Genoa trail to open in late January

Construction on the Genoa Vista Trail has been moving forward and the project should be complete by the end of January. A dedication ceremony is scheduled for Jan. 26 at 10am at the northern end of the trail not far from the Genoa Station Bar and Grille.

Afterward, David Walley's Resort will host refreshments on its property at the south end of the trail.

The trail will be open for walking, skating, running, and biking.

Mancuso 25th in giant slalom in Austria

By USSA

SEMMERING, Austria – Mikaela Shiffrin (Eagle-Vail, Colo.) battled a rugged Audi FIS Alpine World Cup in Semmering on Dec. 28 to finish a career best eighth in giant slalom and leap into 10th in the overall World Cup standings.

Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) finished 25th as wind and fog made the already bumpy course exponentially more challenging.

Austrian Anna Fenninger posted the wire-to-wire win with a massive 1.1 second margin over Slovenian overall leader Tina

Maze.

A slalom is slated for Saturday, a year to the day after Shiffrin's first World Cup podium. Shiffrin claimed her first World Cup win with slalom victory a week ago in Are, Sweden and currently leads the World Cup slalom standings.

Lindsey Vonn (Vail) did not start and is still regaining strength following a late November stomach illness.

The U.S. Ski Team now as three women in the World Cup overall top 10 (Vonn 5, Mancuso 7, Shiffrin 10).

Truckee resident, Olympian to teach skate skiing class

Olympian Marcus Nash will teach an intermediate to advanced skate skiing clinic at Royal Gorge on Dec. 29.

Nash is a nine-time national champion in cross country skiing and competed in the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, and the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.

Nash is a Truckee resident, and experienced and well-respected cross country skiing coach.

The Marcus Nash clinic will begin at 9am Saturday at the Summit Station Lodge. The cost is $35.

For more information, go online.

Lahontan wants input on Upper Truckee River project

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is taking comments until Jan. 16 on the U.S. Forest Service Upper Truckee River Reach Five Restoration and Utility Relocation Project.

At the Feb. 13-14 meeting, the Lahontan board will consider granting an exemption to the basin plan to allow this project in El Dorado County to go forward.

More information is online.

Doctors offering free help to injured high school athletes

Barton Rehabilitation & Sports Medicine and Carson Valley Medical Center Rehabilitative Services in conjunction with the Tahoe Center for Orthopedics offers free sports injury evaluation clinics for in-season high school athletes who have suffered a sports-related injury and are seeking professional treatment options.

Clinics are open to all high school sports athletes who may be injured and require professional assessment in order to return

to play safely and effectively.

Appointments are preferred – Monday-Friday. Students must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

For more information, call (530) 543.5896.

Trek through Tahoe history on cross country skis

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Apparently for rich San Franciscans, Lake Tahoe's winters were too harsh. Instead of embracing the elements and the beauty, they boarded up their homes, packed their belongings and went to the flat land for most of the year.

Of course, those who summered on the shores of Lake Tahoe in the first half of the 20th century didn't have all the modern conveniences we have today.

And had those with last names like Pope, Baldwin and Heller decided to reside year-round at what is now known as the Tallac Historic Site, it's possible the winter experience would be much different in the 21st century. Maybe it would still be privately owned.

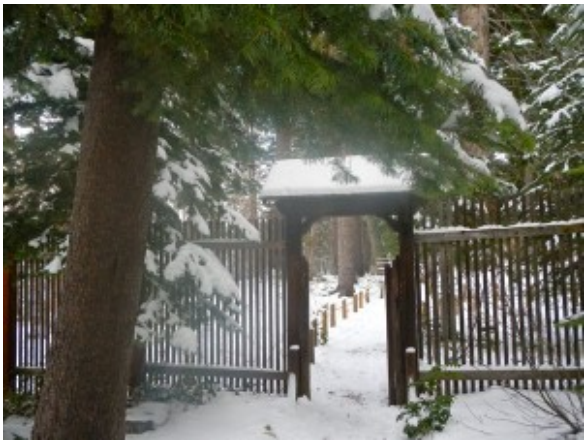


Sue and AJ at Kiva Beach.

