Ski report: Expect lots of people



Patience may be required in the lift lines.

Storm coming in this afternoon may affect lift access.

Here is the Dec. 25 ski report.

– Curtis Fong

Lead paint class for contractors to be taught in Spanish

South Lake Tahoe and Lake Tahoe Community College Connect Community Education are sponsoring the Renovator, Repair, Painter course for local construction workers. This class is going to be conducted in Spanish.

The Lead Safe Worker eight-hour training is at LTCC on Jan. 19 from 8am-5pm.

The cost is $50. Up to two workers from each local company are welcome to participate.

This one-day class explains how to comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's RRP rule. Subjects covered include health effects, regulations, lead safe work practices, containment, cleaning and record keeping. After passing an end-of-class exam, students will receive their RRP certificate.

To register, contact Lydia Zuniga at (530) 542.7417 or lzuniga@cityofslt.us

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Letter: Thanks to community from TACCD

To the community,

I would like to take this opportunity to send my personal thanks out to those wonderful people who supported our Disability Awareness & Employment Month celebrations and fundraisers.

Restauranteurs Paul and Judy Bruso from Ernie's, Dan and Tai from Passaretti's, Kelly from Steamers, Manuel from Taqueria Jalisco, and George from Jalisco Grill, were so generous in their support, providing a day to fund raise in their restaurants.

Sincere thanks also go out to Danny from the Pine Cone Acre Motel, Seth from Raley's at the Y (for all the food and supplies), Gia and the rest of the gang from KRLT/KOWL, the Tahoe Sierra Kiwanis Aktion Club members, and TACCD Secretary John Pillsbury for their help and support of our huge Treat Street Hot Dog Fundraiser.

Individuals who contributed to our organization’s support also have our heartfelt appreciation: Lloyd and Susan Enos, Paula Foley, B. Gorman, David Jinkins, David Kurtzman, and Liberty Energy.

I am sincerely grateful and look forward to continued support from these long-time backers and any new benefactors who support our advocacy for senior and disabled residents during the upcoming year.

Most Sincerely,

David Kelly, president TACCD (Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled)

Trek through Tahoe history on cross country skis

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Apparently for rich San Franciscans, Lake Tahoe’s winters were too harsh. Instead of embracing the elements and the beauty, they boarded up their homes, packed their belongings and went to the flat land for most of the year.

Of course, those who summered on the shores of Lake Tahoe in the first half of the 20th century didn’t have all the modern conveniences we have today.

And had those with last names like Pope, Baldwin and Heller decided to reside year-round at what is now known as the Tallac Historic Site, it’s possible the winter experience would be much different in the 21st century. Maybe it would

still be privately owned.

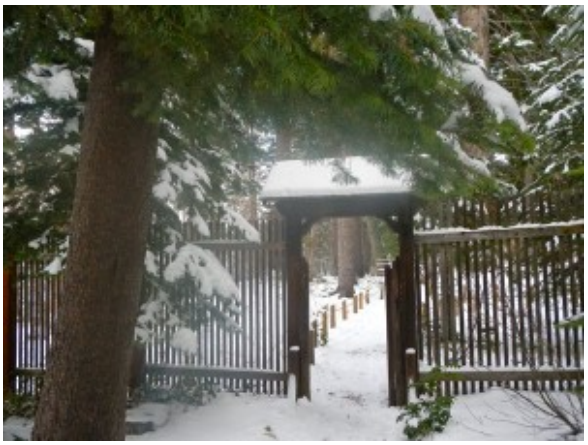


Sue and AJ at Kiva Beach.

Today, it is so incredibly tranquil. Few people seem to venture to this part of the South Shore in winter. It’s almost like a ghost town.

Sure, the buildings are closed up – just like when it was privately owned. But there is still plenty to see. The U.S. Forest Service has done a great job in putting up signs telling about the history of this site.

(Most of the buildings are open in the summer.)



A gateway to history.

