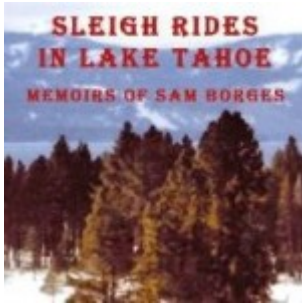


A trip through Tahoe history via a horse-drawn sleigh

By Kathryn Reed

Something about a sleigh ride creates lasting memories.



Stories about those memories are retold throughout "Sleigh Rides in Lake Tahoe: Memoirs of Sam Borges". But the book is so much more than the history of this iconic South Shore business. It's about Tahoe, and it is in large part about Sam Borges – the man who started the business.

Borges died two years ago this month, not long after the book was published in 2009. The book is his stories as told to daughter-in-law Dianna Maria De Borges.

While there are a greater number of typos than any book should have, overlooking them is worth the read of this 127-page paperback.

I never met Sam – but wish I had. In some ways he sounds like my Grandpa Albert. Maybe it's because my grandpa helped create my earliest sleigh ride memory of when he had the reins in South Dakota.

Then there's the story of how the Borges' used to have dinner excursions. This reminded me of when I was in high school and my parents, with my best friend and her parents, took a sleigh to dinner while we were in Sun Valley, Idaho, to ski.

I think part of the reason I've never gone on a Borges sleigh ride is not wanting to erase the wonderful memories I have. Why I can't create new ones, well, I just don't have a good answer.

Reading this book, the stories of their customers and the stories of the Borges family, made me appreciate how special Lake Tahoe is, the unique businesses, the tenacity required to make it here.

And finishing the book the weekend of the first winter storm seemed so appropriate. Maybe it's time to take a sleigh ride in Lake Tahoe.

Learn what the Tahoe Rim Trail Association is all about

Learn about what the Tahoe Rim Trail Association does in regards to trail building, hiking and youth programs, as well as numerous educational programs.

The talk is Jan. 24 from 11:45am-1pm at Explore Tahoe, 4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

For more information, contact Shannon Skarritt at (775) 298.0235.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Shelby is a special kitty – only 6 months old, she came to the shelter as a stray with a damaged eye.



When she was spayed, her eye was removed and she's much happier, purring all the time. Shelby gets along with just about everyone, and she gets around just fine despite her missing eye.

Shelby is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated.

She 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.

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

Embracing the Year of the Dragon

By Eileen Wacker

Many predict 2012 to be a dynamic, innovative year. Individuals are encouraged to make bold moves and leave humble behind. Across Asia, artificial insemination has been on the rise since May. In Taiwan, a 20 percent increase in births is expected this year. In Korea and China, people are planning weddings and having babies. Supposedly dragons are the luckiest and wealthiest people and everyone wants in on the dragon's legendary rewards.

Many millions of households are busily preparing for the New Year. In Japan, China, Korea and other Asian countries, houses are being swept clean. Windows are opened to let in good luck and flush out stuck energy. Special flowers are placed carefully to invite and impress good luck and opportunity. This happens every year to get ready for Lunar or Chinese New Year. But this year is very special. Today, half the globe will celebrate and welcome the Year of the Dragon. The dragon is the luckiest and most powerful sign.

The dragon is the only sign in the Asian zodiac that is mystical; the others are all real animals – the rat, dog, pig, horse, tiger, snake, monkey, rabbit, ox, chicken and sheep. Asian dragons are benevolent, charismatic and powerful. They are known for their sincerity and trusting natures. They are often free spirits who are passionate, creative and self-centered. In China, Japan and Korea, throughout time many believed the emperors had descended from dragons.

The power of the dragon is undisputed in Asia and its image is pervasive. Bruce Lee's stage name was Li Xiaolong or little dragon. In Japan, one often sees the seahorse, which is a baby

dragon, as well as dragon emblems everywhere. And the dragon is the symbol of the emperor in China and Korea. Dragons are beloved and admired across Asia and this year there will be massive celebrations.

If nearly half of the globe's population believes in and will celebrate this phenomenon, should the average person try to win the attention and empathy of the Black Water Dragon?

