

Northstar veteran at helm of ski resort

By Kathryn Reed

Even though Nadia Guerriero is well versed in event planning, a mega-winter pushing 600 inches of snow to date is one event she didn't plan for.

"For so many years the conversation was how to keep our trails open, how to make sure we had enough snow. Now it is where do we put all the snow," Guerriero told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Guerriero is in her first season as chief operating officer of Northstar. This Truckee resort averages 350 inches of snow a season. In 2014-15, 133 inches fell.

This season she and her crew are figuring out how to get it off roofs, how to dig down to access lifts, and how to maintain safety, as well provide a good experience for guests. All this snow doesn't just affect life at work. Employees, like everyone in the greater Lake Tahoe area, have had their own struggles this winter, which in turn can have an impact on the workplace.

Guerriero said the massive amount of snow "has accelerated the learning process in a lot of ways."

It helps that the 43-year-old is not new to the resort. She started at Northstar in 2007 as director of events and conference services. Four years later when Vail Resorts acquired the property she became general manager of the village.

While she didn't work directly with everyone at the resort in her prior capacities, she at least had an awareness of who they were and what they did. That has helped ease the

transition to being the leader.



Nadia Guerriero in her first year as C00 at Northstar has had to deal with more snow than she ever imagined. Photo/Provided

It is her leadership that helped get her the job.

“Nadia’s leadership and dedication to the Northstar community for nearly a decade prepared her well for the Northstar C00 role – it was a natural fit. She executes on her day-to-day responsibilities exceptionally and also dedicates a huge portion of her time to developing high performing teams,” Pete Sonntag told *Lake Tahoe News*. He is Vail Resorts’ vice president in charge of the three Tahoe area resorts. “It’s this extraordinary leadership and commitment to excellence that is sought after in this industry and will help her raise the bar for Northstar and Truckee/Lake Tahoe.”

Guerriero’s immediate goal is to continue to have Northstar be the No. 1 place in California for families to ski.

She wants to fill in the midweek with more destination

visitors. With the recently approved master plan, the resort will be expanding. This could attract more people, too. What the first project will be has not been determined.

Northstar has long struggled to be a year-round destination. Lake Tahoe locales take precedence in the summer. Guerriero knows the lake will always be a priority for summer visitors, but she thinks Northstar can still capture a larger segment of the market. This will in part be accomplished by keeping the village full, having plenty of shopping and dining options, as well as things for kids to do.

“We have available lodging here and need to promote that lodging. We need to make Northstar a real hub to spend a week or two,” Guerriero said. “Another big thing to do is be mindful and thoughtful about programming.”

She also wants to coordinate transit with the town of Truckee to bring people between the two locations.

Development in the region draws the ire of many when it comes to where workers will live and congestion on roads. Guerriero believes Northstar has a role to play in mitigating both issues.

“Regarding roads and traffic it’s been an extraordinary year from weather and visitation standpoint,” Guerriero said. Working on the inflow and outflow of traffic, and educating guests are other things the resort is doing. The resort also helps fund regional transit.

“I believe in affordable housing and workforce housing. We are part of the (Truckee North Tahoe) Regional Housing Council,” Guerriero said. The resort has pledged \$30,000 to the Housing Solutions Fund.

While Guerriero’s job is never ending, she does get to spend time on the mountain. She been skiing since she was 10, having learned at Eldora Mountain Resort near Boulder, Colo. Her mom

put her and her sister in lessons – at night – and from there she was hooked.

Today she skis with her husband and daughter.

For now, Guerriero is hoping to be in this position for years to come. Even though the last two Northstar head honchos got promoted to other resorts within the Vail Resorts family, she wants to stay put.

“There are a lot of people in the same role, at the same resort. I hope to get to be one of those,” Guerriero said. “I would love to stay at Northstar. I’m passionate about the resort.”

Trauma support group for adults in SLT

Live Violence Free is offering a free adult trauma support group for people who are survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, or other forms of sexual abuse.

The support group offers a confidential space to receive education and support on healing from trauma caused by previous abuse.

The goal of the group is to provide support, psycho-education, coping skills and promote healing after a traumatic experience.

There is no need to sign up for the group—it is confidential and no-cost.

The group meets at Live Violence Free (2941 Lake Tahoe Blvd.,

South Lake Tahoe) on Wednesdays from 11am-noon.

Hard Rock looking for local bands to compete

Lake Tahoe Hard Rock casino and Hard Rock Café are looking for emerging musicians to take the stage for its annual Hard Rock Rising Battle of the Bands competition.

