

Snowshoeing and learning about the night sky

By Allen Pierleoni, Sacramento Bee

Snow will be piled up in the Sierra between Christmas and New Year's Day, making for an abundance outdoors options during the holiday season.

There's a new one that combines a walk in the woods with a learning experience: the Stargazing Snowshoe Tour at Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort.

"We had such a phenomenal year with our summer stargazing tours that we decided to open this new product," said "star guide" Tony Berendsen, who operates Tahoe Star Tours in Reno (www.tahoestartours.com). "We get people from all over the world (for summer stargazing), and a huge number of them come from the Sacramento area.

"My goal is to bring awareness of the night sky to those who wouldn't normally have it," he said. "We'll see stars hundreds of light-years away, so we'll actually be looking hundreds of years back in time."

Berendsen, 58, said he has "a huge passion for stargazing" and has been in love with the night sky for 50 years. He is the president of the Northern Nevada Science Coalition and past president of the Astronomical Society of Nevada.

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