

Tahoe snowboarders miss podium in superpipe

Lake Tahoe snowboarders didn't fare well in the superpipe at the Winter X Games in Aspen on Sunday.

Hannah Teter of Meyers was sixth with a 67.33, while Elena Hight of South Lake Tahoe was eighth with 59.66

Chloe Kim repeated her gold medal performance from a year ago, with a score of 95 on Jan. 31. The 15-year-old trains at Mammoth.

The riders had to contend with snowy conditions that slowed them down when it came to getting big air.

Arielle Gold of Breckenridge won the silver with a score of 86. Xuetong Cai of China took home the bronze with an 80.33.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Ranger finds trees have social networks

By Sally McGrane, New York Times

HÜMMEL, Germany – In the deep stillness of a forest in winter, the sound of footsteps on a carpet of leaves died away. Peter Wohlleben had found what he was looking for: a pair of towering beeches. “These trees are friends,” he said, craning his neck to look at the leafless crowns, black against a gray sky. “You see how the thick branches point away from each

other? That's so they don't block their buddy's light."

Before moving on to an elderly beech to show how trees, like people, wrinkle as they age, he added, "Sometimes, pairs like this are so interconnected at the roots that when one tree dies, the other one dies, too."

Wohlleben, 51, is a very tall career forest ranger who, with his ramrod posture and muted green uniform, looks a little like one of the sturdy beeches in the woods he cares for. Yet he is lately something of a sensation as a writer in Germany, a place where the forest has long played an outsized role in the cultural consciousness, in places like fairy tales, 20th-century philosophy, Nazi ideology and the birth of the modern environmental movement.

After the publication in May of Mr. Wohlleben's book, a surprise hit titled "The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate – Discoveries From a Secret World," the German forest is back in the spotlight. Since it first topped best-seller lists last year, Mr. Wohlleben has been spending more time on the media trail and less on the forest variety, making the case for a popular reimagining of trees, which, he says, contemporary society tends to look at as "organic robots" designed to produce oxygen and wood.

Read the whole story

Change to LTN comment policy starts Feb. 1

This is reminder that starting Feb. 1 it will cost people to comment on *Lake Tahoe News* – \$10/month or \$100/year. For those

who subscribed to *LTN* prior to this policy change there is no change in that annual payment amount.

This change was first **announced Jan. 1** and it is posted at the bottom of the About page as well.

Payments may be made **online** or checks sent to: Lake Tahoe News, PO Box 13406, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151.

Lake Tahoe News welcomes differing opinions, but not ones that personally attack individuals. Even those who pay will not be allowed to be mean.

We see value in the comments section and want them to continue.

We will continue to bring the news to readers for free seven days a week.

– *LTN staff*

Avalanche deaths soar in the West

By Doyle Rice, USA Today

Several “big and dangerous” avalanches took a toll on skiers, snowboarders and snowmobilers in the western USA this month, making January the deadliest month on the mountains since 2008.

January is typically the month with the most avalanche fatalities in the U.S., but this January proved worse than

normal, with 11 people killed, according to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center, which tracks fatalities and accidents nationwide. Last weekend, avalanches killed four people. Overall, 14 people have died in snow slides this winter, all in the western U.S.

The 11 fatalities in this month is the largest number of deaths in January since 2008, when 19 people died in avalanches. Last year, one person died during a warm, practically snow-free January.

Read the whole story

Water an issue as Nev. lures manufacturing firms

By Megan Messerly, Las Vegas Sun

When electric car company Faraday Future was thinking of building a manufacturing plant in Southern Nevada, it needed water.

Its operation would require 630 acre-feet of water, or about the amount it takes to water one golf course, said John Entsminger, general manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority. With Faraday projected to directly create 4,500 jobs, the calculation was easy for officials.

Allocating water rights was one of the subjects investigated by a state panel of experts last year, who sent a list of

short-term and long-term recommendations for dealing with the drought and Nevada's water supply to Gov. Brian Sandoval in November.

The panel's chairman, Leo Drozdoff, director of the state department of conservation and natural resources, said the panel was important in bringing stakeholders together to try to find common ground. Some of the recommendations could come before the Nevada Legislature in 2017.

Read the whole story

Snow allows Great Ski Race to return

One of the Sierra's enduring traditions, the Great Ski Race, returns March 6 after being canceled due to lack of snow the last two years.

It is billed as the West's largest cross country event.

The 30-kilometer race began in 1977 with 60 racers. Today more than 1,000 skiers of all abilities participate.

Racers depart in waves from the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area in Tahoe City, traverse rolling hills, spacious meadows, and groomed trails before heading slightly downhill to the finish at Hilltop in Truckee.

The Great Ski Race is the primary fundraiser for the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization.

Registration fees are \$60 through Feb. 20, \$70 from Feb. 21-

March 5, and \$110 on race day. For more information, or to register for the race, go **online**.

Then and now: Twin Bridges once a popular stop



Twin Bridges in the 1950s.
Photo/Del Laine Collection,
Lake Tahoe Historical
Society

Twin Bridges on Highway 50 was a rest spot for many years, complete with a cocktail lounge. It was also on the annual wagon train route.



