

NEVADA

MARCH/APRIL 2009

M A G A Z I N E

The Journey
to Jarbidge

Fly Fishing

Silver State
Sushi Feast

Las Vegas
Convention Center
Turns 50

RENO

BASEBALL

THE ACES ERA BEGINS

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Cover Photo: Charlie Johnston
Special thanks to Sierra Winds and Scheels for
providing the artificial turf and baseball equipment.

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If You Build It ...

Professional baseball was born in Reno in 1947. Starting in April,
a new era begins with the arrival of the Reno Aces Triple-A club.



COVER STORY

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The Journey to Jarbidge

This tiny town in northeastern Nevada has a remote, middle-of-
nowhere feel, but once you're there, it's likely the community
will be in a festive mood. If not, the residents will gladly throw a
parade just for the heck of it.



Nevada Magazine had a perfect opportunity to show the entire country the REAL plight of the wild horses...instead, Charlie Johnston wrote a fluff piece. Mr. Johnston wrote about the non-wild horses east of Dayton. Any of us who actually live in the Virginia Range around the real wild horses know the difference. A real wild horse would NEVER allow a "two-legged outsider" anywhere near them. Another glaring point Mr. Johnston missed entirely was the fact that the Virginia Range wild horses are not Bureau of Land Management horses. The Virginia Range wild horses fall under the Nevada Department of Agriculture.

Jeanne Gribbin, President of the Virginia Range Wildlife Protection Association

Just a note to say your January-February cover [shown above] is the best one yet. Great magazine.

Steve Bass, Bakersfield (CA)



CORRECTION:

In our January/February 2009 issue, we incorrectly listed Joe and Francie Royer as owners of Reds Ranch in Lamoille. The actual owner is Mimi Ellis Hogan.

Congratulations on the excellent article on Nevada's Wild Horses. It was very informative and accurate. And, it was a great pleasure to introduce Charlie to some of our "closest friends, the wild horses!"

Bonnie Matton, President of the Wild Horse Preservation League

I just received the January/February issue, and all I can say is WOW. The layout invites the reader in. I love Nevada News, the opening of the Lamoille [skiing] article, Tour Around Nevada, the Piper's Opera House piece, Looking Back, and Wild Horses. The entire magazine was very well done! And most of all, thanks for the southern and northern events and shows!

Mark S. Bassett, Ely

We Want Your Input

Nevada Magazine welcomes your thoughts and feedback. Submit a Letter to the Editor at editor@nevadamagazine.com or via mail using the address listed on the facing page. You can also comment on stories at nevadamagazine.com. Letters and comments are subject to editing.

CONTRIBUTORS

ZACK THOMAS

Reno-based freelance writer and photographer Zack Thomas climbed Matterhorn Peak in the Jarvis Mountains with his parents when he was 14 but didn't return to the area until last fall. Jarbidge hasn't changed much in the intervening 20 years—as Thomas discovered in this issue's story "Delightfully Isolated"—but Thomas has. This time he took his first son, Owen, who was just three weeks old. "He's definitely a Nevada kid," Thomas says. "He loves the rough roads."

■ PG. 10



MIKE SEVON

Fallon resident Mike Sevon purchased his first fly-fishing rod from the Family Liquor Store in Ely at the age of 14. He's been a Nevada angler ever since. His love for the sport led to a career with the Nevada Department of Wildlife—and an article in *Nevada Magazine*. He retired as the supervising Fisheries Biologist for northwest Nevada in 2006. Now, in addition to writing and photography, he's a board member on the Truckee River Flyfishers Club and teaches fly-fishing classes for the Churchill County Department of Parks and Recreation.

■ PG. 24



ERIC KARLAN

Eric Karlan is set to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania in May, majoring in journalism, history, and culture. Despite growing up on the East Coast, Karlan is a diehard Arizona Diamondbacks fan. "I started rooting for them because I loved expansion teams as a kid," Karlan says. With the Reno Aces Triple-A team, which begins play in April, being an Arizona Diamondbacks affiliate, Karlan had a vested interest in writing about the kickoff of the Biggest Little City's new era in sports.

■ PG. 46





BASEBALL

IN THE BIGGEST
LITTLE CITY

PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON



1950 RENO SILVER SOX

Back Row—L to R—Club
Drakulich, 2b; Mark Torres,
p; Charles Closs, p; Dick Zac-
carelli, ss; James Dykes, of.

Middle Row—L to R—Joe
Borich, c & mgr; Marvin
Diercks, of; Ellis Daugherty,
of; Robert Treutler, p; Marvin
Drees, c.

Front Row—L to R—Wayne
Hinckley, pres.; Samuel Straul,
3b; Pat Monahan, p; William
Seward, p; Ed Whitney,
1b; Tony Filippo, of; Mead
Walker, bus. mgr.

Bobbie Blakeslee, bat boy

if you build it...

Professional baseball was born
in Reno in 1947. Starting in April,
a new era begins with the arrival
of the Reno Aces Triple-A club.

