Golf event to benefit Barton Foundation

The 23rd annual Barton Foundation Golf Tournament is June 23 at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers.

All proceeds will support the Barton Foundation's efforts to improve the health and well-being of South Shore residents.

It will be a scramble format with teams of four. Golf registration includes continental breakfast, golf and golf cart, drink tickets, and a buffet lunch. Prizes will be awarded for best costume, team spirit, and the tournament winners.

Sign up for the early bird price of $165 per a player or $660 for a foursome. After May 10, the registration fee for individuals will go up to $185. Tickets for the golf tournament can be purchased **online**.

Squaw Valley building relationships with Chinese

Squaw Valley on May 20 will host members of the U.S. and Chinese national freestyle teams, as well as delegates from the resort's sister mountain in China, Genting Resort Secret Garden, for a trail naming ceremony of Squaw Valley's competition mogul course under the Red Dog chairlift.

U.S. and Chinese national freestyle team members will be on site for nearly a week hosting a joint training session on the course.

Resort managers at Genting Resort Secret Garden renamed a trail Squaw Valley in January. Secret Garden will be a host venue for the 2022 Winter Olympic freestyle skiing and snowboarding events. A Squaw Valley delegation led by CEO Andy Wirth and chief mountain host and Olympic gold medalist Jonny Moseley were on-hand for the renaming.

Squaw Valley will in turn name the mogul course under Red Dog chair Secret Garden.

Super snowpack could be deadly summer hazard

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Summer is when Sierra Nevada hikers and bikers transform dreams of warm days and magical mountain vistas into reality.

This year an extra helping of snow survival skills might keep those dreamy, high country trips from turning into nightmares.

That’s because the many thousands of vacationers who surge onto Sierra Nevada trails in the coming months will need to cope with the biggest snowpack in decades.

Creeks they remember as a mere hop, skip and jump to cross could require serious strategy to survive.

Read the whole story

Sierra bighorns on ledge of breakthrough

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

From a perch above a boulder-strewn ravine, we peered with binoculars up canyon walls and across a steep jumble of rocks and dirt for endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep.

The arrival of spring in the high country is when Sierra bighorns feast on fresh, water-saturated forage in the front country of the Eastern Sierra Nevada outside Bishop.

To some, the spike in population seems to have come out of nowhere. In the late 1990s, about 100 Sierra bighorns were thought to be left on the planet; the latest count was roughly 600.

Read the whole story

Squaw Valley's winter season has no end date

It's official – Squaw Valley intends to be open all summer for skiing.

The ski resort will be open July 1-4 and Saturdays thereafter as long as conditions allow.

The resort registered 714 inches of snow this winter, equaling nearly 60 feet. And more moisture is on the way this weekend. Squaw Valley currently has a base depth of 20 feet.

The plan is to offer skiing and riding in the Shirley zone in the summer. This will be the fourth time Squaw Valley has been open for skiing on July 4. Going beyond that date is a first.

January broke the resort's record for most snow in one month, with 282 inches, followed by the snowiest February with another 196 inches.

Guests planning to ski and ride will access High Camp via the tram and make their way on foot between High Camp and where the snow remains. Through the strategic movement of snow using grooming machines, Squaw Valley mountain operations team members will transport snow from areas with ample snow to areas with lower amounts of snow, effectively maximizing the snowpack long into summer. The Shirley zone also benefits from a northwest aspect, limiting sun exposure and snow loss due to melting.

Operations at Squaw Valley will continue seven days a week through May, on weekends in June and July 1-4. Beyond the 4th of July, the Shirley Lake Express chair will be open on Saturdays for 2017-18 Tahoe super passholders, with discounted daily lift tickets also available.

Massive West Shore fuels project to start this year

The West Shore Wildland Urban Interface Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Project will treat approximately 4,875 acres extending from Emerald Bay to Burton Creek State Park.

The project includes thinning and fuels reduction treatments intended to reduce the risk of severe wildfire, provide

defensible space to adjacent communities, and improve forest health by thinning trees in high density areas, which decreases the risk for widespread tree mortality during drought conditions, insect infestation and spreading of diseases.

Thinning methods will consist of hand and mechanical removal of brush and trees, which will then be removed for saw logs, biomass, or fuel wood, Remaining material will be chipped, masticated, or piled for prescribed burning. Piles will be burned approximately one to three years later, once the fuels are dry.

