## Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls... **By Patrick Crosby**

...now appearing twice-nightly in the Circus Room of John Ascuaga's Nugget in beautiful downtown Sparks, Nevada, are Bertha and Tina, the World's Most Talented Performing Elephants!

Did you get a chance to see Bertha solo or with Tina from the mid 1960's to the late 1990's? Besides performing in the Circus Room they were regulars in the annual Nevada Day parade in Carson City. According to the featured postcard anyone could visit them daily from 10am to 2pm at their home on Nugget Ave.

John Ascuaga's Nugget has the distinction of presenting the biggest act in show business Bertha and Tina, the performing elephants. The lovable pachyderms are featured in all of the twice-nightly shows in the Nugget's Circus Room. Bertha, who has been starred in the Circus Room shows since 1962, was born in India in 1945. Now at full growth, she weighs five tons. Tina, born in Thailand in 1965, will also weigh approximately 10,000 pounds when she reaches her maturity at 20 years of age. Elephants have an expected growth rate of about 400 pounds a year. They are fed a balanced diet of oat hay, a variety of vegetables, and fruit and bread. Like all of the stars appearing in the Circus Room, Bertha and Tina enjoy favored treatment. They are groomed daily and their skin is frequently smoothed with a coarse sandpaper material. They receive extensive pedicures every six weeks. built "Elephant Palace" just west of the Nugget (at 14th Street and Nugget Avenue). The FOR NUGGET RESERVATIONS: Budge facility is complete with swimming pool and a John Ascuaga's Dial 800-648-1177, direct and toll-free from fenced exercise yard.

The public is invited to visit Bertha and Tina California, Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Arizona

Dial 358-2233 in Sparks and Reno.

Besides the local history, this advertising postcard has some interesting postal history with its postage meter label and its unusual size. Postage meter labels are not typically found on postcards. Notice the violet "R" touching the left edge of the label. Holding the card to a light "Returned for Postage" is easily read.

at their home any day of the week between

10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

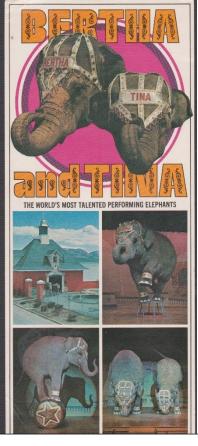
Let me give an optimistic possibility of what occurred. Bud and Leona were enjoying themselves so much they didn't even think about putting postage on their complimentary postcard at the front desk. They just dropped it in the hotel mail slot. The post office caught the not infrequent error and applied an ancillary postal marking. ("Ancillary" is a more accurate term than "auxiliary" and implies the delivery delay is the sender's fault.)

The post office returned the card to the hotel front desk and the hotel, as a courtesy, placed 13¢ postage meter label from their Pitney Bowes Postage Meter Co. machine, the label covering the ancillary marking. The label reads Sparks, NV, but the card was postmarked in Reno, both dated June 1, 1976. The ink used on the label glows bright orange under UV light so it could be processed in the automatic facing and canceling machines at the post office. The perforated label also has a repetitive security design watermark.

At 81/4 inches long the card exceeds the then 6 inches allowed for the 9¢ postcard rate, so 13¢ letter rate postage was required. The hotel employees were familiar with this requirement on their postcard.

So, as I see it, Bud and Leona got a free night's stay, ate at the \$2 buffet, enjoyed complimentary drinks, won big at the tables, then sent a free postcard for free. I feel I got a good deal also, recently paying \$1.30 for this free postcard.

**Patrick Crosby** is a member of the Nevada Stamp Study Society and collects U.S. postal cards, especially used, including first days; the 1886 Grant Letter Card (or Sheet); UC16, the first U.S. aerogram; and postal history on business or picture post cards.



Back side of above post card