

Travelers leave some expensive items in hotels, on airplanes

By Gary Stroller, USA Today

Frequent business traveler Joyce Gioia forgot more than \$20,000 worth of jewelry in her hotel room in Italy last year.

Luckily for Gioia, the jewelry was in a room safe, and staff at the Rome Marriott Grand Hotel Flora shipped the items to her home in Austin, Texas.

"I had done such a dumb thing, and I was very happy to get the jewelry back," said Gioia, a management consultant.

Travelers annually leave millions of personally important items such as wallets, keys, cellphones and eyeglasses behind in hotels, airports, airplanes and rental cars. Fortunately for the forgetful, many belongings – including very valuable and unusual ones such as Gioia's jewelry– are returned.

Many, however, aren't, and they are given away or sold if their owners don't retrieve them, or their owners cannot be found.

Gioia and other travelers scold themselves for their forgetfulness, but psychologists say it's commonplace even among the most veteran of travelers.

"When traveling, people tend to have lots on their minds, and there are often many unexpected distractions," said David Meyer, a University of Michigan psychology professor. "The combination of too much to keep track of, limited attention for doing so and being in relatively unusual circumstances outside familiar work and home locations promote forgetting about the small stuff being carried along the way."

USA Today contacted several airlines, airports, hotels and car-rental companies and, among other things, asked how many items are left behind by their customers yearly.

Southwest Airlines, which carried 88 million passengers last year, reported the largest number. The airline takes possession of up to 10,000 items a month that are left behind at airports and in planes, said spokeswoman Katie McDonald.

Books, cellphones, clothing and reading glasses are the most common items left behind, she said.

The most valuable items? A \$10,000 diamond engagement ring, an NFL Super Bowl ring and professional video equipment – which all were returned to their owners.

Read the whole story

Study: Dogs help detect lung cancer

By Science Daily

Sniffer dogs could be used for the early detection of lung cancer, according to new research published in the *European Respiratory Journal*.

The study, carried out by researchers from Schillerhoehe Hospital in Germany, is the first to find that sniffer dogs can reliably detect lung cancer.

Lung cancer is the second most frequent form of cancer in men and women across Europe with over 340,000 deaths per year. It is also the most common cause of death from cancer worldwide.

The disease is not strongly associated with any symptoms and early detection is often by chance. Current methods of detection are unreliable and scientists have been working on using exhaled breath specimens from patients for future screening tests.

This method relies on identifying volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are linked to the presence of cancer. Although many different technological applications have been developed, this method is still difficult to apply in a clinical setting as patients aren't allowed to smoke or eat before the test, sample analysis can take a long time and there is also a high risk of interference. Because of these reasons, no lung cancer-specific VOCs have yet been identified.

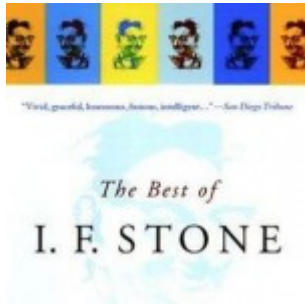
Read the whole story

Collection of I.F. Stone columns relevant decades later

By Kathryn Reed

I admit I didn't know much about I.F. Stone until I read a collection of his columns.

"The Best of I.F. Stone" (published in 2006) is a series of his writings with the earliest being 1941 and the latest from 1971. Think about all that happened in the United States and throughout the world during that time span – then you'll realize this is not light reading.



Stone was a serious journalist who didn't have a problem calling a spade a spade. He didn't back away from pointing out the truth even if that wasn't what the politicians were spewing. There was depth to his work that is so often missing today in journalism. Stone wasn't afraid to dig deeper, provide insight. He knew the back-story so he was able to give readers perspective to what he was writing.

Tom Wicker, former associate editor of the *New York Times*, said on the jacket cover, "I.F. Stone was perhaps our most independent journalist. Instead of attending news conferences, he searched out government documents – learning far more than by listening to 'official statements.' We could certainly use more like him today."

This book is full of 63 highly charged political columns that are thought provoking and enlightening.

My friend Bill gave me the book; thinking I might identify with Stone. (More about Stone may be found online.)

(I'm intrigued by the idea of not having advertisers and only paid subscribers. That's something to think about.)

