Hope Valley's vast trail system goes on for miles

By Kathryn Reed

HOPE VALLEY – Two things about steadily climbing up are often true – a great view is usually the first reward, and then the trip down is often a breeze.

We found both to be true of our snowshoe in Hope Valley. This is one of those areas just outside the Lake Tahoe Basin that is worth visiting year-round. On this particular Sunday we park at the yurt where Joyce Coker operates Hope Valley Outdoor Center.



Kae Reed discovers a swing along the snowshoe trail. Photo/Susan Wood

With more than 60 miles of marked trails, it has a variety of terrain to satisfy all levels of snowshoers and cross country skiers. Added bonuses include free parking and no trail fee. But Coker gladly takes donations. After all, it takes a tremendous amount of work to keep up this outdoor playground on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

As we climb, the forest seems to surround us, to take us in, almost hug us. We forget there is a highway close by.

Although Burnside Road is drivable for a bit in the summer, in the winter no tires are going across the snow. We seem to have this oasis to ourselves. It's not until we head back that we finally come across other people out playing.

This being my first time here in winter, it all looks unfamiliar. And that's part of the fun. Despite Sue's reluctance to head downhill, I convince her to follow the signs toward Secret Meadow. I just like the sound of it. I don't care that it will mean a bit more work to hoof it uphill.

Meandering around in a loop, openings peak out to Hope Valley below us. Seeing the field of snow it makes me wonder what this meadow must look like in the spring and summer. Are there wildflowers? Is it grassy? Would it make for a great lunch spot? Is it as peaceful during hiking season as it is in snowshoeing season?

Continuing on a bit a smile crosses my face. I see a swing in the distance. I love to swing. That gentle rocking back and forth. With snowshoes on, it makes for an interesting dismount.

We continue on, circling back to the main road. We keep going up. A sign points to a vista. We go have a look-see.

I hope I never stop being awed by the majestic snow covered Sierra. The Carson Range seems to go on forever. Stevens Peak looms tallest from this vantage point. Maps and research are not consistent with its elevation – some say close to 10,000 feet, others have it topping that mark. The peak is named after J.M. Stevens who was a supervisor in Alpine County and ran a stagecoach in Hope Valley in the 1860s.

Sitting on the granite boulder having a bite to eat I take in

the scenery. It’s sad to see the blackened trees still looking freshly charred, thought they are in their third winter since the 2008 Burnside Fire.

Clouds are moving in and the temperature is dropping. It’s time to start moving. We decide this is a good time to turn around.

Signs along the various trails are abundant, but not obnoxiously so. Maps are available in the yurt just in case that makes you feel more comfortable. Lessons, tours and equipment rentals are also available. More information is online.

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, take Highway 50 west. Turn left onto Highway 89 in Meyers. Go over Luther Pass. At Picketts Junction (the four-way stop), go straight toward the yurt. Park. And don’t forget to leave a donation.

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Ski report: A Super morning to be outside



It’s Super Bowl Sunday, which could mean lighter crowds at the ski resorts in the morning. Waiting to hit the slopes mid-morning may be the answer to a slight softening of the snow.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Reno-Tahoe Olympics' economic boon touted

By Stephen Ward

INCLINE VILLAGE – It might be gold medals athletes would be after, but it's green in the form of cash that organizers of the Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition are after.

"This is something that could benefit everyone in the region," Joe Killoran, CEO of the Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition, said. "We have an opportunity to market ourselves to the world in a short period of time."

Killoran stressed that the impact the Olympic games would have on the region would be enormous.



Joe Killoran talks Feb. 4 about bringing the Olymics to Reno-Tahoe. Photo/Stephen Ward

Killoran conducted a presentation Friday meant to inform residents about his organization's aim to have the 2022 Winter

Olympics in Lake Tahoe.

The majority of the PowerPoint slideshow at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center at Sierra Nevada College referred to the ways in which Salt Lake City prospered from hosting the 2002 Winter Olympics. Killoran cited the city's $100 million operational profit and the 35,000 jobs created. The city's infrastructure, business community and tourism numbers have also improved significantly in past decade.

"(Tourists) want to be on slopes where Olympians are," he said.

That wealth, according to Killoran, could come to Lake Tahoe – again.

In fact, the region's rich Olympic legacy was a centerpiece in Killoran's vision for obtaining a competitive bid for the region. The 1960 Winter Olympics in Squaw Valley were the first time they were conducted in the Western United States, were the first to use artificially refrigerated ice surfaces, and the first to use fully automated timing.

