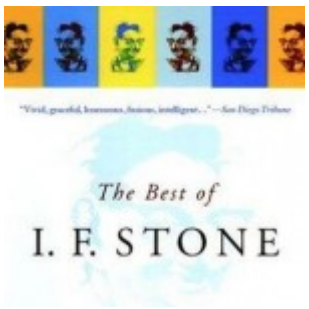
Collection of I.F. Stone columns relevant decades later

By Kathryn Reed

I admit I didn't know much about I.F. Stone until I read a collection of his columns.

"The Best of I.F. Stone" (published in 2006) is a series of his writings with the earliest being 1941 and the latest from 1971. Think about all that happened in the United States and throughout the world during that time span – then you'll realize this is not light reading.



Stone was a serious journalist who didn't have a problem calling a spade a spade. He didn't back away from pointing out the truth even if that wasn't what the politicians were spewing. There was depth to his work that is so often missing today in journalism. Stone wasn't afraid to dig deeper, provide insight. He knew the back-story so he was able to give readers perspective to what he was writing.

Tom Wicker, former associate editor of the *New York Times*, said on the jacket cover, "I.F. Stone was perhaps our most independent journalist. Instead of attending news conferences, he searched out government documents – learning far more than by listening to 'official statements.' We could certainly use more like him today."

This book is full of 63 highly charged political columns that are thought provoking and enlightening.

My friend Bill gave me the book; thinking I might identify

with Stone. (More about Stone may be found online.)

(I’m intrigued by the idea of not having advertisers and only paid subscribers. That’s something to think about.)

But it’s Stone’s writings that captured me. It was like a trip through history that happened almost entirely before I was born. And while I knew of many of the bigger stories, it was the intricate details that were never written in any history book I had to read.

From going to the Mideast to see for himself what was happening with the Israelis and Palestinians, to criticizing Bobby Kennedy for not being stronger against Vietnam as he ran for president, to the atrocities of Joseph McCarthy – Stone was not afraid to tackle any subject or person.

This isn’t easy reading. At times it’s not even fun. But every page was educational. It either made me remember something long forgotten or taught me something I never knew.

Besides being disturbed to learn things I think I should have known by now, what was more alarming is how some things have not changed. It makes we wonder if we are progressing and evolving as a people.

What’s your idea for a budget holiday gift?

Shop – it’s a four letter word in a super negative way for so many people this time of year.



With the economy being what it is, household incomes such as they are and the pressure to buy, buy, buy this time of year, let’s help each other out.

Twenty dollars. What if that were the maximum amount you could spend on a gift? What would you buy? What would you make? What would you sell someone?

Send your suggestions to **info@LakeTahoeNews.net**. Put “holiday” in the subject line. Suggest ideas to other readers about what $20 or less can buy, who it might be good for if that’s not obvious, where to buy it, how to make it. Make the ideas as Lake Tahoe or Sierra Nevada oriented as possible. If you have a picture of the item, the store, yourself, then send it along as a jpeg. Include your name and contact information in case we have questions. If you are OK with your name being credited with the suggestion, indicate it’s fine to publish it. Your phone number and/or email address will not be published.

Keep what you write to 150 words or so.

Keep the ideas family friendly and legal.

Lake Tahoe News reserves the right not to print all of the suggestions and to edit them.

Report: Government subsidies

going to millionaires

By Daniel Stone and Laura Colarusso, Newsweek

Class warfare is a politically charged term these days, from the Wall Street protests to the Capitol Hill negotiations over curtailing the nation's debt. But a new congressional analysis, obtained by Newsweek, may fuel populist outrage by showing the extent of government subsidies that go to the wealthiest people in America.

From unemployment payments to subsidies and tax breaks on luxury items like vacation homes and yachts, Americans earning more than $1 million collect more than $30 billion in government largesse each year, according to the report assembled by Sen. Tom Coburn, a Republican from Oklahoma, who is so often at odds with members of both parties that colleagues call him "Dr. No." The Internal Revenue Service provided the data showing how much money was going to the much-referenced top 1 percent.

In all, millionaires receive hefty help from Uncle Sam. The $30 billion in handouts, to put it in perspective, amounts to twice as much as the government spends on NASA, and three times the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency. On the other hand, it would only cover the cost of fighting about three months in Iraq and Afghanistan. Still, eliminating them would help make a small dent in the $1.5 trillion congressional leaders are trying to find by Thanksgiving.

