



In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



Hello to Family & Friends

Here it is, January again, and I am off on another adventure. This time I will be heading to Southern California.

The photo above is after leaving Grand Junction, Colorado this morning. I feel as though I have been transported into the Disney movie FROZEN.



With the exception of the 50' wide asphalt road, visible for maybe a ¼ mile ahead, everything was white. White to the left; white to the right; white sky above.

First Days

Sunday 1/5
To
Tuesday 1/7

On the Road and
Las Vegas

Weather
Variable

In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allen Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

The last time I was in a vehicle driving through Utah on I-70, I 70 may not have been there. As can be read below, the San Rafael Cut was not completed until November of 1970, and it was only two lanes wide. I think it may have been '71 or '72. But I must say, this is probably one of the most scenic drives I have ever been on that continued through an entire state. From Colorado to Arizona it was beautiful.

SAN RAFAEL REEF



Excavation begins through the Reef. Courtesy: Emery County Sheriff's Department.



Surveying in the bottom of Spotted Wolf Canyon. Courtesy: Emery County Sheriff's Department.

They call it the San Rafael Reef, a 30-mile-long barrier, a sandstone wall at the eastern edge of nowhere. For centuries, only the most intrepid travelers found their way through its narrow slot canyons and into the forbidding landscape of the San Rafael Swell. The early Spanish Explorers detoured 20 miles north to avoid this wall. Then in 1957,

Congress decided to increase the nation's interstate highway system. Interstate-70 would be built through the San Rafael Swell, cutting through the Reef. Here at Spotted Wolf, workers could stand in the canyon and touch both walls. Engineers and surveyors used body harnesses and ropes to work as high as 400 feet above the canyon floor. Crews excavated 3.5 million

cubic yards of rock from the area where eight miles of road cost \$4.5 million. In November 1970, the way was opened for two lanes of traffic from Fremont Junction to the Colorado State Line. Two more lanes were finished in the mid-1980s. You will ride through the Reef in about five minutes, entering a wild and spectacular landscape.





THE SANDS OF TIME



Canyons of the San Rafael. Courtesy: John Telford.

The magnificent cliffs, canyons, knobs, and spires before you are mostly cut from the 190 million-year-old Navajo Sandstone formation. Imagine the winds that carried sand to this area and deposited it in sand dunes hundreds of feet high. As wind shifted the massive

sand dunes, the sands were deposited in a whirl of layers. Buried over eons of geologic time, the sands ceased their movement and turned to stone. Water releases the grains of sand from the grip of stone. Even here in an arid climate, water is the prime agent sculpting the stone into

canyons, arches, and pinnacles. You are near the center of the great anticline that is the San Rafael Swell. Here, the layers are nearly flat-lying. It is like a stone dome with the curved top worn away. You are nearly at the top of what is left of the dome. Soon the layers will begin tilting gently to the west.