BY ERIC KARLAN

Recent generations in Reno have cheered on the Blackjacks, Chukars, and Silver Sox. When the Aces take the field in April, however, a whole new ball game begins.

For nearly two decades, local fans have watched independent league teams unaffiliated with any of the 30 Major League Baseball teams. The Reno Aces are a Triple-A franchise—the highest level of baseball in Reno history—meaning the players are one step away from the big time. “The kind of level they played before and Triple-A are so different,” says longtime *Reno Gazette-Journal* sportswriter Steve Sneddon, who recently retired. And thus, after a 17-year drought, a new chapter begins for professional baseball in the Biggest Little City.

Professional baseball first came to Reno in 1947 with the formation of the Class C Sunset League. The Reno Silver Sox, a charter member and affiliate of the New York Giants, finished its first season at 69-69. The club placed fourth in the six-team league under manager Thomas Lloyd.

The following season, Reno bested its in-state rival, the Las Vegas Wranglers, in a best-of-five championship for the league title—after finishing just third in the regular-season standings. Earlier in the season, the team experienced a different type of excitement when they were stopped at the Mexican-American



PHOTO: COURTESY OF TIM MUELLER (TOP)

Silver Sox

HISTORY OF RENO BASEBALL

A look at some of the leagues that have called Reno home

- Sunset League (1947-49)
- Far West League (1950-51)
- California League (1955-64, 66-92)
- Western Baseball (1996-99)
- Pacific Coast League (2009-TBD)

border en route to a May 8 game in Mexicali. By the time immigration questions were resolved, the game had to be postponed until the following day. In 1949, Reno faltered in its title defense, placing next to last. The following spring, the Silver Sox joined the Far West League as an independent club (see photo on page 48) and lasted just two seasons.

Professional baseball returned to Reno on July 1, 1955, when the Channel Cities Oilers relocated in the midst of a horrid season and took on the Silver Sox moniker. While local baseball nuts celebrated the city's midseason acquisition, they were bewildered by the team's dismal last-place finish in the Class C California League—63 1/2 games out of first with a 40-106 record.

Fortunes changed in 1956 as the Sox posted a winning record playing in the Brooklyn Dodgers farm system. The following season, Francis Boniari ended his 1957 campaign with a .436 batting average, a California League record.

At the turn of the decade, it looked as if Reno was on the verge of establishing a dynasty. In 1960, the Silver Sox ended the regular season with a 14-game lead and the league's best record (89-51). The club was propelled by the pitching of California League MVP Robert Arrighi—whose untiring arm threw in a

league record 69 games—and Rookie of the Year Thad Tillotson (19 wins). Meanwhile, outfielder Lowell Barnhart led the league in runs (116), hits (185), and RBIs (109).

The Sox outdid themselves in 1961, finishing 97-43 and outdistancing the competition by 15 games. Reno celebrated its second MVP in as many seasons, shortstop Don Williams, who topped the league in every hitting category, including a .363 batting average and 144 RBIs. Meanwhile, Rookie of the Year Dick Nen provided power with a league-high 32 home runs, and Bruce Gardner bested the competition with 20 wins and a 2.82 ERA. Little did anyone know that these would be the brightest years of Reno professional baseball for the next three decades.

In the final seasons before Reno faded from the California League in 1992, the Silver Sox plummeted into mediocrity. A perennially average squad, the team's only championships came in 1975 and 1976 as an unaffiliated franchise.

Reno experienced an unfortunate run of playing in unsuccessful minor-league farm systems. From 1964 to 1974, the cellar-dwelling Cleveland Indians served as the parent club, followed by the San Diego Padres from 1977 to 1987—a team that salvaged a winning record only three times during that span. "The crowds were usually small," remembers Sneddon on cover-

PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON



ing the Silver Sox. "The best crowds were when there was a promotion of some kind, giving something away. The Silver Sox were just taken for granted, being there since 1947."

Despite the losing, there were bright spots. "Quite a few prospects came up in the California League," Sneddon says. "That was the best part, seeing some of those guys move up. In [Single-A] ball, when somebody is not winning, it's not the Major Leagues. The idea is to produce players."

Playing professionally from 1988 to 1992 as an unaffiliated team in the California League did not help the Silver Sox. Continued losing and low attendance forced the franchise to move and become the Bakersfield Blaze. Over the next 15 years, independent teams placated fans. All the while, Reno sought a return to the ranks of a major-league farm system. At the conclusion of the 2006 season, there came a light at the end of the tunnel.

Despite on-field success in the Pacific Coast League, the Tucson Sidewinders (Triple-A affiliate for the Arizona Diamondbacks and PCL champs in 2007) struggled to attract fans during the Arizona summer heat. In a short time, Tucson's follies became Stuart Katzoff's fortune. Seeking to buy a professional sports team, Katzoff headed a group dubbed SK Baseball, LLC, purchased the Sidewinders, and turned to Reno for relocation. "As I learned more about Reno, I realized it was a sports-hungry town with no professional sports," says owner and managing partner Katzoff. "Reno is passionate about its sports, like University of Nevada, Reno basketball and football. We only had two main concerns: weather and population."

