

Suzi Elizabeth Berens – 1958-2014



Suzi Elizabeth Berens

Lifelong Homewood resident Suzi Elizabeth Berens brought love and joy to those around her from the day she was born Nov. 15, 1958, until she passed away on Dec. 15, 2014 surrounded by family and friends in Hermosa Beach.

Along the way, she made innumerable friends through her relentless optimism, loyalty and selflessness that inspired all of us.

While fully embracing her own life, Suzi was always first to care for those around her and thought of everyone else's well being before herself. Suzi simply could not say "no" when a friend was in need.

An animal-lover, generous spirit and loving soul, Suzi was a long-time member of the Lake Tahoe community where she spent her summers in the family home on the Western shore of the lake.

An adventurous traveller, outdoorswoman, camper and sailor, Suzi spent three years sailing around the world, before settling in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she worked for 15 years in the film business, while continuing to work

summers in Lake Tahoe.

Through the years Suzi enjoyed success personally and professionally: wife, mother, props master, real estate investor, volunteer, den mother and very active in her communities.

She and husband Norm Berens shared 20 years together and have two children: 16-year-old Sean and 10-year-old Ellie. She was a tireless and passionate advocate for her children and was very involved in their lives volunteering at school, at play and in sports, arts and scouting. S

he was a caring daughter to Howard Skaggs, Merriam Lewis and George Lewis, and loyal sister to Vicki Skaggs, James Lewis and Betsy Clemings.

Suzi will remain in the thoughts of many people in Lake Tahoe, Northern and Southern California, and around the world.

A remembrance service and celebration of her life will be on Jan. 17 at 2pm at the Redondo Beach Center for Spiritual Living at 907 Knob Hill Ave., Redondo Beach.

For those of you who would like to make a donation, the family requests that you send in the memory of Suzi Berens to: Mesothelioma Alliance, 3206 Heritage Trade Drive, Suite 116, Wake Forrest, NC 27587.

Easy to recycle electronic waste responsibly

By Molly Wood, New York Times

Maybe you replaced old electronics over the holidays or you're just sweeping out the old and ushering in the New Year. Either way, you'll need to do something with your old devices. For everyone's sake, including Mother Nature's, try to get rid of your old technology the right way.

Recycling electronics is becoming easier by the day. Stores like Best Buy and Staples now offer programs to take back old gadgets and recycle them. Churches and schools commonly hold e-waste collection drives, and you can even occasionally find bins for dropping off old tech on the street.

Still, most old gadgets end up in the trash. Americans alone throw away 2 million to 3 million tons of electronics yearly, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. With the life span of devices shrinking – the average phone is replaced every 18 months – the problem keeps growing worse.

The toxic waste from all those tossed gadgets causes terrible damage to soil, water and people. The Blacksmith Institute, a nonprofit organization that focuses on solving global pollution problems, estimates that so-called toxic e-waste threatens the health of 100 million people worldwide. And the United Nations Environment Program calls electronic waste the “fastest growing waste stream in the world.”

The solution is not just recycling. It's to be sure that you're recycling with a responsible processor. Some programs do little more than pass the load to unverified operators that then toss loads of e-waste into increasingly toxic dumps around the world.

Read the whole story

International rock climber to give talk at Squaw

Mike Libeck, rock climber of international fame and a National Geographic nominee for adventurer of the year, is part of Alpen Glow Sports Winter Film Series.

Libeck will be at Squaw Valley's Olympic Village Lodge on Jan. 15 at 7pm.

Now in its ninth year, the Alpenglow Sports Winter Film Series is designed to inspire, motivate and educate, the event runs from November through March and showcases five famous athletes. All shows are free and raffle prizes from sponsors are sold to raise funds for local nonprofit organizations. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue is the beneficiary for the Jan. 15 show.

Libeck's "Global Climbing Pursuits" will document his most recent adventures in his quest to complete 100 expeditions throughout the world. These include a winter expedition to Siberia, big wall first ascents in subzero Greenland and Baffin Island, an Antarctica ski trip with his 11-year-old daughter, and rock climbing remote Polynesian jungle towers.

For more info, call 530.583.6917.

Magnesium, the invisible health deficiency

By Zahra Barnes, CNN

Feeling exhausted? Or noticing weird muscle cramps that are throwing off your workouts? You might be suffering from a magnesium deficiency.

