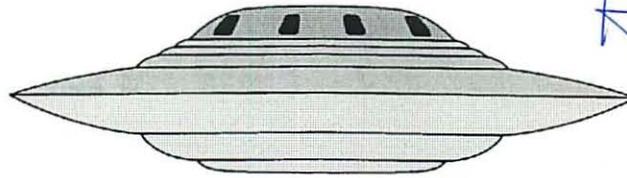


"Area 51"

Viewer's Guide

By Glenn Campbell



- ⇒ Mile-by-Mile Logs of Nevada 375, America's "Alien Highway"
- ⇒ Flying Saucer/Secret Aircraft Viewing Sites
- ⇒ Ghost Towns and Back Road Info
- ⇒ Services, Equipment & Safety
- ⇒ Map Portfolio
- ⇒ **Bonus!** Guide to Las Vegas

~~\$15.00~~
Compliments of
the Little A'letw
G-C.

Happy Hunting!
[Signature]

Bill -
Your comments
and corrections
are encouraged!
[Signature]
2-18-93

Researched Oct. 1992 through Feb. 1993
Preliminary Edition 2/17/93

Copy #770

You're On Your Own!

While every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the information herein, the author accepts no liability whatsoever for any damages or injury that may result if any information is in error. The fact that a road or other geographical feature is listed in this document does not necessarily imply that such travel is safe, legal or wise. The reader must judge for himself where he should and should not go.

About This Document

In UFO research, it can be hard to distill the truth from the overwhelming ocean of rumors, ideologies, hyperbole, hoaxes and false perceptions. Thus, I have chosen in this document to stay as close as possible to concrete, undeniable fact. This is a guide not to UFOs themselves but to the many practical matters concerning the hunt for flying saucers in the vicinity of Nevada's famous "Black Mailbox." This document reviews the geography of the region, the references available, local accommodations and services and many other practical topics of interest to visitors. Much of this information should be helpful to any traveler passing through the area regardless of their views on flying saucers. It should also be of special interest to aviation buffs in search of super-secret "Black Budget" aircraft, built entirely by humans.

More experienced viewers of Area 51 must please bear with me. Because there are so many unverifiable stories floating around, I have chosen to rely on my own direct observations and published references that can be easily confirmed. Although I include in this book the most common popular claims, I try to make it clear when I do not have any direct evidence for them myself. When in doubt, I try to err on the side of skepticism and let the reader seek his own evidence for these claims. To the best of my knowledge, I have not seen any flying saucers myself, but I have seen many objects that could easily be mistaken for them. I hope that these observations, reported herein, may at least help avoid future false perceptions.

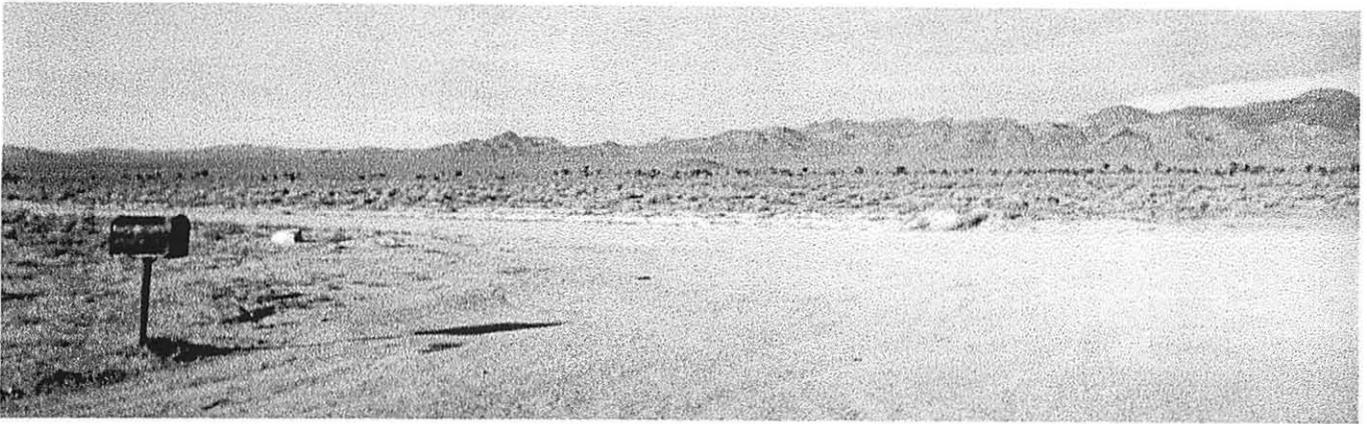
This document is in continual evolution. Although it reflects the best information available to me at the date of publication, everything contained herein should be considered tentative and subject to revision. [See UPGRADEPOLICY in the back.] I am sure there are many facts of which I am not aware, and I encourage readers to send me their corrections, additions, comments and suggestions to improve future editions. I am concerned about the accuracy of details, and minor corrections are welcomed as much as major ones. I am also interested in hearing about other people's sightings, be they of flying saucers, secret planes or things that might be taken for them. This information will be used to expand the "Flying Object Catalog." My address for correspondence can be found at the end of the document.

I have assembled this guide as a not-for-profit project at considerable personal expense. To help me recoup some of my costs, would you kindly not photocopy it but instead purchase additional copies. (Ordering instructions are in the back.) All authorized copies are signed in ink on the cover page.

Table of Contents

Commonly Asked Questions	3
The Highway and the Land	10
Preparation	12
Highway 375 Mileposts	26
White Sides	43
Day Excursions	48
A Summary of Lazar's Claims	51
A Flying Object Identifier	52
References	62
Guide to Las Vegas	69
Address for Corrections	79
Map Portfolio	Appendix

*Glenn Campbell
Rachel, Nevada
February 1992*



Commonly Asked Questions About Area 51

What is the "Black Mailbox" and why is it famous?

The Black Mailbox marks a location on Nevada Highway 375 where many UFO sightings have been reported. It was first publicized in late 1989 by Bob Lazar, an apparent physicist who claims to have worked at a secret "flying saucer base" in the Military Restricted Area north of Las Vegas. There have long been rumors of alien craft at the Nevada Test Site and adjoining Nellis Range, but Lazar was the first to make specific first-hand public claims. He says that the U.S. military in Nevada has in its possession at least nine alien-built flying saucers—but apparently no live aliens—and is studying the craft with the goal of reproducing the technology. Lazar says he worked at this base for several months in late 1988 and early 1989, read briefing documents and had extensive hands-on experience with the craft themselves. His story has been impossible to confirm but also curiously difficult to refute. If it is a hoax, it is coherent and well crafted. Many of the peripheral facts check out, and, most interesting to investigators, no government agency seems willing to flatly deny his claims. Even people who believe Lazar find it hard to make sense of it all. Where did the saucers come from? Why hasn't the public been told about them? There is no consensus on these questions, and one person's theory seems as good as anyone else's.

The Black Mailbox is simply a rancher's mailbox located at Lincoln County mile marker 29.5 on Nevada State Highway 375. This location is about 130 road miles north of Las Vegas and 20 miles southeast of the small settlement of Rachel, Nevada. This stretch of highway is significant because it is the closest that an average civilian can come to the highly restricted military base where Lazar claims the flying saucers are kept. Since his claims were first publicized, many people have come here looking for flying saucers and think they have seen them. Lazar and the Black Mailbox have been featured on national and international television, including segments on *Current Affair*, *Sightings* and Japanese network television. The area now attracts bus tours, conferences, believers, skeptics and charlatans, not to mention a steady stream of urban pilgrims in search of enlightenment. For the most part, however, the area remains as it always was, a vast and lonely desert where even million saucer watchers could easily get lost.

Will I see flying saucers here?

Maybe. If the Lazar stories are true, Highway 375 could be the best place in the world to see them. That does not mean that the task is easy, however. If the saucers are real, the government will certainly be cautious about putting them on display, especially after the recent publicity. Seeing a flying saucer on your first night out is the equivalent of winning a jackpot in Las Vegas: Theoretically, it might happen, but the odds are against it. You improve your odds the longer you stay and the more you learn about the area, but even then there are no guarantees. It is hard to be sure about anything concerning Area 51, not the least because of the vast mire of unsupported speculations publicized as fact by UFO believers.

Most of the "UFOs" people claim to see in this area are misperceptions of conventional military activity. In the skies of this region, swarms of aircraft can be seen doing a lot of amazing things, almost like an air show every day and night. There are many exercises taking place here that most civilians have never seen before, and it takes some skepticism and patience to figure out what could be alien and what is not. As one of the nation's premiere aircraft and weapons testing facilities, the Nellis Range can host many bizarre shows that involve no shred of alien technology. These include flares, missiles, dogfights, evasive tactics and nearly every kind of experimental helicopter, jet and hybrid.

Where are the flying saucers supposedly kept?

According to Lazar, the nine saucers he saw were stored in camouflaged hangers near Papoose Lake, south of Groom Lake. This area, also known as S-4 or "Dreamland" at least among UFO proponents, is walled off by mountains and protected by a wide off-limits buffer area. Even military pilots are not allowed to over-fly this area without special authorization. The view of the Papoose area from anywhere outside the Restricted Zone is very poor. There is no mountain you can legally climb to look down upon this dry lake bed, although a few might give you a better view of the airspace above it. Only the higher level airspace over Papoose can be seen from the vicinity of the Black Mailbox, but it is better than nothing.

Could the saucers have been moved from Dreamland since the publicity began?

That is certainly a possibility. However, there aren't many U.S. facilities, at least known to aviation experts, where you can hide and comfortably test something so secret. Cold areas like Alaska are inappropriate because the weather limits testing, and most other desert bases lack a protective ring of mountains. Lazar's description of specially built hangers also suggests that the saucers are well-entrenched at Papoose Lake.

Is the Black Mailbox the best place to set up watch?

That is debatable. The Black Mailbox appears to be an arbitrary location chosen because it is the only landmark in the vicinity. For viewing the airspace over Groom and Papoose Lakes, anyplace along that general stretch of highway should be just as good. The gravel area at mile marker 32.3 is a more discreet and comfortable parking spot than the Black Mailbox, and because it is slightly higher and closer to Papoose Lake, it is probably also a better viewing location. There are countless other places you can watch from—Every veteran watcher seems to have their favorite.—but Mile 32.3 is a good place to start.

When is the best time to look for flying saucers?

Conventional wisdom among watchers says that flying saucers are tested here on Wednesday nights between dusk and about 1 am. The choice of day is Lazar's, but this also adheres to the pattern often followed by conventional testing programs. It seems unlikely that aliens would have any special respect for Wednesdays, but keep in mind that these craft are supposedly operated by humans. There are two theories to account for Wednesday testing, both of which have their flaws. One theory says that the military once conducted a study which determined that Wednesday night is the time of least traffic along SR-375—a fact that certainly is not true today. The second theory says that Wednesday is consistent with the pattern of some other military testing programs. The people who test weapons systems and secret aircraft usually observe a Monday through Friday work week like everyone else. If tests are conducted once a week or less often, then from an organizational standpoint mid-week is the logical time. Monday is for briefings on the mission; Tuesday is for preparation; the test takes place on Wednesday, and Thursday is for debriefings. Friday is for cleaning up loose ends or, as in the rest of the working world, for goofing off.

The choice of Wednesday as a good saucer watching day is still very speculative, however, since both of these theories seem weak. To me, Wednesday appears to be more an article of faith than a firm certainty: It may have been true once, but now it seems more like a religious tenet passed around from watcher to watcher as though it was the word of God. The day has been very well publicized, so this is the time that most saucer watchers show up on the highway. If the military wanted a little more privacy, it wouldn't be hard to change the schedule. Many veteran watchers still think Wednesday is

best, but since very few people show up any other day, this is hard to confirm.

The best time of day to watch is also speculative. Top secret aircraft like the Stealth fighter and bomber have been tested at night to keep anyone from getting a good look at them, and the same logic might apply to flying saucers. As a practical matter for saucer watchers, it is much easier to spot any aircraft at night than in the day, assuming that it gives off light. The reports of Lazar and others suggest that the production of light is an inherent characteristic of flying saucer propulsion. You might be able to see more details of the craft during the day, but then you have no obvious beacon to tell you where to look.

In a nighttime testing program operated by humans, the staff usually wants to get the job over with and go home. Administrators know that late at night people are not in top form and are more likely to make mistakes. This suggests, but does not prove, that the first part of the evening, up to about midnight, is the most likely time for nighttime testing and the best period for sightings. This seems to conform with the bulk of reports, in which the most spectacular activity takes place well before midnight and often right around dusk. However, it is also true that many watchers leave or nod off around midnight, so they cannot confirm a lack of activity.

Finally, conventional wisdom also contends that some sort of display, known among watchers as "Old Faithful," shows up reliably around 4:45 am Thursday morning. (Some say it shows up reliably every morning.) There is no obvious organizational explanation for this, and you'll have to confirm it for yourself.

What is the best time of year to look for flying saucers?

According to the advice of the other saucer watchers you meet here, the most active period for flying saucers seems to be every season of the year except the time you happen to come. If you arrive in the summer, the wags will tell you that the saucer base is all but shut down and that the best time for viewing is September through May. Come back in January, and they will tell you the best time is July. This seasonal shift of opinion appears to be a convenient way to keep the faith when long nights go by and nothing happens. The unpleasant fact is, you can spend a lot of nights here, at any time of year, and not see anything unworldly. The greatest number of "saucers" tend to appear on your first night of watching, when you are inexperienced in identifying other phenomena. As you learn more about conventional military hardware, fewer and fewer "UFOs" will present themselves, until you might wonder if watching is worth the effort.

If you do not see any flying saucers, some encouragement can be drawn from the fact that you also are not seeing much of the rumored Aurora spy plane or any other conventional "Black Budget" aircraft currently being tested at Groom Lake. Groom Lake is a facility even closer to the Black Mailbox than Papoose Lake, so activity there ought to be easy to detect; nonetheless, if you were here five years ago, you would have had great difficulty catching a glimpse of the Stealth fighter and bomber, secret aircraft that definitely existed and definitely were flown regularly from Groom Lake. Groom Lake is a big facility that the government does not officially acknowledge and that has one of the longest runways in the world: *Something* secret must be tested there. Over the years, the Air Force has developed great proficiency in keeping aircraft secret, probably using decoy procedures and flight patterns designed to avoid detection. These people aren't dumb. If they are trying to keep something secret, then it follows that you will have difficulty seeing it.

On the other hand, if you are testing a secret aircraft, be it a "conventional" Black Budget plane or something more exotic, then you have to fly it. The time of year is not relevant, especially in Nevada, which has been chosen for its excellent year-round flying conditions. If military officials expect something to fly in the future, then they have to fly it now, on a regular basis. Only then can they be sure that all hardware systems and pilot proficiencies will be functional when they need them. If a watcher is fortunate enough to know where a secret craft is based and to have a view of the airspace and approach zones, then all he has to do is wait... and wait. Sooner or later, if the craft exists, it has to fly and has to pass within his view, even if only in a momentary dash to a higher altitude.

How will I recognize a flying saucer when I see one?

That's a good question. It is certainly more difficult than it seems. First of all, you have to have a

good understanding of conventional military devices and what they are capable of. There are aviation experts, firm believers in UFOs for other reasons, who have spent many nights here and not seen anything inexplicable. At the same time, many novices who spend only one night on watch become convinced that saucers are everywhere. The difference, of course, is that the experts know how to identify the conventional hardware that novices immediately assume are alien craft.

A true flying saucer, if there is one, would be an object that could change direction abruptly, travel vertically as easily as horizontally, stop on a dime, take off again at high speed and possibly vanish from view in mid-air. The most common report is of a bright object that jumps from one point to another almost instantaneously, but one should also keep in mind that natural oscillations of the eye can also generate this apparent effect. To confirm the identification, the movements would have to be so dramatic as to rule out both conventional craft and the various optical illusions which can make distant lights appear to dance.

Few watchers in this area claim to have seen a distinct saucer, only dramatic moving lights. Even if you did see a saucer-like craft, the shape alone would not necessarily confirm an alien device because certain known and rumored conventional aircraft may also have a circular form. For example, the Stealth fighter appears as a saucer when seen head-on, and many other conventional aircraft can also appear saucer-like under certain conditions.

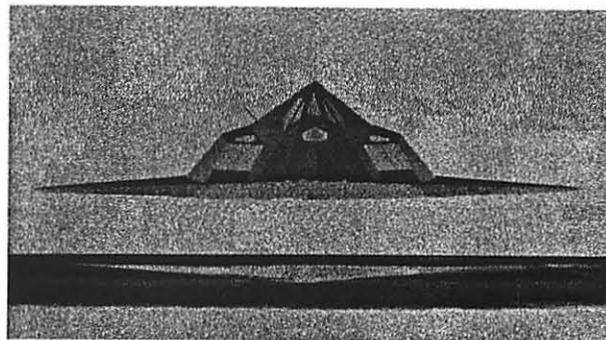
What is Groom Lake?

Groom Lake, the dry lake bed just north of Papoose Lake, hosts a testing facility for conventional, "merely" Top Secret aircraft. While the existence of a base at Papoose Lake had not yet been proven, the base at Groom Lake definitely exists, even though officially denied. The Stealth fighter and bomber were put through their paces from this airfield, and today the testing subjects are said to be very high speed reconnaissance jets.

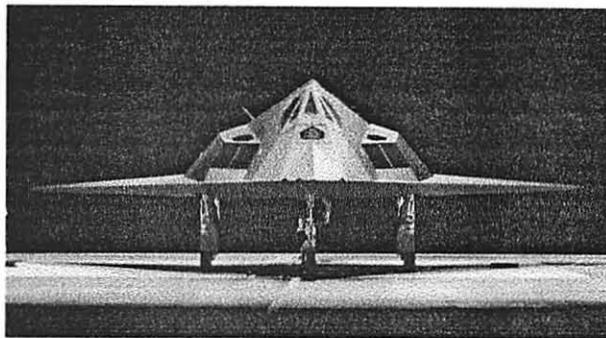
Of particular interest to aviation fans is a rumored Mach 5 to Mach 8 spy plane dubbed *Aurora*.¹ Like the Stealth before it, this plane is shrouded in deep secrecy, and the military has vigorously denied its existence. Although few outside the military establishment have seen this plane, many have sensed its presence. *Aurora* can be identified by its unusual sound: a very loud, deep, throbbing roar unlike any other aircraft. This sound is often heard in Rachel, not far from the Black Mailbox. *Aurora* appears to be based on known aerodynamic and engineering principals, but its radical design could make it appear unearthly. It is said to be a sort of "flying wedge" with no obvious wings. Catching a glimpse of and trying to photograph such an advanced plane is a challenge in itself which draws many aviation fans to the area who do not expect to see flying saucers.

Because it is a very secure area, Groom Lake could also conceivably be used for the testing of "Above Top Secret" craft from Papoose Lake, but this is speculation. Groom Lake is not the place where Lazar claims the saucers are held—a fact that often seems forgotten. Saucer watchers seem to focus their attention on Groom Lake mainly because it is fairly accessible while Papoose Lake is not.

Most of Groom Lake is said to lie within the geographical sector of the Nevada Test Site known as "Area 51," while Papoose Lake is referred to by Lazar as "Area S-4." It is not clear what these designations mean or where their boundaries are. "Area 51," in particular, seems to have almost as



Saucer? Guess again...



Stealth fighter, front view.

¹The name comes from an unexplained line item on a Pentagon budget. See *Aviation Week* articles in References.

many definitions as "Watergate" or "New Age." Used in the vernacular by UFO buffs, it refers both to this whole broad region of the Restricted Zone and to the alleged government cover-up of flying saucers hidden inside.

Is there any mountain I can legally climb to look down on Groom Lake?

Apparently, there is. Although the Restricted Zone was extended in 1986 to include most of the Groom Range, one vantage point appears to have been overlooked. It is a small mountain called White Sides about a mile and a half north of Groom Lake Road near the south end of the Groom Range. According to maps, it is about a mile outside the boundary of the Restricted Zone. Longtime Area 51 watchers do not expect this loophole to last for very long, but as of this writing White Sides appears to still be legal.

From the top of White Sides, you can look down on an airstrip and some hangers on a dry lake bed—nothing very dramatic at first glance, although the airstrip, hangers and communications facilities are said to be exceptionally large. The hike is fairly strenuous, takes 1-2 hours each way and, because it cuts very close to the Restricted Zone, should be undertaken only with great caution. Do not attempt this expedition until you have an absolute certainty about the geography, and do not bring a camera. ***Repeat, do not bring a camera of any kind.*** Photography of the base is illegal, and there is a very high likelihood you would be caught. White Sides is a very exposed location where the security people can see everything you do. If they catch you with a camera, your camera will be confiscated and the film developed for you. If any photos of the base show up, you will be facing federal charges. (Other watchers have already gotten away with it, and these photos and videos are freely available, so there may be no sense in risking your own arrest.) Other than the prohibition on photography, the security forces have no legal grounds for stopping you. (However, they can annoy you by calling the Sheriff, who could cite you for violating some minor state laws. See LAW ENFORCEMENT and the White Sides entry in the MILEPOST GUIDE.)

Will I encounter security personnel in the area?

If you leave the paved road and approach the Restricted Zone, there is indeed a high likelihood you will encounter security. The boundaries around Groom and Papoose Lakes are patrolled by two-man teams in four wheel drive vehicles. Look for an unmarked light green Ford Bronco with a light bar on top and two male occupants in fatigues. These are burly, well-armed but frequently pleasant chaps who will admit only to working for a "civilian entity." Conventional wisdom says that they are culled from elite armed forces units and employed by the mysterious Wackenhut Corporation under military contract, but this is not confirmed. (They themselves deny they work for Wackenhut, and other sources back this contention.) These guards have no legal authority outside the Restricted Zone, but they also have no responsibility to please the public and are accountable for their actions only to their ultimate employer, the military. The military, in turn, denies they exist. Although courteous under relaxed circumstances, you would not want to get on their bad side. These guards have the guns, brawn and anonymity to do what they want, and there aren't many witnesses out here to say that you were right and they were wrong.

You probably have nothing to worry about if you remain in the vicinity of the paved highway. As you approach the Restricted Zone on dirt roads, the security people tend to become increasingly edgy. As they see it, you are "challenging their borders," even if you do not actually cross. Although you have a reasonable right to travel on the public lands bordering the Zone, you should also expect every letter of the law to be enforced here. If you make the slightest legal misstep, like parking within 100 yards of a cattle watering trough, you should expect the maximum penalty to be imposed. (In this case, a fine of \$155.)

Whatever you do, do not bring a gun of your own. Their guns will always be bigger than yours, and having a weapon in your possession just gives them an excuse to shoot. Intruding citizens *have* been shot, supposedly because they violated the Restricted Zone and raised a gun to security personnel. We will hear only the government's side of the story in cases like this because being shot, in this place, means hamburger.

What will happen if I intrude into the Restricted Zone.

Don't do it. You should not be fooled by the absence of fences and signs along many parts of the border. Intruding into the Restricted Zone is a very serious offense and should not be taken lightly. If you violate "the box," you are leaving civilian territory and surrendering your usual citizen protections. To put it bluntly, *they can kill you*. The signs at the border say, "Use of Deadly Force Authorized," and you should believe it. The fact that no unarmed saucer watcher has been killed *yet* should not reassure you. Don't get any kooky ideas about conducting Greenpeace-style commando raids or descending on the border *en masse* to overwhelm security and "smash open the wall of UFO secrecy." These installations are equipped with overwhelming firepower, and stopping an assault is exactly what it is there for.

It is also important to remember that the Restricted Zone is not shown accurately on some older maps. To be safe, do not leave the paved highway south of 375 until you have reviewed a new map and are certain of your geography. Ignorance is not a legal defense. Short of being shot, the maximum penalty for intrusion is one year imprisonment and a \$5,000 fine, although a simple fine of \$500 appears to be the norm.

Who owns the land outside the Restricted Zone?

Most of the land surrounding the military area—as well as over 85% of the land in all of Nevada—is controlled by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management which leases it to farmers, ranchers and miners. Your exact legal rights on this land are not always clear—It depends on the kind of lease the tenant has.—but it is generally accepted that you can travel freely on BLM land as long as you stay clear of tenant installations like buildings, corrals and water troughs. In the vicinity of the Black Mailbox, the only tenant is the Medlin Ranch, which holds grazing rights in the Tikaboo Valley. According to reliable sources in Rachel, the Medlins and their employees are not government agents, just hard-working people trying to make a living in a very sparse land. Regardless of what your legal rights may be, it is common courtesy to stay as far away as possible from the ranch compound and all cattle operations and to not do anything that would be annoying to *you* if you were in their shoes.

Scattered pockets of land, like the house sites and farm around Rachel, are privately owned, and you should stay clear of these properties anyway as a matter of courtesy. On the ground, there is no easy way to tell what is private, public and military land, so you have to remain aware of where you are. Study your maps, give all buildings a wide berth, stay on existing roads, and watch for posted signs that might hint at local sentiments. If you encounter a gate or any kind of Keep Out sign, then do not proceed.

How do the local residents feel about flying saucers and the people who come to look for them?

Nearly everyone living along this highway has seen spectacular aerial lights they cannot explain, but opinion is divided as to whether the activity represents alien technology. In any case, the topic is not laughed off, and no one claims to fully understand what is going on. Only outsiders think they have things all worked out, usually before they even arrive.

Plenty of loony people have come here spouting a lot of exotic theories, and this may result in a natural reluctance of many residents to discuss the matter. Local ranchers whose land abuts the Restricted Zone, as well as local residents who work there, are probably barred from discussing military activity, so don't pester them. Visitors are welcome here as long as they adhere to a commonsense respect for residents' privacy and property. If you don't come off like a flake or try to browbeat people with your opinions, then residents might be willing to talk to you, but in general it is probably best to leave them their space and conduct your own independent investigation.

You can feel comfortable asking Pat and Joe at the Little A'Le'Inn about UFOs (when they are not busy), because unlike other Rachel residents, they have accepted a role to serve saucer watchers. However, they have not done much watching themselves, mainly because they have had to stay home and mind the Inn while the alleged sightings take place some 20 or 30 miles away.

Will I be abducted by aliens while visiting this area? Are my cattle safe? Should I look for crop circles in the desert brush?

According to Lazar's claims, these saucers may be of alien origin, but they are currently housed and operated by humans. There is nothing in Lazar's story to suggest that current alien activity is greater here than anywhere else.

That said, cattle mutilations *have* been reported nearby.² Reputable ranchers near Alamo claim to have lost a number of animals to this mysterious "disease"—that is, all blood drained from the body without a drop on the ground, laser-like "zipper" incisions in the corpse and parts of the body surgically removed. Whether this means that humans are next on the menu is a matter of speculation, but if you are going to be fearful here, you might as well live in fear anywhere on the planet. If the aliens are real and have all the powers they are credited with, then there is probably no place you can hide. If they wanna getcha, they're gonna getcha.

Might I "disappear" or "have an unfortunate accident" if I see more than the government wants me to?

As far as can be determined, no deliberate physical harm has ever befallen an unarmed saucer watcher along Highway 375. People have supposedly had guns pointed at them, and those who have violated the Restricted Zone have been arrested and given stiff fines, but government interference appears unlikely if you stay close to the paved highway. If the cover-up is real, then some "saucer nut" out on the highway, taking fuzzy photographs and telling unverifiable stories, isn't nearly as much of a security threat as, say, a government insider with first-hand knowledge. Harming or threatening to harm an outsider to try to keep him quiet presents many unknowns and could backfire. Any effort to discredit a witness or suppress his testimony would probably be more trouble than it is worth, since most UFO enthusiasts are undisciplined observers anyway and usually end up sabotaging their own credibility with unsupported claims.

That does not mean you are safe from all threats, however. The saucer nut's greatest enemy is himself if he does not understand his own limitations and the natural dangers of the desert.

What conventional dangers do I face in this area?

The most serious conventional threat is... cattle mutilation. This kind is not bloodless, however. Highway 375 runs through unfenced range. The stock are cleverly camouflaged and have little fear of the road, so you have to be alert at all times. These animals *want* to be mutilated, but the encounter isn't so healthy for you or your car. The danger is ever-present but is especially serious at night, when a maximum speed of 50 mph is both recommended and actually adhered to by local residents.

The second most serious danger is your vehicle breaking down on a remote dirt road. Nevada is a land of freedom and self-reliance, and that includes the freedom to screw yourself up without any hope of rescue. If you choose to leave the paved highway, make sure you have brought enough water and other supplies to get yourself out of any mess you can get into.

Summer heat should be given serious consideration when planning a journey here. Wear light clothing and a hat and carry plenty of water. You should also be prepared for nighttime cold any time of year. In the desert, the temperature plummets after dark—by as much as 40°—and you may need warm clothes to compensate. (People from Southern California often seem particularly ill prepared for the cold, not fully comprehending the concept.)

Lesser dangers include falling down abandoned mine shafts and being bit by desert critters. Both can be avoided by walking slowly and watching where you step. The hills of this region are peppered with mine tunnels, which can be gaseous and structurally unstable inside. Stay out.

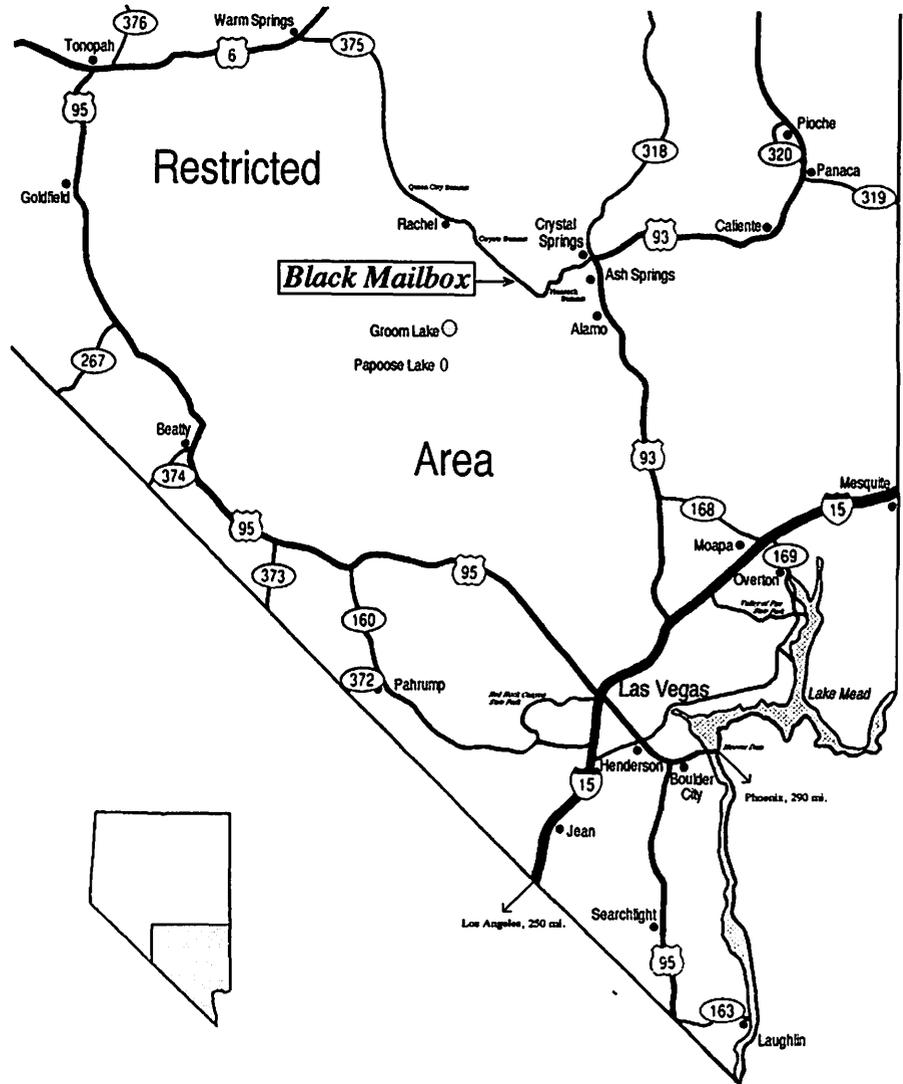
²According to the KLAS-TV series *UFOs: The Best Evidence*, in which two Alamo ranchers and a former Lincoln County sheriff are interviewed. Some say satanic cultists are to blame for the mutilations, but if so they are very efficient.

The Highway and the Land

As a cut-off between the lightly traveled US-93 and even quieter US-6, State Highway 375 easily qualifies as one of the loneliest roads in America. There are only a handful of residents along its hundred mile length, most of them in the tiny settlement of Rachel at roughly the highway's midpoint. The highway runs southeast to northwest through the Nevada desert along the northern boundary of the vast Military Restricted Area. The terrain is a series of parallel desert valleys, each running roughly north to south and separated by rugged and treeless mountain ranges.

Each valley is a vast, bowl shaped basin that was a lake in wetter times. Today the only hint of standing water is usually a dry lake bed to which seasonal rainwater flows and then evaporates. A typical valley is about 15 miles wide and 30-40 miles long and seems from a distance completely barren and reminiscent of the planet Mars. The absence of trees, the concave valley shape and dry desert air mean that from any one point in a valley you can usually see every other point, even dozens of miles away. There is little privacy here, but then again, there is no one much to watch you either. In a typical desert valley, a ranch compound is the only habitation, meaning that the population density is considerably less than one person per square mile. It's more like one cow per square mile.

Plant and Animal Life. The most visible residents of most of these desert valleys are cattle, who wander unfenced across the road. You may also see jackrabbits, ground squirrels and perhaps a coyote. Most other animal residents remain out of sight during the day. A walk through the desert reveals the ground riddled with burrows, home of many interesting nocturnal creatures who you will probably never meet. Nor will you encounter any impressive plant life in this desert, like the giant saguaros of Arizona, or even a tree. Only desert scrub grows here, even on the mountains. This desert is part of the Mojave ecosystem. The only large plant is the Joshua tree, looking like a kind of primitive pine tree with needle-like leaves growing directly from the trunk and branches. Elsewhere these can grow 20-40 feet in height, but here they are relatively small and sparse in number. Most of



the vegetation is stiff shrubs and grasses which appears gray and lifeless most of the year. When the weather is windy, tumbleweeds blow across the highway like in the Hollywood westerns.

Climate. In southern Nevada, there is not a lot of “weather.” Days are generally clear with temperatures dictated by the season. Highs well over 100° F. are common in the summer, but it is a dry heat that is relatively easy to cope with. That is not to say that summer temperatures are pleasant, but as long as one dresses lightly, wears a hat and drinks plenty of water, the heat is not dangerous in itself and does not prevent most activities. In Spring and Fall, the climate can often be described as “perfect,” with highs of 60° to 80°F during the day and lows of 30° to 50° at night. Winter nights along 375 can be bitterly cold, but daytime temperatures almost always rise above freezing. Light snow is common here in the winter, but it usually melts quickly in the valleys. When “weather” does come to this region, it is dramatic: Paradoxically, summer heat is often punctuated by violent thunderstorms dumping much of the water for a year in the space of a few minutes. These storms are melodramatic spectacles, with dark clouds moving ominously across the landscape spewing jagged bolts of lightning. Needless to say, it is unwise to be caught in an exposed location when these fronts pass through.