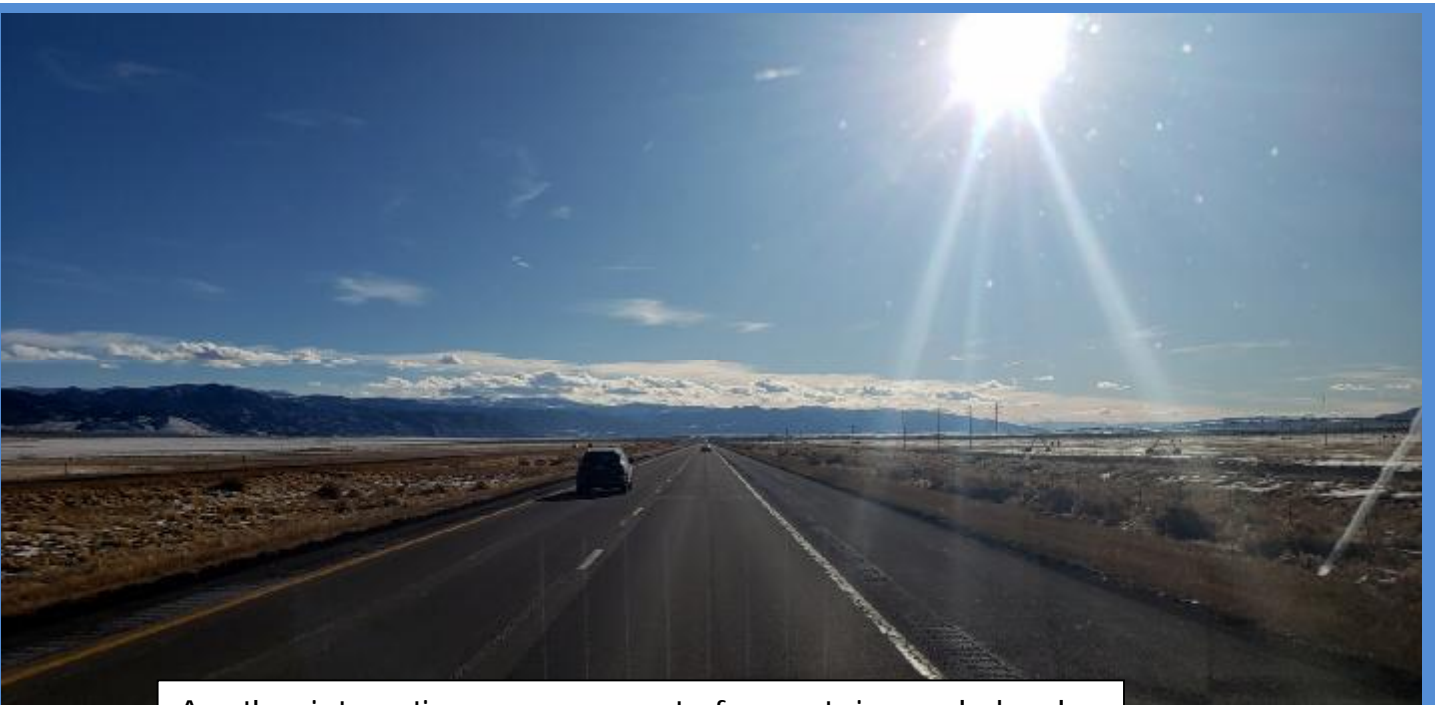




Hard to see in the photo, but there are low flying clouds in the valley, then the mountains, then more clouds above



Here come those pesky low flying clouds again.