Five ways to embrace the energy of the dragon, just in case...

1) Seriously de-clutter your home or a part of your home like your office. You need to make room for good fortune to settle. The extra space will become filled with new, exciting things. If you can find a sweet pea plant, put it out prominently or by a door or window. This is the favorite flower of the dragon.

2) No matter how cold, open your windows for a period of time each day throughout this year. The stale air of the past will exit and new opportunities will be swept in. On New Year's night, if you are awake at midnight, open every door and window briefly.

3) Black is back as "the new black." The Dragon loves black this year and feel free to accessorize with bright colors. The dragon loves extravagance. Take a walk today in your black outfit, accessorized with bold colors and breath fresh air.

4) Today, share a meal with someone and talk only about the future and its possibilities. This is a year for innovation and big projects. Do not talk about the past at all. For your meal today, eat at a table adorned with lit candles. The food should be well spiced and if possible include seafood and pumpkin.

5) Give a gift. The dragon can be self-centered and impetuous but it is also very generous and benevolent. Give small gifts to people (love is a gift) and it will be returned in some

form with greater richness. Since it is a water dragon, some gift ideas are – a dragon pen, dragon cup, game or anything to do with water. Little pouches with small money are also lucky for children. These gifts bring luck to the recipient as well as the giver. Donate items as you de-clutter; these are gifts to others as well.

Do not confuse the dinosaur with the dragon. Dinosaurs are negative, where dragons are wealthy, lucky and smart.

Eileen Wacker lives in Honolulu with her husband and four children. She is the author of the new children's book "Black Tortoise Samurai and the Dynasty Dragon" (February 2012), the fifth installment of the award winning Fujimini Adventure Series.

N. Nevada groups create kindness initiative in philanthropist's name

The Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows, together with, Bishop Manogue Catholic High School, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, Our Lady of the Snows and UNR, invite the community to participate in a kindness initiative called Give Back Like Jack.

Throughout 2012, the five organizations encourage residents to help create a sense of kindness and camaraderie in the community by performing random acts of kindness in honor of longtime Reno resident and philanthropist Jack Reviglio, who passed away in 2011.

Give Back Like Jack kicked off on New Year's Eve with Boys & Girls Club members creating 2,600 day packs for local residents who visit St. Vincent's Food Pantry for assistance with meals. The initiative has continued to spread as the University of Nevada recently handed out 500 free tickets to this weekend's men's basketball game.

Give Back Like Jack is a memorial to Reviglio who was so well known for his kindness and philanthropy throughout northern Nevada. Reviglio worked often with the five nonprofit organizations that have created the initiative, whose mission is to continue spreading the kindness that was so often experienced thanks to Reviglio and his family.

Whether the activity consists of taking the neighbor's trash to the curb, visiting a friend who is struggling with illness or patiently waiting for a pedestrian to cross the street, Give Back Like Jack encourages people to engage in small daily activities that positively affect a friend, family member, co-worker or even a perfect stranger.

After completing the act, go online to tell the story. Stories will be used as examples for other people to follow throughout the rest of the year.

In addition, an event takes place on Washoe County's Jack Reviglio Day – March 17 – to celebrate the accomplishments made during the first part of 2012 and encourage residents to keep the kindness going. Details of the event will be made available in the near future.

For more information on Give Back Like Jack, go online or call (775) 331.5437.

Backcountry Film Festival in Tahoe City

Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area and Alpenglow Sports present Viva The Backcountry Film Festival benefiting the Tahoe Cross Country Ski Education Association.

The Winter Wildlands Alliance Backcountry Film Festival made its world premiere 11-11-11. This is a celebration of the winter experience.

The seventh annual world tour of the Winter Wildlands Alliance Backcountry Film Festival highlights the beauty and fun of the winter backcountry experience. Submissions come from renowned filmmakers who travel every corner of the globe to submit their best backcountry work, and from grassroots filmmakers who take a video camera out on their weekend excursions and submit their best film short. The films are juried by a select panel of judges and the top films are assembled into a 90 minute program.

