

River otters make a splash at Lake Tahoe



A river otter finds plenty to dine on at Lake Tahoe.
Photos/Bob Sweatt

Two river otters were spotted Jan. 24 playing on the ice at Tahoe Keys in South Lake Tahoe.

“Two otters put on a show for about an hour and a half, diving, resurfacing and climbing up on the ice to peacefully eat their prize,” Bob Sweatt told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Each otter ate at least three large fish.”

It’s rare to see an otter at Lake Tahoe, though they have existed in various locations through the years. They’ve even been seen at Fallen Leaf Lake.



Wildlife at Lake Tahoe.

Normally they are found at lower elevations in the Sierra, but always close to shore.

They will eat fish and crawdads in Tahoe. While they don't pose a threat to people or other land animals, humans and dogs can scare them off.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

No easy answer to whether orange or juice is better

By Maria Godoy, NPR

We all could probably eat more fruits and vegetables. But if forced to choose between whole fruit or a glass of juice, which one seems more healthful?

The general advice is to opt for the fruit, since juicing can destroy some of the beneficial compounds fruit contains and

strip it of fiber – which most us don't get enough of. And let's face it: Most juice contains a lot of sugar, which we might be trying to cut down on.

So our interest was piqued when we spotted a study suggesting that, when it comes to oranges, juice might actually unlock more carotenoids and flavonoids – both beneficial phytonutrients – than an equivalent amount of fruit.

To figure that out, German and Saudi researchers started with a big batch of fresh navel oranges. They analyzed the fruit in three forms: peeled segments, a mashed-up puree and as juice, both fresh-squeezed and pasteurized. They found that levels of vitamin C and carotenoids were basically the same in the juice and the unprocessed fruit, while levels of flavonoids were significantly lower.

Read the whole story

Historic organ gathering dust at EDC fairgrounds

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

In 1865, an immigrant from Goteberg, Sweden, with a grand vision for music opened a modest cabinet-making shop at 24th and Mission streets in San Francisco.

John Bergstrom wouldn't be long known for cabinets. He became renowned as a designer and manufacturer of exquisite pipe organs. They were towering creations – virtual cathedrals of sound – that reached toward the heavens with gold-leafed hardwood and intricately stenciled and painted musical pipes.

Aided by water pressure, his organs' sophisticated labyrinth of keys, pedals and pumps powered levers, bellows and air valves into a stirring symphony. By the mid-1880s, Bergstrom had built an estimated 66 pipe organs. His wonders of craftsmanship became musical and spiritual hearths in churches from San Francisco to British Columbia and Mexico to Hawaii.

Now volunteers are trying to find a new home for one of his last surviving creations.

For more than 50 years, a majestic pipe organ built by Bergstrom about 1885 has sat forlornly in a warehouse at the El Dorado County Fairground in Placerville. Few people get to see the 20-foot-tall marvel that occupies about 400 square feet, with its pipes nearly touching the ceiling.

The organ, sold to the Placerville Federated Church for \$2,500 in 1904, is occasionally a backdrop for fairground events such as mineral and gem or home accessory shows that are held in the warehouse known as "the organ building." Often it is merely covered by a drape.

Read the whole story

**Scheduling conflict
infuriates freeskiers**



Reno freeskier David Wise
trains at Northstar.
Photo/Provided

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

ASPEN – David Wise of Reno battles gravity as an Olympic and X Games gold medal halfpipe skier. Now he's battling an equally stubborn force: the International Ski Federation, or FIS.

Widely embraced as the world's best pipe skier, Wise lost his world champion title last week when he, like most of the world's top freeskiers and snowboarders, opted to attend Aspen's Winter X Games instead of the FIS world championships in Austria.

The 24-year-old Wise, who skis for Northstar, blasted the international federation for refusing to reschedule the world championship halfpipe contest – which was put on the calendar five years ago – to accommodate the athletes whose careers have flourished thanks to the X Games.

The scheduling conflict is a symptom of a larger issue, freeskiers say. There's a perceived lack of respect for freeskipping and snowboarding from the sports' governing body. The fear is that new school freeskipping could see its freewheeling style stifled by the decidedly old guard FIS.