Today, it is so incredibly tranquil. Few people seem to venture to this part of the South Shore in winter. It’s almost like a ghost town.

Sure, the buildings are closed up – just like when it was privately owned. But there is still plenty to see. The U.S. Forest Service has done a great job in putting up signs telling about the history of this site.

(Most of the buildings are open in the summer.)



A gateway to history.

Nineteen buildings are dispersed on what were three estates. The 74 acres are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

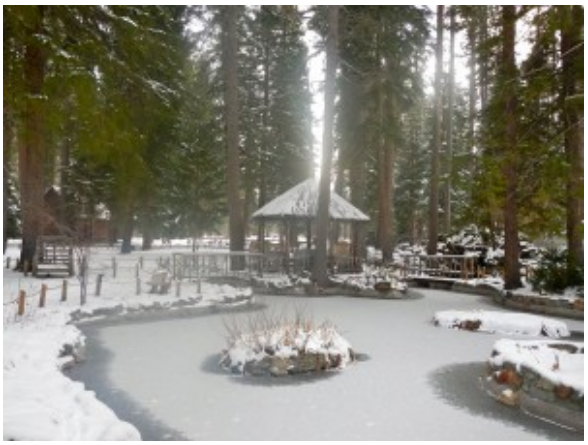
Restoration work continues on the buildings and grounds.

Imagine what it would have been like a century ago to live here. Imagine the summers back then compared to today. Same

lake, same trees, same beach – but a different time makes for a different world.

One of our favorite cross country ski outings is to park at the Beacon restaurant, then glide along the snow-covered beach toward Taylor Creek.

On a blustery December Saturday we hit the point that would take us to Baldwin Beach and decided we didn't need to go farther. Instead, we headed back along the beach a bit until we could get onto the trail that would lead us through the Tallac Site.



Tallac Historic Site is rich in history and beauty. Photos/LTN

That's the fun thing about this trek – which is good on skis, snowshoes or boots – it can be a loop. It's a bit present day, a bit yesteryear.

And with the Beacon the start and end point it makes for a good spot to get something to drink and/or eat.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, go north on Highway 89 toward Emerald Bay. At Camp Richardson, turn right at the lodge. Drive down

to the Beacon parking lot.

Northstar celebrates 40 years, looks forward

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – "Everything in the middle of nowhere." That was Northstar's motto in 1972 when the first lift started turning.

A lot has changed since Dec. 22, 1972 – owners, lifts, amenities, and definitely the fact that the Truckee resort can no longer be considered being in the middle of nowhere.

Its evolution into being a fixture in the greater Lake Tahoe area and a destination resort for those beyond the drive up market of the Bay Area and Central Valley was heralded on its 40th anniversary.

In blizzard conditions year 41 started with snowboard legend Shaun White joining a group of riders for first tracks. While he is normally in the resort's halfpipe (when it's built), on this Saturday he was letting loose in the fresh powder – and not always on the trails.

The day before, White, who is now sporting a much shorter haircut after last week cutting off his locks for charity, did another charitable act. He made a Make a Wish come true by giving a young boy a snowboarding lesson.



Northstar’s Zephyr Lodge is one indication of Vail’s commitment to upgrade the resort. Photos/Kathryn Reed

On Dec. 22, White dropped in on the kids at the Burton Snowboard Academy to offer some advice.

Still under snowy skies, at 4pm it was time for White and Northstar COO Bill Rock to offer a toast.

Earlier in the day Rock had been at a celebration that was part reminiscing about the past and part looking forward to the next 40 years.

A bit of history

In 1949 a tree farm was started where Northstar is located. The land when Georgia Pacific owned it was called the Timber Farm.

It was the Fibreboard Corporation that opened Northstar-at-Tahoe in 1972.

The first snowboarders were allowed in the 1988-89 season. In the video that was shown at the celebration on Saturday the binding settings on the boards were much different than they are today.

Trimont took over operations of the resort in summer 1994. Two years later, Booth Creek Ski Holdings acquired Trimont/Northstar.

In 1999, Booth Creek and East West Partners agreed to a real estate agreement that led to the development of the village and various lodging properties. The first phase of the village opened in 2005-06. The village kept expanding, culminating with a third phase.

