

Tahoe firm's climbing method cuts summit times in half

By Eben Novy-Williams, Bloomberg

When Brooks Entwistle, a partner at Everstone Group in Singapore, climbed the sixth-tallest mountain in the world, the 26,800-foot-tall Cho Oyu, he didn't take the typical seven weeks. He took three weeks off and sandwiched the 17-day ascent between a board meeting and a parent-teacher conference.

That timeframe was unheard of in guided high-altitude mountaineering until recently, when Lake Tahoe-based Alpenglow Expeditions began offering its first "rapid ascent" climbs up some of the tallest peaks in the world. In April, the outfitter will guide a group to summit the 29,000-foot Mount Everest in 42 days, nearly half the time of most expeditions. Later this year, Alpenglow will take another group up Argentina's Aconcagua, the tallest mountain in the western hemisphere, in 14 days instead of the usual 20-plus.

For decades, climbing the world's highest peaks has been an opportunity reserved for those long on money and athletic ability. But for those who have both, the biggest factor is time. For about 30 percent more than the normal price, Alpenglow streamlines the process in various ways: expedited permits, aggressive scheduling, and, sometimes, flying directly to base camp in a helicopter instead of multiple days of trekking in on foot.

Read the whole story

Tahoe polar plunge sets a fundraising record

A toe dip was enough for some people as opposed to the full plunge many others opted for.

The space odyssey themed Polar Plunge kicked off at 10am March 18 at Zephyr Cove Resort.

The annual event raises money for the 23,000 Special Olympics athletes in Northern California and Nevada. More than \$150,000 was raised on Saturday – a record.

Hundreds of people showed up in an array of costumes. Some went in fully clothed, others had traditional swimwear. Most had an expression of being speechless – like the cold water literally took their breath away.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Waterhouse provides lines for adventure seekers



A flat Grass Lake is the easy start and finish for Waterhouse. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

With 1,800 vertical feet to ride and features built into the environment, no wonder Waterhouse is such a popular destination for skiers and snowboarders.

Even better for them it's not much of a hike from the vehicle to where the climb begins.

The eight of us (four humans, four canines) aren't into back country adventures of that kind, but we did explore this terrain last weekend on snowshoes – a first for all of us.

After traipsing across Grass Lake it's all uphill. Waterhouse (9,497 feet) and Powderhouse (9,380 feet) are next to each other. When facing the mountains from Grass Lake, Waterhouse is to the left – our desired destination. They are both popular with skiers/snowboarders.

Always be aware of snow conditions. The freeze, thaw, fresh layer cycle can create variable conditions in the Sierra. The Sierra Avalanche Center is a good resource for information.



A snowboarder finds natural jumps down Waterhouse.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

It's one of those routes without a route, so to speak. Plenty of people (snowmobilers, hikers, snowshoers, skiers with skins) had gone before us, but still we weren't always sure which path to choose. Some lines went straight up, others zigged, and sometimes we chose to zag.

The beauty of being surrounded by all those pines in all of that snow was breathtaking – or maybe it was the steep terrain taking our breath away. Mother Nature's splendor never gets old. And on this warm late winter day short sleeves could be worn.

A group of snowboarders crossed our path. When they told us it was probably another 90 minutes to the top we decided we'd had enough for one day. This was like a scouting mission to know

how much time we'd need to complete the trek and see the conditions for ourselves. Maybe it would make a good summer hike.



Blue-green-white – the natural beauty of playing in the Tahoe area. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, go west on Highway 50. Go left onto Highway 89 in Meyers. Park at the top of Luther Pass; there are several cut outs to make it safe. Walk across Grass Lake and start the climb.

Shiffrin flies to skiing's pinnacle



Mikaela Shiffrin won the overall Alpine skiing World Cup title. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Bill Pennington, New York Times

ASPEN, Colo. — “Is my career ahead of schedule?” Mikaela Shiffrin, the precocious Olympic and world ski racing champion, asked here on Monday, her 22nd birthday. “No, I don’t think I’ll ever believe I’m ahead of schedule.”