Wise, who spent three years pleading with the FIS to adjust the schedule, wrote in a scathing post on his blog last week that it is an "unforgivable blunder; one based in arrogance

and in a true lack of respect.” Dozens of the top-ranked skiers and snowboarders on the World Cup halfpipe and slopestyle circuit did not show up at Kreischburg, Austria, last week.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- South Tahoe Public Utility District is having a workshop Feb. 5 from 9am-1pm to review the 10-, 20-, and 30-year capital improvement plans. The district is at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.
- Here are the Caltrans roadwork schedules for Sierra and El Dorado-Tahoe for the week.
- If you have old prescription glasses, take them to Barton Memorial Hospital and put them in the donation box located on the front desk in the lobby.
- St. Theresa Catholic Church will host its 21st annual Crab Dinner on Feb. 13. The event will begin at 6pm with cocktails and a silent auction, dinner at 7pm. Tickets are \$40 at St. Theresa Church Rectory Office, 1041 Lyons Ave., South Lake Tahoe. Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$45 if the event is not sold out. For more information, call 530.544.3533.
- Due to an increase in interest, the climate presentation Fire and Water on Jan. 27 from 5:30-8pm has been moved to Tahoe Valley Elementary School, 943 Tahoe Island Drive, South

Vonn back on podium, Mancuso 16th

By USSA

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland – Lindsey Vonn (Vail) will wing her way home to Beaver Creek with a 64th career victory, taking a strong win Sunday over Austria's Anna Fenninger in an Audi FIS Ski World Cup super G in St. Moritz. Vonn posted a 0.24 second margin for the win, coming just eight days before she will step into the super G starting gate at World Championships.

The St. Moritz super G course presented tough challenges for the athletes. "I was definitely a difficult course today," said Vonn. "There was a lot of terrain and tricky parts."

Her win came a day after a big mistake in the downhill dropped her from podium-challenger to 23.

"After a bad day comes a good day," said Vonn. "Yesterday I risked a lot and it didn't pay off. Today I risked a lot and it did pay off. I always like to ski at the limit – it's what's won me a lot of races and what's made me crash and go into the nets. That's the way I ski."

Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) was 16, with Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) 19 and Alice McKennis (Glenwood Springs, Colo.) 27.

Then and now: Third Street appearance changes



Highway 50 near Third Street in South Lake Tahoe in the 1960s. Photo/South Lake Tahoe

Highway 50 near Third Street in 1960s South Lake Tahoe had a gaggle of buildings and businesses shown on the left in the photo above. This included Bob Bellemore's used car dirt lot on the corner at Third Street.

They're gone now, all replaced by the Bank of the West.

Third Street was only three blocks long between Highway 50 and Ruth Avenue. It had no stoplight and did not extend across Highway 50.



This is what Highway 50 near Third Street looks like today. Photo/Bill Kingman

By the 1990s, Third Street had connected left and right: left to Washington Avenue and right across Highway 50 to Barton Avenue, making Third and 50 a major intersection with a traffic signal.

The Richfield gas station of the 1960s now is Brothers Burrito House after many changes, including being a KFC. Between it and the Hill Center today is Accurate TV and Audio, adjacent to the new intersection.

– *Bill Kingman*

Kings Canyon reveals Carson's rural side



Dry, short grasses dot the landscape in the Kings Canyon

area of Carson City. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

CARSON CITY – Despite a more than 20-foot waterfall tumbling down less than a half mile from the trailhead, the Kings Canyon area is so dry it looks more like summer than winter.

Dry sage and anemic manzanita dot the landscape early on. Ironically, it's this dryness that has driven us east, out of the basin in search of alternative winter recreation because there are so few snowshoeing opportunities right now in Tahoe. Even on this trail there ought to be more than the one patch of snow we saw.

This swath of land known as Kings Canyon is owned by the U.S. Forest and has been public property since 1997.



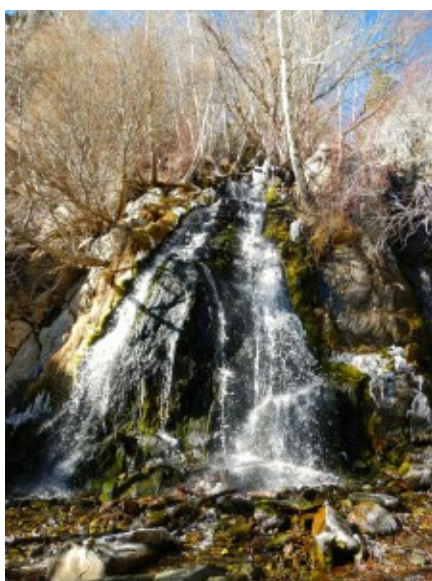
The five dogs lead their people uphill.

Way back when this land was home to the Washoe Indians. The canyon became a gateway to Lake Tahoe during the Gold Rush. Lumber was brought through the canyon during the Comstock era to build the silver mines of Nevada.