For weather information, look up Las Vegas in your local newspaper. (Or call the local weather line: (702) 734-2010.) The Tikaboo Valley, where the Black Mailbox is located, has an elevation of about 4500 feet compared to 2000 feet for Las Vegas, so temperatures may be 10° to 20° cooler. While snow is unlikely in Las Vegas in winter, it is common along 375. The elevation may also mitigate the temperatures in the summer, but the difference between 120° and 110° is not a lot to cheer about.

The Skies. For a visitor from any urban area, rural Nevada’s nighttime skies are an amazing show—with or without flying saucers. On the majority of nights, stars usually blanket the heavens in an amazing density and are perfectly clear down to the horizon. There are so many stars that it can be hard to pick out the major constellations among all the clutter. The Milky Way cuts a bright band across the sky, and the whole celestial production casts enough light, without a moon, that you can see the outlines of your immediate surroundings on earth. In the rural Nevada skies, there is very little of the “light pollution” found in populated areas. Elsewhere, the sky glows with the light of street lamps reflecting from the clouds and haze, but here there are almost no artificial lights, and the desert air is so dry that there would not be much for them to reflect from anyway. The extreme clarity of the night sky may make it easier to spot flying saucers, but it can also disorient saucer watchers with deceptive distances and common celestial phenomena like meteors and satellites.

Along 375, the only noticeable light pollution is a smudge above the southern horizon. This is the reflected lights of Las Vegas, a city known for its superfluous lighting.

The Road. Although Highway 375 seems remote by most definitions, it is not hard to get to, at least from the south. From Las Vegas to the Black Mailbox is any easy drive of just over two hours on top quality, cruise control compatible highways. 375 itself is a two lane blacktop in excellent condition. It has wide shoulders, few curves, only moderate grades and no potholes. Needless to say, there’s not much traffic to contend with: no more than a dozen cars an hour at rush hour and less than one an hour at night.

Preparation

Recommended Equipment

Services are extremely limited along Highway 375: Just one gas station, a restaurant and basic lodging in Rachel. The next significant town westbound is Tonopah, 110 miles from Rachel, but even this isn't exactly Mall City—just one supermarket with highway-robbery prices. Eastbound, there are gas stations, small grocery stores, lodging and a scattering of small shops in Caliente, Ash Springs and Alamo. The closest major supermarkets and department stores are in Cedar City, Las Vegas and Reno; if you are passing through any of these cities be sure to stock up on food and supplies there. Following are some items to consider bringing on an expedition to this area. (Many of these items are helpful even if you have no interest in UFOs.)

A supply of *drinking water* is essential any time of the year, but it is especially critical in the summer. [See SUMMER PREPARATIONS, below.]

Binoculars are useful for general sightseeing and are absolutely essential for saucer or aircraft watching. These need not be expensive: A \$20 pair is pretty much the same as a \$100 model of the same magnification and field width. (I bought mine at Wal-Mart for \$40: 10 x 50. They also carry a 7 x 35 model for \$20, which is almost as good. A 20 x 50 pair has been seen in a mail order catalog for \$50: Call Sportsman's Guide at (800) 888-3006 and ask about item #R1-2046.) Due to the clarity of the desert air, visibility is limited only by the magnification of your viewing device, but the view through hand-held binoculars also tends to get shakier at higher magnifications, and the narrower field of view may make it harder to locate moving targets and scan a large area of the sky. Unless you have \$1000 to spend on something fancy, probably 10 x 50 is the best choice.

For reporting your nighttime observations, it is useful to know the field of view of your binoculars. This is usually printed on the top of the binoculars as arc degrees (usually 5° to 10°) or as the field width at a distance of 1000 yard or meters (usually 200 to 400 feet at 1000 yards). If someone asks, "How big was it?" or "How far did it move?" you can answer in terms of the field width of your binoculars: "It took up half the field width of my binoculars, or 3 arc degrees."

Remember to bring a *flashlight*. You may not need it much on nights with a moon, but it is still important to have. *Dark sunglasses* are handy during the day, since the sun can be very bright reflecting off the light colored land surfaces.

Warm clothes are important for nighttime watching, since the temperature drops rapidly after dark. Be prepared for 40° below the daytime temperature. Be sure to bring adequate bedding if you plan to sleep in your vehicle. (This is probably a better option than sleeping out in the open, due to the various prickly critters roaming at night.) Warm under- and outerwear is especially important for winter nights, when temperatures fall well below freezing. If you come here then, dress like an Eskimo.

An *RV* would be nice to bring if you have one; there are plenty of hookups in Rachel and many discreet places to park elsewhere. As an alternative, if renting a car, you may want to consider a luxury model for the extra sleeping space. Renting a luxury car would also give you *cruise control*, which greatly enhances driving comfort on this sort of landscape. On these straight and open highways, you can almost set your speed, crawl into the back and sleep until you get there.

An eminently useful accessory would be a *high clearance vehicle*, like a pickup truck, four wheel drive or Humvee, but this is not required. Highway 375 is a sealed blacktop in excellent condition, and many of the dirt roads leading off it are maintained and possible for a passenger car to handle. On more rugged unmaintained dirt roads, four wheel drive is not as important as high clearance, since the major problem is not steep slopes but high rocks and plants in the middle hump of the road. Four wheel drive could certainly be handy, allowing you to explore even further into the mountains, but since off-road driving is damaging to the desert and won't take you anyplace special, a

two-wheel drive pickup is almost as useful.

If you don't have a high clearance vehicle, consider bringing a *mountain bicycle*. This could handle nearly all the dirt tracks in this area and might be thought of as the poor man's Stealth, much less visible than a car if you want to travel unnoticed. The local terrain seems made for mountain biking, and there are plenty of tracks to explore. Since the distances are vast, a bike would be best used only after you already gotten close to your destination in a motor vehicle. It would be especially nice for ghost town touring because each town is usually surrounded a network of interesting roads. Consider equipping your bike with the new "airless" foam inner tubes to prevent flats. (Available for \$15-\$19 each at Wal-Mart.)

A useful optional item for serious saucer watchers is an *electronic kitchen timer* that you can set to go off at periodic intervals. If nothing is happening in the sky, you can set the timer and go to sleep, then wake up every hour or so for sample observations. A *compass* is also helpful, but it is not required, since it is easy to determine direction using a map and surrounding landmarks. Serious watchers should consider bringing a small, hand-held *tape recorder* to record observations as they happen. In the dark, it is hard to write things down, and the human memory for details fades quickly. If you see an aerial light, you can talk about where it is, how it moves and when it appears and disappears. If you take pictures, you can record the f-stop and exposure settings. If you travel new roads, you can record the mileage points and landmarks as you drive. This is an immensely helpful item for data collection, with the only problem being what to *do* with the data once you have collected it.

There are certain to be many long stretches in any saucer watch when nothing happens. At these times, boredom and sleepiness may suppress your interest long before any threats from the government. To fight off these private demons, you may want to bring some form of audio entertainment. An *AM/FM radio* is a good idea; bring a portable one in case you leave the car. FM reception is unlikely, but at night you can pick up AM radio stations from Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. Larry King will keep you company.

Finally, I suggest bringing a healthy supply of *caffeine*, in whatever form is your pleasure.

Cameras

A still or video camera is not as useful as you might suppose for proving that you saw a certain nighttime display. Take a snapshot of a moving aerial light, and what you get is an ambiguous blob or streak in the middle of the picture. Scattered throughout the Little A'Le'Inn are many snapshots taken by visitors, each as vague and unsatisfying as the next. A blob of light in the middle of a dark photo could have a lot of explanations and does not prove anything to a stranger. The same applies to video pictures: Camcorders are not nearly as sensitive to low light as the human eye, so you might only capture a moving ambiguous blob. While a bright light itself might show up on film or video tape, the most important element of such pictures is some kind of identifiable background to put the blob into perspective. Good photography in nighttime conditions requires a high degree of technical skill, and the attempt to take pictures may only distract you from your observations.

Another consideration regarding cameras is legal. At the end of the Groom Lake Road (LN 34.6), you will encounter stern signs that warn, "Photography of this area is prohibited" Not long ago, the U.S. Government banned all Soviet citizens from the state of Nevada for fear of the sort of activity we are now engaged in—snooping around the borders of restricted areas with binoculars and cameras. Although the national enemy is no longer clear, one can assume that the Cold War regulations are still on the books and that photography of militarily sensitive areas could result in arrest or loss of your camera. The prohibition on the signs was not "within this area," but "*of* this area," so the laws might also apply to photos taken from a hillside many miles away. There aren't any "photography police" cruising 375 ready to confiscate your camera, but you should not discount that possibility on dirt roads approaching the Restricted Zone. It is my intention to stay within the law myself and not incite anyone to espionage, so if you do take pictures, you didn't hear me recommend it.

However... if you did intend to take still pictures under conditions like this, it would be very important to experiment beforehand with films and exposures. Go out at night in a dark part of your

own hometown and try taking pictures of planes passing overhead. At night, it is not possible to take a quick snapshot and expect to capture anything useful. Auto-focus, auto-exposure and other newfangled camera features are virtually useless under these near-darkness conditions. Long exposures are usually required, and that means you need a tripod and a flexible shutter release cable. The ideal photograph would show the horizon or the stars, in front of which a moving object would perform its show. This streak of light might not prove anything to someone else, but it would at least provide a personal reference for your own recollections of the event—color, size, direction of movement, etc. The photograph might show at least that the sighting is not an obvious misidentification, like a meteor, car headlights or a planet. A photograph, no matter how good, means nothing by itself. As a record of your sighting, it would only supplement, not replace, a detailed verbal description.

In my own experiments, I have obtained satisfactory pictures of the stars and planes passing overhead with ASA-400 film, aperture wide open at f1.8 and an exposure of 15 seconds. On clear, moonless nights, overexposure is not a threat, but in shots of more than 30 seconds you can expect to see the stars appear as streaks as the earth rotates on its axis. Be sure to record the particulars of every shot you take: f-stop, exposure, date, time of day, zoom factor, location, direction, subject. It is nice to have a tape recorder for this, then later transcribe this data into a notebook or computer. This information becomes vital if you actually capture something unusual on film, and even if you don't, it still gives you feedback to improve your future pictures.

A high power telephoto camera lens is probably not very helpful at night unless it is a zoom lens that offers a standard field width as well. At night, the higher magnification is only useful if you have a tripod and know where to point the camera; an unpredictable, swiftly moving target would be very hard to capture. The best choice of lenses would probably be a medium power zoom lens, say 80-200mm. You can start out with a wide view, then zoom in on an object if it happens to stand still. As a supplemental lens, a generic 500mm f8 mirror lens for any SLR camera is widely available for between \$100 and \$130. (Consult the mail order ads in any photography magazine. One brand is Kalimar, but there are others.) In general, low-light capability would probably be more helpful than high magnification, since this would allow you to take shorter exposures and capture faster action.

The low light shortcomings of consumer video cameras make them almost useless at night, since a bright blob dancing alone in the frame means nothing. A camcorder would certainly be helpful if a brightly lit spaceship happened to swoop down within a few feet of you, but for long-range shots of moving lights, it would only be useful around dusk and dawn when the background landscape is still sufficiently illuminated to register in the frame.

Summer Precautions

Plenty of water is essential in the summer, when you must force yourself to drink as much as a quart an hour. As long as you keep up your water intake, are lightly clad and wear a broad-brimmed hat, you can survive the high temperatures without any danger. (Especially useful is a "French Foreign Legion" type hat to protect your neck from sunburn. You can make one yourself, without joining the Legion, by pinning a handkerchief to the back of a baseball cap.) You can get by without air conditioning even in 100 degree heat, since the air in the desert is dry enough to make sweat an effective coolant. Still, summer days in southern Nevada can be a uncomfortable, nowhere near as pleasant as Spring and Fall. (The compensation, however, is that summer nights are pleasantly warm.) On summer afternoons, extraordinary temperatures are often punctuated by dramatic afternoon thunderstorms dumping enormous amounts of water. This weather can play havoc with unpaved roads for weeks after, but the storms themselves usually clear quickly and the heat rapidly returns.

Make sure that your vehicle is well supplied with all its bodily fluids, too. "Baja" preparations should be considered if you plan to travel back roads in the summer: That is, bring everything you might need to get yourself out of any conceivable dilemma. However, an alternative to carrying every possible auto part is simply to bring a mountain bicycle. Unlike Mexico, Australia or the Sahara, nowhere in Nevada are you more than 60 miles from a paved road or modern dwelling. It might take you a day to do it, but if you had plenty of water with you, you could easily ride to the next outpost for

help.

If you travel only on paved roads, you do not have to go overboard on your desert preparations. Just making sure you have plenty of gas and water and that your spare tire is good. If you break down here, someone will be along sooner or later, and most drivers will stop if you flag them down in distress.

Engine overheating is a concern, and you should keep an eye on your console temperature gauge. The engine temperature usually rises when climbing hills. If the needle on the gauge approaches the "red" zone, turn off the air conditioning. If that isn't sufficient, open the windows and turn *on* the heater; this helps draw heat away from the engine. If these things don't help and the needle enters the "red" zone, stop driving and wait a while before starting again. Even in 120 degree heat, engine overheating should not be expected, except perhaps when driving a long uphill stretch with the air conditioner on. If it happens frequently, you may need a tune-up or to adjust the mixture of coolant in your radiator.

Other Vehicular Concerns

When driving in this remote region, you must plan your gas purchases carefully. You won't find gas stations at every "town" shown on the map. Don't skimp on fuel at one town hoping you will find it cheaper at the next. "Top off" whenever you see gas available, especially if you are not certain of your itinerary.

Otherwise, make sure your vehicle is in top condition, since you are a long way from repair services should you break down. Be especially vigilant about your spare tire. Make sure it is in good condition and that the jack actually works, because a flat tire is your most likely and debilitating vehicle danger.

Maps

Good maps are essential equipment. They are absolutely required if you plan to do any back country driving, and they greatly enhance your visit even if you stay on paved roads. A basic state map is vital just to get you to 375. After you arrive, USGS topographic maps are more important. There are also many other kinds of maps available for this region: aerial photos, raised relief, air charts, etc. Although these are listed below, they are mainly of interest to map aficionados. For saucer watching, only two maps are essential: the Nevada state highway map (free) and the USGS 1:100,000 "Pahranagat Range" map (about \$4). The next most useful map is USGS 1:100,000 "Timpahute Range," followed by the big USGS Nevada state topographic map and the Nevada Ghost Town map

Nevada Highway Map

The standard tourist map of Nevada is essential: It gives a wide view of Nevada highways and points out many highlights that would be lost on more detailed maps. It is available free from: Nevada Commission on Tourism, Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV 89710. You can also request "general information on events and attractions" for a packet of glossy brochures. This map is also available for the asking at the information desks at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas or at one of the Nevada Welcome Centers near the state borders (off I-15 at Jean and Mesquite, or Boulder City). It is important to have a compact highway map of the whole state, so if you can't get this free one, you should buy a comparable Nevada road map at a convenience store.

USGS Topographic Maps

Published by the U. S. Geological Survey, official topographic maps are a gold mine of useful information. They show mountains and valleys, mines, towns, dry lakes, back roads, springs and the boundaries of government areas. These maps can be ordered directly from the government at: USGS Map Sales, P. O. Box 25286, Denver, CO 80225. You can request a "Topographic Map Index for Nevada" free of charge, and the maps themselves are inexpensive—between \$2.50 and \$6 each. The only trouble with ordering these maps directly from USGS is that they seem to take at least a month to

fill any order, including a request for the index. Below, I give specific ordering information so you don't have to wait for the index.

For greater convenience, there are also some private dealers who sell USGS maps, usually at slightly higher than the government price (typically, about \$1 more than each price listed below—e.g. a \$4 map for \$5). Most of the key USGS maps relevant to saucer watching are sold at the Little A'Le'Inn in Rachel. [See Milepost LN 9.7.] They should have plenty of copies of the Pahrnagat and Timpahute 1:100,000 maps, but their stock of others is limited. You may want to call ahead to make sure they have the maps you are interested in: (702) 729-2515. You can also call them for information on ordering maps by mail. It should be noted that the Little A'Le'Inn stocks maps based strictly on customer interest; their selling you a map does not imply a travel recommendation. What you do with these maps is your responsibility.

A larger regional dealer is Mercury Blueprint & Supply Co., 2910 S. Highland, Suite H, Las Vegas, NV 89109. Phone (702) 794-4400. Mercury is located near the freeway in Las Vegas and is open Monday to Saturday. (From I-15, take Sahara Eastbound and your first left onto Western Ave.; Western almost immediately becomes Highland, and Mercury is about a block down on the left.) Mercury stocks nearly every USGS map for Nevada and surrounding states and will send maps to you "any way you want," including overnight express.

1:100,000 Series. The most useful USGS maps for this kind of terrain are the "1:100,000 Series." Each is folded and represents an area of approximately 35 miles by 55 miles. The state of Nevada is covered by 68 of these maps. The ones of interest to saucer watchers are "Pahrnagat Range" (for most of the Groom Range, Groom Lake and Tikaboo Valley) and "Timpahute Range." (for the north end of the Groom Range, Rachel and Sand Spring Valley). These two cover the eastern two-thirds of Highway 375. The western end is found on "Cactus Flat" and "Warm Springs." The Map Portfolio at the end of this document contains an index of the 1:100,000 maps for Southern Nevada. If ordering from USGS, be sure to specify scale, state and map type, e.g. "Pahrnagat Range, NV, 1:100,000 topographic." The USGS price for these maps is \$4.00 each.

If ordering these or any other topographic maps from USGS, there is no shipping charge for orders totaling \$10 or more. A handling fee of \$1 must be added to orders of less than \$10. Make check payable to "Dept. of Interior—USGS." [See the express order form at the end of this document.]

7-1/2 Minute Series. More detailed topographic maps are also available—called the "7-1/2 Minute Series"—but each shows such a small area of this vast landscape (about 7 by 8 miles) that it isn't very useful for general touring. For example, the 7-1/2 Minute map for Groom Lake ("Groom Mine") simply shows an empty dry lake taking up a large portion of the sheet, and the detail of surrounding roads and contours is only moderately better than the 1:100,000 series. The only time the extra detail might be useful is when you are climbing a mountain, visiting a ghost town or studying some other specific land feature on foot or bike. For saucer watchers, a 7-1/2 Minute map is recommended if you plan to climb White Sides, Badger Mountain or the rise above old Tempiute. Each of these maps is \$2.50 from USGS and they are ordered as in this example: "Groom Mine, NV, 7-1/2 minute topographic." The Map Portfolio at the end of this document contains an index of 7-1/2 Minute topographic maps of this region. Below is a list of the more useful ones and the highlights they cover. Each of these maps is stocked in limited quantities at Little A'Le'Inn.

The first group is of interest mainly to saucer watchers and aviation buffs....

<u>Map Name</u>	<u>Covers</u>	<u>Highway Coverage</u>
Groom Mine	Groom Lake (airstrip & buildings absent)	Groom Lk Rd: W End
Groom Range SW	White Sides (E approach is cut off by edge)	Groom Lk Rd: Up to Rest. Zone
Groom Range SE	E approach to White Sides	Groom Lk Rd
Tempiute Mtn South	"Old" Tempiute ghost towns, Coyote Summit, Andies Mine	SR375
Papoose Lake	Papoose Lake (buildings absent)	None
Papoose Range	North shore of Papoose Lake, S shore of Groom Lake	None
Crescent Reservoir	Black Mailbox & start of Groom Lake Rd	SR375: LN 32-37; Gr Lk Rd: 0-5
Badger Spring	Badger Mtn & access rd from S (4WD?)	None
Hancock Summit	Hancock Summit, 4WD access rd to NE flank of Badger Mtn	SR375: LN 37-43

The following maps are of general hiking and sightseeing interest....

Worthington Peak	Freiburg ghost town	None
Delamar	Delamar Ghost Town (off US-93, W of Caliente)	None
Pioche	Pioche semi-ghost town (off US-93, N of Caliente)	US-93
Tybo	Tybo ghost town (off US-6 N of Warm Springs)	None
Flagstaff Mtn	Keystone ghost town, N side of Tybo	None
Lunar Crater	Lunar Crater (volcanic calderas, off US-6 N of Warm Springs)	US-6
Crescent Spring	Crescent ghost town (N of Black Mailbox), S side of Logan	None
Mount Irish	Logan ghost town, Logan Pass	None
Reveille	Reveille ghost town	None

“Army” Series. Each of these maps, at a scale of 1:250,000, covers the area of four 1:100,000 maps. Obviously, that are also not as detailed, but they might provide economical coverage for places you are only peripherally interested in. Most of Highway 375 is found on the “Caliente” sheet, and the remainder on “Goldfield” (W of Caliente) and “Tonopah” (NW of Caliente). Other useful ones are “Death Valley” (SW of Caliente) and “Las Vegas” (S of Caliente). The USGS price is \$4.00 each. Be sure to specify the scale, e.g. “Goldfield NV 1:250,000 topographic.” Mercury Drafting stocks these maps, but Little A‘Le’Inn does not.

The Army Series “Tonopah,” “Goldfield” and “Las Vegas” maps are also available as “Satellite Image Maps.” This means that for only \$2 more you get an Army Series map on one side of the sheet and a satellite photo of the area on the other. As you might guess, there are none to cover the supposed secret saucer bases at Groom and Papoose Lakes. Each is \$6 and is ordered as “Goldfield NV 1:250,000 Satellite Image Map.” (Mercury Drafting carries only the Las Vegas Satellite Image Map, and the Little A‘Le’Inn carries none.)

Topographic State Map. An even wider scale map is the huge Nevada state map. At nearly 4 feet by 5-1/2 feet, it can be hard to handle, but it contains a lot of detail for the money, only \$4. If you can find a way to fold it, this map can serve as a detailed road atlas of the state. Ordering this map also has the effect of forcing USGS to send your order by UPS instead of fourth class mail, which may speed your delivery a bit. Order “Nevada State Map 1:500,000 topographic,” and expect a five-foot box to arrive. Both Mercury and the Little A‘Le’Inn stock this map.

Basic Order. To simplify, there is an order form in the Map Portfolio at the end of this document. It lists the three basic maps for saucer watching and general touring. Just fill in your name and address and send the page with a \$12 check payable to “Dept. of Interior—USGS.” The “File No.” and “Reference Codes” shown on the form are not necessary if you specify the scale and map type as given above, but the codes might help avoid clerical errors in filling the order. To translate the numbers into English, you are ordering the Pahrnagat Range and Timpahute Range 1:100,000 maps for the Black Mailbox and vicinity and the huge Nevada state map for the Big Picture. In addition, you are requesting a free map index and catalog for Nevada for future orders and a free guide to topographic map symbols. There’s also space on the form to request any other items you may want, like some of the other maps listed above or a free index and catalog for your home state.

USGS Orthophotoquads

A different office of the U.S. Geological survey publishes black-and-white aerial photographs called “orthophotoquads” for the bargain price of \$3.00 each. These are the same size and cover the same area as a 7-1/2 minute maps. These photos are offered only for limited areas, and as you might expect they are not available for Groom Lake, Papoose Lake or any other military area where “secret saucer bases” might conceivably be located. However, the Black Mailbox itself is covered by an orthophotoquad—or at least you can see the road junction where the mailbox is located. Orthophotoquads are not as useful as maps because they don’t tell you what the marks on the landscape mean, but they can sometimes yield some useful data, especially about four wheel drive tracks not shown elsewhere.

The quad for the Black Mailbox is called “Crescent Reservoir NV 1:24,000 Orthophotoquad” and it is available from National Cartographic Information Center, P. O. Box 25425, Denver, CO 80225. Enclose \$2.50 plus a \$1 handling fee for orders under \$10, check payable to “Dept. of Interior—USGS.” Other quads cover most of the road from 375 to Groom Lake. These are “Groom Range NE,” “Groom Range SE” and “Groom Lake NW.” See the Map Portfolio at the end of this document

for an index listing other orthophotoquads of the area.

Satellite Imagery

If really want to go whole hog into the spy business, you might as well get all the best intelligence the U.S. Government can provide. For information on ordering Landsat satellite imagery, write to: EROS Data Center, Sioux Falls, SD 57198. Request "information on ordering satellite and aerial imagery of Southern Nevada." The photos from EROS are many times more expensive than USGS maps and are probably not worth the effort for most saucer spies, but the ordering information is free and interesting in its own right

BLM Maps

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management sells a number of maps regarding land use. For the most part these are simply USGS 1:100,000 base maps (without contours) overprinted in pretty colors indicating who owns or controls the land. Available at the BLM office in Caliente or you can order them from USGS as "Surface Management" maps. (Listed in the USGS Nevada index.)

For the most part, these maps are dull. However, the surface management map for Pahrnatagat Range is the only government map I have seen which acknowledges a base at Groom Lake. It shows a long airstrip and a network of roads, circa 1978. The Groom Lake portion of this map is reproduced in the Map Portfolio at the end of this document. If you feel compelled to order it yourself, it is available from USGS as "Pahrnatagat Range NV 1:100,000 Surface Management" for \$4. (Use the same address as for topographic maps. Not available at Mercury or Little A'Le'Inn.)

Defense Mapping Agency

DMA publishes a big, colorful map of the entire Restricted Area, apparently Unclassified. The Restricted Area is shown divided up into coded sectors, but the designations "51" and "S-4" do not appear. The title of the map is "Nellis Air Force Range". I have been unable to locate this map for public sale, but it can be seen on the back wall at Quik Pik in Rachel, and there is also a copy floating around at the Little A'Le'Inn. (Both copies came from military personnel.)

Aeronautical Charts

These are maps published for pilots by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. Each "Sectional Aeronautical Chart" is a 1:500,000 shaded-relief base map overprinted with technical info on airspace restrictions, navigation beacons, air corridors, etc. Unless you are a pilot and know how to read these maps, they are mainly a curiosity item. The Black Mailbox and vicinity are covered by the "Las Vegas Sectional." Apart from Las Vegas itself, most of the airspace on this chart is blocked off as "Restricted" or "Military Operations Area." Essentially everything north of about the SR-163 junction on US-93 is off limits to non-military pilots. This chart acknowledges no airfields at Groom or Papoose lakes, but it does show some roads in the vicinity.

The Las Vegas Sectional can be ordered for \$6.00 postpaid from NOAA Distribution Branch N/CG33, National Ocean Service, Riverdale, MD 20237, (301) 436-6990. NOAA is prompt in filling orders, and they accept credit card orders by phone. You can also request a free catalog of US air charts. The Las Vegas chart is also available for \$6.75 at the Signature Flight Support booth at the Executive Air Terminal at McCarran Airport. (The "Executive Air Terminal" is the civil aviation terminal on Las Vegas Blvd. south of Tropicana—not to be confused with the main passenger terminal on the other side of the airport or the commuter terminal next door.)

Raised Relief Maps

These are maps you can feel. Each is USGS Army Series map printed on a sheet of plastic which is molded as the land is formed. Not an essential item; mostly for curiosity. You can't carry this one around in your pocket, but if you are stuck at home, this map is the next best thing to being there. The Caliente map covers the Black Mailbox, Groom & Papoose Lakes and Rachel. Order from Hubbard Scientific, P.O. Box 760, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729, (800) 446-8767. The price for the Caliente map is \$16.95 plus \$3.95 shipping, and the item number is "NY 11-9-1". It is also available at Mercury for the same price, and there is a copy on display at the Little A'Le'Inn.

Nevada State Atlas

The only general atlas of Nevada that I am aware of is published by the state Department of Transportation. It is a 8-1/2" x 11" book containing 170 maps, covering the entire state at a scale of 1:250,000. Unfortunately, the information on these maps is very limited: Just roads, water features and government boundaries. Topographic information, such as mountain ranges and elevation contours, is almost entirely absent. This is a very poor atlas and not an essential item, but it is relatively cheap and better than having no detailed map at all when traveling beyond your USGS topographic coverage. The atlas also provides a cross-check for some topo map data, especially dirt roads that may have changed since the last USGS map was issued. (Most of the maps in this atlas were prepared in the 1980s, while some USGS maps are much older.)

The "Nevada Map Atlas" is available for \$12.00 postpaid, from: Nevada Dept. of Transportation, Map Section—Room 206, 1263 S. Stewart St., Carson City, NV 89712. Mercury also carries the atlas for \$15.00.

Nevada Ghost Town Map

This is a good resource to help fill your idle days between saucer watches. It gives the locations of hundreds of ghost towns and tries to specify the back roads to get from a paved highway to each. You'll probably still need a USGS map for reference, since the large scale of the ghost town map makes it difficult to locate access roads. The presence on the map of a ghost town and road to it does not necessary mean you can get there. For example, the town of Groom is shown on the map (a mine on the mountainside above Groom Lake), but it is within a Restricted Area and not open to the public. Also, don't expect most ghost towns to look like Hollywood movie sets; in most cases, all you will find are foundations, debris and some mine workings, but there could be some surprises, too, like an intact bank building or some vintage vehicles. Ghost towns are the places to be especially careful about mine shafts and tunnels, which usually riddle the hills around town.

There are so many ghost towns in the state that one suspects Nevada is nothing more than one big ghost town. Aside from the military, the business of Nevada is "resource extraction." (Las Vegas even does it to its tourists.) The pattern of development here is "boom or bust," and most of what you'll encounter in the outback is "bust." This is not due to any particular economic downturn; it's just that after a mining town has had its few years of boom, it lasts forever on the landscape. Every piece of junk is preserved by the dry weather for the benefit of future archeologists. (The same holds for every empty Miller Lite can that you or your alien buddies leave behind.) As a courtesy to future generations, please do not remove anything from a ghost town.

Many gift shops sell the Ghost Town Map, and Mercury Drafting in Las Vegas carries it for \$2.50. (Mercury Drafting can probably send you this map by mail, but they might be annoyed if this is all you order.) This map is printed in dark brown ink on light brown paper, distinguishing it from a bland but multicolored imitator...

A *different* Nevada Ghost Town Map, a more glossy and official one, is available from Nevada Magazine Merchandise, 1800 U.S. Highway 50 East, Suite 200, Carson City, NV 89710. Phone (702) 687-5890. This map shows fewer ghost towns and no roads leading to them. (A state employee explained to me that they did not include roads because they did not want people to visit the ghost towns and possibly damage them. That's an odd twist of bureaucratic logic, since why would you publish a map if you didn't want people using it?) This map does provide some useful information: Since it lists only a few ghost towns, the ones it includes are probably the most prominent ones with the most buildings still standing. The price is \$5.50, postpaid. Nevada Magazine also sells many books about Nevada; you can write for a free catalog. Nevada Magazine itself is a glossy bimonthly published by the state and full of pretty pictures. Subscription is \$14.95 per year (6 issues), ordered from the same address. The subscription includes a *free* copy of their Ghost Town Map if you request it at the same time.

Handy Map-Related Info

One mile = 5280 feet or 1609 meters. 1 foot = 0.3048 meters. 1 meter = 3.2808 feet. The speed of sound is roughly 1000 feet per second (or 5 seconds per mile, or 760 miles per hour): This is a useful statistic for estimating the distance of thunderstorms or aircraft (by the sound delay after a visual

event) or the speed of a jet (when a sonic boom is heard).

Safety

Serious Beef. The most dangerous hazard on Route 375 is not alien spacecraft or U.S. security forces, but terminal encounters of the bovine kind. Since most of the highway is open range, stock wander freely across the road, easy targets for another cattle mutilation. Cattle are most dangerous at night when you can't see them until you are right on top of them. Drive slowly and keep alert. Even in the day you should not become complacent. As one Rachel resident explained to me, "They got black ones for the night and tan ones for the day." The little ones pose a special risk: If Baby is on one side of the road and Mama is on the other, Junior could make a mad dash toward Mom as a car approaches. The crowning insult of colliding with one of these beasts is that after your car is totaled and your front teeth knocked out, you are required by law to pay for the animal. This is no laughing matter: These animals are *dumb*. They stand in the middle of the road. Sometimes they *sit* in the middle of the road. They look death squarely in the eye and chew their cud. One can see how they would be the subject of choice for lazy alien biologists: Cattle are easy to spot, easy to catch, easy to work on, and *they* don't have to pay for the animal.

Desert Nasties. The desert is supposed to be full of nasty things that slither, bite and sting, but I have yet to run into any (aside from human ones in Vegas). Still, desert critters should be a concern if you walk through the brush at night. Day or night, it is always a good idea to walk carefully. If nothing else, the desert contains a vast tonnage of manure you may care to avoid, not to mention an occasional unmarked mine shaft you definitely want to stay clear of.

Abandoned Mines. The tunnels and shafts of old mines are deathtraps. There are some 10,000 derelict mines in the state, most of them unsealed and unmarked. If you encounter a tunnel in a hillside, don't go inside. The dangers are collapsing floors and poisonous gas, not unlike an Indiana Jones movie. In flat areas, open mine shafts on the desert floor give you an opportunity to plunge to your death in a place where no one will ever find your body. Tunnels and shafts are usually quite obvious on the landscape, surrounded by tailings and clutter, but they could sneak up on you if you run, drive or bike off-road during the day or walk through the desert at night without adequate light.

Unmaintained Dirt Roads. If you choose to leave the paved highway, don't take on rougher roads than your vehicle can handle. As Clint Eastwood would say, "A man's got to know his limitations." If you get stuck out here, help is going to be far, far away. If the road gets rough, slow down and don't hesitate to turn back. Even if the road is in good condition, don't be lulled into driving great distances from civilization. Until you understand the terrain and have some desert driving experience, a good rule of thumb is, Don't drive any further from a paved road than you are willing to walk back.

There are some lessons of dirt road driving that come with experience. If you hit a sand trap, don't slow down and don't hit the gas; just keep moving at a steady pace; if you brake or try to gun your way out, you are more likely to get mired. If a road has a hump along the middle of it, as many here do, you can avoid scraping bottom by driving on the edge of the road with one set of wheels on the hump. Try to avoid dirt roads if any kind of inclement weather threatens; mud traps and flash flooding are common and could strand you miles from anywhere. Even after the weather has passed, keep in mind that dirt roads can be impassable for weeks or months, until someone gets around to repairing them.

If you choose to drive on dirt roads, you should have a prudent fear of getting lost on them. There are usually no road signs and no neighbors you can ask for directions. Avoid unpaved roads unless you have a good topographic map, and even then, keep in mind that many roads are not shown on any map while others that are shown have long since been washed away or absorbed into the sagebrush. Even the best topographic maps do not depict very well the quality of dirt roads, whether suitable for passenger cars or high clearance only. If you leave the paved road, you will probably get lost sooner or later, so be prepared: Note the way you came in and bring plenty of essential supplies like water and a full tank of gas.

