

Heaven's Gate/Area 51

From: **Dave B**
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This AP story indicates an interest in Area 51 by the cult members.

PM-Mass Suicide,0312
Report: Cult members took trips to Vegas, Mexico, before suicide

LOS ANGELES (AP) _ Heaven's Gate cult members gambled in Las Vegas and visited Sea World, Mexico and several other tourist destinations in the weeks before they committed mass suicide, the Los Angeles Times reported today.

The newspaper said a meticulously kept financial ledger, now in the hands of San Diego County officials, provides a glimpse into the cult's final weeks before they killed themselves in the hope that a spaceship would take them to the ``next level.''

Although celibate and teetotalers, the cultists satisfied their cravings for candy, maple syrup, cookies, soda pop and pizza, the newspaper said.

When investigators found the 39 corpses March 26 at the Rancho Santa Fe mansion the group rented, they also found seven quarts of Starbuck's Java Chip ice cream in the freezer, according to the report.

In Las Vegas, the report said the cultists visited the Stratosphere Hotel amusement park in late February and won more than \$20 at the slot machines.

The group may have been drawn to the gambling mecca not by the lure of easy money but by a public meeting to discuss Area 51, the part of the Nevada desert thought by UFO buffs to be where the Air Force has kept an alien spacecraft, the newspaper said.

According to the Times, group members also went to Mexico and on a bus trip through Northern California and southern Oregon in their final weeks.

Even farewell video tapes made March 19 to announce their suicides did not seem to disrupt the group's mania for cleanliness, orderliness and financial tidiness.

The Times said after making the tapes, the group enjoyed a trip to a pizza parlor _ the tab was \$417.27 _ and attended the movie ``Secrets & Lies,' ' where they drank \$75 worth of soda.

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