But it's Stone's writings that captured me. It was like a trip through history that happened almost entirely before I was born. And while I knew of many of the bigger stories, it was the intricate details that were never written in any history book I had to read.

From going to the Mideast to see for himself what was happening with the Israelis and Palestinians, to criticizing Bobby Kennedy for not being stronger against Vietnam as he ran for president, to the atrocities of Joseph McCarthy – Stone was not afraid to tackle any subject or person.

This isn't easy reading. At times it's not even fun. But every

page was educational. It either made me remember something long forgotten or taught me something I never knew.

Besides being disturbed to learn things I think I should have known by now, what was more alarming is how some things have not changed. It makes we wonder if we are progressing and evolving as a people.

Santa Paws elevates animals to full family member status

By Kathryn Reed

“You can say any foolish thing to a dog, and the dog will give you a look that says, ‘My God, you’re right! I never would’ve thought of that!’” – Dave Barry

Apparently you can do some foolish things with them, too, and get the same result. Like taking them in for a family photo with Santa Paws.

They stand in line more obediently than many a child. They play nice with strangers – unlike some children. And they willingly go – no whining involved.



Gary and Lorna
Lefler with

their
menagerie and
Santa Paws.
Photo/Dawn
Armstrong

Now in its 25th year, Santa Paws is Lake Tahoe Humane Society's most well known fundraiser.

Each year someone puts on a hot costume – Santa Paws – and spends hours having people and animals on his or her lap as the camera clicks away.

"The pets are great. The owners can be the problem. I have to tell the people to be quiet. I need to tell them to stop calling their pet because they are looking at them and not me," Dawn Armstrong, who runs the Humane Society and is chief photographer at the event, said.

She has been part of Santa Paws for 20 of the 25 years it has been going on in South Lake Tahoe. She started with a Polaroid camera. Each picture was \$5.

Now she uses a digital camera, it costs \$20 and people are given a disc with multiple pictures.

This will be the first year the event has been at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center. With it completely inside and there being plenty of room, it should be better for the several dozen people who turn out each year.

More than 60 people usually show up, with 91 being the record.

Ray Petragallo is planning to be at the event next weekend with his granddaughter. Last year was the first time they had been at the Santa Paws event with her St. Bernard and his Weimaraner.

"My dog put the Santa Paws glove in its mouth and would not

give it back. A lady came over with a treat and they traded. He gave up the glove,” Petragallo said. “These people are so good with these dogs.”

Judy Brown, who is on the Humane Society’s board of directors, said accidents are rare and when an aggressive dog comes in, he is shown the back door.

Many regulars come back year after year. Kids get older and bigger, and sometimes the pets are different.

Sometimes it’s the animal just with Santa Paws. Sometimes it’s a single person. Sometimes it’s the whole family. And many times the animals are dressed up.

Many people use these as Christmas photos that get sent far and wide.

For Brooke Laine, she showed up last year with two dogs – her Border Collie, Pepper, and her son’s Lab, Buddy.

She and the dogs are her son, Matt’s, wallpaper on his laptop.

Laine plans to be back this year.

“It’s super fun and it’s for a good cause,” Laine said.

Dogs and cats dominate the animals brought in to be photographed. But birds, a snake, bunnies and ferrets are been part of the fun.

“Last year we had ferrets. They came near the end. It was a hoot. They had them all dressed up,” Armstrong said. “After they left, then the dogs were really weird. They wouldn’t get near Santa Paws. Ferrets stink.”

And, yes, animals and their humans do look alike, Armstrong said.

Santa Paws is Dec. 3 from 11am-4pm at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, 1180 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. Cost is \$20 – cash or check. For more information, call (530) 542.2857. Proceeds benefit the Lake Tahoe Humane Society. Donations of dry dog and cat food will be accepted for the Emergency Pet Food Bank.

Family Resource Center looking for holiday donations

South Lake Tahoe's Family Resource Center is working with a number of other local agencies to provide gifts for children, Christmas dinner, clothing, and other basic supplies to families in need throughout our community.

Below are the holiday programs people may help with: Christmas dinners: Through generous support from local Safeway stores, the FRC purchases dinners for families in need for \$45 per family.

Family adoption: Adopt a family of any size and personally pick out the presents for the children. Families eligible for this program are generally large or single parent homes. Gifts should be wrapped and delivered to the Family Resource Center during the week of Dec. 12.