The above warnings given, a "maintained" dirt road—that is, one that looks like it has been

recently bulldozed—is generally safe to travel on by all vehicles. The ride can often be nearly as smooth as a paved road, and the fact that the road is kept up usually indicates that other people use it frequently and could possibly help you out if you need it. The greater dangers are on unmaintained dirt roads, where unpredictable hazards can easily disable your vehicle and it might be months before someone happens along to collect your bones. These are the road you need to think twice about traveling on, and exercise great caution on if you do.

Land Use

For the most part, Nevada is owned by the Federal Government. Commercial and residential land in inhabited areas may be privately owned, but most of the outback is controlled by one government agency or another. Portions not controlled by the military, the Forest Service, the Park Service or the state are usually managed by the Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, who leases it out to farmers, ranchers and miners. In the vicinity of 375, BLM controls most of the land just outside of the Restricted Zone. It is generally accepted that you have a reasonable right to travel on this land. However, the rancher who leases the land also has a reasonable right to protect his livelihood. He thinks of it as “his” land, just like a renter thinks of an apartment as his. It is not always clear what your exact legal rights are on leased land, but “rights” are not the main issue. A more important concern should be courtesy.

Consider this: How would you feel about a crowd of strangers camping out in front of your mailbox every week, tearing up your backyard with four-wheel drives, accusing you of being a government agent and peering in your bedroom windows with high-power binoculars. Such are the indignities frequently suffered by the Medlins, who operate the ranch in the Tikaboo Valley. Saucer watchers, in their fevered pursuit of aliens, often have a complete disregard for the human beings who live and work here. The merchants of Rachel are happy to have you visit, but the local ranchers and farmers gain nothing from your presence and see you only as an annoyance.

This land is big enough that saucer watchers and ranchers can coexist peacefully. All that is necessary for the relationship to work is for the saucer watchers to follow a few rules of common courtesy.

In particular, you should stay as far away as possible from the Medlin ranch compound and all ranch operations. People’s “backyards” are big around here, so anything closer than a mile to a residence or workplace might be considered a breach of privacy. You won’t learn anything by haunting the Medlin’s gate. Steve Medlin is not a government agent; he is just a rancher trying to make a living and coexist peacefully with the powerful neighbor next door. Because he is allowed to enter military land to retrieve cattle, he is probably prohibited from discussing anything he sees.

Steve Medlin says that he has no particular objection to people parking around his mailbox, as long as he can get in there to get his mail. I suggest, however, that you not drive down Mailbox Road during the day. The road runs through the corral and reservoir area that is the heart of cattle operations at the Medlin Ranch. During the day, real cowboys tend real cattle there, while at night it is usually deserted. Beyond that point, Mailbox Road doesn’t take you anyplace special; it simply connects with Groom Lake Road. When coming from Rachel, using Mailbox Road as a cut-off to Groom Lake Road does save time, but otherwise it is just as easy to enter Groom Lake Road directly at LN 34.6 and not risk annoying anybody.

Law Enforcement

If you stay close to the paved highway, it is likely you will never encounter any kind of military or civilian police authority. If the Sheriff stops you on the paved road, it probably concerns a routine traffic problem. Just as on other highways, the authorities are not happy with you parking on the shoulder, especially at night. This restriction applies both to the paved highway and to maintained dirt roads like Mailbox Road or Groom Lake Road. Pull into a gravel parking area or some other off-highway location mentioned in the Milepost Log. Sheriffs Department employees are almost always decent and courteous. The only public grumblings against them are those suffered by police

departments everywhere, the natural byproduct of being required to enforce the law and mediate between warring parties.

If you leave the paved highway and approach the Restricted Area, you may encounter much less friendly authorities. Whether or not it has flying saucers in its possession, the military obviously does not want people intruding into its secret bases or even threatening to. Signs in the area warn, "Use of Deadly Force Authorized," and it would be unwise to test this hypothesis. Realistically, saucer watchers have been arrested and given stiff fines for intruding into the Zone and have been menaced with helicopters and, reportedly, guns just for approaching. Legally, security forces are not supposed to shoot you or arrest you outside the Restricted Zone—It's impolite, to say the least.—but there is no sense in irritating them without a reason. You should stay miles away from the border unless you have clear aims and a positive certainty about your geography.

The dirt roads around the perimeter of the Restricted Zone are patrolled by well-armed two-man teams in Ford Broncos. They are said to be employed by the private Wackenhut Corporation under government contract and are referred to by some saucer watchers as the "Wackenhut S.S." Although the Wackenhut claim is debatable, the sentries themselves admit only that they work for a "civilian entity." Why these are not regular military sentries is hard to say for certain, but we can speculate that a secretive private company might afford greater freedom to operate in the "gray" area between the military and civilian worlds.

Although patrols have no legal authority outside the Restricted Zone, they have been rumored to exercise various questionable techniques to remove people from areas that are ostensibly public. Black Mailbox folklore is full of "Wackenhut" encounters, with many themes repeated. Below, I have divided these encounters into two groups: ones that I can personally attest to and ones that hear only from other sources, some more reliable than others. The most easily confirmed stories (and the ones that I have experienced myself) record three kinds of security encounters:

Confirmed Encounters

A Visit from the County Sheriff. This appears to be the most common kind of security encounter on the dirt roads near the Restricted Zone. At Security's telephoned request, a Deputy Sheriff drives in from Alamo, pulls you over, asks for ID's and advises you politely about the military's concerns—usually regarding crossing the line or carrying cameras on White Sides. If the security patrol is present, they stay in their vehicle at a respectable distance and let the Sheriff do the talking. This form of intervention appears to be legal, since Security has no proper authority to stop you outside the Zone. It is, however, an enormous pain for the officer, who must make the hour-and-a-half roundtrip just to visit you. Aside from conveying the military's warnings (and perhaps arresting you if you violate them), the Deputy is primarily concerned with three relatively minor points of state law which are a genuine issue in this area: (1) that you not park with 100 yards of a cattle water trough, (2) that you not park on the roadway or immediate shoulder of a paved or maintained dirt road, and (3) that you not litter or cause obvious damage to property or land. Otherwise, as far as the Sheriff is concerned, you are pretty much free to do what you want.

It seems likely, however, that your name and home address will be relayed to Security, a thought that may not be comforting. Calling the Sheriff is also a very effective method for bringing you down from White Sides when the military does not want you there, since most people do not climb back up after they come down to see the Sheriff. [See WHITE SIDES section following the Milepost Log.]

Low level aircraft. Many people climbing White Sides (including myself) have reported very close encounters with big military helicopters, apparently called up especially for the occasion. Such stories usually include a passenger inside the aircraft taking pictures with a big telephoto lens and the Sheriff waiting at the road for the usual licenses-and-chat routine. Other stories (of which I have no direct experience) recount bone-jarring low-level passes by fighter jets over vehicles outside the Zone. Apparently, the pilots find it amusing to lock the vehicle in their sights and swoop down for the kill, choosing only at the last minute not to press the button.

A Friendly "Need any help?" If you are parked somewhere near the Restricted Zone, don't be surprised if the guys in the green Bronco drive up and say, "Hi!" They could be friendly! Their most common line is something like, "Having any trouble?" or "Need any help?" On my single own

encounter of this type, I got the impression that their demeanor was genuine and not just a sarcastic put-on. We chatted for a couple of minutes, and I commented on how they weren't the nasty people they were supposed to be. They assured me that they weren't and said that if I needed any help of any kind, I should just flag them down. Then, after they left, I started climbing White Sides, and of course they immediately called the Sheriff.

Nonetheless, I get the impression that these are decent, middle-aged family men just doing their job. I believe they are respectable gentlemen who will behave honorably if you treat them honorably. On the other hand, if you insist on challenging their authority, dodging them, lying to them and dancing along the border just to see how far you can push them, then I am sure they will rise to this challenge, as anyone would, and not give you the slightest bit of leniency.

Unconfirmed Encounters

The security encounters below are based Black Mailbox folklore—in other words, on secondhand testimony or the claims of people I do not know. I have no direct experience with these tactics myself and cannot say for certain whether they are true, but I think it important to list them anyway, because it is better to be overprepared for what might happen than underprepared. The following are the less than honorable ways that Security might remove you from public lands where they do not want you to be.

Pointing guns at you and telling you to leave. This theme recurs again and again in Black Mailbox folklore, apparently occurring when Security wants to remove you quickly without waiting for the Sheriff. Some stories suggest that there might be *a lot* of guns pointed at you by a small army of ominous military types wearing camouflage outfits and night vision goggles. However, since the number of guns tends to increase with each telling, it is hard to know where reality begins and ends in these stories. In any case, having even one gun pointed at you is enough to get the message across. A tactical retreat would be in order, but not a surrender. That any gun at all should be pointed at you outside the Restricted Zone suggests an element of panic, as though there really was something sensitive going on at that particular time and they don't want you getting too close.

Verbal threats. More subtle than the actual use of force is the gentle art of threatening to break your bones if you don't depart immediately. This sort of thing is said to happen if you encounter a Security patrol blocking the road. You ask if you can pass, and they say no. You ask why, and they come up with some creative, Mafia-style advice about the integrity of your limbs and the importance of remaining healthy. Although there appears to be no confirmable evidence of such threats being carried out, it would be unwise to call the bluff, since the relationship can only degenerate into the guns-in-your-face form of persuasion. Again, a tactical retreat would be in order.

Shooting out tires. Some visitors approaching the Restricted Zone have reported mysterious flat tires immediately after passing a Security patrol parked beside the road. (Specifically, Richard Boylan says this happened to him on Groom Lake Road. See his Mufon Journal article in REFERENCES.) The evidence is circumstantial, but on these remote roads, a flat tire is a threat not to be taken lightly. Make sure your spare is in good condition, and if you do get a mysterious flat, be sure to save the tire and report the incident to the County Sheriff and anyone else you can think of. If any such incidents are taking place, it is important to document them thoroughly and publicize them loudly.

Arrest. The fact that security forces have no legal authority and no supportable charge against you might not necessarily prevent them from detaining you. It at least it gets you out of the way for a few hours if you are proving to be an irritation to them, and it certainly can rattle those saucer watchers who are not prepared for it.

Black Mailbox folklore must be taken with a grain of salt, but it should not be dismissed lightly either. For example, the suggestion of electronic sensors in every Joshua tree seems far-fetched, but other stories of surveillance deserve some prudent consideration. If nothing else, the top of White Sides is almost certainly under close scrutiny by electronic and optical devices. There is a good chance they can see, hear, smell and taste everything you do up there; if you take a piss, they will know the color and quantity. Electronic surveillance in the rest of the Tikaboo Valley is more speculative. Much debate has centered on the purpose of the small structure visible through binoculars on the top of Bald

Mountain. Is it a simple navigation beacon or an Orwellian surveillance device? Neither possibility should be discounted. It would be neither difficult nor illegal for the military to mount a telephoto video camera up there so they could see everything that goes on below.

Can they also *hear* everything that goes on in this valley? Technically, it may be possible, but now we are descending into the realm of paranoia. Is the Little A'Le'Inn bugged? Is that highway worker really a government spy? Paranoia breeds well along SR-375 because if you start to believe the saucer stories then there's no telling what else the government and aliens might be up to. If you look for spies behind every rock, transmitters under every lampshade and alien impostors behind every set of eyes, you'll soon go mad, so it is best not to give it a second thought. Paranoid thoughts of surveillance and persecution are best addressed by this maxim: If you say and do nothing that you are not proud of, then you have nothing to hide.

One final note regarding security personnel: Since this book is a public document available to anyone who wants to buy it, it is fair to assume that the security people are reading it just like you. I can only approve. Every green Bronco should have one in the glove compartment, and I encourage the occupants to send me their comments and corrections. Given their access to this information and the fact that they work here full time and probably know every nook and cranny anyway, it is silly for you to sneak around like a spy and think you can pull anything over on them. Instead of speaking in hushed tones and taking back roads to skirt the patrols, I suggest being completely open and direct about what you are doing. If you meet the patrol on the road, tell them what you are up to, that you are hunting for flying saucers and you welcome their advice.

Ethical Rules for Saucer Watchers

Three rules of ethics should be observed when hunting for flying saucers—or when searching for anything else, for that matter.

#1: Tread lightly. Stay on existing roads. Do not litter, damage abandoned buildings or harm the wildlife. Do not irritate the locals or intrude on their privacy. Don't make an ass of yourself.

#2: Obey the law. If a road or boundary is posted "No Trespassing," "Private Road" or "Restricted Area," then do not pass. Be sensitive to the rights of local residents and to the legitimate security concerns of the military.

The law may not always be fair or right, but breaking it makes you vulnerable to attack and may permanently damage your credibility. From time to time in human history, higher principles must override the law, requiring a noble act of civil disobedience, but there is no sense in getting yourself in trouble or irritating the authorities for something trivial that accomplishes nothing. If you are going to pull a Henry David Thoreau, you should at least be sure that your illegal act is going to achieve the goals you want, not the opposite ones. Most of the illegal schemes people hatch here—like stealing Restricted Area signs or intruding into the Zone in weekend-warrior raids—are the thumb-your-nose-at-authority sort of disobedience and are not really guided by a principle or purpose. Instead of advancing the cause of truth, these actions can only sabotage trust and detract from serious inquiry.

#3: Don't decide what you will find before you arrive.

That last piece of advice is more subtle than the other two and applies to any kind of exploration. Too many people arrive at the Black Mailbox thinking they have things all worked out. They *know* what's out there at Area 51 and seek only to validate their theory. They come here on a Wednesday night, see a few ambiguous lights, and it confirms their whole world view. They leave the next morning immensely satisfied with themselves, convinced that they have absolute proof of everything they always knew anyway.

If anyone knows what is going on at Area 51, it ought to be the people of Rachel, who have been living under bizarre aerial displays for years. Nearly everyone in town has seen unusual lights, but hardly anyone claims a full understanding of what is going on. Joe Travis, owner of the "Little A'Le'Inn" in Rachel, ought to be the world authority on the matter, since most saucer watchers and many knowledgeable government employees pass through his establishment. In the day, Joe proposes complex UFO theories with apparent confidence, but in the evening, after he has had a few beers, he

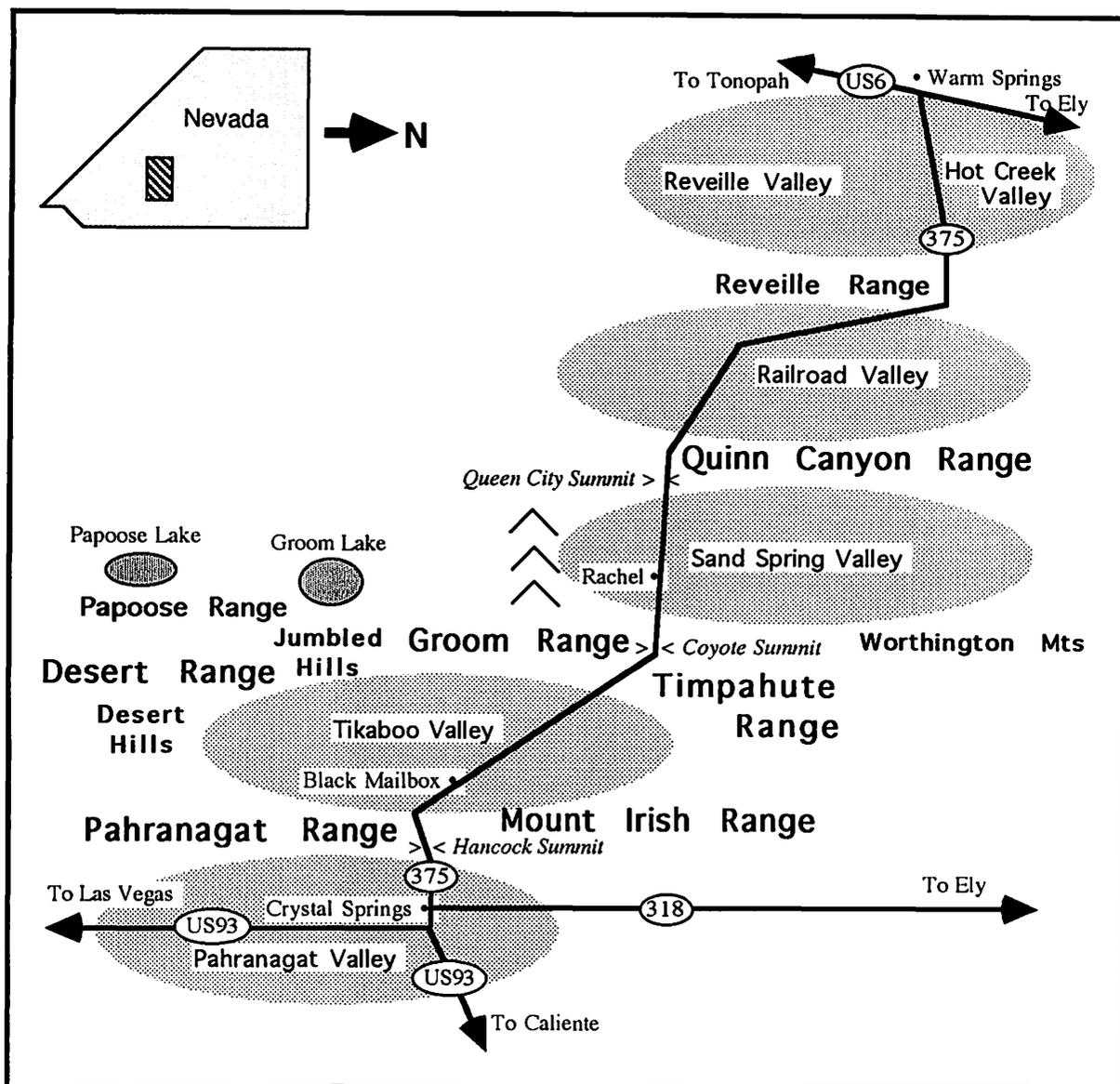
confesses to being as mystified as anyone. He says, "The more I know, the more I realize how little I know."

The only people who claim perfect understanding are the outsiders, the folks who come up from L.A. on Wednesday night and see exactly what they expect to see. The truth is, recognizing a flying saucer here can be immensely difficult in the midst of the vast circus of military activity, the optical illusions of the desert and the confusing swamp of UFO speculations brought here by believers. The majority of "UFOs" people see here can undoubtedly be explained by the testing of conventional aircraft and weapons. If you spend enough time watching, adhere to rigorous scientific principals and leave yourself open to alternative explanations, you can usually see through these red herrings in a day or two. For people who have made up their minds before they come, one glimpse of the red herring is all they need to close the case. Since all their convictions have been confirmed, they feel it unnecessary—and unsettling—to invest in further research.

Most visitors have already made emotional investments and bear private grudges that they expect flying saucers to support, and it take very little evidence to confirm their views. Everything happens on a Wednesday night: UFO proponents expect to see flying saucers, and they do. Hardened skeptics expect to debunk the saucer stories, and they do. Spiritualists see spirits. Doomsdayers see the end of the world. Conspiracy buffs find just the evidence they need to link Bigfoot with JFK. Each of these groups comes to the Black Mailbox with a preordained "agenda" that is sure to cloud their observations. Like Christopher Columbus, who went to his death believing he had sailed to Asia, they often miss a more interesting truth because they have already made up their minds about how the universe ought to be.

"When you have eliminated the impossible, what remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth."

— *Sherlock Holmes*



Highway 375 Mileposts

The mileage log below records all side roads and roadside landmarks along the entire 100-mile length of Highway 375, from the junction with US-93 near Crystal Springs to the junction with US-6 at Warm Springs. Services, mountain passes, turnouts and most dirt roads are listed, as well as notes on saucer viewing, dirt road destinations and ghost towns. Mile markers correspond to those posted on the highway, clearly marked every mile by small white signs on both sides. These are measured from the western terminus within each county—from the Lincoln/Nye county line on the eastern half of 375 (“LN” mile points below) and from the Warm Springs junction in the western half (“NY” mile points below). Since the majority of visitors are likely to come from the Las Vegas direction, mileposts are listed in reverse order. Decimals between mile markers are estimates.

Although Highway 375 runs roughly northeast to southwest, for convenience I use E and W to denote directions of travel and N and S to refer to sides of highway. (These designations are reversed on side roads: N and S for travel, E and W for sides of the road.) When a direction is spelled out, like “north” or “south”, it indicates a compass direction. A “maintained dirt road” is a high quality thoroughfare, regularly graded and passable by nearly all vehicles at relatively high speed—25 to 45

mph. It has no hump in the middle and no big rocks. A "dirt road" is unmaintained but appears passable by passenger cars at low speed. It could be rocky and rutted and have a hump in the middle that may scrape the bottom of low clearance vehicles. A "dirt track" is best left to four wheel drive or high clearance vehicles. Some of these tracks look like they haven't been used in years, and you may have to repair the road yourself as you go along. Unless a detailed description of the road is given, these classifications are based on what can be seen from the highway; the road conditions could change further in.

"Parking areas" are wide, flat dirt areas beside the highway; they may not be officially sanctioned, but enough of the vegetation has been destroyed by previous traffic that your parking there won't cause any further damage. A "gravel parking area" is assumed to have the sanction of the state, since somebody has apparently distributed a load of gravel there to improve the surface. Most of these gravel areas were probably staging pads for road construction or maintenance.

I have tried to list every visible dirt road, regardless of whether it leads anywhere or would be safe or legal to use. You must exercise your own judgment about where it would be wise to travel. I have probably overlooked a few minor dirt tracks, especially on the western half of 375. I welcome all corrections and additions to this list. [See address at the end.]

LN 49.6 Eastern terminus of Highway 375 at its junction with US-93. Distances via US-93 from this point: Las Vegas 107, Alamo 12, Caliente 42, Pioche 68, Cedar City 150. There are no services here, only a derelict roadhouse at Junction. In an article in *Far Out* magazine, Michael DiGregorio says that until 1984 some Groom Lake personnel were bussed into the base from this location. He also claims that "this barroom/restaurant was a CIA ruse to covertly observe both loose-lipped Groom personnel, in addition to any drifters." (He does not list his sources for this information.)

Nearest services are at Ash Springs, 4-1/2 miles south, where you will find gas (Las Vegas price + 20¢), basic groceries, restaurant, auto repair (maybe), RV park (\$9/night) and rest rooms—all at the "R" Place roadhouse. Phone (702) 725-3545. A small military surplus store is next door, selling a few basic camping supplies, including compasses.

Motel, post office, laundry, a small grocery store, gas, major auto repair, pizza and sheriff can be found in Alamo, 12 miles south of the 375 junction. Lodging there is found at Meadow Lane Motel on US-93. (15 rooms. \$23.80 single, \$30.40 double. Phone (702) 725-3371.) There is also a motel at Alamo Valley Truck Stop, about a mile south of Alamo. (13 rooms. \$28.50 single, \$32.50 double. Phone (702) 725-3336.) South of this point there are no services before Las Vegas, 91 miles distant.

LN 49.5 Turnout S with litter barrel about 500 ft from US-93 junction.

LN 49.3 Key Pittman Wildlife Management Area. Some signs regarding hunting. Relatively lush vegetation due to the spring. Cattle guard.

LN 49.2 Parking area S.

LN 49.0 **Crystal Springs.** Hardly a town, just a road junction with a farm and a few other habitations. No services. Junction with SR-318 North. (On SR-318, don't count on gas south of Ely, 134 miles north.)

Crystal Springs is the garden spot of Highway 375, owing to the presence of liquid water most of the year. Shallow lake N. Tree-shaded picnic spot at junction. Enjoy the trees while you can, because you won't see any more of them on this route. Historic marker S about discovery of silver in Pahrangat Valley and founding of Lincoln County. Crystal Springs was once the county seat and is now a ghost town of sorts, although no old buildings remain. Distances via 375: Rachel 40, Tonopah 148.

LN 48.7 The only billboard on 375, a small one for the "Little A'Le'Inn" in Rachel (LN 9.7). Farm S, with a few dirt access roads.

LN 43.2 Dirt track N. *Maps says it leads to several long tracks, one of which runs northwest to*

Reed Spring in the Mount Irish Range.

- LN 43.0 Dirt track S. *Map says it ends after 0.5 mile.*
- LN 42.0 Faint dirt tracks N & S.
- LN 41.6 Dirt track S. *Map says this track leads 7 miles to NE flank of Badger Mtn.*
- LN 38.5 Faint dirt track S.
- LN 38.1 "Horney's Rest Stop" Maintained dirt road N to "Road Side Rest" (marked westbound; unmarked eastbound). "Horney's" is spray painted on a rock visible westbound. (Who is Horney and why?) Leads to a dusty parking area with some trash barrels and picnic tables. A couple of dirt tracks lead from there into the surrounding hills. Worth exploring.
- LN 37.6 **Hancock Summit, Elev. 5592.** Parking area and litter barrel N. This is a mountain pass through the Pahrangat Range, providing passage between the Pahrangat and Tikaboo Valleys. This is the only stretch of SR-375 with any significant curves or grades, although still nothing to worry about.
- LN 37.0 Two dirt tracks S on either end of a guard rail. They don't seem to go anywhere, just to flat areas where you can park.
- LN 36.1 Large gravel parking area S. High angle perspective on the airspace over Groom Lake but nearby hills prevent visibility to either side.
- LN 35.4 Marginal parking spot on a rise N, just after a shallow ravine. Appears to be the starting point of a faint dirt track along the base of the ravine, probably part of the old highway. Better high angle viewing spot than LN 36.1, with much wider view to the west, but the view of the south end of the Tikaboo Valley is still cut off by a hillside.
- S, at the end of the guard rail is a faint dirt road that apparently leads to some mine tailings and a dirt track leading along the base of the hills. Worth exploring.
- LN 35 Approximate start of the Tikaboo Valley. Lowest road elevation: 4500 feet. The Tikaboo Valley is referred to locally as "Steve's Valley," after the rancher, Steve Medlin, who owns the grazing and water rights here. His ranch compound is the only habitation.
- LN 34.9 Faint stream-bed track N
- LN 34.6 **Groom Lake Road.** This is a well maintained 45 mph dirt road leading to the restricted Groom Lake facility. You can travel down this road about 13 miles before encountering some intimidating "Restricted Area" signs. They threaten fines and jail for trespassing and admonish you not to take photographs. The signs are positioned on the road just before it takes a turn beyond which you would encounter a guard house and would eventually look down on the Groom Lake base. The military seems to have taken great care to assure that no casual traveler can cast eyes upon Groom Lake. One could easily take a short hike to the top of one of the surrounding ridges to look down on the base, but this is a dangerous and illegal activity. (It is better to visit White Sides, which is not illegal.)
- From 375, you can see almost the entire non-restricted part of Groom Lake Road. It runs arrow-straight for about 11 miles before entering the Jumbled Hills at the S end of the Groom Range. Because these hills loom higher in your field of vision as you approach, viewing sites along this road are probably no better than at Highway 375.
- Below are mileage points on Groom Lake Road, measured from the highway. (N and S refer to the right and left sides of the road, respectively.) Security patrols could be parked beside the road or on hidden side roads. They are probably aware of what traffic *should* be on that road, so there is a good chance they will recognize you. Don't be surprised if you are shadowed.
- 2.0 Dirt road S.
- 4.2 Dirt road N. Dirt track S.

- 5.1 Maintained dirt roads N and S, with a stop sign N. The N road leads to a corral and the Black Mailbox at LN 29.5.

According to the map, the road S leads about 7.5 miles to intersect with the Restricted Zone. (There are warning signs when you reach it.) Some veteran watchers say that this point is a good saucer viewing location.

- 5.7 Dirt track diagonally S.

- 6.0 Dirt road S, meets the track above. This road then heads diagonally southwest across the valley to eventually intersect the Restricted Zone, where the map says it turns into a rugged 4WD track. This road is maintained for at least the first 4.3 miles. About 2.9 miles down this road, there is a turn-around circle and a water tank. 1.4 miles beyond that is a four-way crossroads:

Straight: According to the map, continues into the Jumbled Hills to intersect the Restricted Zone 3.8 miles from this intersection.

Right: According to the map, leads 2.3 miles west to a reservoir and beyond.

Left: According to the map, leads 6 miles east to intersect with the road south from Groom Lake Road Mile 5.1. The road is maintained for about 1.5 miles, where there is a turnaround circle and a water tank. The rest of the road is unmaintained and probably high clearance only.

- 6.5 Maintained dirt road N leads 1.9 miles to the Medlin Ranch compound.

- 9.4 Dirt track S.

- 10.9 Dirt track S.

- 11.5 At the first significant curve on this road, just beyond a 35 mph sign, a dirt road N leads about 500 feet to a turn-around circle and a water tank. From there, a dirt track leads to the top of a small hill, where there is a campfire circle.

Different watchers have different names for this hill, with ego playing a significant role. "World's Foremost UFO Researcher" Sean Morton named it after his girlfriend, reserving the name "Morton's Mountain" for an impressive peak nearby which he claims to have discovered. Other veteran watchers do not recognize these appellations. They do, however, concede Morton's claim to being the first to build a campfire on this hill, and they bestow on it the name "Morton's Mound" in recognition. To avoid sectarian violence, I refer to this rise simply as "Campfire Hill." The top is a favorite camp-out spot for Morton and his followers (sometimes referred to as "Morton's Minions"). Other times, it is also a favorite parking spot for security patrols. What happens if both groups turn up here at the same time? The watchers say that security people would probably leave, not being the sociable types.

This area is also the access point for a hike of **White Sides**, the small mountain about two miles northwest of Campfire Hill. White Sides is unique in offering a direct, legal view of the Groom Lake base. Two pieces of legal advice bear repeating: (1) Do not bring a camera on a hike of White Sides, and (2) Do not park within 100 yards of the water trough. 100 yards from the trough is marked by yellow ribbons on Joshua trees. [For a more extensive discussion see the WHITE SIDES section following the Milepost Log.]

- 12.6 Exposed parking spot on a rise above a small ravine. A dirt track runs N and S through the ravine. (Might be risky to drive, given the proximity of the Restricted Zone, but these roads deserve some future exploration.)

- 13.8 Restricted Area begins in a narrow ravine, just before the road turns a corner. There are no fence or gate, just six prominent warning signs, reminiscent of those

nasty signs on approach to the witch's castle in "Wizard of Oz": Each is a different creative variation on the theme, "Keep Out." The largest one says:



The above is a new sign, installed since January 1993 because the old sign was stolen by a childish UFO researcher (allegedly "The World's Foremost") who probably has it on his wall at home. (It is irresponsible frat boys like this who give all watchers a bad name, encouraging the security patrols to come down harder on everyone.)

Another two signs, identical ones posted on either side of the road, say...



Yet another sign repeats in red: "Photography of this area is prohibited." The fourth and fifth signs contain a lot of small print, with the most memorable phrase being: "Use of Deadly Force Authorized."

I'd turn back if I were you.

The military boundary is actually supposed to be a few feet *before* the signs at a point where there are orange and red striped posts beside the road. I recommend not proceeding beyond them. More of these posts can be seen leading into the hills on either side, tracing a straight line running diagonal to the road. Just beyond the signs, there is a bend in the road, and after another bend there is a guard house where the reception is said to be very unfriendly. At that point, you have already intruded well into the Zone despite plenty of warning, and you could be arrested immediately. A few bold adventurers have proceeded to the guard house and pleaded ignorance or illiteracy. They have been released after being yelled at, held for a few hours and forced to sign papers promising not to do it again. Such lenient treatment is not guaranteed, however.

Resuming on Highway 375...

LN 32.3 **Large gravel parking area S—an excellent viewing site for the airspace over Groom and Papoose Lakes.** Offers convenience, space and the safety of the paved highway. Probably a better viewing spot than the Black Mailbox because of the slightly higher altitude and slightly closer proximity to Papoose Lake. (The distance to Groom

Lake is about the same.)

Following is a reference system that will permit the viewer at this location to make fairly accurate estimates of direction. Instead of saying, "The object rose above the horizon," you can specify exactly where: "The object rose above the Groom Mountains in a direction west, 280°." Landmarks have been chosen according to how easily they can be described. These degree readings were taken with a small orienteering compass. I encourage others to confirm these readings.

Compass Points for LN 32.3

Readings were taken with a small compass resting on the wooden post inside the parking area at the E end. There also happens to be a State Of Nevada Survey marker embedded in the ground at this location. All readings are adjusted for the local magnetic declination of 15°. (In other words, "true" north is about 15° to the left of where your compass says north is, and the readings below are based on true north, not magnetic north.) Error is probably about ±5°. Data below is based on a single daytime reading; still requires daytime and nighttime confirmation.

- 0° **True North.** Low, striated pyramid on other side of highway. Standing at the post in the parking lot, look directly across the street at a right angle to the highway. Now scan left for about 30° and you will see a pyramid-shaped hill with diagonal striations. It is relatively close, perhaps two miles, and behind it are much higher mountains. The point of this pyramid is approximately true north. From this point, we will be scanning right for the following compass points.
- 15° A much higher peak. (Magnetic North.)
- 125° A pyramid shaped peak on the horizon, lower than the surrounding peaks.
- 130° Looking down the straight portion of the highway, to the last rise where pavement can be seen with the naked eye.
- 135° Southeast. Peak of Badger Mountain.
- ? Point where foothills of Badger Mountain reach the valley floor.
- 220° Post on edge of parking lot. About 75 feet from the post where we are taking our measurements, there is another post beyond the edge of the parking lot.
- 235° Main corral for Medlin Ranch. Best identified through binoculars.
- 245° Lowest point on the eastern horizon. Groom Lake is just beyond that ridge.
- 250° Close outcropping in middle of valley, about two miles distant.
- 250° Medlin Ranch compound, almost obscured by an outcropping in the middle of the valley. At night, lights will be visible here.
- 267° Distant outcropping in valley floor, just below the foothills of the Groom Range
- 270° West. Peak of Bald mountain, the highest point in the Groom Range. (Through binoculars, a small structure can be seen at the top.
- 300° Top of a very gentle hump in the valley, left of the highway about a mile away
- 310° Straight portion of the highway, at a point just before it turns toward Coyote summit. The road runs perfectly straight for about 10 miles through the Tikaboo Valley. This reading is taken at the furthest straight-line portion you can see, as the highway ascends into the hills.
- 320° Top of low rounded knoll on N (or right) side of highway, immediately adjacent to LN 31.4.

Near the W end of the gravel area, close to a wooden post and a Joshua tree is a curious hole in the ground, about 1-1/2 feet wide and who-knows-how deep (all the way to China?). It would be a nasty thing to fall into. I assume that this hole is a test bore for water. Deep bores have been drilled in this valley with no water found. (Stories in Rachel say they have drilled 9000 feet down, but I dispute this figure since that would be well below sea level. I suspect 900 feet.) For their cattle, the Medlin's have to pipe in water from a mountain spring. They then truck it to water tanks that feed cattle troughs scattered throughout the range. These oases mean life or death for the cattle, so it is easy to understand the sensitivity regarding them. As you trundle around on back roads, remember that you must not park within 100 yard of any of these tanks.

