Winter is a perfectly good time for beer

By Rosie Schaap, New York Times

Maybe you also went through that phase. The one when you kept an eye on an ominous bucket in a dark corner of your kitchen until the time came to invite over friends, tap it and drink it. Maybe your friends also gulped it, smiled stiffly and said something like, “It’s . . . interesting.” And maybe they also grimaced as if they had just sucked down a rotten egg. I didn’t blame them. The brown ale I concocted during my brief foray into home brewing was dreadful stuff — syrupy, unbalanced and weird.

I could accept that I had no inherent gifts in the beer-making department, but my failure put me off beer — at least the kind with flavor — for a long while. Sure, there’s nothing like a cold beer on a hot summer day, but I don’t want too much trouble. I want something light and pale and watery (and inexpensive) straight from a bottle: Corona or High Life or Rolling Rock suit me just fine. The same goes for when I eat Chinese or Mexican food, sausages and cabbage or anything Eastern European.

Brown Corduroy

For two cocktails:
1 oz. Bulleit Bourbon
2 dashes orange bitters
Krusovice Cerne beer to top
Grated nutmeg
Shake bourbon and bitters over ice. Strain into a highball over fresh ice. Top up with beer. Grate a little nutmeg on top.



But the bar where I work carries a great variety of beers, and so I've had to reacquaint myself in order to answer my customers' questions. And what I've discovered is that after a long absence, beer and I get along more than fine. My favorites – often from Central and Eastern Europe, where, for centuries, they've known a thing or two about the craft of beer – are characterized by depth but not burdened by difficulty. There's a warm, slightly sweet, nutty, toasty character that many of them share – flavors that make them naturals for drinking in the winter, even for drinkers who normally think of summer when we think beer.

It takes a lot to force me to forgo whiskey around this time of year, but some very special specimens, like Innis & Gunn's Oak-Aged Rum Cask Beer (strong stuff but reminiscent of cream soda), Allagash Black (a yeasty, Maine-made alternative to my usual Guinness) and those shown here, can make me do just that. Even an excellent, not-too-aggressive I.P.A., while not dark, has enough going on to win me over. These bottles aren't for chugging; they're for sipping, and the first one is satisfying enough to savor after dinner, with fruit and chocolate and good, sharp cheese. Beer has a place in mixed drinks, too, which – kicked up with spirits and laced with spice – can make for surprising and warming cocktails, like a Brown Corduroy.

In July, sure, pass me a Corona. But a deep, dark beer on a cold winter's day? That's pretty refreshing, too.

2 workshops focus on marketing strategies

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce and Lake Tahoe Community College's Connect Community Education are partnering to offer two marketing workshops to be presented by Constant Contact.



On Feb. 20 from 4-5:30pm, Constant Contact representatives will be going over numerous ways to Supercharge Your Facebook Marketing. In this workshop attendees will acquire the what, why and how of a social media campaign.

The second marketing workshop, The Power of Engagement Marketing, will teach the importance of building lasting relationships with existing clients. Participants will discover the three components that lead to engagement marketing success, and leave with a stronger marketing strategy to help inspire their customers to promote their business for them.

This workshop is March 6 from noon-1:30pm.

Both are at Lake Tahoe Community College.

To register for either workshop, go online or call Megan Waskiewicz at (530) 541.4660, ext. 718.

Sierra Club to discuss wild-scenic rivers

The Sierra Club meeting on Feb. 20 will focus on wild and scenic rivers.



Steve Evans, conservation director of the Friends of the River, will speak. He will share his photographs of wild places and rivers and share insights on potential designation of wild and scenic status for the high reaches of the Upper Truckee River and other wild places in the Tahoe Basin.

The talk starts at 7pm at Unity at the Lake Center, Rufus Allen Boulevard, South Lake Tahoe.

Holland takes 4th in snowboardcross in Russia

By USSA

ROSA KHUTOR, Russia – Alex Deibold (Manchester Center, N.H.) rode to a career first FIS Snowboard World Cup podium Sunday, finishing second in the pre-Olympic snowboardcross test event.



Nate Holland

U.S. Snowboarding teammate Nate Holland (Squaw Valley) was fourth.

Faye Gulini (Salt Lake City) was eighth to lead the U.S. women.

Alessandro Haemmerle of Austria won for the men with Michela Moioli of Italy taking the women’s race.

Deibold picked up his first career podium in his 31st World Cup start.

Despite the weather, riders were impressed with the Olympic course in Rosa Khutor outside Sochi. All of the snowboarding, freeskiing and freestyle venues are in the same sector of the mountain with the alpine venues nearby.

Ski report: Stop reading, start skiing

It’s going to be another great day of holiday weekend skiing.

Here is the Feb. 17 ski report.