Gift basket program: In addition to Family Adoption, some donors like to provide families with a basic needs basket that includes household necessities such as laundry detergent, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, bathroom tissue, and many other items.

Baskets: FRC needs medium to large baskets and wrapping paper by the first week of December.

The Family Resource Center also accepts cash donations, which are spread out between all of the programs listed above. Mail donations to: SLT Family Resource Center, 3501B Spruce Ave., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

For more information, call the FRC at (530) 542.0740.community.

Tahoe Snowcial announces preliminary lineup for January event

The worlds of digital storytelling, snowsports and technology will converge at Heavenly Mountain Resort Jan. 18-21 for the fourth annual Tahoe Snowcial, a one-of-a-kind winter festival that celebrates the global community who live their passion on the snow and tell their stories online.

Joe Fernandez, CEO and co-founder of Klout, the social media analytics site that measures a user's influence across their social network, will headline the conference portion of the event as the keynote speaker.

Fernandez will be joined by Vail Resorts CEO Rob Katz on the

conference's first day. Day Two will consist of panels that cover topics such as technology tools and techniques, the science of social, measurement, storytelling and social media's influence on action sports.

And, in true Snowcial tradition, the event includes skiing, snowboarding, concerts, entertainment and networking.

Chamber honors businesses, individuals

Eight awards were given out at the 4th annual Blue Ribbon Awards dinner at Embassy Suites this month.

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce spearheads the annual awards event.

Winners were:

- Geotourism award: Tahoe Rim Trail Association; honorable mention: Sorensen's Resort
- Tourism award: Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority; honorable mention: Edgewood Tahoe
- Experience award: Escobar Training grounds; honorable mention: Lake Tahoe Boat Rides
- Entrepreneur award: Carl Ribaud with Strategic Marketing Group; honorable mention: Phil Blowney and LaDonna Faedi of Sessions Salon
- Small green business: Winters Electric; honorable mention: Tahoe Resource Conservation District

- Large green business: South Tahoe Express/Amador Stage Lines; honorable mention: Harrah's & Harveys
 - Customer service: Brian Cohen with Overland Meat; honorable mention: Tommy Walker of Ciera Steak + Chophouse
 - Public agency: Gary Weigel with TRPA; honorable mention: Tom Pandola with CalStar.
-

Red Cross presents an idea for gift giving

The holiday season is here and this year the American Red Cross is urging people to give something that means something by donating to the Red Cross and helping those in need.

The Red Cross has launched a holiday fund-raising campaign, asking everyone to go online to make a donation in the name of the people on their gift list this year. The donation can help provide food and shelter to a victim of disaster, help purchase things like phone cards and supplies for a member of the armed forces, or help supply basic necessities to families in desperate need in countries across the world.

Everyone is invited to browse through the Red Cross Holiday Giving Catalog and view symbolic gifts they can "purchase" for, or in honor of, a loved one – things like infant care kits for babies in emergency shelters, comfort kits for wounded warriors, or water containers used when natural disasters disrupt a community's water supply overseas.

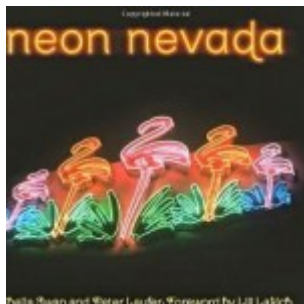
In the last year, the Capital Region Chapter of the Red Cross

– which Lake Tahoe is part of – responded to more than 400 local disasters, educated more than 50,000 residents in lifesaving skills like first aid and CPR, and helped relay 800 emergency messages for local military families.

Neon lures authors to retrace steps across Nevada

By Susan Skorupa, Reno Gazette-Journal

Three times in nearly 35 years, Sheila Swan and Peter Laufer have traversed Nevada in search of neon.



In their first quest in 1978, they photographed neon signs from downtown Las Vegas to the mom ‘n’ pop motels and bars scattered across the Nevada landscape, their interest piqued by the two small neon signs in their living room in Silver City.

They found scores of examples, such as the signs for the Cal Neva Lodge and Harvey’s Resort Hotel at Lake Tahoe, and the Frontier and Comstock motels in Carson City, whose signs sported not just lettering but figures animated by the lighting synchronization of gas-filled glass tubes.