Another interesting arrangement of mountains and clouds



The highlighting of the snow makes such a difference



Sunset approaches

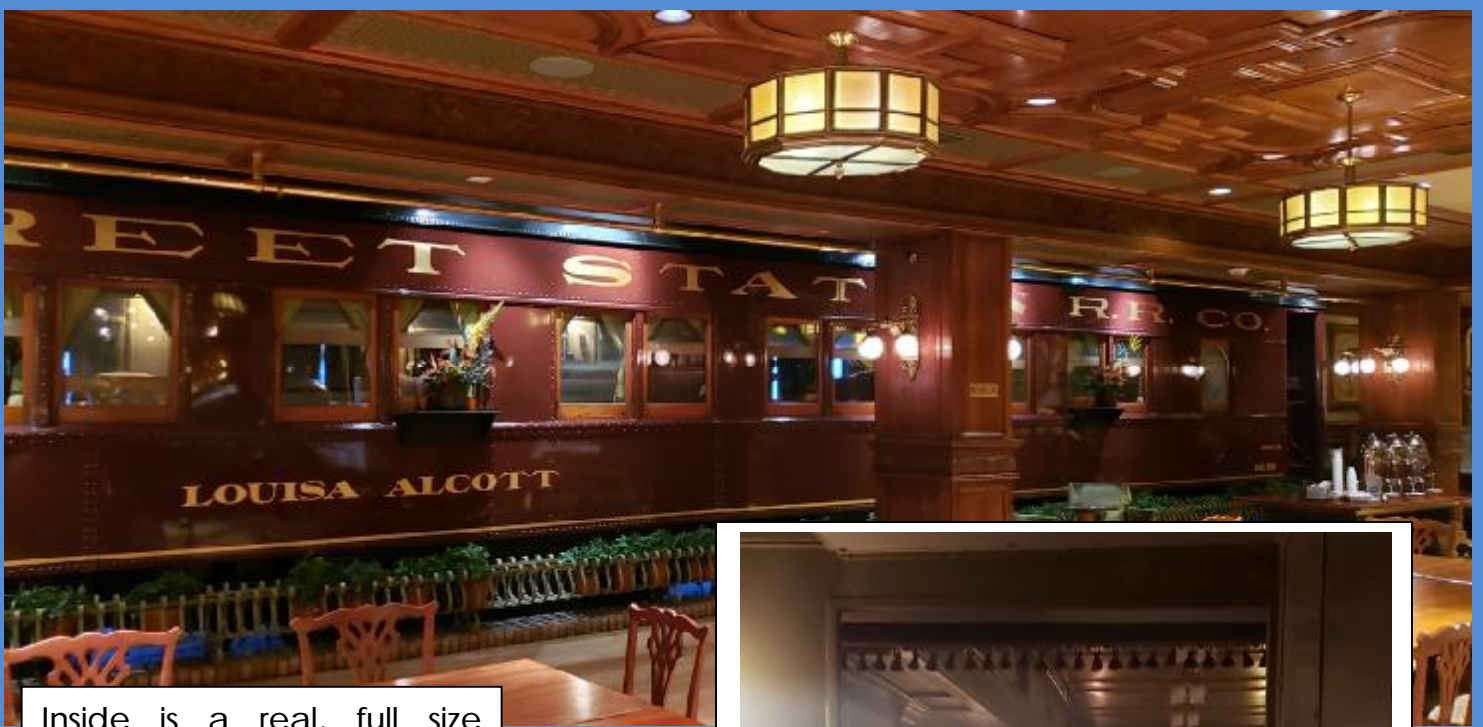


The end of a beautiful day in Utah. Next stop – Las Vegas and cousin Al and Deb



If you remember last year, Al and I spent a day exploring the casinos on the Las Vegas Strip. This year we decided to visit the old casinos downtown and the Fremont Street Experience.

We arrived in daylight and our first visit was to the Main Street Station Casino and Hotel. Main Street is probably the only casino downtown with any real personality to it. In other words, the rest are just a casino and hotel, no ambiance. But the Station has some real old world charm.

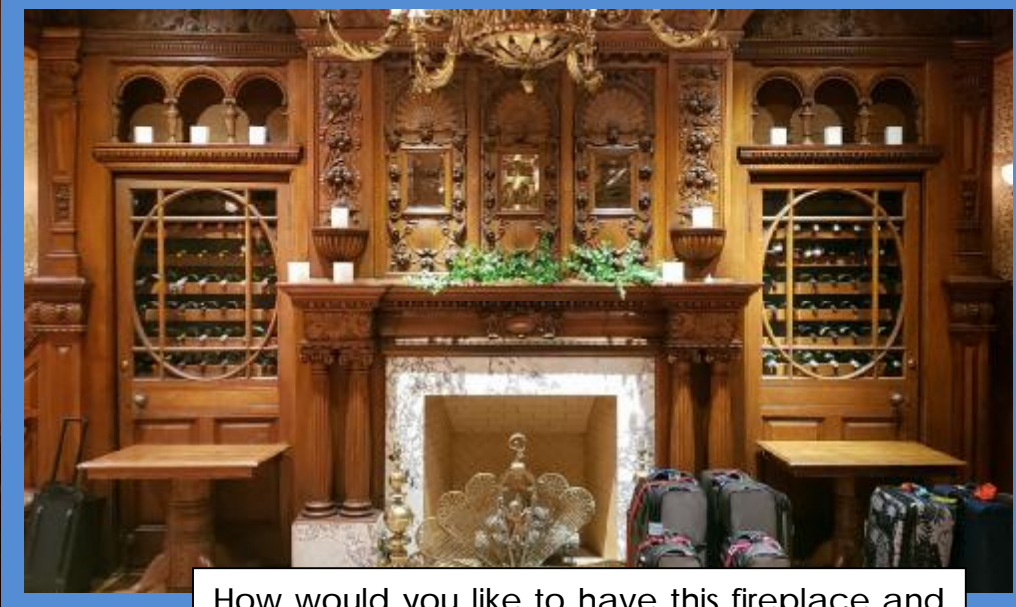


Inside is a real, full size Pullman car from the 1890's.

