



# A PEAK, A POINT, AND A FIELD

By Claire Keefner

**P**ure gold...a bag of the precious stuff worth \$50,000 dazzled the crowd during Cert's Goldfield Treasure Days at Goldfield, Nevada.

The bag was extracted from an antique strong box by Nevada governor, Richard Bryan and was symbolic of the prize that Ralph Wolfe, a young Cambridge, Massachusetts architect received, a \$50,000 check for his correct answer and winning essay in the Cert's Treasure Hunt.

The clues for the treasure hunt were hidden in two verses and two maps published in the April 10 and 17, 1983, comic sections of Sunday newspapers throughout the United States...but the \$50,000 prize was certainly not "fool's gold."

Goldfield, located about 200 miles northwest of Las Vegas, was a boom town in 1906 and '07, but has since dwindled into almost a ghost town with approximately 400 residents. When the clues for the treasure hunt were published, many people thought that Goldfield might be the treasure site, and began calling and writing for more information. Virginia Ridgeway, a Goldfield resident and operator of Glory Hole Antiques and other enterprises, volunteered to field the calls and letters. It was out of this confusion that someone mentioned that it would be a great time to have a celebration...and so, "Goldfield Treasure Days" was born.

The focal point of the celebration was, of course, the winner of the treasure hunt, Ralph Wolfe. A parade, mucking contest, old fashioned bathing suit contest, barbeque and more were planned.

Unknown to Cert's Treasure Hunt officials, a San Francisco real estate/investment and management company, General Western Company, had purchased the Goldfield Hotel with plans to restore it. Lester O'Shea, owner of the company and president of the Goldfield Historical Society learned of the treasure hunt, and opened it up for a VIP reception during the event.

***"There were a lot of references to luck and gambling and chance so, of course, Las Vegas came to mind..."***

Meanwhile, some 150,000 contestants studied the clues in the verse and map.

Ralph Wolfe saw the contest information and found himself drawn to it. "I really thought that I could guess the hiding place, but there were misleading clues in both the verse and the maps. For instance, the first letter of the first five lines in the second verse spell 'Boise,' but those same lines said that there was some deceit; that 'what glitters here may not be gold.' Then further down, carefully embedded in the verse, were the letters that spelled 'Nevada.' There were a lot of references to luck and gambling and chance so, of course, Las Vegas came to

mind...in fact, Las Vegas was the most popular 'wrong guess.' There was a line that said, 'Beware the gambler's guess for losers number more and winners less.' This suggested to me that it might be near, but not in, Las Vegas.

Ralph is an avid map collector and has boxes and boxes of them. Perhaps this was the reason that he unearthed so many clues from the maps. "I spent a lot of time looking at them. Each state had little pictures of symbolic things of that state; pictures that were recognizable, but there was something different in Nevada. In addition to a roulette wheel, there were three little 'anonymous' mountain peaks that caught my eye because they were the only such items on the map.

"One of the lines in the verse, 'Expect a spot most cleverly concealed/A place between a peak, a point, a field.' In checking the Nevada map, I saw SilverPEAK, GoldPOINT,...and in between GoldFIELD appeared,...and I felt that I had hit it.

***"Ralph is an avid map collector and has boxes and boxes of them."***

"I was sure that was it, but then there was the matter of solving all the other clues. The lines, 'Of woman's name and lore and ore we speak/Let all who seek their fortunes take a seat.' In checking, it seemed to me that every other western town has gold or silver or a woman's name in it. There is a Virginia City in Nevada and it has an opera house with 'seats' in it. There is a Virginia City in Montana, and Helena. Montana was attractive since the state's motto is 'Gold and Silver', and its nickname is "The Treasure State."

Ralph's map collection helped him to decide on Goldfield because, "not every map has the county seats marked on it, but I happened to have one that showed Goldfield as the county seat for Esmeralda."

Contestants had to specify the exact

location where the treasure was hidden and Ralph analyzed these lines to solve the problem: "A place of bars and stars is what you seek..."

"That could mean several things," Ralph explains. "It could be Las Vegas

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because of all the entertainment stars and the many bars in the casinos. I also considered that it could be a confederate state because the confederate flag has stars and bars, but I finally decided that the line meant the jailhouse bars and sheriff's stars...so my first guess was the sheriff's office in Goldfield."

