

‘Grandma got run over by a reindeer’ has roots in Tahoe

By Michael E. Young, Dallas Morning News

It arrived 30 years ago, a rebellious little ditty that became the ultimate anti-Christmas carol by killing off an eggnog-loving Grandma in the very first line.

But over those three decades, “Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer” has managed to become something of a holiday classic. Songwriter Randy Brooks estimates that 40 million copies have been sold in various guises, from the earliest version on 45-rpm vinyl to today’s singing ornaments and plush toys and ring tone downloads.

Read the whole story

Coast Starlight – holiday travel at its best

By Lisa Huard

Have you taken a train lately?

Whether you’re close to the Los Angeles or Sacramento areas and you want to get to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, consider taking Amtrak’s Coast Starlight to at least Seattle. You can easily arrange for other transportation to Vancouver from there.

This holiday season we decided to do something different to

get to family. We decided to take the train instead of driving from South Lake Tahoe. It's just one of those things we say we want to do and for some reason we just keep jumping in the car or "hurry to wait" to get on a plane.



Paul and Lisa
Huard of South
Lake Tahoe
ride the rails
to their
holiday
destination.

The train mentality is different altogether. At the Sacramento Station we arrived with our luggage in tow and headed for Train 14 southbound for Los Angeles on Track 3. We were taking the SuperLiner Sleeping Car on the Coast Starlight, one of Amtrak's premier trains that offer services and features exclusive to this train.

My train experience has been limited. I have taken the train from Anaheim to San Diego, from Oxnard to San Diego and again on a brief excursion in Alaska as part of a cruise. Each time was pleasant but as a traveler on coach, I simply had a seat. This was different.

On the platform we were greeted by the car's conductor, Jaime; a nice man who would be taking care of us on our journey. We had arranged to get a "roomette" which was a small but private room with two reclining type chairs that face each other. The space is very comfortable and has

amenities such as pillows, temperature control, lights, a small tray table in the center, an electrical outlet, and music. It's designed that two people can comfortably sleep should you decide to. The two opposing chairs fold toward each other and make into a bed. There is also an upper berth that opens down from the ceiling. The more flexible traveler can take the top bunk.

Better than expected

What did I expect in taking the train? The sounds of the train rolling down the track, the sway of the car as it barrels past the stagnate traffic as the rails parallel freeways through towns on the way to the coast, a nine-hour drive by car taking 12 by train, the graffiti of a city on walls in the industrial areas of towns. As the "driver" for more of our trips (control issues) I was looking forward to being able to take naps whenever I wanted. The problem was that I still found myself wanting to see everything. I expected to need to occupy time with a book I've been meaning to read and perhaps playing Cribbage for hours just to pass the time.

What was a great surprise? Incredible, personal service of a conductor (and other staff) who gave us a tour of the different types of sleeper rooms before others arrived. The offer was the fresh fruit and Champagne, juice, and coffee on our arrival. The holiday decorated Parlour Car where you could sit in comfortable surroundings and enjoy the view out the windows while having a drink, some food, or playing cards. The Dining Car where you choose from a nice menu for your breakfast, lunch, and dinner and merely sign for it as it's included in your roomette ticket.

The sounds a train makes are pleasing; there really is a clickety-clack in amongst the vibrations of the large windows for your viewing pleasure. It's also much more pleasing for the train you are on to be the one making the sound of the horn as you pass by any intersection where a car could be. I

used to live in Anaheim, one mile west of Disneyland. The train tracks ran close to my home and honestly, the sound of the train wasn't as romantic when it rattled your house.

The sounds are reminiscent of the candy advertisement from a bit back, "Choo-choo-choo-choo, choo-choo-choo-choo, Good and Plenty, Good and Plenty."

Jaime came back to familiarize us a bit more with the train. He told us the history and uniqueness of the Pacific Parlour Car. It is their "signature" lounge car, exclusive to the Coast Starlight and is a unique and luxuriously upgraded piece of historic equipment and is available to sleeping car passengers. In fact, it is one of the last five cars left from the Santa Fe's famed train of the 1950s, the El Capitan.

Top notch amenities

For our journey I had packed a great picnic complete with wine, cheese, crackers and fruit. The ticket had said meals were included, but I thought that would mean something wrapped in plastic. Boy was I wrong.