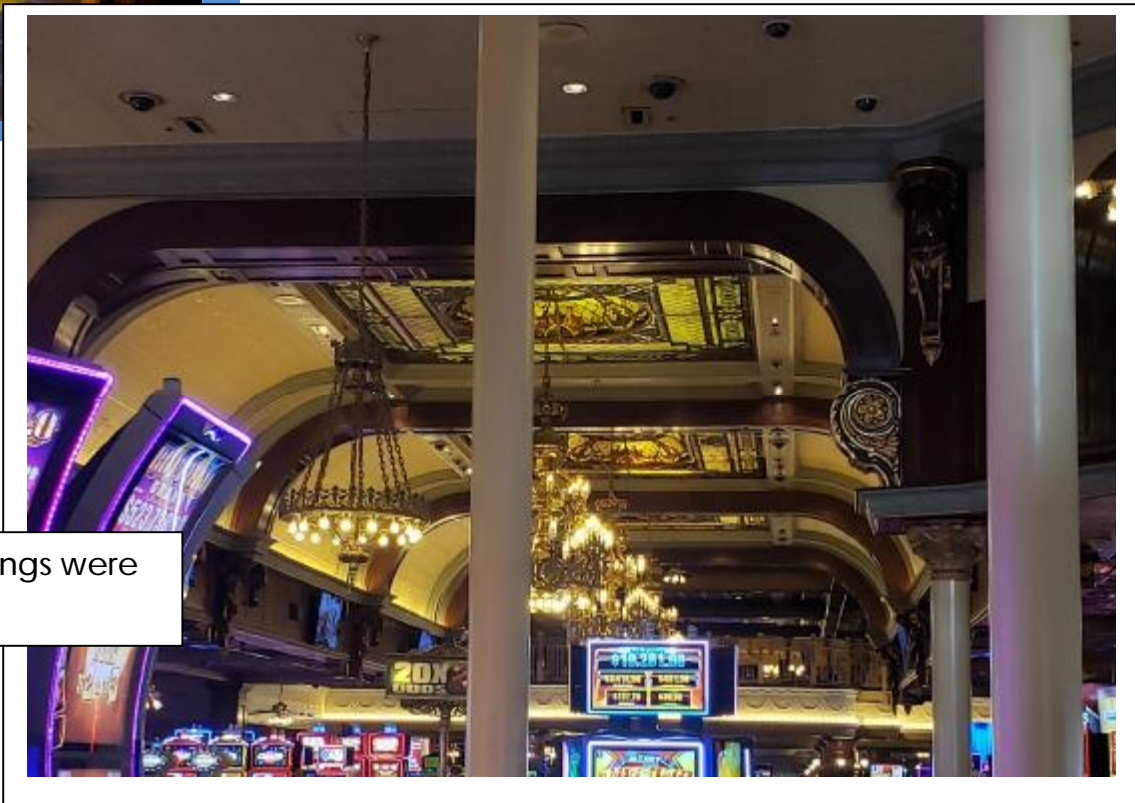
At right is the inside of the car.



These doors were originally from a real English castle.



How would you like to have this fireplace and wine storage in your family room? Or maybe I should say, the parlour.



The woodwork and ceilings were impressive.

