

Virginia City hangs onto its roots

By Adam Kealoha Causey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

VIRGINIA CITY – Mining may not get top billing anymore, but this town built high on Northern Nevada hillsides still packs that history into its punch.

Today tourism is big business, and there's something here for everybody who likes tales of yesteryear, whether rooted in fact or fiction. There are signs of life from the actual boom days that drew thousands to mine the Comstock Lode starting in the 1850s, and also the made-for-TV version from "Bonanza" that started its 14-season run a hundred years later.

You can find markers and a museum commemorating Mark Twain's newspapering days. He reported for the Territorial Enterprise in the early 1860s. Piper's Opera House, whose current location dates back to 1885, still houses performances in the same spot where traveling shows stopped to make some cash back in the day.

Even this town's name, according to legend, is a throwback. Miner James Finney, whose nickname was "Old Virginia" or "Old Virginny," christened it Virginia City to honor his home state.

Read the whole story

Squaw to host 3-day music-beer fest

WinterWonderGrass is a boutique winter music and craft beer festival featuring more than 15 bands and 12 California breweries over three days.

Headliners of the March 20-22 festival at Squaw Valley include Trampled by Turtles, Greensky Bluegrass, The Infamous Stringdusters and Elephant Revival as well as bluegrass legend Sam Bush. California favorites Nicki Bluhm and the Gramblers, Dead Winter Carpenters, The California Honey Drops and Brothers Comatose will also be performing. Additional artists include Fruition, Scott Law, Head for the Hills, Front Country, T-Sisters and The Dustbowl Revival.

California craft breweries will be pouring their signature brews from 2:30-5:30pm each day.

The Rex Foundation will be hosting a charity ski race at Squaw Valley during the WinterWonderGrass weekend.

WinterWonderGrass Festival originated in the Vail Valley in 2012.

For the full line-up and more information, go online.

Study: Words make an economic difference

By NPR

In the early 1990s, a team of researchers decided to follow about 40 volunteer families – some poor, some middle class, some rich – during the first three years of their new children's lives. Every month, the researchers recorded an hour of sound from the families' homes. Later in the lab, the team listened back and painstakingly tallied up the total number of words spoken in each household.

What they found came to be known as the “word gap.”

It turned out, by the age of 3, children born into low-income families heard roughly 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

Research since then has revealed that the “word gap” factors into a compounding achievement gap between the poor and the better-off in school and life.

Read the whole story

Technology infiltrates into all aspects of travel

By Amy Farley, Travel + Leisure

For our annual forecast of the trends that will define travel for the coming year, Travel + Leisure looked at the big changes in store for air travel, hotels, websites, and gadgets.

Airports will become more enjoyable.

Tech gadgets will continue to shrink and get smarter: phablets (smartphone-tablet hybrids), smartwatches, and digitally

enabled glasses from Google and other gear will top travelers' Wish Lists next year.

New websites, such as the private dinner-party finder EatWith, will allow you to connect with destinations on a profoundly local level.

Read the whole story

Nev. makes another bid to name cove after Twain

By Martin Griffith, AP

RENO — Nevada officials have launched a new bid to give Mark Twain recognition in the state where he assumed his pen name 150 years ago, but it doesn't come without opposition.

The Nevada State Board on Geographic Names is again pushing a proposal to name a scenic Lake Tahoe cove for Samuel Clemens, Twain's real name.

But it no longer maintains the inlet should be named for Twain because he actually camped there in 1861.

The board's national counterpart rejected the request two years ago in a 5-4 vote, citing as a factor doubt about whether Twain camped at the spot.

Nevada board members now say they want to name the cove for Twain merely because of his association with Tahoe and the lack of a geographic feature in the state named for him. His book "Roughing It" put Nevada on the map and included an oft-quoted poetic phrase about Lake Tahoe.

"Whether or not the cove was Mark Twain's campsite does not matter in the national scheme to put a name to that cove," Bob Stewart, a member of the state board, told the Associated Press. "The very fact that he was associated with the Nevada shore of Lake Tahoe makes an unnamed point on Tahoe eligible for naming for him."