Jon Bon Jovi, the millionaire rock star cited in the report, took federal dollars to raise honeybees on his property. Together billionaire moguls David Rockefeller and Ted Turner have also accepted more than half a million dollars in farm payments. Basketball legend Scottie Pippen took $210,520 in agriculture subsidies while making his fortune playing for the Chicago Bulls. To make matters worse, the government disclosed

to Coburn that some recipients of farm subsidies got it by mistake. Tax records show that more than three fourths of high earners collecting farming money list their primary residence in a city—land unsuitable for farming.

Read the whole story

Santa Paws elevates animals to full family member status

By Kathryn Reed

> *"You can say any foolish thing to a dog, and the dog will give you a look that says, 'My God, you're right! I never would've thought of that!'" – Dave Barry*

Apparently you can do some foolish things with them, too, and get the same result. Like taking them in for a family photo with Santa Paws.

They stand in line more obediently than many a child. They play nice with strangers – unlike some children. And they willingly go – no whining involved.



Gary and Lorna

Lefler with their menagerie and Santa Paws. Photo/Dawn Armstrong

Now in its 25th year, Santa Paws is Lake Tahoe Humane Society's most well known fundraiser.

Each year someone puts on a hot costume – Santa Paws – and spends hours having people and animals on his or her lap as the camera clicks away.

"The pets are great. The owners can be the problem. I have to tell the people to be quiet. I need to tell them to stop calling their pet because they are looking at them and not me," Dawn Armstrong, who runs the Humane Society and is chief photographer at the event, said.

She has been part of Santa Paws for 20 of the 25 years it has been going on in South Lake Tahoe. She started with a Polaroid camera. Each picture was $5.

Now she uses a digital camera, it costs $20 and people are given a disc with multiple pictures.

This will be the first year the event has been at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center. With it completely inside and there being plenty of room, it should be better for the several dozen people who turn out each year.

More than 60 people usually show up, with 91 being the record.

Ray Petragallo is planning to be at the event next weekend with his granddaughter. Last year was the first time they had been at the Santa Paws event with her St. Bernard and his Weimaraner.

“My dog put the Santa Paws glove in its mouth and would not give it back. A lady came over with a treat and they traded. He gave up the glove,” Petragallo said. “These people are so good with these dogs.”

Judy Brown, who is on the Humane Society’s board of directors, said accidents are rare and when an aggressive dog comes in, he is shown the back door.

Many regulars come back year after year. Kids get older and bigger, and sometimes the pets are different.

Sometimes it’s the animal just with Santa Paws. Sometimes it’s a single person. Sometimes it’s the whole family. And many times the animals are dressed up.

Many people use these as Christmas photos that get sent far and wide.

For Brooke Laine, she showed up last year with two dogs – her Border Collie, Pepper, and her son’s Lab, Buddy.

She and the dogs are her son, Matt’s, wallpaper on his laptop.

Laine plans to be back this year.

“It’s super fun and it’s for a good cause,” Laine said.

Dogs and cats dominate the animals brought in to be photographed. But birds, a snake, bunnies and ferrets are been part of the fun.

“Last year we had ferrets. They came near the end. It was a hoot. They had them all dressed up,” Armstrong said. “After they left, then the dogs were really weird. They wouldn’t get near Santa Paws. Ferrets stink.”

And, yes, animals and their humans do look alike, Armstrong said.

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Santa Paws is Dec. 3 from 11am-4pm at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. Cost is $20 – cash or check. For more information, call (530) 542.2857. Proceeds benefit the Lake Tahoe Humane Society. Donations of dry dog and cat food will be accepted for the Emergency Pet Food Bank.

Family Resource Center looking for holiday donations

South Lake Tahoe's Family Resource Center is working with a number of other local agencies to provide gifts for children, Christmas dinner, clothing, and other basic supplies to families in need throughout our community.

Below are the holiday programs people may help with: Christmas dinners: Through generous support from local Safeway stores, the FRC purchases dinners for families in need for $45 per family.

Family adoption: Adopt a family of any size and personally pick out the presents for the children. Families eligible for this program are generally large or single parent homes. Gifts should be wrapped and delivered to the Family Resource Center during the week of Dec. 12.

Gift basket program: In addition to Family Adoption, some donors like to provide families with a basic needs basket that includes household necessities such as laundry detergent, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, bathroom tissue, and many other items.

Baskets: FRC needs medium to large baskets and wrapping paper by the first week of December.

The Family Resource Center also accepts cash donations, which are spread out between all of the programs listed above. Mail donations to: SLT Family Resource Center, 3501B Spruce Ave., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

For more information, call the FRC at (530) 542.0740.community.