Beyond the Parlour Car is the Dining Car where we joined another couple for breakfast. Unless you're a recluse in your roomette you will meet all sorts of folks. Here Cora presented us with a cup of nicely brewed coffee and a menu to make a selection from. Since the train is moving there are two ways in which they will serve eggs; scrambled and as an omelet. Cora explained that way they would always come out right for the passenger.

Breakfast fare included choices in eggs, breakfast meats, breads, French toast, yogurt, fruits, and oatmeal. Lunch selections were Caesar salad, burgers, vegetarian burgers, and penne pasta. Dinner boasts roasted herb chicken, a seafood selection, and marinated steak. Of course there are incredible desserts such as Ciao Bella Sicilian lemon sorbet, cheesecake, fruit, and nut desserts selections. And yes, for those who

just can't live without their espresso, café latte, cappuccino or mocha, they have those too.



Mel brings
wine and
cheese to
passengers
headed to
Southern
California.
Photo/Lisa
Huard

The food was good and so was the company we shared a table with. One couple was from Vancouver, British Columbia. They caught this leg of their trip in Seattle and were headed to San Diego. They are a couple who have traveled the world many times over on all sorts of transportation and are thoroughly enjoying their trip on this train. They have often driven from Canada to San Diego and to Scottsdale by car. We have too. It was interesting that all four of us continued to look at the train's map information to figure out where we were even though we were so familiar. When you're on the train, you get a view that you can't get anywhere else.

The train's hallway is narrow. In fact it might be a great way to travel if you are single and want to meet someone. You dine with other folks as they fill up the four tops and unless you back up to the nearest connecting hallway, you literally are up close and personal to someone crossing your path. Since you can see the people coming, you get to decide if you really

want to "meet" them or not.

The other intriguing thing about a train is that it is literally pieces of equipment hooked together. Those junctures of metal were most challenging for me. Looking forward you can see that one car is moving in opposition from side to side from the other. You quickly press on a panel to open the door. Then you tell yourself to move forward over the connected area and aim to hit the panel of the second door. If successful, you'll find yourself closer to the Dining Car. Kids love this part. Adults and those using canes; not so much.

The restrooms are adequate, a bit larger in length than that on a plane, but certainly not in width. In fact if you're 5-foot-7 with a 31-inch inseam, your knees will be hitting the toilet paper holder. The restroom is not someplace you would want to spend a lot of time in and like all other travel, be sure to wear your shoes. It's moving, as you know.

My girlfriend who is a flight attendant is aghast at the many people who will go barefoot or in their socks to the restroom on a plane. Included on the Sleeper Car are showers. You can use the cute little bag of shower amenities that they provide you in your roomette. And if you need more, just ask.

After our breakfast we decided to go back to our roomette since it was light out and we could see where we were going. Over the PA system came a voice telling us that the Café Car was now open. It sits below the Parlour Car and provides sandwiches, drinks, and snacks. We started to laugh as it reminded us of a cruise where if you plan it right, you could eat the entire way.

Aside from rolling down the tracks, the train has a schedule of eating. In fact if you wanted to, you could find yourself doing nothing but eating the entire time. The Starlight is on its second day since it originated in Seattle and is on its way to Los Angeles. Today, the Parlour Car opened at 7am and

the Dining Car began its breakfast service at 6:30am. Seating was open and no reservations for breakfast were required. Lunch service begins at noon with a last seating at 1:45on and does require reservations. Cora will be traveling the Sleeper Car to take everyoneâ€™s requests for seating. No need to track her down.

We selected a 12:30 seating because at 3:20 there is a Wine and Cheese Tasting Event where for only \$5 and a proper ID you can entertain your gastronomic palate with four wines and three cheeses from places that are actually produced along the route of this fantastic train. The wine selection included treats from Santa Barbara County, Pinnacles Ranches in Monterey County, and the Paso Robles area. From Washington state wines from the Columbia and Yakima Valleys can please your taste buds. On the southbound train, this portion of your journey occurs around sunset. The dome ceiling of the historic Parlour Car is even more special as you sit, learn, and enjoy these treats.

