

# LAS VEGAS

# SHOWBIZ EAST

## Bill Willard's VEGASTARS

ON "VEGA\$" -- The recent flap about the vid - series "Vega\$" engineered by county commission chairman SAM BOWLER found some quick rebuttals to his charge that the popshow should be taken off the air because it wrongly portrays "mobsters and gangsters running every casino in town." Now, SAM won his race for reelection by 2 - 1 and this piece of political fodder, printed after the election, cause him to lose some votes, but not when it counted. SAM could never get the hang of newscasting when he was on KLAS - TV several years ago. When he was on the air reading his pieces, nobody cared much and that's when they cleared out to go to the bathroom, back in time for the lively blurb that followed his Siminexian delivery. Thus television has always perplexed SAM. He never found out it was invented only for selling stuff. And that's what "Vega\$" does. It sells stuff, all kinds of junk which Americans must have in order to

survive. And it sells them by means of the expensive junky shows seen on every channel. How does "Vega\$" get its authentic, colorful Las Vegas police yarns for private eye Dan Tanna to unravel? Production manager for the show, BUD BISHOP, gave a hint when I interviewed him last year. BISHOP was questioned that since the company has Hollywood writers whipping up teleplays about Las Vegas, wouldn't it be advantageous for them to spend some time here searching and researching information? BUD replied, "Let's put it this way. They assign 22 writers for 22 stories. Maybe out of the 22 or 24 stories that they send out for writers -- that's freelance writers all over Hollywood -- maybe you got 15 or 16 guys who are writing these 24, some have been up here, some have not.

"They're just coming in with story ideas, that's all they do and they're putting it together in a script. We have a producer in Los Angeles, LARRY FORRESTER and the Executive AARON SPELLING and DUKE VINCENT, who's supervising producer and two other story writers, you know, they're story consultants, or story editors. They get the script and put it in this kind of shape for us. They've been up here...."

So no matter the ire of GREG MORRIS, the actor who plays police Lt. Nelson in "Vega\$," or the irk of producer DON VINCENT who said

the show's writers are under strict orders to portray Las Vegas in a good light, and the prez of the Desert Inn, BURTON COHEN, who has found himself in some segments taking the place of a legitimate Screen Extra Guild or Screen Actors Guild player and boosterishly beams "The show has helped publicize Las Vegas and the D.I. - all over the world," and no matter all manner of protestations about lonesome SAM's belated political bombshell, the show "Vega\$" is just another cops n' robbers private eye shoot 'em up screaming rubber auto chase claptrap formula vehicle that television hack writers turn out for \$10,000 or \$12,000 per show to sell junk to the American consumer junky.



Showroom malady to be known henceforth as "Cher Blare," or distorted deafening sound levels after her recent citation at Caesars Palace, is really the fault of so - called entertainment directors who have abdicated their responsibilities, allow the acts to dictate all manner of offenses to the senses....CHER and CP got off easy with reduced amounts of \$180 each, but next time the Dept. of Occupational Safety and Health will level \$15,000 fines.... Sign of the times -- no bids were offered on Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority

### GEORGE M! OPENS AT UNION PLAZA

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It's one of the most enduring songs to ever come out of the wit and imagination of George M. Cohan... and now Las Vegas audiences will get to sing along with "Yankee Doodle Dandy," along with "You're a Grand Old Flag" and a host of others, when the Union Plaza Hotel presents GEORGE M!, the musical life story of George M. Cohan.

The unabashedly patriotic show opened Sept. 16, presenting the song and story of one of America's most beloved showmen nightly to an 8 p.m. and an 11:45 cocktail audience.

The show is produced by Maynard Sloate, with Jack Bunch and Voight Kempson sharing directing honors. Kempson is also choreographing the show that includes songs you've probably been humming to yourself for years -- "Always Leave 'Em Laughing," "Musical Moon," "Oh, You Wonderful Boy," "All Aboard for Broadway," "Twentieth Century Love," and "Billie."

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