast simply for an excuse to try their housemade jams (I'm fond of the mixed berry), and save room for one of Patty's cinnamon rolls. ***431 S. Decatur Blvd., lousdinerlv.com*** (JB)

BEST COFFEE

Sambalatte

Obsessive baristas and self-taught roasters are slinging great coffee valley-wide these days, but much of our caffeine-fueled rebirth has been localized to Downtown. Ironically, this urban renaissance owes a lot to suburban-born Sambalatte, which proved that locals are happy to pay for top-shelf, expertly prepped coffee in a stylish setting. Founder Luis Olivera recently unveiled an ambitious growth plan, including a roasting facility and a Henderson store. A Sambalatte counter already steams at Symphony Park's Molasky Building, with a full-size café appearing soon at The Smith Center — an appropriate backdrop for the café's upscale sensibility. **Multiple locations, sambalatte.com** (JPR)

BEST DONUTS

Pink Box

Donut shops are a dime a (Bavarian créme) dozen, but Pink Box's offerings stand out, whether classic or eccentric. Enjoy a plain, or contemplate the difference between a chocolate frosted and a chocolate glazed. Dig high-concept offerings, such as a series of cereal-based donuts from Froot Loop to Cocoa Krispie, or the hipster trifecta of a maple-bacon cronut. And some are just plain magical, such as the PB&J, Campfire S'mores, and Fat Elvis donuts. Pink Box has locations in Summerlin and Henderson, with plans to open another soon. For the sake of my waistline and my arteries, I hope it's nowhere near my house. **Multiple locations, pinkboxdoughnuts.com** (LTR)

SAMBALATTE: SABIN ORR; DONUT COURTESY OF PINK BOX DONUTS; PANACEA: CHRISTOPHER SMITH

BEST VEGAN FOOD

Panacea

If your mental picture of vegan food is bland and gloopy, Panacea might be the cure. (Yes, went there.) Its vegetable-forward menu features avant-garde smoothies with inspirational monikers like the Sacred Temple (coconut water, avocado, ginger, kale, spinach, dandelion greens, cucumber, lemon, coconut oil). Inventive bowls abound with whole grains including black rice and *freekeh* (cracked green wheat) with a kaleidoscope of savory adjuncts like spiced chickpeas, jalapeño-infused tomato water, and Kalamata olive tapenade. The towering, double-decker cheeseburger with *agrodolce* red onions and chipotle ketchup is mind-blowing. It's easily one of the top stackers in town, and you won't miss the "moo" at all. **750 S. Rampart Blvd., panacealv.com** (GT)

FAMILY & LEISURE

PHOTO COURTESY OF HOOVER DAM

BEST EDUCATIONAL FAMILY OUTING

Hoover Dam Tour

We've all become slaves to the mobile devices in our hands, so we tend to underappreciate the technological achievements of yesteryear that were far more astonishing (not to mention historically significant). Set aside a day this year to pile the family in the minivan, and tour the epic piece of industrial technology that is Hoover Dam. In learning about the dam's creation and its critical function, the young ones just might change their opinion that the greatest phenomenon of all time is Candy Crush. **usbr.gov/lc/hooverdam** (MJ)

BEST PLACE TO TEACH KIDS SOME HISTORY

NATIONAL ATOMIC TESTING MUSEUM

If your kids react to losing a Wi-Fi connection as though it's the end of the world, perhaps it's time they see what the true end of the world nearly looked like. The National Atomic Testing Museum features 8,000 square feet of exhibits and rare artifacts that tell the backstory of our nation's nuclear weapons testing program at the Nevada Test Site, and the role Nevada played in keeping our nation safe. ***755 E. Flamingo Road, nationalatomictestingmuseum.org*** (MJ)

BEST FAMILY DINING DESTINATION

PIZZA ROCK

Created by 12-time world pizza champion Tony Gemignani, the menu features Italian favorites designed to tantalize the taste buds of all ages, from his signature pies and meatball subs to his pastas, calzones, and Strombolis. Rivaling the food is the environment, highlighted by a sound system that's always cranked to 11 (the "rock" in Pizza Rock). The upside: The kids can scream all they want, and nobody's going to complain. ***Green Valley Ranch Resort, Downtown, pizzarocklasvegas.com*** (MJ)

BEST PARK

GARDENS PARK

What do good parks and good bars have in common? Games. Lots of them. The Gardens Park in Summerlin is lush and tree-lined, with basketball, tennis, volleyball, bocce, horseshoes, and shuffleboard. There's a playground, of course, and plenty of picnic tables means you don't have to show up early to snag one. Plus, the community center hosts classes and activities for residents. ***10401 Garden Park Drive, summerlink.com/parks*** (KT)

BEST DOG PARK

BARK PARK

The Vegas Valley may have bigger dog parks (though not by much) than this 5-acre spread on the west side of Henderson, but I doubt it has one whose design responds better to the quirky needs of the canine nation. In addition to separate runs for different-sized dogs, shaded seating areas, and drinking stations — amenities that many other parks have — Bark Park also has an agility course, splash pad, and giant puppy sculpture for kids to climb on. The city hosts classes and programs there, and it's available for other group events and shows. ***915 Burkholder Blvd., Henderson, cityofhenderson.com/parks-and-recreation*** (HK)

READERS' POLL

LEISURE & LIFESTYLE

BEST NATURE HIKE
Red Rock National Conservation Area

BEST DAY TRIP
(tie) Mount Charleston, Valley of Fire

BEST LOCAL TWITTER ACCOUNT
Vegas Golden Knights

BEST PLACE TO NETWORK
Eat

BEST FAMILY HIKE

WHITE DOMES AT VALLEY OF FIRE

Packed in to this short 1.1-mile loop you'll find the best of what Valley of Fire has to offer. The trail ambles through a sandy wash, past an old movie set (*The Professionals*, 1966), squeezes through a tight slot canyon, and opens up to a wide vista featuring every shape and color of Aztec and Navajo sandstone. (AG)

BEST INTERMEDIATE HIKE

PINE CREEK AT RED ROCK CANYON

Think of it as a choose-your-own-adventure novel, in

hiking form. Right from the beginning, side trails lead to a historic homestead, a flowing creek (most months), and world-class climbing routes. The main trail ventures deep into the Spring Mountains, following a maze of interesting forks, which make this out-and-back hike as challenging or easy as you can handle. (AG)

BEST ADVANCED HIKE

GRIFFITH PEAK AT MT. CHARLESTON

The Carpenter One Fire kept this popular trail closed for years. Now that it's reopened, the landscape has taken on a stark new beauty. Hikers who climb the countless steep switchbacks to the peak are rewarded with unencumbered views of Mt. Charleston, Las Vegas, Lovell Canyon, and points far beyond. (AG)

BEST SPORTS VENUE

T-MOBILE ARENA

Here's what the average fan wants from a 21st-century sports venue: comfortable seating, great sight lines, wide concourses, a multitude of food and drink options, state-of-the-art audio and video, free and fast Wi-Fi, and a raucous atmosphere. The well-heeled fan? He wants all of the above, along with plush suites and the full VIP treatment. T-Mobile Arena checks all these boxes, and then some (for instance, the adjacent Toshiba Plaza and The Park offer a great family-friendly pregame tailgate experience, minus the actual tailgates). Sure, parking is still a nightmare, and the beer prices are outrageous. But this being the 21st century, we fans have come to expect nothing less. ***t-mobilearena.com*** (MJ)

BEST PLACE FOR A STROLL

MONTELAGO VILLAGE AT LAKE LAS VEGAS

So many options here, from the serenity of Red Rock Canyon and Mount Charleston to the manicured trails of Summerlin and Green Valley to the zaniness of Las Vegas

BEST INTERACTIVE/ HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

SKYZONE

It's never boring in SkyZone — more like boing! This ultimate bounce house features padded arenas with trampoline floors. Dunk it like LeBron in the basketball section. Release your inner Jackie Chan on a ninja obstacle course. Or let it fly in an epic dodgeball throwdown. Boom. **7440 Dean Martin Drive, skyzone.com/lasvegas** (GT)

BEST PLACE FOR A SELFIE

HOTO, IN THE SHOPS AT CRYSTALS

In Buddhist scripture, Hoto is a bejeweled treasure pagoda that floats midair to symbolize the importance of all life. In Las Vegas, it's a shiny, bullet-shaped sculpture by Japanese artist Tatsuo Miyajima, dotted with thousands of LEDs — perfect for capturing the importance of your own life in a selfie. **In CityCenter.** (KT)