Mancuso takes third in GS at Aspen

By USSA

ASPEN – Olympic champion Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley broke a seven-year jinx Nov. 26, taking the No. 3 podium spot with two brilliant GS runs at the Nature Valley Aspen Winternational.

Lindsey Vonn of Vail battled back from a tough first run (21st) to finish 12th. It was the first U.S. podium in Aspen since Kristina Koznick was third in slalom in November 2004 and the first U.S. women's GS podium since Tamara McKinney's win in 1981.

Defending World Cup GS champ Viktoria Rebensburg of Germany survived a near crash on the first run to comeback for the

win. Action continues with slalom Sunday.

“I’ve been wanting to ski really fast in GS and I had a couple of unlucky second runs last year so this is just a great way to start. I know now that with any start position, I can find my way onto the podium,” Mancuso said. “I think every time I’ve raced here I’ve been in the top 10 or have been really close to the top 10. I’ve always loved this hill because it’s always moving, it’s really steep and it’s a lot of fun.”

With Mancuso’s third in Aspen and Vonn’s win in Soelden, the U.S. women have been on both Audi FIS World Cup GS podiums.

Mancuso’s Spyder racing suit for Aspen featured a trail map of her home mountain of Squaw Valley.

“It’s so special to get back on the podium here in Aspen, my family is here, my Squaw Valley Fan Club is here and my Spyder speed suit from today has the Squaw Valley map on it,” Mancuso said. “Plus, my friend Tamara McKinney, who was the last U.S. woman to take a GS podium here was in the crowd. It’s just cool to celebrate with my family and friends.”

Children’s shelter looking for holiday donations

Austin’s House expects to have many children in crisis staying over the holidays. You can brighten their days with a simple donation.

The best donation is a gift card to a store or cash. This allows Austin’s House to purchase the exact gift that each

child wants, even if they arrive on Christmas Eve. A gift card to any local store that carries clothing and toys is perfect. You may also donate gift cards for children's entertainment such as local movie theaters, fast food restaurants and bowling.

Austin's House also needs food to stock the pantry. Specific items needed are cereal: oatmeal, Cheerios, Corn Chex, Honey Bunches of Oats and Raisin Bran; canned fruit in light syrup: unsweetened applesauce, peaches, pears, mandarin oranges; crackers: Goldfish, Wheat Thins and Triscuits; snack bars: Nutrigrain or oatmeal bars; baking mixes: cookies, brownies, corn bread and cakes; canned chili, refried beans, canned soup, pasta sauce, pancake mix, syrup, ketchup, mayonnaise, and ranch dressing.

Other items needed are baby wipes, paper towels, toilet paper, Kleenex, napkins, laundry detergent, dishwashing soap, dishwasher detergent, Clorox cleaning wipes, baby shampoo and children's hairbrushes.

The staff at Austin's House has produced a beautiful 2012 calendar featuring artwork drawn by children who have stayed at Austin's House. Each month brings a warm reminder of another young life that was changed for the better thanks to the fine care provided at this wonderful facility. The 2012 calendar is $10 and all of the money will directly benefit Austin's House.

Call (775) 267.6711 to donate to Austin's House – the only emergency children's shelter in rural Northern Nevada.

Assembly committee budgets conceal travel by lawmakers' personal aides

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

Much of the money spent for travel by Assembly committees this year went to fly personal aides of Southern California legislators round-trip between the Capitol and their districts.

The trips contradict what the Assembly tells Californians in its annual expenditure report – that committee travel funds are used primarily for hearings to serve the public.

"Staff travel expenditures reported by committee are generally costs incurred in connection with interim committee hearings which are generally held away from Sacramento for the convenience of citizens who wish to provide testimony," the Assembly's annual notice reads.

The disparity offers another example of how difficult it is to pinpoint how much taxpayer money lawmakers use to run their personal offices. Assembly financial reports minimize what individual lawmakers spend by charging costly personal office expenses to the budgets of committees that do the brunt of the policy work in the house.

Nearly three of every four travel dollars spent by committees from December through July were for trips by lawmakers' personal aides, roughly $48,500 of $67,000. Documents released by the Assembly do not specify a reason for travel in every trip involving a personal aide, but many do, and virtually none cite committee hearings.

According to a Bee review of 507 pages of Assembly committee

records, personal aides flew on 102 of 138 flights bankrolled by committees during those eight months. Dollars spent for travel paid for other things as well, including hotel rooms, rental cars, parking fees, and gasoline reimbursement when personal vehicles were used.

