Ski report: Ton of sun



Wind may be an issue at higher elevations.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Sam is a really nice, loving, cuddly lap cat, who loves to be brushed. He is an older gentleman who would like a quiet home.



Sam is scared at the shelter and spends his time hiding in a box so he never gets snatched up. He is happy to live with other well mannered pets and children.

Sam is neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated.

He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

— Susan Baumflek

Estate planning workshop on South Shore

Attorney Jacqueline Mittelstadt is offering two seminars on estate planning.

Both start at 5:30pm. One is March 10, the other March 11. Both are on the South Shore.

Reasons to attend and learn about living trusts:

1) To avoid giving your money to the government;

2) Ensure loved ones are provided for;

3) Avoid wasting money and time on unnecessary court fees;

4) Retain control over your assets.

Wine and cheese will be served. Space is limited. Call to reserve a seat, (530) 307.9412 or email jm@mittelstadtlaw.com.

Discounts apply for all who attend.

Census results may shift

political power to S. Nevada

By Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada’s population shift to Southern Nevada will be reflected in the redrawing of representative districts, but whether it means seats will be added in the state Legislature for the first time in 30 years or whether Northern Nevada loses seats remains to be seen.

With Democrats in control of the Legislature and Republican Brian Sandoval in the governor’s office, a partisan battle is more than likely.

Public hearings will be held in Carson City, Fallon, Reno and Las Vegas over the next six weeks to let concerned citizens weigh in on the issue.

Based on Census population figures released Thursday, if the current number of 63 legislative districts stays in place, each of the 42 Assembly members would represent 64,299 residents and each of the 21 seantors 128,598 residents.

About 75 percent of the state’s population of 2.7 million lives in Southern Nevada, with 1.95 million in Clark County alone.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Brown, labor have a

chance to be a model

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Feb. 21, 2011, Sacramento Bee.***

Gov. Jerry Brown offered a quick answer to the question of whether he would follow the incendiary lead of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker by moving to abolish collective bargaining rights for state workers.

"No," Brown told reporters the other day.

Walker and other newly elected and emboldened Republican governors are using their state's fiscal crises as an excuse to curtail or abolish public employee unions. This spectacle will embitter both sides, particularly the rank-and-file, and that's never a good idea.

If Republican Meg Whitman had won in November, and sought to carry out her campaign promise of dismissing 40,000 state workers, California might well have been the scene of such angry protests.

Brown, by contrast, signed the original legislation during his first stint as governor granting state workers the right to collective bargaining.

Read the whole story

Alpine Meadows understands

what true skiers want

By Susan Wood

TAHOE CITY – I felt a kinship skiing the slopes of Alpine Meadows. We're about the same age. We're both no frills. We're both a little rugged.

In its 50th year, Alpine's philosophy of "it's just the mountain" appeals to me in this day and age of carnivals, villages, casinos and caviar in relation to ski resorts.

The employees know this philosophy. So do the skiers and boarders. Both celebrated at a party Alpine threw on Jan. 8. It sounded like an understated gathering. More is in the works throughout the year, spokeswoman Rachael Woods hinted.



Alpine is full of bowls and steeps. Photos/Kathryn Reed

When I got on the mountain on Presidents Day, I soon came to believe a mountain of this magnitude deserved more than one party.

The terrain is full of knobby, jagged peaks circling the base. It reminded me of Alta in Utah – which in effect also shows a different personality from its nearby, more glamorous neighbor Snowbird. Up the road, Alpine has the glitzier Squaw Valley –

home of the 1960 Winter Olympics.

A quick ride up on Roundhouse Express chairlift at Alpine Meadows, down the Rock Garden run to the Scott lift over to the Lakeview chair gave way to some of the most stunning scenery available in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Several people gathered at the plateau on top to take pictures of the lake we call home.

A simple snow skate over the knoll below Ward Peak at 8,637 feet brought me to another mind-blowing view of wide-open faces and runs on the backside the Sherwood Express lift services. The snow was soft and even during a holiday weekend the crowds were sparse on this side.