It will take an estimated $1 million annually now through 2013 to fund research studies about the economic and environmental impacts the Winter Olympics would have on the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The money would also help bring competitions and events to the region in order to stir economic activity and prove the area would be a credible Olympic host.

Although the Nevada Legislature has assisted the planning organization in the past, Killoran said the group didn't ask for assistance in the previous session.

"If we can't raise the money from private investments, we're all wasting our time in this room right now," he said.

Despite a few logistical questions, the roughly 50 people in

attendance showed little sign of skepticism about the venture.

“I came in here a real skeptic, not about what happens between now and 2022, but what would happen after that,” Michael Durand, a 60-year-old Incline Village resident, said. “The buildings built could go to housing seasonal workers in South Lake Tahoe and dormitories at (Sierra Nevada College). I feel much better after hearing the presentation.”

Other attendees said they were convinced, so long as the environment remains a top priority.

“The key is better public transportation,” Al Bulf, a 67-year-old retired railway businessman, said.

For more information about the Reno-Tahoe Winter Games bid, go to the website.

Kashima 18th in dual moguls at Deer Valley

By Freddy Perryman, U.S. Ski Team

PARK CITY -– Olympic Champion Hannah Kearney of Norwich, Vt., won bronze in dual moguls at the 2011 FIS Freestyle World Championships which ended Saturday night in front of 6,000 spectators at Deer Valley Resort. The bronze marked Kearney’s second medal of the championships after taking silver in moguls earlier in the week.

Kearney won the consolation round match with teammate Heather McPhie of Bozeman, Mont., who was fourth. Patrick Deneen of Cle Elum, Wash., was fifth to lead the U.S. men.

Newly crowned moguls World Champion Jenn Heil of Canada won the gold, her second of the week. Fellow Canadian Alexandre Bilodeau won the men's title giving Canada 16 medals including eight golds. The USA was second in the medals count with seven.

In a sour twist of fate, all three U.S. men were in the same bracket for Saturday night's finals, forcing a faceoff between Deneen and teammate Joey Discoe of Telluride, Colo., in the first round. Deneen won, making the quarterfinals.

Jeremy Cota of Carrabassett Valley, Maine, who has been on a hot streak for the last few weeks, lost his first round dual against Japan's Nishi Nouyuki. Nouyuki, after defeating Cota, would go on to knock out Deneen on his way to a bronze medal.

Official results, FIS World Freestyle Ski Championships, Deer Valley Resort, Park City, Dual Moguls

Men

Gold: Alexandre Bilodeau, Canada

Silver: Mikael Kingsbury, Canada

Bronze: Nishi Nouyuki, Japan

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5. Patrick Deneen, Cle Elum, WA

9. Jeremy Cota, Carrabassett Valley, ME

13. Joe Discoe, Telluride, CO

18. Sho Kashima, Lake Tahoe, CA

Women

Gold: Jenn Heil, Canada

Silver: Chloe Dufor-Lapointe, Canada

Bronze: Hannah Kearney, Norwich, VT

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4. Heather McPhie, Bozeman, MT

9. Eliza Outtrim, Steamboat Springs, CO

14. Kayla Snyderman, Winchester, MA

Packer, Steelers neck-and-neck with bettors

By Case Keefer, Las Vegas Sun

Those looking to bet on a side in Super Bowl XLV based on where the smart money is coming in are going to run into a problem.

Sharps or professional sports bettors have split opinions on Sunday's game where the Green Bay Packers enter as 2.5-point favorites over the Pittsburgh Steelers, according to one prominent Las Vegas bookmaker.

"We've gotten a lot of large plays on the Steelers and a lot of large plays on the Packers," said Jay Rood, MGM Resorts International sports book director. "I've taken money on both sides from guys who we've dealt with in the past and whose opinions we really respect."

The betting public's feelings are also equally divided. Walk into any sports book in town this weekend and chances are half the room would prefer Terrible Towels, while half would rather take cheeseheads.

That was the case at the Mandalay Bay sports book Friday night. Scanning the room revealed an equal number of Steelers and Packers hats.

In the back of the book, two friends from Fresno, Calif., debated the betting options detailed on the board. The first mentioned Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers as a reason why he leaned toward the Packers. The second naturally disagreed.

Read the whole story

Avalanche dogs train with flight crew

Each winter the Sierra Nevada will naturally see its share of slides and avalanches in the backcountry. Although extremely rare, big snow dumps and changing snow conditions can cause slides and avalanches within ski resort boundaries despite preventative measures. In the event there is a slide or avalanche at or near Kirkwood, patrollers are ready.