BEST DAY TRIP

Valley of Fire State Park

Nevada's oldest state park, just an hour up I-15, is a trove of natural wonders such as whimsical Elephant Rock and the impressive White Domes. Get anthropological at Atlatl Rock and go historic at Mouse's Tank. Pop culture nerds love the fact that Elvis, Arnie, and Shatner have all starred in movies filmed in the evocative, otherworldly landscape. Take Northshore Road back to town, through Lake Mead National Recreation Area, to see even more ruddy hoodoos at roadside Redstone Picnic Area and vast Bowl of Fire in the distance. **parks.nv.gov/parks/valley-of-fire** (GT)

BEST LIFESTYLE CLASSES

Pizza lessons at Metro Pizza

Las Vegas has become a real pizza town, from its award-winning pizzaioli helming restaurant ovens to the International Pizza Expo held every March. Now you can get in on the pie action during pizza-making lessons conducted by John Arena, proprietor of the beloved Metro Pizza. His three-hour private sessions cover pizza history, proper dough technique, and insights into quality ingredients. Plenty of slices and side dishes are served, of course, along with beverages to wash down all that delicious education — a deal at just $24.95 per person. **1395 E. Tropicana Ave., metropizza.com/cooking_classes** (GT)

VALLEY OF FIRE: CHRISTOPHER SMITH; PIZZA TOSS COURTESY OF METRO PIZZA; HOCKEY COURTESY OF VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS

BEST SPORTS OUTING

A Night with the Knights

If you've been to a Vegas Golden Knights game at T-Mobile Arena, feel free to nod in agreement with this selection and move along. If you've yet to lose your VGK virginity, here's what you're missing: Sixty minutes of fast-paced, edge-of-your-seat professional hockey played at the highest level; tremendous spirit, passion, and community pride not seen in these parts since (arguably) the Rebels' championship heyday; explosive starts; thrilling finishes; a hoarse voice; and a lot of winning (we're talking 15 victories in 18 home games in 2017 — utterly remarkable for an expansion franchise). You may walk into T-Mobile not knowing a puck from a duck, but you'll walk out thinking, "I can't wait to do that again!" **nhl.com/goldenknights** (MJ)

Boulevard. But when we need to clear our heads and get some light exercise, we prefer to saunter the cobblestone streets of MonteLago Village. With its striking architecture, boutique shops, and pristine lake, this little slice of Europe in the desert is a feast for the senses and the ideal spot to recharge life's batteries. ***lakelasvegas.com*** (MJ)

BEST STAYCATION SPOT

GREEN VALLEY RANCH RESORT

It's enormous and notably posh for being in the 'burbs. The Backyard Pool is one of the best watery amenities in the metro area, and offers a stunning view of the Strip and the Spring Mountains. Gourmet viands and swanky cocktails are served at Hank's Fine Steaks; vibrant Bottiglia Cucina & Enoteca is a destination for Italian eats. Stroll the nearby District for more dining and shopping, plus outdoor movies in warm months. ***greenvalleyranch.sclv.com*** (GT)

BEST OLD-SCHOOL VEGAS EXPERIENCE

LAS VEGAS HISTORICAL RADIO

Many of the places that made Vegas Vegas are long gone — the Riviera, the Sands, the Green Shack. One can still get a steak at the Golden Steer or a drink at Champagne's Cafe, but the best trips to the classic Strip happen in the imagination — and KIYQ 107.1 FM can provide the soundtrack. The local station's playlist is full of denizens of the Congo Room, such as Eydie Gorme, Louis Prima, and Frank Sinatra, interspersed with gambling advice and short narratives about dealing baccarat at the Dunes or the connection between Jack Ruby and Benny Binion. The programming may be odd and the reception erratic, but who else is going to explain the pointlessness of three-card monte and then play you out with some Robert Goulet? ***kiyq.org*** (LTR)

BEST DAY EVER: BRENT HOLMES

BEST DAY EVER

RONALD CORSO, OWNER, 11TH STREET RECORDS

I think perfect days just have to sort of happen, where at the end of the day you say to yourself, "That one's in the bank." You've got something that no one can take away. So: When we were having those crazy-nice-but-slightly-alarming-because-climate-change days early in December, one Sunday my wife was up ridiculously early. That is not unusual. What was unusual is that on this day I happened to be, also. We walked our dog, Big Steve, in **Firefighters Memorial Park** (6401 W. Oakey Blvd.) just before dawn. Incredible sunrise. Went home, went back to bed for a while. I said, "You wanna get breakfast?" She did. So we rolled up to the **Bagel Cafe** (thebagelcafelv.com). Corned beef hash and eggs. Sesame bagel, toasted, butter, no cream cheese. I forget what she had. Something just healthy enough to be mildly annoying in contrast, probably. Afterward, to the **Self Realization Fellowship** chapel (srflasvegas.org) on Charleston, the Paramahansa Yogananda org, for the 10 a.m. meditation. Like church, but nobody says a word for an hour and you leave feeling better. Then, up to **Roma Deli** on West Sahara (romadelilv.com) to grab some necessities. Called our sons to see if they were coming for Sunday dinner, no answer. We put on the sauce and meatballs when we got home, like one does on a Sunday. "They're probably not coming," she says. "Hey, you feel like a hike? Gorgeous day." I did. Turned off the pot of sauce, rolled up to Mount Charleston, did the **Fletcher Trail**. By the time we came down we were starving; we'd skipped lunch. "What was that old place we went to after that funeral that time?" **"Bob Taylor's Ranch House?"** "Dude." We had steaks and twice-baked potatoes in a room filled with several varieties of white people. Some wore cowboy hats at the table! We headed home, fell into bed, crashed. Fresh air, hiking, and twice-baked potatoes will knock you out. When we woke up, it was dark, but we could smell the sauce cooking, which freaked me out. Went downstairs, the boys had showed up and turned the sauce back on. We were in no way hungry, but we made the pasta for them and watched them eat it while we talked and laughed, and enjoyed our recently emptied nest being full again for a little while. Perfect day, in the bank.

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57 The Guide

ART

THROUGH MARCH 10
Wet is Wild: Water Stories
Artist James R. Atha manipulates photographs of water into abstractions, encouraging viewers to notice the shapes, patterns, and colors found in nature. **Free. Gallery at Laughlin Library, *lvccld.org***

THROUGH MARCH 18
96 Hours
Artist Ronda Churchill shares her candid photographs centering on the architecture, culture, and people of Cuba, as seen through a photojournalist's eye. **Free. Gallery at Whitney Library, *lvccld.org***

THROUGH MARCH 18
Chinese Year of the Dog Exhibition
Artists explore the idea and imagery of the dog for the Chinese Year of the Dog. **Free. Historic Fifth Street School, 401 S. Fourth St., *artslasvegas.org***

THROUGH MARCH 22
From Refuse to Reuse
Come see how different artists use found and thrown-away materials in finished pieces that will surprise and shock. **Free. Las Vegas City Hall Grand Gallery, *artslasvegas.org***

FEB. 6–APRIL 8
Carrying On
The diversity program offers a collection of oil paintings utilizing a classical style to depict contemporary subject matter, both figurative and narrative in theme. **Free. Gallery at Summerlin Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 8–APRIL 10
Elegant Creatures
Strikingly chromatic and scintillating paintings depicting luxury fashion displays as an investigation into consumer culture. **Free. Gallery at Enterprise Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 22–APRIL 21
Off the Page
An installation that showcases ceramic objects relating to literary works and authors. **Free. Gallery at Sahara West Library, *lvccld.org***

MUSIC

FEB. 9–10
The Lao Tizer Band
The all-star jazz band plays songs from their upcoming album "Songs from the Swinghouse." **7P, $39–$55. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 10
An Unforgettable Night of French Music
Paris Chansons, Los Angeles's premier French musical group, will perform a mixture of jazz and classics in Russian, Italian, and other languages. **7:30P, free. Conference Room at Rainbow Library, *parischansons.com***

FEB. 10
Sounds from Twilight
The Las Vegas Philharmonic performs Torke's "Sylvan," Schumann's "Violin Concerto in D Minor," and Beethoven's "Symphony No. 7 in A Major." **7:30P, $30–$109. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 13
Journey Through Jazz
Hosted by saxophonist and UNLV assistant professor Adam Schroeder, the show is an all-ages, community-based concert series showcasing jazz in an interactive and educational setting. **7P, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 14
Latin Jazz Ensemble
UNLV's Division of Jazz Studies highlights their talented student musicians. **7P, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 14
What the World Needs Now
The show is a celebration of two of the most iconic songwriters of the '60s and '70s, Burt Bacharach and Paul Williams, brought to life by unique song stylists Jonathan Karrant and Chadwick Johnson. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

