

Fabulous views unveiled after steady climb on snowshoes

By Kathryn Reed

I have to catch my breath at one point as I feel the pull in my legs and lungs at the same time. “That’s why it’s called High Meadow,” Rosemary says.

I don’t have my snowshoe legs. That’s my excuse. It’s February and this was the first time to strap on the devices this winter. Usually by this phase of winter I’ve blazed trails throughout the basin.

Although there is exposed dirt on part of the the route most exposed to the sun, it still seems easier to hike with the snowshoes than boots. As we keep climbing, the snow just gets better for this winter activity.



Power lines
and Mount
Tallac
demonstrate
modern
conveniences
and the power
of nature.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

Oddly, neither Sue nor I had snowshoed here before. Different off-spurs could have us exploring the High Meadow trail system for days. We've biked parts of Power Line, but had done zero winter outings until last weekend.

Already on the to-do list for the three of us is going farther than we did this particular day. Next time the end point will be Star Lake. That is about six miles one-way. High Meadow is about one mile below the lake. (Distances are according to the U.S. Forest Service.)

In summer 2010, the Forest Service turned the meadow into a construction zone in order to restore Cold Creek.

On our trek we make it to an earlier manmade disturbance – power lines. Power Line trail gets its name from all those overhead wires that run through the forest.

The clearing we use as a turn-around location provides spectacular views looking west to Mount Tallac, Pyramid Peak and other ridgetops in Desolation Wilderness.

Although signs are clearly posted that no snowmobiles are allowed where we are, the tracks prove the sleds have been out.

With the trail wide enough for a vehicle in places, it allows us to walk at least two across. It makes it easier to chat over the crunching of the snow.

Large conifers loom overhead, casting shadows on this gloriously sunny day. While the temperature was chilly to begin with, the exertion has us losing layers.

A vista of sorts beckons us before we reach our end point. The knoll provides panoramic views in all directions. Lake Tahoe almost looks small below the forest.

I'm ready to explore some more.

Getting to the High Meadow trailhead:

- From South Lake Tahoe, turn east onto Al Tahoe Boulevard.
- Turn right on Pioneer Trail.
- Turn left on Remington Trail. (Sierra House Elementary School is on the corner.)
- Follow signs to the end and park.
- On the trail, we veered up and to the right at times, but signs could be better.

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Pop titan Whitney Houston found dead at age 48

Publisher's note: *While Whitney Houston was never on a stage in Northern Nevada, she did have a connection to Lake Tahoe. The 1992 film "The Bodyguard" was partly filmed at Fallen Leaf Lake.*

In the film, Houston and co-star Kevin Costner were holed up at his father's cabin at Fallen Leaf.

Leah Halsten, who was in "Carnival Cabaret" from 2002-08 at the Horizon casino in Stateline, impersonated Whitney Houston.

By Geoff Boucher, Los Angeles Times

Whitney Houston, a willowy church singer with a towering voice

who became a titan of the pop charts in the 1980s and 1990s but then saw much of her success crumble away amid the fumes of addiction and reckless ego, has died. She was 48.

Kristen Foster, a publicist, announced Saturday that the singer had died, and police sources later confirmed that she was found unresponsive in her room at the Beverly Hilton Hotel about 3:30pm. Paramedics performed CPR on her, but she was pronounced dead about 4 p.m., Beverly Hills Police Lt. Mark Rosen told KTLA News. An investigation into the cause of death is pending.



Whitney
Houston

On Thursday afternoon at the hotel, Houston drew the attention of reporters and security staff with her erratic behavior, dripping sweat and disheveled clothes. The singer was disruptive at that day's rehearsals for music mogul Clive Davis' annual Grammy industry party and showcase; that party at the Hilton on Saturday night was supposed to include a performance by Houston.

Late Saturday, Davis told those assembled at the party that he had a "heavy heart" and was "personally devastated" by Houston's death, but "simply put, Whitney would have wanted the music to go on, and her family has asked for us to carry on."

The star's professional decline had become a familiar part of her public saga. Her haggard appearance at times shocked fans who had once been drawn to the singer's world-class smile and

approachable glamour in music videos, album covers, concerts and, later, hit films. Songs like “I Will Always Love You” and “Saving All My Love for You” had women around the world singing along with the star, but by the end of the 1990s they barely recognized her.

Read the whole story

Disabled ski champion Jill Kinmont Boothe dies at 75

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

Jill Kinmont Boothe was the national women’s slalom champion and on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* when she set out to win a 1955 race that would help put her on the U.S. Olympic ski team. As she sped down a Utah mountain slope, she lost control on an icy bump, struck a spectator, crashed and tumbled into a tree.

