

How to make skiing fun for beginners

By New York Times

For first-time skiers, expectations and reality can often diverge on the slopes. They imagine gracefully swishing down an Alpine mountain, but then spend their first day falling. After that, most give up.

Indeed, according to the National Ski Areas Association, 83 percent of first-time skiers and snowboarders never return to the slopes for a second visit.

To combat this high attrition rate, Joe Hession, president and chief executive of Snow Operating, has worked with dozens of resorts, from Jiminy Peak in Massachusetts to Snowbasin in Utah, to redesign their ski areas and programs for beginners, making the learning process smoother and much less frustrating.

In lieu of bunny slopes, what you find at these resorts are hills with turns and banks shaped to let beginners really ski, even if they haven't mastered turning or stopping. With the terrain guiding you, Hession explained, "you can make turns without a lot of skill, so it's fun."

Fun is the objective here, he added. "The perfect first day is someone has fun and learns something. The second best is they have fun and learn nothing."

Read the whole story

Tahoe recovers from wind damage; snow coming



Downed power lines Dec. 11
on the South Shore.
Photo/Provided

Lingering effects of the storm that roared through Lake Tahoe are subsiding.

Heavenly Mountain Resort resumed operations today after being closed for the last three days. Thursday it was wind, Friday and Saturday it was power issues that kept the resort from opening.

Power also affected operations at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows on Dec. 13.

Liberty Utilities services all three of these ski resorts.

Services resumed at St. Theresa Catholic Church on Dec. 13 after a tree fell on Globin Hall. A city building inspector on Dec. 12 said the church was safe to enter.

At the 5:30pm Mass on Saturday the Rev. Ben DeLeon expressed relief that the sanctuary was protected.

While the storm did not bring the massive amounts of snow that

had been forecast, the North Shore did end up with much more snow than the South Shore. What all regions had was a ton of wind that brought trees and power lines down, causing much of the region to be in the dark last Thursday.

Snow is in the forecast again starting today and continuing through Wednesday. Highs are going to be in the 30s and lows in the 20s. But no devastating winds are predicted this go-round.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Wise second at Dew Tour

By USSA

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. – Under a setting sun at the 10th annual Dew Tour on Dec. 13, Torin Yater-Wallace and David Wise would put down some of the best halfpipe runs of their freeskiing careers to take the top two spots on the podium in men's halfpipe – Wallace in first and Wise in second.

In what appeared to be a battle of one-upmanship, Yater-Wallace took the lead with a huge double cork 1260 on the first hit and landed what is arguably the biggest double flat spin alley-oop ever which moved him into first with a 92.25.

Then Reno's Wise, who won last weekend's opening Sprint U.S. Grand Prix, dropped into what he says was "the best run of my life" linking back-to-back 1260 doubles and moved ahead of Wallace with a 94.75.

But it was Wallace's second run an even bigger frontside 1260 and linked back-to-back alley-oop double corks that would ultimately take the lead and the win with a 95.25. With

Wallace and Wise swapping last week's podium spots it's fair to say that the Wallace-Wise rivalry is back.

Top qualifier, Gus Kenworthy finished just shy of the podium in fourth and Alex Ferreria followed suit in fifth.

1. On the women's slopestyle course, hometown hero, Keri Herman would reign supreme taking home her first Dew Tour title. Herman's first run packed with 720s, spinning in all directions landed her on top of the podium just ahead of Emma Dalstrom and U.S. Freeskiing teammate, Julia Krass. Rookie skier Krass landed her second run and with a corked 720 and a solid rail section to step onto her first Dew Tour podium. Slopestyle favorite, Maggie Voisin, fell in her first run and decided to sit out her second.

South Tahoe teen killed by falling tree

A missing South Lake Tahoe teenager was found dead Dec. 13, having been struck by a 50-foot tree during the storm.

Dejon Smith, 14, had been reported missing Dec. 11 from his Wildwood Avenue home.

Officers on Dec. 12 spoke to someone who had seen the teen late the night before in the wooded area behind Rancho Way. Officers searched the area to no avail.

A resident on Saturday reported finding a body about a half-mile from where officers had been looking the day before.