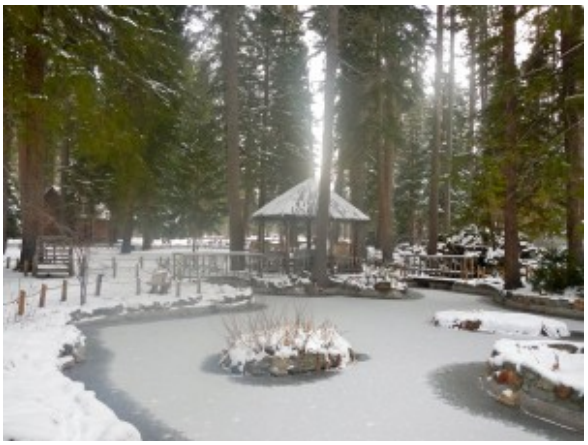
Nineteen buildings are dispersed on what were three estates. The 74 acres are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Restoration work continues on the buildings and grounds.

Imagine what it would have been like a century ago to live here. Imagine the summers back then compared to today. Same lake, same trees, same beach – but a different time makes for a different world.

One of our favorite cross country ski outings is to park at the Beacon restaurant, then glide along the snow-covered beach toward Taylor Creek.

On a blustery December Saturday we hit the point that would take us to Baldwin Beach and decided we didn't need to go farther. Instead, we headed back along the beach a bit until we could get onto the trail that would lead us through the Tallac Site.



Tallac Historic Site is rich in history and beauty. Photos/LTN

That's the fun thing about this trek – which is good on skis, snowshoes or boots – it can be a loop. It's a bit present day, a bit yesteryear.

And with the Beacon the start and end point it makes for a good spot to get something to drink and/or eat.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, go north on Highway 89 toward Emerald Bay. At Camp Richardson, turn right at the lodge. Drive down to the Beacon parking lot.

TOCCATA special performances raise money for outreach programs

TOCCATA – Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus will have three special “soiree musicale” fundraisers featuring Elizabeth Pitcairn, violinist, as well as vocalists Joy Strotz, Liudmila Mullin, and Irina Kasimova performing Russian arias and Broadway tunes.

The soirees will take place in elegant private homes. Proceeds will go to help defer costs for TOCCATA’s 8th winter season kickoff series as well as the outreach program Discovering Classical Music in the Public Schools.

The soirees will be Jan. 12 at 2pm in Incline Village, Jan. 13 at 2pm in Truckee, and Jan. 18 at 6pm in South Lake Tahoe. Admission s $100 per person and includes wine, cheese and dessert.

For information or reservations, call (787) 602.2121.

Mentors being sought to help area youth

January is National Mentoring Month and Tahoe Youth & Family Services is looking for mentors.

TYFS needs mentors for ages 4-17.

A Big Brothers/Big Sisters study shows that youth who are mentored by a trusted adult are “more confident in their schoolwork performance, able to get along better with their families, 46 percent less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27 percent less likely to begin using alcohol and 52 percent less likely to skip school.”

Just one hour a week could change their world. These kids are just waiting for someone to take an interest in their life, to show them opportunities that they never knew existed.

There is also an on-site mentoring project with Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe.

In the South Lake Tahoe area, contact Eli Stevenson at (530) 541.2445, eli@tahoeyouth.org. In Alpine County and surrounding area, contact Betty Hathaway (530) 694.9459, betty@tahoeyouth.org.

Opinion: Institutional investors may bring gunmakers

to their knees

By Ken Silverstein, Forbes

The energy and gun worlds are about to collide. Fundamentally, the two have almost nothing in common – except that each has been or is about to be the subject of immense pressures from large institutional investors.

Money managers have long exercised their financial muscle. Energy companies, for example, have been rewarded for developing clean fuels or critical infrastructure. Now, some of those same investment managers are targeting gun manufacturers and particularly those that make semi-automatic weapons.

"The bottom line is neither the California Public Employees's Retirement System (CalPERS) nor the California Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) should have any investments in the makers of guns that are illegal in California, especially those guns that have been used to kill 20 innocent children and six innocent adults," says California State Treasurer Bill Lockyer.

While those investment managers must serve their shareholders, many would argue that they have a greater purpose – to leverage their strength to achieve common good and to improve lives where they are conducting commerce. The best example is when the masses pressured their institutions to extract money from South Africa's former Apartheid government. Both corporate and scholastic icons responded, which became the impetus that brought down that regime.

