

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules from Caltrans for next week.
 - Carol Del Carlo of Incline Village was elected to the Nevada System of Higher Education board of regents.
 - Permits to cut Christmas trees on the Carson and Bridgeport Ranger Districts of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest will be available for purchase beginning Nov. 21. For more info, call 775.882.2766.
 - 40 oz. to Freedom will be the headliner at Whiskey Dicks in South Lake Tahoe on Dec. 11. Also playing will be Taking Root. Door opens at 9pm. Cover is \$15.
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3-day holiday extravaganza at Valhalla

The 21st annual Valhalla Holiday Faire is Nov. 18-20.

The free event is hosted by Valhalla Tahoe, a nonprofit cultural arts organization in South Lake Tahoe.

It is Nov. 18 from 5:30-8:30pm, Nov. 19, 10am-5pm and Nov. 20, 10am-4pm at the Valhalla Grand Hall just past Camp Richardson Resort on Highway 89.

The hall will be decorated with three Christmas trees, lights, decorated garlands and wreaths. There will be a fire in the fireplace, holiday music, 28 local vendors and artisans. The South Lake Tahoe Children's Choral Society will perform on

Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Santa Claus will be there to greet children of all ages.

Parking is limited. A free shuttle service will be available from the main entrance.

Study: Biodynamic, organic vineyards produce better wine

By Thomas Ulrich, Sierra

For decades, vineyard managers and wine aficionados have wondered whether growing organic and biodynamic grapes is worth the trouble. Last summer, the *Journal of Wine Economics* may have unveiled the answer via a report from researchers out of UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. For the study, environmental economists evaluated the results of 74,148 wines reviewed by Wine Spectator, Wine Advocate, or Wine Enthusiast, accounting for the variation in region, vintage, and variety. They discovered that wine made from biodynamic and organic grapes on average scored four points higher on a 100-point scale than wine made from conventionally grown grapes.

"We found that organic or biodynamic farming made a significant difference in wine quality," says lead author Magali Delmas, an environmental economist and professor at the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

Dozens of eco-certified California vineyards are embracing dry, no-till, and biodynamic farming. Vignerons cultivate the land organically, tend farm animals across a varied landscape, blend their own compost, mix and apply their own soil

preparations, and harvest grapes according to a celestial calendar. To find out exactly how regenerative vineyard practices are enhancing the quality of grapes, enriching the soil, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, I ventured onto two such leading vignerons' vineyards—one of whom farms biodynamically and the other organically.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: No fuss black bean chili

By Kathryn Reed

My house seems to smell better as the days and nights get cooler. This is because I'm more apt to be making comfort foods that linger in the oven or cook all day in the crockpot.

There is something wonderful about throwing ingredients together in the crockpot, letting them simmer and then having a meal ready in the evening. When I'm at home during this ritual I love the intensity of the aroma as it gets stronger. If I've been out all day, to come home to a house that smells like someone has been cooking all day is delightful.

This recipe is super easy – as are most crockpot concoctions.

The flavors will meld as the day goes on, so don't adjust the seasonings right away.

Using the yogurt instead of sour cream keeps it healthier. None of the toppings is necessary, but they do make the bowl look prettier.

This can easily be made on the stove. Just use a little oil to sauté the vegetables before adding the other ingredients.



Black Bean Crockpot Chili

1 medium onion, diced

1 medium red bell pepper, diced

6 garlic cloves, minced

2 T tomato paste

1 T chile powder

2 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp dried oregano

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cayenne

Kosher salt

Pepper

1 15-ounce can crushed tomatoes

3 15-ounce cans black beans, drained

1 T honey

1 tsp finely grated orange zest, plus 2 T fresh orange juice

Cilantro leaves, optional

Greek yogurt, optional

Cheese, optional

Put all the ingredients except the cilantro, yogurt and cheese into the crockpot. Let cook all day on low.

Add a dollop of yogurt and few pinches of cilantro and cheese to each serving, or let guests add their own.

Snowshoe, stargazing experience at Northstar

Tahoe Star Tours will host a series of evenings under the stars that pair stargazing with a snowshoe tour in North Lake Tahoe.

Each event is led by local astronomer Tony Berendsen, who writes the monthly Star Guide column for *Lake Tahoe News*.