When she finally came to a stop, she couldn’t feel anything. This must be death, she later recalled thinking. Her neck broken, she was paralyzed below her shoulders, her promising career as a skier over at 18.

But Kinmont Boothe became a role model of a different sort, the subject of a book and two Hollywood films, a teacher and a painter who refused to let her crippling injuries turn her into a different person.

She died Thursday at a hospital in Carson City, said Ruth Rhines of the local coroner’s office. Rhines could not confirm reports that Kinmont Boothe died of complications related to

surgery. She was 75.

A Los Angeles native, she was born Feb. 16, 1936, and in her early teens moved with her family to the Owens Valley, where her father ran a dude ranch in Bishop in the shadow of the Eastern Sierra. She learned to ski at nearby Mammoth Mountain and in 1954 won both the national junior and senior slalom championships

Adding to her appeal, she was, in the words of 1950s press accounts, a “plucky, pretty” blue-eyed blond – the mid-century ideal of young womanhood.

“Everybody that I knew at that age thought Jill was about the cutest thing around; she really was a beautiful young lady and a phenomenal skier,” said Alan Engen, a former U.S. ski competitor and ski historian who met Kinmont Boothe as a young racer. “At the time that she had her accident, she was probably the premier up-and-comer women’s U.S. skier.”

Read the whole story

Caltrans to talk about highway changes in Meyers

Caltrans is having a public meeting in Meyers on Feb. 21 from 5:30 to 8pm at the Lake Valley Fire Protection District building.

The main topic will be the proposed changes to the speed limits in the area. Also to be discussed is the issue of pedestrian crossings in Meyers.

Learn ways to deal with hip pain

Robert Rupp and Rene Hoogendijk will give two lectures in March about hips.

The Barton Health officials will talk about alternative treatments for people with hip pain.

The first meeting is March 7 from 6-7pm at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe.

The second is March 21 from 6-7pm at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village.

Conference focuses on survival of small farms

In the midst of a challenging economy, the 2012 Nevada Small Farm Conference looks to agriculture to help communities rebuild local economies.

Western Nevada College will host this year's Nevada Small Farm Conference March 8-10 at the Fallon Convention Center and Western Nevada College Fallon campus. The event includes four pre-conference workshops, two days of farming seminars, and a Friday evening reception. A variety of topics will be covered, including marketing local beef, small-scale cheese operations, organic farming, hops and barley production, food

distribution, business planning and more.

Developing local food systems is a priority of the conference. Speakers from the 2011 conference will return to continue talks aimed at developing a system for small farms to compete in today's industrial food system. U.S. Foods and the Great Basin Community Food Co-op, two organizations at the forefront of these efforts, will highlight their operations.

The Great Basin Community Food Co-op will talk about its online ordering and distribution system for small farms. The program debuts with the opening of the expanded co-op this spring.

For conference details, registration information and fees, visit WNC's website or contact Ann Louhela at (775) 351.2551 or louhelaa@wnc.edu.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- The 50th annual Lake Valley Firefighters' Ball is March 2 at 8pm at MontBleu in Stateline. Click on the flyer for more info.

- The South Lake Tahoe women's center received a grant to build an emergency shelter in Alpine County, which will include permanent offices. It will be able to house three families with up to 12 beds, but it will be open to people outside of Alpine County.

- Each Wednesday at 6:30pm Unity at the Lake has Book Study at

1195 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe (across from the rec center). "The Storm before the Calm" by Neale Donald Walsch is the current book. For more info, call (530) 544.2266.

- The free ski shuttle that was going to happen on the North Shore during Presidents Day weekend has been canceled.

- South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center is sponsoring a fun trip on Feb. 23 from 7:30am-6:30pm aboard the M.S. Dixie II and at the city pool. The cost is \$25. Preregister by calling (530) 542.6056, or drop by the pool 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd.

Education proposal would challenge Brown on the ballot

By Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

When Molly Munger's name surfaced last year as a potential partner on efforts to provide more funding for schools, California State PTA President Carol Kocivar had to turn to Google to find out who she was.

While Munger is a longtime champion for civil rights and education policy issues, the 63-year-old attorney was a virtual unknown in California political circles.

That changed the moment she submitted a \$10 billion tax proposal for the ballot.

Munger's proposed initiative to raise state income taxes for all but the poorest Californians to fund schools and early childhood development programs – and the personal cash she has

pledged to spend to put it on the ballot – makes her a major player in the 2012 ballot wars and a thorn in Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown's side.

Her measure, one of at least three tax proposals that could qualify for November's ballot, is seen as a threat to the one Brown is pushing. His would generate nearly \$7 billion in budget relief by raising income taxes on high earners and enacting a half-cent increase in the sales tax.