The *Bee* reported last month that more than $8 million in salaries for more than 170 personal aides – who staff legislators' Capitol or district offices – had been paid by Assembly committees during that time span. Travel records show that costs of trips they take are paid by committees as well.

Ted Costa, head of People's Advocate and a political watchdog who launched the successful recall drive against former Gov. Gray Davis, said that the Assembly's failure to disclose scores of flights by personal staff as member expenses can harm its credibility.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Nevada – the state that loves to kill things

By Keaven Van Lom

The state of Nevada is rebranding itself as the "go to" state if you detest democracy and love to kill things. With the highest unemployment and foreclosure rate in the country, along with a mammoth meth crisis, Nevada's good old boy network has cooked up a plan for the decrepit state by tossing

out democracy and offering up more wildlife to slaughter in hopes of attaining an economic path of recovery by satiating trophy hunters.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife, whose commission seats happen to be occupied by hunters, kicked off the marketing plan when they added the majestic black bear to the list of hunting trophies to snag in the beautiful state. In an amazing display of abuse of public office, and the thwarting of democracy, the commission passed Nevada's first bear hunt despite overwhelming public opposition and pleas to Gov. Brian Sandoval to intercede.

Despite polls showing fervent opposition to the hunt, letters to media, nearly 4,000 emails to NDoW on record against the hunt (less than 100 for it), nearly 19,000 anti-hunting signatures flopped on their desks, rallies and so forth, the trophy hunting commissioners took their cue from fascist countries and were able to do what small groups of self-serving, pathological males have always been able to do: what they want despite what the majority wants. The death of democracy now joins the state's dead, bloodied bears.

As one observer stated, "The commissioners had already made up their minds about the hunt way before any public discussions where brought up and told us when they stated, 'We're having the bear hunt because we can'. If you're a public officer elected or appointed in Nevada, you rule not serve."

A lot of great marketing slogans have come in from citizens who want to help the state attract characters who hate the democratic process and who have, say, a certain amount of bloodlust. Here are some noteworthy ones:

> Welcome to the new Wild West. Where random shootings are on the increase and hunting small, unsustainable populations to extinction are encouraged for your entertainment.
>
> Come to Nevada; where real men kill stuff.

> Welcome to Nevada; where democracy is as awful as your craps game.
>
> Nevada, your one stop resource: rent a hooker, lose your shirt and kill your share of our unsustainable wildlife. Commit all your sins in just one state! Governor Sandoval has appointed Stevie Wonder to keep an eye on things.

A petition is now circulating to change the iconic Reno arch sign that straddles Virginia Street in downtown Reno. Citizens hope to reword the famous landmark from: “Reno. The Biggest Little City in the World” to “Welcome to Nevada. Have Fun Killing Our Wildlife.”

The sign change would certainly be apropos. It’s not like eco-tourism or the actual protection of wildlife to live wild and free was ever on the agenda. Nevada hosts animal snuffing groups such as the Safari Club International, killing accoutrement retailers such as Cabela’s and Scheels, and Red Rock Hounds for hunting hounds to tree your bears before you shoot them down. Born Free USA, who works to protect wildlife in their natural habitats, and encourage compassionate conservation globally, gives Nevada a D minus as one of the states where cruel body-gripping traps are least regulated. Desert Bighorn Sheep are being introduced in the Virginia Range for trophy hunting. To do that, plans are afoot to eradicate predators such as mountain lions, and cap underground springs so the area’s wild horses can’t find water.

Well, the Bureau of Land Management has already made life hell for the state’s wild horses. Heck, if you’re a wild animal in Nevada, you’re as unlucky as a blue hair at a rigged slot.

On a positive note, a local church group is fervently praying that baby Jesus will come to life from a front lawn nativity scene in Reno on Christmas Eve wielding a giant, golden saw. The congregation believes the baby Jesus will then saw the

state from the continent and float it over to attach somewhere in the south where animal cruelty and abuse is pandemic. This will help the state feel more at home with their brethren says the group.

Liberals are just hoping the state attaches itself to Washington where democracy has long gone by the wayside, and animal advocates are encouraging cowardly hunters to enlist in one of America's numerous wars and unleash their penchant for violence on something that can shoot back.

Will the new marketing ploy work, or will it send Nevadans packing to states where less blood flows and their voice and opinions actually count? Will they stay and vote out a Governor who turned a blind eye to his arrogant wildlife commission who snubbed a majority and continues to imperil innocent creatures?

