Snowboarder magazine shooting at Sierra

Snowboarder magazine's THE HIT comes to Sierra Resort on March 12.

New this season, THE HIT lets locals experience the excitement of a large-scale photo shoot with an oversized custom build and the industry's top photographers clicking shutter buttons from every angle. Get that perfect shot and it could end up in *Snowboarder* magazine. Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort is the only Tahoe stop for this rider-judged contest, and will draw Northern California's top regional athletes for a chance to get noticed by one of snowboarding's most respected publications.

For more information, go online or call (530) 659.7453.

Gatorade Free Flow Tour

Gatorade Free Flow Tour is Feb. 5 and 6 at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

This high-profile event will bring Northern California's top amateur skiers and snowboarders out for a weekend of jibbing, jumping and bonking on a custom build. Three events – Slopestyle, Superpipe and Junior Rail Jam – will emphasize quality terrain park features, skier/rider style, and industry standard judging.

Each division winner from this event will move on to the Free Flow Tour finals at the February stop of the 2010-11 Winter Dew Tour where they will compete for a wildcard spot in the 2011-12 Winter Dew Tour.

For more information, go online or call (530) 659.7453.

Volcom Peanut Butter and Rail Jam

Volcom is opening its North American tour at Sierra Resort, bringing the winter's first large scale event to the Lake Tahoe region Jan. 2.

This jam-format, grass roots event is free and accessible to any and every snowboarder who can hit a rail.

The custom build on Broadway draws one of the largest competitive turnouts of the season and is easily accessible to spectators.

For more information, go online or call (530) 659.7453.

Borg to bring on the 'Heat' at SNC talk

Threats. Murder. Revenge. Todd Borg's eighth novel – "Tahoe Heat" featuring his long-standing protagonist private detective Owen McKenna – involves a fatal fall at Lake Tahoe's Cave Rock, encoded piano strings, and a wild mustang named Heat.

Borg's series of mystery thrillers set exclusively around Lake

Tahoe will be the featured topic of the next Fireside Chat, hosted by Andy Whyman, Nove. 18 at 7pm in Sierra Nevada College's Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, rooms 139/141.

Stunned by the beauty of the second highest big lake in the world, Borg and his wife moved from Minnesota to Lake Tahoe in 1990. While he had written short stories, reviews, articles, and three novels before moving to the region, the dramatic Tahoe landscape gave Borg the idea for a series of novels with a detective protagonist who lived at Lake Tahoe. The result was Owen McKenna, an ex-cop with a tragic background, who moved from San Francisco to the mountains to study art and earn a slightly more genteel living as a private detective. McKenna works out of a rented office space on Kingsbury Grade on the South Shore, and lives with Spot, his Harlequin Great Dane, in a tiny log cabin (500 square feet) that sits 1,000 feet above the East Shore. All eight of the Owen McKenna Mystery Thrillers are available for check-out at SNC's Prim Library and the Incline Village Library.



Todd Borg

Borg's work has won numerous awards including the Ben Franklin Award for Best Mystery of the Year and the Bay Area Independent Publishers Association's Best Thriller of the Year. A prolific lecturer and speaker, Borg also teaches at Lake Tahoe Community College. His three-day writing workshop The Hook, the Twist, and the Cliffhanger is open to any aspiring fiction writer and focuses on the craft of writing entertaining fiction, including character development, the

rising plot curve, and critical aspects of writing effective prose such as scene construction, point-of-view, and dialogue.

For more information on the event, contact Shelia Leijon, IVGID Seniors Program Coordinator, at (775) 832.1310, shelia_leijon@ivgid.org, or Debi Noonan, SNC director of Special Events, at (775) 831.1314, ext. 7420, dnoonan@sierranevada.edu.

Valhalla Gala on Dec. 4

The annual Valhalla Gala in the Valhalla Grand Hall on is Dec. 4 from 5-11pm.

It’s an evening of fine wine, hors d’oeuvres, dinner and dancing in front of the 40-foot high stone fireplace.

A silent auction will be before the end of the evening. This is a sell out every year so early reservations are recommended.