Life on the rails

Jaime stopped by again to check on how we were doing. He brought us a beautiful Origami bird in blue and red that he made. He is an intelligent, artistic, and thoughtful person. He told us he makes Origami for all of his passengers. He also color codes them to help children or older folks get back to their particular car without confusion. He tells them as they are leaving their compartments to look for the red and blue, or orange and red bird on the wall. When they find it, they know they are back where they need to be.



Jaime is no
ordinary
conductor.

Photo/Lisa
Huard

Born and raised in the Philippines, he was a teacher of mathematics for most of his career. Teaching and sharing is a passion for this man and you can tell that by how helpful and engaging he is. He taught in his home country for 22 years, and then taught in Nigeria for nine. He then said he copied Eddy Murphy in "Coming to America." Landing in California, he taught in the Los Angeles Unified School District in the inner city for two years and that did him in. As a "quitired" teacher myself, (I resigned as I'm still too young to retire), we shared our feelings about education for today's youth. We both agree the education process is subject oriented and not student centered as it once was; that test scores and the emphasis on paperwork showing accountability seemed to be at the top of the flagpole rather than performance and true competition. We talked about how everyone is more dependent on electronics, including myself, who can type quicker and for longer than I can hold a pen to paper these days.

We commented on how even with the progression of all of our new and fancy ways to communicate, that we may be communicating more, but are we doing it better? I even shared with him a recent email I had asking my niece if she still knew how to write complete sentences. You know those things with a subject and a predicate. Her emailed reply was

something like; "æo aunt lisa u r funny LOL katie." Wouldnt you know it? She's having trouble in her language arts class in school.

Since retiring from teaching he's been working for Amtrak and loves it. He meets people from all over the world. He observes what everyone is doing. He enjoys seeing people look out the window at the land passing by and is amazed at the individuals who sit and play games on their iPhones or Blackberrys who never look up. You might think that I'm not looking up that much, but I am. After all, it's a 12-hour trip.

Money well spent

Anyone who knows us knows that my husband is not one to spend money on what he views as "frivolous" expenses. I have to tell you, he loved this trip. He loved being able to walk around, have what he wanted when he wanted it. He completely took advantage of all the train had to offer. The employees are friendly, helpful, and love that people are looking at train travel as a way to get around rather than the hustle and bustle as we "hurry" to get to places these days without seeing anything along the way.

The scenery on this particular journey varies greatly beginning in the industrial areas of Sacramento. You knew you were in the Davis area when the station looked pristine and had a million bicycles in bike racks parked as individuals caught the train to their jobs. There was interesting graffiti along the way to Salinas, Paso Robles, and San Luis Obispo. And then there's the Pacific Ocean. How can you not love that view? The coast area south of Morro Bay is incredible, especially as you near sunset during the winter at about 5pm. The foam of the ocean coming to the shore, the scattered clouds with the sun setting make for a spectacular view. Some portions of the trip are on precarious cliffs and you feel like the train is literally running directly over the water.

As it gets dark outside you can see the occasional off shore oil derrick between the main land and the Channel Islands all lit up with lights like a Christmas tree.

And in the days of everything running late and people being upset, this train ran early. Apparently it's one of the few things that do. There are points along the way when it has to wait as running ahead of time isn't permitted. Pretty tough to fit opposing trains on the same track.

For those of us who are lucky enough to do a bit of travel and have taken a seven-day cruise, you know what I mean by it takes you five days to figure out the ship and all that there is to do. That's just in time for your trip to end. We've all commented on how great it would be if in each individual cabin you wish someone had done a cheat sheet for you. Well here's my version of a good cheat sheet when you're booking a trip southbound. First of all, if there's just two of you get a minimum of the roomette. It's a total treat and you don't have to spend the bigger money for the larger compartments.

Be proactive and engaging with the staff. Introduce yourself and shake their hand. This is common courtesy and common sense if you want to have a more personal experience. If it's not busy, ask your conductor if they can tell you a bit about the train. They love the train and are most happy to share the information. They also have written information that can provide you with the history and particulars for those of us who are visual learners.

Eat at every meal service just to say you did and really feel you took advantage of the price of your ticket. Take advantage of the coffee, teas, water, juice, snacks and great meals included with your ticket because *les toilettes* is just down the hallway. Get up and walk around. It's funny watching everyone negotiate their gait as the train is moving along. Of course remember you look just as uncoordinated.

