

Incline Notes

Hourless days, dayless weeks brought him to attention of owner

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"Meet Jim Connelly," says Mr. Cal Neva, our friend, Vern Schlect. Jim is Cal Neva's new general manager. And we look into the blue, blue eyes of a smiling blond, curly-haired Irishman. He's nice and no doubt kissed by the Irish Saints. You can take Mr. Cal Neva's place but you can't take his title, we say. That's all right with me, but maybe I can be Mayor? And since we will call him Mayor, we may call him Jim.

We've never met Ron Cloud who has all the clout at Cal Neva Lodge these days and who has brought this young man to Tahoe. This is the third choice he's made — Bill Bostwick was lured to the casino from Hyatt Lake Tahoe as was our handsome young friend David Hannukela, and now Jim Connelly. Three strikes and you are home this time, Mr. R.C.

Knowing nothing else about Jim Connelly we phone and go pick up Club and Sports magazine, the Argonaut and information. Relaxing in the lounge overlooking the lake we both order Calso water. May I have your ID? asks the smiling cocktail waitress of the new general manager. He doesn't have one. Funny, funny, and what an introduction to one's new boss that proved to be.

It also proved to be a long way from Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania, to the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, insofar as miles and work were concerned. Hourless days and dayless weeks brought him to the attention of the hotel owner, Hernando Courtright, whose protege Jim became and who remains a close friend. Jim was manager of the Beverly Hills Hotel for six years.

For his birthday January 23, Rocky Bleier of the Super Bowl Champion Pittsburgh Steelers presented Jim with a team-autographed football. Bleier is former captain of the Notre Dame football team.

Former President Gerald Ford participated in a conference at the Marina City Club and vice president, Jim, arranged and gave personal attention. He coordinated a surprise birthday party for Frank Sinatra, assisted to the needs of Madame Nu when her husband President of South Viet Nam was assassinated, and was involved in the Burton-Taylor romance. (Now we have the Burton-Santini affair to read about!)

Jim's introduction to Cal Neva Lodge is not recent — he attended the Frank Sinatra Cal Neva Lodge opening of the Celebrity Room, flying back in his place to Los Angeles. And now he occupies the old Sinatra quarters newly-decorated and furnished for the new Mayor. He is looking forward to meeting patrons and making friends in his newly-chosen home. Water and snow skiing and tennis are sports he enjoys, and find time for them, we say.