

LAS VEGAS

SHOWCASE

Bill Willard's VEGASTARS

If you are puzzled why some of the top Grammy nominees and winners aren't on the Vegas stages, consider WHITNEY HOUSTON's fee for a new posh Australian resort called Sanctuary Cove was \$700,000 for five days. But then, FRANK SINATRA, one of Bally's big guns, played there last week and received \$1 million for a single one-hour perf. SINATRA, blackballed from OZ for his description of journalists in that land as "bums and parasites," "Fags" and "dollar-and-a-half hookers" in 1974, vowed never to return. This trip, however, he even gave the media seven minutes and posed for photos with the bunch...Another wealthy singer, PIA ZADORA and her equally wealthy husband, Riviera owner MESHULAM RIKLIS, will spend \$2 million in "doing over" Pickfair, the legendary home of MARY PICKFORD & DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS. They bought the 42-room shanty for \$7 million and plan to move into the place with the two babies, KATY & BARZIE, sometime in March. PIA's gift this Xmas to pals was a watch with her picture on the dial wearing a black outfit. The hands of the watch were also black and impossible to see, which makes PIA and her little remembrance timeless...Remember PRESIDENT

PRUNEFACE's elegiac "morning in America" pitch a few years ago? In real time, people found out that maybe midnight is nigh according to the HARRIS poll. "Big majorities of Americans deeply desire a whole host of developments, from eliminating starvation in the world to ending war between nations with nuclear weapons," the survey stated. "However, only relatively small minorities expect to see these hopes fulfilled in their lifetimes"...More presidential follies — ABC network will air "Conversations with the Presidents" in April (KTNV-TV-13) spotlighting REAGAN, FORD & CARTER, with the quizzing by youngsters. NIXON nixed going on the show because ABC plans to air "The Final Days" from BOB WOODWARD's book about NIXON's not-so-grand finale in office during the Watergate scandal...The collection of spoken goofs by PRESIDENT PRUNEFACE grows daily and will become several volumes by the time he takes a powder in 1989. Here's one you may remember when he was trying to explain the patrolling of the Persian Gulf on a 24-hour policy: "It may be easy for some, after a near record 54-month economic recovery, to forget just how critical the Persian Gulf is to our national security."



ALAN BAER spent months making the rounds after his Tropicana exit looking for employment, but a pal, CHUCK DI ROCCO, offered him a challenge to direct advertising, marketing and p.r. departments of his weekly Sports Form.

ALAN responded to the challenge, so if you're a sport, call him at 873-1151 and wish him well...At the Trop, they had figured the odds at 80,000-to-one for a poker machine to hit a Royal Flush on the same machine two days in a row. JUNE KELP from White Deer, Texas, met that challenge winning \$28,836 on a \$5 video poker machine the first day and another \$20,000 the following day...JUNE kelp, being from Texas, is probably mourning the closing of BILLY BOB's "World's Largest Honky-Tonk" in Fort Worth. The joint bit the dust from lack of finances, but founder BILLY BOB BARNETT predicted the mammoth club would reopen somehow. BILLY BOB invited me to come to Ft. Worth and gander his club couple of years ago, said he would send along a plane ticket and give me the VIP treatment, same as he always gave WILLIE & WAYLON & TAMMY & DOLLY & REBA & LORETTA, without their salaries, of course. Well, BILLY BOB never sent along a plane ticket and I never got to see his famous honky-tonk, more's the pity...Vegan MARLENA SHAW has signed a new deal with Polygram and her new disk will be out this spring. She's a regular at ALAN GRANT's Monday Night Jazz at the Four Queens...Don't know if a crime was committed, but "Crime Story" creator MICHAEL MANN sued New World Pictures for allegedly underpaying him in royalties from the series which has its raison d'etre for all that crime in our city back when the moustaches were rife...For those Screen Actors Guild thespes who braved CHRIS KARAMANOS to get a line or two in BURT REYNOLD'S "Heat" shot here

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