LN 31.8 Here there is a big black burn mark on the westbound side of the pavement. No, it is not a saucer crash site. This is the place where an M-1 tank and the vehicle carrying it caught fire in October 1992. According to a Deputy Sheriff, the tank was an obsolete one being transported to the Nellis bombing range to be turned into Swiss cheese. The tank shifted on the flatbed truck that was carrying it so that the treads of the tank dragged against tires of the flatbed. The tires caught fire, then the wood of the flatbed caught fire, then everything burnable in the tank went up in smoke. The marks on the pavement and debris nearby reveal an intense fire, hot enough to melt deep ruts in the pavement and to leave puddles of molten metal on the ground.

LN 31.7 Small dirt track S, leading about 0.2 mi. to a secluded parking place for one vehicle. The track is sandy and hazardous for cars. Similar view as LN 32.3, but a butte obscures a small section of the horizon. The track continues south from there, but degenerates in

quality.

- LN 31.4 Sandy dirt track N. High clearance only. Leads about 0.1 mile to intersect with another dirt track running roughly parallel to the highway. (See LN 31.9.) This second dirt track joins the power lines further W and is also accessible from the roads at LN 31.1 and LN 27.5.

Also at this location on the highway is a small knoll immediately N. You can walk about 0.2 mile to the top for a commanding view of the Tikaboo Valley. This is an excellent viewing spot, offering a high angle look toward Groom and Papoose Lakes. It is only marred by the fact that you have to leave your car. (Remember not to park on the shoulder of the highway, or you would be subject to ticketing as on any Nevada highway.)

- LN 31.1 Rough dirt road N, leads 1/2 mile to a water tank, then it becomes high clearance only. Could be interesting.

- LN 29.5 **The famous "Black Mailbox" where many UFO sightings have been reported.** The mailbox itself is very mysterious, with barely decipherable lettering on its side. (Close inspection reveals the inscription: "Steve Medlin.") Here, a maintained dirt road ("Mailbox Road") leads S 3.8 mi. to a corral, then continues to Groom Lake Road (straight) or the ranch compound (right). The location itself is arbitrary, chosen only because it is the only roadside landmark for miles. Similar views, some probably better, can be had for several miles on either side. As I see it, the Black Mailbox is for the busloads of Japanese tourists. I recommend LN 32.3 as a more comfortable, less obvious and less intrusive location.

If you insist on watching from the Black Mailbox, here are some points of etiquette, in deference to the people who live and work here:

— Do not drive down Mailbox Road, at least during the day. This road exists essentially to serve the ranch. It won't take you anyplace special: It simply connects with Groom Lake Road. Mailbox Road cuts through the corral and reservoir area that is the heart of ranch operations. During the day, real cowboys tend real cattle there, although it is usually deserted at night.

— Do not block access to Mailbox Road. Also, to avoid admonishments by the Sheriff and a possible fine, you should park well off the highway.

— Stay clear of the mailbox itself. Think of how you would feel about people lurking around your mailbox or messing with your mail. If you looked inside you would probably only find a few bills.

— Do not litter or leave behind any other evidence that you were there.

Below are the approximate compass points for the Black Mailbox. The altitude above sea level of Black Mailbox is approximately 4500 feet.

Compass Points for the Black Mailbox

Readings were taken from a white rock about 40 feet inland from the mailbox itself. Readings have been corrected for a magnetic declination of 15° and have an error of about ±5°. (Readings taken during the day with a hand-held compass. Need confirmation and night readings.)

- 0° **True North.** From the white rock, look back toward the highway and the stop sign. Immediately behind and left of the stop sign is a small straight-line portion of the horizon. Reading is taken and left end of this straight line.
- 30° Mountains close to the highway. Reading at highest apparent peak (left).
- 50° From white rock looking toward Black Mailbox: the peak directly above the mailbox.
- 90° **East.** Utility pole on top of ridge (visible only through binoculars).
- 130° Looking toward Hancock Summit: Highest visible straight-line portion of the highway, on a rise about a mile away.
- 140° Badger Mountain, the highest peak right of Hancock Summit. Reading at highest apparent point. Elevation ???.
- 165° Where foothills of Badger Mtn meet the valley floor. Scan right from Badger peak to the point where its foothills intersect with the downward sloping, straight valley floor.
- 170° Where mountains in the medium distance intersect with the valley floor. Look at the mountains just above the previous compass point. Follow that range until it almost intersects the valley floor at a "W" shaped notch (with much higher mountains behind it). Reading is taken at the first "V" of the "W."
- 180° **South.** Small bump in valley floor. The bump interrupts a long straight line sloping upward across the valley. Reading at top of little bump.
- ? *Papoose Lake airspace.*
- 200° Farthest visible straight line portion of Mailbox Road
- 210° 35 mpg sign about 500 feet away
- 220° Medlin ranch compound. A cluster of buildings only faintly visible in the day. Will show lights at night. Reading taken at largest building, a barn.
- 225° *Groom Lake airspace. No landmarks.*
- 230° White Sides. A pyramid shaped peak, with a table-like formation to the right.
- 240° Outcropping in valley floor. Outcropping of highest point in it.
- 270° **West.** Bald mountain, the highest peak in the Groom Range. Elevation ???.
- Reading is taken at the small structure at the top.
Still need some compass points for N end of Groom Range.
- 310° Furthest visible straight-line portion of Highway, before it curves toward Coyote summit. To identify this point, you may need binocs and have to walk toward highway.
- 315° Small pyramid shaped peak, possibly Coyote Peak???
- 330° Round peak at end of a rippling range. Scan right over a ridge with an undulating surface. Reading at the rounded peak just beyond it.

Map also shows another track S from mailbox at angle, to run parallel to Hwy. E and rejoin it at LN 34.0. Not seen on survey. Probably overgrown.

There is also a dirt track N, across the highway from the Black Mailbox.

LN 29.3 *Map shows dirt track N here, missed on survey. Probably connects with track at LN 29.5.*

LN 28.1 Dirt road S.

LN 27.5 **Road through Wild Horse Valley to Murphy Gap.** Small parking spot about 100 feet in (just after the dip). This road leads far to the north, through Wild Horse Valley to Murphy Gap. Although it looks maintained at the beginning, much of this road is very rough. Although I drove it in a sturdy passenger car, I would not do it again and recommend it for high clearance only. This 25 mile drive took 1-1/2 hours. There are much better ways to Murphy Gap, like the roads at LN 11.7 and LN 4.1 and a good BLM road off SR 318. The only reason to use this road is for access to the reputed ghost towns of Logan and Crescent (that I have not visited).

Also dirt track S (as shown on topo maps).

Following are some mileage points on the N road....

- 0.0 Road is maintained for the next 3.6 mi.
- 3.6 water tower and corral W; road becomes unmaintained with a hump in the middle. Road gets progressively worse from this point.
- 7.3 Dirt road E, probably to Crescent Spring and ghost town of Crescent.
- 10.5 Four-way intersection. Straight probably leads to the Ghost town of Logan, Logan Pass and eventually to Hiko on Rt 318. Right probably leads to Crescent Spring and Crescent Ghost town. Left continues to Murphy Gap, high clearance only.

- 23.0 Intersection with road from west (from behind), probably leading to Sand Spring Valley.
- 23.5 Intersection with maintained BLM dirt road, runs E through Murphy Gap to SR 318 and W to Adaven. Distances: Westbound: Water Gap 11, Adaven 34, Highway-25 20; Eastbound: Murphy Gap 1, Highway-38 19, Key Pittman 23. The road W from here passes about a *mile* from the ghost town of Freiburg; however, access to the site itself is high clearance only (or foot).

LN 26.1 Parking area S.

LN 24.5 Maintained dirt road N, running at an angle toward the Tempiute Range. At 0.7, turns parallel to the highway. At 1.3, it turns again toward the Tempiute Range. Turns at 2.7 to run W along the power lines. At 3.2 the maintained portion ends at a water tank. From here, becomes high clearance only, following the power lines up into the Tempiute mountains. According to the map, the power lines lead eventually to the Tempiute Mine and then to Rachel.

Dirt track S.

LN 22.5 Dirt road S, straight across valley.

LN 21.3 Almost imperceptible dirt track S (overgrown).

LN 21.8 Dirt track N.

LN 20.1 Mostly paved road to "New" Tempiute and Lincoln Mine. (Tempiute is pronounced roughly "Tem-pah-yoot" and an alternative spelling is Timpahute.) Sign says "Umetco Minerals Corp., Emerson Operations 9.6 miles." Trash barrel at the corner. This Tempiute (not to be confused with "Old" Tempiute at LN 13.6) is a recently abandoned mine operation—not too romantic. Has the usual modern jumble of derelict vehicles and equipment, and all that remains of housing are mobile home pads. Site is posted "No Trespassing". You can continue beyond this point on maintained dirt roads to rejoin Highway 375 just E of Rachel (at LN 11.7 or LN 10.2).

LN 19.5 Dirt road S and large parking area. The road leads up to a network of interesting high clearance only tracks at the N end of the Groom Range, one of which probably leads to the Andies Mine. (You probably won't find any good viewing sites here, but it would be interesting exploring. This area appears to be outside the Restricted Zone, but be sure to know the boundaries before you travel here.) This is a fairly good road for about 3 miles before becoming very rough and rocky, high clearance only. I made it seven miles up this road in a full-size car, but I would not do it again.

Faint dirt track N, possibly part of old highway.

Highway 375 now ascends through low hills to Coyote Summit.

LN 18.0 Two faint tracks N lead down into depression, merge together and then appear to lead uphill in the direction of Coyote Summit. Could be a portion of the old highway. May also lead to a road into the hills visible N from LN 18.3. Tire tracks indicate recent use.

LN 18.3 Faint dirt track N leads up into the hills. No evidence of recent use.

LN 16.5 **Coyote Summit, elevation 5591 feet.** This is a pass over the ridge between the Groom and Tempiute Ranges, providing passage between Tikaboo and Sand Spring Valleys. I actually saw a coyote here. Paved parking strips and litter barrels on both sides of the highway. Dirt track S, downslope, is part of an old highway. It leads nowhere but provides a hidden parking area. (Another dirt track, west of that road, leads up a low rise and then ends immediately.) A twenty minute hike takes you to the top of a rocky knoll immediately S, where you have an unobstructed 360-degree view, including both the Tikaboo and Sand Spring Valleys and a high-angle perspective across the Groom Range. A potential viewing spot, but it would require leaving the comfort of ones vehicle. Ridge

above Old Tempiute (LN 13.6) is probably better.

LN 16.3 Faint dirt track S. Part of the old highway. Runs parallel to 375 to the Coyote Summit parking area, where it is accessible again.

LN 15.4 Cattle guard.

LN 13.6 Dirt road N, leads 2.7 mi. uphill to the "Old" Tempiute ghost town, not to be confused with "New" Tempiute accessible from LN 20.1 or LN 11.7. Old Tempiute consists of many ancient stone foundations (whereas New Tempiute is a collection of rusted out cars and abandoned mobile home pads). Lack of any derelict machinery here indicates that this settlement was inhabited long ago, and a Rachel resident tells me it dates to the 1850s. Road is rocky, but passable by a car. This road also leads to an excellent saucer viewing site on a ridge overlooking both the Tikaboo and Sand Spring Valleys.

On 375, the road to Old Tempiute is immediately across the highway from a sign, visible eastbound, that says, "Alamo 47, Caliente 77." A short distance up this road, it forks, with the more traveled road going right. The left road, probably high clearance only, is said to lead to yet another ghost settlement. The descriptions below apply to the more traveled road on the right.

The stone foundations start about 2 miles from the highway. At 2.7 miles, the navigable portion of the road ends at a parking area at the base of a narrow gorge. Here there is a gate (that may be locked or open) and a rusted sign that probably once said "No Trespassing". Beyond the gate, the main track leads steeply uphill through the gorge, probably to a mining operation. The presence of the gate suggests that visitors are not welcome beyond this point. However, a second dirt track, outside the gate, leads from the parking area steeply up the hillside on the left.

This second road leads to an excellent saucer viewing site. Unless you have a sure-footed, high clearance vehicle, you will have to park at the base and walk up, but it isn't far to go. A ten minute hike up this road takes you to a ridge overlooking both the Sand Spring and Tikaboo Valleys. At the top are a couple of radio transponders, one of which re-transmits Las Vegas Channel 8 (KLAS) for Rachel residents. Walk about 100 feet beyond the antennae and you will find a couple of small rocks to sit on. The road continues downslope from here to dead-end at a mine tunnel. This tunnel looks more stable than most, having been chiseled out of solid rock, but it is probably still not a good idea to go inside.

This ridge location high on my list of saucer sites because it offers a high angle perspective on all the key locations: To the left are Groom Lake, Papoose Lake and Tikaboo Valley, which is the area where the saucers are supposed to operate. To the right are Sand Spring Valley and Railroad Valley where many conventional aircraft *definitely* operate. Even if you see nothing to the left, you are guaranteed to get a good show on the right. Among its minor shortcomings are that Desert Valley and the eastern side of Tikaboo Valley are partially obscured by a hillside and the view of the airspace directly over Groom Lake is not quite as good as at the Black Mailbox or LN 32.3. Another shortcoming is that you have to leave the comfort of your car, a serious consideration in the cold months. It's an easy hike, however, and you can quickly go back for anything you might have forgotten.

On the drive back toward the highway, there is an good view of Rachel and Sand Spring Valley below.

LN 13.5 Dirt track S, leads into the hills along the fence line. However, it is blocked off by a fenced gate about 500 feet in. Do not proceed.

LN 12.9 Two false cattle guards.

LN 12.1 Dirt track N, leads to sand pit.

LN 11.7 Dirt road to "New" Tempiute and Lincoln Mine. [See LN 20.1.] Westbound, this road is

marked by a "Tempiute" sign. Eastbound, the sign says, "Thru Truck Route." Some distance down this road it forks, with the left fork going east to Tempiute and Lincoln Mine and the right heading to the north end of Sand Spring Valley and beyond.

LN 11.4 A maintained dirt road S, leads to a network of roads around Rachel and to the northern entrance to the Groom Lake facility. [Another access point for this entrance is at LN 2.8.] Some mile points for this road are as follows, measured from the highway. North and south are the sides of the road.

0.7 Dirt tracks lead south to a ridge at the end of the Groom Range, the first of several.

1.9 Another dirt track south.

2.6 Corral south.

3.4 Bend in the road and dirt track south.

4.0 Dirt track south .

4.5 Other dirt tracks south. This or one of the previous track might lead to the Andies Mine.

10.2 Another maintained road joins this one at an angle from the north. This other road leads north to SR-375 at LN 2.8.

A few feet beyond this junction, there is a fence line and yellow-striped posts on either side of the road. This is presumably where the Restricted Zone begins. The guard shack is in plain view about 1000 feet beyond. I recommend not crossing this line and not proceeding to the guard shack itself, where you can only receive a chilly reception. However, there is nothing wrong with milling around outside the line. You and the guards can look at each other through binoculars.

10.? Locked gate and a guard shack. (Don't go.)

LN 10.2 Maintained dirt road N, leads around the derelict minerals operation visible from road. Connects with road at LN 11.7 and continues to Tempiute Mine.

LN 10.1 **Town of Rachel.** Elevation 4970 feet. Population: About 100. Hardly a Gotham or Metropolis, just a scatter of mobile homes with the only paved roads being 375 and the frontage road beside it. Home of two tiny commercial establishments: The Quik Pick gas station/convenience store/RV park and the Little A "Le" Inn restaurant/bar/motel/RV.park/laundromat/UFO headquarters, each described below. Behind Quik Pik is a "Senior Thrift Store"—a good place to pick up warm clothing. (It's open officially only on Fridays but if someone happens to be there, they'll probably let you in.) No post office, bank or other superfluous conveniences. There are EMTs in town but no other medical care. Local residents do their shopping in Las Vegas, 150 miles away, and the children go to school in Alamo, a 50 mile bus ride each way.

The town appeared on the landscape fairly recently. Formerly know as Sand Springs, it was renamed in the 1980s in memory of the first child born here, Rachel Jones, who died at the age of three. Rachel's family moved to Washington State shortly after her birth, and there she succumbed to respiratory failure following the Mount St. Helens eruption.

LN 10.1 **Quik Pik.** Sells unleaded gas for about 25 cents higher than the price in Las Vegas. Fuel up here, since nearest gas is 110 miles W and 45 miles E. The convenience store is no frills but has a good selection of basic groceries. Water is available here from a faucet to the left. Has 25 full-hookup RV spaces for \$7/night. Hours: Mon-Sat 7-8, Sun 8-8. Phone (702) 729-2529.

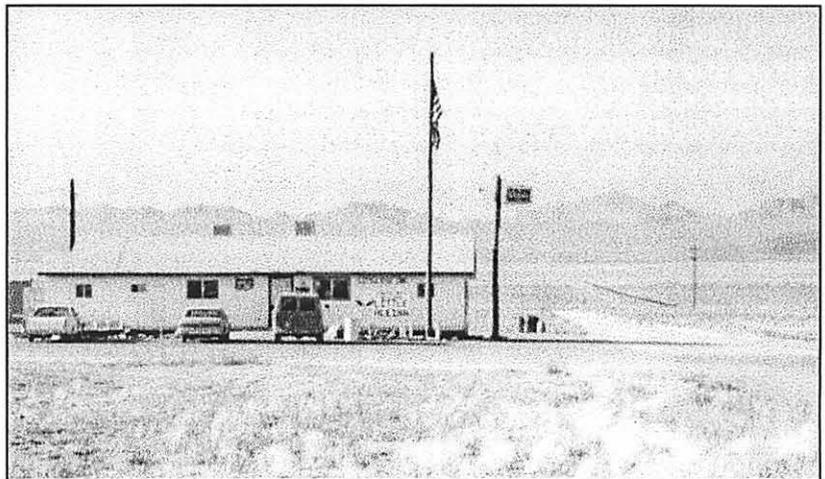


RACHAEL NEVADA ON HIGHWAY 375

Posted on a wall in the back of the store is a Defense Mapping Agency chart of the Nellis Air Force Range. This map is worth a look if you haven't seen it before. [See MAPS.]

In front and to the left of Quik Pik is a cluster of high tech equipment. This is a radiation monitoring station, common to many small towns surrounding the Nevada Test Site. It is as well-documented as the Batcave, with signs on each device telling what it is.

LN 9.7 **Little A'Le'Inn.** (Pronounced "Little Alien.") A tiny roadhouse you might miss if you weren't looking for it, but a "must" stop for all travelers, especially those interested in local UFO and aircraft lore. It's also the only food and lodging on Highway 375, and a good deal on both counts. Nearly everyone in town passes through the Inn at one



time or another: It's Rachel's social club, entertainment center and meeting place, as well as the starting and ending point for most saucer watch expeditions. Sign in front says, "Welcome UFOs and Crews."

Food is good here and reasonably priced. All-you-can-eat buffet Friday and Saturday nights: \$4.95 (beats Vegas). Offers 11 motel rooms in mobile homes at \$25 single, \$30 double. Rooms are simple, but clean and comfortable: Each mobile home contains 2 or 3 rooms sharing a bathroom and a refrigerator. There is a VCR in each room and the Inn has a sizable collection of tapes that can be borrowed by guests for free. Also has 18 RV hookups at \$8 per night. There are pay phones both inside and out and a couple of them infernal gambling machines. (Don't touch 'em or they'll suck you dry!) Liquor and cigarettes, if you must have them. Coin operated pool table. (Alas, no pool.) Visa/MasterCard accepted. Rest rooms. Laundry facilities. Hours: 8am-10pm, 7 days. Phone: (702) 729-2515. Owners: Joe and Pat Travis. Mail Address: HCR Box 45, Rachel, NV 89001. (The "HCR" stands for "Highway Contract Route.")

Items for Sale at Little A'Le'Inn: UFO T-Shirts and other knickknacks. Books (including this document). Bob Lazar's video tape. USGS maps of the area. [See MAPS.] Binoculars. Snacks. Do-dads and thingamajigs.

Reference materials at Little A'Le'Inn: UFO memorabilia and photos are prominently displayed on the walls, a sort of mini-museum with much of interest. Includes shots of

UFOs reportedly taken at the Black Mailbox. On one wall are autographed photos of UFO luminaries and hangers-on. Bob Lazar and John Lear are represented here alongside *two* publicity photos of someone named Sean Morton, one describing him as “the world’s foremost UFO researcher.” (Who is Sean Morton?) Many maps, books and magazines are available for perusal on a bookshelf marked “Little A ‘Le’ Inn UFO Library.” Out of sight but available for the asking: Extensive video tape library, including UFO topics. Printout of Paranet files on Bob Lazar. Many maps and books. Articles on Area 51 from magazines and newspapers.

The Inn has a satellite dish hooked up to the TV at the bar, but just about the only entertainment station Joe can get with sound is the SciFi channel. Is this spooky, or what? Patrons and staff are treated to a steady diet of space battles, evil aliens, night-dwelling monsters and creatures from beyond the grave. This can’t be good for the mind.

Formerly known as the Rachel Bar and Grill, the Travis’s changed the name in 1990 after the UFO watchers started coming. Judging from all the above, one might suspect that Joe and Pat were out to make a quick buck off the UFO trade. You may rest assured, however, that they are sincere in their interest in the subject. Their prices are very reasonable and hardly a source of rich profit. Owing to the many lean periods between visitors, the Inn has never made much money, and Joe and Pat keep it going primarily because they feel they have a mission here, both to serve the citizens of Rachel and to provide a stable base for visitors. It is a worthy cause to support them with your purchases.

Joe and Pat were here before the saucer watchers came, and their role as hosts of the UFO movement was thrust upon them without their asking. They have accepted the role with earnest, however, and Pat now describes the Inn as an “information resource” for anyone interested in Area 51. Indeed, hidden in the nooks and crannies of the Inn is a wide array of reference sources—maps, videos, photos and magazine articles. Most are available for perusal for the price of a cup of coffee. This isn’t like a library where you can look things up in the card catalog. Instead, you have to slow down, set a spell and if you are patient whatever you are interested in will eventually emerge from the woodwork.

That’s not to say that Joe and Pat have all the answers—or any of them. They readily admit to being as mystified by the saucer stories as anyone else.

LN 9.5 S: Penoyer Farm Road. Maintained dirt road leading to Penoyer Farms, owned by the Castletons, which grows hay and alfalfa with well water and dominates this end of Sand Spring Valley. (You can usually find Roger Castleton at the bar at the Little A ‘Le’ Inn. He sits on the stool at the end.)

N: Little used dirt road connecting with road to Tempiute. Avoid it; the roads at LN 11.7 and LN 10.2 are better.

LN 8.8 Dirt road N, apparently to the dry lake bed.

LN 8.0 Dirt roads S & N.

LN 7.9 Dirt road S.

LN 6.1 Dirt track N to dry lake bed.

LN 4.8 Dirt track N.

LN 4.1 Dirt track S.

N: Maintained dirt road N to northern end of valley and beyond. 26.7 miles to the junction with a maintained BLM road just north of the Worthington Mountains. This second road leads west through Murphy Gap to Rt 318 or north to Adaven in the Humboldt National Forest.

LN 3.4 Water tower N.

LN 2.8 Maintained and heavily used road running 8.7 miles south to the northern entrance of the Groom Lake facility. Sandy and may have some washboarding. Following are some landmarks along this road, measured from the highway....

1.8 E: Hay fields begin (Penoyer Farms).

W: Dirt track, roughly parallel to 375, runs in the direction of mid-valley outcroppings (which also visible directly south from County Line); may connect with dirt track at NY 47.8. (Be cautious and bring a map if driving this track, because there is also a Restricted Zone border in that direction.)

3.6 Dirt road E, the western end of Penoyer Farm Road [LN 9.8].

6.2 Road takes right angle right turn and heads southwest. A little used dirt road heads off to the left here. Continuing on the road right....

8.7 This road joins another maintained road coming from LN 11.4. The Restricted Zone begins a few feet beyond this junction. [See side road mile 10.2 at LN 11.4.]

Resuming on 375...

LN 0.5 Dirt tracks N to ridge and S into valley.

LN 0

NY 49.5

County line: Lincoln and Nye counties. A good saucer view site, since it provides a high angle peek behind the Groom Range toward Groom Lake, also a good view of the Railroad Valley where conventional aircraft hold maneuvers. From this spot, I saw two glowing orbs rise above the horizon. [See FLYING OBJECT IDENTIFIER.] Wide gravel parking area N. This location is marked by a "Nye County" sign westbound, but no sign eastbound. The county line itself is marked by several posts on either side of the road.

Compass Points for County Line

One is a wooden post on the N about 10 feet from the pavement, where I took the following compass readings (corrected for 15° magnetic declination). [These are tentative readings taken with a handheld compass during the day. Confirmation needed.]

- 0° **True North.** End of straight line portion of the horizon. From the point where the highway crosses Queen City Summit (away from Rachel), scan right about 45° past a rocky range of mountains. Where the rocks end, a straight line begins. Reading was taken where a line of distant hills rises from behind this straight line, disrupting the perfectly straight horizon. This direction also coincides with the Lincoln/Nye county line (not perpendicular to the highway as the posts suggest.)
- 25° First peak of a range of low, gentle hills close to the highway. This is conical, rounded peak.
- 65° Highest apparent point in this nearby range.
- 90° **East.** No landmarks.
- 110° Right side edge of the dry lake in Sand Spring Valley.
- 125° **East Southeast.** Highway 375 below Coyote Summit. This reading was taken at the furthest visible straight line portion of the highway, beyond Rachel, just before it turns toward Coyote Summit.
- ? **Bald Mountain.** Elev. 9380 feet). The highest point on the southward horizon. Bald mountain has a slightly bulging conical shaped peak topped by a tiny structure visible with binoculars.
- ? Start of the straight line slope.
- 175° End of the straight line slope, where it reaches a small bump. This is also where an outcropping, called Sharp Mountain, first rises from the valley floor. Sharp Mtn has two peaks of approximately the same height.
- 180° **South.** On Sharp Mtn, roughly the halfway between where it first rises from the valley floor and its first peak.
- 185° First peak of Sharp Mountain
- 190° Second Peak of Sharp Mountain
- ? Highest peak of Chalk Mtn. Elev. 7362 feet.
- ? Final butte of Chalk Mtn
- 215° Another outcropping from the valley floor. Sight along the posts perpendicular to the highway then look slightly to the left. Reading was taken where the low hill leaves the floor.
- 240° Top of low, broad conical shaped hill below the high table-like mountains. These mountains are shaped like a big mesa and offer no distinct reference points, so the lower hill is used.
- 270° **West.** Left-hand end of a straight line, at the point where it meets a tiny black mesa.
- 300° Highway 375 below Queen City Summit. This reading was taken at the furthest visible straight line portion of the highway, roughly in the direction of the orange cattle sign.
- 325° **Rock Pyramid.** Scan right from Queen City Summit and you see 3 or 4 low, gentle hills, then a gap, then the start of some reddish, rocky hills. First there are some cliffs, then a pyramid shaped peak where this reading was taken. (There is a higher mountain right of it.)
- ? Much larger peak beside the pyramid, the highest in this range.
- 350° Right-hand edge of last rock outcropping of these rocky range.

Mileposts below are in Nye County, measured from the start of Highway 375 at Warm

Springs.

- NY 49.2 Gravel area S over a drainage duct. This might make a good parking spot, slightly higher in elevation than County Line, but it is also very close to the Nellis Restricted Zone, which nearly touches the highway on this side. As an "Indefinite Boundary," it is hard to be sure exactly where the line is. Better to use the parking area a few feet down the road at County Line.
- NY 48.4 Sign: "Alamo 63, Caliente 93, Cedar City 201." That means 202 miles to the nearest eastbound K-Mart. (Is this a Hell on Earth, or what?)
- NY 47.8 Easy to miss dirt track S. There is space to park a few feet in. Probably good viewing site, a bit more secluded than County Line, but does not offer as good visibility over Railroad Valley. Don't venture far from the highway, as this spot is close to the Nellis Restricted Area.
- NY 46.5 Turnout S.
- NY 46.0 Cattle guard. Turnout S and dirt track S to distant hills.
- NY 45.8 **Queen City Summit**, elevation 5960. On the ridge separating the Sand Spring Valley from the Railroad Valley.
- NY 45.7 Dirt road N leading to an interesting network of small roads and tracks through the surrounding hills. Lots of mining remnants. Best for high clearance vehicles or mountain bikes.
- NY 45.5 Dirt track N connects with road at NY 45.7.
- NY 44.4 Dirt track N.
- NY 43.6 Maintained dirt road S. According to the map, this road leads to an abandoned ranch and then to Cedar Pass, about 25 miles away on the Nellis Air Force Range. (There will be a guard shack or nasty warning signs, no doubt.) You can see the entire road, the ranch and Cedar Pass in the distance.

I am told that the ranch is the "old Fallini place," now uninhabited. There are supposed to be some interesting stone buildings here. At that point, according to the map, you can turn north and drive behind the Reveille Range and rejoin SR-375 at NY 7.2 or NY 0.8. Up to the Fallini ranch, the road is said to be heavily washboarded, but the road north of there is said to be good. There are supposed to be some interesting mine sites on rough tracks off this road.

This milepost is also the approximate edge of Railroad Valley, named for a railroad franchise once granted here but never built. Railroad Valley has no railroad; in fact, it ain't got nothin'—only the requisite ranch and dry lake bed. Since there is nobody much to complain—and no sound restrictions like there are supposed to be in Rachel—military jets often fly through at low level while on maneuvers. Planes dive, bank and change course abruptly, with each pilot apparently vying with the next to see how close they can come to the landscape without turning into dead meat. There's a spectacular air show here almost every day, although exact show times are unpredictable.

The entrance to this road is a good viewing location for both day and night activity. In the clear desert skies, aircraft operating above this valley might easily be seen from the Black Mailbox 40 miles away. In the daytime, I have counted as many as a dozen aircraft at once performing extreme maneuvers in Railroad Valley, which could make an impressive UFO-like show when seen from afar at night.

- NY 42.2 Dirt track N.
- NY 38.6 Dirt track S to corral.
- NY 38.5 Dirt track N.

- NY 37.7 Faint dirt track N.
- NY 36.1 Dirt track N & S. Curious depression S, perhaps a catch basin.
- NY 34.1 Dirt track S to corral.
- NY 33.3 Dirt track N to distant wind vane and well.
- NY 31.3 Dirt track S.
- NY 31.1 Dirt track N to corral.
- NY 29.0 Dirt road to corral at the edge of dry lake.
- NY 24.8 Sign westbound: Tonopah 74, Bishop 189, Reno 310.
Eastbound: Tempiute 39, Alamo 86, Caliente 116. (Tempiute! Who would be going there?)
- NY 22.0 Road S to Reveille (a ghost town?).
- NY 15.9 Maintained dirt road to Nyala and Adaven. According to the map, this road runs through Railroad Valley, along the north side of the Quinn Canyon and Grant Ranges to connect with US-6 at Currant. Access to the Humboldt National Forest.
From here, highway runs through a wide, level pass through volcanic buttes. Leaving Railroad Valley.
- NY 15.2 The highway crosses a pond. It had water in it in the fall and winter, but it will probably be dry in the summer. Dirt track N along edge of pond
- NY 14.5 Older pavement begins (but still good quality).
- NY 14.0 Large parking area N.
- NY 12.5 Parking area N.
- NY 11.2 Maintained road to Twin Springs (1 mile) and Blue Jay (15 miles). Twin Springs is the ranch you see just over yon, owned by the Fallini's. According to the map, this road connects with US-6 about 15-20 miles N.
About 0.1 mi down this road, the maintained road turns right and a smaller unmaintained dirt road continues straight. This smaller road continues 0.2 mi to connect with another maintained road running E roughly parallel to SR 375 then up into the hills. This third road dead-ends at some apparent mine tailings (but no obvious mine) about 1.5 mi from the highway; with no other significant roads going off it.
- NY 10.3 Dirt road N to corral.
- NY 9.9 Dirt road N to corral.
- NY 9.8 Dirt track S across valley.
- NY 7.2 Dirt road N & S across valley. S has a stop sign and (according to the map) provides an alternate route to NY 43.6. Looks interesting.
- NY 0.8 Dirt road S to a corral and beyond. According to map, connects with road at NY 7.2 and provides an alternate route to NY 43.6.
- NY 0.1 Sign eastbound: Rachel 59, Alamo 111, Caliente 141.
- NY 0 **Warm Springs.** The name says it all—a steaming aqueduct of water flowing down from a hillside. This is a ghost town with no human life. I am told that the remaining buildings are owned by the Fallinis in Twin Springs. The Warm Springs Bar & Cafe appears permanently shuttered, although there is a working pay phone out front, the only one for miles. The water from the spring flows down to a pool and derelict bath house with “Keep Out” spray painted on it. Here, 375 ends (or begins) at U.S. Route 6. Go west on

US-6 for Tonopah (49 miles) and Bishop (151 mi). Go east for Ely (119 mi), Delta (273 mi) and the ghost towns of Tybo and Hot Creek (access road at Basecamp, 9.5 mi).

The spring itself is worth exploring: It comes out of the ground very hot about 1000 feet away on the hillside, then runs through a man made channel to the bath house. In the area surrounding the junction there are several stone buildings and a stone corral of some antiquity.

White Sides

For adventurous travelers who want to experience the thrill of espionage without actually breaking the law, there is a small mountain you can climb to look down on the secret Groom Lake base. It is not clear why the military overlooked White Sides in their land seizure of 1986. Everywhere else along the border they seem to have carefully blocked the holes of casual viewing. The most reasonable explanation is that White Sides was simply an oversight: Surveyors must have known about the loophole, but perhaps they never suspected that anyone else would find it or have the gall to go up there in plain view. This theory is not the only one, however. Some conspiracy buffs, who see a pattern of high level intent in everything, claim that the military *deliberately* left White Sides outside the Zone just so saucer watchers would discover it. It is all part of the "Plan," they say, perhaps to release UFO information to the public in calculated steps.

The Groom Lake installation was used to test the Stealth fighter and bomber during their development, but what is going on there now is a matter of considerable speculation. Persistent but unconfirmed rumors, reported in *Aviation Week* and *Jane's Defense Weekly*, cite Groom Lake as the home base for an ultra secret, very high speed reconnaissance plane dubbed *Aurora*. Rumors of a more conspiratorial nature claim Groom Lake as the site of a vast underground laboratory, jointly operated by evil aliens and a secret world government, where unspeakable biological experiments are now being conducted on innocent humans. Did you wonder where all those missing children have gone who are now on the back of milk cartons? This is the place.

What is often forgotten is that Lazar himself makes no claims about Groom Lake. He says that the saucers he worked on were housed at Papoose Lake about 12 miles south, and he mentions Groom Lake only as a transfer point in his daily commute there. Papoose Lake is not visible from White Sides nor, it seems, from any place else outside the Restricted Zone. However, the map suggests that White Sides could be a good viewing location for the airspace above Papoose Lake—at least better than the Black Mailbox.