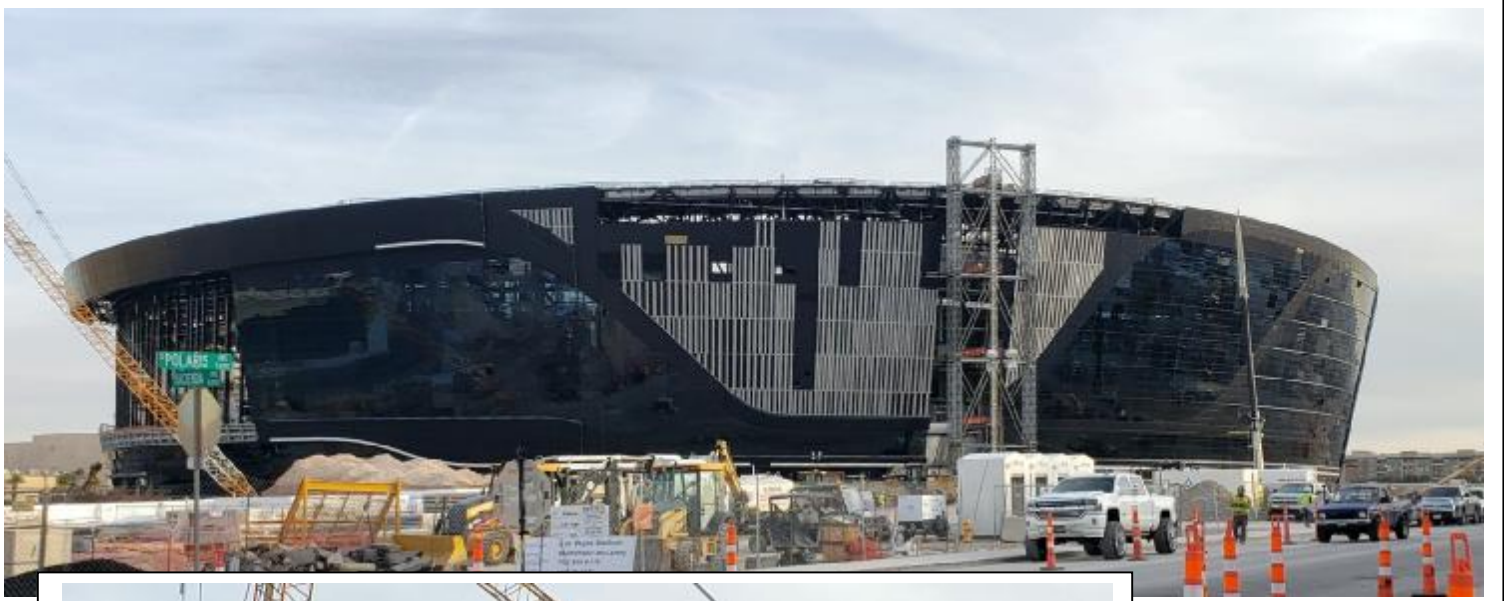
If you have ever seen PAWN STARS, this is the shop of the sports memorabilia expert they call on when necessary.



The Fremont Experience during daylight hours. Impressive colors even at 2:00 in the afternoon.

With plenty of time to kill before darkness (and the crazies) arrived at Fremont St., we decided to drive south and get a look at the new Allegiant Las Vegas Raiders football stadium. Below is what \$1.84 billion will get you, if you're interested.





You can see the seating structure thru the open wall.





Back downtown we visited the Golden Nugget Casino.

The Gold one is called the Hand of Faith, not the flesh colored one. I include that only to emphasize the size of that nugget.





The same sign as seen earlier, but much nicer in the evening dusk.

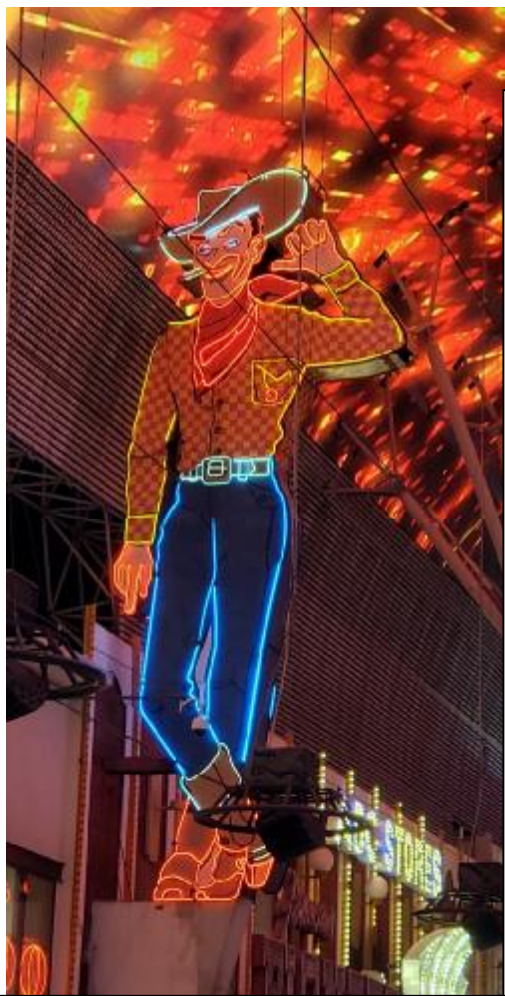
This one is for Steve & Marcie.
Note my bar stool.