— *Curtis Fong*

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has fully accredited Lake Tahoe Community College. Next evaluation will be in six years.

• Here are the roadwork schedules for the week from Caltrans for Sierra and El Dorado-Tahoe.

• The spa at the Resort at Squaw Creek is No. 5 on *Conde Nast Travelers’* readers’ poll of top spas in North America.

• Sens. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Harry Reid, D-Nev., in vain urged in this letter for the Sierra Club not to file a lawsuit challenging the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s Regional Plan.

• Assemblyman Harvey Munford, D-Las Vegas, has introduced a bill that would make it illegal for pedestrians to read, browse the Internet or enter data while crossing highways in

the state. That would mean no texting while crossing Highway 50 between the Stateline casinos.

Beaver Creek – the pinnacle of customer service

By Susan Wood

BEAVER CREEK – This service-oriented resort does everything but ski it for you.

And one could argue that sometimes they do. At least that's how Kae would describe her experience negotiating the famed Colorado resort's gnarliest run off the Birds of Prey chairlift. The double black diamond Golden Eagle run starts the Men's Downhill Course, home to the Alpine World Ski Championships set for 2015.

Kae, who identifies herself as more of an intermediate skier, had help on one of the world's three toughest downhill racing runs with a guide she felt at home with. Beaver Creek ski guide John "J.B." Bell, who hails from Truckee, is familiar with the terrain and the reality of feeling like he's skiing over his head. He recalled on our recent visit to the area how he skied at an amazing speed on the men's downhill run at Snowbasin outside Salt Lake City, home of the 2002 Winter Games. At the time, the run was labeled as the steepest racing run ever.



Kae only smiles before she sees the run; Sue smiles the whole time. Photo/J.B.

“I thought: ‘J.B., you’re going too fast’,” he described as if he was flying. So he knew what an apprehensive Kae was going through.

“I’ve been a bodyguard on the slopes. So I hope they trust me enough that I’m there for them,” Bell said, using an example of a client who calls him every year to get that kind of assistance. He added that working in the beginning ski school hones a Beaver Creek employee’s patience.

It’s a good thing Bell was there as the guide and not me, otherwise Kae wouldn’t have spoken to me for the rest of the ski, food and wine trip.

It’s like this. Upon cruising down the run called Golden Eagle of the downhill course, a skier approaches an area called The Brink, a seemingly bottom-less lip where the grade tilts about 50 degrees and the entire valley below opens up miles away. Of course, there’s a right turn the racers will need to negotiate, rather than tangle with the trees.

“(The racers) fly off here at 80 mph,” Bell said.

The terrain was hard-packed with limited clumps of snow to use to turn. Most downhill runs are designed that way – hard and fast.

Bell proceeded by skiing in front of Kae, as if he would hurl his body on top of her if she fell and started sliding. She skidded over a challenging spot to a safe place, and I waited as the backup sweep.

I must admit. It was fun. I felt the adrenaline I haven't experienced since skiing the Dave Murray Men's Downhill run at Whistler-Blackcomb, home to the 2010 Winter Games.

Afterward, the three of us looked up at the steep grade, sighed and continued toward the Larkspur Express chair. Along the way, Bell pointed out how the Women's Downhill Run starting at Peregrine meets the men's course at the Kestrel run. It took 700 days of dedication to carve out the women's racing run.

It dawned at me that Bell is in the right job at the right place. And not just because he was the most qualified person to safely and confidently get Kae down the slick double-black racing run. I witnessed his poise all morning during last month's Food and Wine Festival ski day. He helped two 5-year-old children on and off the chairlift, stayed friendly with everyone he met and provided pointers for us.

Upon skiing the superior snow of the Rose Bowl chairlift area, Bell talked us into taking a leap of faith and ski with our two poles suspended in front of us like a platter. The exercise was intended to keep our upper body level and hands in front. If the poles tilted, "you dropped your wine glasses," he joked.

Beaver Creek's attentive experience goes way beyond ski instruction and guidance from a coach with a 30-year background. The mantra of providing excellent service is engrained in every practice, every product, every employee. That's why its advertising tagline "Not exactly roughing it" seems so fitting. Even Mamie's Cabin for the casual-faire declares on a sign "only slightly roughing it."

There are the warm chocolate chip cookies handed out at the base at 3:30pm, gourmet hot chocolate given away at the top of the Centennial Express Chairlift and a variety of cabins where residents have access to these isolated culinary hideaways.

And beyond those offerings, Beaver Creek operates with an overriding service program in which the employees provide suggestions to improve a guest experience. The program is extensive and serious.

The staffers at Beaver Creek may strike the guests as a little older than the more-common, young, ski-bum types living between high school and college or career path.

“We want to be the industry leader in guest service. And that means being proactive,” Beaver Creek spokeswoman Jen Brown told Lake Tahoe News. “We have a little more of a mature audience serviced by mature employees.”