Twin Bridges in 2014.

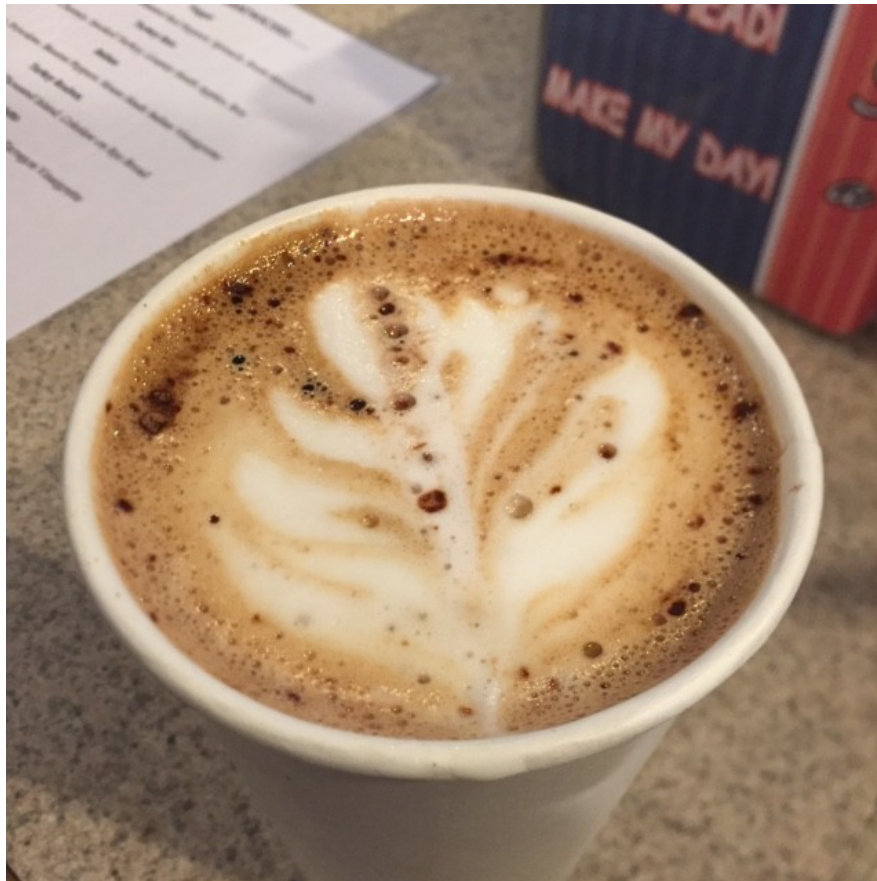
Photo/Google Earth

Wintertime travel could require chains on vehicles driving Highway 50, and Twin Bridges often was specified as a chains enforcement boundary, making it a popular stop for removing or installing chains. Unlike Nevada which allowed chains or snow tires for winter driving, California at the time mandated chains only, no snow tires. As of May 1, 1990, the California Vehicle Code 27460 then included "...or snow tires."

Perhaps related to the eased requirements, the historic commercial rest stop no longer exists at this site.

– *Bill Kingman*

**No two hot cocoas the same in
Lake Tahoe**



Hot cocoa at Alpina Cafe in South Lake Tahoe comes with great flavor and a fun design. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Long before chocolate was routinely consumed as a solid form it was a beverage.

There was a time when chocolate was for the elite members of society. The chocolate tree's scientific name is *Theobroma cacao*. In Greek it means food of the gods.

Dutch chemist Coenraad Jhannes van Houten is credited as being the first to separate the fat from the liquid. This was in 1828. The residual could be crushed to make cocoa powder. Thus began the realization it could be more than a drink.

Today, hot chocolate is a beverage the masses can afford to consume. But there is technically a difference between hot chocolate and hot cocoa. The former uses actual chocolate that

is then melted in hot water or milk. Hot cocoa uses cocoa powder and is usually sweeter than hot chocolate.

Lake Tahoe News spent a few weeks sampling this popular winter beverage. Regional establishments have all sorts of ways to create the drink. For our purposes, we are interchanging hot cocoa and hot chocolate, and not adhering to old school definitions.



The whip cream at Bert's is a reason to order hot chocolate.

Anne only has good things to say about the cocoa at Paul Schat's Bakery in Carson City. A small at \$2.95 was plenty big. It is made from Ghirardelli chocolate, according to the menu board. She said the best part is it is not too sweet. The bonus was having the whipped cream made as she waited.

Rude Brothers in South Lake Tahoe also uses Ghirardelli. Customers may choose the type of milk. I had nonfat. It's whipped on the espresso machine, making it frothier and

creamier; and no need for whipped cream. The medium at \$3.25 seemed like a good price.

Blue Angel Café in South Lake also uses the barista method for hot cocoa. They use light and dark chocolate syrups from Guitars – one is more bitter, one more sweet – along with 2 percent milk.

“If you use the steam wand correctly, it makes the chocolate velvety,” owner Jeff Cowen explained. He wasn’t kidding. It’s worth the \$3.50.