Each tour features a lively science-based talk about the cosmos and poetry reading. Guests of all ages will enjoy an easy to moderate snowshoe walk with an unobstructed view of the cosmos, followed by the opportunity to view constellations through high-powered, professional telescopes manufactured by Celestron, the world's leading telescope manufacturer, from the Fireside Terrace at the Ritz-Carlton. The telescopes use leading edge computerized technology enabling sharp, accurate pointing and tracking, with optics for clear, clean images.

The stargazing snowshoe tours are Dec 21, Dec. 28, Jan. 14 and Feb. 11, weather and conditions permitting. Tours are approximately 2-2.5 hours in length, starting at 5p, at Northstar's cross-country center, and ending at the Ritz-

Carlton.

Reservations are recommended, and can be made **online**. Tickets are \$63 for guests ages 13 and older, and \$45 for kids ages 10-12. Snowshoe rentals are available for \$21 per person.

West Shore Café creating a wine mecca



Wine service at West Shore Cafe in Homewood is under the direction of two sommeliers. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

HOMEWOOD – It's one thing for a restaurant to have an exceptional wine list, it's quite another to employ two

sommeliers – especially in Lake Tahoe.

West Shore Café earned the 2016 Award of Excellence from Wine Spectator. This is given to restaurants that have at least 90 wines to choose from, as well as a thematic match to the menu in terms of price and style.

While other Tahoe restaurants earned this award, what distinguishes the Homewood eatery is that it is the only one in the basin to have two level two sommeliers. Most don't even have one sommelier.



West Shore Café facts:

- It will reopen Nov. 23
- Every season there is a new menu
- In winter it is open for dinner Friday-Monday
- Lunch is served Saturday-Sunday
- It has been owned by JMA, the owners of Homewood Ski Resort, since 2010
- Seats 150
- Located in Homewood on the other side of Highway 89 from the ski resort.

The overly simplistic definition of a sommelier is someone who is an expert in wine and is able to assist diners with which wine to pair with their meal. There are four sommelier classifications, with Lisa Small and Rob Dubben at West Shore both at level two.

Together Small and Dubben create the wine list.

“When it comes to our list at West Shore Café, we look at a number of things. First, we look at what our competitors have and how it is selling. Second, we think about the balance of the list, how to make it functional but also have the right choices so guests can be happy with their selection,” Dubben told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Beyond that, we really try to look at classic styles from all regions of the world. I often ask myself questions like, what is interesting about this wine? What can I find that is off the beaten path that has great value and quality? What is something I know our clients will love?”

Looking at environmental practices is another component, as in organic farming. Last summer the menu was revamped to tell guests if a winery is certified organic, biodynamic or uses green practices.



Special chef-sommelier pairing:

Appetizer: King crab with a pepper crusted orange relish

Wine: Leeuwin Estate, Dry Riesling, Margaret River, Australia

Salad: Strawberry salad with a white balsamic dressing and arugula

Wine: Chateau Gassier, "Epritgassier", Rose, Provence, France

Entrée: Red wine braised short ribs with salted roasted potatoes

Wine: Robert Craig "Affinity", Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

Dessert: Mascarpone crusted cheese cake with chocolate dipped Madeline

Wine: Saracco, Moscato d'Asti, Piedmont, Italy.

To make the list more approachable it highlights flavor profiles. A Chardonnay might indicate if it has a big, buttery taste or is more oaky.

The menu also balances classic favorites with small case productions.

It's not all about the sommeliers' favorites, but what guests want and what will sell.

The sommeliers also work closely with Chef Ben Deinken so they have an understanding of what will be coming out of the kitchen. Based on a sampling of food and wines prepared for *Lake Tahoe News*, the trio is clearly in sync.

The guidance of a sommelier will often lead people to trying wines they have not heard of, but could be similar to what

they are used to. The wine experts ask diners what they regularly drink, what they like in a wine – that's more important than what they are ordering.

