



Everything here, except the woman, is rentable.

# Rental Service Says Santa Wears Size 46

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Newspaper Enterprise Assn.

NEW YORK (NEA) — Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. And he wears a size 46 suit. But, alas, dear child, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is not a reindeer. He is an English fal-

low. What proof lies behind these grab statements concerning these creatures so essential to the yuletide aura?

Well, verifying the jolly gent is Harold Blumberg, an executive of Brooks Costumes here. He says there are several hundred plump, well-bearded and well-dressed Santas loosed in the U.S. between Thanksgiving and midnight Dec. 24.

How does he know? His firm rents them their suits. And since they are all size 46, there must have been a model, and it follows that the original must have been, well, guess who? As for Rudolph, we must have our illusions and the true reindeer is too bovine, too gangly to fulfill them. According to Mrs. Lorraine Dessen, of Animal Talent Scouts, people picture reindeer as the artists draw them and the artists lean to the more aesthetic delicate falow deer.

An indulgent parent with \$75 to \$500 to spare can have a deer or fawn attend his children's parties, Mrs. Dessen said.

Santa suits and animals are just two of hundreds of rentals in demand at this time. One of the larger rental firms reveals that 15 to 25 per cent of its yearly gross comes during the holidays. Volume for the merchandise rental business now is more than \$300 million. Firms coast to coast keep adding to their lists to entice the consumer and push the figure to \$1 billion.

What are some of these items? Well, who best to ask about this at Christmastime than an angel? In this case, Mrs. Rita Angel, manager of a Manhattan Hertz Rent-All store.

In the rental field are baby cribs, carriages, diapers, pink sheets (rented by Zsa Zsa Gabor), power equipment, cement mixers and grass cutters. There are little furs for those going on cruises and big furs for those staying at home with mink \$25-\$75 a day and leopard \$60-\$105. For parents of teen-agers, there are hi-fis, dance platforms, glassware and dishes. "With the rental firm washing

the dirty dishes, parties are a breeze," one mother said. Families moving into new homes during the holidays can rent complete rooms of furnishings including all the necessary party regalia to celebrate the Yule while their furniture is en route.

"We rent everything but people," Mrs. Angel said, telling of a man who rented a wrist watch to wear to Switzerland where he was going to buy one. The firm has rented such things as coffins to macabre jokesters. One prankster rented a shotgun to take to a friend's wedding.

Rental firms also report an upsurge in car rental gift certificates, rental of station wagons and pickup trucks to haul Christmas trees and fly-drive combinations for vacationers.

Increased interest in skiing opens a new rental area. Now a family can rent a ski package—car with ski racks, boots and metal skis.

"We get the skiers coming and going," Mrs. Angel adds with a chuckle worthy of Peter Lorre. "We also rent wheel-

## Family Court Change Sought

PORLAND (UPI)—Reorganization of court handling of family problems will be sought by the Oregon Council on Crime and Delinquency, William Moshofsky, council chairman, said Tuesday.

Moshofsky said the council planned to have the National Council on Crime and Delinquency make a study and then would seek legislative approval of the resulting program in 1965.

The aim, he said, is to nip delinquency at the root. Moshofsky said jurisdiction over family problems now is "dispersed among five separate courts."

Domestic relations laws, he said, have failed to keep up with knowledge about human behavior.

Moshofsky estimated the study would cost \$49,900. Funds will be sought from other organizations, he said.

Did you know that Santa Claus, Indiana is the only town so designated in the United States. The privilege is reserved to its post office by Congressional Act.

# In 15 Years Gamblers, Promoters, Tourists Have Quickly Urbanized Tahoe's Wilderness

AL TAHOE, Calif. (UPI)—Mark Twain once called Lake Tahoe "the loveliest sight the whole earth affords."

People don't speak that way any more — especially about Lake Tahoe.

Justly or not, this famed Sierra resort 6,225 feet high on the California-Nevada border is being dubbed everything from "a cesspool for gambling joints," "a recreational slum" and "a city with a hole in the middle" to "a Sierra Coney Island."

At the same time, it's being acclaimed as Nevada's new "IN" resort, the "coming Vegas," "the pinnacle of success" for entertainers and "America's all-year playground."

Top Performers Tahoe boasts the world's top night club performers, some of its most exquisite beauty, enough gambling to satisfy anybody and more business than it can handle. Add these up and the total is trouble.

The 21.6 mile long lake, one of the three clearest in the world, is threatened by sewage pollution. Along the shore, neon motor lodge signs dangle from pine limbs. "Buy now" billboards replace timber in the forests. "Indian trading posts," "carnivals," hamburger joints, overrun lots — they're everywhere. California plans to ring its side of the lake with a freeway or "parkway." And, although Lake Tahoe has 71 miles of shoreline, only seven are public.

From Mark Twain's day until a decade ago urbanization of Tahoe's wilderness moved slowly. Civilized life at the sleepy lake consisted mainly of a few millionaires' homes, some summer cabins. Scattered resorts and camp grounds. The trip was long and hard.

But gambling, freeways, winter sports and plenty of promotion changed all that in the early 1950s.

Now thousands arrive daily by airplane or on two transcontinental highways. Whereas the trip from San Francisco formerly took days, the 500 plus miles now are traveled before lunch.