FEB. 14
A Musical Valentine with Nik Mastrangelo and the Nik at Nite Quartet
Nik and an all-star quartet bring you a special selection of some of the most romantic songs. 7:30P, free. PAC at Summerlin Library, lvccld.org

FEB. 15
Erykah Badu
American singer-songwriter, record producer, disc jockey, activist, and actress Badu will wow the audience with her versatility. 18+ only. 8P, **$62.60–$119. Brooklyn Bowl at The Linq, *brooklynbowl.com***

FEB. 16-18
Remembering Luther: "The Night I Fell in Love" Abraham McDonald performs the hits of Luther Vandross. **Fri 7P; Sat 2P and 7P; Sun 3P, $54. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 17
Swing or Die, featuring the Michael Thomas Quintet
Hometown North Las Vegas trumpeter, Michael A. Thomas, comes back home to perform a special concert in loving tribute to Gloria A. Brown and Anthony D. Thomas. **2P, free. West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 17
The Greatest R&B Songs Ever Written
Lannie Counts stars in a show that is packed full of the very best of Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, John Legend, Gene Chandler, the Cadillacs, James Brown, Marvin Gaye, Al Green, and the Righteous Brothers. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

FEB. 17
Kig Ibu
Ibu's music is a blend of traditional West African folk music and contemporary arrangements. He plays guitar, the talking drum, and sings in five languages. **7P, $11. Winchester Cultural Center, 3130 McLeod Drive, *clarkcountynv.gov***

FEB. 20
Ryan Ahern in Concert
The pianist has performed in more than 100 countries and has headlined at Planet Hollywood. **7P, $30. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 21
Bill Fayne & Friends — An Evening of Classic Broadway
The show will feature hits from some of the most celebrated musicals in Broadway's history. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City *Summerlin, scscai.com***

FEB. 21
ABBA Mania
A concert tribute to the music of the Swedish supergroup ABBA. **7:30P, $29–$75. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 22
The Chieftains
The renowned Irish folk band is celebrating its 55th year. **7:30P, $29–$95. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 22
Respighi's "Pini di Roma"
The UNLV Wind Orchestra performs. 7:30P, $10. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall at UNLV, unlv.edu

FEB. 23
Leonard Patton/ Danny Green Trio
Enjoy Patton's smoky and soulful vocals as he croons selections from Duke Ellington through Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson. **3P, free. Conference Room at Rainbow Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 23
Johnny Mathis
The legendary singer is celebrating the release of his new album. **7:30P, $33–$175. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 23–24
Herb Alpert & Lani Hall
The trumpet legend and the popular singer have been touring together for more than 10 years. **7P, $39–$65. Myron's Cabaret Jazz at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 24
Music of Four Centuries
Renown guitarist Peter Fletcher will perform a repertoire that runs the gamut from the Renaissance through the 20th Century. **2P, free. Jewel Box Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 24

Leonard Patton/ Danny Green Trio

Enjoy Patton's smoky and soulful vocals as he croons selections from Duke Ellington through Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson. **3P, free. Auditorium at Windmill Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 24

Art Vargas' Vintage Vegas Live!

With the finger snappin' cool of Bobby Darin and the flamboyance of Louis Prima, Vargas embodies the spirit and passion of those great performers. Featuring Vegas songstress Laura Shaffer. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

FEB. 24

One Night of Queen

Gary Mullen and the Works recreate the look and sound of Freddie Mercury and company. **7:30, $24–$79. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 24

Black Violin

A blend of classical, hip-hop, rock, R&B, and bluegrass music all played on violin. **8P, $25–$45. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall at *UNLV, unlv.edu***

FEB. 25

Opera Legends in Black — A Celebration of African-American Achievement

This performance features some of the valley's most accomplisher singers performing musical selections to pay homage to major stars, famous composers, and operas based on African-American life. **2P, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 27

Symphonic Winds in Concert

The UNLV Symphonic Winds perform, conducted by Anthony LaBounty. **7:30P, $10. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall at UNLV, *unlv.edu***

MARCH 1

Honor Band Concert

The Clark County School District Secondary Fine Arts Division presents its annual concert. **7P, free. Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall at UNLV, *unlv.edu***

MARCH 2

Marvelous Musicals & Opulent Operetta

This entertaining evening of pieces from the world's favorite operettas and musicals features the UNLV Chamber Chorale, Argenta, Varsity Glee Club, and soloists from the School of Music. **7:30P, $10. Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center at UNLV, *unlv.edu***

MARCH 3

Wade Hammond

Remember when country music had the full rich baritones? That is what Hammond will deliver. **7P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

MARCH 3

Pink Martini Gala Concert

The international music band is headlining the Las Vegas Philharmonic's annual gala concert. **8P, $30–$109. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

MARCH 4

Eileen & the In-Betweens

The social justice indie folk group will present both a concert and discussion. **2P, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

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THEATER & COMEDY

FEB 2–18

Time Stands Still

This play examines the lives of a couple who are journalists making a living by documenting the horrors of war. **Thu–Fri 8P; Sun 2P, $13–$15. Black Box at Las Vegas Little Theatre, *lvlt.org***

FEB. 9–18

Fences

Troy Maxson works as a garbage man in 1957 Pittsburgh. Excluded as a black man from the major leagues, his bitterness takes its toll on his relationships with his wife and his son, who now wants his own chance to play ball. **Thu–Sat 7:30P; Sun 2P, $27.50–$33. Judy Bayley Theatre at UNLV, *unlv.edu***

FEB. 10–11

Still Waters

The third play in the trilogy of "The Waters Family Saga" continues as family members and friends prepare for the wedding of Janice Waters in the year 2012. **Sat 6P; Sun 2P, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 10–11

You Can't Take it With You

When Alice Sycamore becomes engaged to the boss' son, her oddball family agrees to act "normal" for a dinner with her future in-laws, the practical and stuffy Kirbys. **Sat 7P; Sun 2P, $10. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

FEB. 17

Cupid's LVIP Show

Fall in love with improv and musical comedy as the Las Vegas Improvisational Players make up the show on the spot based on the audience's suggestions. **7P, $10; $5 kids, seniors, and military. Show Creators Studio, 4455 W. Sunset Road, *lvimprov.com***

FEB. 18–21

Is That Man Your Husband?

A hilarious romantic comedy (gospel stage play) that explores the pains and pleasures of marriage. **7P, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

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DANCE

FEB. 4

A Love for Dance

Professional dancers Mary LaCroix, Barrington Lohr, and their special guests will celebrate love and relationships to the music of The Beatles, the Righteous Brothers, Frank Sinatra, and classical pieces as well. **2P, $20. Starbright Theatre at Sun City Summerlin, *scscai.com***

FEB. 10

Golden Dream Festival

Zemskov Dance Academy presents more than 150 soloists and teams from the USA, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Armenia, Russia, India, and China. **2P, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 17

If Only For One Night 2018 Adult Prom

A formal affair for singles to experience their prom for the first time or all over again. The night includes a live DJ and special guest. 21+ only. **7P, $50–$2,100. Aliante Hotel and Casino, *fabweekend.com***

FEB. 17–18

Beauty and the Beast

Nevada Ballet Theatre presents the popular tale with music by Tchaikovsky. **Sat 2P and 7P; Sun 2P, $29–$139. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 24

Studio 34 Dance Academy

A contemporary company dance show based on Sense and Sensibility. **6P, $10. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

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DISCUSSIONS & READINGS

FEB. 8

Zulu Dreams, from Apartheid to the Ivy League.