On Jan. 21, four of Kirkwood's patrollers and avalanche dogs as well as one dog and handler from El Dorado Country Search and Rescue completed their annual orientation and training with Care Flight at Kirkwood Mountain Resort. To expedite transportation, Care Flight has been working with avalanche dogs and their handlers at various ski areas and with search and rescue teams for years.

This year Care Flight worked with Kirkwood patroller Kip McCarthy to provide orientation for their avalanche dogs and

handlers to ensure both dogs and people are comfortable and familiar with the flying in the helicopter.

Ski report: Wind holds?



Wind may be an issue today.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Teller takes 5th in skicross at Deer Valley

By Freddy Perryman, U.S. Ski Team

PARK CITY -– John Teller of Mammoth Lakes just missed the skicross final round Friday, but won the small finals to finish fifth at the FIS Freestyle World Ski Championships at Deer Valley Resort in Park City. Canada’s Chris Del Bosco and Kelsey Serwa swept gold.

Teller was the only American to make Friday’s skicross finals. After qualifying for the finals in ninth, Teller skied well, passing his way through the first heat and the quarterfinals before finishing third in his semifinal race earning a spot in

the small final.

Teller took full advantage of his opportunity in the small final where he blasted into the lead, taking the hole shot at the first corner and never looked back. He finished fifth overall.

“I had some goals coming into this season. They were pretty high goals and I’d say I’ve achieved them,” said a confident Teller.

Teller’s strong finish in Friday’s World Championships comes only a week after he won gold in the 2011 Winter X Games in Aspen.

“The course was good,” said American Skicross Association’s Casey Puckett, who came out of retirement last week to place third in skicross at Winter X Games 15. “There was room to pass and Teller made a lot of passes today.”

In the first heat of the women’s quarterfinals, there was a massive crash where all of the skiers, including Ophelie David of France, went down. Going into Friday’s races, David was favored to make the skicross finals.

Del Bosco’s gold came after finishing fourth in the 2009 Worlds and the Olympics last year. Jouni Pellinen of Finland and Andreas Matt of Austria earned silver and bronze, respectively, to round out the men’s podium. Matt, the brother of Austrian alpine star Mario Matt, was the defending World Champion. The women’s silver went to Julia Murray of Canada and Anna Holmlund of Sweden got the bronze.

Official results, FIS World Freestyle Ski Championships, Deer Valley Resort, Skicross

Men

Gold: Chris Del Bosco, Canada

Silver: Jouni Pellinen, Finland

Bronze: Andreas Matt, Austria

–

5. John Teller, Mammoth Lakes, CA

–

DNQ for finals:

37. Patrick Duran, Fayson, VT

38. Trevor Ricioli, South Lake Tahoe, CA

40. Ethan Fortney, Tenino, WA

Women

Gold: Kelsey Serwa, Canada

Silver: Julia Murray, Canada

Bronze: Anna Holmlund, Sweden

Ski report: Mix of sun, clouds



The morning is starting off with a few clouds, but those are not expected to be around all day.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

First cycling team invited to 2011 Tour de California

By Pro Cycling News

The Jamis/Sutter Home Pro Cycling Team has been invited to race the 2011 Amgen Tour of California. Directeur Sportif Sebastian Alexandre made the announcement.

“The Amgen Tour of California is one of the most important stage races in professional cycling,” said Alexander. “We are proud to be selected and look forward to lining up with the best riders in the international peloton.”

“The Amgen Tour of California is the premier road racing event in North America,” said Carine Joannou, President of title sponsor Jamis Bicycles. “We are thrilled that our squad and our bikes will have the opportunity to compete against the world’s top pro teams.”

NRC Champion Luis Amaran, now in his fourth season with Jamis/Sutter Home, is a favorite for a stage win. In 2010, Amaran captured his first NRC overall win at the Joe Martin Stage Race and finished on the podium in nearly every major event, including his stage two victory at the SRAM Tour of the Gila ahead of three-time Amgen Tour of California winner Levi Leipheimer.

Alexandre also expects podium appearances for Jamis/Sutter Home veteran Alejandro Borrajo. An accomplished sprinter with the strength and endurance for climbing, Borrajo delivered

Jamis/Sutter Home’s first major win of the 2010 season with his victory in the stage two road race at the UCI 2.2 Rutas de America in Uruguay. He went on to win the Redlands Bicycle Classic road race, the Wilmington Grand Prix, and the opening stage of the Fitchburg Longsjo Classic.

Read the whole story