For more information or ticket purchase, call (530) 541.4975 or visit www.valhallatahoe.com.

Snow blankets basin, slick roads greet commuters

By Kathryn Reed

It doesn’t matter the calendar is closer to the fall equinox than winter’s – white stuff is all over the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Rain began turning to snow off and on Sunday afternoon, with just snow coming down in the evening. About an inch fell at lake level in South Lake Tahoe, while the Meyers area got about four times as much.

Ski resorts like Heavenly that have been making snow for a couple weeks are in good shape as the season is about to begin. Heavenly plans to open Nov. 19, Boreal is already open. Other opening dates include Northstar Nov. 20, Squaw Nov. 25, Homewood Dec. 17.



Sunrise in Meyers on Nov. 8. Photo/Brenda Knox

Although it’s a bluebird morning, the National Weather Service is still calling for 30 percent chance of snow for today and 40 percent on Tuesday.

Black ice is being reported in the basin and surrounding areas between Carson Valley and Reno. As the temperatures rise, that threat will subside. Chain controls are in affect on some passes, so check the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News* for the latest info.

Highway 50 from the basin to halfway down Spooner Summit into Carson was called an “ice skating rink” by one driver who

drove the route about 8am Monday.

Bundle up because the high today in Lake Tahoe is expected to be 38, with the low 18 degrees.

Mostly sunny skies are in the forecast for Thursday and Friday.

To ensure more white stuff covers the slopes, the annual Sierra-at-Tahoe Pray for Snow Party is Nov. 11 at 7pm at Mo’s Place near the Super 8 motel in South Tahoe. Fresh Ketch’s party is Nov. 17 at 7:30pm in South Tahoe.

Totals change, 3 finalists don’t in SLT council race

More votes have been counted affecting the South Lake Tahoe City Council, but not who the three finalists are.

As of Nov. 6 at 5:45pm:

• Claire Fortier, 1,776 votes, 17.05 percent

• Tom Davis, 1,529 votes, 14.68 percent

• Angela Swanson, 1,325 votes, 12.72 percent

• Alice Jones, 1,202 votes, 11.54 percent

• Joy Curry, 1,192 votes, 11.44 percent

• Elizabeth Hallen, 1,080 votes, 10.37 percent

• Steve Cubby, 1,070 votes, 10.27 percent

• Adrian Gooch, 610 votes, 5.86 percent

• Georg May, 266 votes, 2.55 percent

• Doug Cichowicz, 135 votes, 1.3 percent.

Measure E, the city initiative to change the business license fee, was defeated by 48 votes.

– Kathryn Reed

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The North Lake Tahoe Resort Association is trying to lure Bay Area residents with a billboard in downtown San Francisco. Tahoe used to use billboards all the time – now it's the exception, not the rule.

• On Nov. 11 at 11am the American Legion in South Lake Tahoe is honoring all living and passed veterans at the American Legion Post, 2748 Lake Tahoe Blvd. Refreshment to follow.

• The Sugar Pine Foundation is in the running to win a Pepsi Refresh Grant. Go to the website under "The Planet" Category at the $50,000 level you can vote for the Tahoe-based organization.

• Comment on the Upper Truckee River-Lake Tahoe Golf Course-Washoe Meadow State Park has been extended to Nov. 15.

• *Saveur* magazine has good things to say about El Dorado County's Holly's Hill 2009 Roussanne.

• From the Nov. 5, 2010, *Denver Post*: Vail Resorts chief marketing officer Heidi Kercher-Pratt described Northstar as

“more Beaver Creek-esque, more of a family draw” than Heavenly, which attracts a livelier clientele. Kercher-Pratt said Vail Resorts might consider other acquisitions in the Tahoe area that would increase the synergies from Heavenly and Northstar. “We are always keenly focused on strategic growth, including acquisitions, but will maintain a disciplined approach on the right companies at the right price.”

Gaining weight vacationing in New England

By Kathryn Reed

BOSTON – It started as a cycling vacation, but turned into more of a culinary tour of New England – at least that’s the trip I was plotting before leaving Tahoe.