Certainly, money managers could use their same influence to effect common-sense changes to gun laws and to penalize those weapons' factories that place their profits ahead of the concerns of the local communities where they co-exist. That's why Lockyer asked the country's two biggest pension

funds to examine their allocations in these companies. His request was immediately felt, prompting Cerberus Capital Management to say that it is dumping the Freedom Group that makes one of the firearms used in the Newtown, Connecticut massacre.

“The tragic and devastating acts that took place Dec. 14 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut have prompted many in this country to call for change: To determine what we can do differently to help ensure the unthinkable never happens again,” says a statement by Calstrs. It has $750 million invested in Cerberus.

The flip-side of the argument is that those pension fund managers have a fiduciary obligation to maximize their returns to plan participants – not to make political or social statements. But such thinking is one-dimensional. In the case of Cerberus, it has been reported that its chief executive has relatives in Newtown, meaning that the corporate boss has tied his business to what is now happening in that community.

Indeed, it’s about corporate social responsibility – or the idea that the companies and the cities in which they prosper are irrevocably linked. Business reputations have currency and as such, firms must project a positive image. Public outcry has significance. It’s why the National Rifle Association’s leadership, which exacts punitive retribution against those who cross it, has released a statement that says it will now try to be more accommodating – at least until legislation starts moving to ban assault-style weapons that can trigger multiple bullets at once.

But the gun lobby gets its fire power from the gun manufacturers. As long as they are flush with cash, so too are its richly-rewarded lobbyists who intimidate those officials on Capitol Hill and in the state legislatures. But now, the actions of the California pension funds are spreading. The Massachusetts treasurer’s office is making a similar request

of its fund managers. More states are certain to follow, especially if the public anger coalesces into the kind of movement that destroyed Apartheid.

Bottom line: Share prices of the gun makers are taking a direct hit with both Smith & Wesson and Sturm Ruger & Co. going down. They may be able to bully lawmakers and legislators. But they can't threaten the institutional investment managers. Who wants to profit off the misery of others?

"It is apparent that the Sandy Hook tragedy was a watershed event that has raised the national debate on gun control to an unprecedented level," says Cerberus.

Investments with a higher purpose can beat market averages. CalPERS has often said that socially responsible investing has enhanced its returns. Meantime, the International Shareholder Services says that such thinking is a business imperative: Two-thirds of the companies that it surveyed said that good governance is the right thing to do and that such standards also give enterprises a leg up.

Both shareholders and creditors have expressly said that business must actually live and breathe their corporate codes of conduct. Along those lines, many mainstream investors want to see companies become more "socially responsible" – in essence, to expand their missions beyond serving just shareholders and into the communities where they work.

"With only rare exceptions, the financial community has not sufficiently recognized or rewarded corporate efforts to respond to environmental, labor or human rights challenges, even though such factors can be directly material to corporate performance," says Marshall Carter, chairman of the New York Stock Exchange Group, in a speech.

While shareholder activism has its cynics, the reality is that businesses must now appeal to a broad range of constituencies.

Good corporate citizenship adds value while bucking the mores of a civil society will eventually kill enterprises.

The energy sector knows this firsthand. It has seen the greediest of its members collapse. That's why the power and gas industry, generally, places a high value on stakeholder communications and community outreach, all with an eye on building consensus. The gun lobby, conversely, has long hidden behind specious arguments, reasoning that it can run roughshod over the people's will. But now, the institutional investors are the ones packing heat that could drop the gun makers to their knees.

The large pension funds would be justified to leverage their financial clout to effect social change here – to accomplish what elected officials have failed to do, which is to better protect our local communities. And if its good for real people, it's also healthy for shareholders.

Most of California's water footprint tied to food production

By Bettina Boxall, Los Angeles Times

These days, there's a lot of discussion of carbon footprints. A new study by the Pacific Institute focuses on another footprint, that of water.

The report, released this month by the Oakland-based think tank, takes a look at the amount of water required to produce the goods Californians consume, whether it's the food we eat

or the things we buy; whether they are produced in state or imported from other states or foreign countries.

California's total water footprint is about 64 million acre-feet, or 20 trillion gallons of water, per year, according to the study. More than half of that is used to produce goods that are imported and consumed here.

On a per capita basis, the average Californian's water footprint is 1,500 gallons a day – slightly less than the average American's but significantly more than the average in other developed countries.

Only about 4 percent of the total footprint is tied to direct household use, much of it for watering lawns and gardens. Industrial products, such as clothing and electronics, account for another 3 percent.