Contest rules specified that contestants could enter more than one time, but each entry had to be mailed separately and be accompanied by four proofs of purchase from Certs Breath Mints. Since Ralph had unearthed so many possible sites with his "super sleuthing", he entered 15 times.

"When I went into the store and asked for 60 packages of Certs, the clerk thought that I was crazy."

"I was very confident that I had the right guess and my wife, Betty, and I joked about the things that we would be when I won the \$50,000. It was in mid-June that I received a letter saying that I was one of the finalists. There were 2500 people who had guessed Goldfield and 889 guessed the sheriff's office."

Contest rules stated that in case of more than one correct answer, contestants would be required to write an essay with a maximum of 500 words, identifying the clues and describing how they solved the contest, with judging based on originality, aptness of thought, etc.

"I decided that the winning essay had to do more than follow the rules. I tried to imagine one person reading hundreds of

15, 1984 & winners notified by mail by November 30, 1984. One Grand, First, Second, Third Prize per household. Sweepstakes open to residents of US 18 years and older & residents of Puerto Rico & APO/FPO addresses. No prize substitutions or transfers. Proof of eligi-

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#### HONEYCOMB KID SHOPPING SPREE SWEEPSTAKES

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Sweepstakes", Winners List Request c/o Nicholas Marketing Associates, 6 W. 36th St., New York, NY 10018. **Entries must be Received by March 15, 1985.**

ners' names and photographs for publicity & promotion. Prize substitution not offered. Limit one prize per family. Game is open to children between the ages of 6 & 14 years of age as of July 1, 1985 residing in US, Puerto Rico & U.S. Government Installations. Void where prohibited by law. **WINNERS' LIST: Send SASE to:** Honeycomb Kid Sportstokes Winners List, P.O. Box 14220, Baltimore, MD 21268. **Entries must be Received by July 1, 1985.**

Continued from pg 17

what would probably be nearly identical essays. I knew that the winning essay must follow all of the rules and especially must identify ALL of the clues...but it must go far beyond that...it must be memorable enough so that when the reader had gone through all of the essays, that one particular essay would stand out...so that he would say, 'Let's go back to that one again.'"

"It was possible to solve the contest using just a couple of the clues, but I mentioned all of them. I wrote the essay in the form of a Sherlock Holmes parody in the style of Dr. Watson's journal...and I was one of the few people who did mention all of the clues."

Other finalists tried various tactics.

There were many in verse and even a sonnet and one other based on Sherlock Holmes but Ralph's "plot" worked.

"I was completely flabbergasted when a representative of the judging company called me at work on August 1st and told me that I won the Cereals Treasure Hunt. He explained that there was an elaborate event planned at Goldensfield on August 19th and 20th with the governor and other dignitaries there and all the press informed. Since I was the key member of the celebration, they thought I should be there, but the date put me in a difficult position because my wife and I were expecting our first child on August 29. I wouldn't take the risk of not being with my wife when the baby was born."



After about a dozen phone calls back and forth in two days, we finally made arrangements for my brother to go to Goldfield and accept the prize in my place, unless the baby was born early.

"As it turned out," Ralph continued, "the baby, a girl that we named Lucy, was born on the 10th and I was able to go to Goldfield myself.

"A local television station wanted to do a news story about my winning the contest when Lucy was only two days old. We had just bought a little tiny house during the summer and hadn't even met our neighbors. On the Friday evening before I went to Goldfield at about 10 o'clock in the evening, the television crew came out. They turned on all of their flood lights and began taking pictures of my house and my rusty old car. All of the neighbors were out on their porches and I'm sure that they thought that a murder had been committed.

**"The local papers had banner headlines about the contest and the story of my life."**

"The newscaster had a concept of doing his story with me sitting at the table on Sunday morning reading the funny papers. Well, I didn't have a comic section at home so there I was going around to all of the neighbors whom I had never met, asking if they had an old copy of the Sunday funnies. I finally found one and the reporter got his story."

"A representative from the judging company accompanied me on the flight to Las Vegas and they had a room for me at the MGM Grand Hotel. Then we flew to Goldfield in a private plane.

"It was a day that cannot be described!...I was greeted very warmly and enthusiastically by the town residents. There were signs in the windows welcoming me with things like 'We congratulate you, Ralph.' Little old ladies hugged me and said that I was just the right person to win. I rode in the governor's bus and I was

the focal point of the parade...Little kids asked me for autographs. Everyone seemed to know all about my personal life and asked me about Lucy. The local papers had banner headlines about the contest and the story of my life. My face hurt from smiling...It was like being in a dream world.