"There is some indication other people may have been present

and we are investigating that,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Anyone with information about this case is asked to call the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530.542.6100.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Sleep deprivation hurts your career more than it helps

By Deborah Sutton, Deseret News

Burning the midnight oil implies working overtime, long into the night, to get something done and ultimately to get ahead. But the belief that sacrificing a few hours of sleep for a few more hours of work will lead to higher achievement has been debunked by science.

“According to the Division of Sleep Medicine at the Harvard Medical School, the short-term productivity gains from skipping sleep to work are quickly washed away by the detrimental effects of sleep deprivation on your mood, ability to focus, and access to higher-level brain functions for days to come,” wrote Travis Bradberry for Forbes. “The negative effects of sleep deprivation are so great that people who are drunk outperform those lacking sleep.”

On Sunday, the National Geographic Channel in collaboration with the Public Goods Project and National Institutes of Health, aired a documentary about the silent and dangerous epidemic of sleep deprivation in America. “Sleepless in America” revealed that 40 percent of all Americans and 70

percent of adolescents are sleep-deprived.

Read the whole story

Then and now: Too much snow doomed resort

Today there is a ski resort called White Hills operating in Canada. Back in Tahoe history, there was a White Hills Ski Resort at the junction of highways 50 and 28 atop Spooner Summit.



White Hills Ski Resort,
circa 1950. Photo/Private
Collection

It lasted only six years, starting modestly in 1946. By 1950 it included a chairlift and a T-bar.

But the overwhelming snowfall of 1952 was White Hills Ski Resort's last gasp. With access to the Lake Tahoe Basin having been shut off for nearly a month, the resort ceased operating that year.



Remnants of the resort are near the U.S. Forest Service fire station on Spooner Summit. Photo/Bill Kingman

There is barely a trace of its ski run today.

– *Bill Kingman*

Camelback Mountain provides sweeping views



Downtown Phoenix is in the distance as seen from along

the Camelback Mountain trail. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

PHOENIX – Mileage is not always the determining factor in how sore one will be after a hike. Terrain has a lot to do with achy muscles, too.

Nine days ago I found out how true that statement is.

Camelback Mountain is considered by some to be the toughest hike in the city limits of Phoenix. (It's on the border of Scottsdale.) There are two routes to the 2,704-foot summit – Echo Canyon and Cholla. Penny and I did the latter trail, which is longer. Echo is steeper.

We gained 1,300 feet in elevation over the course of 1.6 miles.

The layered sandstone was harder on my legs than Tahoe's dirt and decomposed granite trails. It was even more pronounced coming down. I wish I had shock absorbers built into my shoes.

That night I could not climb or descend the stairs at the condo without pain and looking like there was something out of whack.

This is definitely not a trail for everyone, especially because of the scrambling that is involved. A backpack with water is recommended over carrying a bottle because many times both hands are needed to get up or down a pitch. There's nothing technical about the climb, but it does require being in shape.

We just shook our heads at the people jogging up and down the trail.

But what got us to really turn our heads was when we saw members of the Scottsdale Adventure Club hauling up multiple Christmas trees to erect at the top. Last year the one 10-foot

tree was a bit cumbersome, so this year they did a few smaller trees – all just to be festive.

The name of the mountain comes from its looking like a camel because of the two formations that are split by a saddle. From the top it's a 360-degree view of the valley.

Fortunately, the area had been getting rain before I arrived, and was still overcast the morning of our hike. Even in the 70s it was a warm hike. You are completely exposed all the time – no big pines for shade.

While there are a few cacti growing, there did not seem to be much life on this massive rock. Luckily we didn't see one of the more common critters – rattlesnakes.

Starting out we see the sprawling Phoenician resort below us. Civilization is everywhere below us and in the distance.

There was a time when Camelback was going to be an Indian reservation. Then development kept encroaching on the mountain. Finally, Preservation of Camelback Mountain Foundation led by Barry Goldwater was able to get the federal government involved in the 1960s to preserve the summit.

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Opinion: State Park police in Tahoe ruin visit

By Steve Hutchison

I am writing to express our collective disappointment at the treatment we received during an encounter with a member of the

State Park police on Nov. 8 at D.L. Bliss State Park at Lake Tahoe.