The speaker will discuss his true story: of a boy born in a small village near Durban, South Africa who managed to turn his life into a success story after the tragic death of his father due to a vodoo spell when the boy was. **7P, free. PAC at Summerlin Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 22

The Global Black Presence

Dr. Runoko Rashidi will discuss the African foundations of humanity and civilizations and the present conditions of Black people throughout the Global African Community. **7P, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 22

Ron Becks: Overcoming the Odds

Award-winning executive producer, writer, director, actor, and singer, Becks will share his journey of what it takes to make it in the film industry as an African-American male. **7P, free. Concert Hall at Whitney Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 23

A Return to Kemit

Guest lecturers Ashra and Merira Kwesi present a lively and dynamic multimedia production on African history and culture. **7P, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 24

A Black Actor's View of Hollywood

Juan Fargas an American actor known for his portrayal of Huggy Bear in the 1970s TV series Starsky & Hutch. **2P, free. Theatre at West Las Vegas Library, *lvccld.org***

FEB. 25

Fishnets & Spotlights: The Glamour of Casino de Paris

There was a time when the Vegas Strip was knee deep in French-style production shows. The panel of former Casino de Paris performers will discuss their experiences. **2P, free. Main Theater at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

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FAMILY & FESTIVALS

THROUGH FEB. 25

China Lights

The park will be decorated with 40 larger-than-life lantern displays and animation created on-site by Chinese artisans. The festival will include performances, cultural displays, and food. **5:30P–10P, $20 adults, $12 ages 5–17 and seniors. Craig Ranch Regional Park, *chinalightslv.com***

FEB. 7

How I Became a Pirate

A family musical based on the book by Melinda Long. **6:30P, $14.95–$24.95. Reynolds Hall at The Smith Center, *thesmithcenter.com***

FEB. 8–10

Be Mine Valentine's Puppet Show

The talented puppets will take you on a love rollercoaster that is sure to entertain and delight. **Thu 11:30A; Fri 10:30A; Sat 11A, free. Storyroom at Clark County Library, *lvccld.org***

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Teacher recruitment fair: Saturday, February 10th at 10am at Sandy Ridge Campus.

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SMART THINKING

OUR ANNUAL EDUCATION GUIDE COVERING PRE-SCHOOLS TO COLLEGE

BY ELISABETH DANIELS

The Las Vegas Valley is known for its sunny weather, world-class restaurants, endless entertainment, and affordable housing. With a wide variety of learning opportunities, it's also a great place to get an education—from pre-school to college prep to grad school and even to uniquely Vegas institutions.

The Clark County School District (CCSD) is responsible for educating nearly 75% of the students in Nevada, ranging from kindergarten through 12th grade. CCSD also offers adult-education courses and special education. Many of the CCSD schools are magnets: themed programs designed to attract a diverse student body. These federally funded programs have a specific focus, such as Science, Math, Engineering and Technology (STEM), Performing Arts, and Language curricula.

Another academic option is a charter school. The "charter" refers to a performance contract outlining the school's mission, which students are served, performance goals, and measurement methods.

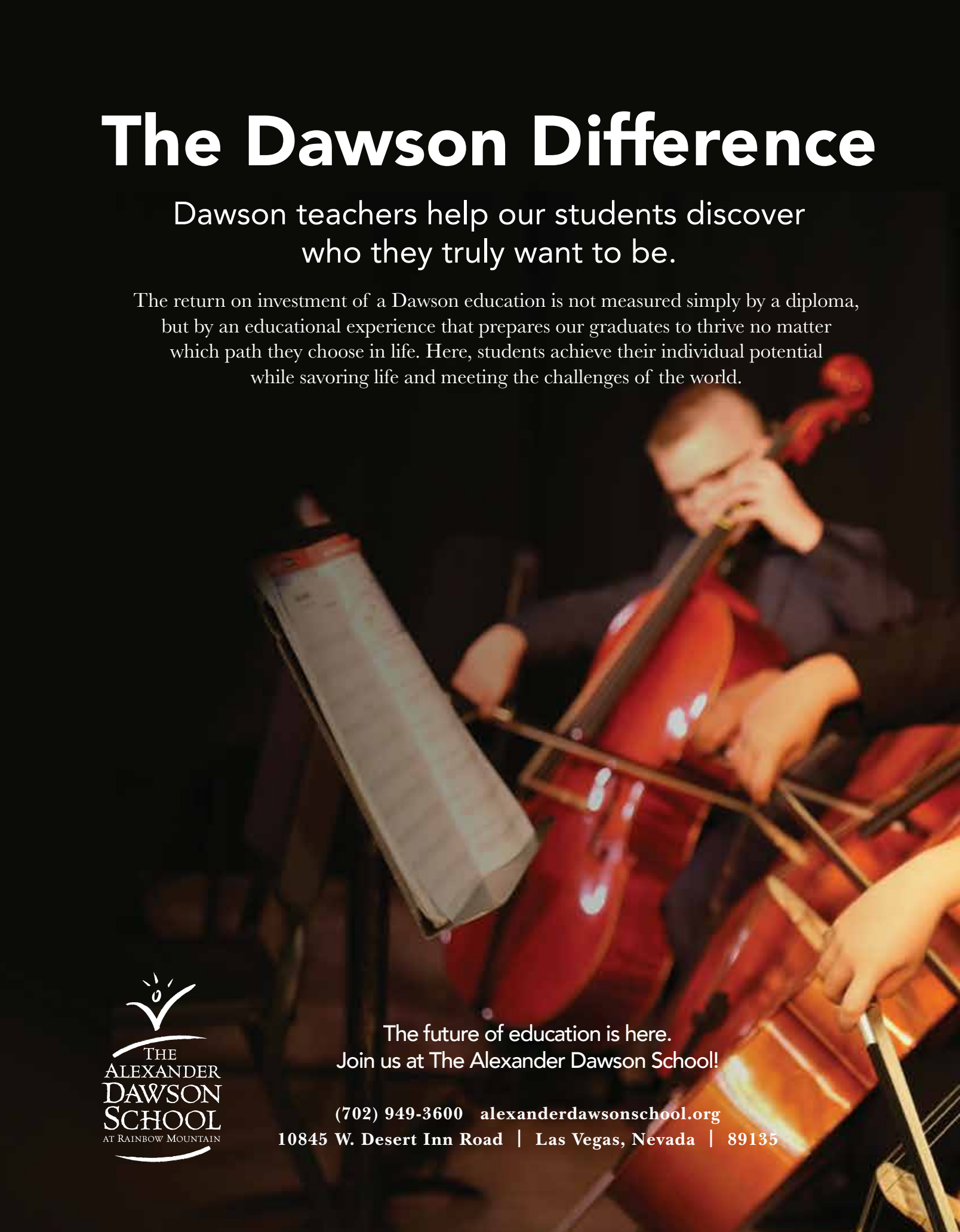
Those looking for higher learning can choose from more than 150 degrees and certificates in 70 academic programs at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). Or, study one of the 146 academic programs offering more than 350 degrees at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The university offers graduate-level classes as well.

As an alternative to the traditional learning model, Khan Academy (*khanacademy.org*) is an educational website offering video lessons for kindergarten-through-8th grade, high school, and college students, as well as adult learners—all for free. Other eclectic learning opportunities include the School of Rock, where kids are educated on the finer points of rock-n-roll; discovering how to be a gondolier at the Gondola University at The Venetian; or channeling your inner NASCAR driver at The Richard Petty Driving Experience. This section explores 45 different educational options available to Las Vegas Valley residents of all ages. Read on, discover, and enjoy.

The Dawson Difference

Dawson teachers help our students discover who they truly want to be.

The return on investment of a Dawson education is not measured simply by a diploma, but by an educational experience that prepares our graduates to thrive no matter which path they choose in life. Here, students achieve their individual potential while savoring life and meeting the challenges of the world.



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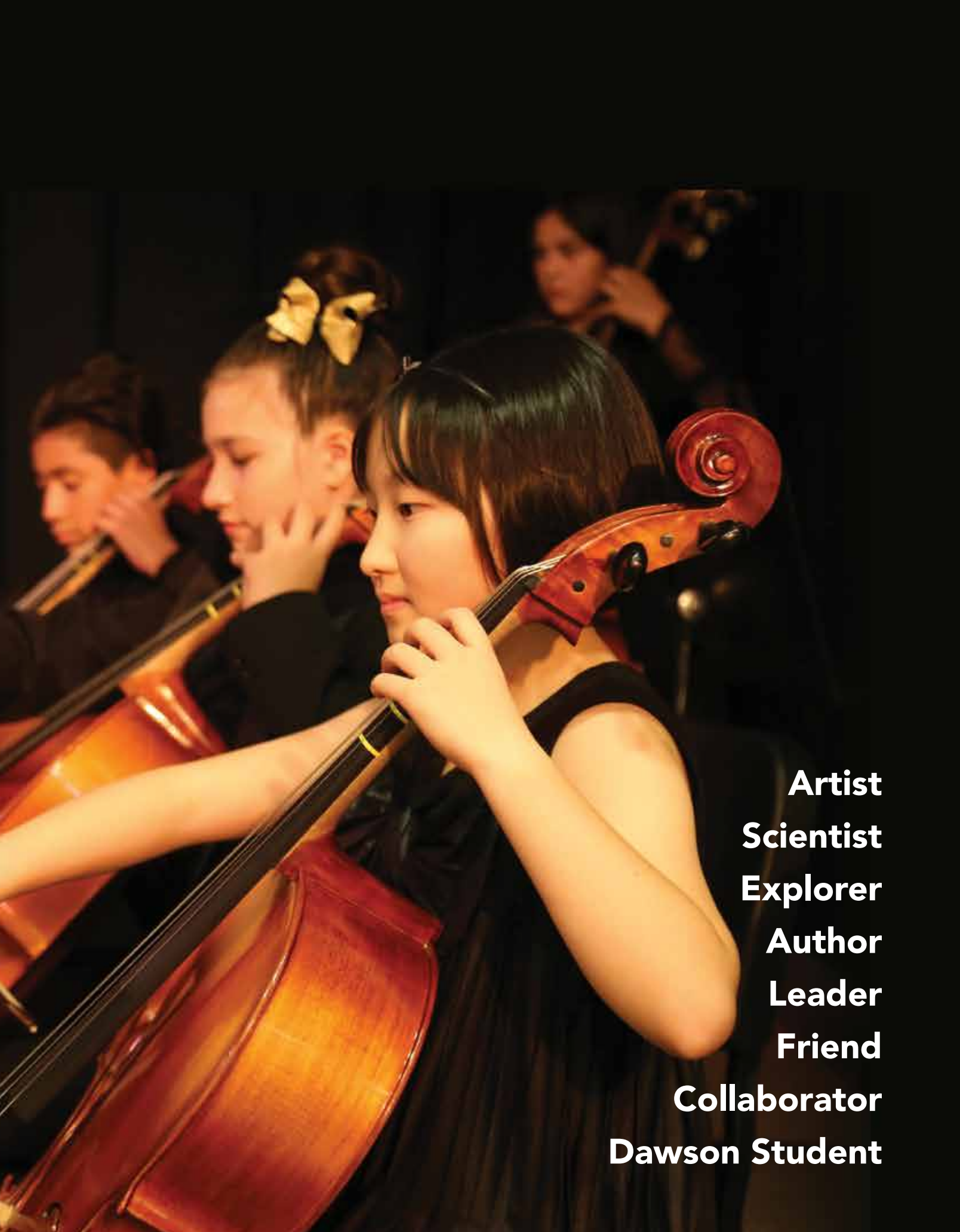
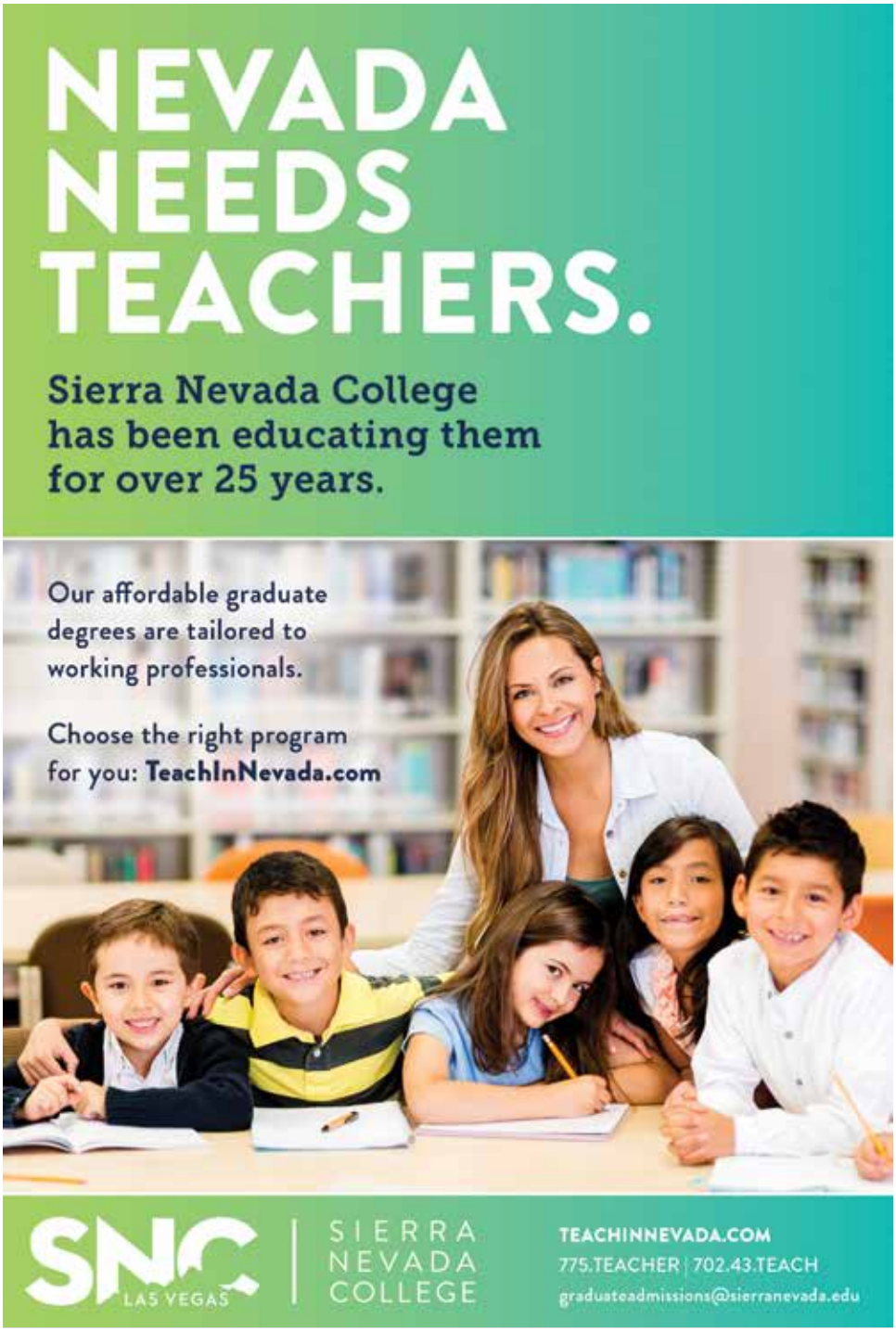

Artist
Scientist
Explorer
Author
Leader
Friend
Collaborator
Dawson Student

■ **9TH BRIDGE SCHOOL** *(310 S 9th St, Las Vegas, 89101)* is an entrepreneurial preschool serving infants through 2nd grade. The school's mission is to redefine the school experience through social/emotional learning. Students are taught sign language before they can speak, and older children cultivate independence by developing their own lesson plans. The curriculum includes executive skills—like curiosity, decision-making, cooperation, persistence, creativity and problem-solving—to provide students with a foundation to succeed in business as well as in life.



■ **ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES ACADEMY** (2501 Vegas Drive, Las Vegas 89106) is a magnet public high school in Las Vegas with a mission to integrate technology with academics for students in grades 9-12. A-TECH is a Blue Ribbon and 5-Star Reward School. Offering 22 Advanced Placement (AP) courses, A-TECH was rated as the Top Magnet School in Nevada by k12niche.com. The school regularly receives national accolades. It was recognized by the Washington Post as the Most Challenging High School in Nevada in 2013, 2014 and 2015. In *U.S. News & World Report*'s most recent ranking of 22,000 public high schools nationwide, A-TECH was ranked first in Nevada.

■ ■ **THE ALEXANDER DAWSON SCHOOL** (*10845 W. Desert Inn Road, Las Vegas, NV 89135*) serves pre-school through eighth grade students. Situated on a 33-acre campus, the school balances nurturing and challenge by focusing on the intellectual, social/emotional and physical growth of children. The early childhood curriculum includes exposure to Mandarin, Spanish and Science. Lower School students are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in a global and digital world. The Middle School curriculum emphasizes college preparation. The Dawson College Bound program serves high-achieving students beginning in the summer following sixth grade with graduation from the program occurring as they matriculate to high school.

■ ■ ■ **AMERICAN HERITAGE ACADEMY** (*2100 Olympic Ave., Henderson 89014*) is a principle-based Christian private school in Las Vegas serving families from North Las Vegas to Henderson. It began as a small home-school group that has grown into a robust private school that accepts students from pre-kindergarten to high school. Academic excellence, along with

responsible citizenship and character development, is emphasized at American Heritage Academy. Teachers at American Heritage Academy take a tutorial approach to education, using the Foundation for American Christian Education (FACE) methodology. Education focuses on the 4 Rs: Research, Reason, Relate, Record, and students test in the top 10% of the nation academically.

ANDRE AGASSI COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY *(1201 W. Lake Mead Blvd., Las Vegas, 89106)* is a kindergarten through twelfth grade, tuition-free public charter school. Founded by tennis player Andre Agassi, a native of Las Vegas, Agassi Prep maximizes the opportunity for academic achievement by requiring students to attend school for an additional two hours per day and an additional ten days per year. The students attending Agassi Prep are selected by a public computer-based lottery system. Preference is given to children living in a two-mile radius from the school, which is a low-income neighborhood. There are no entrance exams or tuition fees required for students to attend. Students and parents are required to sign a Code of Excellence pledging a commitment to fulfill school requirements, including community service hours.

BASIC ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES *(400 Palo Verde Drive, Henderson 89015)*, serving grades 9-12, was the first high school in Henderson. Home of the Wolves, the school's motto is, "The strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack." Basic Academy is a candidate school for three International Baccalaureate programs, each of which develops an understanding of languages, culture and global issues. An emphasis on career and technical education includes tracks for business, computers, forensic science and fashion.

Playing to learn, learning through play

More than thirty years ago, a small group of Las Vegas families had the dream of a different kind of preschool - a place where the gentle rhythms of a child's life are honored, where learning and play go hand in hand, and where families and teachers work together for the good of every child.

WE BELIEVE in developmentally appropriate learning.

WE BELIEVE in a child-centered curriculum.

WE BELIEVE in meeting the needs of the whole child.

WE BELIEVE that teachers and parents work together.

WE BELIEVE in family connection and education.

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■ **BISHOP GORMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL** *(5959 S. Hualapai Way, Las Vegas, 89148)* is a four-year, Catholic college-preparatory high school operated under the auspices of the Diocese of Las Vegas. Home of the Gaels, Bishop Gorman is known for its athletic excellence. Forty-four seniors from the Class of 2017 received scholarships to play at a college level. The school boasts a 98% college-bound rate, and its acting students have been Theatre State Champions six years in a row.

■ **CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL** (*10200 W. Centennial Parkway, Las Vegas, 89149*) is a public high school serving grades 9-12. Students have received National Merit Finalist Recognitions, scholarships, and Military Academy Appointments. The school's NJROTC Program has repeatedly been selected as the number one unit in the nation. The Bulldogs have earned over 50 division championships, more than 28 region championships, and fifteen state championships.

■■ **CHALLENGER SCHOOL** (*challenger.com*) is an independent, non-profit private school serving Pre-K through 8th Grade students with four Las Vegas Valley campuses. The curriculum builds on a foundation of reading, composition, math and history. Recognizing that the stimulation the brain receives after birth create the connections for intelligence, Challenger's teaching methods maintain the circuits in the brain and help each child build new ones through a structured and encouraging learning environment.

■ **CHAPARRAL HIGH SCHOOL** (*3850 Annie Oakley Drive, Las Vegas, 89121*) is a public high school located on the east side of the valley, serving grades 9-12. The school's pioneering spirit is embodied in its cowboy mascot and its motto: Rigor, Relevance, Relationships, and Responsibility. In addition to foundational coursework, Chaparral offers Mariachi, Journalism, Culinary, We the People, and Forensic Science classes, and recently doubled graduation rates. The school has a robust athletics department with spring, fall, and winter sports, including football, soccer, golf, and swimming.

■ **COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN NEVADA** (*csn.edu*) is a fully accredited institution offering over 160 degrees and certificates in more than 70 academic programs—with 23 degrees and certificates available entirely online. There are three main campuses in Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, and Henderson, as well as multiple sites and centers throughout the Southern Nevada area. A variety of clubs, activities, and organizations to keep students engaged and connected. The CSN Coyotes are national baseball champions and are also represented in team softball, soccer, and volleyball. Recognizing cybersecurity as a fast-growing industry, the college recently opened a cutting-edge lab filled with computers, cameras, Wi-Fi equipment, and a Faraday cage to accompany degrees in cybersecurity.

■■■ **CORAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE LAS VEGAS** (*7951 Deer Springs Way, Las Vegas, 89131*) Named a 5-Star Quality School for two years consecutively, Coral Academy is a K-12 state-sponsored tuition-free public charter school emphasizing a STEM curriculum. The school has five campuses throughout the Las Vegas valley: two in Las Vegas, two in Henderson and one at Nellis Air Force Base, with three separate campuses serving grades K-2, 3-5 and 6-12 respectively. Service and leadership programs include Key Club and Civil Air Patrol.

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CULINARY ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS (*710 W. Lake Mead Blvd., North Las Vegas, 89030*) provides students with real-world training in 12 different classifications. Academy students gain hands-on experience by cooking for the Westside Bistro, the Academy's restaurant, as well as preparing and delivering meals to the needy in the community. The school maintains partnerships with the Culinary Union 226, Bartenders Union 165, and 28 major properties on the Las Vegas Strip.

■ **DEL SOL ACADEMY OF THE PERFORMING ARTS** (*3100 E. Patrick Lane, Las Vegas, 89120*) offers a comprehensive high school experience, in addition to selected magnet curricula. Students may choose one of the following magnet majors: Costume Design, Dance, Mariachi, Band, Orchestra, Vocal, Music Production, Technical Theater, and Theater. Magnet students have access to community internships, Artist-in-Residence programs, and performance opportunities. As they partake in a challenging and rigorous curriculum in all content areas, students have the unique opportunity to study the performing arts—while still benefitting from a comprehensive environment rich in athletics, visual arts, service organizations, clubs, and countless student activities.

■ **EAST CAREER & TECHNICAL ACADEMY** (*705 Vegas Valley Drive, Las Vegas, 89142*) is a comprehensive magnet high school that offers several distinct program areas of study. Students select their program of choice when applying for admission. Students can choose coursework in Education, Medical Professions, Culinary Arts, Entertainment Marketing & Hospitality, Automotive Mechanical Technology, Information Technology Systems, Construction Technology, and Electronics Technology. Rigorous coursework, hands-on projects, job-shadowing, and internships will give students first-hand experience in their selected program areas. In addition, students can earn college credits through the 2+2 Tech Prep program and through Advanced Placement Courses.

■ **FAITH LUTHERAN ACADEMY** (*2700 S. Town Center, Las Vegas, 89135*) offers a comprehensive academic curriculum for students ranging from kindergarten through Grade 5 is comprised of Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students also attend

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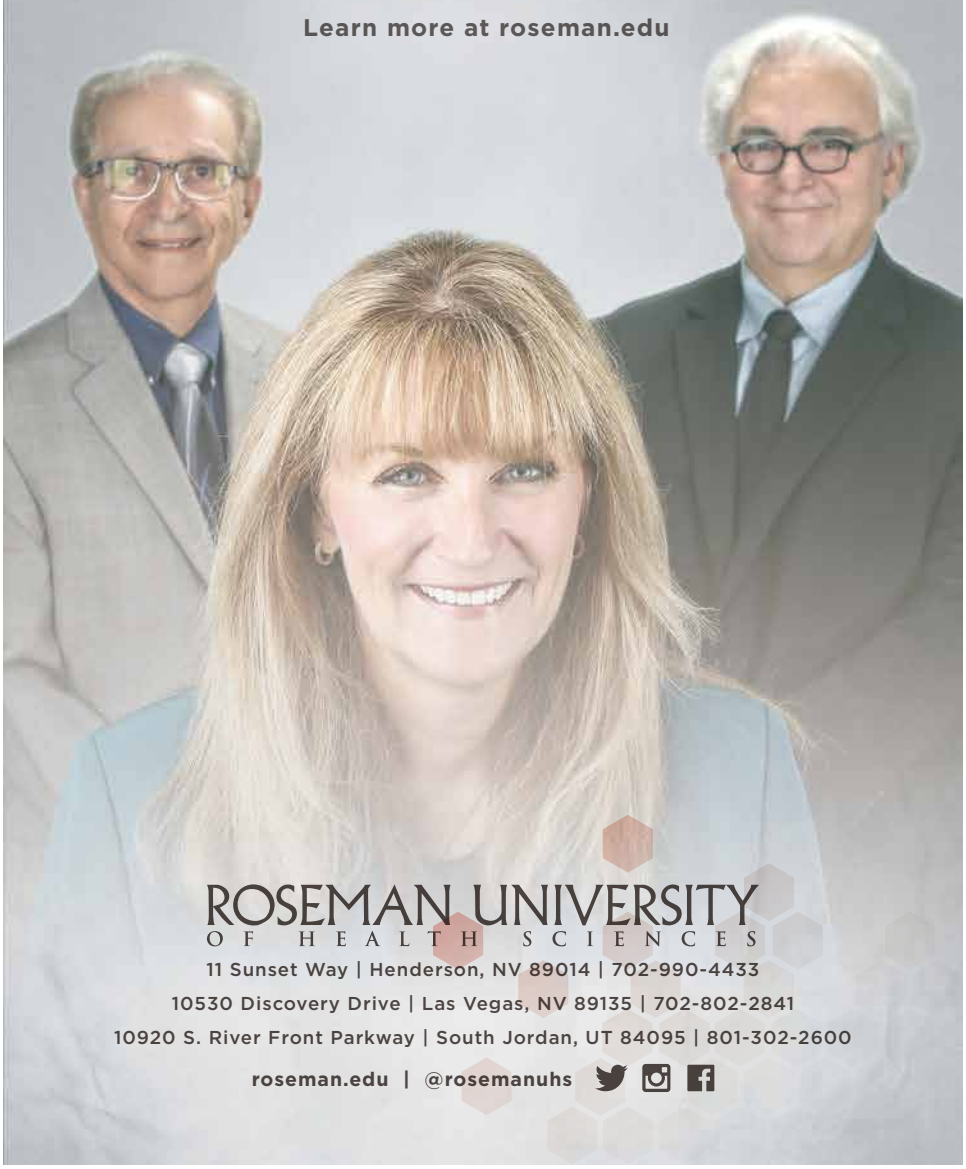

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Bible Study and engage in other religious training. Wednesday mornings are set aside for Chapel Day, in which students actively lead and participate in worship. Extracurricular activities include Handbells and Choir and the Kids Empowering Kids Club, in which students encourage other students to participate in ministry projects.

FAITH LUTHERAN MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL (*2015 S. Hualapai Way, Las Vegas, 89117*) is a private Christian school located in Summerlin®. The school is guided by the core values of a Christian faith and life, teaching that engages and challenges learners, and the balance of mind, body and soul. Faith Lutheran's curriculum is demanding, designed to prepare students for success at the college level. In high school, Advanced Placement courses offer students the opportunity to earn college credit or have introductory courses waived at the university level.

FOOTHILLS MONTESSORI SCHOOL (*1401 Amador Lane, Henderson, 89012*) is a private school that provides children ages 3-14 with an education based on the Montessori method. Key elements include a low student-to-teacher ratio to ensure ample attention, a multi-age classroom structure to encourage student mentorship and a focus on individual progression without peer competition. Areas of study range from Math, Science, Geography, and Social Studies to History, Language, Foreign Language, Music, Art, and Physical Education. The campus features an amphitheater, multi-purpose room, and state-of-the-art science playground.

HENDERSON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY (*2750 Robindale Road, Henderson, 89074*) is a private Christian preschool in the Henderson

and Las Vegas communities. With small class sizes and a nurturing family atmosphere, Henderson Christian offers families a well-rounded Christian education with encouraging teachers who have an intimate sense of each child's personality and needs. Henderson Christian accommodates children from 6-weeks-old to full-day kindergarten students. The school also offers before- and after-school programs.

■■ **HENDERSON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL** (*1165 Sandy Ridge Ave., Henderson 89052*) is a private, preschool through 8th-grade, co-ed college-preparatory school. The school's STEAM curriculum focuses not only on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, but also on Art. The international emphasis includes a homestay boarding program that provides opportunities for students from around the globe. The school is also a satellite site for The Western Talent Search, offered through the Center for Bright Kids.

■ **JO MACKEY ACADEMY OF LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL COMMUNICATION** (*2726 Englestad Street, North Las Vegas, 89030*) is a 5-star magnet school serving pre-k through 5th grade students. Jo Mackey's program is built around a philosophy of 3 Cs: Positive Character, Strong Citizenship, and Outstanding Communication, all elements that are needed to be successful leaders in a global society. The school is named for Mrs. Jo Mackey, who came to Las Vegas around 1925 and devoted her life to the under-privileged and to the handicapped, being handicapped herself. Her legacy is carried on through student participation in service projects, which are undertaken by students in every grade level.

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■ ■ **KIDDIE ACADEMY OF HENDERSON** (*870 Coronado Center Drive, Henderson, 89052*) is an educational daycare modeled on the Life Essentials® educational philosophy, which includes family-style meals shared with other children, computer literacy and character education. Core curriculum is supplemented with Music & More, weekly 30-minute lessons filled with music, stories and activities designed specifically for each child's age. CampVentures is designed for children up to age 12. Children spend quality time participating in water play and physical fitness activities, and some age groups can go on fun and educational field trips throughout the summer.

■ **KIDS' CO-OP PRESCHOOL** (*4316 N Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, 89130*) is a non-profit, non-sectarian cooperative school administered and maintained by parents. Modeled after the Child Development Lab at the College of Southern Nevada, the school's curriculum is designed to empower the whole child through four main developmental domains: social, emotional, physical, and cognitive. The school uses child-centered, play-based, developmentally appropriate practices to create a safe, nurturing early childhood learning environment. Kids' Co-op is also part of the nationwide network of parent cooperatives.

■ **LAS VEGAS ACADEMY OF THE ARTS** (*315 S. 7th Street, Las Vegas, 89101*) is an award-winning magnet high school. Located in the center of the Las Vegas High School Historical District, the Las Vegas Academy serves students in grades 9 through 12. Students may pursue a major in Band, Vocal Music, Dance, Guitar, International Studies (French, Japanese, and Spanish), mariachi, orchestra, photography, piano, studio art, technical theatre, theatre, visual design, and World Jazz studies. Students attend classes in 86-minute blocks, as compared with the standard 50 minutes in a comprehensive high school, allowing for more intensive instruction.

■ **LAS VEGAS HIGH SCHOOL** *(6500 E. Sahara Ave., Las Vegas, 89142)* is a public high school and home of the Wildcats. Along with attending challenging academic classes, students can participate in sports, CTE courses, the school's performing arts program, or its AJROTC program. Students can also join one of the 40 different clubs and organizations on campus. The Wildcats have won numerous championships, and their athletics programs are recognized as some of the best in Nevada.

LEGACY TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS (*5024 Valley Dr., North Las Vegas, 89031*) is a tuition-free, K-8 public charter school. The school emphasizes a "back-to-basics" education, which focuses on achieving mastery on the basic skills of reading, writing and math as the foundation for success in all areas of study. In addition to the basics, Legacy offers the Spalding Language Arts Program, which integrates direct instruction in listening, speaking, spelling, writing and reading, and the Saxon Math Program, which teaches the mastery and practical application of basic mathematical practices.

THE NASRI ACADEMY FOR GIFTED CHILDREN (*5300 El Camino Road, Las Vegas, 89118*) serves kindergarten through 8th grade students. Understanding that gifted children are unique and require a specialized learning environment, Nasri provides students opportunities to tackle real world, hands on projects. Using problem-based learning, students are encouraged to use and understand of multiple perspectives. Programs include Entrepreneurship, Junior Achievement, Specialty Workshops, Parent Education, Community Service Projects, Robotics, and Innovation & Design.

NEVADA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS (*401 S. 4th Street #125, Las Vegas, 89101*) is a non-profit community-based music program. NSA offers a wide variety of programs for students and adults, serving students from ages 3 through senior citizens with private lessons, group classes, and ensembles. There are no restrictions or entrance auditions required to study at the school. Everyone who wants to learn how to play an instrument or refresh skills is welcome. The school is the State of Nevada's only member of the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts.

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Inspiring Children to Achieve Since 1963

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■ **NEVADA STATE COLLEGE** (*1300 Nevada State Drive, Henderson, 89002*) a four-year public college offering more than 35 majors and minors. Known for its small classes and experienced faculty, fields of study include the liberal arts and sciences, and more. Students can learn in-class or online, or a hybrid of both. All instruction is career-focused, so technology and a hands-on approach are high priorities. Recognizing that education goes beyond academics, Nevada State College also has a robust and diverse student life with a variety of clubs and organizations and the opportunity to participate in student government.

■ **NORTHWEST CAREER & TECHNICAL ACADEMY** (*8200 W. Tropical Parkway, Las Vegas, 89149*) is a public magnet school serving grades 9-12. Northwest Career & Technical Academy emphasizes college preparation and offers several programs for students to choose from: Engineering & Design, Hospitality, Mechanical Technology, Culinary Arts, Construction Technology, Early Childhood Education, Teacher Education, Kindergarten, Medical Professions, Media Communications and Biotechnology. There are over 50 clubs and activities for students to participate in, including Anime Club, Future Business Leaders of America, Hip Hop Club, Physics Club and Robotics Club.

■ **RAINBOW DREAMS ACADEMY** (*50 W. Lake Mead Blvd., Las Vegas, 89106*) is a public charter school serving students in grades K-6. Located in a 13,028-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility, students are educated and prepared to challenge their intellect, maximize their talents, respect themselves and others and take pride in their heritage in a nurturing learning community. The curriculum integrates English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, reading, computer technology, fine and performing arts and Spanish with an infusion of African American history and multicultural learning. With the philosophy that music and dance can be vehicles for social change, Rainbow Dreams offers three Music & Dance Programs.

■ **RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIES OF AVIATION AND MEDICAL SCIENCES** (*1900 Searles Ave., Las Vegas, 89101*) is a "school within a school" inside Rancho High School. Part

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of a comprehensive high school serving grades 9-12, the RHS Academy provides students with rigorous and relevant learning experiences within the magnet programs as well as in the general curriculum, and students can choose from electives such as orchestra, theater, dance, band, choir, and art. After-school athletic programs and club activities are also available. The Rancho High School Medical Academy is the head-start program for those interested in becoming doctors, dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians, & nurses. "Real-life" medical work, including virtual autopsies, suturing, and CPR, gives students insight into the medical field. The only one of its kind in the District and one of only a handful in the United States, Rancho High School's Academy of Aviation offers two dynamic and unique programs for students interested in aviation and aerospace. Other offerings include the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Dual Enrollment Program and Biomedicine.

■ **ROBERT O. GIBSON MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY** (*3900 W. Washington Ave., Las Vegas, 89107*) is a magnet school serving grades 6-8. The Leadership Academy fosters the academic success, personal growth, and social development of middle school students through service to their communities. The curriculum centers on English, Math and Science, and uses the real world as a classroom in which students develop as leaders who take initiative, solve problems, work as a team, and demonstrate their abilities while addressing real community needs. Eighth graders can participate in the Dual Language Immersion Academy, a bilingual program of Spanish and English.

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■ **ROSEMAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES** (*11 Sunset Way, Henderson, 89014*) is a private, non-profit university with campuses in Henderson, Summerlin® and South Jordan, Utah. The University is comprised of the College of Dental Medicine, offering an Advanced Education in Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics/MBA residency and Doctor of Dental Medicine program; College of Pharmacy, offering a Doctor of Pharmacy and Professional Continuing Education; College of Nursing, offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing and RN to Bachelor of Sciences in Nursing; and an MBA program. Roseman's programs are unique in that they utilize the Six-Point Master Learning Model.

■ **SHENKER ACADEMY** (*9001 Hillpointe Road, Las Vegas, 89134*) is a preschool in Summerlin®. Shenker's curriculum framework is based on the Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory and the four developmental domains of child development: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. Teachers create lesson plans following the eight multiple intelligences that also work on the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development for each individual child. The daily and weekly curriculum is planned around the children's age, individual, and group needs.

■ **SIERRA NEVADA COLLEGE** (*sierranevada.edu*) is a private, four-year university on Lake Tahoe with locations in Henderson and Reno. The Incline Village campus offers 30+ undergraduate majors and two Low-Residency Master of Fine Arts programs. All 4-year programs have generous financial aid support, making SNC an affordable option in a beautiful location. The Henderson campus offers master's degrees in Teaching & Education. Online, SNC offers Master of Education in Administration or Teaching English as a Second Language. Through SNC's Dual Degree Program, students can earn their Bachelor of Arts, teaching credential, and complete their M.A.T. while teaching. Teaching programs are eligible for Teach Nevada grants.

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■ **SIERRA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL** (*8100 W. Robindale Road, Las Vegas, 89113*) is a public high school in Spring Valley serving grades 9-12. The school recently produced two National Merit Finalists, and several students have gone on to attend prestigious institutions such as Stanford, Berkley and West Point after graduation. Known for its strong robotics team, Sierra Vista won the respected Community Award in Robotics and was a Robotics World Qualifier. They were State Finalists in Cross Country, Wrestling, and Volleyball, and the school won a National Championship in Orchestra.

■■■ **THE ADELSON EDUCATIONAL CAMPUS** (9700 Hillpointe Rd, Las Vegas, 89134) is a preschool-through-grade-12 independent private school based on Jewish values and identity. The Adelson Educational Campus consists of two schools: The Preschool/Lower School for students from 18 months through 5th grade and the Upper School for grades 6–12. The Adelson Educational Campus strives to develop students into caring, perceptive, engaged thinkers, who are fully prepared for top universities at home and abroad. Learning takes pace in a dynamic environment where students thrive academically by gaining invaluable skills and insights through authentic scholarship.

■ **TOURO UNIVERSITY** (*874 American Pacific Drive, Henderson, 89014*) is non-profit, Jewish-sponsored, private institution focused on the health sciences and education. Touro offers a wide range of degree programs in allied health sciences and education, as well as osteopathic medicine. The Touro campus is also home to both a full-service patient health clinic, staffed by practicing faculty members, and a multidisciplinary Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities. In addition to serving the community through care, both facilities serve as on-site learning laboratories for students across the disciplines.

■ **UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS** (*unlv.edu*) is a public research university with more than 350 degrees to choose from. UNLV has become a home for the study of

robotics and unmanned aerial systems industries, with high-quality research opportunities and associated academic programs. UNLV has celebrated programs in hospitality administration, creative writing, nursing, law and dispute resolution, entertainment engineering, architecture, sciences, fine arts and UNLV Continuing Education. The university includes notable graduate schools, including the William S. Boyd School of Law; the College of Education; and the College of Business – Lee Business School offering Executive MBA and MBA degrees. Black Mountain Institute is a literary center dedicated to promoting discourse on today's most contentious topics. The 93,500 square-foot Hospitality Hall will house Harrah's College of Hospitality and feature Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits Beverage Academy. The Performing Arts Center, The National Conservatory Theatre, Barrick Lecture Series, and The Marjorie Barrick Museum offer students and the community a variety of educational and entertainment programs.

■ VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

(*2839 Burnham Ave., Las Vegas, 89169*) is a public high school, serving grades 9-12, that also offers two widely recognized magnet programs: The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and Middle Years Programme. The school is also home to the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (AOHT), which develops employable skills using project-based learning. Valley High School's athletic program is known as the Vikings. Valley also offers a variety of co-curricular activities in addition to athletics: Band, Choir, Mariachi, Fine Arts, and various clubs.

■ VARIETY SCHOOL

(*2800 Stewart Ave., Las Vegas, 89101*) serves special needs students with physical, intellectual or emotional disabilities. The school features vocational training centers for a laundry, a kitchen and restaurant, a recycling center, a graphics center and a greenhouse. Students spend time in each area, learning a skill of their choice, with a goal of preparing them

Summer Term 2018

Session 1
May 14–June 1

Session 2
June 4–July 6

Session 3
July 9–August 10

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for the workforce. Some students come for behavior modification and are transitioned back to their home schools once they've completed their program at Variety. Some must stay for extended periods of time; many remain until they reach 22 and no longer can attend.

■ **VETERANS TRIBUTE CAREER AND TECHNICAL ACADEMY** (*2531 Vegas Drive, Las Vegas, 89106*) is a public high school serving grades 9-12. The school has the distinction of being the only school of its kind in the state of Nevada focusing on preparing students for careers in public service. Instructors with enforcement, emergency medical response, and dispatch careers provide students with firsthand knowledge and training. Partnerships with the Las Vegas Metro Police Department and other public agencies give students a leg up when applying for public service positions.

■ **WALTER BRACKEN (STEAM) ACADEMY** *(1200 N. 27th St, Las Vegas, 89101)* is a pre-k through 5th-grade public magnet school with an award-winning program that emphasizes Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Math. Ranked among the top 5% of all elementary schools in the Clark County School District, Walter Bracken offers students labs focused on earth, life, and physical sciences as well as access to outdoor gardens, tortoise habitats, and investigative field trips, which provide additional opportunities for hands-on discovery. All students participate in gardening and help to maintain the multiple school gardens. With computer labs and 1-to-1 iPads, students become familiar with technology for data collection, analysis, interpretation, and publication.

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