New England can certainly be a foodie experience, but that isn’t what I had in mind. Beer, cheese and ice cream were on my list of things to devour. The cycling part of the holiday helped ease the guilt of eating my way through the East.

Inside the Quincy Market in Boston are a slew of places to eat and drink. Good thing. We had worked up an appetite walking the Freedom Trail. Whole lobster, clam chowder and Sam Adams – seems like a well-balanced meal.



Kae Reed eats her way through New England. Photo/Susan Wood

I’m not sure Sue ever found a clam chowder she didn’t like. Maybe it’s just psychological, but there is something special and tasty about New England clam chowder in New England.

Near this tourist hub entrepreneurs recreated the bar from the TV show “Cheers” – though this tourist spot had nothing to do with the actual program. In fact, it was built after the show went off the air. Still, we had a beer at the end of the bar where Norm usually sat.

Farther along the trail is a farmers market. Wow – what a selection. Besides fruits and vegetables, seafood was also for sale. We grabbed a few items for a picnic of sorts to be had latter.

Sam Adams tour

It’s hard to believe Sam Adams is celebrating 25 years of being in the beer business. The free tour is great – and easy to get to by using the subway. Ah, functional public transit – what a concept.

Michael, our guide, was entertaining and informative.

The importance of water, barley, hops and yeast (the only ingredients in Sam Adams and most beers) were outlined for the nearly 60 people on the tour. And this was a weekday in October.

“Hops are the spice or soul of beer. They provide the bitterness and are responsible for a lot of the aroma,” Michael said.

Samples of barley were passed around – one being nutty, another more mild, another with a hint of chocolate.

Water comes from the tap. It’s filtered and continually tested to make sure its purity is consistent.

The yeast is responsible for alcohol content, carbonation and flavor profile.

It’s this brewery where brewmasters research flavors and quality control is maintained. Sam Adams has two other breweries.

Men in waders roam around the fermentation tanks. At one point it looks like beer is flowing onto the concrete floor, which has drains in it, before water comes out of the metal contraption.

Bob, the bearded guy seen in so many Sam Adams commercials, comes out as most of the gang is headed in to the tasting room. He smiles and puts up with the tourists wanting their picture with him.

Inside, where three 7-ounce tastes are poured, Michael gives everyone a lesson on what to look for.

Visual appearance. It’s the clarity of the Sam Adams Boston Lager we are looking for. You should be able to see your finger wiggle behind the glass.

Now, inhale. Smell those hops.

Take a swig. Notice the body, the carbonation level.

Then pay attention to the flavor. Michael said we should taste a roasted caramel sweetness on the tip our tongues, then citrus grapefruit, before a bitter, dry finish on the way back of our tongues.

I can’t say either Sue or I would have described it like that,

but we were ready for seconds.

The other beers being poured that day were Sam Adams Octoberfest and Sam Adams Cream Stout. The latter is only available on draft at the brewery. The bottled variety is pasteurized, while the draft isn't.

Having the stout proved not all dark beers are alike. This was thick and delicious.

Sugarhouse

I kept saying I wanted to know how maple syrup is made. People laughed. Just tap a maple tree. Really? It's that simple?

For the most part, yes. Though, that's like saying wine is made just by crushing grapes.

What I didn't know until I went to a sugarhouse – that's what they call the places where syrup is made – is there are four grades of syrup – Fancy Grade, Grade A Medium, Grade A Dark and Grade B. Grade B was our favorite – the darkest, and probably the sweetest.

"The trees respond to the warm temperature, which causes the darkness of the syrup," explained Lara, who was giving lessons and samples of syrup and cheese at the Sugarbush Farm in Woodstock, Vt.

I think of syrup for pancakes and French toast. Vermonters see it as a staple.

"We put it in coffee around here," Lara said. She also said syrup is used in marinades for seafood, used in baked beans, pumpkin pie and mixed in yogurt.

We got in on the end of a tour of the plant (which is rustic and in a barn) that owner Jeff Luce was giving. He talked about the trees needing to be 35- to 40-years-old before they are tapped.