Enjoy!



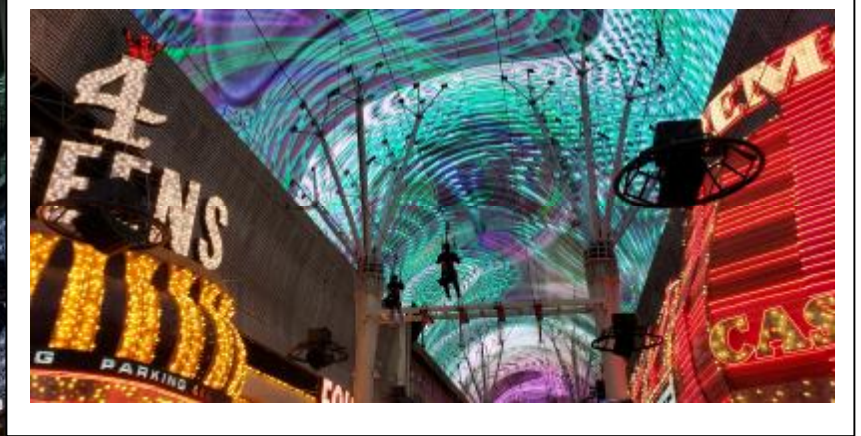


This one is for Bob

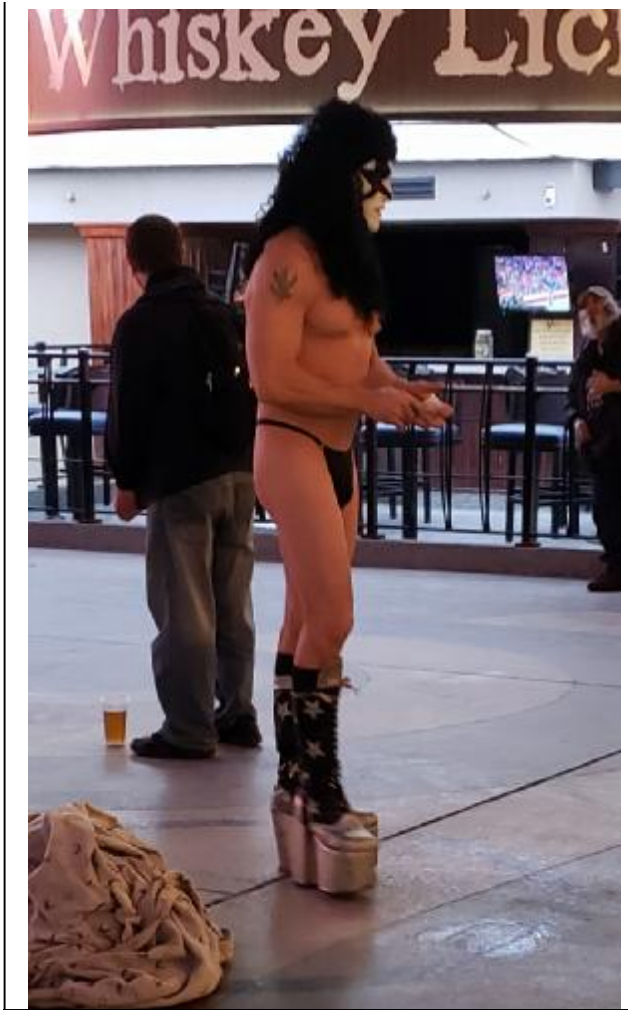




Between the scantily clad ladies above is the start of a zipline which flies the entire length of the two block canopied Fremont St. Left and below are a couple of adventurous souls.



You may have noticed earlier that I mentioned the crazies are more viewable by night, just as the lighted canopy above is? These pix below speak for themselves.