My wife, our Friends, their boys, (6- and 8-years -old), and our two small dogs, a 14 pound French bulldog, and a 17 pound Boston terrier, packed a small lunch and took a walk down the beach toward D.L. Bliss State Park along the low water line, as we have often done this time of year for the past 40-plus years.

After an hour or so of walking along the completely deserted shoreline, we arrived at a similarly empty beach adjacent to D.L. Bliss State Park, where my friend and I, with our dogs, stopped just past a line coincident with the park fence to wait for the kids and our wives.

The dogs were tired from the walk, (they are quite small and it's a long boulder strewn walk), so we took them off leash so they wouldn't tangle on the bench legs where they both promptly fell asleep in the afternoon sun. After a half hour or so, the girls and the kids arrived, at which point we broke out water and some sandwiches.

After a few minutes we observed an official looking white pickup truck arrive and stop in the parking lot with police radio on, obviously some sort of park ranger, about a 150 feet from our position.

We awoke the dogs, placed them back on leash, (as we always do in public or when any potential stimulus for the dogs is seen), and expected an inquiry regarding our presence (as I assumed the park was closed as are all the others around the lake this time of year), and expected to be greeted by a bored ranger, asked to be careful or at worse, asked to leave.

Instead, we were challenged by an angry policeman (name illegible on citation) badge No. 1513 (complete with flak vest and completely equipped police utility belt and side arm) who approached us, and in an agitated manner, informed us that

there are no dogs allowed on the beach, to which I responded: "Oh, we thought the park was closed, if it's a problem, we'll leave back the direction we came down the beach." (Pointing north along the deserted beach).

To which the policeman responded in an even more accusatory and combative manner: "If it were closed, you would all be trespassing and all going to jail!"

"Now I need to see everyone's ID!"

To which we responded that none of us had any as we were out for a walk. This seemed to further incense the policeman to which he responded: "You drove here without a license?"

"No, again we walked here and are fine with just leaving."

All of us are now also becoming quite angry with the treatment we were being subjected to, but not wanting to escalate a silly situation into something else that it was obviously headed for, we again volunteered to simply diffuse the situation and leave the abandoned beach the way we came.

Then he informed us in an even angrier tone that not only are dogs not allowed, but that they must be leashed, to which we responded: "Well they are [leashed] see?" (Holding both dogs up to chest level displaying their harnesses and leashes-they are toy breed sized).

"I don't believe you! They weren't leashed," adding angrily, "Don't you see the big sign? No Dogs."

There is indeed a 3-foot-by-4-foot "No Lifeguard On Duty" sign whose main purpose (judging by the fact that 75 percent of the sign is dedicated to those words) is to inform that there is no lifeguard on duty, but includes about a half dozen smaller icons with red slashes through them indicating all the various things that are prohibited, one of which is a dog, which on shading our eyes and squinting toward the setting sun we could

just make out, next to the parking lot over 100 feet away.

We acknowledged the sign, but pointed out that it was far away and obscured by the glare of the setting sun; and that there is no sign when approaching the beach from the north (where we came from). Explanations which fell on the policeman's deaf ears. When asked if the policeman was detaining us, he confirmed that he was detaining us and to remain where we were, stating: "You all stay here while I decide what I am going to do with these dogs."

At this point the children think:

1. We may be going to jail,
2. That this policeman may try to seize our dogs.

I commented that I found it quite sad that the park rangers I remember from my youth at the lake in the 1970s were kindly naturalists, who were friendly and helpful, who would never have dreamed of subjecting us to the DHS storm trooper kind of treatment we were receiving from this officious and bullying policeman, all of which was brought about by having two small docile dogs on an empty beach.

At this point we were insulted, angry, and upset and (although not stated) definitely not about to let this rogue policeman so much as touch our harmless and special needs dogs.

Is this really the kind of demeanor and public relations policy the parks department seeks to promote? Threatening hikers and children with jail and seizure of their beloved pets? I fear the altercation that will inevitably occur when (not if, in my opinion) this policeman takes this very aggressive and combative tone and attitude with somebody with less to lose, or who for whatever reason is not in a mood to be bullied while on vacation in front of their children, in a

campground where they are on vacation by the likes of this individual.

This is all of our business as citizens, as when someone exercises authority to the point of being ludicrous, we all lose; especially when it escalates to an altercation that potentially gets physical (that in my opinion this policeman was game for in threatening arrest and seizure of our dogs), and when, in the courts a decision is made to rightly award a victim of authority run amok, we as taxpayers and citizens all pay monetarily and in further erosion of confidence in our country's leadership.

In this instance, a simple friendly warning would have been immediately heeded and we would have gone the 100 feet it would have taken to pass the fence where the policeman assumed his jurisdiction began.

We again had two small dogs completely under control (with refuse bags attached to their leashes) and causing no disturbance whatsoever on a 100 percent deserted beach in November. We were cited (§ 4312, e and f) for dogs on state park property, and dogs off of a leash then mockingly told to have a nice day and come again.

In conclusion, we will fight this in court and share this negative experience with our friends and associates, and recommend a second thought when considering visiting a State Park.

Steve Hutchison is a resident of the Bay Area.

Letter: Squaw-Alpine coping with power issues

To the community,

While the recent “storm of the century”, as proclaimed by many meteorologists, didn’t deliver as much snow as originally thought, it did provide Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows with nearly 20 inches of snow and the ability to open more terrain at both mountains today.

The storm did not deliver as much snow as anticipated, but it did create power problems for many in our area. As a result homes, businesses on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe, and other resorts around the lake, including Heavenly, lost power over the course of the last few days.



Andy Wirth

Having not experienced the same power problems as others in our region, it was with great anticipation that we opened our mountains today under blue skies and with great snow conditions. Unfortunately, late this morning, our utility company, Liberty Energy, had difficulty providing energy to us. Consequently, our chairlift systems were without power for parts of the day. This was an unfortunate situation that was unforeseeable and outside of our ability to control.

Fortunately, our mountain operations teams immediately went into action and ran many of our lifts on auxiliary power.

While we did everything we could to continue to operate the mountains and provide for skiing and riding throughout the afternoon while Liberty Energy worked to restore our power, we acknowledge the inconvenience that this power outage caused our guests. At Alpine Meadows power was restored approximately one hour after the initial Liberty Energy caused power outage and then a bit over four hours later at Squaw Valley. Again, most lifts were kept running throughout that time frame at both mountains. Once power was fully restored, we extended operations at both mountains – running our lifts as late as possible, which at this time of year means until 4:30pm.

I have received multiple assurances, personally, from officials at Liberty Energy that as power has been restored, we should absolutely plan on normal operations (Sunday) and in the future. I've also received assurances from those same representatives from Liberty Energy that they are doing everything in their power to ensure that this circumstance does not happen again. We do appreciate the hard work they did today to restore power to our mountains.

To those who were inconvenienced by this circumstance, we genuinely regret the fact that your day was adversely impacted. Our guest service team stands by to further assist should you have any questions about your experience today.

Importantly, we look forward to normal operations tomorrow, which will likely feature even more terrain and lifts. It's likely to be a spectacular day and we look forward to welcoming you as well as the next weather system, which looks quite promising early next week.

See you on the mountain.

Warm regards,

Andy Wirth, president and CEO Squaw Valley Ski Holdings

Ex-Mirabelle chef to reopen restaurant

By Kathryn Reed

A former cook at Mirabelle restaurant in Stateline is now the owner.

The eatery had closed in September after owner-chef Camille Schwartz retired. It is reopening Dec. 19.

Kenn Druely, who moved to Lake Tahoe two years ago with the intention of buying the French restaurant, wasn't able to because of financing. This time it all worked out. The deal went through the week of Thanksgiving.

Druely was a sous chef at Mirabelle for the first year he was here. The last year he has been at Lake Tahoe Vacation Resort as the food and beverage manager. His training was at the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park in New York. Druely has spent the past 20 years working at a variety of restaurants in the Napa Valley, including Terra, French Laundry, Tra Vigne, Carneros Inn and Cook.

"We'll be opening with a menu that is basically one of Camille's old menus. Some of the dishes are tweaked a little bit," Druely told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Other than a cook the rest of the staff is new.

Down the road Druely expects to put his own twists on entrees. He also expects to have more options for vegetarians and to pay more attention to what is in season, using those ingredients.

Other than painting the dining room, the décor is the same.
That could change in the spring.

Mirabelle will be open Tuesday-Sunday starting at 5:30pm.