But Stewart, a historical researcher and former U.S. Bureau of Land Management employee, said he still believes Twain camped at the cove near Incline Village.

"Personally, I'm totally comfortable that this is the campsite, but this is not the point of this nomination," he said.

David Antonucci, of Homewood, a civil engineer and history writer, maintains Twain camped on the California side of the lake. He has pledged to fight the new bid. His opposition was cited as a factor in the earlier decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

"It's just a backdoor attempt to accomplish what was earlier rejected by the national board," he said. "I don't think they're fooling anyone. You'd have to be naive to think if it was named Samuel Clemens Cove that the proponents would not promote that as the site where he camped."

The request also should be rejected because Lake Tahoe is the ancestral homeland of some Nevada tribes and Twain made racist statements against American Indians, said Antonucci, author of "Fairest Picture: Mark Twain at Lake Tahoe."

The national board also cited opposition by the U.S. Forest Service as a factor in its decision. But the agency has since sent a letter to the state saying it would not take a position on the new request.

While Twain wrote adoringly about Lake Tahoe, the Forest Service noted that "his legacy also is that he carelessly

started a forest fire” at his camp there.

Twain accidentally started the wildfire in September 1861 while preparing to cook dinner. He and a companion staked a timber claim there, weeks after he arrived in Carson City, with his brother, Orion, then secretary of Nevada Territory. Twain later assumed his pen name as a newspaper reporter in Virginia City.

That first trip to Lake Tahoe inspired Twain to write the famous lines: “As it lay there with the shadows of the mountains brilliantly photographed upon its still surface, I thought it must surely be the fairest picture the whole earth affords.”

The state board will take final action on the proposal after holding hearings in January and May. The national board is expected to act on the request sometime next summer in advance of Nevada’s 150th anniversary of statehood on Oct. 31.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Turbo

Orange cats are different from other cats. Some say they are three times as likely to be male, but the main difference is in their personalities – orange cats are frequently described as more friendly, goofy, and people-oriented than other cats. They love to sit on your lap and are happiest while you are petting them.

And Turbo fits this description. Plus, he is leash trained.

Turbo is 2 years old, neutered, microchipped, 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 online 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

SnowGlobe rocks South Lake Tahoe



SnowGlobe will be rocking South Lake Tahoe for three nights – Dec. 29-31. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Most SnowGlobers were bouncing to the music blasting from the speakers on Day 1 of the three-day South Lake Tahoe music festival, but plenty more were chilling in the warming tent.

A sea of bodies at the three stages moved to the music supplied by bands and disc jockeys. While the temperature felt warmer this year, more people were fully clothed than the last two years.

Inside the warming area the sounds from the main stage were crystal clear. People were sprawled on what is normally the turf of Lake Tahoe Community College's soccer field. A full bar warmed people in other ways. The only thing that could have made this more ideal would have been screens to see the action going on outside.

While the number of noise complaints is considerably less than

the first year, the bass is louder than last year.

"There is considerably more bass and noise than last year," a resident of Pioneer Village told *Lake Tahoe News* at 4:15pm Sunday. The concert had started an hour earlier.

Bijou Park closed

"Like last year the park is utilized for SnowGlobe staff and equipment parking.



Gibbz entertains the crowd South Tahoe Middle School is SnowGlobe in South Lake the nearest Tahoe.

offsite parking for vehicles traveling to SnowGlobe. The park will reopen to the public on New Year's Day."

— *Lauren Thomaselli, South Lake Tahoe recreation manager*

"(The) first year was awful and very unnerving. We had pictures fall off the walls. Last year was better. We'll see

what this year brings,” the resident added.

About 15 noise complaints were filed with the city the first night.

“Sound monitoring is being conducted throughout the event. No violation of permissible sound limits has occurred thus far,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It’s likely the lack of snow contributed to the sound not being absorbed. Plus, as the wind shifted, the noise drifted.

