Warren Miller at Crystal Bay

Lake Tahoe is the star in this yearâ€™s Warren Miller flick titled “Dynasty”. Catch it all at the Crystal Bay Casino in Crystal Bay Nov. 27-28 with shows times both nights at 6:30 and 9:15.

Mt. Rose rail jam

Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe hosts Saturday in the Park Rail Jam Nov. 21 when participating snowboarders are judged on their tricks in a jam-style format from 1-2pm in the Ponderosa Park. Free and open to all ages and abilities, but you must have a Mt. Rose season pass or lift ticket to enter.

Peggy Fleming in Tahoe

Come out and see Peggy Flemming and local children skate at the Resort at Squaw Creek Ice Rink, Nov. 27 7-8pm.

Kirkwood’s snowfall is off

the charts

By Kathryn Reed

Don’t ever rely on Lake Tahoe storm totals to know what the conditions or accumulations are at Kirkwood Mountain Resort.

Even when it’s not snowing at the lake, it might be at the ‘Wood.



Not all the terrain is this gnarly at Kirkwood. Photo/Provided

That’s one of the things that makes Kirkwood so special – all that powder, all that natural snow. For the loyalists, it more than makes up for the lack of high speed lifts.

The hundreds of inches of snow the resort receives each year allowed it to hit its projected skier visit numbers in 2008-09.

“While a lot of resorts around the lake reported losses and down counts, we stayed right on par with the previous year’s performance,” Julie Koster, Kirkwood spokeswoman, said of last year’s numbers. “We did really, really well. We had a great season.”

With El Nino being the phrase of the pre-season, Koster said Kirkwood would love another 2005-06 season when more than 400

inches of white stuff fell, which led to more than 70 powder days with 6 or more inches of freshies. That was the year the resort had more snow than any place else in the world.

Changes to the terrain parks and evening snow cat tours are features to look forward to when the resort opens – which is dependent on natural snowfall. It's usually around Thanksgiving.

Skiers and boarders can practice their Olympian moves on the expanded boarder cross course. Kirkwood expects to double the length of this obstacle course of sorts.

The terrain parks are still off chairs 5 and 7, but with more and bigger features to test skier and boarders' skills.

To keep up ones energy, the resort has revamped its food selection at all the restaurants.

The chef is infusing the French fries with a sour cream and onion chip flavor that Koster says is something worth traveling the 45 minutes from South Lake Tahoe to the resort that encompasses three counties – El Dorado, Alpine and Amador.

Healthier options are a large part of the changes at Bub's and Off the Wall.

Closer to the December holidays Kirkwood will begin evening snow cat tours to the top of Red Cliffs or Caples Crest. Appetizers and drinks are part of the $75 package.

Expedition Kirkwood continues to offer a slew of classes like avalanche beacon training and women specific clinics.

Daily lift tickets went up $2 to $74 a day for adults. For those 13 to 18 years in age, it will cost $59 to ride Kirkwood.

Events are a large draw at Kirkwood. Each Saturday from

noon-4pm there is live music on the village plaza. Saturday nights are the snow cat tours.

Other events include:

Jan. 23 – Snowbomb Slopestyle and JETs GS Race

Jan. 24, Jan. 31 – USASA Skier/Boarder X

Feb. 6 – JETs Rail Jam, JETs Skier/Boarder X

Feb. 7 – USASA Slopestyle

Feb. 25-27 – North Face Masters of Snowboarding

March 3-7 – North American Freeskiing Championships

March 13 – JETs Big Mountain Comp

April 2-4 – Kirkwood Jammin' XVII

April 3 – JETs Banked Slalom

Kirkwood is online at www.kirkwood.com.

Pray for snow at the Ketch

The snow gods will shift their view Wednesday, smiling down upon the Fresh Ketch annual â€œOriginal Pray for Snowâ€ party.

With two floors of party space, the El Jimador Tequila Girls on hand, the return of the famous frozen T-shirt contest, two live bands, a slew of prize and drink specials to be had and the outdoor fire pit on the lakeside patio, the elements will come together to produce another successful snow praying extravaganza – at least that's what the organizers are saying.