It takes 6,000 tapped maple trees to make 40 gallons of sap, which is turned into 1 gallon of syrup. No wonder pure Vermont maple syrup is expensive and called liquid gold.

On this 550-acre working farm is a path through the colorful maple trees that shows how the trees are tapped with a device that is about a quarter inch in diameter and goes 2 inches into the tree. Only 7 percent of sap is taken from a tree.

A 16-quart sap bucket catches the liquid. It’s quite an operation. Sap is perishable until its boiled.

And the season is only six weeks, in spring, usually with snow on the ground to start with.

Next step is the boiling process.

“The sap enters the pan at between 2 and 4 percent sugar and boils away enough water so it is reduced to liquid that is 7 percent sugar,” according to Sugarbush Farm. Maple syrup is syrup at 219 degrees. It is filtered and bottled to be sold right away, or stored in 30-gallon drums.

Vermont cheese

At the Sugarbush Farm they also make cheese. The most interesting thing was learning about the age of cheddar.

Lara told us that cheese aged for a year is what supermarkets call aged – “no matter what is on the label. And here that is young.”

For the 8-year-old cheddar she lets it dissolve on her tongue, not even needing to chew it.

On this farm they make 110 tons of cheese a year in 15 flavors.

Nearby (everything is close in Vermont) is a store with just Cabot cheese samples. Being the big guy in the state, it

reminded me a bit of tasting wine at Mondavi in the Napa Valley – not impressed.

Still, it is fun to venture beyond the everyday cheeses I seem to get into a rut eating.

The best sample of cheeses was at the Woodstock Inn. Chef Jason Lawless prepared an impressive display of all Vermont cheeses to be sampled one afternoon by guests of the inn. The inn on random days does special free events for people staying the night.

Cheeses made from cow, sheep and goat milk were there for the taking. Some were aged for a few weeks, while Cabot's private stock is aged up to 18 months. Some were hard, some soft.

A Commersdale from Bonnieview Farm was super tasty. This semi-hard cheese took at second place in 2008 from the American Cheese Society.

Ben & Jerry's

Finally, we arrive at the other reason there are so many cows in Vermont – Ben & Jerry's. Five hundred family farms supply the ice cream company with milk.

At this plant in Waterbury 250,000 pints are made each day. The plant in Henderson, Nev., supplies the West Coast.

I had no idea between 55 and 65 flavors are sold at once. No grocery store I've been to has that many for sale. Cherry Garcia is the No. 1 seller, with Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough No. 2.

As luck would have it, my favorite, Mint Chocolate Chunk, was the sample of the day. The only disappointment was the tiny little cup it's served in. I think they could have spared a full cone. But I suppose that would cut down on sales.

I bought a scoop of Bonnaroo Buzz – a combo of coffee and malt

ice creams, with whisky caramel swirls and English toffee pieces. Yummy, but incredibly sweet.

Sue wanted to bond with her fellow Vermonter and snowboarding Olympian from Sierra-at-Tahoe so she had a scoop of Hannah Teter's Maple Blondie. Good, but not good enough to get Sue to trade in skis for a snowboard.

More food stuff

Other places worth checking out on a trip to New England:

• Green Mountain Coffee in Waterbury, Vt.;

• Cold Hollow Cider Mill, Waterbury, Vt.;

• Charlotte Village Winery, tasting room in Quechee and Charlotte, Vt.

• Red Rooster restaurant, inside Woodstock Inn, Woodstock, Vt.

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Photos/Kathryn Reed

Great American Smokeout – Nov. 18

The National Great American Smokeout, which asks smokers to give up tobacco for 24 hours in hopes that they will quit for good, is Nov. 18.

Smoking cigarettes remains the No. 1 preventable cause of premature disease and death in the United States, according the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An estimated

21 percent of Americans and 14 percent of Californians are smokers.

The Great American Smokeout is a national event sponsored by the American Cancer Society, traditionally on the third Thursday in November each year.

Resources include calling 800-NO-BUTTS or going to www.californiasmokershelpline.org. The American Cancer Society also has stop smoking resources on their website at www.cancer.org.