

Tahoe Queen and 'Twainiacs' come out on top



Tahoe Queen
Photos/Austin
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By Austin Fay

Blue waters churned as throngs of people gathered along the lake to top off the South Shore Summer Series with an old-fashioned sternwheeler race. The water, however, was not so summery – the tradition of the losing captain walking the plank into the lake was nixed.

“It was a little too nippy this year,” said Capt. Jerry Summers.

The Tahoe Queen, with 168 passengers on board, won the Great Lake Tahoe Sternwheeler Race on Sunday against its rival, the M.S. Dixie II, still leading the series 8-6.

The race usually goes to the larger boat with a bigger engine, “but with a little help from Tahoe Tessie ... we had her underneath the boat for the last quarter mile,” Summers said.



Capt. Jerry Summers and the Tahoe Queen.

Frosty-haired Mark Twain impersonator McAvoy Layne was on the old-style boat, giving words of encouragement and telling tall tales in his signature white suit and black bowtie.

"Truth is one of our most valuable resources, and that's why I try to conserve it," Layne joked.

It was a momentous weekend at Zephyr Cove for "Twainiacs," history buffs and other riff-raff who came to celebrate the forthcoming publication of a 100-year delayed Mark Twain autobiography with a pie-eating contest, a mock gunfight and a "Bald-Faced Liars" contest.

Austin Sass, director of marketing at Zephyr Cove Resort commented on the rarity of such an event like this in Tahoe.



A battle to the finish.

"Finding a setting where you can have a fun and intellectual event like this, it just doesn't happen too often here in the

mountains," Sass said.