



SEPT. 5 1958

Diane Rugg said in an email, “I don’t think there’s anything quite like that around here anymore. ... It was great fun, good times, great people in the late ’60s and early ’70s in the Truckee Meadows and High Sierra from Pyramid to Tahoe, Gerlach to American Flat, to the hot springs out there south of Carson somewhere, when we was hippies.”

## SOBER RECOLLECTION

One person wrote of taking an overdressed date who was wearing an all-white outfit to Sundance. “[W]hen she flopped herself down in one of the many couches ... all we could see was a terrific blast of dust.”

One person who signed herself Katherine wrote, “Back in the early ’70s when it was called the Sundance Lodge, we would night ski just across the street at Tannenbaum, then stop in at the lodge for a martini or three before heading down the hill home to Reno. On one of those nights, while enjoying our martini, someone jacked up my car on two sides and stole my two back wheels. Because I had only one spare, and because it had snowed so much that night I couldn’t arrange for a tow until the next day. The bartender let me stay in one of the guest rooms that night. Lots of memories of the old place, mostly good, one not so good.”

She may have been thinking of this incident: There were softball games played regularly, and the custom was to pick the umpire “out of the crowd of onlookers.” At one game, according to a source who participated, a fellow who had volunteered to umpire “drank a beer for every run scored. After the game, he drove down Mt. Rose Highway on his motorcycle. We were in [a] jeep. He attempted to pass us in the oncoming lane going down, and around a blind

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turn. He didn’t see the oncoming car and swerved into a stand of Manzanita to avoid a head-on and wrapped both legs around his handlebars. We stopped, of course, called for an ambulance ... back up to Sundance [it was a pre-cell phone time], while some stayed with him. He was hospitalized and lost both legs. A total stranger.”

The source said he thinks the games ended after that. Numerous people we contacted expressed dismay at the kind of drinking behavior they engaged in during that period. “Have no idea how I got home. ... Got by with a little help from my friends,” one said. Another wrote to us, “INSANE. Defies logic that we lived.”

Owner Schmidt, a community activist who has occasionally run for public office, has begun demolition, but it seems to be going slowly and there is still a lot standing. Equipment has taken some big bites out of the structures. The site is fenced with signs reading “KEEP OUT” and “NO TRESPASSING.” There is a substantial amount of mining equipment on the lodge property or adjoining lots. An essay Schmidt provided to us says he bought the lodge “as an investment in 1972, when it was called the Sundance.” He changed the name to Reindeer Lodge.

He seems to know the meaning it has to people, writing in an email, “I was honored to be at the helm for almost five decades. Many thanks to all those that worked the decks, provided the song, those that partook of the voyage.”

In 2017, Svenhardt wrote, “With the Christmas Tree Restaurant and the Galena Lodge closed, and the Reindeer falling into decay, folks returning from skiing have virtually no Apres Ski opportunities once revelers are kicked out of the Timbers Bar an hour or so after the chairs stop spinning. This is truly a sad state of affairs as we have no place to come together after a powder day [to] tell our lies about the cornices we jumped and face shots we enjoyed.”

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