Visit the Parlour to view the scenery and just to have a different perspective. When booking your ticket get an even numbered if you are headed south. That will be the side that the ocean will be on. Check out your compartment; push all of the buttons, (Almost all. Skip the emergency one that can summon your conductor) and open things. I didnâ€™t realize there was a skinny closet to hang and store things and towels until after Salinas.

Take a pair of comfortable slippers or socks to be cozy. If you are sensitive to motion, bribe (or threaten) your traveling mate so you sit forward in the compartment. This seat should be designated as a “No napping” zone.

Take disinfectant wipes with you, after all it is a public train and I do admit that there were times I wish I had my cleaning bucket with me. When using “les toilette” close the drape if stopped at a train station unless you are not at all modest. Although the scenery is fun to see with no obstructions, sit on the east side of the train in the Dining Car so the sun does not pound in your eyes. Carry a pen; your meals are included in your Sleeping Car status and youâ€™ll feel like youâ€™re Robin Leach who most of us remember as someone who would hang out with the “Rich and Famous”. Talk and furthermore listen to people on the train; their stories are interesting even if some of them are made up. Smile at all who pass your way. Look up, look out, enjoy.

P.S.

At 7:05 as we arrived at the Oxnard station and were exhausted. After all, we ate, drank, and laughed our way to Southern California. I never cracked open the book, never played cribbage. Perhaps on the return trip, perhaps not.

A bright tradition glows throughout Tahoe



The evolution of decorating the outside of a house or business at the holidays started years and years ago with Christmas trees having candles on them.

We now know that's not the safest of traditions.

Edward H. Johnson, a peer of Thomas Edison, is credited with bringing electric lights to a Christmas tree in 1882.

In 1900, businesses strung lights inside to frame their windows. With electricity being so expensive, this was not something the average person took part in.

It took until 1930 for most homes to use electric lights instead of candles on trees.

Rockefeller Center first had lights on its famous tree in 1931.

Now all sorts of things – inside and out – are brightly lighted this time of year.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder

N. Nevada United Way pleads

for donations

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

The United Way of Northern Nevada is making an end-of-the-year desperate appeal to Northern Nevadans for donations after its annual campaign came up millions of dollars short because of layoffs and home foreclosures.

“We are calling upon those in the region who might be able to give a donation in any amount to help the United Way fund the critical programs that help the growing number of people in need,” Greg Krause, chairman of the United Way board of trustees, said Wednesday.

Nevada’s high unemployment and home foreclosure rates severely impacted the amount of discretionary income individuals and corporations have been able to give during the United Way’s annual workplace donation campaign, Krause said.

Read the whole story

Squaw offers the complete winter experience

By Susan Wood

OLYMPIC VILLAGE – With avalanche-control dynamite blasts rippling across the valley on a recent Sunday, comfort isn’t the first word that comes to mind to describe skiing at Squaw Valley.

It takes skill to navigate the steeps, powder stashes and rock

formations at Lake Tahoe's premier ski resort. First, the KT-22 Express chairlift provides access to a run named after Jonny Moseley, the Olympian who made death-defying maneuvers on skis an art form. Second, that same lift provides access to Julia's Gold, named after the resort's other Olympian – Julia Mancuso. Third, the Headwall Face requires even the advanced intermediate to pay attention. Fourth, the rocks on top of Granite Chief remind most people of the humility necessary to take on this massive mountain.



Squaw Valley
Inn is steps
from the
slopes.

Photos/Kathryn
Reed

And, that's all on a good day.

No matter what the slopes bring, true luxury and comfort are steps away when skiers and boarders come in from the cold to eat, drink, be merry, soak in hot water and sleep at PlumpJack's Squaw Valley Inn.

Across from the Squaw Village, guests are invited to plop down and take a load off from the day at the PlumpJack Cafe bar, where comfort-food appetizers, refreshing drinks and an open pit fire await. Seating there is prime real estate unless snuggling on a sofa off the main bar area is the goal.

For hotel guests, the bar is transformed into a full complimentary breakfast buffet. It's open to others for a fee.



Snow continued to fall at Squaw Valley on Dec. 13.

Those with a penchant for more a substantive nighttime meal can enjoy a full menu of fine dining and wine tasting that will satisfy a variety of foodies and wannabes. Even dessert is an experience. (Click [here](#) to read about dining at PlumpJack.)