The festival was created to highlight Winter Wildlands Alliance's efforts to preserve and conserve winter landscapes for quiet users.

This year's program includes nine films including festival award winners "Solitaire" (festival cut) from Sweetgrass Productions, voted Best of Festival.

The films will be shown Feb. 10 at the Sawtooth Ridge Café, Tahoe City. Film starts at 7pm. Admission is \$10 and tickets can be purchased at the door. Sawtooth Ridge Café will serve dinner and drink specials starting at 5:30pm.

Families envision memorial wall for fallen soldiers

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Families of military members killed in the war on terror have proposed a wall memorial in Carson City to honor all Nevadans who have fallen in battle since the Civil War.

"The freedom we have today, they have given us," said Roger Varela of Fernley, founder of Gold Star Families of Nevada Nationals Inc. "We don't want them to ever be forgotten."

Varela's son, Army Pfc. Alejandro Varela, 19, died in Iraq on May 17, 2007. Varela said the idea for a memorial in Nevada's capital came from Sgt. Brad Williams of the South Lake Tahoe Police Department.

Williams' son, Army Pfc. Phillip Brandon Williams, 21, was killed by a sniper in Iraq while protecting other soldiers who were dismantling a roadside bomb. The Gardnerville man died Oct. 9, 2006.

"Roger and I were at the dedication of a memorial in Hawthorne six months ago and we wondered why there isn't one in the capital," Williams said. "It just took off from there."

Both men stressed that the memorial is subject to the state's approval process and isn't a sure thing. They said plans are progressing, and several contributors have said they will donate some of the \$500,000 needed to build the wall.

Tahoe-ites think big and small to help women in Kenya

By Jennifer Gurecki

Barey's eyes widened with wonder as she held the piece of paper in her hand. She struggled to decipher the words on the document, but understood its significance – the number, 5,000 Kenyan shillings, would be paid to her to start her own small business baking and selling chapati to support her family.

As a child, Barey never had a chance to learn to read or write, or learn anything else besides street smarts and the necessity of hard work. But now, as a 41-year-old widow, she has earned an opportunity to break free of the vicious cycle of living hand-to-mouth, day after day after day.

The loan to Barey, the equivalent of \$59, was one of nine loans provided to aspiring Kenyan women entrepreneurs this past December by the Zawadisha Fund, a South Lake Tahoe-based organization that Julie Lowe and I co-founded in 2010. The idea germinated when I wrote my master's thesis on how social norms impact women's ability to participate fully and freely in society. When I surveyed women in Eldoret, Kenya, they repeatedly said the greatest barrier to prosperity, and thus empowerment, is access to capital and participation in the economy.



South Lake
Tahoe's Jen
Gurecki, co-
founder of
Zawadisha,
congratulates
Barey on her
micro-loan.
Photos/Provide
d

Armed with this knowledge and inspired by the success of the Grameen Bank – which along with its founder Mohammad Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for providing small low-interest loans to Bangladeshi women – Zawadisha has sought to develop an effective microfinance program to improve the lives of Kenyan women and their families.

The results so far are encouraging. Aptly named the Tuinuane Project by the loan recipients, which means “to lift up” in Swahili, after just one year the women report they have been able to contribute financially to their families for the first time in their lives. And of the eight women granted loans for 2011, six paid back their loans enabling us to lend additional funds to the successful six and provide loans to Barey and two other women in December.

Though the sustainability of the program is promising, we strive to innovate to increase the project's effectiveness. For example, while in Eldoret in November, we implemented a new savings program in which the fund will match any savings deposited by the women upon full repayment of their loans.

Promoting savings is especially vital in Kenya where life is precarious and one bad turn – an illness, an accident, a marginal decrease in earnings – can prove disastrous to families without savings.

Zawadisha has also joined the fight for the well being of women on another front: confronting an epidemic of rape and violence against women in Kenyan society. In a survey conducted by the United Nations AIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV, nearly half of Kenyan women reported experiencing violence in their lifetimes and one-quarter reported such violence had occurred within the preceding 12 months.