The fun begins at 8pm at the South Lake Tahoe restaurant.

Â·

Tahoe economy dependent on skiers

By Kathryn Reed

For the person schussing down one of the myriad slopes in and around Lake Tahoe, itâ€™s all about fun.

For the people running the resort, itâ€™s a business. Skiing impacts a variety of industries â€“ lodging, restaurants, massage, retail and others. If the resorts donâ€™t do well, no one does well.



With the Ritz-Carlton opening Dec. 9 at Northstar, it may bring an infusion of cash to the North Shore. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The California Ski Area Association says the 4.2 million skier visits each year in Lake Tahoe make it a $600 million industry. The organization says a skier visit equates to $150 per day being spent at Tahoe businesses.

The past couple of ski seasons have been less than stellar, though.

Itâ€™s hard to know if the ski resorts have hurt themselves by starting the season so early â€“ Mammoth and Boreal opened in October, albeit not every day. Before snowmaking became what it is, the Lake Tahoe area was lucky to have good snow at Christmas.

Now skiers expect to be on their boards at Thanksgiving. If they arenâ€™t, the Bay Area media write and broadcast stories about the lackluster snowfall and predictions for a bad ski season. Itâ€™s silly, false, wrong and just bad journalism.

Those media types also have a penchant for playing up big storms that turn out to be mini-events â€“ but it keeps people from making the trek to Tahoe. For locals, it makes for a fabulous, uncrowded powder day.

The reality, though, is California and Nevada departments of transportation know how to clear highways of snow. And forecasts miss the mark more often than they hit a bullâ€™s eye.

It is true that fingers are crossed, snow dances are under way and all eyes are on Mother Nature. After all, it doesnâ€™t matter what new lift, event, five-star hotel or menu item a resort comes up with, if the snow isnâ€™t good and plentiful, the skiers stay home.

They did that in 2008-09. The National Ski Areas Association said in Tahoe the number of skier visits was down 10 percent last year compared to 2007-08. In part this was because of the spastic snowfall, part because of the economy.

One positive about the recession may be those on the West Coast who want to ride will do so closer to home instead of flying to Colorado or Utah.

Pundits in the ski industry are cautiously optimistic the 2009-10 season will be better than last year. Itâ€™s possible with the Olympics at Whistler in February it may generate enthusiasm for winter sports. It might also drive people to Tahoe instead of Canada because they donâ€™t want to deal with the chaos.

It was 1960 that the Winter Olympics were last on the West Coast of North America â€“ when Squaw Valley welcomed the world, and in turn put Tahoe on the map.

Squaw is capitalizing on the 50-year anniversary with a slew of events. Olympic Heritage Celebration is Jan. 8-17. For details, go to www.SquawValley1960Celebration.com.

Squaw is one of many resorts looking to attract more skiers and boarders. The North Shore resort once sold season passes for as much as $1,900; now they are as low as $369.

Across the lake at Heavenly Mountain Resort the current season pass is $369, but it had been $329 â€“ what it was a few years ago.

One of the best deals continues to be the Learn to Ski or Board program on the North Shore for $25 on Dec. 12-13. Details are at www.gotahoenorth.com.

Sierra-at-Tahoe (www.sierraattahoe.com) is selling three-packs of lift tickets for $45 per ticket through the end of the year.

Northstar is banking on the Dec. 9 opening of the Ritz-Carlton at the top of the gondola to make it the resort of choice.

For those who donâ€™t have a season pass, check out REI, Costco, Snowbomb.com, and DiscountLiftTickets.net for deals on

daily tickets. Once in Tahoe, sometimes deals can be found, too â€“ but most are found off the hill.

Be sure to read *Lake Tahoe News* all week to find out what is going on with nine of the Lake Tahoe area ski resorts for the 2009-10 ski season.

Embassy Suites SLT wins state award

On Dec. 1, Embassy Suites South Lake Tahoe will receive the Good Earthkeeping award for a large property from the California Hotel & Lodging Association.