Just outside on the patio, two hot tubs set at the ideal 102-degrees attract angry and tight muscles. In the winter, the patio becomes a surreal scene with Mother Nature's abundant snow on the patio tables forming what looks like marshmallow snow lollipops.

After a major Sierra snowfall, the serenity of going outside to the tubs can only be upstaged by the beauty of the mix of Aspen and pine trees blanketed with snow.

It's hard to imagine the scene completely changes in summer as the inn hosts patio parties with disc jockeys to entertain guests.



Rooms at Squaw

Valley Inn are modern and comfortable.

The Squaw Valley Inn, (not to be confused with the Squaw Valley Lodge timeshare complex at slopeside) is a PlumpJack property. This hospitality company with wineries, wines, resorts and retail was founded by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom.

The inn was built in 1959 as a home for the delegation of the 1960 Winter Olympic Games.

In 1995, PlumpJack completely renovated the place, offering 60 luxury guestrooms, 34 king and 21 queen rooms and a host of suites. The hotel is more than pet friendly. Canines will feel like royalty as they find their own bowls, treats and pillows to make their stay memorable as well.

"This is important to us," said Inn General Manager Kristina Jetton, herself a dog lover.

For human comforts, rooms feature down comforters, cozy, hooded terry-cloth robes, slippers, televisions with DVD players and wireless Internet service. Views are good from most rooms and even better for groups in the 3,000-square-foot banquet facility on the second floor.

As companies have cut back on their business trips, resorts like Squaw Valley Inn are forced to be more creative with honing the market they want to attract.

"We do a lot of weddings here," said Rob McCormick, director of sales.

The rooms provide subtle touches that enhance the comfort level. The headboards appear to be ergonomically designed for reading in bed. Tile at the entryway allows snow enthusiasts to kick off and put away their gear with no guilt of trampling

on the carpet in the living space. Sample shampoos, conditioners and lotions make cleaning up in the full-size shower an inviting experience with scents like Lemon Grass, Sage and Mountain Breeze.

The decor is one that commands a second look. The lights in the bathroom look like something off a street lamp, providing a feel that complements a metal entertainment center, textured walls, recessed lighting, unique artwork and even a clip-on book light on the nightstand.

Rooms start at \$195 a night and work their way up to \$750 for a penthouse suite.

Squaw Valley is pulling out all the stops on its celebratory season that recognizes 50 years since hosting the 1960 Winter Games and six decades of being in business. An entire slate of events is scheduled for Olympic Heritage Week starting Jan. 8, including a special torch run that honors its own contribution to the history of the Olympics and the Games' return to the West Coast when Vancouver, British Columbia, kicks off its opening ceremonies the following month.

Whistler Blackcomb has already touted record snowfall, and Squaw has much to be proud of in this early season as well. With winter officially beginning this week, Squaw lauds 35 to 60 inches. Coming off a full week of storms on Dec. 13, "Let It Snow" blasted over the speakers at the entrance to the Funitel.

The trees looked like an absolute wonderland. And, as one avid skier from Reno pointed out on the Squaw Creek chairlift, she had every intent of taking advantage of a seemingly end of the three-year drought with her now affordable season pass. To mark its big year, Squaw slashed its pass price by at least 60 percent because, as spokeswoman Savannah Cowley put it, "It was the time to do it."

The inn maybe reached by clicking [here](#) or calling (530)

Holiday cheer through lights

The South Shore is a little brighter this holiday season, thanks to Leadership Lake Tahoe and the enthusiasm of the local business community. More than 40 local businesses are participating in the inaugural Light Up Lake Tahoe.

After receiving donations from local organizations, strands of white LED lights were distributed to participating businesses. Now, the businesses have installed their lights, and are asked to keep them on throughout the holiday/winter season. Lights will be collected in March, to be stored and used toward next year's program.

Proceeds from Light Up Lake Tahoe benefit Tahoe Turning Point, a private, nonprofit agency that provides group care and residential treatment for young men ages 12 to 18.

Additional lights are currently unavailable for this season, but all South Shore businesses with lighting displays are eligible to compete for the title of Best Lights on the Lake. Email lightuplaketahoe@gmail.com to have your business included in the program.

Lighting displays will be judged the week of Jan. 4 and the winner announced mid-January.

