

Vegas Seven  
July 29-August 11, 2010

A large red graphic that dominates the middle of the page. It features the words 'BEST OF THE CITY' in a large, white, stylized font with multiple parallel lines for each letter. The text is set against a background of decorative patterns, including a large white circle with a red outline and a pattern of red and white dots and lines. The entire graphic is tilted slightly to the right.

From art galleries to dog parks,  
foot rubs to food on a stick,  
we bring you a celebration  
of the things that make Las Vegas great.

By  
Richard Abowitz, Mark Adams, Melissa Arseniuk, Charlotte Bates, Dave Berns, David Boyles, Kelly Corcoran, Sean DeFrank, MJ Elstein,  
Mikey Francis, Sharon Kehoe, Phil Hagen, Matt Jacob, Max Jacobson, Jarret Keene, Greg Blake Miller, Jessica Prois,  
Cindi Reed, James P. Reza, Elizabeth Sewell, Kate Silver, Lauren Stewart, Paul Szydelko, Bob Whitby, T.R. Witcher and Xania Woodman

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# Vegas Seven

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### Vegas Seven's Best of the City

versity of Nevada Press, \$30). But the book brings together, for the first time, writings about Nevada by all the big names, such as Mark Twain, combined with a chronological reach that goes back to Native American tales and forward into the atomic-testing era and beyond. This is a historical, essential and unique collection of Nevada writings.

#### BEST BOOK WRITTEN BY A LAS VEGAN

A dad goes to the nudie bar where his daughter works to borrow money. Yes, that happens in Vegas. And in *Blue Vegas* (Stephens Press, \$15), P Moss imagines that and many other funny, sad or weird tales and vignettes about people just trying to get by in a city that can be mean and brutal, even if there are the occasional moments of beauty and grace. These stories are melancholy and sad, and aren't quite like anything yet written about life in Las Vegas. [Readbluevegas.com](http://Readbluevegas.com), midnight book signing at the Double Down Saloon on July 31; 791-5775.

#### BEST SHOWS

We couldn't decide, so we have two winners. **Penn & Teller** do a show so entertaining, intelligent and endlessly changing that they could serve as a model for how to come to Vegas without compromise. Instead, they may wind up the exception that proves the rule in Vegas. The other best show is *The Beatles Love* at The Mirage. It manages to endlessly please Boomers (and their children and their parents) by giving them what they never had: The Beatles doing remixes and adapting Cirque du Soleil

stage spectacle for the video generation. *Penn & Teller: 9 p.m. Sat.-Wed., Rio, \$75-\$85, 777-7776. Love: 7 and 9:30 p.m. Thurs.-Mon., \$93.50-\$150, 792-7777.*

#### BEST IMPERSONATOR/COMEDIAN

**Terry Fator** has managed to charm the Strip with his effortless evocations of voices from the beautiful falsetto of Roy Orbison to the gritty blues of Etta James. But he is also a ventriloquist and a comic who has proven that the Strip, even in this economy, will always go for a triple threat. This is where to send the relatives when they're visiting from the Midwest. *The Mirage, 7:30 p.m. Tues.-Sat., \$59-\$129, 792-7777, terryfator.com.*

#### BEST THEATER PRODUCER

His father was a Vegas bandleader, his mother a showgirl and his sister a Vegas magician. **David Saxe** is Old Vegas entertainment down to his toes. But his business is pure New Vegas, where shows must make money. He keeps the vaudeville/Vegas tradition alive with showgirls and jugglers and musicians by operating two theaters in the Miracle Mile Shops at Planet Hollywood. His marquee show collects a variety of variety acts, and the other show pays tribute to the city as *Vegas: The Show*. But in addition to his own shows, the Saxe venues keep the dream of the independent Vegas producer alive. And his stages are for rent if you have a show, a dream and can pass the Saxe audition for a show likely to please a Vegas audience. [davidsaxe.com](http://davidsaxe.com).

### Expert Picks: Neon Reverb DJ selects seven acts that could be next year's Best Band

Donald Hickey, better known as "The Donald," is the pervasive voice behind Neon Reverb Radio 91.5 KUNV. The full-time airline pilot started hosting the weekly show to bring "modern, left-of-the-dial music to Las Vegas." The longtime Las Vegas's Saturday show features independent artists from across the nation mixed side-by-side with local artists, making him the right guy to spot the Valley's finest locally grown bands.

★ **Kid Meets Cougar.** Very infectious cute-guy-meets-girl duet, combining indie rock, hip-hop and electronica. Very cool videos online as well ([kidmeetscougar.com/videos](http://kidmeetscougar.com/videos)). Right now they are benevolent and very well loved—the king and queen of the local scene.

★ **The Skooners.** I actually disliked this band when I first saw them. However their new album, *Grow a Mustache, Change Your Name*, is really something special. There is no indie rock kitsch or irony here. Very serious. Very good. I have joked that this album points out why Coldplay totally blows now.

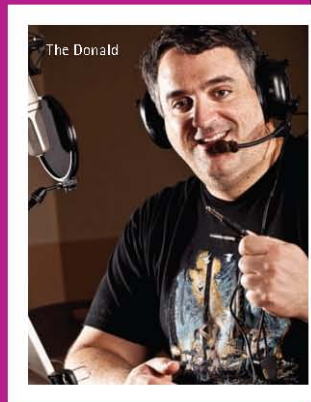
★ **The Killers/Brandon Flowers.** Well, the category is "local bands"! Flowers is apparently putting the finishing touches on an album, which will be a tribute to his late mother. And while The Killers are on a roughly two-year vacation, I feel they are at a fork in the road. Flowers' new album, plus side projects with which other members of the band will involve themselves, will be well worth paying attention to.

★ **Jacob Smigel.** Although residing in Tucson, Ariz., while going to medical school, he claims Vegas as home. Smigel has a secret life as one of America's most promising folk artists. He is already seeing success as a musician; having just released his second LP, *Hope This Passes the Secretary* and having toured with Deer Tick. Check out very cool tracks such as "Grumpy Pill Bugs" and "Johnny Tocco's Ringside Gym."

★ **Halloween Town.** This is a Transfer (San Diego)/Killers side project headed by Ryan Pardey. I haven't spoken with him since his last show at Beauty Bar, but you can be sure that his music on CD will be amazing. It will be a true balance between commercial playability and hard-core street cred. The question is, how to keep a band together when your main members are all in other successful bands. And many local musicians are itching to be in a good band, but are unwilling/unable to tour.

★ **America Yeah.** Where has this band been all my life? Oh yeah, they weren't born for most of it. They could easily be classified into this re-emerging "baroque rock" category. However, to me, they channel this sort of 1981, postmodern/Thomas Dolby kind of thing.

★ **Lazystars.** They put on an amazing live show. Their music lends itself well to commercial and public radio. I worry they almost sound too now, too fresh, too good, too glossy. Nevertheless, they have a solid fan base and could easily be the next big thing out of Vegas.



The Donald

Le photo courtesy UNLV Photo Services; Hickey photo by Anthony Mair



Wei-Wei Le: a Las Vegas with world-class chops.