



Garter grabbin' and hairiest legs competitions are just part of the "goings on" at Sgt. Preston's Yukon Saloon, newest fun sport at the Disneyland Hotel.

PROMOTIONAL EXCURSION

Yukon theme in sunny California

by BOB MILLER
Staff Reporter

No snowdrifts, no howling wind, no frostbite here — Sam Magee, the reluctant sardonic Klondike fame would have traded his poke for the palm trees, orange blossoms and sunshine.

No gold fever, no mother lode, no Bonanza Creek, but here comes Sgt. Preston shouldering his way through the crowd, smooth-cheeked, steely-eyed, in command.

The place is Anaheim, Calif., the time is now and Sgt. Preston's Yukon Saloon is the newest entertainment attraction at the Disneyland Hotel. What Walt Disney is to Disneyland, Jack Wrather is to this official "bunkhouse" of the magic kingdom.

A fresh batch of bear sign couldn't have brought sardonic (a few) and cheechakos (plenty) any quicker to Wrather's "Canadian Reunion" at Sgt. Preston's Yukon Saloon.

Canadian Reunion was the feature event on the first day of a three-day media tour arranged by the Wrather Corporation and CP Air, Vancouver, to promote Disneyland and Wrather's "Port Adventure" in nearby Long Beach.

Port Adventure, home of the luxury ocean liner R.M.S. Queen Mary and Howard Hughes' "Spruce Goose" flying boat, under lease to Wrather Corporation is a megabuck investment aimed at cornering its share of the most lucrative and competitive tourist market in the world.

How Wrather is recapturing the heyday of the largest ocean liner still afloat is a story itself. And why the mysterious Mr. Hughes kept his colossal aircraft under wraps for 30 years after its maiden flight is another.

Both will be dealt with in later segments of this series.

Right now we're 2,500 miles from the marge of Lake Labarge, and bringing a touch of the frozen north to the shout at Disneyland Hotel was Yukon Commissioner Doug Bell — dog sled, malamutes and saloon's singing host Sgt. Preston in tow.

On hand for the hoopla were Jim Nutt, Canadian consul general for southwestern United States; Canadian-born entertainers Austen Willis and Robert Ito (Sam on the Quincy television series); Anaheim Mayor John Seymour, Orange County Supervisor Ralph Clark and several dozen of the half-million Canadians who call

Citizen reporter Bob Miller took part in a three-day media tour during December of the Disneyland Hotel and Port Adventure, destination resorts operated by the Beverly Hills-based Wrather Corporation in southern California. This series of articles deals with different attractions in the most competitive tourist market in the world.

southern California home. Bell presented Klondike mementos to Clark, Seymour and Disneyland Hotel vice-president Richard Erb and received in turn a replica of the big "A", Anaheim's equivalent to the keys of the city.

Formalities done with, there were handshakes, hearty slaps on backs and drinks all around as patrons picked their poison and warmed to the Trail of '98 — Hollywood style.

Sgt. Preston, a singing version of the popular red-coated 1950s' television hero and sultry Klondike Kate, the saloon's "madame", set the pace for the nightly "goings on", while costumed bartenders and waitresses keep the action rolling.

Sourdough Sam, Pierre Zee Trapper, Payday Polly, Dangerous Dan, or Bonanza Babe might serve a drink, then break into a song or skit from anywhere in the room. The only formality here is informality.

Patrons gets their share of the tomfoolery too, vying to be "best darned garter grabber", hooting and hollering during the drinking contests, or taking part in the "hairiest chest and legs" competition.

If that's not to your liking you can bend elbow with Sg. Preston's Salute, a 32-ounce mug of beer, or try the house specials — Firewater, Frostbite and the Buzz Saw.

For the less adventure-some there's Kate's Kiss and the Can-Can, served up with a souvenir garter, or Hot Husky, Moose Milk and Snowshoe cocktails. During happy hour the bill of fare includes Yukon style hors d'oeuvres (beef and sourdough biscuits), and drink prices are determined by a spin on the wheel-of-fortune.