Then, in the early 1990s, the couple set out again, looking for the same signs they’d seen in the 1970s and any others to add to their collection.

They found the French Bar in Gardnerville and the neon boots of the Burns Brothers Truck Stop in Mill City, among others. Their first “Neon Nevada” book came out in 1994.

A few years ago, rummaging in their garage, Swan and Laufer found the photo transparencies of their first journey and decided to hit the road again to look for new signs and rediscover old ones that still existed.

The result is a new “Neon Nevada” (Globe Pequot Press, \$16.95 hardcover), which contains neon photos from 1978 into the 21st century, commentary and plenty of neon history.

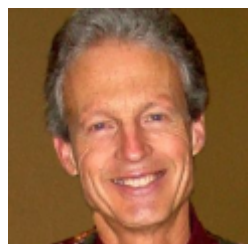
Read the whole story

Thanks comes in all art forms

By Robert Schimmel

There are times when I wish there were nothing to be thankful for, then I'd be justified in all my whining “what ifs?” and pity parties. I don't do as much of what I really want to do on a regular basis. I'll talk responsibility for this later.

But for now, daily tasks, mundane chores, and work that pays most of the bills (if one is lucky these days) make it so easy to paint the grass as greener over yonder. Ever been there or somewhere similar? Whew, not a good space until something triggers the “look at that guy; how does he do it; where is that smile coming from?” question that hopefully engenders a reality check and ultimately a lesson in gratitude and/or humility.



OK, right about now you're ready to leap from my therapist's couch to a real art column or magazine ... but wait. There is a connection.

Remember sometime back when I encouraged you about having and acknowledging your talent? Well, there's a tremendous amount of it out there that begs to be discovered, trained, enjoyed, shared, etc., and that's what we need to be thankful for as individuals and as a community. Once we've taken the step of recognizing how marvelous it is to have talent, use it, and enjoy it as well as that of others, isn't it a no-brainer how joyless and dull our world would be without its expressions and manifestations?

Of course, and here is where the connection lies: I have no business being a whiner when I get to write this column, host a radio show, paint or teach. Do I also have to go to work, pay for this, fight for that, struggle here, and lose there? Absolutely, and the latter too often obscures the former. Yet, all are incredible blessings, and you have your version of these same lists. No one wants the minuses, but the truth is that character and strength don't come from having or winning, but from how we meet our challenges and lift up others in the process.

And this is what I witness constantly from individuals and organizations (for-profit and nonprofit) supporting and promoting the talents of others for the benefit of all.

To this point in the big picture, I just took part in a workgroup session of the Tahoe Prosperity Center at the Lake Tahoe Community College and came away humbled by the talents, accomplishments and concerns of all involved. Each is a professional as well as caring enough about Tahoe's future to volunteer time and energy to configure and implement relationships and plans to create end results and opportunities that will enable prosperity now and for posterity. I am thankful for these people.

Do I have my own Top 10 "Thank you" list? Actually, no, just a top two: my Lord Jesus Christ and my family. After that it becomes a litany of great friends, mentors, concepts,

intangibles and experiences to whom and for which I owe so much. However, I do want to sincerely and heartily say "Thank you!" to all the fine, giving, caring, and steadfast volunteers, donors, promoters, organizations, teachers, companies, employees, bosses, etc. who put it on the line for developing and sharing all that Tahoe has to offer. I couldn't do what I do, for instance, were it not for casinos, news sites and radio stations and the people behind them, not to mention all the guests and events I've been blessed to experience.

What's your ledger look like? What are you thankful for and who is responsible for your talent and/or its use? Express it; tell them.

And finally, art is a strange animal in that it asks little and gives much. All we need to do is grant it freedom to exist and open doors for its expression, then it will bear abundant returns and yield a "field of dreams" never seen before. Tahoe needs that like no other, as current vernacular goes. We as a community, city, county and lakewide region need to recognize our talents, be thankful for them and open the doors to allow them to flourish. Then, and only then, will we be able to avoid the whining of economic woes and pity parties of "what ifs" and enjoy the giving of thanks in terms of the heart and the harvest.

May I wish each of you a wonderful, fulfilling, giving and sharing Thanksgiving Day and beyond.

Robert Schimmel is a professional artist and teacher in South Lake Tahoe as well as host of "Lake Tahoe Art Scene" on KTHO radio on Thursdays at 5:15pm.