There’s room for everyone here. And from the looks of the tracks cutting into cliffs, hillsides and runs between trees, everyone had thought of a variety of ways to schuss down the multi-angled mountain.

No boredom here at Alpine. This was downright fun, and I wondered what took me so long to get here after living at Tahoe for 10-plus years.

On the Scott chairlift, a New York tourist admitted to having impeccable luck to choosing his ski vacation week months ago. He flashed a smile as if all were right with the world.

Maybe timing is everything. The skiers and boarders seemed giddy with excitement after the series of recent storms a week ago had delivered 106 inches to the mountain with 400 acres of groomed intermediate and expert off-trail terrain and serviced by 13 chairlifts. February’s windfall became the icing on the cake, after Alpine received its biggest opening day ever on Dec. 10. Mother Nature summoned many feet of snow in November and December to provide a hefty base.

The Outer Limits run off the Lakeview chairlift provides an incredible view before dropping into the backside. At the top

of the Sherwood Express chair, a humbling double-black run called Our Father gave credence to prayers and ability for those who grace its slopes. Some of these runs drop so steep, you'd think you're free falling.

From there, the wide-open expanse came into sight. The entire Sherwood Face was covered with fluffy white stuff. I traversed over to it from the groomed Robin Hood. Get the theme? Little bounces on the baby moguls, and I was in heaven. It was tame, but challenging at the same time. You have to love the Zen of a great ski day.

The front side is another experience in itself. The Summit Express whizzes riders from the 6,835 base to the 8,000-plus foot ridge where Idiot's Delight marked double-black land off to the right. We ventured to the left where the Alpine Bowl allowed us to select our own fall line.

Alpine Meadows is generous with its space – especially when that space involves snow cold enough to stay soft.

While peering over the edge, I was reminded of a T-shirt I saw at Vail Village – "If it's too steep, you're too old." I grinned, as all ages found the glee that day of powder in the steeps – whether it was chopped up or not by mid-afternoon.

For a ski area that prides itself on maintaining its primary "just the mountain" focus, it is making efforts to attract a younger demographic with its advertising campaign "Mountain Head," and all that it implies. The Concept Farm of New York boasts a client list of TRW, American Heart Association, TNT, MSNBC, ESPN and Greenpeace.

"We think it's an awesome campaign and one that will really connect with skiers across the West," Alpine Meadows General Manager Kent Hoopingarner said in a statement. His tone said it all. You're as young as you feel at Alpine Meadows.

If you go:

Alpine Meadows is tucked in the landscape off Alpine Meadows Road, which is south of the Squaw Valley turnoff off Highway 89 on the North Shore.

From South Lake Tahoe, it can be a long ride if Highway 89 is closed at Emerald Bay – but scenic, and worth a day of skiing.

The direct route from the South Shore calls for going north on Highway 89. Go to Tahoe City. Turn left at the Y in Tahoe City. Alpine Meadows will be on the left a few miles up.

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Mountaineer Doug Robinson to speak

Mountaineer, climber, skier, and award-winning author, Doug Robinson, will speak in Reno on March 10 at a special benefit for the Reno-based advocacy group Snowlands Network.

The lecture and slideshow “Wild in the Sierra: Backcountry Skiing the Highest Sierra” will feature Robinson’s reflections about his 50 years of climbing and skiing throughout the Sierra.

Robinson, the recipient of the 2010 American Alpine Club Literary Award, has given voice to the thoughts and concerns of the climbing community ever since he articulated his ideas about “clean climbing” in the early 1970s arguing that rock climbers should climb in a way that left no trace of their ascents. Robinson’s writing has led some to call him the “bard of the climbing community;” he has been referred to as a “modern day John Muir” because of the poetic way in which he

combines adventure and observations about the natural environment. His climbing video, “Moving Over Stone,” was a best seller, and has taught several of generations of climbers how to take to rock and mountains.

Robinson will speak at the Patagonia Service Center, 8550 White Fir St., Reno.