Take Beaver Creek shuttle bus driver Ned Weiss, a single senior from Ohio who comes up to Colorado for the winter to work.

“I came here for the great benefits,” he said. Of course, as with all age groups, access to superior skiing conditions tops the list of benefits. He’s friendly, helpful and forthright.

Despite all the pampering, one cannot reduce Beaver Creek to a ski bunny hill where riders spend more time having every whim addressed than carving serious turns. Much of the terrain, like the Birds of Prey area, is not for the faint of heart. Eight high-speed chairlifts service more than 30 black diamond runs, adding up to a 4,000-plus foot vertical drop. Then, there’s the Stone Creek Chutes on the backside. And that’s just the advanced terrain.

Whatever the territory, the mountain stretching to 11,400 feet with 1,815 acres of ski terrain comes with skiing ambassadors who roam the grounds.

The ski resort is even kind to the resident elk herds who also meander through the landscape by providing tree “islands” consisting of clusters of trees on Bachelor Gulch side of the resort. At its base, a Ritz-Carlton stands to further the extraordinary guest-service experience. (Note: more on that in this article.)

History

• Beaver Creek opened Dec. 15,1980, with six chairlifts and a temporary base lodge. Development costs ran $300 million.

• The decade brought much growth to the resort with the opening of the Larkspur Bowl and the unveiling of the Centennial Express chairlift from the village base.

• In 1989, the World Ski Championship came to Beaver Creek.

• In the following decade, Grouse Mountain at Beaver Creek opened. In the later years, the Arrowhead Ski Area was connected to the resort.

• The Birds of Prey area was developed and included an express chairlift in 2003 to accommodate the resort’s quest to be a dominant force in hosting the World Alpine Ski Championships.

• In 2004, the town lift that crosses Highway 6 was put in to take skiers from the Lower Beaver Creek area to the upper side.

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April home and garden event looking for vendors

The second annual Lake Tahoe Home and Garden Show is April 26-27 at the Recreation Complex on Rufus Allen Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

It will feature live music, food, door prizes, drawing prizes, and free admission. Friday's event will be open to the public from 4-8pm and Saturday's from 10am-6pm.

Vendors for all types of services and goods that relate to anything for the home, garden, maintenance, protection, decorating, auto, health, fitness, and recreation will be participating.

The Master Gardeners will answer questions, and the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department will provide a public service by allowing hands-on practice on how to properly use a fire extinguisher. Lake Valley Fire will talk about defensible space around houses. Second Chances will be offering short classes on how to repurpose just about anything for your home, garden, or auto.

There is still booth space available. For more information, go online or call (530) 544.7412.

Opinion: S. Tahoe turns deaf ear to younger generation

By Scott Valentine

I spoke at the South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission meeting on Nov. 29 to make some comments on the Harrison Avenue Streetscape Project. There was one other person in the audience beside myself. After making some suggestions about the bikeability and walkability of this area, I was asked: “If there are so many people who believe in these ideas and solutions, where are they now?”



Scott Valentine

I should have told the commission that the reason is simple: They’re at work!

OK, maybe I’m overreacting, but I felt like it was inappropriate and disrespectful to devalue someone’s comment based on the number of attendees at 3 on a Thursday afternoon.

I’m in my late 30s; people my age are spending time trying to

manage a family and juggle work, while simultaneously trying to squeak in some world-class play wherever they can so they can justify living in such a junky town. Sorry. I'm not a snob, but this is the dumpiest place I have ever lived, surrounded by the best place I have ever lived.

I recently found a *Tahoe Daily Tribune* article from 1977 that stated that one of the top priorities for City Council was the beautification of Highway 50. So I understand change is slow, either that or our idea of beauty in 1977 was very disappointing.

I was on the steering committee that helped to re-create the beach at Lakeview Commons so I feel like there are a few people doing what they can to fix the dumpy parts. However, one of the public comments we received while trying to improve this area was: "Stop changing our town!" It seems as though the public is as much at fault as our political leaders for slowing positive improvements.

I felt like a fool after speaking in front of the commission that day in November, and I walked away feeling … alone? Not alone in sentiment, because I know there are a lot of people out there that would like to improve the standard of living in this town, but alone in involvement, participation, or unification around a common goal maybe.

The makeup of our city government is not a fair representation of our town and therefore does not accurately represent the views of our town. So why are active young professionals in this town so underrepresented? We are constantly talking about positive change, sustainability, and community vision, but seriously lack the time and energy to get involved. Maybe this apathy can be explained because we think the older generation in this town is set in their ways, fearful of change, and unwilling to listen to a bunch of young, educated radicals. Guess what? We make up a very large percentage of this town, and right now we are inheriting the mistakes currently being

set upon us simply because we don’t have the time to get involved. This is unacceptable.