The luncheon is in San Francisco.

As a winner, Embassy is automatically entered in the national competition.

Wallace: Ready to serve children in other ways

Letter to the publisher,

I want to congratulate Wendy David & Judy Cefalu on their election to the LTUSD Board. Wendy is the strength and center of the Board.

It was a true privilege to work with Wendy. Two of my boys

were lucky enough to receive both their preschool and their high school diplomas from Wendy.

It was also a privilege working with Sue Novasel, Michael Doyle and Larry Green. I can tell you that whether you disagree with the decisions made or not, these people truly seek to do the right things for the right reasons. I'm sure Judy will enjoy working with this Board and taking on the challenges ahead.

I also would like to thank Dr. (Jim) Tarwater and all the administrative staff for their professionalism and dedication. The classified employees were terrific as well. It was wonderful being a part of a team for even such a brief period that was able to bring test scores up (WAY UP!) at every school. The dedicated teachers have been asked to do more with less and they have done it.

I was very pleased to have received 1,842 votes. I had told myself that were I to be fortunate enough to win, that I would remember that I would then also represent those who had not voted for me.

I want to thank (*Tahoe Mountain News* Publisher) Taylor Flynn for endorsing me. I appreciated that you understood that I was sincere and dedicated to making this a great place for kids to live and go to school as well as someday return to raise their families. I especially enjoyed this month's Tay's Tales where you wrote about how you were inundated with rumors and attempts to bring down other candidates with the politics of personal destruction.

As one who has always felt the need to lead, I have certainly taken my share of broadside hits and rumors. But I learned about politics at an early age. I ran for president of my high school in Sonora. We had about 1,200 kids in the school. There were 1,480 votes cast. I lost by 14 votes. To my astonishment and heart break the administration of the school would not

nullify the results even though the winner and his friends admitted to voting several hundred times. That was one of the best lessons I ever learned.

While there were no extra votes cast in this election, 5 votes difference was hard, but not devastating. In fact, when I came home, my three dogs, Annie, Lady and Cupid didn’t seem to notice at all.

There are many ways to serve. I’m going to do some coaching and do my best as a Board member of Tahoe Youth & Family Services. I’m also going to pass along to the School Board and Administration, the many issues, concerns and communications that 1,842 of you wanted me to work on. I hope you find ways to get involved, too.

Duane Wallace

Christmas Cheer hopes donations roll in

Christmas Cheer was started decades ago in South Lake Tahoe to provide a merry Christmas for the less fortunate on the South Shore. It has evolved into a year-round food distribution center for people who are referred to the nonprofit from one of the social service agencies in the area.



Christmas Cheer provides food and clothing to those in need.

However, Christmas is still one of its major events.

Food for a festive holiday and toys for children are part of the mix.

Regular clients of Christmas Cheer and anyone who is signed up by Dec. 3 can partake in the special holiday give-away.

Food will be distributed Dec. 22-23 from 9am-4pm at Christmas Cheer, 285 Eloise Ave., South Lake Tahoe. Toys will be handed out Dec. 21-22 at the American Legion Building, 2478 Highway 50, South Lake Tahoe.

Christmas Cheer accepts donations year-round. With the number of people needing assistance going up and the donations going down, Christmas Cheer has had to cutback its operation from four days a week to two.

To donate, call (530) 542.4934. Goods can be brought by when its open – Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-2pm. Christmas Cheer is located at 2085 Eloise Ave., South Lake Tahoe.

To learn more about Christmas Cheer, listen to KTHO FM-96.1/AM-590 (www.kthoradio.com) at 6 tonight.

Man wins women's poker

tourney at Harveys

By Gary Mihoces, USA Today

A 22-year-old male won a “Ladies Poker Championship” over the weekend in Stateline. The winning hand that earned him top prize of $9,932 was a pair of queens.

Greg Sessler, a student at the University of California-Davis, earned his victory Saturday at Harveys Lake Tahoe hotel/casino. The tournament was part of a series of “circuit” events affiliated with the World Series of Poker.

How does a guy win a women’s event?

Read the whole story