Temporary roads will be constructed to allow for mechanical treatment. Follow-up treatments may include prescribed understory burning.

Thinning could begin as early as this summer or fall. It could take 10 years to complete.

Internet sensation Spiranac joins celebrity golf field

By Jim Krajewski, Reno Gazette-Journal

The mid-summer golf/party at Lake Tahoe got a little more sizzle when Paige Spiranac announced she will be in the field at Edgewood Tahoe.

Spiranac, an aspiring professional golfer, model and social media star (with 1 million Instagram followers) will be playing in the American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament July 14-16.

Spiranac, 24, is not just another pretty face, though. She knows her way around a golf course as she played college golf at San Diego State.

Read the whole story

National parks contributed $34.9B to economy

By Michelle Robertson, San Francisco Chronicle

More than 331 million people visited a national park in 2016, and they brought with them some serious spending power.

The National Park Service just released its 2016 visitor spending effects report, which details the massive economic contributions of the parks and their visitors.

In total, national parks generated $34.9 billion in economic output during the last fiscal year. And because visitors need lodging, food, and maybe a drink or two at the local watering hole, their dollars reverberate far outside the bounds of the parks.

Read the whole story

Mammoth snowstorms take toll

on Sierra wildlife

By Scott Smith, AP

California’s mammoth snow drifts, a welcome sight following five years of harsh drought, have killed off dozens of endangered bighorn sheep, lengthened hibernation for bears and should cause some hikers to think twice before seeking high Sierra adventures, officials say.

“We’ve gone from flat-out dry conditions to just an overabundance of moisture,” said Doug Carlson, a spokesman for the California Department of Water Resources. “It shows the incredible variation of California’s weather.”

The iconic Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, which butt their coiled horns on rocky cliffs, have not fared well. During the drought, they migrated to lush mountain peaks of the southeastern Sierra for food.

When harsh snowstorms came, more than 100 of the 600 protected animals may have perished.

Read the whole story

Star Guide: Jupiter easy to spot in Sierra sky

By Tony Berendsen

As the sun sets, stars begin to emerge in the darkening sky of the southeastern horizon and a peculiar bright star rises. We call it a star because at first it looks like all the other

stars in the night sky, but it is different from the rest if you take notice of its lack of twinkling. If you gaze at it through a binocular or telescope instead of seeing a single point of light, you will see round bright disk with up to four points of light strung out from its side; the Galilean moons.

We call this star the planet Jupiter and it is very bright in our night sky, not because of its nearness to the Earth, but because of its size, and high albedo, reflecting about half the light it receives from the sun. Jupiter is a gaseous planet so large that its volume could fit all of the other planets and asteroids and still have about 30 percent left over, it is surely “an imperial star.”



Jupiter at the horizon. Photo/Ryan Berendsen

As the largest planet, Jupiter is a gravitational giant affecting the orbits of comets, asteroids and planets in the outer solar system. Its composition is mostly hydrogen, from gaseous to liquid, or event metallic near its core. If it were about 80 times larger, it might have been a second star in our system, but small in comparison to the sun, which is about 1,000 times larger.

Jupiter isn’t alone, in fact it is accompanied by 67

satellites in orbit around it ranging in size from larger than our moon to the size of a small asteroid. It’s like a solar system with in our solar system, with a huge variety of environments; some that may harbor the first forms of extraterrestrial life we will discover.

To find Jupiter in the night sky walk outside away from bright lights and look to the east just after sunset. As the sky darkens it will be the first starry looking object to appear. Take a smart phone or tablet with you armed with your favorite star gazing app (SkyPortal and SkySafari are my favorites) and point to that area of the sky. Jupiter will be just above the horizon with the stars Arcturus and Spica above and below. If you watch for a while, notice how long it takes the stars to appear, and how they twinkle in comparison to the mighty planet Jupiter’s steady shine.

If you have a telescope, watching the orbits of the four Galilean moons (Ganymede, Callisto, Io, and Europa) can be a lot of fun. Since the orbital plane of the moons are in line with the plane of the solar system we see them transit from time to time, and even see the shadow of the moons projected on the upper clouds of Jupiter. A great website to learn when these events will happen and to plan and plan to observe them is shallowsky.com/jupiter.

Jupiter will be with us in the night sky until September, so you have plenty of time to see the great planet. But if you have a chance take some time in the early evening over the next few weeks to look out over the hills to watch as a peculiar bright star rises in the east.

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775.232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.