Dubbed the “invisible deficiency” by some experts because it’s so hard to spot and diagnose, magnesium deficiencies are more dangerous than you might think.

“Magnesium is involved in over 300 biochemical reactions in your body. It affects everything from your heartbeat to your muscles to your hormones,” says Danine Fruge, associate medical director at the Pritikin Longevity Center in Miami.

Between making sure to get enough fiber in your diet and trying not skimp on iron, monitoring your magnesium intake can easily fall through the cracks.

“Studies have shown that only about 25 percent of U.S. adults are at or above the recommended daily amount of 310 to 320 milligrams for women and 400 to 420 for men,” says Fruge.

In fact, the 2005-2006 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey revealed that at least half of the U.S. population had inadequate intakes of magnesium.

Read the whole story

Barton's first baby arrives New Year's Day



Brianda Torres holds Jayden as son Noe and husband Daniel Molina look on. Photo/Provided

Time will tell if Jayden Daniel Molina Torres will always be faster than his older brother. But for now, he holds the speed record in his family – the record for how short of time he kept mom in labor.

Jayden has the distinction of being the first baby born in 2015 at Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake Tahoe. He arrived at 3:06pm New Year's Day.

"It was so fast," mom Brianda Torres told *Lake Tahoe News* not long after she arrived home Jan. 2. "It was just kind of crazy. It happened so quick."

She was in labor for a little more than six hours. This is in contrast to her first son, who just turned 6 last week, when labor was 32 hours.

Not only was Jayden quick to arrive, but he also came three days before the due date.

The early arrival might have something to do with big brother Noe being more than ready for his sibling to be born. Torres said he was always asking: “When is my baby coming out?”

Jayden weighed in at 7 pounds, 7 ounces and 18 inches. In addition to both boys being born at Barton, so were their parents – Torres and dad Daniel Molina.

Barton Health provided a wagon full of gifts for the family. Local businesses and Barton employees contributed \$1,950 in baby supplies, toys, and gift certificates.

“We were just looking at them,” Torres said. “It’s awesome.”

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Spouses tangle over pets in divorce court

By Carri Geer Thevenot, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Family law attorney Mandy McKellar valued her cats so much that she included them in a prenuptial agreement with her husband – “just in case.”

By the time they divorced this summer, the couple also had acquired two dogs. Now all five pets live with McKellar in her Las Vegas home, although she has offered to let her ex-husband take the cat they adopted.

“He can come back and get her at any time,” McKellar said of the cat. “She hates the dogs.”

Although McKellar and her husband went through an uncontested divorce, lawyers and judges who handle Family Court cases know that breakups often turn bitter. Couples fight over their children, their houses, and yes, even their pets.

The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers announced in February that 27 percent of the respondents in a recent survey had noticed an increase in the number of couples who fought over custody of a pet during the previous five years. Most of the time, those disputes involved a dog.

Read the whole story

Guest services No. 1 priority for Northstar chief



Beth Howard took over the top leadership position at Northstar just before the ski season started. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – Having all the equipment one needs for whatever work conditions might come up isn't unusual for a boss. What's different about this office is the tools are four pairs of skis.

"I'm ready for any type of condition," Beth Howard says.

But she doesn't always put on her gray uniform when she hits the slopes – that would be a giveaway to employees that upper management is around. As vice president and general manager of Northstar ski resort, she wants to be able to check on things incognito. This allows her to experience things as the guest does.

Howard is on the mountain at least four days a week, every Saturday and all holidays. The 51-year-old assumed the top position at Northstar this fall. She took over for Bill Rock

who is now at Park City.

“Beth was chosen for this position because she has strong leadership skills, deep business knowledge and an ability to get things done. In her career at Vail Resorts she has had great success overseeing our entire food and beverage operation for all of our mountain resorts driving a strong financial performance, delivering a high quality product and service and has been instrumental in developing and putting in place many innovative programs, products and approaches,” Blaise Carrig, president of Vail Resorts Mountain Division, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “She easily works her way through difficult challenges with a very positive and can do approach. And she has consistently demonstrated an ability to lead other strong leaders and foster teamwork.”

Since 2010, she was vice president of mountain dining and clubs for Vail Resorts, the parent company of the ski resort. That job had her overseeing the dining operations at the company’s more than 100 restaurants and eight private mountain and golf clubs.

“This job is much more hands on,” Howard said while sitting in her spacious office in the heart of Northstar Village.

