

LAS VEGAS

SHOWCASE

Bill Willard's VEGASTARS

GIANI RUSSO tossed an elegant party celebrating the hole in the ground marking site of his new Renaissance hotel - casino over a year ago, but ran out of investors. But he did get enough money together to open a supperclub on State Street and that's the name of the joint which got underway on the 28th with a posh "black tie optional" party.....JOHNNY PAY-CHECK, who took lots of shoves before he warbled his million seller "Take This Job and Shove It," brings his West Texas Music Company into the Hacienda Feb. 15 for a fortnight... Plenty of news arrived about FRED TRAVALENA from his indefatigable PR pusher JUDI WOLFE, so if you're wondering where one of our fave impressionists was and is, read on. For starters FRED recently performed at the Touchdown Club's Sports Award Dinner in Washington honoring DANNY THOMAS who never ran for a touchdown in his life. Among attendees were PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN and ALEXANDER HAIG, both of whom were regaled by the TRAVALENA touch lampooning both men. Another shot about FRED is that he's been much involved with the National League of Families helping to raise loot for bringing back POW's and MIA's from Southeast Asia. On the vid-game show "Bullseye," airing soon in Vegas, FRED won \$35,000, which he donated to the cause....Also this shot from BARNEY RAWLINGS, pubbing for MERV GRIFFIN's Trans-American Video of Nev., that TAV's exec v.p. ROSS EASTTY has become the greatest booster of Lake Mead since COLONEL BOB RUSSELL introduced barricada to the lake as a publicity stunt -- appropriately for a video production exec his boat is "Prime Time".....Current at the Maxim in Cloud Nine Lounge are CALIFORNIA ZEPHR, CARLEEN & BRIAN, ANGELO TOLENTINO & JOHN AMORE, when you decide to do your evening partying there....DOC SEVERINSEN toots in to make his MGM Grand bow costarring with CRYSTAL GAYLE for a frame teeing Feb. 6 after DEAN MARTIN & THE GOLDDIGGERS have their sway....TONY BENNETT wraps a seven city concertour at Cincinnati's Music Hall Jan. 31....Catch PEG BOLEN'S joyous dance paintings at Charleston Heights Art Center.

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Not sky - shattering news, but Donna the Duck flew back to her pond on Las Vegas Country Club with a couple of mates, one of whom looks like Donald. Now if she keeps

dodging arrows from youngsters, all will be quiet newsie from duck headquarters....Caesars Palace rang with firecrackers and other entertainments last Saturday night as Chinese New Year celebrants from around the world began their hoopla toasting lunar year 4680 and start of the Year of the Dog. CP's v.p. and director of far - Eastern affairs, HOP LOUIE WOO, hosted the colorful three - day event....FBI crime stats rating Vegas third highest crime center in the US of A is drawing fire from Metro Police deputy chief ERIC COOPER. He sez if you compared the LV area with other communities of 200,000 or more, the city would rank 21st....Vegas also has to answer charge that it is the fifth worst polluted city in the country behind Fairfield, Conn., L.A., Denver, and Phoenix. Achoo y'all....And here's another stat to make your day - Convention Center survey shows 93% of all LV visitors are white and average winter tourist spends \$137 daily.

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LIBERACE wrapped his rousing Riviera preem of "Penthouse Serenade" Wednesday and offs on a 7 - day tour, but returns to headline the

Hilton March 30th. NEIL SEDAKA took over at the Riv with JOAN RIVERS, who again guest hosted "The Tonight Show" Monday through Wednesday....KELLY MONTEITH's award-winner BBC - II vidseries bearing his name, has been renewed for the 4th consecutive year and he's currently scribbling scripts for his '82 shows. The Vegas resident, who has become a major star in Blighty, skies to London in May to begin filming this year's epics for autumn airing...No one in Vegas takes a fling with rockers like the Sahara Tahoe, booking SHA NA NA, JEFFERSON STARSHIP, and PABLO CRUISE back to back, all three - nighters.... ROY CLARK has left the Summa fold for the nonce and marks his first Vegas engagement outside Summa showrooms in 11 years playing the Aladdin Feb. 15 for 17 nights.

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More on Aladdin booking -- HENNY YOUNGMAN will be matched with HELEN REDDY for a three - nighter Feb. 11 - 13 with the Bagdad Theatre dark the night before CLARK moves in with RODNEY LAY & THE WILD WEST FANCI and JIMMY HENLEY. ANN-MARGRET pranced back to Caesars with her dancing Raw Satin. In Cleopatra's Barge KELLY & CO. features former Miss Louisiana and runnerup to Miss America, PHYLLIS KELLY....The Tropicana's Fountain Theatre is up and away with the 5TH DIMENSION...TERRY RICHARDS of "The West Was Never Wilder" bunch at the Sahara, moved from lounge act "Unusual We" to form the band CHASE with BILL CHASE, who met an untimely death after an auto accident. But not before the band won a Grammy in


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