By the end of the day, Ralph seemed to be answering questions in a daze and a Las Vegas Review Journal reporter said, "Wolfe was answering by reflex, saying over and over, 'Can you believe it? He seemed to be expecting a pinch or a poke, something to awaken him from a very pleasant dream.'"

But it wasn't a dream and Ralph had the \$50,000 check to prove it. He says, "Winning the money really didn't change our lifestyle and we haven't turned extravagant. Our '72 Datsun was about to fall apart, so I gave it to a friend who needed a car and we bought a reliable, safe new Honda Accord. We had borrowed some money from my parents for a down payment on the house and we paid that back, and put some aside for income taxes. The rest we plan to save for an education fund for Lucy.

Lucy likes to enter contests "that require some skill", but the Cert's Treasure Hunt was the first time that he ever won a contest. He did win a 17" color television set in a sweepstakes publicized in a magazine for college students. However, he only enters sweepstakes occasionally, preferring the challenge of a contest. He stresses the importance of following the rules to a letter, regardless of whatever it is, a sweeps or a contest.

Recently, he began doing some sketching when he travels and does a lot of reading when he's not on the trail of clues in a contest. He enjoys woodworking and riding his bicycle, too.

No matter how many contests he might win in the future, the Cert's Goldfield Treasure Days and the Cert's Treasure Hunt will be a golden memory.



## IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

By Ralph Nader

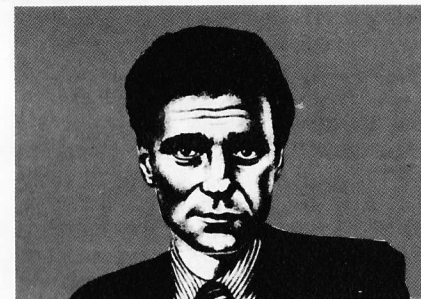
### HARVARD LAW: NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE!

As a student at the Harvard Law School (HLS) in the Fifties, I used to wonder what that pre-eminent institution would be like years later. With all my imaginings, I guessed wrong. The school neither remained the same nor did it transform into an active center for the analysis and advancement of justice in America. Instead, Harvard Law School is in a crisis of confidence on a directionless highway.

At a recent reunion with my classmates, there was an opportunity to speak with students and faculty and listen to the alumni's reactions. Last readers think this is a parochial subject, it is well to observe that HLS for decades virtually defined what was legal education in America. This philosophy in turn shaped the horizons of tens of thousands of lawyers practicing throughout the land or holding important political and corporate posts. A few years ago we thought sufficiently of its influence on the law and its unfulfilled potential to devote a book, called "High Citadel", dedicated to its redemption.

Today, three traumas are hammering at the School's traditional mode of operation. First, the big law firm market demand for HLS graduates has sent annual starting salaries soaring - nearing \$50,000 right after graduation. Second and third year law students get some basic training in during the summers at \$800 to \$1000 per week! With the demand for their services massively up during the past twenty five years, there are no more HLS students to go around. They still number just over 500 students per graduating class.

So the big law firms wine and dine



them, flying them to their cities for interviews and giving them the expense-account time of their school days. Not surprisingly, the students believe that they have it made as soon as they are admitted to HLS or certainly after they get through their first year creditably. The students register this smugness in their classrooms. Absenteeism is high. One Professor told me that at any given day in the fall over 10% of his students are flying around the country interviewing at law firms. The students who show up are often unprepared, listless and in no mood to be called on by "Paper Chase" Law Professors.

Many Professors no longer call on students whose hands are not in the air volunteering. As if all this is not sufficiently upsetting to the proud teachers, the students have lost their awe of the Professors, seeing them as irrelevant to their career possibilities. (A few years ago, grade inflation reflected these realities).

The second trauma is the assault on the older faculty by the younger faculty loosely united by what is called the "critical legal studies" challenge. "They're wearing us down and we're not getting any younger," a fiftyish Professor told me. Critical legal studies is a jurisprudential shredder, gulping and chewing out dollops of old guard assumptions about how the legal rules work. The shredder appears, steeped in unfathomable prose, in lengthy articles.

*Continued on pg. 30*