From the top of White Sides, you see a runway on a dry lake bed and some hangers and other buildings along the shore. The installation is unimpressive at first glance, and there is certainly nothing unworldly about it. The view is roughly comparable to looking down on Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas from Sunrise Summit on Lake Mead Blvd. east of the city. Aviation buffs will see a lot to get excited about—big hangers, big satellite dishes and a very long runway—but other casual observers are more likely to say, "So what? Show me the saucers." Again, based on Lazar's public testimony, there are probably no saucers here. Flying saucers don't need runways. Secret airplanes do, and, if you are lucky, that is more likely what you will see.

A Hike of White Sides

White Sides is plainly visible from SR-375 if you know where to look—a small, unremarkable peak near the southern end of the Groom Range. A detailed hiking map of it is provided in the Map Portfolio at the end of this document. White Sides is actually separate from the Groom Range and in front of it; thus it is about a mile and a half outside the straight, north-to-south Restricted Zone border which takes in all of the higher Groom Range peaks. You approach White Sides by car by turning west on the well maintained Groom Lake Road from milepost LN 34.6 on SR-375. As you get closer, you see that the mountain does indeed have white sides—at least the southern face is lighter in color than the rest of the terrain. At a point about 11.5 miles from the highway, the first curve in the road appears. Just before this curve is a 35 mph sign, and just after that is a small dirt road on the right that

is easy to miss. Turn here. This is an access road for a water tank about 500 feet from the road. This road forms a loop so the water truck can turn around. From the loop, a dirt track runs to the top of a small hill, Campfire Hill, where saucer watchers often camp. Downhill from the loop, there are also two dirt tracks leading to a water trough and to two other dirt tracks. One of these tracks runs east and west through the ravine where the water trough is located. The other track is less noticeable and leads out of the ravine on the side opposite the loop.

The easiest way to hike White Sides is to park in this vicinity [See PARKING below.] and follow this last track on foot. After about 20 minutes, you pass through a gap between rock bluffs. At this point, you have bypassed the only topographic obstacle at the base: some hidden ledges that you might have found yourself on top of if you had taken a bee-line route. After you have passed through the gap, there are two ways to climb the mountain. You make a direct frontal assault or you can take a more pleasant and less strenuous route around the back.

The frontal route is unmarked, and no trail is necessary since the land is all open and there are no major obstacles. Simply walk parallel to the mountain for about a half mile to avoid the side peaks, then head straight up, aiming for the saddleback between the main peak and the smaller one to the right. The angle is steep and footing not great. From the saddle back, it is a fifteen minute climb, with solid footing, to the peak itself. A mountain club might rate the difficulty of this route as "Moderate," which means "Strenuous" if you are out of shape. This is not the most pleasant or easiest route, but it is the fastest if you keep moving. It is probably also the best route to take at night, since the open ground and light colored terrain makes for excellent visibility in moonlight. (At night, you should take a flashlight, but you won't need it as long as the moon is in the sky.)

The easier and more scenic route is called "Backside Trail." This trail follows the dirt track and drainage line to the other side of the peak, then ascends through a narrow gorge to the saddleback. As of this writing, the Backside Trail is well-marked with orange plastic trail tape tied around Joshua trees. A mountain club might rate the difficulty as "Easy," which means "Moderate" if you are out of shape. This is an interesting hike on varied terrain that would be pleasant to do even if there was nothing to see from the top. However, this trail does have its disadvantages. Since it passes through a narrow gorge, moonlight may not be sufficient illumination at night. This trail also takes you out of sight of your car and Groom Road for about 30 minutes. This can be seen as a disadvantage or an advantage. You can't see if the security patrol has found your car, but they can't see you either. If you climb by the frontal route, the patrols can see you from the road or the guard shack as soon as you start climbing the incline, whereas on the Backside Trail, they won't see you on the mountain until you reach the saddleback just 15 minutes from the peak. As discussed below, timing is a matter of concern on White Sides, since there is a predictable delay of at least 40 minutes between the time they complain and the arrival of the Sheriff.

Parking

Where to park is an issue of great concern on White Sides. First, there is an ironclad law you must obey: Do not park within 100 yards of the cattle water trough. This is a Nevada state law and it is rigorously enforced here, since it is a genuine concern of the rancher. If you are parked or camped too close to the water hole, the cattle will not approach. In this desert landscape the location of water holes is critical, and if one becomes unavailable, the cattle could conceivably die of thirst. You can dispute this rationale if you wish, but the fact is, if you are parked too close to the water hole, the Sheriff will cite you for it when he arrives. The fine is \$155.

For your convenience, a distance of at least 105 yards from the water hole has been marked by yellow ribbons tied around Joshua trees. This distance is further than you might have guessed. You need to park either beyond the "Y" in the turnaround circle or beyond the yellow tape on any of the dirt tracks. (If the tape is missing, you should pace it out yourself: 100 full strides.) As long as you maintain this distance for parking or camping, the Sheriff will probably have no beef about your being there.

Be sure to lock your car.

It is a philosophical issue whether you should park your car in plain sight facing Groom Road or park in a secluded location where you hope they won't see you. I usually prefer to be open about what

I am doing, and my current method is to park facing the road where anyone driving by can see me. Between Groom Road and the turn-around circle, beyond the yellow tape, is wide spot on the side of the access road where two or three cars can park. In addition, I like to post a big sign on my windshield saying exactly what I am doing: "Three people climbing White Sides. Left at 11:45, back around 4:00. We have binoculars but NO cameras." At the bottom, I give my name, with which I assume they can call up my whole life history.

"Wait a minute!" you say. Isn't the whole idea of this exercise to sneak up there stealthily and catch a glimpse of something they don't want you to see? What does it accomplish by warning them? There are several reasons I want to be completely upfront about what I am doing:

First of all, there is a good chance they already know I am there. Apart from the possibility of electronic sensors, there is a full-time security patrol out there that has nothing to do but cruise up and down Groom Lake Road and sit in the shadows waiting something unusual to happen. There is no way to "sneak in" on Groom Lake Road. If the patrol is anywhere in the Tikaboo Valley, they will see you, and the sentries will certainly see you from the guard shack as soon as you appear on the mountain. Parking in a hidden spot, in that case, might only irritate them and make them think you are up to something illegal. If they saw you come in and not go out, they may call out the helicopter to find out exactly where you are. In other words, trying to hide the car might not hide your presence but only create an adversarial relationship with the patrol. If you seem devious and deceptive to them, then they will watch you all the more closely and are more likely to call the Sheriff. I even suggest the outrageous step of flagging down the security patrol and telling them where you are going. If you can convince them before you go that you won't be taking a camera, then the fewer excuses they will have for interrupting your visit.

A second reason for being upfront involves maintaining a good relationship with the Sheriff. When the Sheriff arrives, as he always seems to do, I want him to see that my car is parked properly. I want him to read my sign, and when I come down from the mountain, I want him to see that I have kept 100% to my word. When I am open and honorable with him, I know he will be honorable with me. Neither of us wants this encounter. If called by Security, the Deputy has to take at least two hours out of his day to come out to see me. As much as is possible, I want this encounter to go smoothly for both of us.

Finally, by being clear and open about my actions, I want to discourage Security from calling the Sheriff without a good reason. More on this later.

Cameras

Please heed this advice: **DO NOT BRING A CAMERA OF ANY KIND ON YOUR HIKE OF WHITE SIDES.**

Taking pictures from White Sides is your only legal vulnerability. It is a Federal law that you cannot photograph a secure installation such as Groom Lake. This law may not be right, but it is still the law, and if you are caught breaking it, you will be severely punished. (I have not yet determined what the penalty is, but the prospect of facing any Federal charges is something you want to avoid.) It is okay to have a camera in your car and probably to take pictures from ground level, but having a camera with you on the mountain is indication to them that you intend to photograph the base. If you have no camera then the military has no grounds for interfering with your visit—at least legally.

I know it is tempting to sneak a camera along on your hike so you can take a snap of one of those flying saucers when they happen to show. I also know it is easy to rationalize the act by saying that you can ditch the camera on the way down if you see that the Sheriff is waiting for you below. Nonetheless, there are a number of very strong reasons why you should not give in to this temptation:

1) As the only chink in the military's armor, White Sides must be under intense surveillance; thus, if you bring a camera, there is a very high probability you will be caught. Every place on the mountain where you can see Groom Lake the sentries in the guard shack two miles away can also see you. It is reasonable to assume that they have some very expensive optical and photographic equipment and that every time you raise your camera to take a picture, they will take a picture of you. It may not matter if the Sheriff finds a camera on your person, because if they saw you up there with one, they could send out a search party and find where you ditched it. Your camera found among the rocks plus a picture of

you using it at the top would clinch the case against you.

2) Other people have already gotten away with it and these photos and videos are freely available, so why take the risk yourself? See the Goodall book in REFERENCES for a full-page photo of the "secret" Groom Lake base. This photo and others have been widely shown on national television. Even Geraldo offered some on-the-spot video on his *Now It Can Be Told* show, but the fact remains that if you take the same pictures, you will be breaking the law. If you must add Groom Lake to your photo or video library, I suggest investing \$20 in the Goodall book or another \$30 on a video from the UFO underground.

3) Even if you do see a flying saucer, are you really going to take a decent picture of it? Look at all the snapshots on display at the Little A'Le'Inn: Is there even one of them that would be worth risking your own skin for. The probability of taking a convincing telephoto shot of any distant moving object seems very remote, especially a night. The sad fact is, no matter how good a photo you take—even of a perfect saucer from ten feet away—it proves nothing to someone else. The only person who can be sure it wasn't faked is yourself, and if convincing yourself is your only goal, then you don't need a camera at all.

4) If enough people are detected taking pictures from White Sides, this might be just the excuse the military needs to seize the land or take some other action to close off access. Right now, if the military tries to shut down White Sides, they are in for a tough legal and political battle because there is already enough bad feeling about the 1986 seizure. However, if they can show a stack of photos of people opening flaunting the law, the fight would go much easier for them, and it might be reasonably claimed that they have no choice but seize the mountain. In that case, the choice for us now is between "Eyes Only" and no eyes at all.

5) Bringing a camera sabotages the effort of watchers to secure their freedom of movement on White Sides. This effort is discussed in the following sections.

The Techniques of Security

Although stories have long been floating around about Security waving guns, shooting out tires and making verbal threats to remove people from public lands, it appears that for the most part they rely on a much simpler and more effective method: They call the Sheriff. Ostensibly, they are doing so because they suspect that the person on White Sides has a camera, but they do not have to prove anything before making the complaint. The Sheriff comes, calls you down from the mountain, looks in your backpack, and finds nothing. He takes down your name and you are free to do what you want.

This method is highly effective for bringing you down from the mountain because you know that the Sheriff is as much a victim of the situation as you are. He has driven 40 miles to see you, and you don't want to make things difficult for him—or earn his wrath—by ignoring him. The encounter itself may only last a couple of minutes, but it almost always serves its intended purpose: Once people have made the hour long journey down, they usually do not make the hour-and-a-half climb back up again.

The key issue here, and one that might make the basis for a legal case, is whether Security is calling the Sheriff because it has genuine evidence that a camera is being used or whether it is calling the Sheriff as a matter of course whenever anyone shows up on White Sides. That question defines the latest chapter in the Battle of White Sides.

The Legal Theory

Here is an analogy: A shopkeeper suspects that a patron is shoplifting. He though he saw the patron put something in his pocket and notices that a valuable item is missing from the shelves, so he calls the police. The police come, take the patron outside and ask him to empty his pockets. If they patron has the missing item in his pocket, he is arrested and taken away. If he does not have the item, and no other evidence is found of the patron's wrongdoing, then the police have to let him go.

The shopkeeper's action, in this case, is completely legal. He had genuine indications that a crime was taking place, and he acted solely on that basis. True, he could have been mistaken, but the important thing is, the shopkeeper acted on good faith based on evidence he actually observed.

The situation is different—and illegal—if the shopkeeper has no observed evidence and is only

using the shoplifting complaint as in indirect way to achieve some other goal. Let us say that there is a certain class of people the shopkeeper does not want in his store. Maybe he does not like people of a certain ethnic background, say, white males, who we all know are born thieves and vile oppressors who do not deserve full citizenship. Every time a white male walks into the store, the shopkeeper immediately phones the police and reports a shoplifting in progress, without bothering to wait for evidence. The police now come to this store several times a week. Each time, they take the suspect male outside, find nothing in his pockets and let him go.

Although no formal charges were filed against the innocent males, the shopkeeper's goals were still achieved: He used the police and this unsupported charge to successfully removed this class of patron from his store. In this case, the shoplifting law was used not for the intended purpose of protecting the merchandise, but simply as a means of harassment and discrimination. Had this been a real case in the United States, the police or the patrons would become upset and litigious if a pattern emerged of complaints being made that did not turn up evidence of any crime. Soon it would be the shopkeeper facing charges, according to any of a variety of civil rights or obstruction of justice statutes.

A similar situation could be happening on White Sides: It appears that a lot of people without cameras are being visited by the Sheriff whenever they stay very long on the mountain. The reason given is always that the military "suspects" that someone up there has a camera. Keep in mind that the guard shack has a direct view of White Sides, and that given the military's sensitivity about that location, they probably have some powerful optical equipment trained on the peak. Surely, they can tell the difference between binoculars and a camera. The suspicion, as yet unproved, is that they *do* know the difference and that they are using the camera claim simply as a means of removing people from a place where they otherwise have a legal right to be.

You can now see why it is important that *no one* bring a camera on their hike of White Sides. Since we will not be given the opportunity to examine the optical equipment the military is using for surveillance, the case for harassment can only be proven on statistical grounds. If it turned out that people *were* regularly breaking the law and the military had the dated photos and arrest records to prove it, then it would be hard to show that any one call to the Sheriff was unjustified. On the other hand, if *no one at all* took cameras to White Sides, and yet the complaints to the Sheriff continued unabated, then the case could be made that the complaints by the government were a pattern of arbitrary discrimination not based on observed evidence. One form of proof could be the contact records of the Sheriff's Department, which in turn could be verified or reconstructed by the people who were visited. If these records showed an overwhelming statistical pattern of the Sheriff being called and no evidence of a crime found, then the government could be legally vulnerable.

It is important to note that the target of this theoretical action would not be the Sheriff's Department, which is as much a victim of the situation as the watchers are. If anything, the Deputies suffer more than the visitors do, being forced to make that involuntary hour-and-a-half journey every time. Instead, the target would be the U.S. Government—although it is not exactly clear what unit of the government would be the defendant, since the security forces do not officially exist. The goal of the action would simply be to stop the harassment, so any watcher obeying the law could visit White Sides at any time without being called down by the Sheriff.

What to Expect on White Sides

As indicated above, if you choose to climb White Sides, there is a very high likelihood that the Sheriff will arrive when you are up there. He will flash his lights and whoop his siren, which means "Come on down." It is best if you comply promptly, since to delay would only get him irritated. As long as you are properly parked and do not have a camera, you have nothing to fear. You should be sure that your car is not stolen, however, because he will run your license plates for identification. He may ask to see inside your backpack, and he will also take down your name and address, which might be conveyed to Security. Otherwise, the encounter should be brief and benign. When it is over, you will be free to go back up the mountain or do whatever you want.

While on top of the mountain, do not be surprised if you are buzzed by a big helicopter. There is usually a passenger looking out the side window with a camera, hoping to catch you in the act of using yours. Please resist the temptation to moon this gentleman. Otherwise, your visit should be a pleasant

one. Bring some wine and cheese. Use your binoculars to look out over the base that does not exist and try to figure out how far you can see beyond it.

Equipment: Binoculars are apparently not a problem on White Sides, but I have not figured out at what power of magnification the authorities draw the line. (Can you haul a 10" Celestron telescope with you and read the license plates in the Groom Lake parking lots?) When you climb White Sides, you should be prepared for a dramatic change of climate. It could be windy and chilly up there, while the climb up could be very hot. Wear a good shade hat to protect yourself from sunburn, and be sure to carry adequate water. A map is useful equipment on White Sides: USGS 1:100,000 Pahrangat Range is the one to start with.

If you choose to climb at night, you do not need a flashlight when there is a moon, but carry one anyway and be sure you keep track of when the moon sets so you do not get trapped by darkness. It is suggested that you climb the mountain first during the day so you understand the geography.

Day Excursions

Following are some suggested day excursions from Rachel. Since most of them involve leaving the paved highway, topographic maps are recommended. [Most of the relevant maps are available for sale at the Little A'Le'Inn; see MAPS for a list.] The destinations below are listed first by direction from Rachel, then by relative distance. For those marked "Not visited," please tell me what you find so I can update the description accordingly. It may be wise to inquire locally before attempting the "Not visited" excursions.

North and West of Rachel

Freiburg Ghost Town

At the north end of the Worthington Mountains about 25 miles north of Rachel on dirt roads. The area is accessible by high-quality maintained dirt roads suitable for most vehicles, but the last 1 to 2 miles require high clearance, mountain bike or feet. (Not visited.)

Tybo and Keystone Ghost Towns

Accessible from Basecamp on US-6 about 10 miles N of Warm Springs. (Not visited. Inquire at Little A'Le'Inn.)

Lunar Crater

Volcanic caldera (big hole in the ground) associated with recent eruptions (less than 10,000 years ago). Accessible by a well-marked dirt road from US-6 about 25 miles NE of Warm Springs. This road runs about 6.5 miles S from US-6 to crater; in 1991, this road was rough but passable by most cars.

East of Rachel

Old Tempiute Ghost Towns

See description at LN 13.6.

Andies Mine

This mine is marked on the map at the North End of the Groom Range. The road S at LN 19.5 might take you most of the way there, then high clearance or a mountain bike would be required. Might be done as a biking loop from Rachel, since the road continues down the other side of the ridge. The mine and most of the roads in this area should be outside of the Restricted Area, but study your map and proceed with caution. (Not visited.)

Logan and Crescent Ghost Towns

Accessible from the road north at LN 27.5 on SR-375 not far from the Black Mailbox. High clearance or mountain bikes required for the last few miles. (Not visited.)

“Power Line” Hike over the Mount Irish Range

Follow the power lines from the vicinity of the Black Mailbox to the top of the ridge due east. Might offer a better view of Groom and Papoose Lake airspaces than the highway. You might also be able to continue over the ridge to meet a car where the power lines intersect with a dirt road. (Probably going in the other direction would be a better idea.) You should study this ridge with map and binoculars before attempting to hike it, as the terrain looks very rugged. (Not visited. I only assume this route is passable because someone had to get up there to build the power line.)

White Sides

This is a hike for the adventurous to the top of a small mountain where you can legally look down upon the “secret” airbase at Groom Lake. [See WHITE SIDES section following the Milepost Log.]

Badger Mountain

The peak of Badger Mountain, southeast of the Black Mailbox, might provide good view of the airspace over Papoose Lake. A strenuous hike should be expected. You could begin directly from SR-375 if you have all day, or you could try to drive as far as you can on a dirt road, either with a high clearance vehicle or a mountain bike, and do only the peak on foot. According to the map, there are two access roads to the flanks of Badger Mountain. One leaves from LN 41.6 on SR-375; the other leaves US-93 at the headquarters of the Pahranaagat Wildlife Refuge and approaches the mountain from the south. If you can get to the end of either of these roads, the hike to the top shouldn't be too bad. Study your maps carefully, since visual distances can be deceptive. (Not visited.)

Meteor Impact Crater Near Ash Springs

Just north of Ash Springs is a white hole on a mountaintop where a meteorite supposedly impacted in the 1920s. It is easy to see from US-93 if you know that it is there. Reaching the crater itself is perhaps a two hour hike from the highway, even though it appears close. What seems like a small mining excavation from afar is really a large hole some 50 feet across and 20 feet deep. The hike is a physical and topographic challenge: Physical because of the long upward climb and topographic because the impact site is surrounded by cliffs and you have to find a way around them. Getting there is possible without climbing gear, but you have to be clever.

The climb is best started at a sandpit at Mile 48.1 on US-93. Look up at the mountainside to the east, and you will immediately see the white scar near the top. The best route is not to approach the mountain head-on, but instead go up the canyon just to the right of the peak where the crater is. (From the big sand piles where you park, follow the drainage basin on the right, not the one on the left.) I have not made it to the crater myself because I ran out of daylight, but I suggest continuing up the canyon beyond the crater and then backtracking to it when you reach that level. One of my informants made it to the crater without any obstacles, but he describes the hike as a quite a huff. The hole itself has steep sides and you would need rock climbing gear to go down into it. A couple of owls live inside.

Pahranaagat Wildlife Refuge

A pleasant lakeside picnic spot on US-93, south of Alamo. Accessible by all vehicles.

Delamar Ghost Town

Once a boom town of 3000 people. Accessible from US-93 about halfway between SR-375 and Caliente. Well marked entrance, then a 13 mile drive on dirt roads from there. Road is maintained for about 11 miles, then becomes rough and rocky, but passable by sturdy cars. At a fork 5.8 miles from the highway, be sure to bear left, as the road here is not well marked; otherwise, go straight whenever you encounter an intersection. Many stone foundations and mine workings. Look for a big twenty foot high wall standing alone; this is the top of Main Street. Very interesting terrain around the town, ideal for mountain bikes.

Caliente

On US-93 about 42 miles from eastern end of SR-375. Caliente is proud of its classic railroad station. Of course, trains no longer stop here, but the station has been turned into a sort of City Hall. Here will find town offices, visitors center, public library, police and the "Nuclear Waste Office" (something every small town should have). There isn't much to do in Caliente itself, but the tourist office can give you information on nearby attractions, like those listed below. (Caliente is often pronounced locally "Cali-enney.") Also in Caliente is the local BLM office, which can advise you on the condition of dirt roads and sells a limited range of maps. (Phone 726-8100. Hours: 7:30-4:15 M-F.)

Rainbow Canyon

Colorful cliffs south of Caliente, accessible by paved road. A maintained dirt road further south provides an alternate route to Las Vegas. Inquire at Caliente visitors center in the train station for more info. (Not visited.)

Cathedral Gorge State Park

On US-93 N of Caliente. Impressive sculptured formations with many narrow passageways to explore. Worth a couple of hours. Great for kids and adventurous adults. Easy access for any vehicle.

Pioche

Off US-93 N of Caliente. An interesting old mining town with many abandoned mine buildings still standing in the surrounding area. (Pronounced "Pee-ohch.")

A Summary of Lazar's Claims

What follows is based on the word of Lazar....

During late 1988 and early 1989, Robert Lazar worked briefly for a secret government project analyzing the propulsion systems of alien flying saucers. He says he did not know what he would be working on when he was hired, only that he would be doing something with "advanced propulsion systems." When he reported for work, he was taken by plane and bus to a highly secure facility known as "S-4," a few miles south of Groom Lake. There he learned the true nature of his work: to "reverse-engineer" alien craft. He saw nine flying saucers in hangers near Papoose Lake and viewed one of them briefly in flight. He read briefing documents on alien technology and human-alien contact, and examined the saucers themselves in detail. Lazar has a good general understanding of how the propulsion system works and says that it is dependent on the special properties of Element 115, a superheavy element not found naturally on earth.

Lazar claims to be a physicist with degrees in physics and electronics, but his credentials have been difficult to verify. His public records have been "disappearing," he says, apparently by government design. Credentials aside, it can be independently confirmed that he has worked in some capacity for Los Alamos Laboratories and that he has designed and built high speed rocket cars as a hobby and business.

Lazar apparently obtained the secret job in Nevada through contact with Dr. Edward Teller, "father of the H-bomb," who Lazar met several years before in Los Alamos. All attempts to get Teller to either clarify or deny his contact with Lazar have failed. After Teller's recommendation, Lazar was hired almost immediately. Lazar's association with this project was short-lived, however, in part because he could not resist talking to his friends about it. Within a few months of beginning work at the "secret saucer base," his security clearance was withdrawn and his employment ended.

In May 1989, at the urging of television reporter George Knapp, Lazar was interviewed about his experiences on television. Although he was shown in silhouette and identified only as "Dennis," he was recognized immediately by his former employers, who made threats on his life. Shortly after the broadcast, Lazar was shot at while driving his car on the freeway. Instead of intimidating him into silence, however, the threats only forced him to make his story fully public to protect himself. He finally appeared as himself on a series of local television news broadcasts beginning November 1989. This led to other reports in the national and international media. It is this publicity that is largely responsible for the popularity of the "Black Mailbox" as a place to look for flying saucers.

Naturally, Mr. Lazar's claims are more than a little controversial, and extensive arguments have been put forward both for and against his case. For further reading and video programs on his claims, see REFERENCES.

A Flying Object Identifier

Sightings

Following are the objects and optical effects I have personally witnessed around Area 51. None of them appear to be flying saucers. Only one phenomena, the Golden Orbs, lacks a satisfactory identification. The list below is the result of eight nights of watching along SR-375 in October and December in 1992. Only two of these nights were Wednesdays, and one of those was heavily overcast. On most nights, I retired by 1:00 am, and only twice did I continue my watch until dawn. Given this limited exposure, I cannot call this list definitive, but I can assert, at least, that there is a lot of conventional activity out there that could be mistaken for flying saucers. Perhaps this list will help others avoid making similar errors.

With so many unverifiable stories floating around, I have chosen to catalog here only objects that I have actually seen myself. In the future, I may add a separate section of objects other people have seen, so if you see anything in skies that is not described below, please send me the details.

This list is in alphabetical order. The names are my own; other people may have different ones.

“Aurora Roar”

Not a sight but a sound: a deep, throbbing roar associated with the rumored Aurora spy plane.

Heard: During the day in Rachel on several separate occasions in Dec. 1992. In each case, the weather was heavily overcast and nothing could be seen.

“Blue Flame”

This is a long blue light the color of a propane gas flame. It is the engine flame of a jet operating “dark,” without position lights or strobe. Since the aircraft itself could be invisible in the dark sky, a distant observer might see the flame itself and think it was a craft. Since the flame is long and thin, the observer might think it is a flying saucer on edge. Similar jet flames could conceivably appear in red or orange, but I have seen only blue.

Sighted: Overhead in the Sand Spring Valley. Object was close enough to confirm that the darkened craft was a jet. It was also accompanied by another jet displaying conventional lighting.

“Bumblebee Effect”

This is not an object, but an illusion of the eye that can transform any object into something apparently unworldly. The more precise technical term is the *autokinetic illusion*, meaning the illusion of motion often observed in an isolated light. If you’ve studied human vision, you know that the eyeball never stays still. Even when fixing an object in a “steady” gaze, the eye actually oscillates around in tiny movements called *saccades*. Thus, the optic system has no direct way of judging an object’s motion. Instead, it has to deduce the information by reference, by comparing the object to its background or to other nearby objects in the field of view.

When the background is indistinct, as it often is at night, the optic system lacks the clues it needs to determine movement. As a result, the object may appear to dance around in small, jerky movements corresponding to the movements of the eye (or to the unsteady movements of hand-held binoculars). An otherwise steady object, like the planet Venus, may appear to jump around like a bumblebee, hence the “bumblebee effect.” Combined with the actual movements of a car or plane, the bumblebee effect can make an otherwise

mundane object, like a plane or car headlights, seem truly alien.

The bumblebee effect would not account for an object racing across half the sky, but across small arc distances, say 2° or less with the naked eye, the bumblebee effect can shed serious doubt on reported movements. It is unfortunate that the bumblebee effect accounts for exactly the kind of erratic movements we would expect a flying saucer to display; therefore, this effect deserves serious study. We need to learn at what point we can claim that the abrupt movement is in the object itself and is not just the result of optical factors.

The Strobe Effect—Related to the bumblebee effect, but actually a different effect added to it, are the dramatic jumping movements often observed in distant aircraft strobes. If an aircraft is very far away, all you may be able to see of it is its white strobe light flashing about twice a second or more rapidly. The optic system “fills in” what it thinks is happening during the black portions, and these assumptions may be erroneous.

If you have played with a strobe light at a science museum, you know that it can make otherwise steady movements appear very strange. A spinning wheel or a stream of water can appear motionless under the strobe and a pendulum or bouncing ball can appear to be two places at once. For another illustration of the strobe effect, try waving your hand rapidly in front of a television screen; suddenly you have not five fingers, but perhaps fifteen. Similar odd effects can be observed in a distant aircraft strobe. Smooth movements appear to be jerky, as though the object were jumping instantly from one strobe point to the next. This is due to the fact that in the black space between strobes, the eye loses track of what it is looking at. Each strobe flash is extremely brief—usually only milliseconds long—so a single flash reveals nothing to the eye about the object’s movements. The eye has no cue about where to look ahead, so it typically glances in the wrong direction instead of tracking the object steadily. When the next flash comes, the object usually shows up in an unexpected place and therefore seems to have moved much farther than it actually has.

For example, the “tick-tack-toe” movement of a flashing object reported by Boylan [See REFERENCES.] could be seen as these optical effects operating on a distant jet or helicopter strobe. Without further data on the visual magnitude of the movements, this and other object-jumping-around reports are not very useful. A more convincing type of report might say, “The object moved the width of two full moons in a fraction a second.” From this description, you could be reasonably sure that optical effects were not the primary source of the movement, since this reported movement is much greater than the motions of the eye.

Ruling Out the Bumblebee and Strobe Effects

The human optic system has been well studied [See *Seeing and the Eye* in REFERENCES.], and there ought to be a set of scientific formulas for determining exactly how much arc movement you must see in an isolated light to be sure an abrupt motion is in the object itself and not in your eye. Unfortunately, I do not have the information, and these formulas would no doubt be complex, taking into account the lighting conditions and type of background. Therefore, we will have to make some rough assumptions. As a rule of thumb (which we might later modify), when viewing objects against an indistinct background, we can say that one full moon width is the minimum observed single-step movement required to rule out the bumblebee and strobe effects. We can call this the *full moon rule* for judging object movement. In other words, if an isolated or strobing object jumps the apparent width of one or more full moons in a single step, then you can be fairly confident that the motion is real. If it jumps less than one apparent moon width, then you cannot be sure that the movement is not an illusion.

The full moon rule applies both to naked eye observations and to sightings through hand-held binoculars. Although a moon-width appears larger through binoculars, there is also the shaking of the binoculars themselves to worry about, which may cancel out the advantage of using them to judge isolated object movement. (Binoculars can be useful,

however, for making the background reference points more distinct and also for resolving the steady position lights on a strobing aircraft.)

The full moon rule is not completely satisfying because it does not take into account the circumstances when you *can* see a distinct background or nearby reference objects. In these cases a different rule of thumb might apply: You can be sure that movement of an object is real when you can describe verbally, in terms of distinct visual reference points, exactly *why* you know it is real. We can call this the *description rule* for judging object movement. A satisfactory description might be: "I know it moved abruptly because it was hovering for a couple of seconds above the mountain peak on the left, then it jumped almost instantaneously to hover above the mountain peak on the right." Other reference points might be stars or ground lights. It is even better if you can include in your description the names of the peaks, stars or ground lights, because then someone else can go out to the same location, look in the direction you did and understand exactly what you meant.

Car Headlights

These are intense white orbs hovering always *below* the horizon, often for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. May flicker and "pulse" and sometimes appear to jump around.

In the clear desert air and open terrain, car high beams can be seen dozens of miles away, and they resolve into two lights only when relatively close. In a wide desert valley, this very bright light can seem to hover for a very long time as the car approaches. In the absence of clear reference marks, these orbs may also appear to dance, due to the "Bumblebee Effect". [See.]

Recognizing car headlights requires only the most basic skills of skeptical reasoning, but many visitors have still been fooled, especially when the car appears on a distant dirt road where they do not expect it. A nationally broadcast special, "Sightings: UFO Report," shows a video clip taken by the Sightings crew at the Black Mailbox. It is supposedly of a mysterious white light dancing above the desert floor. However, since it moves in a straight line always below the horizon, it appears to me to be a car on Groom Lake Road.

Conventional Aircraft

Lots of jets and helicopters can be seen in these skies. Most have one or more white strobe lights flashing about twice a second and red or white position lights at the extremities. The lighting pattern can vary, however, and during exercises, some craft may operate "dark." In the vast desert distances, the lights of craft seen at night can be a lot further away than they appear. In the desert, aircraft lights can be detected by the naked eye 50 miles away or more. The long distances make most aircraft seem to operate "silently," with engines heard only when they pass directly overhead.

There always appear to be a more jets operating at night than during the day, mainly because distant aircraft are much harder to see during the day. Without a beacon to tell you where to look, most distant aircraft go unnoticed in the bright sky, and you are aware of their presence only when they pass close enough to be heard. Even then, you may look up and see nothing, because the tiny aircraft blends into the blue sky and is often running far ahead of its apparent sound.

At night, you see many more aircraft than you would ever suspect otherwise. You can see the lights of aircraft as far away as 50 miles, while 10 miles is about the maximum distance of anything you will detect during the day. At night, when an aircraft is very distant, all you may see of it is its flashing strobe. Almost no one has trouble identifying an aircraft strobe against a clear field of stars, but on more overcast nights the bumblebee and strobe effects can turn distant jets into erratic alien-appearing craft.

Comments: The Air Force appears highly proficient in keeping aircraft secret, if not by actually hiding the craft then by creating a diversion when they appear. Aviation buffs



often speculate that an acrobatic display by fighter jets may sometime be used to draw attention away from something more secret, like the movements of a Black Budget aircraft in another direction. If you see an acrobatic display in one part of the sky, it may be wise to scan other areas as well, not just the place where the most obvious activity is occurring. This notion might be of particular interest for Groom Lake, where the airspace is fairly visible. For example, if the Aurora were landing or taking off from Groom Lake during the day, the management might not be able to hide the activity completely, but they could launch an air show in another part of the sky to draw attention away from it.

Dust Devil

A odd weather phenomena common to the desert. It is a sort of “mini tornado”—a funnel of whirling air sucking up dust and debris under otherwise calm conditions. Encountering one of these by chance, one might suspect that there was an invisible flying saucer hovering overhead causing the turbulence. (Maybe there is!)

Sighted: I had a close daytime encounter with a dust devil in October 1992 in the Tikaboo Valley, under clear skies and otherwise calm conditions. While sitting in my car in mid-morning along the Groom Lake Road, I was suddenly pummeled by sand and windblown debris. After a few seconds, the winds suddenly subsided. I realized then that I had been in the middle of a miniature windstorm about a dozen feet across. It was now kicking up dust a few feet away and moving across the landscape at what I guessed was about 10-20 miles an hour. It was almost invisible as it passed over the sagebrush, but whenever it crossed a road it sucked a funnel of dust high up into the sky. I was able to track it with binoculars until it was about five miles away, still remaining as a tight funnel.

Explanation: I suspect that this phenomena has something to do with the rapid heating of the air on the valley floor following the cold desert night.

