

Mountain Views

By Harry J. Lee

(Ed Note: Harry Lee is on vacation. We have as guest columnist this week "Big Ears, Old Jud," the lead mule in Bruce Morgan's 20-Mule Team. Newspaper people make asses out of themselves on occasion, but this is the first time we've made a newspaperman out of a jackass. Guess there's not much difference.)

Been reading in the Bishop Register where some mule-eared jackrabbit has been sending you stuff to print about the doin's in Upper Inyo, so I thought I'd put you up to date on the main part of the county.

Us jackasses down here been having a right pleasant winter. Good weather and plenty of rain. Then just when the grass is gettin' nice and green this Bruce Morgan, who owns us, gets the idea of takin' another try for the big cup at the Elks Helldorado celebration over in Vegas. Seems like Charlie Scholl, some wheel in the Pacific Coast Borax Co., thinks that big cup would look nice in the Furnace Creek Inn hotel lobby, and since we won it twice straight-hand walking, one more win will give them permanent possession of the hardware.

Anyway, they hooked us up, and took off from Furnace Creek ranch and drove us all the way to Vegas. Took seven days of steady travel to make it. Went right down through that atomic testing country and some of them soldiers thought they was seein' a mirage.

Some of our old jerkline pals were workin' in that big western that Warner Bros. been makin' in Lone Pine and couldn't make the trip, but we had Bruce Morgan, Leppy Diaz, Con Zuniga, and Wendell Gill and they all know mule talk so we moved right along.

I can tell you that old corral down below the Cashman Field rodeo grounds looked mighty good when we got there.

The craziest people in the country filled that town. Their chamber of commerce advertises "Come Have Fun In The Sun." Then they "play all night by artificial light." Makes you mighty proud of being just an ordinary jackass when you see some of them humans in the morning.

Next day was the Old-Timers parade. Nothing motor-driven in it. But lots of the oldest things on wheels and some of the purtiest horses in the world. Never saw such silver mounted stuff. Then there came a long-necked, long-legged bird hitched to a car. Hate to race him. Folks said he came from Africa. Long ways to go to a parade.

In a minute here came another part with funniest lookin' mules I ever saw pullin' it. They was little fellers but they was sport jobs. Grey with black stripes running around 'em. Scared some of us country boys plenty. They said they was zebras and came from Africa.

Before the men had us settled down a pretty girl came down the street riding one of those humped backed horses that have their pictures on cigaret cartons. A meaner lookin' critter I never seen. When that big footed boy gave you the bad eye you really jumped the traces and he was from some other foreign country. Africa or some place. We knew we'd seen everything then and settled down. But a scream like a mountain lion panicked us again and a great big animal with a tail on each end came. When it got close we saw it had a little one about as high as one of Richard Morgan's goats trying to keep up with its ma and squealing for her to wait. That settled it! Half the Vegas police force was needed to quiet us that time.

When the parade started we were in it. In fact, some of us got a raw deal from Bruce. We went around 28 blocks as a pack string led by Leppy Diaz, advertising Mt. Whitney Pack Train as the Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce entry, and then got in the traces and helped pull those wagons full of borax over the same route. I heard we won the first place in both classes, so we must be pretty good.

Ray Hill's sheriff's posse from Inyo did fine, too. They took third place in mounted posse division. Course they only had horses to ride. Nearly 25 of them rode and they looked fine. Ray Hill and Sheriff Charley Cline, "Red Rider" Joslin, and Doc Cummings and Vern Branson, Bob Fredericks and all the rest were there. They usually don't give their right names, so don't know their monickers.

We felt right at home once the parade started. Jack Hopkins was down to help Bruce get us lined out, then he was at every corner we had to turn to help us around it. We saw folks from home all up and down the street. In front of the Cortez Hotel, which co-sponsors us, we saw Mrs. Morgan and Enid and Barbara, and Ralph and Elisa Fear . . . and that drugstore cowboy who was a big shot in the Lone Pine Stampede with some redhead . . . and White Mountain Willie and his wife (we hope) and Mary Hopkins and lots of other Lone Piners. Further along we saw C of C president Elmer Schroeder and some brunette and Gracie Hall and Vera Fredericks and Laura Cline . . . Howard Ellis and Our Nelle and the Wayne Clines, the Bob Cheney's and Joe Bonhams and Red Butlers . . . and Charlie Scholl and Maury Sorrells and Jean Cline and dozens of other old friends.