The corporate gig was much more removed from the day-to-day operations, while this job has her interacting more with guests. And it is guest services that Howard plans to focus on.



The 42-year-old ski resort

has more than 2,400 acres of skiable terrain.

“I’d like to see Northstar as the best in guest services in the industry,” Howard told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We can always be better. We are fine-tuning how we can execute our guest services.”

She is taking note of every component of guest services – from the interaction with bus drivers on trips to and from the parking lot, to lifties, to food quality, to what the resort looks like. No detail is too small for her to pay attention to when it comes to guest services.

Howard doesn’t want Northstar to be compared to other resorts. Often it is referred to as the Beaver Creek of California. She wants Northstar to stand on its own.

But she is intimately familiar with the inner workings of Beaver Creek because she was in charge of that Colorado resort’s mountain dining from 1993-2008.



Summer operations, like the bike park, are also Beth Howard’s responsibility.

Howard doesn’t let it faze her that she is in a male-dominated profession; it’s not something she has focused on and clearly not something that has held her back. She’s been in the ski business for 30 years.

It is men who founded most U.S. ski resorts and subsequently hired other men to operate them. Many of them came out of the 10th Mountain Division after World War II. Slowly hiring practices have changed, but a woman in a ski management position is still rare.

“I think that now it is not an industry bias but more reflective on the culture of individual resorts and resort companies – whether they are supportive of women in these roles and also create and foster workplaces that are unbiased and gender neutral,” Carrig said. “This has been an ongoing focus at Vail Resorts, where we have two women running very large resorts (Northstar and Breckenridge), two women are directors of mountain operations (Vail and Canyons), two women ski patrol directors (Vail and Beaver Creek). And, my successor for president of the Mountain Division is Pat Campbell, which will put a woman at the helm of the largest ski operation in the North America, if not the world.”

But a career in the ski business is not what Howard dreamed of as a farm girl in Iowa. In many ways it’s a fluke she ended up in Colorado for the last three decades.

She was attending the University of Northern Iowa when she saw a posting for an internship with Vail Associates – the predecessor to Vail Resorts. This was 1985. The business major wrote to the Colorado-based company requesting a six-week internship. She had never heard of the company until then.

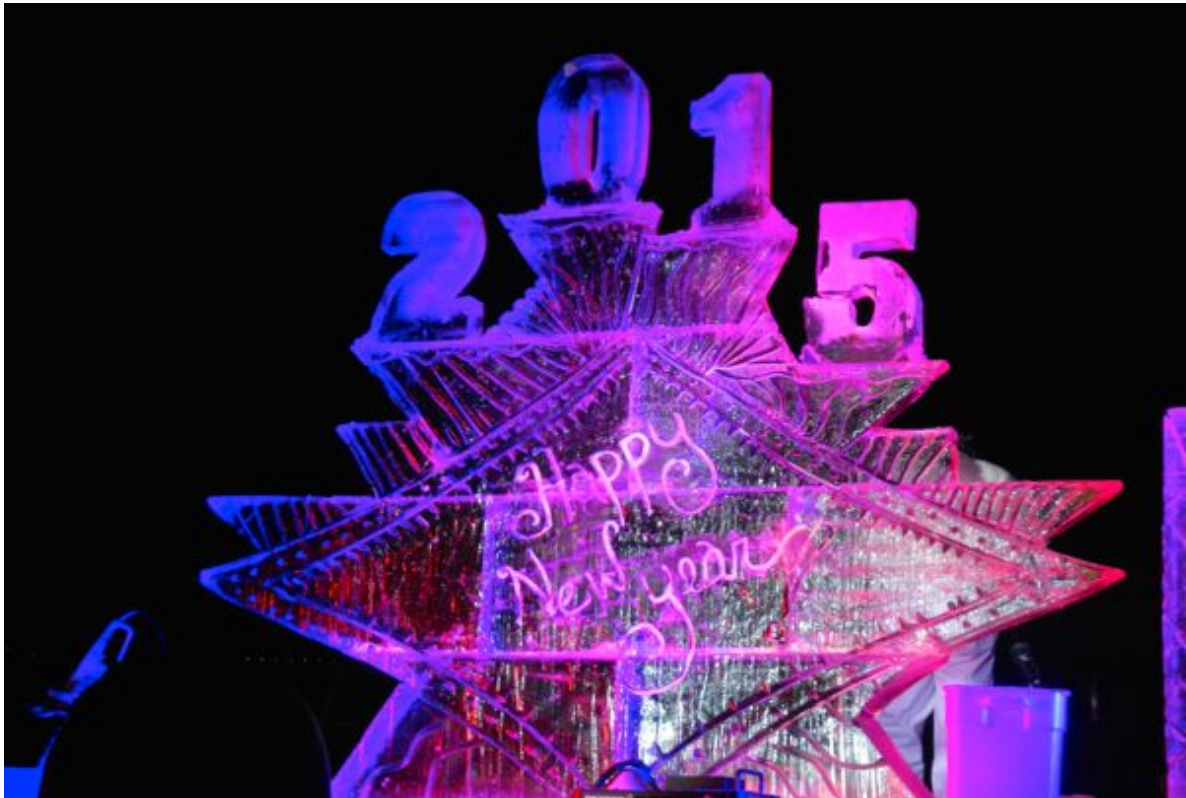
“When I saw Colorado and those mountains I knew that’s where I wanted to be,” Howard said.