"I'm less of traditionalist in finding the right wine for the right food. It's what they like," Small told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Dubben said, "When guests ask for your opinion this can open up dialogue about which direction they want to go. Generally, I follow up in asking if they are feeling adventurous or if they are interested in trying something that they cannot get everywhere. Reading the guest isn't always easy, but another way I sometimes go about it is to just bring up a wine that I love and tell the story about the wine, winemakers and the location of the winery. It paints a picture for the guest about what they are about to enjoy and it is my favorite way to talk about wine."



West Shore Cafe Sommeliers Lisa Small and Rob Dubben

Becoming a sommelier is no easy task. Tests are rigorous, involve blind tastings, written exams, knowing varietals,

where in the world the wine came from and more complexities.

A few years ago at a different restaurant Small was called out by a diner for her lack of wine knowledge. That got her interested in learning, and now making a career out of her expertise.

Dubben took a bit more traditional route, starting in the restaurant business at age 14. Eventually he attended the International Culinary Center in Campbell where he spent three months studying under five master sommeliers.

Dubben is studying to take the exam for the next level, called advanced. The top level is master sommelier.

Letter: TDFPD board members say thanks

To the community,

We would like to thank the entire community for the trust you've placed in us to help guide the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District. Our new chief, Scott Baker, and his entire team are phenomenal community assets and it's our honor to support them.

Our district is fiscally sound, our staff is well trained and equipped, and the members of this organization serve our residents and guests competently and with pride daily. There are some difficult challenges in front of us, however, including addressing areas of our community which have no firefighting water supply and assessing and managing the impacts of the redevelopment area on future funding.

We always welcome your suggestions, questions, and attendance at our board meetings. Again, thank you for your support – especially if we missed you while we were giving out Ann’s fresh-baked cookies as a thank you on Friday. We are committed to representing you well.

Ann Grant, Larry Schussel and Greg Felton, TDFPD board

Opinion: Ski industry leaders support climate change deniers

By Porter Fox, Powder

The future of skiing can be summed up like this: The planet is warming; snow melts when it is warm. And state and federal climate change legislation—that keeps billions of tons of carbon in the ground instead of up in the air—is the best, perhaps only, way to save snow.

So it is surprising that in 2016, ski resorts, trade groups, and industry leaders—who work in one of the most susceptible regions to warming in the world—are actively supporting Congressional candidates responsible for blocking climate change legislation.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, “Vail Resorts PAC” sent thousands of dollars to the campaigns of stalwart climate change deniers Reps. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., Chris Stewart, R-Utah,, Rob Bishop, R-Utah, Scott Tipton, R-Colo., and Tom McClintock (R-Calif.). Vail Resorts CEO Rob Katz donated \$10,000 to the PAC in 2015 and 2016. Former CEO John

Redmond, Executive Vice President David T. Shapiro, and several other high level executives donated as well. Vail Resorts owns Whistler-Blackcomb, Breckenridge, Keystone, Heavenly, Northstar, Kirkwood, and Park City, among many other properties around the globe.

Read the whole story

Millennials workplace loyalty has to be bought

By Chris Stokel-Walker, Bloomberg

A strong pat on the back and a reassuring word no longer cuts it when it comes to keeping millennials happy at work.

More than three-quarters of U.K. workers age 18 to 24 say company perks are crucial to their job satisfaction, according to a survey by Perkbox, a company that sells employee gifts. Only about half of baby boomers in the U.K. tied their job satisfaction to the goodies, the survey said.

Amazon gift cards, for example, are the physical representation of a caring, sharing employer, said Saurav Chopra, co-founder of Perkbox.

“Millennials see this as something employers should do as standard, whereas older employees see it as a bonus,” Chopra said.

Read the whole story

Study: Racial gaps in arrests pervasive in Calif.

By Bob Egelko, San Francisco Chronicle

Arrest rates have dropped for all racial groups in California over the past decade, but African Americans are still much more likely than whites to be arrested on felony charges, the state Attorney General's Office reported.

In 2015, blacks were 10 times as likely as whites to be arrested on robbery charges and three to five times as likely to be arrested on charges of burglary, theft or assault, the report said. For felonies involving narcotics, black men were six times as likely as white men to be arrested, and black women were 2.9 times as likely as white women.

The report, part of a year-old project by the state Attorney General's Office to study arrest records statewide, comes at a time of national controversy and protests over racial issues in law enforcement and police killings of black men.

[Read the whole story](#)