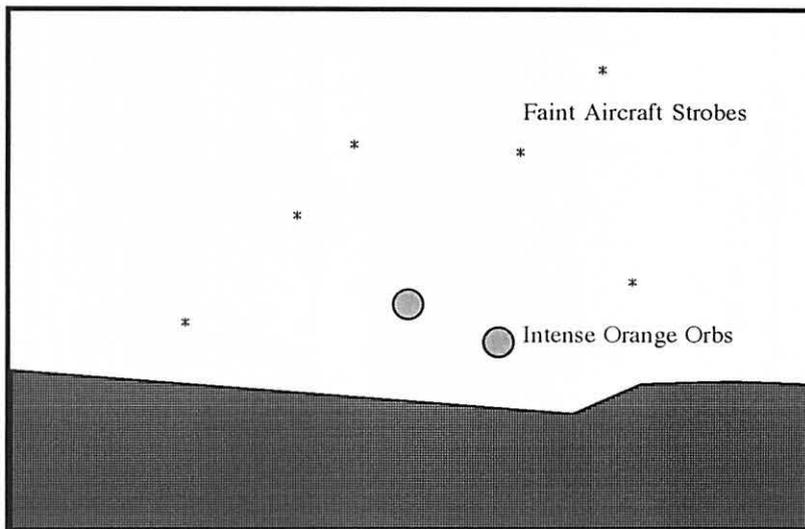
“Golden Orbs”



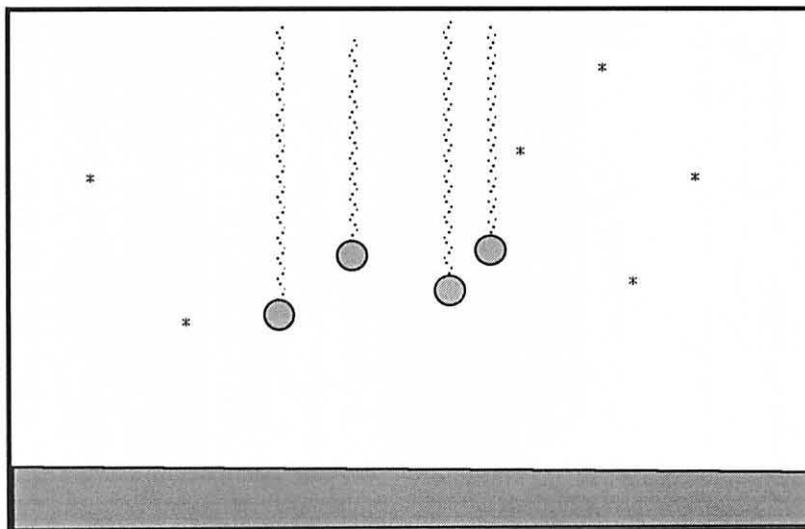
I saw these on two successive nights in October 1992: Extremely bright orange balls of light seen rising up above a fixed location, hovering and drifting slowly down. These sometimes drifted slightly sideways but otherwise made no abrupt moves. Size and structure could not be determined. Intensity fluctuated, but color remained constant —similar to that of sodium vapor lighting or truck fog lamps. When visible, these objects were by far the brightest things in the sky, many times brighter than street lights, distant car headlights or the brightest planet.

The orbs were surrounded by the faint strobos of other craft hovering around them (visible only through binoculars), probably helicopters. The orbs themselves were easily visible without binoculars and were perhaps hundreds of times brighter than the strobos. I compare the scene with looking at Jupiter and its surrounding moon through a telescope: The orbs were many times brighter than Jupiter, but the relative difference in brightness between the orbs and the surrounding strobos seemed about the same. Since an aircraft strobe itself is very bright at its source, this would mean—if the aircraft and orbs were on the same plane—that the orbs were indeed extremely bright at their source, almost like miniature suns.

The orbs always remained at relatively low altitude and never moved very far from their origin before dropping below the horizon. On each appearance, they were visible for between 15 seconds and several minutes. In other words, they were hanging in the air for extended periods, not simply arcing up and down in the air. A white glow of “light pollution” was visible on the horizon just before the orbs rose above it, and a bright flash of white light, like distant lightning, was also occasionally seen when the orbs were below the horizon. Perhaps this flash was associated with their liftoff from the ground, but I am



Golden orbs as seen from County Line, Oct. 20, 1992. They were the color of orange fog lights and were by far the brightest objects in the sky. They were surrounded by five or six faint aircraft strobos, apparently helicopters observing the exercise. The orbs appeared as blobs of light; no size or structure could be determined. (Their size in the drawing reflects their relative intensity compared to the aircraft strobos.)



Golden Orbs as seen from LN 32.3, Oct. 21, 1992. This time four blobs of light appeared and gave off so much light that the landscape around them was illuminated like day. Also visible was a black plume of vapor rising from each orb.

not sure of this association. The orbs were usually seen in pairs rising up side by side but were also seen singly (perhaps with the second orb just below the horizon) and in groups of four. In the group of four, the sky was sufficiently illuminated to note a black plume of smoke or vapor rising from each orb.

Sighted: On Oct. 20, 1992 from County Line, I saw two orbs moving together, rising above the horizon many times between 9pm and midnight, southward at about 175° from north, roughly in the direction of Groom Lake (or beyond). Four orbs moving together were seen the following night (Oct. 21) from LN 32.3 at about 10pm, at a direction roughly south or SSE, somewhere between 165° and 180°. If the source location was the same on both nights, triangulation suggests a location near Desert Valley in the Nellis Bombing Range, not over Groom or Pappoose Lakes.

Conventional explanation: Ground-launched flares—small burning objects like fireworks specifically designed to hover over a target and emit an extremely bright light. (You can actually buy a twirling “UFO” at fireworks stores that will do roughly the same thing, although not nearly as brightly.) The flare hypothesis is consistent with the object’s extreme brightness and lack of dramatic movement. This type of flare be associated with a military ground exercise taking place below, with the helicopters being associated with the ground exercise, not the flares themselves.

Exotic Explanation: A bright object with helicopters hovering around it also fits the description of the UFO in the Cash-Landrum incident. One could speculate that the orbs are a primitive “man-made” UFOs—a crude attempt to reproduce anti-gravity systems with earth materials.

Comments: These objects remain the most interesting I have seen. Even the flare hypothesis leads to many interesting questions about what kind of operations are being conducted. I still need more data to confirm the conventional or exotic explanations. Unlike most lights seen in the sky, these objects would be easy to photograph with a telephoto lens, since they are very bright, slow moving and don’t venture very far from a fixed ground location. Sadly, on the one occasion when I had a good view of these objects (Oct. 21), I saw the black plumes rising from each and assumed immediately that they were flares. After several nights without much sleep, I did not give a damn what I saw. I saw no reason stay up for more detailed observations and pass out immediately. One thing I should have determined, but did not, is how these objects rose from the ground—rapidly like launched flares or more slowly like larger craft.

Sightings by Others: Many others have apparently seen these orbs as well. One Rachel resident reported them to me almost exactly as I described them above. She says she has seen them on several occasions—both a couple of years ago and quite recently—while driving through the Tikaboo Valley. She saw only one orb at a time, however, not the pairs I saw. Her object appeared in the south probably in the same location I saw mine, and hers also did nothing dramatic—just hovered and moving slightly sideways. She also confirms tiny strobe lights surrounding this orb and a white glow around the horizon before it arose.

A snapshot hanging on the wall of the Little A’Le’Inn is also exactly what I saw. The inscription reads: “May 1992. Photo by Kathleen Ford. Location unknown.” This is an excellent photo showing both the orbs and the surrounding landscape. Although the location is marked “unknown” there are plenty of clues in the photo to tell you where it is. I suspect it was shot looking south from the Tikaboo Valley, probably at the south end of the road leading south from Groom Lake Road Mile 5.1, at the point where this side road intersects with the Restricted Zone. The orbs in the picture appear to be in the location I saw them.

Richard Boylan (see References) reports seeing “an intensely burning gold orb” rise above the Groom Range (which is not where I saw them). He says it “hovered, and glided slowly sideways,” and he does not suggest that it did anything more than that. He also

asserts, "The intensity of the radiating light was directly proportional to the power demand of the maneuver being executed." I cannot confirm this latter claim because the orbs I saw made only very subdued maneuvers.

"Golden Trails"

Glowing orange balls, about the same color as Golden Orbs but not as bright, appearing singly or in a "necklace" of several separate balls. They hang in the air for 2 to 5 seconds, then fade out. Size and structure cannot be determined. Although these orbs are by far the brightest objects in the sky, their short life span, high altitude and relatively low light output seems to eliminate the theory that these are flares used to illuminate a ground target.

Sighted: On several different nights in Dec. 1992, always in early evening within two hours after full darkness. Seen from LN 32.3 and the rise above Old Tempiute. Golden Trails appeared in many locations above the Sand Spring and Railroad Valleys, even at relatively low level just above Rachel. Conventional jets were also operating in the same area of the sky. I saw the Golden Trails at close enough range in the Sand Spring Valley to confirm that the orbs were always emitted by passing jets, but from farther away, the aircraft would not be visible, only the orbs.

Explanation: This is what is called an "Infrared Suppression System" on a conventional jet. Puffs of fuel are released by the plane and ignited (or flares are dropped) to produce a series of bright fireballs. The purpose is to distract heat-seeking missiles, which are supposed to lock onto a fireball instead of the plane's engines. These fireballs are bright enough to be seen during the day if you watch carefully: Look for a plane making dramatic maneuvers, as if trying to escape an imaginary enemy.

Comments: The release of the fireballs is usually accompanied by an evasive maneuver, so that the necklace of lights is typically curved. A distant observer who does not see the plane might get the impression that the lights define the edge of a saucer-shaped craft. As the lights go out, the observer might believe that the saucer shot off into the heavens. This illusion occurred to my eyes even when I could see the plane emitting the balls and "knew" there was nothing there. Often, the mind fills in the form of things it can't see, and these interpretations are later remembered as solid fact.

The day after a particularly active night for Golden Trails, a veteran visitor to the Black Mailbox, a supposed flying saucer expert (the world's foremost), reported them to me as bona fide UFOs. I guess he was right: They were Unidentified Flying Objects, but only because he hadn't tried very hard to identify them.

Lightning

In Dec. 1992, I saw some unusual lightning over Railroad Valley and the northwestern part of Nellis range. It struck *upward* from the clouds into an apparently empty sky. The lightning occurred in groups of several bolts that struck upward, then fanned out like a flower, reminiscent of a fireworks display. It was a very cold night with snow on the ground and surface temperatures probably in the 20s. The lightning produced no sound, and there was no local precipitation. The strikes occurred at a rate that was consistent with normal lightning—one episode every couple of minutes.

When seen from a greater distance, clouds obscured the lightning bolts, and all that could be seen were bright orange flashes illuminating part of the sky.

I have no reason to suppose this lightning isn't natural. I have seen more bizarre displays during the course of desert thunderstorms. Still, it would be interesting to know what causes this type of cold weather lightning.

"Red Dots"

Many tiny red lights dancing just above the horizon, appearing to hover and moving in unusual ways. Color is constant, roughly that of the red lights seen on conventional craft,

but no flashing strobes are visible. These Red Dots are often “escorted” by craft with conventional strobes.

Sighted: At LN 32.3 on several nights in Oct. 1992. They were seen in the northwest, apparently maneuvering over the north end of the Groom Range. They always appeared about an hour after sunset at about the first moment of total darkness, danced around for no more than an hour or two, then departed.

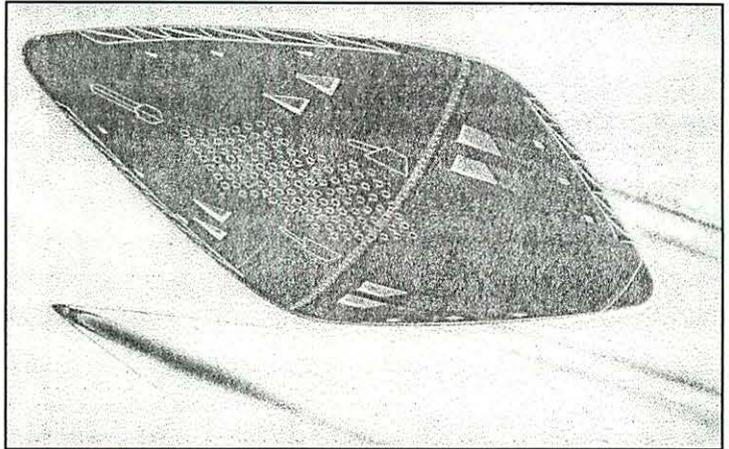
Explanation: In December 1992, I saw similar red lights at close range from NY 43.6 in Railroad Valley. These red lights were always attached to planes, often executing extreme evasive-type maneuvers and ejecting “Golden Trails.” [See.] Some planes had a single red light at their nose, while others had only a single red strobe or operated dark. They operating above the south end of Railroad Valley and adjoining areas in the western part of the Nellis Range. They appeared in a groups of from two to six, often coming from a direction that would have been consistent with takeoff from Groom Lake (although I could not confirm this).

The Red Dots I saw from the Black Mailbox are almost certainly these jets with unusual lighting. Seeing these objects in two dimensions and from a great distance (more than 40 miles from the Black Mailbox) might give the illusion of hovering, and the Bumblebee Effect might exaggerate already dramatic evasive maneuvers.

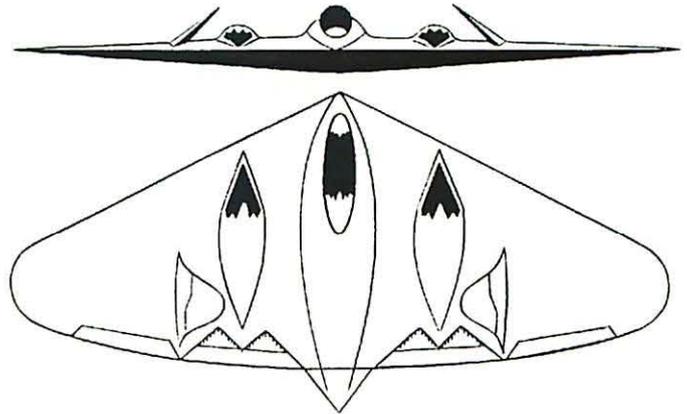
Comments: These “Red Dots” might have been the objects reported in the Business Week article. [See REFERENCES.] Although these are not flying saucers, their unusual lighting pattern might indicate a secret test aircraft of some kind.

Mythical Birds

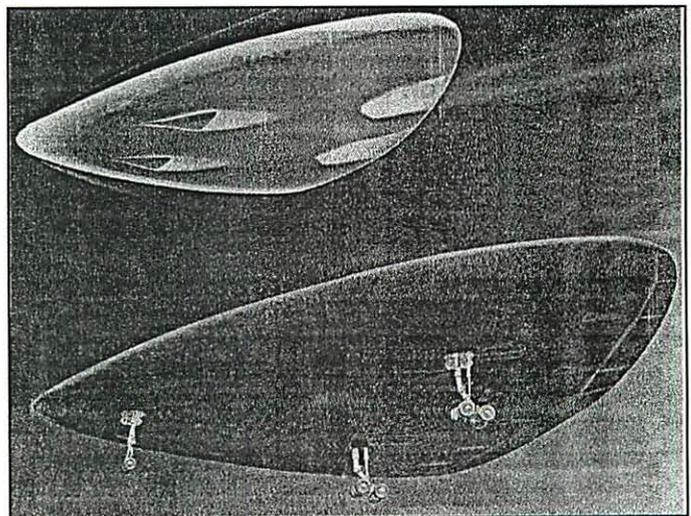
Aurora. This high speed reconnaissance aircraft is the subject of almost as much speculation as flying saucers. The picture at right is only one of many that have been offered for this plane. Rumored to have an unusual power plant, perhaps a "pulse" engine or "external combustion" engine, but probably nothing alien. What is certain about Aurora is its unusual sound and its curious pulsed contrail, described as looking like "cotton balls on a rope." This craft or its contrails has been seen in Texas and Scotland, and it has reportedly caused earthquake-like rumbles in Southern California. The most common rumor has it based at Groom Lake, but it has been associated with other bases as well.



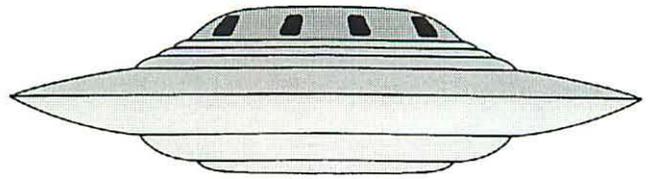
TR-3A tactical reconnaissance plane. Rumored to have been employed in the Gulf war to provide tactical support for Stealth fighters. Marked by rounded surfaces and inwardly angled fins.



Proof-of-Concept craft. Probably one-of-a-kind craft built to prove technical concepts for other Black Budget aircraft.



Lazar's Saucers. The flying saucers Bob Lazar describes are similar to the one at right. He claims that he saw nine saucers sitting in hangers and that the only time he saw any of them fly was when one made modest hovering movements outside. Later, from the Black Mailbox area, Lazar, Gene Huff, John Lear and few others reported seeing a bright light that they assumed was a saucer. Their descriptions, and those of many other watchers who followed, describe a light of varying intensity that hovers or drifts gently in the air then suddenly jumps to a new location in a fraction of a second. Sometimes, the light is said to "sputter" ahead in short bursts, often combined with "stair-step" or "tick-tack-toe" movements that would seem impossible for any object of appreciable mass.



For a viewer to be sure of the sighting, the movements would have to be large enough to discount the "bumblebee effect" of the observer's own eye movements. A saucer shape is not necessarily proof of an alien craft, since conventional test aircraft could also have this shape. The only way to identify an "anti-gravity" craft from a distance is presumably by its dramatic inertial changes: from standing stop to high speed to standing stop again.

Such "jumping lights" would seem to exceed the boundaries of human technology. It should be pointed out, however, that even the appearance of something so bizarre does not necessarily prove the existence of alien craft. The lighted object itself is often reported as indistinct, as though surrounded by an "ionization haze" or an "anti-gravity warping field." This means that the linking of these nighttime lights with flying saucers depends to a large extent on Lazar's testimony. Without additional data, they merely present an intriguing mystery, something to be further explored but not yet proof of any one theory.

References

Summary

You can lay out a lot of money for books, magazines and videos on Bob Lazar and Area 51, most of which repeat the same information. To avoid breaking the bank, I suggest visiting your public library first for the *Business Week* article and any others you can find. Although I have provided price and ordering info for most of these publications, you should think twice before spending money. Most of the print references can be read for free at the Little A'Le'Inn for the price of a cup of coffee. The free-use video library at Little A'Le'Inn (for overnight guests) also has some of the TV shows mentioned below, but not the two key videos, *The Lazar Tape* and the KLAS-TV broadcasts, which you may have to pay for. (*The Lazar Tape* is officially available for sale there, and a discreet tip to the concierge might produce a copy of the KLAS tape.) If you buy only one item from the lists below, it should probably be the KLAS-TV broadcasts: *UFOs: The Best Evidence*.

If you know of any Area 51 references not listed here, please let me know so I can add them.

Print References

Following are some of the books and articles that have discussed Lazar's story or Area 51. They are listed in order of my own recommendation, with the most highly recommended first. Some of the magazines mentioned below are "fringe" publications that won't be found at your public library. However, all of these articles can be found in a binder at the Little A'Le'Inn.

"Little Gray Men Made My Eyes Turn Red." Article by Eric Schine in *Business Week*, June 17, 1991 (page 20A, 4 pages). A skeptical reporter visits the Black Mailbox, is not convinced. Photo of Joe and Pat Travis in front of Little A'Le'Inn. Hardly an in-depth inquiry, but useful as a general introduction to at least the social aspects of saucer watching.

"Look everyone, there it is!" says Pam.

"Oh, isn't it just beautiful?" chimes Joyce.

"What, what?" I ask. "Where?"

And there it is. A tiny dot of reddish light hovering above a mountain peak. First it grows steadily brighter, then darts back and forth, and finally fades in a grand swoop to the west. The whole affair lasts a good two minutes, and everyone seems immensely satisfied. There are pats on the back and hugs all around.

"Believers Are Not Alone." Article by Shannon Sands in *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 20, 1991 (Section E, page 1). Subtitle: "Outer Space: A Nevada military base lures the faithful seeking close encounters of any kind with the UFOs they believe frequent the area." Good overview article on saucer watching, offering the story a bit more respect than the *Business Week* article. Sheriff's deputies are interviewed and say they don't mind people coming as long as they obey the law.

"Secret Saucer Sites." Article by Richard Boylan in *Mufon UFO Journal*, August 1992 (Page 14, 2 pages). A psychologist conducts an expedition to the Black Mailbox and other rumored "saucer bases." Mufon (The Mutual UFO Network, the nation's largest UFO group) sells available back issues for \$3 each plus \$1 postage (or \$1.25 postage for two). Order from: Mufon, 103 Oldtowne Rd., Sequin, TX 78155. (Also ask for info on their many other publications.)

About 9:15 p.m. an intensely burning gold orb of light rose above the range, hovered, and glided slowly sideways. The intensity of the radiating light was directly proportional to the power demand of

the maneuver being executed. Thus, the orb grew extremely bright as it rose upward, and when it turned. After about four minutes the orb descended below the ridgeline.

About 9:40 p.m. a second orb of super intense white light with bluish tones arose, reached an estimated height of 1500 feet, hovered, then drifted slowly south, then reversed and drifted north and hovered again. After this the craft began blinking and then began a series of maneuvers difficult to describe and almost defying the laws of physics.

It jumped from one position to another, changing positions almost simultaneously over a distance of about 500 feet in two-thirds of a second, in a crazy quilt pattern of sideways, crisscrosses and ups and downs, in a random tic-tac-toe kind of sequencing. The craft kept up these split-second gyrations for several minutes in an incredible display of ability to defy inertial and gravitational forces....

Copyright 1992 by the Mutual UFO Network, 103 Oldtowne Rd., Sequin, TX 78155.

“Touring Nevada’s ‘Outer Limits’.” Article by Richard Boylan in *UFO* magazine, Vol. 7, No. 6, 1992, page 32, 4 pages. A retold version of the Mufon Journal article, with more details. This back issue is available for \$5.45 (postpaid) from UFO Magazine, Box 1053, Sunland, CA 91041-1053.

UFOs and the Alien Presence: Six Viewpoints. Book of interviews edited by Michael Lindemann, 1991, 233 pages. Contains a lengthy interview with Bob Lazar (pages 87-127) and comments on Lazar by Stanton Friedman (page 54), who reports difficulty in verifying Lazar’s background. Recommended reading if you want to look more deeply into the Lazar story, as a supplement to the KLAS broadcasts. Order for \$12.95 plus \$2 postage (plus \$1.00 sales tax for CA residents) from The 2020 Group, 3463 State Street #264, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, or (805) 682-8185 (credit card orders).

“In the Land of Dreams.” Article by Grant R. Cameron, T. Scott Crain and Chris Rutkowski in *International UFO Reporter*, Sept./Oct. 1990 (page 4, 5 pages). Highly skeptical review of the Lazar story. If you had read this first (as I did), you might not care to inquire further, thinking the case closed. (It took six months to rekindle my own interest in Lazar, based on some chance encounters with people who knew him and felt he was genuine.) Lays out most of the issues that need to be addressed before Lazar can be considered reliable. Highly recommended. This back issue is available for \$4.00 plus \$0.55 postage from: CUFOS, 2457 W. Patterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60659. (CUFOS is the second largest UFO organization. Also ask for info on other publications they sell.)

“Groom Lake Revisited: A Space-Age Odyssey.” Article by Michael DiGregorio in *Far Out* magazine, Winter 1992, Page 59, 3 pages. An informative account of the journey of three civilians to the perimeter of the Groom Lake base. No saucers seen. Back issues may be available from: L.F.P. Inc., 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

“High Strangeness in the High Country: Is the Air Force Flying a UFO Over Nevada?” Article by Michael DiGregorio in *Far Out* magazine, Fall 1992, Page 10, 8 pages. Full of fascinating anecdotes concerning Area 51, although it is hard to say how accurate they are without sources.

“Dreamland and the CIA.” Article by Andrew D. Basiago in *Mufon UFO Journal*, July 1992 (page 10, 3 pages). Reviews the Lazar story and discusses its parallels to that of a former CIA operative Marion Leo Williams. This back issue can be ordered from Mufon as above.

“UFO Universe Goes Inside Area 51.” Article in *UFO Universe*, Summer 1992, page 56, 8 pages. Lengthy chronological of a saucer watch expedition. Lots of photos of the Little A‘Le’Inn. Back issues might be available from Charlotte Magazine Corp., 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

“It’s Looking Up for Rachel, Nev.: Stop in for a cup and (flying) saucer.” Article by Tom Simmon in the travel section of *The Dallas Morning News*, Jan. 31, 1993, page G-2, 2 pages. Recounts the history of the Little A‘Le’Inn.

General Reference

"The Hard Ride of Route 93." Article in *National Geographic*, December 1992. Follows US-93 on its 1860-mile run from Arizona to Alberta, passing within 20 miles of the Black Mailbox. There is only brief mention of the nearby town of Alamo and no talk of Highway 375 or UFOs, but a photograph of a nearby desert valley on page 50-51 gives an idea of the terrain. [Not at Little A'Le'Inn.]

"Multiple Sightings of Secret Aircraft Hint at New Propulsion, Airframe Designs." Article in *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, Oct. 1, 1990, page 18, 6 pages. Review of various "Black Budget" conventional aircraft, including exotic triangular-shaped craft. This article reveals the enormous complexity of differentiating alien craft from conventional. *Aviation Week* may be available at large city or university libraries; it is recommended reading if you can find it. The following *Aviation Week* articles are related to this one:

June 10, 1991, p. 20: "Triangular Recon Aircraft May Be Supporting F-117A." Concerns the secret TR-3A, which looks like what Batman flies.

Oct. 28, 1991, p. 68: Pulse detonation wave engine.

Nov. 11, 1991, p. 15: Unusual sonic booms over Los Angeles.

Nov. 25, 1991, p. 23: Unusual sonic booms over Los Angeles.

Mar. 9, 1992, p. 66: Unknown pulse-type aircraft seen at Beale AFB.

May 11, 1992, p. 62: "New Evidence Bolsters Reports of Secret, High-Speed Aircraft." Donut-on-a-rope contrails are photographed in Texas.

"America's New Secret Aircraft." Article in *Popular Mechanics*, Dec. 1991 (Page 33, 4 pages). Reports on triangular craft mentioned in the *Aviation Week* articles above, as well as an even more exotic looking diamond shaped aircraft, presumably the Aurora. Although they could be mistaken for UFOs, these planes are apparently based on known aerodynamic principles. Recommended.

"Rumors of U.S. Superplane Appear Unfounded." Article in *The New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1993 (1 page). A curious article suggesting that the Aurora spy plane does not exist, in spite of the donut-on-a-rope contrails, the earthquake-like sonic booms and sightings from highly qualified and credible observers. Refers to another article in the newsletter of the Federation of American Scientists which suggests that Aurora rumors, like UFO reports, may be a product only of wishful thinking. The position of Air Force, of course, is that the plane does not exist, but they are unusually strenuous in their denials....

The Air Force, which operated the SR-71, the U-2 spy plane (which gained notoriety in 1960 when one was shot down over the Soviet Union) and reconnaissance satellites on behalf of the Central Intelligence Agency, emphatically denies the existence of a super spy plane. Donald B. Rice, Secretary of the Air Force, said last month that reports of such an aircraft are "fantasy."

An Air Force spokesman said: "We have looked into all such sightings, as we have for U.F.O. reports, and we cannot explain them. No Air Force aircraft were operating at the times and places of the alleged sightings.

That last statement is especially puzzling since the Air Force has frequently denied that it even "looks into" UFO reports.

Red Flag: Air Combat for the 80's. Book by Michael Skinner, Presidio Press, 1984. I have seen only a few pages of this book, but they were fascinating: A review of air operations in the Nellis Range and confirmation of a sector known as "Dreamland."

America's Stealth Fighters and Bombers. Photo book (195 pages, published 1992) by aviation "spy" James Goodall, who has done his share of snooping around Area 51. Unfortunately, the

Stealth is now yesterday's secret and isn't seen much around Groom Lake anymore. This book is listed here because it contains a full-page photograph of the Groom Lake base taken from White Sides (page 21). The book can be ordered for \$19.95 plus shipping from Motorbooks at (800) 458-0454.

"Creating Superheavy Elements." Article by Peter Armbruster and Gottfried Münzenberg in *Scientific American*, May 1989 (page 66, 7 pages). This technical treatise suggests, as Lazar does, that heavy elements like 115 might indeed be stable and not decay immediately as generally assumed. However, the appearance of this article just before he went public has also raised the suggestion (first put forward by anti-Lazar ufologist Bill Moore) that Lazar concocted his Element 115 story based upon it. In any case, Lazar seems to allude to this article in *The Lazar Tape* and in his *On the Record* interview.

Seeing and the Eye: A Introduction to Vision. Book by G. Hugh Begbie, published 1969 by The Natural History Press. A review for the layman of the physiology of the human visual system. Pages 152-158 contain a discussion of eye movements—saccades, tremor and drift—which could contribute to illusions of movement in an isolated object.

Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps. Book by Stanley W. Paher, 1970. Available from Nevada Magazine Merchandise for \$39.95 (postpaid). Has something to say about most of the ghost towns in the area. Joe Travis at the Little A'Le'Inn has a copy.

"Stealth Corvette: One man's mission to become invisible." Article by Phil Berg in *Car & Driver*, May 1990 (page 125, 4 pages). Reports on an anonymous man name "Bob" who has supposedly equipped his Corvette to evade speed traps and penetrate security at Groom Lake. A rip-off: The article is about the Corvette, not about Bob or Groom Lake. [Not at Little A'Le'Inn.]

Video Tapes

The Lazar Tape is a VHS video tape by Bob Lazar in which he offers a "science lesson" on anti-gravity propulsion systems and describes his work at S-4. 40 minutes. The tape is available for the rather steep price of \$29.95 plus \$3.50 shipping. Order from: Tri-Dot Productions, 1324 S. Eastern, Las Vegas, NV 89104. Also for sale at the Little A'Le'Inn for \$30.

I was reluctant to buy this tape at first because I figured that if Lazar was a fraud I didn't want to be supporting him. However, I soon realized that the Black Mailbox *is* Bob Lazar: He was the first to publicize it, and without him no one would be coming here. I finally bought the tape at the Little A'Le'Inn after hearing the testimonials of several people who know Lazar personally and felt that he was genuine. I can now report that whether it be fiction or fantasy, *The Lazar Tape* is intelligent and entertaining and is a better buy for your \$30 than, say, *Terminator 2* or a day at Disneyland. In this tape, Lazar lays out a plausible intellectual scenario of how flying saucers work and what his own experiences were; what it lacks, however, are emotional cues that might tell you whether he is telling the truth. *UFOs: The Best Evidence* is probably a better introduction to Lazar since it captures him under more spontaneous circumstances, even if it does not provide as much information.

UFOs and the Alien Presence, a VHS video tape produced by Michael Lindemann. Available for \$12.95 plus \$2 shipping (plus \$1 tax for CA residents) from The 2020 Group, 3463 State Street #264, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, or (805) 682-8185 (credit card orders). 35 minutes. This tape is a review of the currently "hot" UFO topics: Area 51, crop circles, animal mutilations, abductions. To me, the Area 51 material is the most convincing. Included on this tape is a lengthy excerpt of best parts of *The Lazar Tape* in which he discusses his S-4 employment and general saucer design. "World's Foremost UFO Researcher" Sean Morton, talks about saucer viewing at Area 51, and his words are overlaid with a shot of the Black Mailbox during the day. This is followed by two very impressive video clips, one of a point of light passing over mountains and buildings at dusk and another of two lights dancing around

each other. The unspoken implication seems to be that this activity is taking place near the Black Mailbox, but ground lights reveal the backdrop to be Las Vegas—an irritating editing error that doesn't make the clips any less impressive. In general, this tape is a competent production and offers a less expensive alternative to the full *Lazar Tape*. However, the Sean Morton comments appear to be a bit of an exaggeration....

Probably the most amazing thing about Area 51 is the fact that this is literally the only place in the world where you can go out and actually see flying saucers on a timetable basis. You can literally go out there on a Wednesday night between about seven and one a.m. and you'll see these things flying up and down the valley. It's absolutely amazing. On even a bad night you'll have ten, eleven, twelve sightings. On a good night—and I've been out there with friends of mine camping—on a good night the sky will just rip open with these things. You'll see anywhere between twenty to forty objects in a night testing over the base for anywhere from fifteen and forty minutes at a time. You'll see these objects flying up and down the valley. We've had people where these objects have flown right over their heads as they've gotten out and fumbled for their cameras, and then shot away.

Government Whistleblower or Cosmic Charlatan. A VHS video tape promising an analysis of Lazar's claims. 90 minutes. Available for \$29.95 plus \$4 shipping from V.C. Distributing, 4266 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611, (501) 428-0202. I have not seen this one yet. How many \$30 video tapes can one afford? It seems to me that analysis of Lazar's story can be done much better in writing than on video.

Analysis of the Bob Lazar Case. I know of this VHS video tape only from an entry in the Arcturus Book Service catalog: "5-member panel, including Stan Friedman and Jim McCampbell, kick Lazar around." I assume that it is recorded from a conference somewhere. Available for \$34.95 plus \$2.90 postage (plus sales tax for GA residents) from Arcturus Book Service, Box 831383, Stone Mountain, GA 30083. I have not yet seen this one because I refuse to pay so much to watch talking heads. However, I do recommend writing for the Arcturus catalog, containing nearly every available book on UFOs.

Television Appearances

Lazar first became known to the world in a series of reports entitled *UFOs: The Best Evidence* broadcast on Las Vegas television station KLAS in Nov. 1989. (He also appeared anonymously in silhouette in May 1989.) Most other programs were follow-ons to this series and, except for the *On the Record* interview, do not add much to it. To keep the list below manageable, the only shows I include are original broadcasts that have actually sent reporters to the field. (Some programs have merely reused the footage taken by others.) The dates of original broadcast have been difficult to confirm, but they all took place between Nov. 1989 and July 1992.

Technically, if you missed these broadcasts when they first aired, you are out of luck, since video rental stores do not carry these tapes, and they are not officially for sale. In practice, however, it isn't too hard to obtain "gray market" copies. Okay, black market. The stations and networks seem not to object to strenuously, apparently because the copies are usually of fuzzy quality and there is no other way to obtain them. *UFOs: The Best Evidence* might possibly be procured for a \$20 "tip" to the concierge at the Little A'Le'Inn. When other broadcasts are marked "LA" below, it means that they can be found in the Little A'Le'Inn video library, available for free use if you stay there overnight.

You can also obtain copies of all of the broadcasts below from The UFO Audio-Video Clearing House, P.O. Box 342, Yucaipa, CA 92399, (909) 795-3361. Before you order tapes from them, you need to become a Clearing House member for a one-time fee of \$15. (Make check payable to "Video Kit Co." You can also write for free info first.) For your membership fee, you get an intimidating catalog of available video and audio programs—hundreds of shows ranging from 1 minute to several hours each. For videos, you select the programs you want, and they are assembled for you on a VHS tape. Cost is \$30 per tape (postpaid) for up to 150 minutes of programming per tape. For each entry below, I have listed the Clearing House's item number (as best I can determine), as well as the length in minutes and the page number in their Nov. 1992 catalog.