Until this fall, she had never left.

For now, her husband and son are still in Colorado. They will be moving to Truckee when the school year is over.

“I’m living my dream,” Howard said of her new job, new town and new mountain.

Hundreds ring in 2015 at Heavenly Village



An icy welcome to 2015 in South Lake Tahoe.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

With power tools in hand, a couple sculptors turned a block of ice into 2015 New Year artwork.

As one whacked away at the 4, the other chiseled the 5. The crowd erupted as the finished piece signaled the celebration of a new year was about to get into high gear.

That block of ice was symbolic of the night – icy cold. But the bitter cold temperatures were not about to keep away the throngs of New Year's Eve revelers who showed up at Heavenly

Village to ring in 2015.

Now in its fourth year, Heavenly Holidays is a free event put on by Heavenly Mountain Resort and Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.



Wes Quave entertains hundreds of people New Year's Eve. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Musicians are performing on a stage close to the size of SnowGlobe, with fire dancers and other acts filling in. Wes Quave was the main draw; singing mostly covers of other artists much to the delight of those in the crowd who were dancing and singing.

"We all were dancing when we got here," Andreina Jeffery, 21, of Clovis told *Lake Tahoe News*.

She was in town with her parents, two siblings and both sets of grandparents. They had researched interesting things to do on New Year's Eve and chose South Lake Tahoe.

It's hard to find another place that has a gondola car decked out with lights that descends from the mountain as a symbol of the New Year. This is a definite family event – with the age span ranging from those who needed to be carried to those who needed assistance walking.



The decorated Heavenly gondola is illuminated by the fireworks. Photo/Denise Haerr

With the celebration culminating at 9pm, it also makes it easier to stay up for everything.

Two-year-old Shailee Palmer was taken by the ladies on stilts. She couldn't stop staring at them.

Steve Haerr of South Lake Tahoe was enjoying the festivities with a group of friends for the third year. The energy of the event is what he likes most.



Shailee Palmer, 2, of Chico is mesmerized by the

super tall woman.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

Laura and Gwyn Amason of Bakersfield have been coming to Tahoe for 14 years – before kids were part of the group dynamic. The youngsters were looking forward to the fireworks, which were shot off from the top of the parking garage just after the gondola came down. They like having something family-friendly to do on New Year's Eve, knowing the adults can always venture to the casinos.

A variety of things are going on all at once throughout the village – from free photos, to face painting (with some boys opting for tattoo looking art on their arms), to fireworks. Ice sculptures are throughout the village.



Warmth is found at the fire pit at Gunbarrel restaurant.

Restaurants were doing a brisk business, with many people sitting by fire pits drinking something to warm their insides. Despite the mercury being in the teens, people were also lining up at Cold Stone Creamery. Next door at Heavens Little Cafe it was hot drinks that were in high demand.

For those who were a little under dressed, Shirt Off My Back was selling gloves, hoodies and beanies. It was also one of the shops that allowed people to take refuge from the cold.

Even after the fireworks finale the music kept going, the vibe of the New Year was electric and freezing at the same time,

even though technically 2015 was still three hours away.

Pamela Shaw-Miller — 1961-2014



Pamela Shaw-Miller

An amazingly gifted and creative artist-designer has left this earth after inspiring all with her wisdom, courage and love.

