

PASSOVER FEATURE  
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joyous holiday of Passover.  
The Jewish people, thousands of years ago, "passed over" from slavery to liberty. It was the first time in history that a fight for freedom was fought, and that is why the Jewish people are happy all over again every Spring when the festival of Passover rolls around.  
The celebration lasts a week, with the first two nights and the last two, the most important.  
On Passover, there is a religious service, in which thanks are said to God for inspiring all those who labor to bring benefit to other people.  
On the first night of Passover, and the second one too, among many Jews, there takes place in Jewish homes a festive supper in honor of Passover.  
The supper is called the Seder (pronounced say-der), which means Schedule, and the schedule is very interesting.

From a book called "The Story" (in Hebrew, that's Haggadah) the things that happened in ancient Egypt are read. Then different foods are held up to make the story more dramatic.

The matzah, or unleavened bread, is held up. That's a kind of a dry cracker, eaten to give the people a taste of the unappetizing food which poor people and slaves eat. That is supposed to make the eater sympathetic with the poor and induce him to try to help them. A bitter herb is also eaten as a symbol of the bitterness of slavery.

Everyone in the family and guests at the Seder table also eat a sprig of greens to recall that Moses freed his people when the Spring of the year was coming around.

The Seder is of interest to Christians too, for that's what "The Last Supper" was.

One point in the Seder calls for the youngest person there (That is, the youngest person who can talk) to ask "Four Questions" about the holiday.

There is singing at the meal, and prayers are said, and at the end there is even a game, as children look for the Afikomen (a piece of matzah which is hidden) for which the parents give prizes. The idea is to give the children a feeling of fun at the celebration.

The next morning in the synagogue, prayers, sermon and music remind one again of the importance of freedom. One prayer, for example, goes like this: "May the hunger after freedom and justice be satisfied and may all mankind be blessed with the joys of brotherhood and peace."

The last words spoken at the Seder are: "Next year at this time may all the people on earth be free."

See what we meant when we said you don't have to be Jewish to be glad about the Jewish holiday of Passover?

ISRAELITE RECEIVED SPECIAL PERMISSION TO PRINT THE ONLY AUTHENTIC REPORT  
ON LEGALIZED GAMBLING IN NEVADA TO DATE . J.T.

GAMING BATTLES ITS PAST

Control Boss Knew--  
But Who Listened?

By GABRIEL R. VOGLIOTTI

One morning almost six years ago, Governor Sawyer called in a Nevada newspaperman and gave him the toughest job in the state. He was Ed Olsen, former head of Nevada's Associated Press bureau, and a highly competent reporter. Sawyer made him boss of the Gaming Control Board, a man with unbelievable power. Olsen discovered his command had many fronts.

(While, technically, there is a sharp distinction between functions of the Commission and of the Board, the two units worked with such consultation that often the lines were hard to distinguish. It became widely assumed that Olsen's thinking generally prevailed as Nevada's government policy.)

Olsen Assumes Unscheduled Role

Olsen's roles? One was to keep the industry from cheating the State on taxes. This gave him power to get into the innards of every casino, to find out, once and for all, what they earn.

During the Olsen years, the Board reviewed mammoth transactions. The \$25 million Caesars Palace was licensed, as were the Silver Nugget, Aladdin, the Four Queens and the Sahara-Tahoe. The Silver Slipper closed and reopened. Reno's Hotel Golden was rebuilt. There were massively complex sales: The Sahara and Thunderbird to the Del Webb group, the Fremont to Parvins-Dohrmann, three sales of Reno's Riverside. The Board went into meticulous detail on every transaction and Olsen's group developed a vast knowledge of the industry's who's who.

Separately he had another job, preventing cheating of customers, a job that required hiring many investigators. His command was enormous. His power to investigate was complete. Newsmen called him a czar and were not far off. Fortunately, previous legislature had given Board and Commission all the money they needed and incredible authority. Olsen could never claim he was handcuffed by budget or weak laws.

Defender of the Industry

Olsen served almost six years, developing the deepest inside knowledge of Nevada gambling ever built up by one man, with the possible exception of Robbins Cahill, his predecessor some years removed. As the years passed—working under laws that made him a czar—and with enough money to do any blessed thing he wanted, Olsen angered some operators for what they called too tough an enforcement. He developed strong convictions and took on an unscheduled role. He became the State's chief defender against charges by outside writers. It was never contemplated that a Board Chairman should become gambling's defender, but something like this happened.