Of course Wilfred (who bans mules from his rodeo string) was way up in front in the parade with his partner Mister Skinner, all

dressed up on pretty horses. I hear they had record crowds at the rodeos every night and from the noise they made everyone must have had a big time. I know . . . it kept us mules awake.

Sunday they put us in the "beauty parade," cause so many folks wanted to see us again and we got to see all the beauty queens and bathing girls and movie actors like Rex Bell and Rex Allen and Jerry Colona.etc. Never saw so much of so many pretty gals before.

They put the parade on television this year for the first time so Francis won't feel so smart now. Anyway, the boss felt so good over our win he loaded us into trucks and let us ride back to Death Valley to star in a T. V. picture with some Hollywood people named Gene Autrey and Carolina Cotton to support us. Heard Carolina sing last week at the Silver Slipper in Vegas and she can really yoddlle.

As we pulled out of town a tourist asked, "Are those the original 20-mule team wagons?" A native said, "Yes. Of course, they've been reconditioned."

Then she said, "Well, are they the original mules?"

He barked back, "No. Those wagons were driven a good many years ago, but I think those are the grandsons of the original mules."

That satisfied her. So I guess she came from farther east than Missouri.

We sure missed Russ and Kate Spainhower, Fred and Hazel Reynolds, and Leaky and Pete Olivas and Frank Chrysler and Ted and Mike Cook and Pete Garner and the rest of the those folks. Never paraded before without them. But we'll see you all in a few weeks when this T.V. picture is finished.

Talented Cast To Re-enact Heroic Trek

One hundred years ago the Manley-Jayhawker party would have given anything to see the flood of transportation units that will descend on Death Valley for the gigantic Centennial pageant Saturday, Dec. 3 at 2 p. m.

The setting will be the same, and the gold-rushing 49ers trek through the valley will be re-enacted in much the same manner that it happened 100 years ago.

Saturday's terrific pageant, heralded as the greatest Centennial event held in southern California, is expected to be viewed by 20,000 persons. A giant grandstand will provide 6000 seats, and other spectators will have ideal spots for placing their folding chairs or camp stools.

For almost a year the pageant has been in preparation. Death Valley 49ers' Inc., a non-profit group representing Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties have worked hard to raise funds for the event, which is being subsidized by the State Centennials Commission. Admission to the pageant is FREE!

Gov. Earl Warren, Lt. Gov Goodwin Knight, and a host of state and federal dignitaries will be on hand for the celebration.

T. G. Goodwin, superintendent of Death Valley National Monument, reports that everything is in readiness to handle the huge crowd.

A week ago a 20-mule team caravan, accompanied by other pioneer wagons, left Lone Pine for Death Valley. Bruce Morgan was in charge of the group which is scheduled to reach Furnace Creek Friday. Guests going along on the trek camped out in pioneer fashion. Russ Spainhower of Lone Pine, is driver for the 20-mule team hauling two borax wagons and a water wagon.

Los Angeles riders are taking their horses to Death Valley by trailer in a motorized cavalcade. Montie Montana will head the Los Angeles group. All riders are to take part in the pioneer cavalcade under the direction of David Malloy as the climax of the pageant. Other riding groups will journey to Death Valley in time to join in the pageant finale.

Ideal weather is promised in Death Valley for the weekend. Chief Ranger E. E. Ogston of the weather bureau station for the National Park Service, reports that the temperature will be above the high normal of 66.8 for the past five years. The low temperature is expected to be ideal for sleeping out in the open.

The State Centennial Commission Historical Caravan, two busses loaded with historical items on California, will be on display at the celebration, along with the State Centennial float. The caravan toured Owens Valley this

(Continued on Last Page)

Death Valley gets ready for big visit

(Pictures on Page 19.)

Death Valley is preparing a warm welcome for thousands of visitors who will swarm to the lowest point in the United States Saturday for the valley's centennial celebration.

The giant '49er program, featuring the Hollywood Bowl symphony, with special music by Ferde Grofe and Frank Allen Hubbell, the Redlands university chorus, and a western cavalcade, will be free to the public.

A 20-mule team with original borax wagons and hundreds of riders already are on their way to the valley over the Jayhawker trail from Owens valley to Furnace creek.

They left the day before Thanksgiving and will arrive at sunup tomorrow to greet Gov. Earl Warren, who will dedicate an historic monument tomorrow evening at Valley Wells beyond Trona.

The '49er celebration will get under way Saturday morning, and continue until nightfall.