Current Participating Businesses:

Alpine Market

Barton Home Health

Barton PR

Bear Beach Cafe

Big Pines Motel

Black Bear Inn

Blue Lake Inn

Coldwell Banker

Cosmic Creations Tattoo & Art Gallery

El Dorado Savings Bank

Enchanted Florist

Fox Gasoline

Heidi's Restaurant

Hope's Closet

Hot Gossip Lounge

Inn by the Lake

Kahle Community Center

Lakeland Village

Lakeside Inn & Casino

LTVA Visitor Center – South Lake Tahoe and Stateline locations

Mad About Music

Meeks Hardware

Mountain Mike's Skis

Nikki's Chaat Cafe

Park Tahoe Inn

Rasa Sayang

Riva Grill

RSN

Sessions Salon

Ski Run Liquor

Snowshoe Thompson

Swiss Chalet

Tahoe Art League

Tahoe Mountain Sports

Tahoe Rental Connection

Tahoe Turning Point

Tahoe Wellness Collective & Community Center

Tahoe Youth & Family Services

The Keys Cafe

The Sportsman

Top It!

Worth Naccarato Chiropractic

Budget gifts: Lake Tahoe News



A subscription to *Lake Tahoe News* is the ultimate money-saving gift – it's free, but the value is priceless. Remember, it's the thought, not the amount you spend on a gift.

Are your family and friends getting an email each morning letting them know what's going on in Lake Tahoe? If not, then sign them up via the Home page. Go to the bottom right side of the page and enter their email address. Then send them an email telling them about your gift.

Lake Tahoe News is the only daily – that's seven days a week – source for news about Lake Tahoe. It's the place to get a daily ski report about downhill and cross country resorts in and around the basin. The Events page has listings well into 2010. It's timely news. It's features. It's the place for Olympic news about Tahoe athletes.

It's your source for news, it should be their source for news. Give the gift of news – *Lake Tahoe News*.

If you need other budget gift ideas, click on the Lifestyle button to find out what other businesses in Lake Tahoe have to offer. Just look for the money ornament logo.

Budget gifts: Handmade mufflers and hats



Publisher's note: *Get in the spirit and share your idea for a gift valued at \$20 or less. [Click here for details.](#)*

Fight the cold, buy that last-minute, one of a kind gift and help the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce.

Mufflers of many colors and textures – \$6-\$9. Sets of matching hats and muffler – \$13.

These are handmade by a disabled senior citizen who will share the profits with the chamber.

For more information, call (530) 544.7412.

California puts money toward DUI checkpoints

California traffic safety officials continue to tighten their grip on drunken drivers by and declaring 2010 as “The Year of the Checkpoint” and announcing a record \$8 million in grant funding to 148 law enforcement agencies for DUI checkpoints “up from \$5 million in 2009.

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) will fund more than 2,500 sobriety checkpoints in 2010, a 47 percent increase over the 1,700 conducted this year, more than 250 of which will take place between Dec. 18 and Jan. 3 as part of the December DUI Crackdown enforcement campaign, “Report Drunk Drivers. Call 911.”

“To my knowledge, California conducts more checkpoints than any other state,” OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy said in a press release. “DUI checkpoints are time-tested and proven

as the most effective DUI countermeasure and Iâ€™m gratified that weâ€™re seeing the life-saving results.â€

Since OTS and law enforcement began placing increased emphasis and funding toward sobriety checkpoints in 2006, alcohol-related deaths have declined in California. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administrationâ€™s Fatality Analysis Reporting System, DUI deaths declined in California by 9.1 percent between 2007 and 2008, marking a total decrease of nearly 21 percent from the most recent high point in 2005. In addition, statewide DUI arrests in 2008 were 214,811 â€” the highest since 1993.

Budget gifts: Pain relief



Publisher's note: *Get in the spirit and share your idea for a gift valued at \$20 or less. [Click here for details.](#)*

A wonderful stocking stuffer is a tube of Biofreeze. It's one of the of best topical pain relievers for the sports nut on your list, the computer worker whose neck and shoulders are tight, the shovelers out there, the parents carrying young kids – you name it. A tube is \$15 at A Massage at Tahoe in South Lake Tahoe. Call (530) 318.4806 to get a tube or two.