

2012 SnowGlobe tragedy not forgotten during preparations for annual S. Tahoe music event

By Kathryn Reed

While it's the music that draws people to SnowGlobe, it is Alyssa Byrne who is on so many people's minds. The 19-year-old Petaluma woman died last year of hypothermia as she tried to walk from the concert venue to her Stateline hotel.

A lasting legacy of the tragedy is the Always Buddy Program that was created by her family and friends in Sonoma County. The mantra is, "I promise to never let myself or anyone I love leave in an unfamiliar place without a buddy system."



SnowGlobe returns to South Lake Tahoe Dec. 29-31.

Photo/LTN file

Leandra and Paul Hale, who own the Butter Muffin in South Lake Tahoe, have become friends with the Byrne family. They are working on securing permits from the city to erect warming huts at Al Tahoe Boulevard and Highway 50, and Al Tahoe and Pioneer Trail.

“The most important thing is the heat up huts,” Leandra Hale told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Then people will realize if they hit Pioneer Trail, they are going in the wrong direction.”

The booths are likely to be 12-feet-by-12-feet, include warmers, cell phones for people to use and water. Vegan Café is donating hot beverages.

The Hales are also organizing a free ride program because if people make it to their tents, it means their intention is to walk and not take the bus. Rides will be provided all three nights.

Anyone wanting to donate water or a ride may call (530) 541.8547 or email the_buttermuffin@yahoo.com.

South Tahoe High School seniors Cassidy Jackson and Noah Palmeiri have a booth at SnowGlobe. They have been collecting hats, jackets, gloves, blankets, and hand warmers for attendees. They plan to provide coffee and water, along with charged cell phones people may use.

Another STHS student planned to create a video to air on V-TV, the school television station, that talks about the dangers of drugs, especially Molly. Molly, also known as ecstasy, causes dehydration.

“This is the reason at SnowGlobe that the water line is longer than the beer line,” South Tahoe police Officer Russell Liles told the South Lake Tahoe Drug Coalition this month.

And people who are not used to Tahoe’s elevation can easily become dehydrated without drugs, so the mix can be even more dangerous for flatlanders.

Methamphetamines and other drugs were found in Byrne’s system, according to the toxicology report.

Changes for this year

The SnowGlobe Music Festival is Dec. 29-31 on the ball field adjacent to Lake Tahoe Community College.

“The college is very much in support of a safe and responsible SnowGlobe and making sure people pay attention to the cold, make sure they ride buses, and follow the signage,” LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This year’s lineup features Tiesto, Cut Copy, Kaskade, Snoop Dogg, Holy Ghost!, Zed’s Dead, Gramatik, and Beats Antique and others. More than 50 bands or DJs will fill the main stage and two tent stages.

“The artists are from a number of different genres. Snoop Dog will play a greatest hits set,” Chad Donnelly, SnowGlobe promoter, told *Lake Tahoe News*. Snoop Dog will be on stage Dec. 31.

Tickets are still on sale, but Donnelly expects them to sell out in the next 11 days.

Fireworks will be shot off all three nights instead of just on New Year’s Eve, as has been the case the previous two years.

SnowGlobe has expanded its affiliation with Heavenly Mountain Resort. Big Air snowboard and skiing demos will go on in between sets near the main stage.

To help with the cold, 10,000-square-feet of heated enclosed spaces will be set up. The main stage is totally exposed to the elements, while there are heaters in the two tent venues. However, those are only enclosed on three sides.

The number of buses being used has doubled, so this should eliminate the length of time people are standing around in the cold waiting to get back to their hotel room.

“We have made arrangement as a city to ensure pathways from the post office to the college are free of snow and accessible. That way we try to keep them off the road as much

as possible,” Police Chief Brian Uhler said.

One of the noticeable changes will be what people are walking on. To help preserve the ball field the promoters will lay down a material called LD Panels on top of the synthetic field. It will be used along with plywood. The wood will be used to widen the spots and under anything that needs to stay in place for the entire event.

Law enforcement

Police agencies on the South Shore like that SnowGlobe has contributed to fewer people gathering in the casino core on New Year’s Eve.

New this year is the Horizon casino is having an outdoor concert Dec. 31-Jan. 2. No one at the casino returned calls so details are not available. El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Pete Van Arnum said that event is expected to attract 5,000 people each night. (Douglas County law enforcement had no information.)

SnowGlobe brings about 10,000 people per night.

“It will be nice if people go to that and SnowGlobe instead of hanging out in the middle of the street at Stateline,” Van Arnum told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Uhler said his department is not making any major changes this year in regards to SnowGlobe. Amnesty bins will be at the entrance where people can drop their drugs, no questions asked.

“Essentially it will be the same sort of presence. We have undercover officers. We are not making secret about it because we want to prevent any illegal drug use,” Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Officers in uniform will be out, as will a few dozen security guards provided by the event organizers.

The future

Even with precautions for the field, this is likely to be the last year SnowGlobe will be at this location.

“The reality is (city officials) just are not sure if that venue is the right venue over the long haul. We will continue to work with them to assess what makes sense,” Donnelly told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Murillo said the college is encouraging the city to find a venue that would be ideal for more of these types of events.

“As far as the status of SnowGlobe for future years there has been no definitive decision on whether they will return, but there has been discussion regarding the desire to relocate the event to some other venue not yet identified,” Lauren Thomaselli, South Lake Tahoe recreation manager, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Each year the promoter has asked for a multi-year contract, however until another venue can be identified, it is not likely the city would commit to multiple years.”