Now that Nevada has gone rogue, perhaps Sarah Palin will move in and bring some luster back to the tarnished silver state. After all, Palin can now legally add decapitated black bear and Bighorn Sheep heads to her wall of horrors as well as enjoy some roulette. You betcha.

Keaven Van Lom is a freelance writer living in Truckee, CA. She welcomes your comments at keaven@suddenlink.net.

Competitors locked in for U.S. Grand Prix ski-snowboard

events

By USSA

PARK CITY – One of the longest-standing and celebrated tours in action sports history, the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix series, is back, and bigger for its 16th season. This year snowboarding and freeskiing events will be front and center at three of North America's premier winter resorts.

For the fourth year running, Colorado's Copper Mountain will play host to the kickoff to the action sports winter competition season as the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix touches down Dec. 7-10.

Copper will give the world its first glimpse at new tricks and progression the athletes have made in their riding over the summer months as they boost their freshest moves in a 22-foot halfpipe.

It all starts with halfpipe skiing in the Visa U.S. Halfpipe Grand Prix on Dec. 9. with U.S. champs Devin Logan (West Dover, Vt.) and David Wise (Reno). Pros like X Games champion Jen Hudak (Salt Lake City) also bring their brand of halfpipe stylings to Colorado.

Then, on Dec. 10, laying out the best of their best will be top riders like Olympic bronze medalist Kelly Clark (Mt. Snow, Vt.) who crushed the women's field last season as the only woman landing 1080s in competition. Also watch for Olympic bronze medalist Scotty Lago (Seabrook, N.H.), Olympic silver medalist Hannah Teter (South Lake Tahoe), and many more.

Known for being the first superpipe open for riding each season in North America, Copper's Olympic-regulation U-tube is one of the best conditioned spots to ride halfpipe in the world, not to mention completely visible from the Village at Copper and Burning Stones Plaza, making it easy for spectators

to catch all of the weekend’s competitions.

Immediately following the halfpipe snowboarding competition will be the North Face Junior Jam, an event for local groms to come out and display their riding prowess to the world. Adding to the excitement of the event for the 2012 season is Woodward at Copper’s involvement in the development of the Paul Mitchell Progression Session venue, an event that will feature innovative riding on a unique course setup under the lights on Dec. 10.

Marking the halfway point of the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix series for the second year in a row is Canyons Resort in Utah where snowboardcross and, new to the tour in 2012, skicross will be front-and-center for action packed, first man to the finish, racing Feb. 11-12.

After a successful snowboardcross debut at the resort in 2011, Canyons is gearing up to make things bigger and better this season as they make operational changes to the hill that include cutting trees, moving snowmaking and widening trails that will ensure a world-class cross sport venue.

It kicks off with SBX on Feb. 11 featuring world-class athletes like Lindsey Jacobellis (Stratton, Vt.), Nate Holland (Squaw Valley), Seth Wescott (Sugarloaf, Maine) and Canyons Resort rider Jonathan Cheever (Saugus, Mass.).

Then, on Feb. 12, athletes like World Cup winner John Teller (Mammoth Lakes) will help kick off skicross’ inaugural appearance on the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix series.

Also adding to the excitement at Canyons is The North Face Junior Jam, a competition that will showcase young talent from the Park City area in a slopestyle infused competition layout.

Rounding out the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix is Mammoth Mountain hosting for its third consecutive year. The resort is once again taking things to the next level with the addition of

halfpipe and slopestyle skiing to its competition agenda, which already includes the 22-foot halfpipe and slopestyle snowboarding events.

The action gets underway March 2 when athletes compete at the second stop of the Visa U.S. Grand Prix halfpipe. The day's action will continue as slopestyle snowboarding takes over in the afternoon. After being voted as the riders as the best slopestyle event of the year in 2011, Mammoth's slopestyle course will feature all things bigger and better in 2012, challenging snowboarders and skiers alike to nail their best runs.

On March 3, the halfpipe opens again where reigning U.S. Grand Prix tour champ Kelly Clark will be looking to reclaim her title, going head-to-head with the likes of Teter, Gretchen Bleiler (Breckenridge) and Kaitlyn Farrington (Sun Valley). Things aren't any less competitive on the men's side with Lago riding it out against competitors like Mammoth native Greg Bretz (Mammoth Lakes) and Matt Ladley (Steamboat Springs).

The halfpipe competition will be followed up with the inaugural slopestyle competition, where freeskiing athletes look to make a splash in the sport's Grand Prix debut.