Anything that might be the Yukon is here — a hand-carved wooden bear, hand-carved totems, a kayak and dog sled slung from the ceiling, animal traps, pelts and snowshoes. A Frederic Remington print of the North West Mounted Police graces one wall, a Klondike scene the next and gold rush memorabilia abounds.

As theme bars go it might be a little more authentic than anything the Klondike ever saw, but then this is Disneyland and Hollywood is right next door.



Klondike Kate and Sgt. Preston, with his best "bar" Klem at his side, flank Yukon Commissioner Doug Bell, who broke out his goldrush duds for the festivities.

Wrather Organization, predecessor of the publicly-owned corporation, bought the rights to the Sgt. Preston of the Yukon television series.

It was added to Lassie, and The Lone Ranger television properties distri-

buted through Wrather's Independent Television corporation.

Just as Wrather produced The Legend of the Lone Ranger for theatre-goers last summer, he's come full circle with Sgt. Preston's Yukon Saloon, this time for

the adults who grew up with the famous mountie.

Dancehall gals, songs and skits, fancy drinks served with a smile and a saucy wink — Sam McGee would have made tracks south, belied up to the bar and stood the house.

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SOVIET FUNDAMENTALISTS

Ottawa urged to act

SURREY, B.C. (CP) — The Canadian government should intervene on behalf of seven Soviet dissidents who have been in the basement of the U.S. embassy in Moscow for more than three years, say Christian fundamentalists in the Vancouver suburb of Surrey.

Peter Vashchenko, his wife and three daughters, and Maria Chmykhalov and her son, Timofei, refuse to leave the embassy unless they and 35 other family members are given permission by the Soviet government to emigrate. They went to the embassy June 27, 1978, seeking permission to emigrate to the U.S.

The fundamentalists in Surrey have formed The Siberian Seven Action Group which they hope is the start of a grassroots movement across Canada to help the seven Soviet Pentecostals, said group president Kirk Duncan, pastor of the Bible Fellowship Church in Surrey. "There's a feeling that if there's strong enough reac-

tion to the issue here in Canada, the Canadian government might be able to do something to break the impasse," said Rev. Ray Barnett, a Surrey minister who visited the families of the dissidents last June.

The group plans to launch a widespread information campaign to draw public attention to the situation.

It was announced Wednesday that two of the seven dissidents, Augustina Vashchenko, 52 and her daughter, Lidia, 31, have begun a hunger strike to protest their plight. They have gone for more than a week without food.

Kent Hill, a history professor at Seattle Pacific University who was with the Vashchenkos in Moscow when they began their strike, said they began the

protest out of desperation. "I think they've reached the end of their patience," Hill said in a telephone interview from Seattle. "They don't feel they can endure this ordeal any longer. They're desperate in many respects."

The two are reported to have said they would rather be turned over to the Soviet authorities than continue living in their small room in the embassy.

The crunch will come if the embassy's resident physician recommends that the two women be taken to hospital, Hill said.

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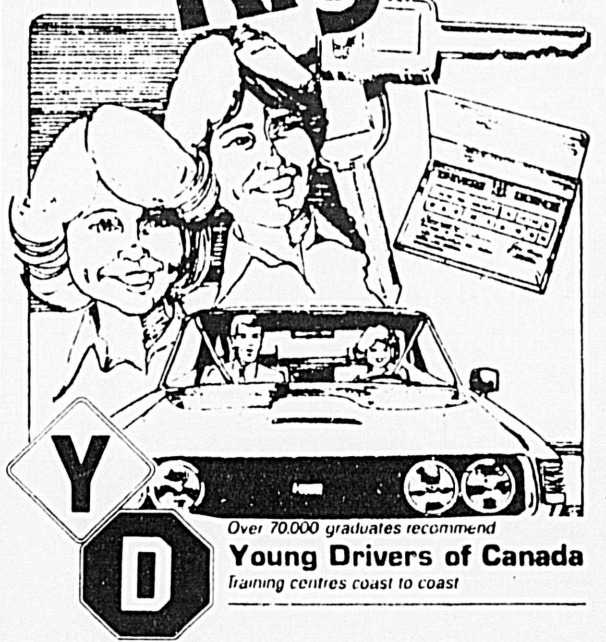
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