

Hundreds ring in 2015 at Heavenly Village



An icy welcome to 2015 in South Lake Tahoe.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

With power tools in hand, a couple sculptors turned a block of ice into 2015 New Year artwork.

As one whacked away at the 4, the other chiseled the 5. The crowd erupted as the finished piece signaled the celebration of a new year was about to get into high gear.

That block of ice was symbolic of the night – icy cold. But the bitter cold temperatures were not about to keep away the throngs of New Year's Eve revelers who showed up at Heavenly Village to ring in 2015.

Now in its fourth year, Heavenly Holidays is a free event put

on by Heavenly Mountain Resort and Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.



Wes Quave entertains hundreds of people New Year's Eve. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Musicians are performing on a stage close to the size of SnowGlobe, with fire dancers and other acts filling in. Wes Quave was the main draw; singing mostly covers of other artists much to the delight of those in the crowd who were dancing and singing.

"We all were dancing when we got here," Andreina Jeffery, 21, of Clovis told *Lake Tahoe News*.

She was in town with her parents, two siblings and both sets of grandparents. They had researched interesting things to do on New Year's Eve and chose South Lake Tahoe.

It's hard to find another place that has a gondola car decked out with lights that descends from the mountain as a symbol of the New Year. This is a definite family event – with the age span ranging from those who needed to be carried to those who needed assistance walking.



The decorated Heavenly gondola is illuminated by the fireworks. Photo/Denise Haerr

With the celebration culminating at 9pm, it also makes it easier to stay up for everything.

Two-year-old Shailee Palmer was taken by the ladies on stilts. She couldn't stop staring at them.

Steve Haerr of South Lake Tahoe was enjoying the festivities with a group of friends for the third year. The energy of the event is what he likes most.



Shailee Palmer, 2, of Chico is mesmerized by the

super tall woman.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

Laura and Gwyn Amason of Bakersfield have been coming to Tahoe for 14 years – before kids were part of the group dynamic. The youngsters were looking forward to the fireworks, which were shot off from the top of the parking garage just after the gondola came down. They like having something family-friendly to do on New Year's Eve, knowing the adults can always venture to the casinos.

A variety of things are going on all at once throughout the village – from free photos, to face painting (with some boys opting for tattoo looking art on their arms), to fireworks. Ice sculptures are throughout the village.



Warmth is found at the fire pit at Gunbarrel restaurant.

Restaurants were doing a brisk business, with many people sitting by fire pits drinking something to warm their insides. Despite the mercury being in the teens, people were also lining up at Cold Stone Creamery. Next door at Heavens Little Cafe it was hot drinks that were in high demand.

For those who were a little under dressed, Shirt Off My Back was selling gloves, hoodies and beanies. It was also one of the shops that allowed people to take refuge from the cold.

Even after the fireworks finale the music kept going, the vibe of the New Year was electric and freezing at the same time,

even though technically 2015 was still three hours away.