That is truly bad news for the other women’s ski racers of the world.

Shiffrin, before even racing in the finals this weekend, won the women's World Cup overall title, the sport's top prize, which is a monumental achievement at any age. Shiffrin had built a nearly insurmountable lead in the season-long World Cup standings, and on Friday, her only remaining competitor, Ilka Stuhec, withdrew from Saturday's slalom, handing the overall title to Shiffrin, who becomes only the third American woman to win it, and the first since 1983 not named Lindsey Vonn.

On Saturday she was second behind Petra Vlhova in the season's final slalom race. In some ways it was anticlimactic because Shiffrin had won the slalom globe at Squaw Valley last weekend. On Sunday Shiffrin she will try for the overall giant slalom title, though she is 81 points behind Tessa Worley.

If this isn't overachieving, what would it look like if she were?

Read the whole story

Wooden boat show at Tahoe Keys Marina canceled

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

The 2017 South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic, an event spotlighting classic boats, has been canceled after the sponsoring organization was unable to reach an agreement to use the Tahoe Keys Marina for the event.

The show, sponsored by the Northern California/Lake Tahoe Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society, has hosted

more than 750 classic boats on the docks of the Tahoe Keys Marina since it began in 2008, according to a society news release.

The event had grown over the years to become the largest boat show on Lake Tahoe and one of the largest in the country, according to the news release.

Read the whole story

STHS swimmers start season on high note



STHS is starting its season in pool strong. Photo/Fabienne Ebner

South Tahoe High School's girls' and boys' swim teams hosted four other schools at home March 14.

(The team uses the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center pool.)

The five Division 1 teams participating were – STHS, Fernley High School, Reno High School, Spanish Springs High School and

McQueen High School.

Although the Vikings held their own and were competitive with each school, the scoring for the head-to-head team match up for South Tahoe was with Fernely. The Viking boys won 142-42, and the girls won 157-74.

STHS swimmers Louis Marin (back stroke), Temugen Enkhbayar (breast stroke), and Tristan Klasko (butterfly) placed overall first in their individual events. Maia Smith finished overall fifthth in the breast stroke, and Alex Otomo finished thirrd in butterfly and fourth in the 500 freestyle.

Coach William Davenport said, "Our swimmers demonstrated midseason form with good endurance and strong finishes. Veteran swimmers posted fast times, while our young swimmers gained valuable experience; many of them competing in their first meet."

Here are the complete results.

The next swim meet will be hosted by Truckee on March 18.

– Provided to Lake Tahoe News

Star Guide: Plan for summer's total eclipse

By Tony Berendsen

There hasn't been a total solar eclipse visible from the contiguous United States since 1979, but on Aug. 21, 2017, from sea to shining sea the long wait will be over, the "Great American eclipse" is coming soon.

Many of us have witnessed a partial solar eclipse, fewer have experienced a total eclipse. Don't confuse the experience because there is no comparison. Partial eclipses are more common and really fun to experience (especially with the right equipment and I'll get to that later in the article) but they are nothing like the experience of a total solar eclipse.



It has been nearly 30 years since a full eclipse of the sun could be seen in the United State. Photo/NASA

So, what's the difference? In a partial solar eclipse the Earth is in the outer shadow of the moon called the penumbra. The moon is blocking only part of the sun so its light is diminished, but still too bright to look at directly. During a total solar eclipse the Earth is in the full shadow of the moon called the umbra. The moon is blocking the full disk of the sun so light from the disk of the sun is completely blocked and safe to look at directly.

During the eclipse this summer all of the United States will experience a partial eclipse of the sun, except for the path of totality stretching from Oregon to South Carolina. If you are within this 70-mile wide path on Aug. 21 and at the

correct time you will experience one of the most amazing wonders of your life.