But a market without any professional teams in a city on the rise was too good to pass up. Katzoff resolved to move

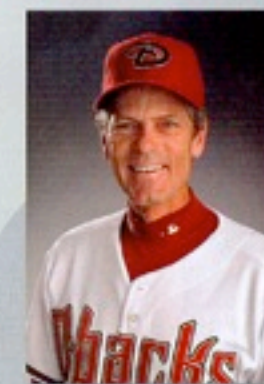


IN THE WORKS

Carson City resident Tim Mueller is working on a book about the history of Nevada baseball tentatively titled, "Homeruns and Jackpots: Baseball in Nevada." He provided the 1940s Silver Sox jersey on the opposite page. For more information, e-mail him at tim_mueller@sbcglobal.net.

BUTLER WILL LEAD ACES IN DEBUT SEASON

In Reno's first season, a former Major League All-Star will be helping Aces players fulfill their dreams of making it to the big leagues. Brett Butler, a standout leadoff hitter for 17 years and one of only 26 players to record 500 stolen bases and 2,000 hits, will lead the Aces as manager in their inaugural campaign—and will have a premier home facility to do it in. "I walked through the stadium today, and wow..." Butler said at a Meet the Manager dinner held at the Reno Ballroom on January 21. "They spared no expense. It's going to be state of the art." Butler is no stranger to managing or the Diamondbacks organization. He previously managed Arizona's Class-A Lancaster JetHawks in 2006 and the Double-A Mobile BayBears in 2007.



BRETT BUTLER



RENO ACES LINEAGE

105-year history
San Francisco Seals
Phoenix Giants
Tacoma Firebirds
Tucson Sidewinders
Reno Aces

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Reno
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the Tucson ball club north following the 2008 season, bringing a storied lineage along with it. The Aces trace their roots to San Francisco in 1905, when the Seals became inaugural members of the Pacific Coast League. The Seals moved to Phoenix in 1958 when the New York Giants moved to San Francisco. Aside from a six-season stint in Tacoma, Washington, the team remained in Phoenix through 1997 until the Diamondbacks arrived, forcing a relocation to Tucson.

Now, thanks to the hard work of SK Baseball—which recently purchased Reno's NBA Development team, the Bighorns—and city officials, professional baseball is back in Reno. While bringing back the Silver Sox moniker was tempting, SK Baseball chose to establish a new identity. Starting with a clean slate, ownership held an online name-the-team contest; they received more than 3,500 entries and 1,100 unique submissions during May 2008. In the end, one name stuck out: the Aces. The nickname touts a regional connection with the gambling industry, and, in the realm of baseball, an "ace" is the best pitcher on a team's roster—something Reno will need in 2009 to reverse Tucson's last-place woes in 2008.

Aside from providing a source of entertainment, the Aces—and the team's new \$50-million ballpark—represent the key ingredient to revitalizing the Freight House District, the area immediately east of the downtown casino district. Built at the northeast corner of Evans Avenue and East Second Street, Aces Ballpark will hold approximately 9,000—two-and-a-half times the capacity of Moana Stadium. With tickets ranging from \$6 to \$29, fans can choose from 6,500 fixed seats (including party decks along the left-field line and center-field bullpen) or a grassy berm behind right field that holds an additional 2,500 people. There will also be a Kids Zone beyond center field.

Plans for the ballpark district include a wide range of retail, three restaurants, three nightclubs, and an outdoor events plaza to ensure the area remains a hotspot for locals even during the offseason. "Being the major professional sports team in Reno, we should treat it like a Major League franchise," Katzoff says. "That's how we went about creating the stadium and logo." The Aces will visit the Salt Lake Bees on April 9 in their inaugural game, then return to Reno for the franchise home opener on April 17.

Pacific Coast League Teams & Affiliates	
	Albuquerque Isotopes Los Angeles Dodgers
	Colorado Springs Sky Sox Colorado Rockies
	Fresno Grizzlies San Francisco Giants
	Iowa Cubs Chicago Cubs
	Las Vegas 51s Toronto Blue Jays
	Memphis Redbirds St. Louis Cardinals
	Nashville Sounds Milwaukee Brewers
	New Orleans Zephyrs Florida Marlins
	Oklahoma City RedHawks Texas Rangers
	Omaha Royals Kansas City Royals
	Portland Beavers San Diego Padres
	Reno Aces Arizona Diamondbacks
	Round Rock Express Houston Astros
	Sacramento River Cats Oakland A's
	Salt Lake Bees Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim
	Tacoma Rainiers Seattle Mariners

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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HOME AWAY Schedule is subject to change. All times PST.

2009 RENO ACES SCHEDULE

★ - All-Star Game in Portland