The winner will perform at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens during halftime.

Locals may register **online** until March 30.

There are local and regional competitions. The top three acts and one wildcard “winner” in each market will perform at the local Hard Rock between May 18-25.

Combo of philosophy-art-science subject of talk

Tahoe Art League is hosting a free presentation titled A Blending of Philosophy, Art and Science at Lake Tahoe Community College’s Aspen Room on March 8 at 7pm.

The founders of Journey Around Happy Inc. are friends who liked to go on walkabouts together. Chris Hill, a fine art

painter, sculptor and “imager” for Disney, and Brent von Twistern, a hydrographer working for the U.S. Navy, seemingly had nothing in common but fun. However, during their adventures a common interest was discovered and a philosophical insight led the journeys.

Von Twistern will lead a talk that will give a general background into the philosophy that guides their work, a view of the creative process they developed, a look specifically at the Lake Tahoe subscapes and the story how the art and science have been used and disseminated through the Lake Tahoe community.

Caltrans' Donner Pass chief tweets a blizzard

By Adam Ashton, Sacramento Bee



Dave Wood

With a white helmet and ash-gray beard, Caltrans Superintendent Dave Wood exudes old-fashioned charm from his post at the snowy summit of Donner Pass. But his favored method of communicating with drivers is decidedly modern.

He's the voice behind regular mountain traffic updates

dispatched on Twitter by Caltrans, where Wood provides a close-up look at the nasty conditions that can snarl Interstate 80 in an instant. He's often funny, and always himself.

"If you drive your car on the roof, we can't keep this road open. Please slow down," he implored in a video post this week.

Read the whole story

Signups available for SNC summer arts workshops

Registration is open to the public for Sierra Nevada College's 33rd annual Summer Visiting Artist Workshops.

This is a chance to learn from masters of their craft at the Holman Arts and Media Center in Incline Village.

Choose from a variety of disciplines, including: ceramics, painting, drawing, printmaking, digital art, sculpture, glasswork, paper and bookmaking, and more. Workshops are affordable and flexibly scheduled, with most offered in June and July.

Anyone 16 and older may take workshops for personal enrichment or college credit. Tuition includes some materials, possible kiln firings, equipment rental, and more.

Spouses, parents, children and friends are welcome to visit the studios before and after classes and attend meet the artist Tuesday nights.

For more info or to register, go **online**.

Athletes regaining independence via High Fives

The High Fives Foundation is awarding Truckee-area residents Taylor Fiddymment, Jason Abraham and Jeff Andrews grants totaling \$14,820 to aid in their respective recoveries.

Truckee resident Fiddymment was injured while riding a four-wheeler with friends in May 2011. Fiddymment's goals have remained the same since entering the world of spinal cord injury recovery – to be the best person she can be, and spread joy and positivity to others.

“My recovery goal is to be strong in body and mind,” said Fiddymment. “I want to make other people's down days better.”

Fiddymment received a grant for \$4,560 to be used toward massage and chiropractic work to pair with her personal training at the CR Johnson Healing Center – program service of the High Fives Foundation.

Alpine Meadows resident Jason Abraham was skiing at Squaw Valley on one of the only powder days of the year in April 2015. He decided he'd take a free ski run on Main Chute on the Palisades. Toward the bottom of Main Chute, he caught an edge and was propelled onto his back. The impact resulted in the burst fracture of his C6 vertebrae, causing temporary paralysis from the shoulders down.

“My recovery goal is to become as independent as possible through diet and exercise,” said Abraham. “But my ultimate

goals are to be the best father and husband I can be, and to watch my son, Ebbett, have a blast out on the hill with friends.”

Abraham received \$2,200 in grant funding from the High Fives Foundation to be used toward massage at the CR Johnson Healing Center along with a new custom fit wheelchair back.

Andrews of Truckee is receiving his sixth grant from the Foundation following a 2014 spinal cord injury sustained in a snowboarding accident at Sugar Bowl.

The \$8,060 will be used for two months of Neuro Kinetic Pilates at Body Wellness Hawaii in Maui. Andrews has previously worked with Alejandra Monsalve and the team at Body Wellness Hawaii and experienced tremendous gains from the Neuro Kinetic Pilates method.

The High Fives Foundation supports injured mountain sports athletes through grant funding to be used toward reaching their recovery goals.