The biggest piece by far – 93 percent – is tied to agricultural production, both food that is imported from out of state or grown, produced and consumed in state. (California's agricultural exports are not counted.) Thanks to the large amounts of water required to grow animal feed, meat and dairy products have an especially big footprint.

Overall, about 70 percent of the state's water footprint is associated with goods produced elsewhere in the U.S. or in foreign countries.

"These findings suggest that California's economic and social well-being is intimately connected with water resources beyond our borders and is vulnerable to water-supply constraints in those regions," note authors Julian Fulton, Heather Cooley and Peter Gleick.

Ski report: The gift of sun and powder



Get up and enjoy some of the best holiday conditions offered in years.

And stay on the trails.

Here is the Dec. 24 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Changing chip ingredients doesn’t make them a health food

By Susan Carpenter, Los Angeles Times

Move over, potato and corn chips. There’s a cornucopia of other vegetables making its way to the grocery store snack aisle.

Whether it’s black bean chips or dehydrated cabbage, sprouted sweet potato tortilla crisps or baked and salted peas, the

options in the $560-billion global snack food market are expanding along with the waistlines of Americans and their desire to eat more healthfully.

“For me, it’s about eating smart but not giving up things that taste good,” said Doug Foreman, founder of Beanitos, in Austin, Texas. Since launching its line of black bean chips in 2010, Beanitos has become the fastest-growing natural snack chip on the market, according to Spins, a natural product research firm.

Although chips made from corn or potatoes are increasingly available in varieties with less fat or salt, snack chips made from beans and other legumes, such as lentils and peas, can be higher in fiber, which leaves snackers feeling fuller with fewer calories. They are, however, still snack chips.

“Even snacks claiming they’re better for you are still an indulgent item. You’re still getting sodium and fat,” said Todd Kluger, vice president of marketing for Lundberg Farms in Richvale. Lundberg Farms makes gluten-free chips from whole-grain, organic rice that is not genetically modified. Even so, Kluger said, “we don’t claim a health benefit from an indulgent snack. We recognize it’s part of a healthy balanced diet.”

So do most Americans. According to the 2012 consumer snacking study from the Symphony Group, 46 percent of consumers view snacks as part of a healthful eating plan; 60 percent are seeking snacks that offer attributes beyond basic nutrition, such as organic or low-glycemic (which has less negative effect on blood sugar levels) or minimally processed ingredients.

“Calorically, our veggie chips do have fat and sugar. Fats from whole foods, such as soaked cashew nuts or sesame seeds, are in their natural state. The body is able to digest them more easily,” said Penny Ann Horowytz, founder of Alive &

Radiant Foods in Berkeley, which makes chips from dehydrated organic kale, arugula, sweet onion, collard greens and other vegetables few people typically associate with snack foods. They are, surprisingly, delicious.

Like any snack, vegetable-based chips “have to taste good first,” said Steve Kneepkens, vice president of sales and marketing for Calbee, in Fairfield, Calif. The maker of Snapea Crisps is about to expand from its popular baked pea snacks into salty crisps made from lentils. “The sweet potatoes, the lentils, plantains and other vegetable snacks are growing in popularity because they offer different nutritional opportunities, and they taste good too.”

For many vegetable snack chip makers, it isn’t enough to merely make a tasty chip from something as unexpected as cassava root or collard greens. They also offer them in flavors appealing to consumers who like to experiment with a globe’s worth of tastes, such as Thai basil, teriyaki, wasabi, pico de gallo and cucumber and dill.

“Consumers are increasingly looking for more variety in all their products,” said Christopher Clark, spokesman for the Snack Food Assn. in Arlington, Va. “Years ago, you had barbecue or sour cream and onion potato chips. Now you have everything from chipotle to beer battered and cheddar. There’s a lot of opportunity to do interesting things with flavors and ingredients, which brings you to the vegetable and bean chips and rice-based snacks we’re seeing today.”

Though snacks perceived as more healthful are outpacing much of the market, different permutations of potato and tortilla chips are projected to grow even more quickly than the many types of vegetables that are now being fried, baked and dehydrated into salted snack chips, according to the Snack Food Assn. That’s good news for consumers, who now have more snacking variety than ever in products that match their dietary values and health goals.