But for those at the concert, other than it being difficult to have a conversation at times, the sound was what they came for.



Daniel Rave and Kati Green show some of the unique clothing worn at SnowGlobe.

Lisi McMadden came up from Santa Barbara for her first SnowGlobe – and her first trip in Lake Tahoe. She will be back the next two nights. She’s already been snowboarding several days.

“My dad proposed to my mom in South Lake Tahoe. It’s a

beautiful, magical place,” McMadden said.

She was waiting for Star Slinger to take the stage in the Sierra Tent. On New Year’s Eve she is looking forward to Snoop Dog.

Miasam Oeli made the trek from Los Angeles for the second year in a row.

He was enjoying the Polish Ambassador.

“It’s a relatable vibe,” Oeli told *Lake Tahoe News*. He described the DJ as reggae with a funky feel.

The only thing he liked better last year was the snow. The snowpack this year has Oeli questioning where he’ll hit the slopes while he’s here.

Buddies Andrew Laufer and Alex Jasmund also came up from Southern California. Jasmund did some research on the lesser known acts so he would be familiar with them.

They are both looking forward to Kaskade, who will be the last act on the main stage tonight.

Single-day and three-day tickets were still being sold Sunday. The last two years the event sold out.

“I noticed many hotels still had vacancies, so my guess is the extra visitors for the event is critical to businesses,” Uhler said.

Sotheby’s giving back to

community

Sierra Sotheby's International Realty made donations to Sierra Nevada College of Incline Village and Mt. Tallac Continuation School in South Lake Tahoe.

Incline Village agent Terry Barberly established the Terry Barberly Scholarship Fund for deserving Sierra Nevada College students. The \$1,000 scholarship will be applied to the student's tuition and financial needs for the semester.

Future contributions from Barberly include 5 percent of his commission from every sale and 15 percent of his earnings from clients with ties to Sierra Nevada College.

Sierra Sotheby's International Realty South Lake Tahoe agent Thane McCall makes his contribution to education in Lake Tahoe this season with \$50 dollar gift certificates to each of the 56 students at Mt. Tallac High School. McCall also pays the students a personal visit at the high school and provides the students a party with homemade food. This is the second year of McCall's donation to students of the school.

Sierra Sotheby's International Realty is also accepting clothing donations for the Good Shepherd's Clothes Closet, a Reno nonprofit that clothes the needy, through the beginning of the year. Go online for a list of most needed donation items. Donations may be made Sierra Sotheby's International Realty locations in Squaw Valley, Incline Village, Zephyr Cove and South Lake Tahoe.

Study: Daily exercise combats overeating

By **Huffington Post**

Daily exercise can mitigate the effects of overdoing it around the holidays, a small study suggests.

The Journal of Physiology study showed that people who exercise on a daily basis are less affected by the negative health effects of one week of overeating, such as poor blood sugar control and expression of genes by fat cells linked with metabolic changes.

“Our research demonstrates that a short period of overconsumption and reduced physical activity leads to very profound negative changes in a variety of physiological systems – but that a daily bout of exercise stops most of these negative changes from taking place,” study researcher Jean-Philippe Walhin, of the University of Bath, said in a statement.

Read the whole story

PT may be better than meniscus surgery

By **Pam Belluck, New York Times**

A popular surgical procedure worked no better than fake operations in helping people with one type of common knee problem, suggesting that thousands of people may be undergoing

unnecessary surgery, a new study in the New England Journal of Medicine reports.

The unusual study involved people with a torn meniscus, crescent-shaped cartilage that helps cushion and stabilize knees. Arthroscopic surgery on the meniscus is the most common orthopedic procedure in the United States, performed, the study said, about 700,000 times a year at an estimated cost of \$4 billion.

The study, conducted in Finland, involved a small subset of meniscal tears. But experts, including some orthopedic surgeons, said the study added to other recent research suggesting that meniscal surgery should be aimed at a narrower group of patients; that for many, options like physical therapy may be as good.

Read the whole story