I have been told that you can obtain transcripts of many of these broadcasts by modem from the

“ParaNet” (Paranormal Network) Information Service. For information on accessing the network, write: ParaNet, Box 928, Wheatridge, CO 80034.

UFOs: The Best Evidence. A series of reports by George Knapp on the nightly newscasts of KLAS-TV, Las Vegas, beginning Nov. 10, 1989. This program is a “must see” for anyone interested in Area 51. In this reviewer’s opinion, it is one of the best UFO programs ever broadcast, far more thorough, intelligent and convincing than anything the networks have ever produced. The reports center on alleged government activities in Nevada. Bob Lazar comes out of the closet and speaks at length. Clearly, he is tense—not calm and rehearsed as in *The Lazar Tape*—and he gives off plenty of emotional cues that can be read for truthfulness. In this reviewer’s opinion, if he isn’t telling the truth, then he is a fine actor, capable not just of telling a lie but reproducing all the remembered details and unconscious nuances of it.

Bob Lazar: I did not believe that this should be [uncomfortable pause] a security matter. Some of it, sure, but just the concept that there is definite proof and we even have articles from another world, another system. You just can’t not tell everyone. A lot of people don’t believe that, but I do.

George Knapp (narrating): When he reached what felt like his bursting point he took Huff and a few others to the edge of the Groom Mountains to see the flights for themselves. A total of five witnesses on two consecutive weeks managed to dodge security patrols long enough to see the strange glowing object lift above the mountains.

Gene Huff: It came above the same mountains. It moved around. It did a step move. It actually went [gestures] up in the air like this and hovered, then dropped way down. Then it just floated around and cruised around, and then it started coming up the mountain range.

The above is followed by a home video said to have been taken on one of the two trips. A camcorder imprint in the corner says, “PM 8:29, Mar. 29 1989” (a Wednesday). A bright object appears to perform the dramatic step-like moves that Huff describes. The recorded voices of Lazar and Huff in the background add to its credibility.

George Knapp: Admittedly, the tape proves very little by itself because with the distance and darkness there are no reference points other than the alleged flying disk, but Lazar’s information about the time and location of the test flights proved correct, not once but twice. That according to our off-camera interviews with each of the other witnesses. Gene Huff describes his second sighting....

Gene Huff: Through the telescope we had seen it was an elliptically shaped light, because you can only get so close even with a telescope to a secure facility. Anyway, it came up by us very rapidly. It glowed, and glowed brighter like a sun. And we almost got the feeling it was going to explode it glowed so bright, and we backed up behind the car. Then it went down, it glowed back up a little bit, and very softly glided back over the mountains where it came up, hovered for a while, then just sat down. Just like you see in the movies.

However, this program does not depend on Lazar or his friends for its impact; it is a riveting production even without them. It offers many other interesting interviews and a review of the historical evidence supporting a government cover-up. The initial series is 90 minutes long, but there is so much in it that you may be able to absorb it only in fifteen minute doses. The Nov. 1989 series was supplemented in later months by a follow-up series under the same title, also worth watching. (#1288—probably first series only, 90m, p. 18)

On the Record—Local talk show on KLAS-TV hosted by George Knapp. Lazar was interviewed on one 30 minute program. Dec. 1989. Very interesting supplement to the original broadcasts. Recommended. (#B148A, 30m, p. 6)

Current Affair—Segment on Lazar, including a visit to the Little A‘Le’Inn. Oct.(?) 1990. Good sound bite-length story for those with limited attention spans. (#1572F, 11m, p. 4) LA

Sightings: UFO Report—One hour Fox network special, a precursor to the *Sightings* series. Linda Moulton Howe produced a segment featuring Sean Morton and lights seen from the Black Mailbox. This reviewer’s opinion: Show-biz fluff; not too convincing. The lights shown as “unidentified” appear to be car headlights on Groom Lake Road. (#1856A, p. 21) LA

Now It Can Be Told—Geraldo Rivera's tabloid program apparently broadcast two stories on Groom Lake and S-4, one in March 1992 (#2069A, p. 10) and the other in July 1992 (2062, p. 25). The latter included Craig Rivera reporting from the top of White Sides with Groom Lake in the background. (Not yet seen by this reviewer.)

Nippon Television (Japan)—Series of one-hour specials featuring extensive coverage of Lazar and Area 51. English dubbed versions are available for the programs concerning Lazar. This reviewer's opinion: "Godzilla" journalism—melodramatic and often silly. Contains a lot of shots of the Japanese crew driving places, sitting in office waiting rooms, and being introduced to people, interspersed with hokey special effects of flying saucers. A stiff panel of "experts" seems less concerned with flying saucers than with Lazar's unspeakable breach of etiquette in not showing up for his Tokyo interview. (Lazar says he did not go because his life was threatened.) Early 1991(?). (#1470E, p. 19) LA

Out and About With Roger Martin—A local program on KNBC-TV, Los Angeles. A Southern California TV personality follows Sean Morton on a saucer watching expedition in the winter, isn't prepared for the cold. No saucers photographed, but the crew is stopped by the sheriff and sees the mysterious Security patrol. 15 minutes. (#2101, p. 11) LA

Home Videos Available from the Clearing House

Historic UFO Conference at Little A'Le'Inn, July 31, 1991. 90 minutes. This reviewer's opinion: An unintentional comedy, heavily conspiracy oriented. Bob Lazar sits quietly in the corner while some very earnest and angry speakers spin sinister theories tying it all together. One talks about hideous "Frankenstein Experiments" conducted on innocent humans by evil aliens in underground bases with the explicit cooperation of the human leadership. What is so funny is not the conspiracy theories themselves—which are common around Area 51 and perhaps as good as any other explanation—but how supremely confident each speaker seems to be about his contentions. One speaker offers these absolute certainties for 1992:

We hear from insiders—and this is a fact—that from now and between twelve and eighteen months, they're going to come out with something regarding Area 51 and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. There's no doubt about it. And the reason is that it is being timed to several events that are going to take place next year, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, there's no doubt about the reelection of Mr. Bush. There's no doubt. It's going to happen. Next is, the E.C. is going to be completely united by December 31 of next year. Together with the E.C. union of next year, the reelection of Mr. Bush and the Olympic Games in Spain, [there is going to be] some amazing revelation with disclosure from the government regarding the cover-up.

The conference is followed by a mass expedition to the top of White Sides, where, alas, nothing much happens. I highly recommend this tape, both for its colorful personalities and for the conventional wisdom they provide on how and when saucers can be seen. There is a lot of tantalizing information here; one wishes, however, that they would stick with the facts and leave out the emotionally charged interpretations. (#1984, 90m, p. 5) LA

"Low Helicopter Fly-By at Groom Lake and Tour of Desert Area." (Not seen by this reviewer.) In the vicinity of White Sides, it is not unusual to see helicopters fly by at very low altitude, perhaps on perimeter patrol. (#1985B, 15m, p. 22)

A Cheapskate's Guide to Las Vegas

To me, UFOs and Las Vegas go together naturally, and I now find it hard to do one without the other. Apart from being the logical staging area for expeditions to the Black Mailbox, Las Vegas also offers many sobering lessons concerning the fallibility of human perception. The casino business is a highly efficient machine for relieving people of their money without giving them anything in return; it is common knowledge that the odds favor the house, yet people still flock here. Each patron jumps to a conclusion that the evidence does not support: that their case is special and they will "beat the odds" this time.

How to Win in Las Vegas. On the other hand, I know a way you can win in Las Vegas. You see, I have a "system," and because you and I are close, I'm going to let you in on it. The system works like this: Come to Las Vegas at mid-week; stay at the casino hotels and eat at their buffets, but don't gamble. Then, you will be getting an incredible value for your money, and the casinos will lose. The gambling operations usually subsidize food and lodging on the assumption that customers passing through the casino will be tempted to try their luck. There is not the slightest coercion to gamble, only the fact that you have to walk past the slot machines to register and eat. Casinos are usually laid out like rat mazes, and you may have to run a gauntlet of flashing lights to find the registration desk or buffet. I see this as an interesting challenge, like following a formal garden maze in England, but the puzzle isn't much fun if you are tired or in a hurry. To make getting in and out of Las Vegas as painless as possible, I have assembled an exit guide to I-15. Only casino-hotels immediately adjacent to the freeway are listed, and the most accessible and least maze-like ones are clearly identified.

Lodging. Finding an inexpensive room in Las Vegas is a "feast or famine" undertaking: Depending on the traffic, rooms are either cheap and available everywhere, or expensive and available only at a few seedy motels. Some casinos, especially the most popular ones, try maintain relatively constant room rates regardless of traffic; the rates of others can change dramatically from day to day according to demand. Mid-week rates at many hotels often hover around \$25, but on weekends the rates can double, even triple, due to the huge influx of visitors from Southern California.

If you must stay in Las Vegas on a peak day, it is very important to have a reservation before you arrive, but on off-peak days reservations are senseless, since a credit card "guarantee" is usually required and this reduces your freedom to change. Friday and Saturday nights are usually peak nights, with lower rates the rest of the week, but this pattern can change if a big convention is in town or if a weekend is particularly slow. To find out whether a specific night is peak or off-peak, call the reservations number of a price sensitive hotel, like *Vacation Village*, and ask for the room rate. If the rate is low (about \$25), then this usually implies that there are plenty of rooms available and you don't need to make a reservation. If the rates are higher, then you do need to make a reservation, but probably not at the hotel you called; it is likely to be too expensive. If you must arrive at a peak time, consider staying outside Las Vegas at one of the I-15 casinos at Jean or Stateline [Exits 1 and 12] or the *Gold Strike* in Boulder City [See OTHER HOTELS]. Their rates are probably the best you will find, but you will still need a reservation.

Whatever hotel you choose, always call ahead for the room rate, and always confirm the rate again when you check in. "Bait and switch" is common: A very low rate is advertised on the marquee, but the number of rooms available at that rate may be extremely limited—or nonexistent on peak days. Needless to say, consumer protection is weak in Las Vegas. (If it were strong, would there be any gambling?) The casinos are full of clever schemes to extract money from visitors, so you have to keep your wits about you. To get the most from this city, you have to know what you want from it and not let anything lure you away from your goals.

Food. All-you-can eat buffets are a Las Vegas trademark. The price advertised, like \$3.95 for lunch, is exactly what you pay, including drink and dessert. This is a genuine bargain, but only if you are hungry enough to eat more than \$3.95 worth of food. If you want to win big at this game, I suggest fasting for 24 hours so you can thoroughly stuff yourself in one sitting. Top buffet choices are *Palace Station*, *Rio Suites*, *Gold Coast* and *Vacation Village*. I usually leave a tip of 75¢ for the

waitress, even though she only serves the drink. For the sake of your health and intestinal comfort, don't attempt more than one buffet a day. Lunch is usually a better deal than dinner, since the price is lower and most of the same items are offered at both meals. Breakfast is usually of the full-cholesterol eggs-and-pork-products variety and can be skipped.

For a complete listing of buffets, their hours and prices, see the *What's On* tourist magazine usually found in your hotel room. (This magazine is also available free at McCarran Airport, but only at the Gray Line booth in the baggage claim area.)

Children. People under 21 are not allowed to gamble, but it is usually okay to bring children through a casino if this is the only way to get to your room or a food outlet. Indeed, the big theme casinos now present a squeaky clean Disney-like image and encourage families to come. Children must be accompanied whenever passing through a gambling area, and you are supposed to keep them moving and not let them stop and stare. I would have no hesitation about bringing my children to a casino hotel as long as they knew I didn't take Las Vegas seriously and they never saw me gamble. Most large casinos have video game areas for the kiddies—I suppose as a way to acclimate them to the notion of putting quarters into machines. These contraptions I do object to, and although I do not deny any child's right to use them, it shall not be with my quarter.

Entertainment. Finding things to do in Las Vegas, for children or adults, becomes a challenge by the second day in town. On the first day, you tour each of the big theme casinos—*Circus-Circus*, *Caesar's*, *Mirage*, *Excalibur* and whatever else is new on the Strip. Each can be satisfactorily covered in an hour or less, and once you've seen it, there's rarely any reason to go back. These places are amazing displays of architecture and showmanship, but the amusement does not last beyond the initial exploration. Each is little more than a monumental variation on the word "facade." All boil down to the same thing: vast, warehouse sized areas filled with row upon row of slot machines and a smaller area of gaming tables and sports betting galleries. After taking this free tour of gambling palaces and the requisite nighttime drive through the neon, you have seen most of what Vegas has to offer. Further entertainment will probably involve leaving the city or seeking out a few hidden museums. In the Entertainment section below I have reviewed the options.

Security. A big Las Vegas casino is probably the safest place in the world to visit or spend the night. These buildings are crawling with security guards and have cameras pointed at every hidden corner. Outside the casinos, Las Vegas presents the same risks as any other big Western city. The city has its run-down and crime ridden parts, mostly in the vicinity of Downtown, but it is certainly not in a class with L.A. in this regard. Simple, commonsense security precautions ought to be sufficient: Lock your car, keep valuables out of sight, don't get piss-ass drunk or pick up hookers.

Services and Shopping. Las Vegas is a sprawling, modern city in the Southern California mold, with supermarkets, fast food and shopping centers galore. Self-serve gas is available on every corner, but the unbroken rule everywhere in town is "Pay Before Pumping," a sad reflection on the trustworthiness of the local clientele.

There are no large supermarkets or department stores immediately adjacent to I-15, these exits being monopolized by the casinos. However, there is *mucho* shopping adjacent to the US-95 freeway; you can almost pick any exit at random. My favorite place for general shopping is Rainbow Blvd. south of US-95, about 5 miles west of the I-15 junction—Home Depot, Lucky Supermarket, Payless Drug, K-Mart, 24 hour Wal-Mart, etc. Another well-endowed shopping strip is East Tropicana between the airport access road and US-95, and there are many others. For camping supplies, try the Sports Authority at the corner of Decatur and Sahara.

Full service post offices are hard to find in Las Vegas, and there are usually long lines inside. However, there are many small post office agencies in cosmetics stores at nearly every shopping center. (There is one beside Home Depot on Rainbow.) One fairly accessible full-service post office is on Lake Mead Blvd. in North Las Vegas. (Take I-15 Exit 45 eastbound. The post office is on the left between Las Vegas Blvd. and Civic Center Dr.) If you are heading north to the Black Mailbox, a better option might be the Alamo post office, where there is almost never a line.

Around the corner from the North Las Vegas is the local public library. It is a small one, but it has all your basic reference materials, and unlike some public libraries in this area, they don't require a

driver's licence and security clearances before they let you look at a book or magazine. (From Lake Mead Blvd., turn left onto Civic Center Dr. Library is about a half block down on the right.) For library junkies with more demanding needs, I recommend the big research library at the UNLV. It is open long hours and (reportedly) has a sizeable map collection. No ID required. (Park at the end of Harmon Ave., east of its intersection with Paradise Road.)

Tourist Information. For general information about Las Vegas write to: Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2301 E. Sahara Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89105. Once you enter the city, there is no convenient government-run tourist office. Avoid the "Official Tourist Bureaus" you see well-advertised at the outskirts of the city. These are private enterprises primarily concerned with the booking of rooms and shows: You won't get much information here, only a crude map and whatever answers you can wring out of a sarcastic attendant. On the other hand, the "Nevada Welcome Centers" at the borders of the state are government-run and offer helpful, non-profit attendants and lots of free brochures on Las Vegas and the region.

I-15 Exit Guide

As a way to whittle down the Las Vegas offerings in food and lodging, I have listed only the most accessible ones by exit number on Interstate 15. Thanks to the gaming industry, I-15 is rich with incredible deals in food and accommodations right off the exit ramp. These are safe, modern, squeaky-clean establishments with whimsical architecture and, of course, lots of neon. Although their profits come from gambling, you don't have to be a gambler to take advantage of their often spectacular room and food prices. In fact, the key to "winning" in these deals is not to gamble at all. If you don't have the willpower to walk past the slot machines, then I suggest you take *none* of these exits but press ahead for Utah where there are no such temptations.

Unless noted, all hotels have swimming pools. The recommended hotels below have (or sometimes have) off-peak rates of \$25 or less. All have convenient parking and are located right next to the freeway off-ramp. All these hotels are huge enterprises, offering between 250 and 4000 rooms each. The "lobbies" of each are casinos packed with slot machines, and you may have to run a maze of flashing lights to find the buffet and registration desk. Unless noted, room prices listed below are per room, same for single or double occupancy, tax not included. These rates are intended mainly for comparison, as there is no guarantee they will be in force when you arrive. These quotes reflect mid-week rates available in December 1992; rates on weekends or peak vacation weeks could be as much as two to three times higher.

Buffet prices listed below are also for weekdays; weekend prices are often the same or could be about two dollars higher. On weekends, breakfast and lunch are often combined into a "brunch," which is simply an excuse to charge more. Buffet hours vary by location, but they are roughly 7-10:30 for breakfast, 11-3 for lunch and 4-9 for dinner. You may want to arrive at an odd hour, like 2:00, to avoid standing in line, but lines generally reflect more the traffic of the day (high on weekends) than the hour. I recommend bringing a newspaper to read in case there is a line. (Such a display of intellectual skill is no doubt disturbing to the management, but in my experience they will not eject you until you start counting cards.)

Recommendations. My top pick for convenient weekday lodging is *Vacation Village* at Exit 34. You should do everything you can to stay clear of Las Vegas on Friday and Saturday nights, but if you must stay here then, I recommend getting out of the city proper and staying at *Nevada Landing* in Jean, Exit 12, or the *Gold Strike* near Hoover Dam. Of the freeway accessible buffets, my favorite for ambiance and overall quality is *Palace Station* at Exit 40. My favorite buffet for value, and the one I go to by default, is *Gold Coast* at Exit 38. *Rio* at Exit 38 has a nice buffet, too, and *Vacation Village's* is fine if you are staying there (although it may be too out of the way if you are not).

I-15 cuts through the southern tip of the Nevada, from the border with California to the border with a sparsely inhabited corner of Arizona, from there passing into Utah. The entire Nevada section is covered in this log. Exit numbers correspond to highway mileposts, as measured from the border with California. Exits without useful services are not listed.

Exit 1 **Stateline.** No town here, just two big casinos in the middle of the desert. You can see them miles away. The food bargains appear limited, but free amusements make the stop worthwhile. Along with the two in Jean, these hotels also provide the best weekday room rates anywhere: \$18 per room. Unlike rates at Las Vegas hotels, this price is reliable and does not change from moment to moment. If you must arrive on a weekend, the rate is still affordable, \$31 per room, and is preferable to hunting for a room in Las Vegas.

Whiskey Pete's. The original just-over-the-border casino, now dwarfed by *Prima Donna* and the two mammoth operations in Jean. Free look at the "Bonnie and Clyde Death Car," riddled with bullet holes. (A fine example of excessive force.) Room reservations: (800) 367-7383. Gas available here, but expensive. A free monorail runs every 15 minutes over the freeway to....

Prima Donna. Part of the same operation as Whiskey Pete's. Same room rates and phone number. Free Ferris wheel—a truly terrifying ride in open gondolas. Free merry-go-round inside, but you have to run a maze of slot machines to find it. Bowling downstairs: \$1.75 per game, \$1.25 for shoes. Lots of video games. Claims a buffet, but it did not seem to be in operation when I was last there. (It may be open weekdays only.) McDonalds restaurant in separate building outside.

Going west, the next major services are in Barstow, California, 110 miles. About halfway to Barstow, gas and food are available at Baker, a hot, gasoline-fumed mirage a few feet below sea level. There is nothing in between but low-altitude desert, essentially an extension of Death Valley, joyous in the winter but Hades in the summer.

Exit 12 **Jean.** Two mammoth casinos with no town in sight. A good choice for accommodations, especially on the weekends. Less than 30 minutes from Las Vegas.

Gold Strike. Dull Western style facade—an offense to the imagination, but clean and convenient. Rooms: \$18 off-peak, \$31 weekends; (800) 634-1359. Buffet: lunch \$2.79, dinner \$3.79.

Nevada Landing. Massive facade of a landing and riverboats—an architectural marvel, tastefully gaudy. The casino is in the landing, and the rooms are in the riverboats. Same room rates as Gold Strike. (800) 628-6682. Buffet: lunch \$2.79, dinner \$3.79.

The state-run *Nevada Welcome Center* is just beyond the Gold Strike on the east side of the freeway. Lots of useful brochures, coupon "fun books" and general info.

Exit 34 **First exit for Las Vegas Blvd. ("The Strip").** (Exit for northbound traffic only.) Still in the empty desert.

Vacation Village. This casino-hotel is my personal favorite, far from the crowds but close enough to the city to get things done. A new establishment, tastefully designed in Southwest pastels with very little neon. It is just off Exit 34 if you are coming from the south (from California). If you are coming from the north (from the Black Mailbox), take Tropicana East (Exit 37) and turn left on Las Vegas Blvd. (away from the city); hotel is a couple miles down on the left. Off-peak room rate is \$25, with some rooms \$20. (Be sure to ask.) Like other Las Vegas hotels, weekend rates can be astronomical, theoretically as high as \$175 a night according to the rates posted in the room, but \$45 is more likely. Phone (800) 658-5000. Many food options: Western Barbecue buffet: \$3.95 lunch, \$5.95 dinner. All-you-can-eat pasta and pizza bar: \$2.95 lunch, \$3.95 dinner. Small, cafeteria-style breakfast and sandwich buffet: breakfast \$2.14, lunch \$5.30, dinner \$5.30. There's also a 24-hour restaurant with a 99¢ breakfast special. Rooms are in two-story adobe-style blocks separate from the casino and immediately adjacent to parking; you don't have to pass the slot machines except to register and eat. The casino itself is relatively small and conveniently laid out—not a maze like others. Nicely landscaped pool area with a view of the city skyline. If you can get the \$25 room rate, this place beats all others in Vegas.

Exit 37 **Tropicana Blvd.** Access to the airport and the southern end of the built-up portion of

the Strip.

Excalibur is the huge fairy tale castle on the east side of the freeway, aspiring to “fun for the whole family” and claiming to be the largest resort hotel in the world (soon to be eclipsed by even bigger monstrosities nearby). Rooms rates can be as low as \$29 in the winter, but are usually \$45 otherwise. The price and massive size makes this a poor choice for practical lodging, but it might be an option on the weekends, when the price appears to hold at \$45. Phone (800) 937-7777. Excalibur has a cheap buffet (\$2.99 breakfast, \$3.99 lunch, \$4.99 dinner) but lines can be long, and it is a hassle getting to it through the huge parking lot and acres of slot machines. This place is worth a stop on a tour of theme casinos, but like the others, it tires quickly. An hour here, including buffet, should be sufficient for a lifetime.

Coming soon next to the Excalibur: A huge hotel in a full-size Egyptian pyramid.

Further east on Tropicana is **Motel 6**, which might be an option on weekends. Convenient to the airport. Rates are \$23.95 weekdays and \$32.99 weekends, single occupancy. A charge of \$6 for each additional adult makes this a poor deal for more than one. Reservations are essential on weekends: (702) 798-0728. Convenient to the airport.

About a mile beyond Motel 6, East Tropicana crosses the access road to McCarran Airport, and about a mile beyond that it becomes an endless shopping strip with stores of all kinds. Wal-Mart (24 hours), Albertson's, Circuit City and countless others are represented on East Tropicana.

West of I-15 on Tropicana: There's another, smaller **Motel 6**. Same rates as Motel 6 on East Tropicana, but more accessible to the freeway. (Turn left on Industrial Rd., at the first lights after freeway ramps; the motel is about one block down facing the freeway.) **King & Motel**, on West Tropicana, just beyond the exit ramp, is very convenient but a bit run down. Consider it only as a last resort. (800) 634-3488. Also on West Tropicana is a strip of fast food outlets: McDonalds, Taco Bell, Wendys, etc. If you are heading to California on I-15, gas stations here offer the last chance for reasonably priced gas before Barstow.

Exit 38 **Flamingo Rd/Dunes Rd.** To the east, provides access to the Strip near *Caesar's Palace*. Lots of buffets and room deals within a few blocks, but you risk getting bogged down in traffic. To the west, however, are two accessible casino hotels with good food deals...

Rio Suites. Excellent buffet: \$3.25 breakfast, \$4.25 lunch, \$6.25 dinner. Since this is a suites-only hotel, room rates are high: \$85 most days. (800) 888-1808.

Gold Coast, just beyond *Rio*. Good quality buffet for a low price: \$2.45 breakfast, \$3.45 lunch, \$5.45 dinner. Covered parking. 72 lanes of bowling: \$1.70/game, \$1 for shoes. Not a place for room bargains: Best off-peak rate is \$35 a night. (800) 331-5334.

Exit 39 **Spring Mountain Road.** East, access to the Strip near the *Mirage*. West, turn right at the first intersection for **The Survival Store**, a well stocked gun shop offering machine guns for rent. Oodles of fun. [See ENTERTAINMENT.]

Exit 40 **Sahara Ave.** East, access to the Strip near *Circus-Circus*.

Palace Station, on the west side of the freeway, offers a top quality buffet, slightly higher in price than others but worth it: \$3.95 breakfast, \$4.95 lunch, \$7.95 dinner. Covered parking. Inconvenient for accommodations, as parking and rooms may be widely separated, and room rates are generally high. Best off-peak rate is \$29. (800) 634-3101.

About a mile beyond Palace Station on Sahara West are many miles of shopping centers, reaching the highest density at the intersection with Decatur Blvd. For discount camping supplies, there is a **Sports Authority** store at the corner of West Sahara and Decatur.

North of Exit 40 on I-15, there are no more easily accessible casino deals for about 80

miles, until Mesquite at the Nevada/Arizona border. Along the way is mostly empty desert with only a scattering of services. (Last gas is Exit 48.)

Exit 41 **Charleston Blvd.** Go east for downtown Las Vegas. Go west for Red Rock Canyon. (Simply follow Charleston for 20 miles.)

Exit 42 **Las Vegas Expressway (US-95/I-515 freeway).** East takes you past downtown to Henderson and Hoover Dam. West goes to Tonopah and Reno, passing along the southern boundary of the Military Restricted Area. You can take this for the *long* way to the Black Mailbox, approximately ?? miles.

West on US-95, there are many supermarkets, shopping centers and other services immediately adjacent to the freeway (unlike I-15, where casinos dominate the exits). You can take almost any exit at random and find a big supermarket. Wal-Mart at Cheyenne Ave.

Further west on US-95, about 10 miles from this interchange, the US-95 freeway passes the *Sante Fe* casino hotel at the northwestern outskirts of the city. May be an option for lodging if you are coming from the Reno direction. [See OTHER HOTELS.]

Exit 46 **Cheyenne Ave.** *Days Inn*, gas, McDonalds.

Exit 48 **Craig Rd.** Last gas northbound before Alamo on US-93 or Glendale on I-15. Tank up here if you are heading north to the Black Mailbox. Gas prices are low—the best in Las Vegas—but cash only. Convenience store. *Super 8 Motel* (Exit 58) is two miles east on Craig Rd. This exit also provides access to Nellis Air Force Base if you are coming from the south.

Exit 58 **Apex/Las Vegas Blvd.** The northern terminus of Las Vegas Blvd., in the middle of the empty desert. No services at exit. Parking area and trash barrels. If coming from the north, you can exit here for the northernmost lodging in the Las Vegas area....

Super 8 Motel is 7.4 miles south of this exit on Las Vegas Blvd., at main gate of Nellis Air Force base. (The road is entirely empty, so it doesn't take long to get there.) Rates are not a bargain (weekdays: \$30 single, \$38 double; higher weekends), but you may wish to consider it if you are coming from the north late in the day and do not want to mess with Las Vegas traffic. Nationwide reservation number is (800) 800-8000. This is the "North Las Vegas Blvd." location for Super 8, not to be confused with the main Strip location.

If you are serious about saucer watching, I suggest taking some time to watch the planes take off and land at *Nellis Air Force Base* during the day. You can view them from Las Vegas Blvd. south of here—or virtually anyplace else in this open desert valley. You will see a lot of air activity and many kinds of craft, from fast jet fighters executing acrobatic maneuvers to slow, quiet prop-driven planes that seem almost to "hover," flying not much faster than cars on the freeway. To add further confusion to saucer watchers, Vertical Takeoff and Landing craft (VTOLs and STOLs), fast attack helicopters, Stealth fighters and other unusual aircraft may also make appearances here. Many planes taking off from Nellis Air Force Base can be expected to maneuver in the vicinity of SR 375. To detect a true flying saucer, you have to know the other birds, and the Nellis approach zone is a good place to start.

If you would like an excuse to intrude into the base itself, the small *Thunderbird Museum* is open to the public during limited hours. People with "base authorization" can visit the museum any day, 8-4, but members of the general public are allowed in only on tours given twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2:00 pm. To take the tour, simply show up at the main gate at about 1:45 and tell the guard where you are headed. The tour is said to include a visit to the hangers when base schedules permit it, presumably to view a Thunderbird jet. For more information, call the museum at 652-4018.

Exit 64 **US-93 North to Black Mailbox.** If coming from the west on I-15, exit here and take US-93 north to get to Highway 375 and the Black Mailbox, approximately 100 miles from

this point. There are no services at this exit and none on US-93 south of Alamo.

Exit 75 **Valley of Fire.** The State Park is 18 miles S of here on SR 169. Small convenience store at exit but no gas.

Exit 90 **Glendale/Moapa.** (Exit 91 westbound) If you are coming from the east and heading to the Black Mailbox, exit here for SR-168, a cut-off leading to US-93. Small **Glendale Motel** here, 16 rooms. Phone (702) 864-2277. Gas (Las Vegas+25¢), restaurant, bar, convenience store, car repair, towing. Small grocery and hardware store about 1/2 mile from exit on SR-168; otherwise, no services on 168 or south of Alamo on US-93.

Exit 120 **Mesquite (West).** Mesquite offers two casino resorts just before the Arizona border. Unlike Stateline, these are utilitarian places with limited glitz and no theme architecture, reflecting the lower traffic.

Peppermill Casino offers off-peak rooms at \$25 or less. (800) 621-0187. No exceptional food bargains. Free RV parking and dump station.

Exit 122 **Mesquite (East).** **Virgin River Casino**, N, has rooms for \$20, off-peak, year-round. (800) 346-7721. Buffet: \$3.33 breakfast, \$5.55 dinner.

Nevada Welcome Center, S, with lots of brochures and info. Burger King next door.

East of this exit, the next services on I-15 are at St. George, Utah, about **26** miles. It has many fast food outlets, supermarkets, department stores and motels from all the major chains. As the major service center for Zion National Park, room rates in St. George are high in summer and low the rest of the year.

Other Hotels

If you have the urge to stay in downtown Las Vegas—for the experience—I suggest **Fitzgeralds**, if you can get a low room rate. \$25 is possible here on off-peak days; phone (800)-274-5825. This is a modern high-rise hotel, the tallest in Las Vegas. No pool. Like other downtown hotels, Fitzgeralds is not very accessible compared to the hotels in the I-15 guide, but it's in the middle of the bright lights and offers free garage parking for guests. This hotel might be an option if you are coming from the north and don't want to go all the way across town to *Vacation Village*, but the hassles of downtown driving may remove the advantage.

If you are approaching the city from Hoover Dam, a convenient place to stay is the **Gold Strike** near Boulder City, just three miles from the dam on the main highway. (This **Gold Strike** is not to be confused with its sister hotel in Jean.) The room rates are fixed at \$19 weekdays and \$29 weekend. The weekend rate is the best I have seen in the Las Vegas area; consider heading out here if you have to stay here then. (You can combine a night here with a visit to the Dam.) Reservations are essential on the weekends: (800) 245-6380. Buffet: \$3.95 lunch and \$3.49 dinner (\$4.95 brunch on weekends).

If you are approaching the city on US-95 from the Reno/Tonopah direction, the first hotel you will encounter is the **Santa Fe**, at the northwestern outskirts of the city. Might be an option if you are arriving late in the day and want to avoid freeway traffic; however, the rates are a bit steep: \$36/night off peak. Reservations: (800) 872-6823. Buffet (no children): \$3.50 breakfast, \$4.95 lunch, \$6.95 dinner. **Santa Fe** has some unusual attractions, apparently as a way to attract locals. An indoor ice skating rink offers public skating during limited morning and afternoon hours: \$4.25 admission plus \$1.75 skate rental. A bowling alley has 60 lanes, renting by the hour.

Entertainment

A day is more than enough time to tour the Las Vegas Strip. After that, you'll be bored silly and, even worse, might be tempted to try your luck at one of the machines. Below are a few suggestions of things to do both on the Strip, for your first day, and to keep you off the Strip for the rest of your

visit. All attractions recommended here are free or nearly so.

Theme Casinos. The monumental architecture of the giant “fantasy” casinos is worth a half day of touring. Each is an elaborate facade housing pretty much the same thing: a huge gambling hall and hotel. Unless you stop to eat, you can do each for free in less than half an hour. Each has a shopping area and some entertainment consistent with its theme, but otherwise the food, rooms and slot machines are pretty much the same. Each is a vast maze inside; once you enter, it can be a challenge finding your way out. *Excalibur* is a huge fairy tale castle with a medieval theme. *Mirage* has an indoor rain forest and a pyrotechnic volcano outside erupting at scheduled intervals. *Circus-Circus* offers free circus acts and a cheap buffet. *Caesar’s Palace* follows a roman theme and has a spectacular indoor shopping street. Coming soon: A full size Egyptian pyramid, a pirate island and a theme park or two. Other, less elaborate facades abound: a Chinese palace, Western-style street fronts, showboats, train stations. Most of the entertainment of these is on the outside; there is rarely any reason to venture within.

Treasure Hunt. Here is amusing pastime for those who are tight of wallet and have time to kill. As a prospective casino customer, you can often collect free hats, watches, coffee mugs, fanny packs, popcorn, coloring books, lucky charms, key rings and free “pulls” on slot machines (the only way to gamble), with no obligation to spend a cent. All merchandise is of dubious quality—but, hey, it’s free! To prepare for your treasure hunt, you should stop at one of the state-run Nevada Welcome Centers when you cross the border. (At Jean or Mesquite on I-15, or Boulder City.) There, you can pick up free “fun books” of promotional coupons. Other coupons are handed out on the Strip or can be found in one of the visitor’s magazines usually left in your hotel room. Each coupon usually requires that you mount an expedition to find the “Promotions Desk” or some other location buried deep within the casino. Here you turn in your coupon, get your free item and can leave immediately. The marketing theory is that once you are inside, you will be tempted to try your luck at the machines, but there is nothing forcing you to. There is some satisfaction in going in, claiming your free prize and leaving without gambling or buying anything. This game would be great fun for the kids, but unfortunately such promotions are open only to people 21 and over.