Tickets are available on the Snowlands website, and at the event if still available. Prices are $20 in advance for Snowlands Network members and $25 in advance for non-members, $30 at the door for everyone. Doors open and silent auction begin at 6:30pm.

The nonprofit Snowlands Network is the only organization in California and Nevada dedicated to representing the needs of backcountry skiers, snowshoers, snowboarders and other outdoors people who value the physical and spiritual joys of winter and winter travel using their own muscle power. The goal is to promote safety and serenity on every winter adventure.

Guided Meditation Workshop

Feeling stressed out and overwhelmed? Struggling with money, health, relationships or your career? Ready to make positive changes in your life and don’t know where to begin?

Learn how to use the elements of nature to become more balanced,clear blocks and release tension at a Guided Meditation Workshop on March 19 from 1-5pm.

Facilitators are Maxine Alper and Chris Alper.

The event is at Unity at the Lake, Star Tahoe Building, 2489

Lake Tahoe Blvd., Ste. 27, South Lake Tahoe.

Cost is $25.

For more information, email info@creatingwithintention.com.

Girl Scout cookie sales are serious business

By Mary Widdifield

Yes, sir. There is a gap in my resume. That's right, 12 years out of the workforce. And no, it isn't a misprint that I garnered experience in sales, marketing, public relations, management and inventory control. That would be the Girl Scout cookie sales.

Try managing inventory of 660 boxes of Thin Mints, 588 boxes of Samoas, 420 Trefoils and 300-plus boxes of other flavors. Yes, there are other flavors. They apparently fill a niche or void that stubbornly resists the marketplace. There's filling each order for each Scout – you'd call them sales reps – and serving as liaison to the cookie czar running the warehouse out of her garage. Don't even think of arriving at her house before the appointed time. Didn't place your troop's cookie order in time? Too bad. You seriously don't want to cross her or you'll never get those 86 boxes of Thin Mints you promised to Alexis – she's the kid whose mother split and Girl Scouts is all she has, a fact she will remind you of when you're alone with her, waiting again for her father, who is always late picking her up.

Public relations? Counseling services? No irate cable TV

customer can come close to matching the velocity of pre-pubescent girls' expectations. They absolutely must have the Walkabout Kangaroo incentive gift (for selling 250 boxes). And what about the Eco-Girl T-shirt (300)? The mini laptop (2,000 boxes)? It takes a strong leader to quash the entrepreneurial spark in those young, still-bright eyes when you inform them they would have to sell an average of 100 boxes a day (or 600 a week) to get the ultimate incentive reward – the iPad (3,000 boxes).

And it's not just the girls you have to think about. It's their addicted customers, both clamoring for their fix and whining about the price inflation: $4? I remember when it was $3!

Mary Widdifield is the cookie manager for her 9-year-old daughter's Girl Scout troop in San Rafael.

Read the whole story

Solar energy's greenness under scrutiny

By Todd Woody, New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO – Just weeks after regulators approved the last of nine multibillion-dollar solar thermal power plants to be built in the Southern California desert, a storm of lawsuits and the resurgence of an older solar technology are clouding the future of the nascent industry.

The litigation, which seeks to block construction of five of the solar thermal projects, underscores the growing risks of

building large-scale renewable energy plants in environmentally delicate areas. On Jan. 25, for instance, Solar Millennium withdrew its 16-month-old license application for a 250-megawatt solar station called Ridgecrest, citing regulators' concerns over the project's impact on the Mohave ground squirrel.

At peak output, the five licensed solar thermal projects being challenged would power more than two million homes, create thousands of construction jobs and help the state meet aggressive renewable energy mandates. The projects are backed by California's biggest utilities, top state officials and the Obama administration.

But conservation, labor and American Indian groups are challenging the projects on environmental grounds. The lawsuits, coupled with a broad plunge in prices for energy from competing power sources, threaten the ability of developers to secure expiring federal loan guarantees and private financing to establish the projects. Only one developer so far, BrightSource Energy, has obtained a loan guarantee and begun construction.

Like so many of this state's troubles, the industry's problems are rooted in real estate.

Read the whole story