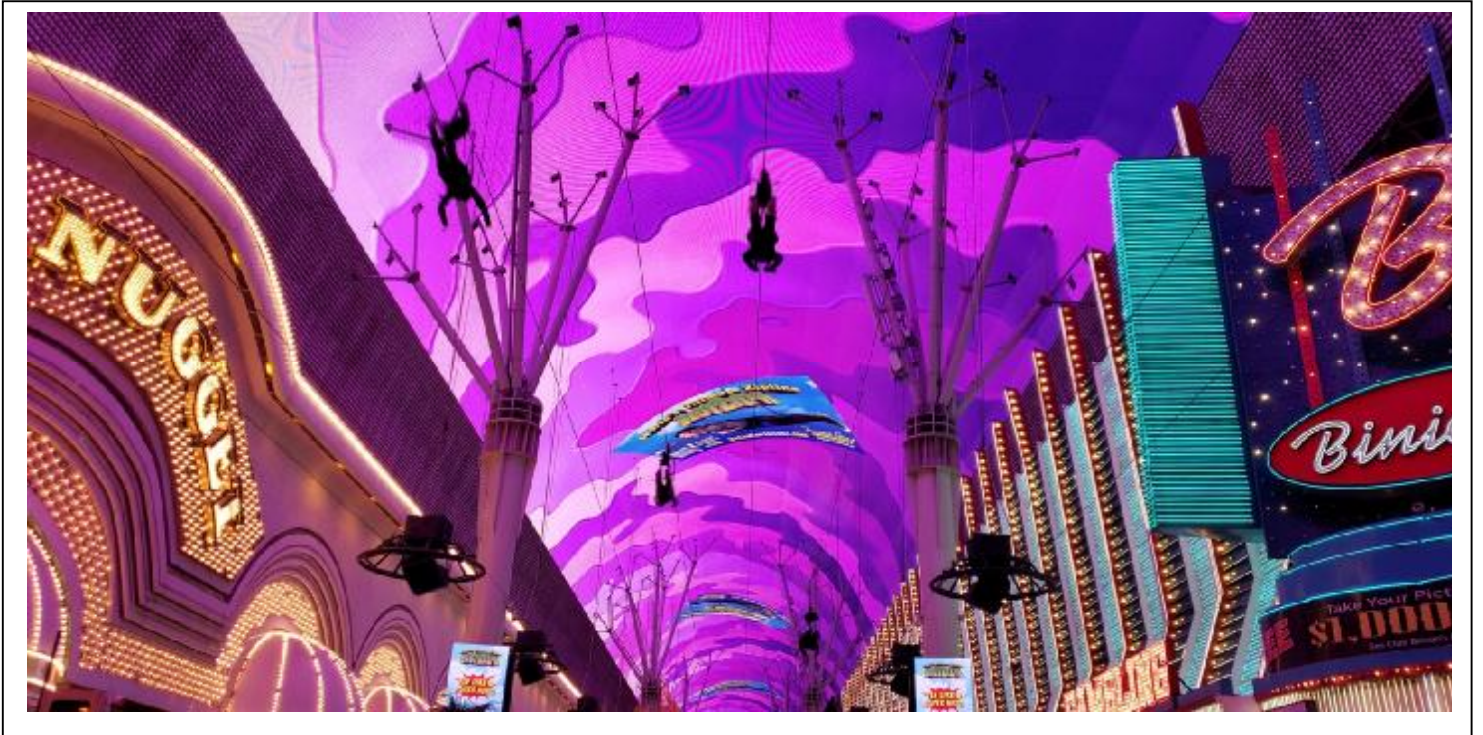
This guy was very talented



Don't ask, I don't know the answer



These two on the left had more clothes on than most of the females.



I leave you with a final zipline photo. See if you can find all four of the daring participants.

I will spend another day or two here with Al & Deb. They will hopefully be celebrating the purchase of their condo. Then I am off to California. Where should I go first? (I have a 13 page itinerary LOL).

The next edition will probably be Thursday or Friday. Or it could be later if there is no cell reception while boondocking in Death Valley National Park. We will see.

Until next time.....