Of these women, an overwhelming 83 percent experienced violence during their childhood, and 46 percent of those incidents were sexual abuse. Additionally, the U.N. Task Team found that in more than 60 percent of these cases, the abused women and children did not report the crime to anyone. Among its findings, the Task Team concluded that education is a social vaccine that can prevent the spread of violence and HIV.

To promote this “social vaccine,” Zawadisha has partnered with a Kenyan couple, Winnie and Duncan Bomba, who founded and run the Dolphin Anti-Rape & AIDS Control Outreach program. The Bombas had lived a “normal” life in Kenya until social activism was abruptly thrust upon them. While staying at her family’s home in Eldoret, Winnie woke the next morning to discover that a girl had been beaten, raped, brutalized, and left to die on her family’s doorstep.

Regret and concern permeated the neighborhood, but for only so long. Each and every day is a new chapter of survival and struggle, and after several chapters, reflection fades. In Kenya, confronting the past and changing the future seem like fruitless endeavors when faced with the ever-pervading tide of the present.

But Winnie refused to let it be. She resolved to rage against complacency because she suddenly felt complicit otherwise. Her husband, Duncan, had martial arts training and magnetism to match Winnie's determination and energy. Together, they founded the Dolphin program that propelled them to visit schools throughout their "neighborhood" – Greater Nairobi – to teach girls how to avoid confrontations, but defend themselves if necessary, and stem this seemingly endemic cancer on their society. To date, Dolphin has instructed more than 250,000 women and girls in their anti-violence and self-defense workshops.

Zawadisha has bolstered the Bombas' program by providing organizational, technological, fundraising, and material support.

Zawadisha has been greatly aided in its efforts through the generous support of South Tahoe CrossFit, Elevate Wellness, GWOF, Indigo Photography, IRIE Rafting Company, Soroptimist International Tahoe Sierra and many other local donors who believe that global issues are relevant locally and that Lake Tahoe residents have a great deal to offer in human and material resources.

If you would like to learn more or donate to the Zawadisha Fund, go online www.zawadisha.org.

Sean Turner and Julie Lowe contributed to this article. Jennifer Gurecki is co-founder of the Zawadisha Fund.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)

Environmental novelist to speak in Incline

Environmental novelist Li Miao Lovett is the first author of the Writers in the Woods series this year at Sierra Nevada College.

Her visit includes a reading, book signing, and reception Feb. 10 at 7pm in the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences in Incline Village.

This evening is free and open to the community.



Li Miao Lovett

Lovett will also teach a fiction writing workshop from 9am-noon on Feb. 11. Workshops are open to the community and available for credit. Students are free. There is a \$50 registration fee for community members. Register in advance online.

Lovett began her writing career after a 600-mile backpacking trip on the Appalachian Trail where she encountered a stalker, a compulsive poet, and 10,000 mosquitoes. She has been a frequent contributor to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and KQED Perspectives. Her literary and environmental writing has also been published by *Narrative Magazine*, *Earth Island Journal*,

China Rights Forum, and Sierra Club's *The Planet*.

Supporting the mission of Words Without Borders, she has organized events showcasing the works of dissident and censored writers.

Gizmo Guys bring comedy-juggling act to schools, casino

Tahoe Arts Project continues its 25th season with the comedy/juggler duo The Gizmo Guys on Jan. 27 at the MontBleu theater.

Allan Jacobs and Barrett Felker have amazed and amused audiences around the world. They work in a variety of venues, including theaters, corporate functions of all types, cruise ships – you name it, they've done it. They've made numerous television appearances, won international juggling competitions, and taught at top circus schools.

But what makes their act so appealing is their uniquely winning combination of technique and humor.

The Gizmo Guys will bring their Objects in Motion show into the South Shore schools Jan. 23-27 to teach children how juggling relates to science and math.

Their full show can only be seen on the South Shore on Jan. 27 at 7pm. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$8 for children and seniors. They may be purchased in advance at the California and Nevada visitors centers on the South Shore.

To charge tickets by phone or for more information, call Tahoe Arts Project at (530) 542.3632.