The Ritz-Carton, Lake Tahoe opened three years ago at mid-mountain – though it has separate owners.

(The Highlands Gondola that goes from the Village at Northstar to the Ritz-Carlton was in jeopardy of not operating this season. The funding partners for the eight-passenger gondola that opened in 2009 were having trouble finding resolution. A deal was reached Dec. 21. However, that same day a tree fell on the cable. It should be fixed by the end of the year.)

In 2010, Colorado-based Vail Resorts bought Northstar. In its first year more than $30 million in on-mountain improvements were made.

The past and future

Hank Schwarz, Zeke Straw and Paul Daily were highlighted in the video shown to a select group at Schaffer's Camp on Saturday. The trio talked about the early days, the dozens of romances developed in ski school and the fun that was had on the slopes.

Blaise Carrig, president of mountain operations for Vail Resorts, recalled how his first experience at Northstar was in 1982. He was impressed with the ambiance, sense of feeling from the people, but completely understood why it had the moniker "flat star".

In 2002, after Vail Resorts bought Heavenly Mountain Resort on

the South Shore, Carrig made it a point to return to Northstar. The transformation was remarkable. More of the mountain was open – which included steeper terrain.

As the top executive at Heavenly, he would bring his management team to Northstar each year to see what the resort was doing.

“We saw Northstar as an able competitor,” Carrig said.

But he also knew about the 40-minute lines on busy weekends and people having to eat on the floor of the mid-mountain lodge.

In 2010, Vail Resorts bought Northstar.

“We wanted to come in and capitalize on their success,” Carrig said. That meant an infusion of cash to disperse people around the mountain via a lift that opened last December, new runs, and a lodge at the top of Zephyr chairlift to provide more dining choices – and chairs.

And Vail is not done. The master plan is in the works.

As Carrig said, Beaver Creek is the template for what Northstar will become.

Beyond the infrastructure improvements, Carrig said it’s the people who come to the mountain that matter most.

“It’s not about customers, it’s about maintaining relationships,” Carrig said.

Taking on a trait from its Colorado properties, guests at Zephyr Lodge are now offered a tissue when they walk in – and more than one when dripping wet coming in from a blizzard.

In the end, it’s all about the experience people talk about long after they’ve left the mountain.

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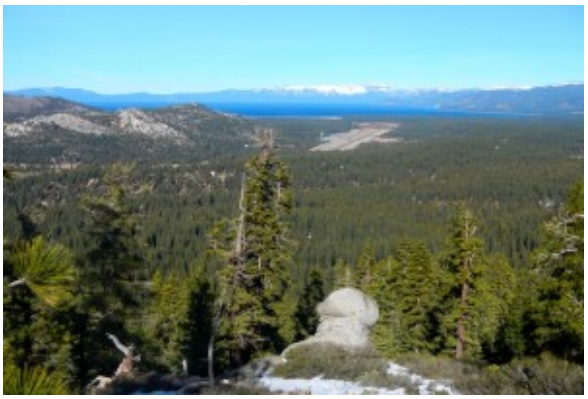
Cowboy Rock – small in size, big in views

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – While it probably would have been hard to get lost, it was nice to have a guide get us beyond the various off-shoot trails and direct us how best to make a loop through the woods so we'd find our vehicle before dark.

That's the thing about locals – they know where unmarked trails go.

Entering the forest off Pinewood Drive we pass a gate and walk up a short ways on asphalt. A South Tahoe Public Utility District water tank is on the right. From there, the trail is all dirt – well, except for the pockets of snow.



Lake Tahoe's signature blue shines from a hilltop in Meyers. Photos/Kathryn Reed

We make this excursion on the second Sunday of December when there is more dirt than snow on the trail. The same conditions would not exist today. If someone else had been out there

first I might go on snowshoes, but there were no blue markers on trees to help guide the way in snow.

Kim leaves work for a spell to show us one of her favorite places to take her dogs out for a romp. For her, it's a short walk from her house in Meyers. We had to drive *all the way* from South Lake Tahoe. It was well worth it.

It's one of those treks that isn't super long, but has incredible views.

Cowboy Rock is the end point – but we stop just shy of there. My stamina was lacking after coming off a nasty cold and the air temperature was less than pleasant when our bodies stopped moving.

