

# OF THE STARS

## LESSONS ANYONE?

A well known Las Vegas resort hotel is suffering from feelings of ambivalence because of a promotional undertaking which otherwise has proved to be a rousing success with the public. However, Casino Gaming Supervisors (formerly known as "Pit Bosses") have been watching the venture with mixed emotions.

With some professional help - a university instructor, no less - the Frontier Hotel has begun a unique form of instruction in the game of "21", sometimes called Blackjack. A regulation fullsize 21 table was set up in the lobby of the Frontier, cards entitled "The Strategy of 21" printed, free play chips supplied, trained instructor-dealers were hired, and the fun began.

It was an instant success. An explanation came from William D. Friedman, an instructor at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. The course he teaches is "Casino

Operation and Management", part of the curriculum at UNLV for students seeking a degree in the College of Hotel Administration.

"Inexperienced gamblers are reluctant to approach a table where play is in progress", says Friedman. "They're afraid to interrupt, to slow down the game or to appear ignorant, although most dealers expect questions and are pleased to answer them. At the instruction table all these fears are dispelled, and the player is free to ask all the questions he wants, and to test his skill with free-play house chips." Consequently, every day there is a substantial crowd around the instruction table.

The instruction card shows when to "hit", "stand", "double down" or "split pairs". It also states that the chart is "a compendium of recommended action used

by leading authorities on gaming and odds arrived at by computer calculation". It cautions, however, that it is not represented to be a strategy for winning, but is offered "to aid them in learning the game of 21 while reducing their disadvantage and giving

them the most fun for their entertainment dollar."

Enter the suspicious casino executives. They, like everyone else, know that the odds favor the house. They have kept a close watch on the neophytes and find that many do in fact head directly for the casino from the instruction table. Thus far, however, it appears that the fears of the casino bosses have been unfounded, although those players who follow the rules find that their money goes further, and by "reducing their disadvantage", have managed occasional wins.

"And does that make

them happy!" says Bob Zonlick, one of the instructor-dealers. "Many of them come back to tell us how it worked, and thank us profusely for helping them." Zonlick is typical of the type of dealer whom Friedman has employed as a teacher. He is a gaming buff and has read every major publication on the subject. He is personable and patient and a modest theatrical background helps his presentation.

Friedman, too, has excellent credentials. He has written a reference manual entitled "Casino Management" for people in

the gaming industry. When published this fall (Lyle Stuart, Inc. Publishers, New York), it will sell for \$25.00. It is not expected to attract the same general readership as has another best seller entitled "The Sensuous Woman" by the same publisher.

Instruction in 21 at the Frontier has proved so successful that a special table has been set aside in the casino for teaching the vagaries of dice. Space and time permitting, the management of the Frontier Hotel plans to add roulette, baccarat and keno instruction.

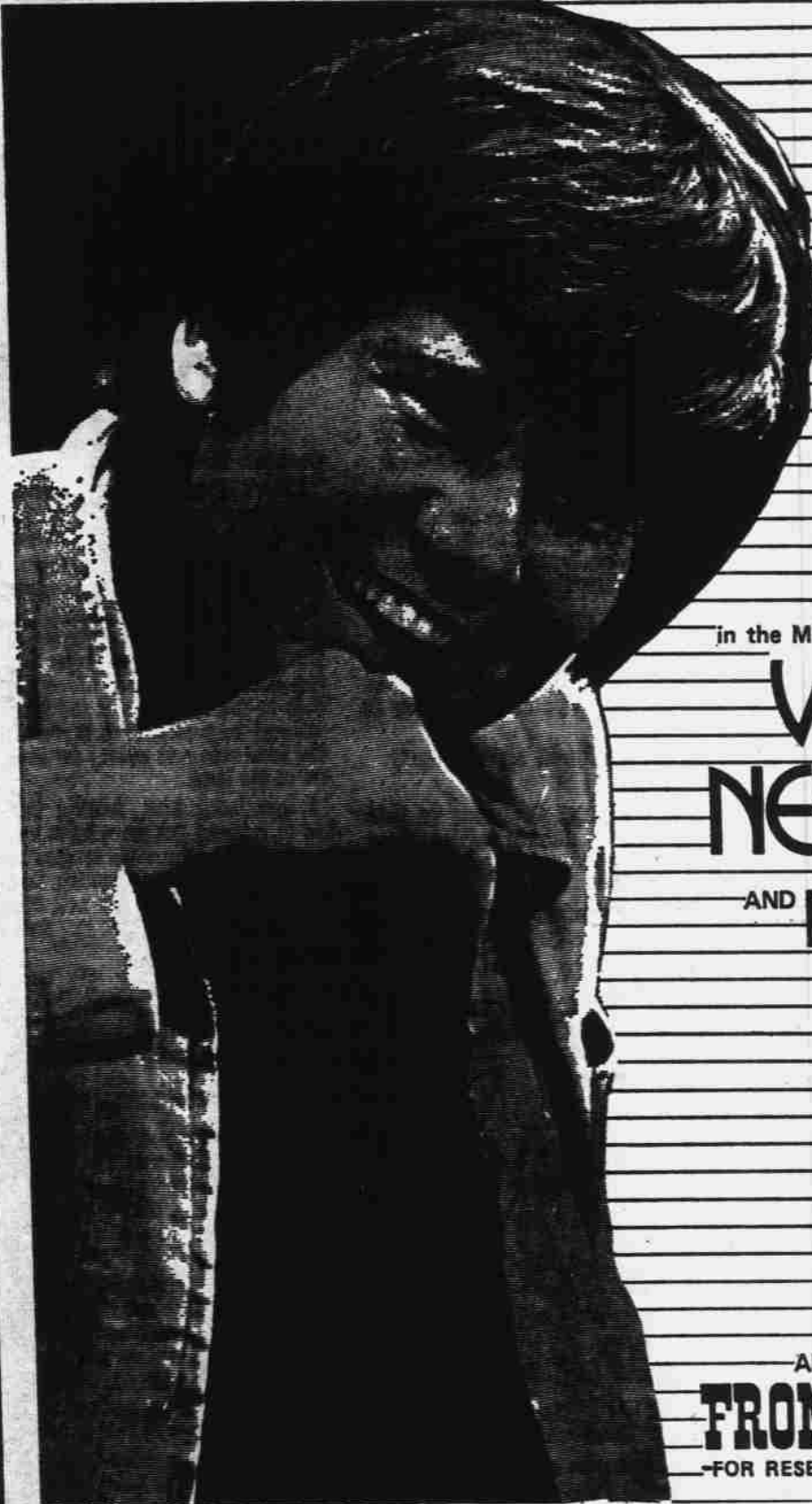
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