Learn about Mountain yellow-legged frogs

Imagine a world with no frogs. No longer would you hear frog melodies in the evening, algae would flourish, and entire ecosystems could change dramatically. This is a possibility in the Sierra Nevada because 90 percent of the Mountain yellow-legged frogs have been disappearing due to an amphibian pathogen and loss of habitat from fish introductions in our lakes.

An ambitious and promising effort is under way to recover these frogs, and this approach may be applied to conserving other threatened amphibians globally. Roland Knapp from the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory will talk about the recovery effort on April 6.

Registration for this event is required. The program will begin at 6pm, with refreshments and no-host bar from 5:30-6pm at 291 Country Club Drive in Incline Village on the campus of Sierra Nevada College.

Seating is open at 5:30 p.m. to guests who have preregistered, open seating starts at 5:50pm. A \$5 suggested donation will be collected at the door.

Road Beat: Toyota RAV4 hybrid – a complete car



The RAV4 AWD Hybrid is a good choice for snow country.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

RAV4 is another Toyota success story, with continuous sales growth since 2011 (sales were 132,000) to its best year ever 2016 when U.S. sales topped 350,000 for the first time. The bestselling car in America, the Toyota Camry, had sales approaching 390,000 (Camry was fourth in overall sales behind three pickups, 1. Ford F-150, 2. Chevy Silverado and 3. Dodge Ram). Toyota is definitely doing something right, very right.

This new compact CUV RAV4 is in its fifth year of the fourth generation. Styling remains ruggedly pleasant, certainly superior to the Honda CRV which actually outsold the RAV4 by about 5,000 vehicles. Perhaps its best styling feature is the high belt/character line which creates a horizontal shelf out of the tail lights. Size remains the same at 180 x 73 x 66 inches in length, width and height. Wheelbase is still 105 inches.

Toyota's biggest improvement is the interior. When I opened the door for the first time I remarked to myself, wow! What an

improvement and a very nice change. It wasn't until I checked out the specs after a few days that I learned what I thought was leather was actually SofTex, Toyota's name for the superb vinyl. My tester was done in black and a saddle tan, which is either called cinnamon or nutmeg. It was stunning and my tester was not even the top of the line model, the Limited. Mine was an SE model. There were more soft touch materials even the lower dash trim was done in the seating materials with some nice stitching. Even better was the comfort level of the front chairs, excellent.

Under the hood of my hybrid tester was Toyota's 2.5L, DOHC, 16 valve inline four, but in the hybrid's case it runs as a high compression (12.5:1) Atkinson cycle engine which improves efficiency by increasing the ratio between the compression and expansion cycle. But some peak power is lost as instead of 176 hp this motor puts out a peak hp of 150 hp at a slightly lower 5,700 rpm. Torque is still a healthy 152 pounds of twist which follows the rule of one pound of torque per cubic inch of engine displacement.

Adding to the RAV4's thrust is the hybrid component which has electric motors that help drive the front wheels and a separate electric motor that drive the rear wheels. The gas engine is not connected to the rear wheels, there is no driveshaft. The rear wheels are driven by the rear mounted electric motor only and is an on-demand system. It's a clever AWD system. While the motors have a rating of a max power output of 141 and 67 hp respectively, the combined hp of all power systems is a still respectable 194 hp. The limitation is the max output of the Nickel-Metal Hydride battery system which is limited to about 33 kWh or 44 hp.



Specifications

Price \$ 32,185 to about \$37,000

Engine

DOHC 16 valve Inline four-cylinder gasoline 150 hp @ 5,700 rpm

152 lb-ft of torque @ 4,400 rpm

Electric power 44 hp

Combined hp 194 hp

Transmission

CVT automatic

Configuration

Transverse front mounted engine/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 104.7 inches

Length 179.9 inches

Width 72.6 inches

Height 67.1 inches

Ground clearance 7.0 inches

Track (f/r) 61.4/61.4 inches

Weight 3,950 pounds

GVWR 4,960 pounds

Fuel capacity 14.8 gallons

Tow capacity 1,500 pounds

Cargo volume (rear seat down/up) 70.6/35.6 cubic feet

Wheels 7.0×18
steel/alloy/alloy
Tires P235/55×18
Turning circle 36.7 feet
Steering lock to lock 2.68
turns

Performance

0-60 mph 7.08 seconds
50-70 mph 4.09 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 5.95
seconds
Top speed Who cares?
Fuel Economy EPA rated at
34/30/32 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 31 mpg overall in a
combination of all driving
and 33-34 mpg on the highway
at legal speeds.