Brown and his allies have called for proponents of rival tax initiatives to drop their efforts, arguing that a ballot featuring multiple tax hikes will lead voters to reject them all.

The argument hasn't moved Munger, a Democrat and Pasadena resident, who says her polling shows a tax hike earmarked for schools can win even with other tax measures on the ballot.

"We think the governor doesn't have as good of an idea this year as we do," Munger told reporters this week. "And that's part of democracy, to put that out in the marketplace of ideas and let the voters decide."

Read the whole story

Opinions: A badge of honor to help feed needy

To the community,

Bread & Broth would like to extend a warm thank you for the Brownies/Girl Scout Troop 123 support in our Adopt-A-Day of Nourishment Program. Volunteers from the Brownies/Girl Scout

Troop 123 spent their Monday helping Bread & Broth volunteers serve those in need a well balanced nutritious meal to people from the community.

The volunteers from the Brownies/Girls Scouts have gone above and beyond in their efforts to help our cause, and it is helping each of them achieve a Global Action Award.

The Bread & Broth staff that Monday was excited that the Brownies were there to offer their support for our Adopt-A-Day of Nourishment through the Bread & Broth program. Bread & Broth is able to continue its mission of feeding the hungry of South Lake Tahoe in large part because of the generosity of the local community.

A \$250 sponsorship covers the cost of food and beverages for the approximately 100 people who visit each Monday evening. To find out how your family or business can Adopt A Day of Nourishment, contact Connie Blue at midwest2tahoe@yahoo.com or (530) 544.4945.

Special thanks to Hailey, Genevieve, Sandy, Kyla, Jennifer, Myliana, Kade, Annaleigh, Tammy, Chloe, Kahleson, Maddy, Linda, Patsy, Susie and Sandy. The volunteers helped serve dessert and drinks, as well as with clean up. Their enthusiasm and helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

Bread & Broth

Millions of dollars for Tahoe fuels projects may have been

misspent by Fire Safe Council

By Anne Knowles

The Nevada Fire Safe Council may have to return \$2.7 million to the U.S. Forest Service unless it can prove it properly spent the grant money. A federal investigation found the group mishandled the funds.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General, which has been investigating the group after receiving a tip in July 2011, found NVFSC violated several federal regulations, including commingling federal grant money with other funds, allowing one person to be in charge of all aspects of managing the grant money and not conducting annual audits.



While no criminal charges have been filed, Andrew List is no longer with the Nevada Fire Safe Council.

Photo/LTN file

In a report released in January, the OIG recommended the USFS recover \$2.7 million of the \$9.8 million it awarded the nonprofit for hazardous fuels reduction work in the Lake Tahoe

Basin. In a response to the OIG, the Forest Service said it is working with NVFSC and has given the group until Feb. 29 to provide documentation proving it spent the money in a way allowed by the grant.

Lake Tahoe News in July 2011 broke the story that the Nevada Fire Safe Council's financial practices were being questioned and the subsequent federal investigation.

The OIG also recommended the USFS withhold any further grant money until NVFSC proves it has implemented adequate internal controls and conducted the missing audits, and that NVFSC provide documentation for all other money spent. If unable to do so, the USFS should withhold reimbursement, the report says.

The OIG is still investigating NVFSC to see if it overcharged for fuels reduction work because it did not use a competitive bidding process to award contracts, the claim of the whistleblower whose call prompted the investigation. The OIG said it would deliver a final report, but did not specify when.

"This first report is letting us know they have uncovered some concerns," Cheva Heck, a public affairs officer with the USFS's Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "At this point, we're going to work with Nevada Fire Safe Council and move forward."

And while the OIG report did not accuse NVFSC of anything worse than mismanagement, it also didn't rule it out.

"Although nothing has come to our attention at this time to indicate that fraud actually occurred, our review of the council's financial accounting practices is still ongoing," the report says.

As an example of commingling of funds, the report said NVFSC put \$705,611 received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act into an account with other funds from other

sources and used the account for rent, utilities and for other purposes not authorized under the act.

The report said Andrew List, the former executive director, was solely responsible for all aspects of handling the grants, such as receiving, depositing and dispersing the funds, when rules require those tasks to be handled by multiple people in order to reduce error and fraud.

Finally, the investigation found that NVFSC had not been audited for four years, from 2007 to 2010, as required by federal regulations.

When asked why, NVFSC board members told OIG that List had "maintained that each year that the audits were not being performed because an accounting firm could not be hired at an acceptable price."

According to the report, on Oct. 14, NVFSC board of directors told the OIG it planned on replacing the executive director with an interim director, developing new business and accounting procedures and hiring an accounting firm to manage its grants.

List left NVFSC late last year and Elwood Miller is now interim director.