I focused my frustrations and decided to apply for the recent appointment to City Council. It was made very clear during the interview process that the current council was looking for “qualified” and experienced applicants. It is ignorant of the community and the council to think that our generation is not “qualified” in making informed decisions regarding our town. I lost the appointment after a three-way tie with two older, more “qualified” ex-council members. I hope their qualifications enable them to make decisions that are more representative of the newer, younger demographic prevalent in our town. Is this recent decision by council somehow sending a message to new candidates that this old mentality will never change? I should hope not.

I applaud Trish Hickson and Jason Drew for stepping up to serve on the city Planning Commission. Others should follow their lead and help guide positive improvements for our city. Is this a call to action for the next generation? Yes! We need better representation in this town and we need to show that we are ready to do something about it. It won’t be easy, but we need to show people that the “Stop changing our town” mentality and this short-term vision is not an option.

In the short time that I was campaigning for the vacant seat on City Council people continually mentioned that if the college would only convert to a four-year university we would be able to save our town. The college plays a huge role in bringing people together and has done a lot to revitalize this community, but people also need to understand that the people of this community and the City Council have the capacity to save our town as well … they just haven’t done it yet.

With the passing of the [Tahoe Regional Planning Agency] Regional Plan update more power will be returned to local government. The city has an opportunity to prove that it is

ready to move forward with sustainable economic development while balancing both community needs and environmental protection. If we do not change our ways and put forth a solid effort to demonstrate that we can conduct ourselves appropriately, we will loose the respect of our community and miss out on this awesome opportunity. How are we currently showing we are making responsible decisions?

The city of South Lake Tahoe just sold the property on the corner of Ski Run and Highway 50 to a Rite-Aid developer. With decisions like this we are clearly not making any effort to improve the attractiveness of our town, revitalize the economy, or prove to the TRPA we are responsible stewards. No wonder businesses and young professionals are reluctant to stay or perhaps relocate here.

Businesses in South Lake have made it clear that they are not doing well and the economy is suffering. Why then do we continue to use the same old model? Why don’t our decision makers think outside the same box they have been planning with for the last 50 years and try something new? How can we achieve economic viability and sustainability if we can’t be more creative than just having another Rite-Aid?

Our community is demanding positive change. We want more bike trails and access to the beach. We want diverse shopping and dining opportunities. We want local business to experience economic success. We want to beautify the city and be proud of our town, but this community vision is constantly crushed by the nearsightedness of the City Council and a very small number of our own community members. Instead of a pedestrian-friendly shopping and dining experience with locally unique shops and cafes with a view of the lake we’ll have just another Rite-Aid.

There are plenty of other progressive uses for that space, but if this “old economy” mentality keeps up, the educated citizenry and the “high dollar” visitors that this city

desperately need will just have to find another town, one that makes a concerted effort to make community desires a priority. It seems as though we can't even do something as simple as banning plastic bags. We are basically telling the world that we are not serious about saving the lake. We need to unify around some common goals and show our city leaders that we are ready and willing to work to effect change and make difficult decisions that benefit the community in the long term.

Together we can adopt a city vision … and possibly a region wide goal of making positive improvements… insuring that our generation, and the generations that come after us, aren't going to be disenfranchised with the state of the town being left to them.

Scott Valentine is the head of the Earth Science Department at Lake Tahoe Community College.

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Publisher's note: The property where Scott Valentine says a Rite-Aid is going is in escrow. It was owned by the city's Redevelopment Agency and had to be sold per state law. The buyer at this time has not been disclosed. And any building that would go on the site would have to be approved by the city and other permitting agencies. None of that has happened. So it is not factual at this time to say what may built at that location. And the city cannot deny a certain type of business if the use is allowable in that location. It's partly called free market.

Full moon snowshoe benefits Winter Discovery Program

Tahoe Cross Country's last full moon yurt dinner of the season is Feb. 22.

Chef Doug Baehr of Uncommon Kitchen will be doing the cooking.



The evening adventure starts with a moonlit ski or snowshoe from the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area to the trailside warming hut on Yellow trail where there will be fireside hot drinks. Dinner is served in the yurt.

Cost is $65 per person. It includes a three-course meal, tax, two beverages, and trail pass. Ski or snowshoe equipment is available for rent.

This is an evening for adults.

All money raised benefits the Winter Discovery Program at Tahoe Cross Country.

Snowshoers should expect to leave the parking lot by 5:30pm and skiers should leave no later than 6pm. Headlamps are available upon request. If you are dining only and not skiing or snowshoeing, the yurt will be open for mingling at 7pm.

Reservations are being taken. Seating is limited – (530) 583.5475.

The center is at 925 Country Club Drive, Tahoe City.