While Mount Tallac is stunning from any angle, seeing the Angora burn area below it is still heart wrenching 5½ years later. This spot is where some in the neighborhood watched the fire rage that June day in 2007. Today, the scar on the land is a reminder of what happens when campfires – illegal or not – are not fully extinguished.

Despite this reminder of one of Tahoe's tragic events, beauty is everywhere. Sugar pines are interspersed with other conifers.

No longer is the forest as dense as it was earlier in the summer. U.S. Forest Service crews have been out thinning this area. Future burn piles dot the landscape at the start of the trail.

Various routes abound. It's easy to hook up with Mr. Toad's or go over to Oneidas from here.

We turn around after a quick break on top of some granite boulders. There we have views of Lake Tahoe Airport with Lake Tahoe in the background.

Sue and I count this as a teaser excursion, as we look forward

to discovering more about this network of trails after the snow melts.

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Getting there:



To the left is a map of where Pinewood Drive is in Meyers. For the most part, just go straight up, veering a bit to the right to get to where the excellent views are and then to the top of Cowboy Rock.

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Tahoe tow driver offers some advice for winter travel

By Bill Donahue, Via

Black ice, fog, snowbanks, sleet—dangers are ever present on winter roads. So slow down, use extra caution, and keep your car in tip-top shape. AAA tow druck driver John Baker, owner of Emerald Bay Towing in South Lake Tahoe has been rescuing members in the state's snowiest highlands since he was 16 years old. He shares more winter wisdom.

Q I'm headed out on a winter road trip. What are my first steps?

A Check the weather conditions. If there's a pending storm,

wait. Know your route and let someone else know it too.

Q A flashlight, a charged phone, extra clothing and blankets, water and food—anything else I need in my emergency road kit?

A An ice scraper with a brush.

Q Why is that so important?

A You have to clear all the snow off the car's top and hood, not just the windows. People drive with four feet of snow on top. The heater will turn that into an ice ball. When you hit the brakes, it'll fall forward, completely blind you, and tear the arms off your wipers.

Q Any recommendations on tires and chains for bad weather?

A People think tires labeled mud and snow are fine. But the question is, is it a traction tire? Get the right chains for your car. Don't get the big beefy ones you see on trucks for a small car. Check with your manufacturer. And remember, the speed limit for driving with chains is 25 mph.

Q Besides staying in the car, what else should I do while waiting for a tow to arrive?

A If the car is running, don't run the heater full blast. The battery can't keep up. Be patient. People panic—a minute can feel like two or three hours.

Q What was your most intense rescue?

A A friend called to tell me that my wife got buried in an avalanche while driving. She went from 35 mph to zero within 10 feet; the snow busted out her passenger window and cocooned her in darkness. It took 10 of us to dig her out. She was fine. Luckily, she had made a point of driving with a pack of cars, so people could call for help right away.

Q Advice for ski vacationers?

A Always put your key in a zippered pocket or keep it in a locker while you're skiing. There's a lot of snow up there – drop your key and it's lost forever.

Snow totals to be measured in feet at Tahoe this weekend

A white Christmas it will be in Lake Tahoe. And a sunny one.

But before Tuesday arrives there is going to be a lot of shoveling and snow blowing in the basin.

A winter storm warning is in effect from Friday at 6am to Monday at 4am.



Expect to see this sign for the next few days in and around Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN file

"There's very high confidence of several feet of snow in the Sierra starting (Friday)," a National Weather Service spokeswoman in Reno told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The brunt of the storm is expected to arrive Saturday. That night into Sunday 1 to 2 feet of snow could fall at lake level, with 3 feet above 7,000 feet.

“The highest accumulations will occur along and west of Highway 89 where up to 5 feet is possible above 7,000 feet and up to 3 feet below 7,000 feet,” the Weather Service is predicting.

Wind is already gusting, and it will continue to do so. Ridgetops could see gusts of 100 mph. This will lead to whiteout conditions for motorists.

For road info, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

And the highs are not expected to reach the 40s.

If you need to know more, check out this video from the National Weather Service in Reno:

– Lake Tahoe News staff report