Pamela Shaw-Miller died Dec. 11, 2014. She was 53.

A resident of South Lake Tahoe and formerly of Glendale, her family and many friends will miss her greatly. She died at home after being diagnosed with lung cancer, not associated with smoking, in August.

Beautiful Pam was inquisitive from childhood, with a creative and artistic mind and above-average intellect. She was born Pamela Louise Shaw at Glendale Memorial Hospital on April 12, 1961, to Jim and Lili Shaw.

After two months they moved from Highland Park and lived in Glassell Park where she attended Toland Way Elementary School from age 4. She bypassed a grade upon moving to Glendale in

1972 where she attended Wilson Jr. High, and graduated from Glendale High in 1977 at barely age 16.

During this time Pam became an accomplished classical pianist and always loved music and dance. The Beatles were a favorite group; she could sing all the lyrics and had a beautiful singing voice.

An early lover of old movies, her favorite entertainer was Fred Astaire, whom she later met. As a mature youngster she enjoyed many fantastic world-class rock concerts, and visits to Las Vegas where she would see and meet many entertainers through then celebrity-friend Connie Stevens.

Pam briefly relocated with friends to Colorado following school, but subsequently returned to Los Angeles. After working a variety of jobs and considering a career in sound engineering/recording, she married Howard Phillippe. Together they ran a commercial painting business for several years, until Pam took a career change to manage several retail stores (in Glendale, Beverly Hills, Oxnard, and Bay area) and later dissolved the marriage.

Pam met husband Alan at a party in Hollywood. They married in 1987, moved from the big city to Humboldt County, and obtained their degrees from Humboldt State University in 1992; both with top honors.

This North Coast area further nurtured Pam's life-long love of the ocean. Many new friends were made during this period and Pam's artistic talents were developed, producing many novel and unique art works (drawings, paintings, sculptures), leather masks, and fabric creations. Later Pam would use her artistic and business talents in support of her various entrepreneurial and community activities.

Following university and a move to South Lake Tahoe, Pam became self-employed in interior decorating and art-related businesses. She also became very interested in gardening and

this continued to the end of her life.

Pam was politically active and environmentally conscious, and spent many days hiking with friends in the Sierra high country, taking nature walks by Lake Tahoe, and developing photography skills.

She belonged to the local chapter of the National League of American Pen Women. She conducted volunteer fundraising for the local Humane Society and loved animals of all types, especially her two cats, Buddy and Lloyd. Pam held no religious beliefs, but served for many years as treasurer for the Lake Tahoe Unitarian Universalist fellowship until it disbanded.

Pam's substantial group of close friends attests to her giving nature and kind heart. Pam's passing is truly a great loss to us all; she was often the social glue and instigator. She believed in keeping old friends and collecting new ones. Pam loved to laugh and entertain friends, celebrate special events, and make people feel special. She loved quality things, good food and drink, great music, beautiful surroundings, and people. If she were here, she would say, "That thing you've been putting off ... just do it!"

Dad James Shaw preceded her in death.

Pam is survived by her husband Alan Miller, mom Lillian Shaw, and sister Carla Shaw.

There will be a celebration of life in Glendale on Jan. 3. Call 818.244.0093 for details. There will be a celebration of life in South Lake Tahoe on Jan. 18. Call 530.542.0243 for details.

Donations to your local humane society or the Caring Bridge website are suggested in lieu of flowers.

10 healthy habits for the new year

By Matthew Basso, Huffington Post

2014 is coming to a close, so inevitably the chatter of new year's resolutions is getting louder. It's great to start goal setting and structuring a program to make sure you're successful early; however, it's equally important to take note of what has and hasn't worked for your health and fitness goals this year.

Regardless of whether you want to make a massive change for the better or carry on with the fitness success you've managed to accumulate, you'll want to take stock of your behavioral patterns to determine which are beneficial to keep and which need to be dropped.

Before I make suggestions to my clients about nutritional, physical, or mental changes to make, I experiment with myself. It allows me to articulate the disciplinary challenges and positive changes that new habits can bring to one's life. Additionally, it helps them move closer to their goals faster as I've already ruled out the things that are a waste of time.

This year I personally was able to surpass some personal fitness goals and help several clients do the same. The life changes you make to create a healthy lifestyle aren't always the obvious ones. Small triggers can initiate massive focused action.

Read the whole story