Sound of Growth—and Abuse

This column deals with the Olsen years because they hold such a vital story for Nevadans. They cover a fantastic span in Nevada history. They were years when gambling zoomed, with a fantastic increase in the number and size of establishments and, at the same time, years when Nevada was hit by an avalanche of abusive writing . . .

. . . years when Nevada had a growth of some 30,000 gambling employees, but years when Nevada weathered 14 outside attacks that shook the state.

. . . years when Nevada authorities, who defended the State, were not listened to, years when we found that even State officials are ignored.

It was an amazing pile-up of abusive writing and no Nevadan can say it has ended. The attacks included (before Olsen's time) the Kefauver Report and the Reader's Digest article. Then came the book "The Green Felt Jungle," then the syndicated series by Wallace Turner of the New York Times. This was followed by the Life magazine article by Paul O'Neil, then by the expansion of the Turner series into the book, "Gamblers' Money." Finally came the avalanche of 1966, (to be described in a future column) including the Chicago Sun-Times series, the NBC White Paper and NBC's "Run For Your Life."

As Nevada shuddered under the attacks, Olsen told friends he seemed to be the only man to put up a fight, the only one to make any defense. The gambling industry did little and Olsen was substantially right.

This is the fourth in a series of articles on Nevada gaming by Gabriel R. Vogliotti. They are adapted from his forthcoming book.

Vogliotti is a former nationally syndicated columnist and a native Nevadan. He is executive director of the Nevada Resort Association, representing 11 major hotel-casinos in Las Vegas.

Why Gaming Stood Mute

There were three reasons why the industry hesitated to make a defense.

First: everyone shuddered at the cost. To match national coverage of two books, 15 magazine articles, tens of thousands of newspaper stories, would require the budget of a General Motors. In advertising terms, to reach the same audience with repudiating stories, would require something like the income of the entire State.

Secondly: the industry had (and still has) reason to believe the American public is not entirely convinced by all the anti-Nevada claptrap. (A point discussed in another column.)

Third: the industry felt that any reputation must come from an objective, outside source—either from State government (meaning the Board and Commission) or from some outside accounting firm. It hoped that the State agencies that had total information would be the ones to set the record straight. (Note: nothing in Nevada law or gaming policy puts this role on the State—in fact, the law seemed to forbid it. Still, the industry could not be blamed for hoping.)

Control Chief Sifts Facts . . .

A man does not change his nature because he changes job, and Olsen remained a reporter—tough, curious, incorruptible. He had a small adminis-

trative army that included secret agents. He had virtually no limitations on budget, legal authority to get into any counting room, the right to subpoena books, the right to interrogate any owner.

After some years in office he had convictions. His accountants studied casino books and checked them against table drop observed by secret agents. He worked out earning charts on what casinos should earn on the basis of patronage.

He had the legal duty to get to the bottom of "skim," and a reporter's determination to know whether he was being made a fool of. He had an overwhelming desire to get final answers on hidden owners, whether there are many or any insignificant few. Like so many Nevadans, he wanted to know whether the Desert Inn, Sahara, Dunes made 7 percent, 50 per cent? or 200 per cent?

After a time, he knew. This writer heard Olsen give his final summing up of Nevada gambling some time before he left the Board.

. . . And Finds Real Dilemma

He knew that the central fact in the story of Nevada gambling is that it is fighting its past. He knew that the sensational writers had not caught up with the change, that they describe as current that which, at best, is historic. He knew that dogged scrutiny of the industry, at both state and federal levels, laid to rest most of the ghosts which for so long haunted the State. As the one-time small industry grew into big business it could not survive doing what was charged.

But Olsen became bitter over his inability to prove these things. Proof of the abstract is an elusive thing. How does a woman prove virtue? Olsen's denials and explanations were glossed over by outside writers. They did not want to believe.

Olsen's problem might fascinate students of public relations but it looked dreary to the industry.

Here was the most informed man on the subject of gambling, announcing things that were unglamorous, saying exaggerated, that the outside writers were wrong. But the outside writers ignored Nevada's Board and Commission as though they were agencies of Nepal.

Finally the Answer Surfaces

Where did that leave the industry? It had long believed that final judgment must come from a disinterested organization, one unchallengeably honest and in a position to know. It had hoped that State government—the State's own police structure—would have such credibility.

It was in the spring of 1966, as has been explained, that the Legislature decided to retain some great outside accounting firm to come to Nevada to do the earnings analysis. The industry sighed with relief.

We will yet get to that Lybrand Report, the document that makes a start, but only a start, in telling the Nevada story.

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