In summer, tourists bring swimming suits, boats, fishing gear and hiking boots. In winter, they load skis to the car roof and head for nearby

Squaw Valley, site of the 1960 winter Olympics, or Heavenly Valley, to ride a new tramway.

Expenses But always they bring their wallets. And, as if drawn magnetically by the razzle-dazzle atmosphere of gaming tables and showgirls, and jangle-jangle of slot machines and honky-tonk, they scurry to one of a dozen Nevada casinos that separate the two states at either end of the lake.

By far the most popular and successful of these are the two big clubs at south shore — Harrah's and Harvey's Wagon Wheel.

Although official figures never are divulged, informed sources say Harrah's Tahoe operation is the biggest in Nevada. They say Harvey's is number three. And these two, they add, operate more slot machines than the entire Las Vegas "strip."

"We had no idea of getting as big as we are," Bill Harrah says. "But we got lucky once in awhile."

Harrah's popularity stems largely from the top drawer entertainment he books. For \$4.50, including tax, a person may sit in Harrah's luxurious South Shore Room with four drinks of his choice and watch the world's top talent.

And no wonder. Harrah provides his top stars with a beach house, motel suites, speed boats and even a Rolls-Royce.

"Favors" don't stop with the performers. He offers babysitting service for children of all ages, and virtually free round trip bus transportation from the San Francisco Bay Area. These trips average about \$4 daily.

Across the street, Harvey Gross opened shop in 1946 with six slot machines and a small bar. Last year he completed an 11-story, \$8.5 million hotel and so big he decided to discontinue as "unnecessary" all chartered bus trips.

"We've had 89 conventions since April and have 101 booked between now and next June," explains publicist Lou Hardy. Harvey offers unique service: He buses hundreds of vacationers to church each Sunday.

At north shore, one of Tahoe's top attractions for the past two years has been Frank Sinatra's Cal-Neva Club. Here

one often found everybody from Sammy Davis twisting in the lounge to Dean Martin and Sinatra clowning it up on stage.

However, too many people once saw Cosa Nostra boss Sam Giancana, the type of clientele frowned on by Nevada state officials. So Sinatra doesn't operate the Cal-Neva any longer.

Tourist Types What kind of tourists come to Tahoe?

A Harrah's official says "they are generally from the middle class up. The average person here is a guy who is not trying to make his fortune, but someone who is out for an evening or a weekend — you know, having a ball."

Edward Olsen, the Nevada Gaming Control Board Chairman says Tahoe is "certainly not" replacing Vegas as the hang-out for the so-called "highrollers."

"Tahoe is coming and is growing, no questions about that, but it's a different type of thing than Vegas," Olsen says. "It's more like Reno. There are proportionately more middle income people coming to Tahoe and Reno than to Vegas. Vegas seemingly has more people with a little extra wealth."

However, the latest quarterly gross winnings released by the state, for April through June, are interesting. Although Las Vegas' take still was 3 1/2 times that of south shore Tahoe, the desert oasis was down about three per cent compared to the same period a year before. Meanwhile, Tahoe south shore was up about 6.7 per cent.

Many theories are advanced at Tahoe as to why "the lake in the sky" changed from a quiet, Alpine wilderness Shangri-la to a brightly lit, skyscrapered gambling center beset with countless problems.

But a Nevada consulting engineer hit it right on the button recently when he said: "The problem at Lake Tahoe is not sewage or gambling. It is people."

In 1950, the permanent all-year population of the entire 506 square mile Tahoe basin was only 2,700. Now it's 17,000 and growing at the fantastic annual rate of 30 per cent. On peak tourist days, the population hits about 50,000.

And by 1980, there'll be more

than 400,000 here on big weekends. By comparison, neighboring Alpine County in California has a population of around 400.

To make matters worse, the federal government, two states, five counties and 76 smaller agencies all have some jurisdiction over the lake. Efforts to place a bi-state commission in charge of public recreation so far have failed. And the lake lacks even one incorporated city, although there is a move to form one on the south shore.

The most controversial problem at present is south shore sewage — what to do with it. When the sewage, even treated to highest standards, is pumped to spreading grounds, it has a way of seeping back into streams which flow into Tahoe. This causes algae and threatens to ruin the lake's clarity.

The Lake Tahoe Area Council, a private organization, financed a \$25,000 sewage engineering study which recommended that existing disposal methods be abandoned. Since then there has been a suggestion that a \$16 million, 2 1/2 mile tunnel be drilled through a mountain into Nevada's Carson Valley. This could house a two-lane highway and also carry away Tahoe's sewage problem.

One of Tahoe's biggest critics has been California Gov. Edmund G. Brown, who in turn has been charged with issuing "reckless publicity releases" that "destroy the worldwide image" of the lake.

Brown says south shore already is virtually "a recreational slum." And he has asked his agencies to come up with a way to "save" the rest of the lake.

"To build more gambling joints on the Lake Tahoe shore is to my mind sacrilegious," Brown says. "Let them have their gambling at Las Vegas or Reno, but they ought to stay away from Lake Tahoe."

Meanwhile, Harrah's is going ahead with plans to build a 25-story hotel costing anywhere from \$12 to \$25 million. A similar structure is being constructed nearby by the Del Webb Corp.

And an eight-story hotel soon will rise on the California side. Thomas Wolfe once said "you can't go home again."

And the same applies here.

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