Downtown Las Vegas. For students of the darker side of humanity, I suggest visiting downtown Las Vegas late at night. This is the older, denser gambling center, offering more depth and human drama than the squeaky clean Strip. Fremont Street, downtown, is the “Great White Way” you usually see in pictures of Las Vegas. At night it has a gritty Times Square feel to it, with homeless derelicts lining up for the late night steak specials and dejected visitors weeping in the street after wagering their last dime. On the Strip, you don’t see the effects of gambling; everything is bright and upbeat and the losers clear out quickly in their cars. In contrast, Downtown was laid out when gambler’s came by foot from the train station, and today it is mostly for the bussed-in crowd. Downtown is full of hustle; walking along Fremont Street, one is accosted by barkers trying to draw you into tiny storefront casinos. I recommend coming here after 10:00 pm for an interesting cultural experience, cheaper than a safari to Africa but no less educational.

As part of the downtown experience, you may want to spend the night here. There are, of course, dozens of hotels downtown, many with low off-peak rates. I suggest *Fitzgeralds*. (See Other Hotels.)



Liberace Museum: Don't Go!
There's enough free glitz in town that you shouldn't have to pay for it.

Other Attractions. Conventional wisdom says that Las Vegas is the place for show bargains, but this is untrue. For the big names like Rich Little, Don Rickles, “Frank” or “Wayne” expect to pay big bucks, maybe twice as much as the cost of your room

There are a number of well advertised commercial attractions in Las Vegas designed to soak up the tourist dollar: Liberace Museum, Believe It or Not Museum, Guinness Museum, Wet ‘N Wild, Old Nevada, Omnimax, etc. All can be avoided without loss. Three small non-profit, local-interest museums are worth a stop. Each can be satisfactorily visited in 30 minutes or less, and the tour of all these museums plus the chocolate factory, The Survival Store and a buffet can be done easily in a day.

Nevada State Museum. Las Vegas history and a variety of other Nevada topics. 700 Twin Lakes Drive. (702) 486-5205. Hours: daily 8:30-4:30, Mon-Tue 11:30-4:30. Admission: \$2. From the US-95 freeway westbound from I-15, exit at Valley View Blvd. and follow signs.

Clark County Heritage Museum. History and nature; reconstructed frontier town and steam engines. On Boulder Highway in Henderson. Hours: (702) 455-7955, Hours: daily 9am-4:30pm. Admission \$1.

University of Nevada Museum of Natural History. Mostly native and Mexican artifacts. Has a small but fascinating exhibit on erosion—explains the West completely. Located at the end of Harmon Ave. on the UNLV campus. Hours: 9-4:45 weekdays; 10-2 Saturdays. Admission free. Also on the UNLV campus is a top-notch university library, should you have the sudden urge to look something up. (The UNLV museum is not to be confused with the *Las Vegas Museum of Natural History*, on Las Vegas Blvd. north of downtown (corner of Washington Ave., open daily 9-4). I have not visited this one because the \$5 admission violates my free-or-almost philosophy.)

Ethel M Chocolate Factory and Cactus Gardens sounds like the sort of commercial attraction one would want to avoid, but there is a compelling reason to visit: It’s free. Located near the corner of Sunset and Mountain View, well south and east of the airport. (At the intersection, turn into Green Valley Business Park, then take first left onto Cactus Garden Drive.) Open daily 8:30 to 6. Phone 458-8864. The factory “tour” is a self-guided glassed-in walkway along one side of the chocolate plant. Of course, it ends at a big chocolate shop, but you don’t have to buy anything. The adjoining cactus gardens are a pleasant stroll, laid out more for show than for educational purposes. Most of the cacti are of the impressive Arizona varieties rather than the spindly ones found in Nevada. Whole visit takes less than 30 minutes.

Another interesting stop, full of local color, is *The Survival Store*, a gun shop offering machine guns for rent. Honest, they’ll rent to anyone, no questions asked. They have a wide assortment of automatic weapons to choose from, from state-of-the-art Uzis to old-time classic Thomsons. You can take your pick for \$20 a day plus ammo. Alas, you are not allowed to leave the premises with your gun but can only shoot it at their indoor range. This greatly reduces the value of renting a machine gun, so maybe you would prefer to pick up a small handgun instead. They have specials priced as low as \$65. *The Survival Store* also stocks a variety of other weapons and paraphernalia, including tee-shirts, bumper stickers and posters of naked women caressing powerful guns. Don’t forget to sign up for the free Gun of the Week Giveaway. It’s just off I-15 and might entertain for 15 minutes. Take Exit 39 (Spring Mountain Rd.) westbound, and turn right at the first intersection. (Look for the billboard above.) 3250 Pollux Ave. Open 7 days, 9-6. (702) 871-7795.



A place of passing interest, if you happen to be in the area, is the “*Boneyard*” of the Young Electric Sign Company. This is the place where old neon signs go when they die. There is a lot of history here: of tackiness, of bad taste, of garishness bordering on the sublime. You cannot enter the storage yard itself, but you can drive into the parking lot next door and try to peek over the fence. There is talk of opening a neon sign museum someday, but today the view is awkward and unsatisfying. Ten minutes is enough. The Boneyard is located on Cameron Ave. south of W.

Tropicana. (From I-15, take Tropicana west for 1.2 miles. Turn left on Cameron, and the Young Electric Sign Company is about a block down on the right.)

Almost everything else of interest lies outside the city. **Red Rock Canyon** (25 minutes west on Charleston Blvd.) and **Valley of Fire State Park** (60 minutes northeast on I-15) are free and offer hiking, natural history, Indian petroglyphs and many nice desert views. You can swim for free in **Lake Mead** almost anywhere you encounter an accessible shoreline; the nearest to the city is Las Vegas Wash off Rt. 147, about a 45 minute drive. The **Hoover Dam** is about 45 minutes from town; a tour of internal workings will set you back \$2—highly recommended.

If you are forced to spend a weekend in Las Vegas, one pastime I suggest is the giant **Broadacres Swap Meet** (or “flea market” for those from the East) in North Las Vegas. Among the usual flea market stuff, you might be able to pick up that emblem of the desert southwest, a cattle skull. The swap meet is open Saturday and Sunday (and sometimes Friday); admission is 75 cents. You can find it by driving north on Las Vegas Blvd. from downtown Las Vegas; it is at least fifteen minutes down on the right, at the far northern border of North Las Vegas. The drive here from downtown is an enlightening one since it passes through some of the seedier parts of the city, home of countless pawn shops, charity missions and unsavory gambling establishments you would not care to visit.

Getting Married

Although Wedding Chapels abound in Las Vegas, this form of participatory entertainment could cost you dearly. Don't do it. It's fun to watch, however. Some casinos have their own wedding chapels, so if you happen to see a decked-out bride passing through the gaming areas, I suggest following her to the ceremony. It could be a giggle.

Gypsum Cave

For adventurous souls, *Gypsum Cave* offers a chance to go where the sun don't shine. This attraction is unadvertised and accessible only by unmarked dirt roads about a 30 minute drive from the city. Can be combined with a visit to Lake Mead and Valley of Fire. A topo map would be helpful (Lake Mead 1:100,000, or Frenchman Mtn 7-1/2 minute) but isn't necessary. Getting there can be a challenge with or without a map. Here are my directions, deduced with some trail and error...

From I-15 northbound, exit at Lake Mead Blvd. East (Exit 45) just north of downtown. Follow Lake Mead Blvd. for about 11 miles, east over Sunrise Summit (good view of Nellis AFB), to milepost 38.7. Here a newly paved road forks to the left; it is marked by signs “Pabco Gypsum” and “Nevada Cogeneration Associates #2.” Go 2.5 miles down this road until you encounter two big “Private Property—No Trespassing” signs. Just before the signs, a dirt road forks to the left. Here you will see the remnants of a Nevada state historic marker probably once describing the cave. Follow this well-used dirt road for 0.5 mile. After a series of roller coaster dips into arroyos, there is a big telephone pole on a concrete pylon in the middle of the road. Turn left here and go about 0.2 mile. Immediately after the road passes under the high tension power lines, there is a fork, with the more traveled road going left. You go right. This will be a rough road, so go slowly. Go about 0.2 mile until this road ends at a perpendicular intersection with another dirt road. Turn left and go 0.2 mile until you come to a four-way crossroads with two dirt roads leading up to the hillside and then ending. You can park at the crossroads and walk. Take the road on the right leading higher into the hills, walk up about 0.1 mile until the road ends, and there will be the cave.

I leave Gypsum Cave for you to explore without further description. *Proceed at your own risk.* Please note that blasting takes place at an open pit mine in the area, and this could destabilize rocks at the entrance of the cave (perhaps sealing you in for Eternity). If you choose to go inside, you will need a flashlight, but further spelunking equipment is not required, as this is not Carlsbad. There are probably other smaller caves in the surrounding area; one entrance appears to be about 100 feet to the left.

Address for Corrections

I welcome all comments and corrections that might help me improve this document. For example, there are number of dirt roads off 375 that I have not traveled. If you explore any side road where you see a description is lacking in the log, please tell me where it leads and I will add this information to the document. Be sure to reset your "trip counter" odometer whenever you leave the paved highway so you can make mileage measurements. Also note the condition of the road and whether it is suitable for passenger cars, four wheel drive or high clearance only. "This road dead-ends at a corral 2 miles up," is just as important as finding the Lost Dutchman Mine; at least we can tell others what roads *not* to take.

I'd also like to hear about your UFO and secret aircraft sightings. Try to be as specific as you can about what you saw, where you were when you saw it, in what direction, etc. (It is more important to describe *what you saw* from your viewpoint than trying to interpret what it was. "I saw a 500 foot space ship travel 10,000 miles an hour," is not as useful as, "I saw a steady blue-white light 5 times brighter than Venus traverse 30 arc degrees in about 3 seconds.") If appropriate, I will add this information to the Flying Object Identifier or to a new document. Like everyone else, I want to hear about the truly bizarre objects that seem to defy the laws of physics, but I am also interested in the merely spectacular operations of earthly craft if these might be interpreted as UFOs by saucer-minded visitors. One of our goals should be to collect enough information about "red herring" objects that we can recognize something truly remarkable when it happens.

Finally, I'd like to hear about your encounters with security personnel, be they ominous or benign. If ominous, please provide as many details as possible concerning time, place, vehicle registration numbers and descriptions of personnel. This information, once compiled, might help tell saucer watchers what to expect and help discourage them in the future. On the other hand, I also welcome comments from military officials, security personnel or local police. If they have any safety warnings or comments on legalities, I would be happy to include these in the document as well.

I will endeavor to respect any contributor's wishes regarding confidentiality. Normally, I will not mention contributor's names in this document; although I will indicate that the information is not my own. (If you *do* want to be credited for you contribution, please say so.) I also accept anonymous advice.

Send comments to:

Glenn Campbell
c/o Little A'Le'Inn
HCR Box 45
Rachel, NV 89001

(An alternate address is: Glenn Campbell, P.O. Box 44-1397, Somerville, MA 02144.)

Ordering Information

To order additional copies of the *Area 51 Viewer's Guide*, send \$15 per copy, plus the airmail postage below, to the Little A'Le'Inn (check payable to them). Nevada residents must add \$0.98 sales tax per copy.

<u>Airmail Postage for...</u>	<u>First Copy</u>	<u>Additional Copies, add...</u>
USA (Priority Mail)	\$2.90	\$1.20
Canada	\$3.12	
Mexico	\$3.55	
Other Countries	\$6.31	

Order from:

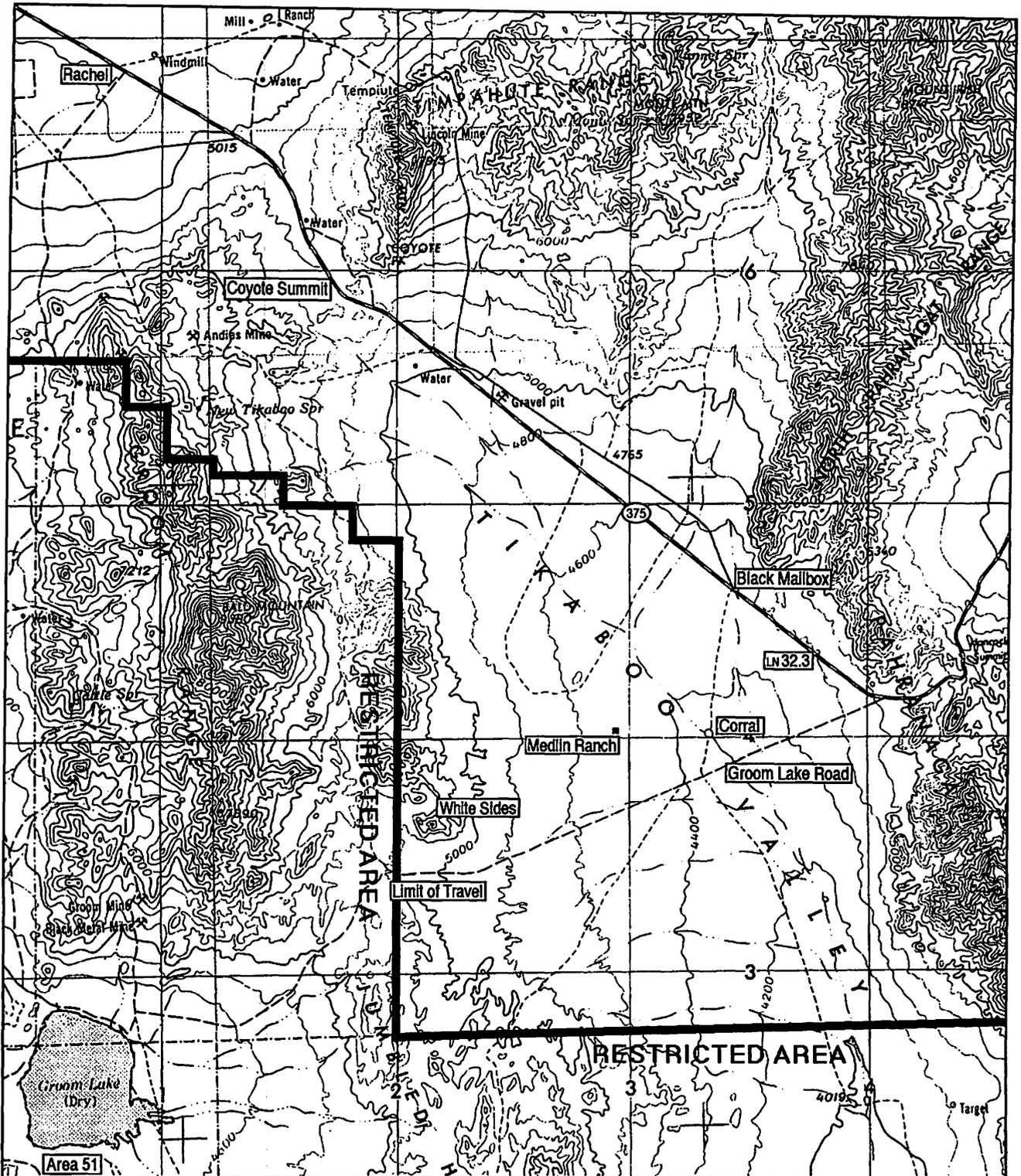
Little A'Le'Inn
HCR Box 45
Rachel, NV 89001

It should be noted that the Little A'Le'Inn is only a sales agent for this document and is not responsible for its content.

Upgrade Policy

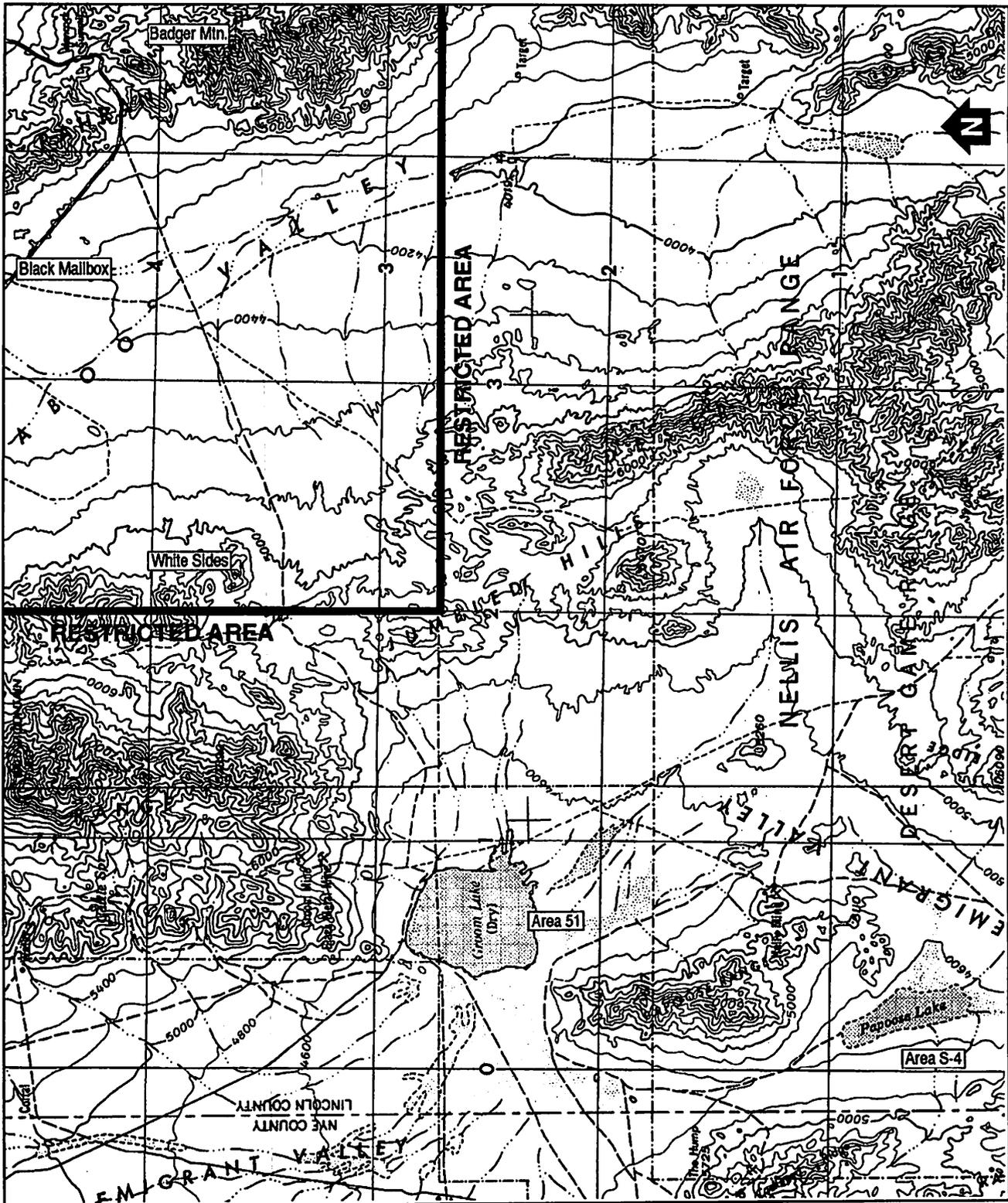
Since this document is frequently revised, you may want a new copy the next time you come. If you turn in your old copy at Little A'Le'Inn, you will get a new copy for 50% off.

Tickaboo Valley, Groom Lake and Rachel



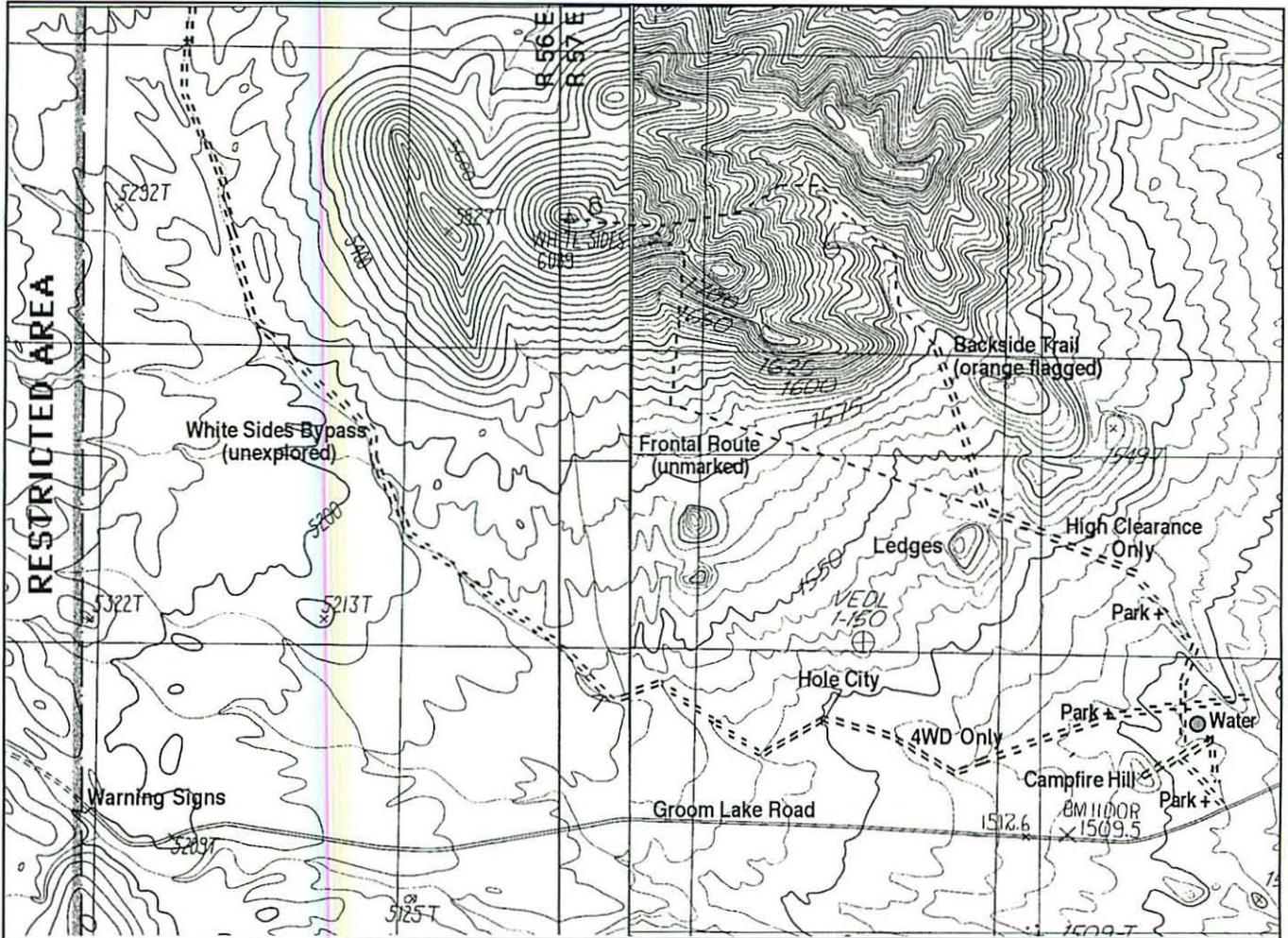
Scale 1:250,000 (1 inch = 4 miles). Base map: Caliente USGS Army Series, 1954. Restricted Area is current but approximate.

Groom and Papoose Lakes and Vantage Points



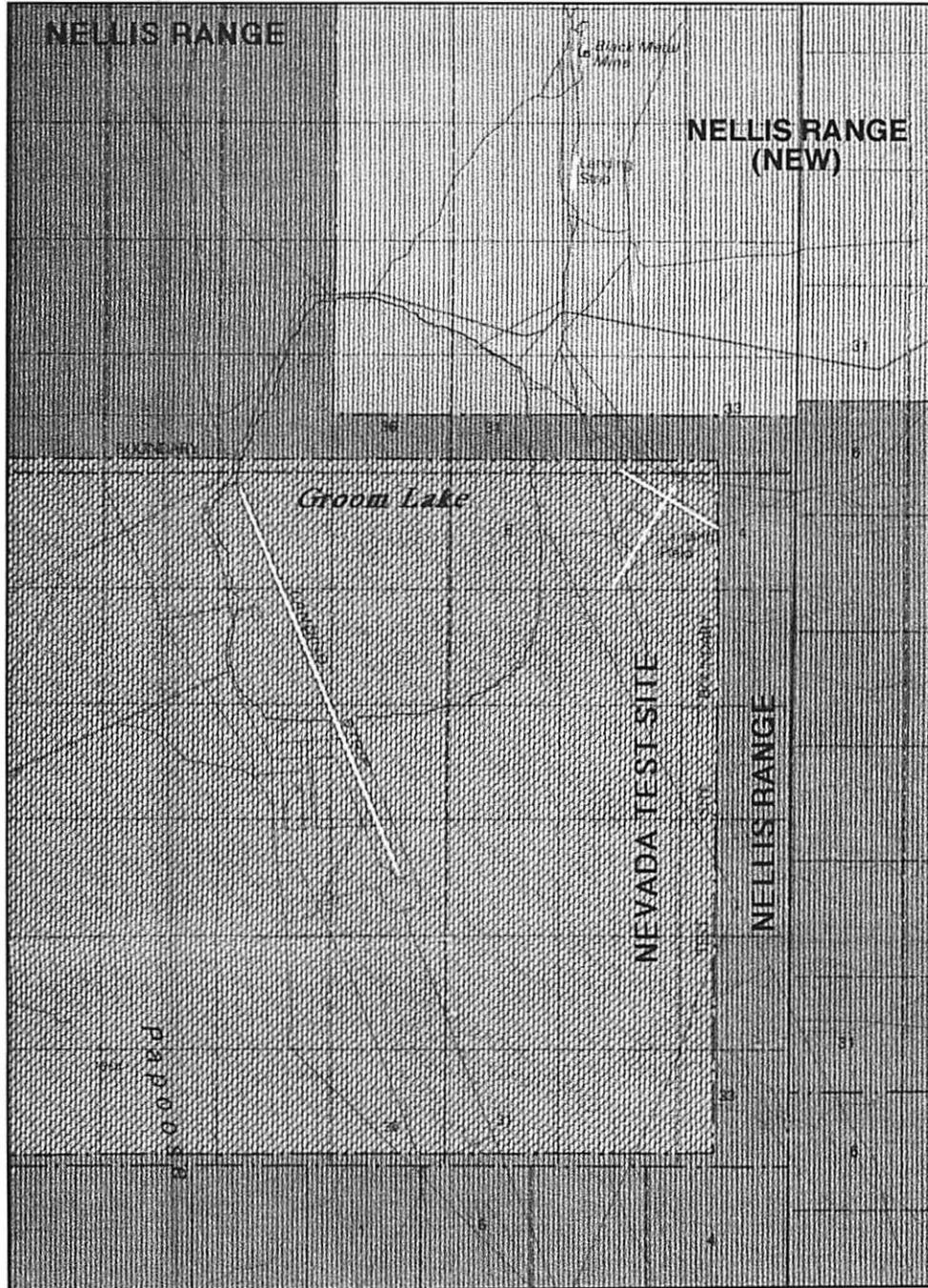
North is left. Scale 1:250,000 (1 inch = 4 miles). Base map: Caliente USGS Army Series, 1954. Restricted Area is current but approximate..

White Sides



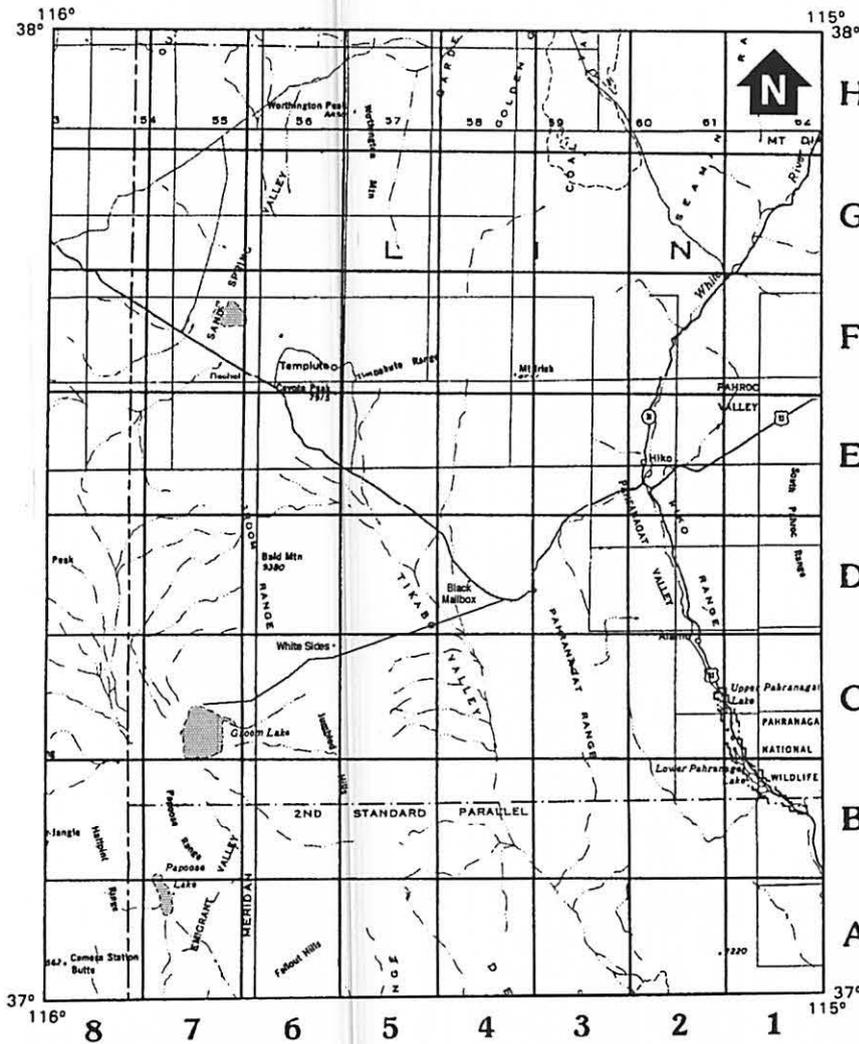
Scale 1:24,000 (2.6 inches = 1 mile). Shows a portion of Groom Lake Road beginning about 11.4 miles west of SR-375 (accessible at LN 34.6 in the Tikaboo Valley). Base maps are USGS 7-1/2 Minute: Groom Range SW (left) and Groom Range SE (right). The contours on the left side of the map are in feet with a 40 foot contour interval, and those on the right are in meters with a 5 meter contour interval. Restricted Area is current. For a description of trails, see WHITE SIDES in text. The White Sides Bypass is a flat stream bed that appears to be accessible to 4WD vehicles. Remember: DO NOT BRING A CAMERA ON YOUR HIKE, and DO NOT PARK WITHIN 100 YARDS OF THE WATER TROUGH.

Groom Lake Airstrips



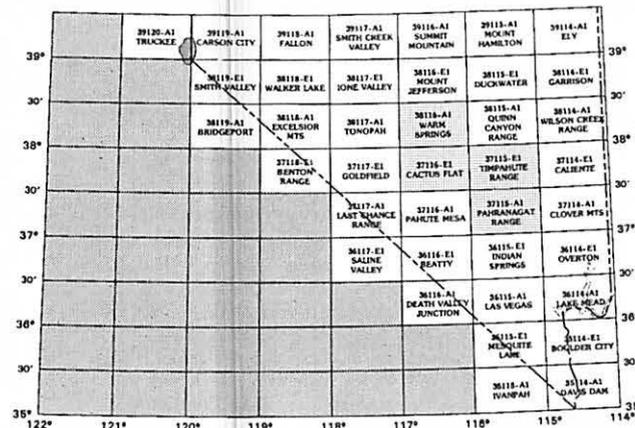
Groom Lake airstrips and roads as shown (faintly) on a 1978 USGS Surface Management map (Pahranaagat Range). This conforms roughly with the current view from White Sides. Labels reflect current land status. Scale 1:100,000 (1 inch = 1.6 miles). The gray block in the center, encompassing the southern half of Groom Lake and the long airstrip, is assumed to be "Area 51." Since this map was published, the long air strip is said to have been extended by 10,000 feet, making it among the longest in the world.

Index to USGS 7-1/2 Minute Maps of Tikaboo Valley and Vicinity



A1	Lower Pahrangat Lake SE
A2	Lower Pahrangat Lake SW
A3	oq Desert Hills SE
A4	oq Desert Hills SW
A5	oq Southeastern Mine
A6	oq Fallout Hills
A7	la Papoose Lake
A8	Paiute Ridge
B1	Lower Pahrangat Lake
B2	Lower Pahrangat Lake NW
B3	oq Desert Hills NE
B4	oq Desert Hills NW
B5	oq Fallout Hills NE
B6	oq Fallout Hills NW
B7	la Papoose Range
B8	Jangle Ridge
C1	Alamo SE
C2	Alamo
C3	la,oq Badger Spring
C4	oq Cutler Reservoir
C5	la,oq Groom Range SE
C6	la,oq Groom Range SW
C7	la Groom Mine
C8	Groom Mine SW
D1	Alamo NE
D2	Ash Springs
D3	la,oq Hancock Summit
D4	la,oq Crescent Reservoir
D5	oq Groom Range NE
D6	oq Groom Range
D7	Cattle Spring
D8	Groom Mine NW
E1	Hiko SE
E2	Hiko
E3	oq Mt. Irish SE
E4	la,oq Crescent Spring
E5	oq Tempiute Mtn. SE
E6	oq Tempiute Mtn. South
E7	White Blotch Springs SE
E8	oq White Blotch Springs
F1	Hiko NE
F2	Fossil Peak
F3	oq Mail Summit
F4	oq Mount Irish
F5	oq Monte Mtn.
F6	oq Tempiute Mtn. North
F7	White Blotch Springs NE
F8	White Blotch Springs NW
G1	White River Narrows
G2	Seaman Wash
G3	oq Murphy Gap SE
G4	oq Murphy Gap
G5	oq Mecker Peak
G6	oq Worthington Peak SW
G7	oq Honest John Well
G8	oq Black Top
H1	Weepah Spring
H2	Oreana Spring
H3	oq Coal Valley Reservoir
H4	oq Murphy Gap NW
H5	la,oq Worthington Peak
H6	oq McCutchen Spring
H7	oq Quinn Canyon Springs
H8	oq Quinn Canyon Springs NW

USGS 1:100,000 Maps of S. Nevada



Maps covering SR-375 are highlighted.

"la" indicates that this map is normally available for sale at the Little A'Le' Inn in Rachel. (Call to be sure.)

"oq" indicates an orthophotoquad (aerial photo) of this area is available from USGS.

Source: USGS Nevada Catalog.

Send To: _____

U.S. Geological Survey
Map Sales
P.O. Box 25286
Denver, CO 80225

Dear USGS:

Please send me the following maps...

<u>File No</u>	<u>Qty</u>	<u>Reference Code</u>	<u>Map Name</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Price</u>
01661	1	37115-A1-TM-100-00	Pahranagat Range	NV	4.00
02516	1	37115-E1-TM-100-00	Timpahute Range	NV	4.00
00906	1	39119-B7-ST-500-00	Nevada State Map	NV	4.00
	1		Nevada Catalog	NV	.00
	1		Nevada Index	NV	.00
	1		Guide to Topographic Map Symbols		.00
	1		Catalog of Maps		.00

Total (payable to "Dept of Interior-USGS") \$12.00