I preferred all of the hot chocolates made barista style with steamed milk. My favorite was at Alpina in South Lake Tahoe. They use a mocha powder they mix in the back. Then the customer has the choice of milk. I had the medium hazelnut hot cocoa with nonfat milk – \$3.40. This was my first hazelnut cocoa – and it won’t be the last. It’s on the menu year-round along with the regular cocoa and white chocolate. During other times of the year there are specialty flavors like peppermint. Depending on the barista he might make a design, like a leaf, out of the foam on top. A nice added touch.



Blue Angel's cocoa is a treat, especially because it is light.

The nonfat peppermint cocoa at Starbucks inside Harveys at Stateline tastes like it's spiked. Presumably, it's like having Schnapps without the calories or alcohol in the middle of a workday. The price, though, for a medium was \$4.02. Anything over \$4 seems pricy for hot chocolate.

Prices at the Starbucks inside the Safeway at the South Lake Tahoe are \$2.85, \$3.35, and \$3.55. While it was good to be warmed up while shopping, the flavor was nothing to brag about. Clearly not all cocoa with steamed milk has a wow factor. The Peet's inside Safeway in South Lake was lacking chocolate. Prices are \$3, \$3.30 and \$3.60.

Hot chocolate comes out of a machine at Bert's in South Lake Tahoe. It's sweet (says Kae) and lacks a chocolateness (says Sue). It tastes like any other machine processed hot chocolate. What is great is the value. The mug is big – cost is \$2.50. The heap of canned whip cream made the presentation

great.

The Lodge at Big Springs' hot cocoa machine is self-serve. Instructions are to fill the cup so far and then let go. Either the instructions are wrong or the cups were too big at Northstar's mid-mountain café. It required a few pushes to get a full cup. It was average at best.

At least one day at Sierra-at-Tahoe's West Bowl they had to improvise because there was no hot water with which to fill the machine. The kitchen made the cocoa. It was sweet, but not as overbearing as machine-manufactured cocoa. A small is \$3.76 and large is \$4.20. The small was plenty big, and considering it was at a ski resort, definitely worth the price.



Machine ready cocoa is festive at Red Hut.

Red Hut on Ski Run in South Tahoe came out of a machine served in a coffee cup. The best part was the ample whipped cream with sprinkles on top. Cost – \$2.19.

The Beacon restaurant's cocoa – also out of a machine – is also average.

The best part of the hot cocoa at Artemis near the Y in South Tahoe is the cinnamon in the whipped cream. The cinnamon mixed in with the chocolate throughout. A powder is used with water. It's not on the menu; cost is \$3.

Also using a powder is Casey's in Round Hill. It wasn't too sweet, but could be chocolatier, according to me, Sue and Brenda. For \$2.95, it was worth it. We got a tip in mixing the powder and water – start with the mix and a little water, stir with a fork to make sure there are no lumps, add more powder and water, mix more and then serve.

Letter: Remembering Tahoe's past

To the community,

When I was the first elected city clerk at South Lake Tahoe years ago, Marjorie Springmeyer was one of my best friends. Thank you for the notifying me of her passing. The article by Kathryn Reed is absolutely true. Marjorie was a brilliant woman with a kind and gentle heart who was a victim of local political decisions.

Marjorie was also the canary in the mine. She knew that former city manager's poor advice encouraged many of the major financial and environmental problems for South Lake Tahoe over the years. It was City Manager Richard Milbrought who believed and stated, "The city is just a second hand rose and we can't afford to build a new City Hall" even on donated land – and so it became accepted.

It was City Manager Gary Chase who pushed so hard for creating

an artificial park at what had been a pristine beach in Al Tahoe – to be named Regan Beach which many think is for President Reagan, not for the local bank executive – by dumping dirt onto it and creating a swell of green water around it to this day.

The Al Tahoe Campground would have been a failed convention center today but for local activists Mr. and Mrs. Barney Mossbacher who fought the city to save it for local use.

And whose idea was it for the current environmental disaster massive hole in the ground at Stateline that sits as silent testimony to another failed political decision?

I was indeed heartened to read that the current city manager has suggested a review of current city policies – an excellent idea. Marjorie would have been very pleased to know of that, I'm sure.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Roberson, former city clerk of South Lake Tahoe

2 Tahoe skiers safe after skiing out of bounds

Two skiers are being escorted out the wilderness tonight after having skied out of bounds at Mount Rose Ski Area.

Washoe County sheriff's search and rescue team was alerted to two men needing assistance at about 4:30pm Jan. 30. At about 9:30pm they were located and being taken out of the woods.

"They are both in good condition," Deputy Jeff McCaskill told

Lake Tahoe News.

They are on the Slide Mountain side, and will come out via Davis Creek.

“Boundaries are in place for a reason,” McCaskill said.

He expressed the extreme danger the two skiers placed themselves in as well as the rescue team, especially with the threat of an avalanche.

“Before you cross some of those boundary lines you might want to consider others and yourselves,” he said.

It is not known if the skiers will be cited.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*