Throttle response is quite snappy recording a 0-60 mph elapsed time of 7.09 seconds or almost a second and a half quicker than the standard RAV4 with a similar 2.5L engine 176 hp. Passing performance also improves significantly with a 50-70 mph simulated passing run of 4.09 seconds and the same run up a six-seven percent grade slowing that time to 5.95 seconds which is a pickup of about a half a second and a second and three quarters. Another huge performance improvement. The standard RAV4 had times of 8.51, 4.57 and 7.73 seconds. And this performance improvement (and fuel economy, see below) is in spite of a weight penalty of about 350 pounds over the conventional RAV4.

And this staggering performance improvement comes with significantly improved fuel economy. EPA rates the RAV4 Hybrid at 34/30/32 mpg city/highway/combines. The reality of my 310 miles of varied driving showed 31 mpg overall with a two-way

level highway run at 70 mph returning 33.5 mpg. The conventional RAV4, while returning an average of 32.7 mpg at 70 mph, only averaged between 25-26 mpg overall. The hybrid version will offer significantly improved performance and a 5-6 mpg boost in overall fuel economy. Is there a drawback? About the only niggle with the hybrid is the auto stop engine feature which at times could be felt restarting upon brake release. But the integration of the electric motors are extremely smooth and basically imperceptible. And with the ability to run pure electric up to about 45 mph under very light throttle, the RAV4 becomes unbelievably smooth and quiet. One very small negative is the fuel tank shrinks by about a gallon to 14.8 gallons; probably due to the battery.

Handling is very good as RAV4 has serious creds. The electric power steering rack is very quick at 2.68 turns lock to lock. Suspension is MacPherson struts up front and a state of the art double wishbone holding up the rear with a ground clearance of 7 inches. Wheels are 18 x 7 inch alloys shod with some pretty meaty 235/55 series rubber. It adds up to sporty driving with strong cornering power with crisp turn in. It handles the twisties with aplomb. It will not disappoint.

Ride quality is smooth, handling both large and small imperfections with ease keeping its occupants coddled. Head tossing is kept to a minimum and jumping from a sports sedan to the RAV4 would be almost imperceptible. There is no tack, but based on vehicle quietness, rpm at 70 mph should be somewhere around 2,000 rpm. There is some road noise on coarser roads, but the RAV4 is reasonably quiet. There is no wind and engine noise unless there is aggressive use of the throttle. In EV mode it is silent.

Four wheel discs are almost a foot in diameter and are strong and of course the RAV4 has all the acronyms including lane departure assist with steering assist. LED headlights were excellent especially on low beam and the automatic high beaming dimming system worked perfectly. Just leave it in

automatic and let it work. A big safety feature that sometimes dimmed the highs when reflecting off a large, new reflective sign which actually helped as the reflection from these headlights sometimes was pretty bright. Going to low beams was an improvement in forward vision. It's a great feature, standard in the middle trim level of an SE.

Inside, as said above, is a trick interior. Instrumentation is complete except for a tach which is replaced by a power meter which reflects power usage. The trip computer is complete and the sound system and HVAC is easy and simple to use, no three-unit college course is required. Rear seating is spacious and comfortable. Cargo capacity is large with over 70 cubes behind the front chairs and about 36 cubes with the second row up.

Pricing for this bullet proof RAV4 is a deal. The base price for an SE Hybrid AWD is \$32,185, plus \$940 for the boat ride from Obu, Japan. But here is the deal. The premium for AWD in conventional RAV4s is \$1,400, but with the Hybrid it is standard. So, the price differential between a RAV4 SE AWD and the RAV4 SE AWD Hybrid is just \$800. Buying the RAV4 with AWD it becomes a no brainer to buy the hybrid. For that \$800 you get significantly better fuel economy and performance with no downside. Oh, you worry about the battery and hybrid system. Toyota hybrids have the highest reliability ratings, even higher than conventional cars and their battery system is as close to fail safe as a battery can be. Toyota has tested its batteries to over 150,000 cycles with no loss of efficiency and performance.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Sherlock

Sherlock is a 4-year-old shorthair male cat who has lived with dogs and kids. He is friendly and easy-going once he's warmed up.

As you can tell from the size of his eyes, he's a bit frightened in the shelter. Sherlock has beautiful soft fur.

Sherlock is neutered, microchipped, tested for FIV, 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. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz