

Opinion: Reflections on true friendship

By Andrew O'Hagan, New York Times

Is childhood the golden era of friendship? And can you get those relationships back?

The other day, I took down from the shelf a beautiful novel by William Maxwell – “So Long, See You Tomorrow” – and I realized the title alone summons the unspoken bond, the constant availability, the relentless promise that friendship is when you are 12. My great friend at that age was Mark MacDonald. In those early, rain-soaked days on Scotland’s west coast, Mark was my constant companion and my secret weapon: Whatever happened at home, there would always be Mark to brighten the day and spit with style like River Phoenix did in “Stand by Me,” via a rolled-up tongue. We would be up at the crack of dawn to wander over the fields, scan the beaches for coins, climb the hills together and sit in the graveyard comparing our plans for world domination. Mark had Crohn’s disease; he was often in hospital, and we’d write to each other planning our adventures for the summer. He told me I was a good writer and I told him he was a great painter, before we disappeared from each other’s lives. I haven’t seen him in 30 years.

When I recently tried to find Mark again, he didn’t appear to exist. Like the boys in Maxwell’s novel, he seemed like a figment, or a fragile piece of memory that crumbles when you turn it in your hands. He wasn’t to be found at the old address I had for him in the seaside town of Saltcoats. His name is a popular one on Facebook, but none of the Marks I found was the one I knew, and he wasn’t on Twitter or Instagram either. None of the search engines reveal anything about Mark. I tried death certificates, fearing, as I have for a long time, that my old friend might have died.

I asked my mother if any of her friends had kept in touch with the family but none had. I could remember two of his sisters' names but they didn't show up on the internet either. When I went back to Scotland recently, I drove to the square where we once lived, and I looked up at the window of my old house, remembering how I used to shine a torch from there to Mark's bedroom. Two flashes meant good night. Three flashes meant see you tomorrow.

Read the whole story

Why you should call, not email, your legislators

By Daniel Victor, New York Times

Kara Waite, an English teacher at Bunker Hill Community College in Charlestown, Mass., made a rule for herself: For every political rant she posts on Facebook, she must pick up the phone and call a legislator.

"It's kind of a swear jar for political action," Waite said recently.

Activists of all political stripes recommend calling legislators, not just emailing – and certainly not just venting on social media. Several lawmakers, along with those who work for them, said in interviews that Waite is right: A phone call from a constituent can, indeed, hold more weight than an email, and far outweighs a Facebook post or a tweet.

Read the whole story

South Tahoe hockey team wins regional title



Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wee A hockey team from South Lake Tahoe won the regional tournament. Photo/Provided

Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wee A hockey team won the 2016 Silver Stick Regional Tournament last weekend at San Jose's Sharks Ice.

The team was undefeated (5-0) for the tournament. This is the team's second consecutive regional Silver Stick Tournament championship.

The Grizzlies downed the San Francisco Sabercats 3-2 in the championship game, getting the winning goal with just 12.7 seconds left.

With the title, Tahoe advances to the International Silver Stick Finals on Jan. 19-22 in Port Heron, Mich.

"I'm extremely proud of this team," Grizzlies coach Mike Gunderson said. "They've worked hard to get to this point and have really come together as a team – many have been teammates going on two years or more now. Everyone on the team contributed during the tournament – all were represented on score sheet."

Other Tahoe Grizzlies hockey teams played their hearts out at the tournament, however did not qualify in their respective divisions to the international tournament.

The Grizzlies Pee Wee A team is currently in first place in their regular season standings with a 4-0-1 record.

– Provided to Lake Tahoe News

Independent presidential candidate requests recount in Nev.

By Megan Messerly, Las Vegas Sun

Independent candidate Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente has requested a recount of the results of the presidential election in Nevada, his campaign confirmed Tuesday.

De La Fuente said in a statement Tuesday that he is asking for recounts in Florida and Nevada "to create a nationwide awareness of the vulnerability of our election system" and to ensure that "your vote counts for the candidate for whom it is cast."

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein has made similar

recount requests in recent days, moving to challenge election results in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Read the whole story

Survey: Calif. ski areas boost safety – barely

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

California's winter resorts have more safety measures in place than they did five years ago, but just barely.

That's according to the California Mountain Resort 2016 Safety Survey.

The report, published by the SnowSport Safety Foundation, surveyed safety measures at 19 ski and snowboard resorts, including many in the Lake Tahoe area.

Although it shows slight improvements from a similar survey six years ago it also shows shortcomings in the way resorts manage impact protection, trail design and maintenance, boundaries and terrain parks.

Read the whole story

Nev. lawmakers learn about pot from Ore.

By Chris Kudialis, Las Vegas Sun

PORTLAND — Nevada State Sen. Tick Segerblom's eyebrows raised as he walked into an Oregon marijuana dispensary Tuesday as part of a day-long fact-finding tour of the state's recreational marijuana industry.

"I've realized how good we've got it in Nevada," said Segerblom while walking by a display case full of marijuana flower at Pure Green Medical Marijuana Dispensary just west of Portland's downtown district. "I think this is going to be a smooth transition."

Segerblom was one of five Nevada legislators who toured Portland dispensaries and met with Oregon's Liquor Control Commission, which starting Jan. 1 will regulate the state's recreational marijuana program. The Nevada contingent is gathering information so they can implement policy for recreational marijuana sales in Nevada, which voters approved earlier this month.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Registration for the Tahoe Rim Trail Association's through hike opens Jan. 25. For more info, go **online**.
- Project Graduation is an organization of Truckee parents who are dedicated to providing graduating seniors with

a safe, sober and supervised graduation experience. Project Grad's main fundraiser, the Truckee High Senior Fashion Show, will be May 21, but more donations are needed. For more info or to donate, email truckeehighboosters@yahoo.com.

- Rage Again & A Perfect Tool will be at Whiskey Dicks in South Lake Tahoe on Jan. 6. Doors open at 9pm. Cost is \$15.

- The Shakespeare Festival at Sand Harbor has announced its 2017 summer shows – "Loves Labours Lost" and "The Hound of the Baskervilles." For tickets and more info, go **online**.

- Jill Brugler's Dirty Diapers/Rabbit Ears is a clay and ceramic exhibit at Western Nevada College's Main Gallery. It opens today and will be shown through Feb. 3.

Lake Valley holiday engine ready to roll

Here is the schedule for the Lake Valley Fire Protection District holiday truck:

Dec. 11 – Echo View Estates, Tahoe Mountain Road, Mule Deer Circle

Dec. 12 – Lake Tahoe Boulevard from Boulder Mountain Drive to Grizzly Mountain Drive

Dec. 13 – West side of North Upper Truckee from Zuni Street

Highway 50, Chiapa Drive

Dec. 14 – East side of North Upper Truckee from Grizzly Mountain to West San Bernardino Avenue

Dec. 15 – Christmas Valley from Highway 50 to Grass Lake Road

Dec. 16 –North side of Highway 50 in Meyers (lower Apache, Magnet School), behind Station 7 (Cornelian Drive, Navahoe Drive, Cheyenne Drive)

Dec. 17 – North of Pioneer Trail from Highway 50 to Elks Club (Southern Pines Drive, Tionontati Street, Meadow Vale Drive), Player Drive

Dec. 18 – Upper Apache Drive and Mandan Street

Dec. 19 – Pioneer Trail from Busch Way to Washoan Boulevard (Glen Eagles Drive, Hekpa Drive)

Dec. 20 – Pioneer Trail from Washoan Boulevard to Jicarilla Drive (Apalachee Drive, Nadowa Street, Susquehana Drive)

Dec. 21 – Kokanee Estates (Marshall Trail, High Meadow Trail)

Dec. 22 – Golden Bear Trail, Meadow View Estates (Plateau Circle, Cattleman's Trail)

Dec. 23 – Cold Creek Trail, Del Norte Street, Black Bart from Pioneer Trail to Meadow Crest Drive.

California Democrats secure supermajority

By Jeremy B. White, Sacramento Bee

Broadening the path to long-sought deals on affordable housing, transportation infrastructure and climate change, California Democrats have again captured a two-thirds supermajority in both houses of the Legislature.

Enough late votes were counted in Southern California's 29th Senate District for The Associated Press to project that Democrat Josh Newman defeated Republican Assemblywoman Ling Ling Chang, R-Diamond Bar. The outcome gives Senate Democrats 27 seats, the supermajority threshold in the upper house. Assembly Democrats secured their two-thirds margin earlier this month.

Chang initially led balloting for the 29th, which is anchored largely in Orange County, but she slipped behind as officials tallied provisional and late-arriving mail ballots in the days after the Nov. 8 election. The latest update Monday put Newman 2,136 votes ahead.

Read the whole story

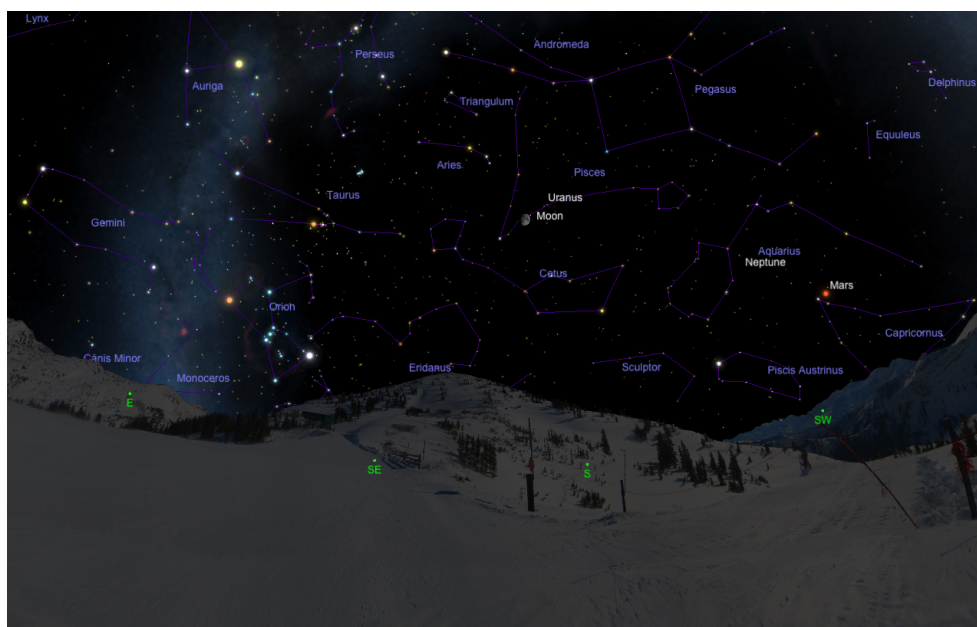
Star Guide: Tahoe, a winter cosmic theater

By Tony Berendsen

There are many wonderful places on the planet to visit where a

person can step outside on a dark night to view the cosmos. Lake Tahoe is one of the best of those places. It is an earthly pedestal adorned with the stars of our near space and the immensity of the winter Milky Way shimmering above.

During the winter at Lake Tahoe the stars are bright diamonds in the sky. The winter air is crisp and clear, and because we are looking away from the center of our galaxy this time of year, the near stars shine brighter since the winter Milky Way is just a subtle whisk of light passing through the constellation Cassiopeia.



Tahoe is one of the best places to star gaze.
Photo/Simulation Curriculum

So what's showing in the winter cosmic theater?

The constellation of Orion is rising in the southeast with the blazing red star Betelgeuse at the hunters' right shoulder; it is a giant star. If it were where the sun is, we would be inside of it. Luckily its 640 light years away.

Below the belt of Orion, the three stars in a row below Betelgeuse, there is a vertical row of dimmer stars; the sword of Orion. Within the sword lays a winter star gazers' treat, a

cosmic nursery. Just visible to the naked eye the glow of a nebula becomes easy to see in binoculars, and a few of the new born stars within it at 1500 light years away.

Next, above Orion to the south is another giant red star, not as big and bright, but still a stellar gem. The star is called Aldebaran and is the brightest star in the constellation Taurus marking the eye in the mighty bull. Look to the right of the star for a V shape of stars and you have found one of the closest galactic star clusters to the Earth; the Hyades. Aim your binoculars at the V shape to see some of the hundreds of stars bound in a giant gravitational web about 150 light years away.

Here are some tips for winter star gazing:

- Dress warm, layer, and wear warm shoes, gloves, and a knitted cap to cover the ears.
- Step away from lights and let your eyes adjust to the darkness for 15 to 20 minutes (bright moon nights are great, but its light overshadows the stars and the subtle winter Milky Way).
- Bring your smart phone loaded with the **SkyPortal app**, set on night mode, to help you find your way around.
- Bring binoculars if you have them. There are some amazing star clusters and nebulae to view through them.

If you are interested in a guided tour of the cosmic theater at Lake Tahoe, join us for a **snowshoe star tour at Northstar**. We take groups out at night on a snowshoe star gazing trek on Dec. 21, 28, Jan. 14 and Feb. 11 starting at the Northstar Nordic Center and ending at the Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe for telescopic viewing and some hot chocolate and cider.

I hope you get a chance to enjoy the stellar show from Lake Tahoe.

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775. 232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.