Years ago in 1997, off the coast of Barbados, while on a Sky and Telescope astronomy tour, I experienced my first total eclipse of the sun. I love to tell the story. "I live in Reno, a Burning Man town, and have never attended, but the day of the eclipse was the closest I've ever come to taking all my clothes off and painting my body."

My wife and I were on the top deck of the Holland American Ryndam about 100 miles off shore. About 11am a roar of amazement went up from the 1,500 or so passengers with us as we saw the moon's shadow approach in the distance, the sky darkened, the air cooled, the sun disappeared behind the moon, and the corona appeared along with three planets and some bright stars.

The eclipse experience was amazingly primal to behold. I say that because some part of my being, a relic of my human history hard wired within me, was touched by the eclipse somehow, remembering experiences of night during day in the past.

Whether you are planning to stay home and experience a partial eclipse, or travel to the path of totality start planning now. The eclipse shadow will be traveling across the U.S. from west to east so the time of the total and partial phases will be different depending on your location. Here is a link to information about the **eclipse times**.

This eclipse will be very popular, so plan out your trip to the path of totality carefully, many rooms are already taken, and campsites will be full. Don't forget to bring along safe solar viewing equipment too.

Celestron has developed a line of solar viewing products that can be found at www.celestron.com appropriately called **EclipSmart**. Remember, do not look at the sun directly

unless it is in full eclipse. In the next Star Guide I'll give some tips on what to look for during the eclipse and how to view a partial eclipse, and do some solar imaging.

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

Controlled burns in basin to resume

If conditions are favorable, California State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service may resume prescribed fire operations.

Operations may take place near Tahoe City and Glenbrook and may continue as conditions allow.

Each prescribed fire operation follows a prescribed fire burn plan, which considers temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke. This information is used to decide when and where to burn. When conditions meet the prescription, state and local air pollution control districts issue a burn permit allowing operations to proceed.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size and environmental conditions.

For more information about prescribed fire and smoke management tips, go **online**.

Placer County working on parks-trails plan

To encourage public input for its inaugural comprehensive parks and trails master plan, Placer County has launched a **website**.

The master plan will provide a 10-year vision for the development and operation of parks and trails in the county.

A countywide online survey will be released later this month, stakeholder and focus group meetings are occurring and a series of public workshops are scheduled for later in the year. The website provides another venue for interested community members to submit comments and review draft recommendations.

Throughout the 18-month project timeline, interested community members are invited to sign up for project notifications and to stay informed on the master plan's progress.

The master plan is intended to update the county's General Plan recreational standards put in place in 1994.

The corporatization of Tahoe's ski resorts



Squaw Valley is now part of the KSL group after being owned by the Cushing family for years.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Sage Sauerbrey, Moonshine Ink

Ski communities seem to have an especially strong inclination for nostalgia. I grew up with my parents' tales of my home mountain during the '80s when the powder stayed fresh for days and getting duct-taped to the local bar was a common occurrence. Lift tickets were less than \$50, and almost every resort was independently owned and operated, giving them all a unique flavor. Some might say the golden age of ski culture has long passed, while others claim that the new cheap season passes and resort collective deals have saved skiing, but the simple fact is that these aren't your parents' ski resorts any more.

"If you were to take a pic from 30,000 feet looking down, it hasn't changed a hell of a lot, but on the ground, it is a different world than it was pre-1990, and it is constantly in transition," said Michael Berry, president of the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA).

"Back then, nobody owned two resorts. Every single resort

around the lake was privately owned, and it was independently owned,” said Tim Cohee, owner of China Peak Mountain Resorts in Lakeshore and ski business and resort management program director at Sierra Nevada College. “What everyone has seen is a business that has become largely dominated by corporations. It’s probably at least 40 percent of the national skier attendance that is being seen by probably five or six companies.”

Here in Tahoe the change began about 15 years ago, when Vail purchased Heavenly Mountain Resort and proved just how lucrative the business of skiing can be.

Read the whole story