The area gets its name from Benjamin King, a doctor who built

a ranch in the 1800s. Today there is a huge, modern house at the start of the trailhead. Other residences line the road leading up to what is the base of the Sierra.

Pete and Raymond Borda started a sheep farm on the land in 1947. They would drive sheep between Carson and Dayton until the 1970s. By then Carson City had experienced a population boom that prevented the drives from crossing the highway. Family members opted to donate their land for the public to use.



Plenty of water still cascades from the waterfall.

Today an extensive trail network exists. After checking out the waterfall (it's 0.3 miles from the trailhead and dead-ends there), we headed out on the North Kings Canyon Upper Loop Trail. The marker said it is 1 mile. It is single-track dirt with small rocks that make it necessary to look down a bit. This trail doesn't allow bikes or horses, but they are OK on the fire roads. We estimate having hiked 6 miles roundtrip.

It's a pretty steady climb, but it doesn't take long for good views of Carson City to reveal themselves.

We come to a fork where we head left onto what looks like a fire road. This was the first time for me, Rosemary and Brooke to explore this area. And none of us had a map, so we winged it when it came to deciding where to go. We were pretty sure we wouldn't follow the early pioneers and walk all the way to Tahoe. Plus, we had five dogs among us to be the trail leaders.

This road, though, had few turns. It kept going up. Luckily, the temperature was ideal considering the sun was beating down on us and we had no shade. This would not be the hike to do in mid-summer.

But soon we were among the trees and the mercury dropped substantially. Ice at various spots where there was water was a clear reminder on this Saturday in January that it really is winter.

The foliage is healthier here where water is more abundant. But there are also stark reminders of the 2004 Waterfall Fire that burned 8,700 acres. It started from an abandoned campfire.



Ice and a bamboo-like plant
at one of the creeks.

While there is a warning at the trailhead this is bear and mountain lion territory, wildlife was scarce on our outing. One magpie was spotted and we heard a chipmunk or squirrel.

We finally hit a plateau where we ran into a couple from

Carson City who told us the route we were on would take us to Ash Canyon. We took their advice to go a bit farther to get a great view of Carson City and then turn around.

They told us about a different route back. Had it not been for their multiple cairns and arrow drawn in the dirt, we would never have seen the abrupt right turn onto the single-track. This dirt trail was a more gradual descent without rocks compared to the path that got us to this point.

At various times the drop-offs are rather daunting. We tried not to look down. It would be a long, painful tumble.

Views are beautiful and vast.

—

Getting there: From South Lake Tahoe take Highway 50 east to Carson City. Turn left at the base of Spooner Summit in Carson, left on West 5th Street, right on Division Street, left on West King Street. The road dead-ends at the trailhead.

Editorial: Prepare for reality check on state water bond

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Jan. 22, 2015, Chico Enterprise Record.*

It's hard to know what voters expected to happen when they approved the \$7.5 billion water bond in November.

We do know our north state legislators thought the \$2.7

billion included for increased water storage would result in pretty quick movement toward at least one and maybe two new reservoirs. That's why they supported it.

We were skeptical. There was no specific language in the bond that the money would go to Sites Reservoir west of Maxwell or Temperance Flat, on the San Joaquin River upstream from Millerton Lake northeast of Fresno. We recommended a no vote on Proposition 1 for that reason. It seemed like we were taking on a lot of debt that would send money who knows where.

However, our representatives were enthusiastic backers of the bond. Sites would happen, they said, because it was so far ahead of the game. Years of already completed work points to Sites as the best solution. There's no way the bureaucrats charged with making the decision would ignore the obvious, right?

Yeah, right.

After the State Water Commission met Wednesday, its chairman, Joe Byrne, issued a statement that said basically, we don't have to allocate the money for storage until the end of 2016, and we're going to spend the next two years developing a whole new set of guidelines and regulations on how to allocate the bucks.

Read the whole story

Mind you, the water system that serves California has been in place for decades and the glaring problems with it have been obvious for years.

Free 2-day Feldenkrais workshop in S. Tahoe

Jim Gallanty, a physical therapist for 20 years and certified Feldenkrais practitioner, is putting on a two-day workshop.

Friends of the Library is hosting the Feb. 21 and Feb. 28 classes. Both are from 10:30am-noon.

Balance Class: Enhance your functioning; Rollback your age, Reduce your fall risk is the title.

For optimal benefit, attend both sessions. Wear comfortable clothes to do as much or little exercise as you choose and bring a bath towel.

Space is limited. Call (530.573.3185) or go to the library (1000 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe) to reserve a spot.