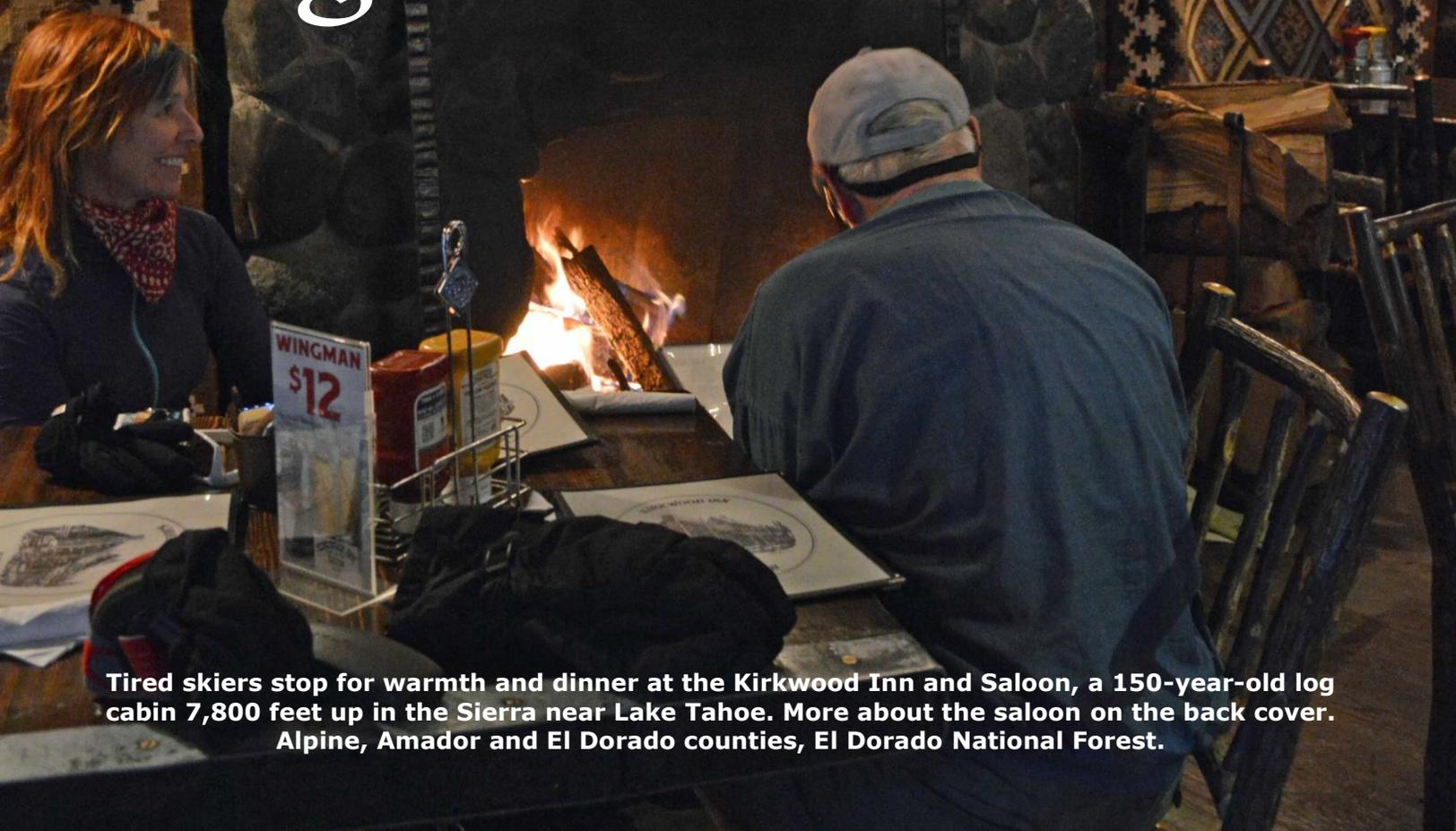


The Holiday Herald

California's High Sierra

21 December 2014

Stockings Were Hung...



Tired skiers stop for warmth and dinner at the Kirkwood Inn and Saloon, a 150-year-old log cabin 7,800 feet up in the Sierra near Lake Tahoe. More about the saloon on the back cover. Alpine, Amador and El Dorado counties, El Dorado National Forest.



Looking west toward more needed winter weather. Near Ham's Station, once a toll stop on Highway 88. Amador County, El Dorado National Forest.

Happy Holidays

The snow that has decorated the Sierra Nevada for the holidays makes things look right, though it represents only a small step toward replenishing California's dwindling supply of water.

There aren't enough reservoirs and lakes in the state to hold what we need. Only the high Sierra – with peaks tall enough to store frozen water all year – has that capacity, and that is being challenged by increasingly warmer winters.

Perhaps we could raise the mountains another thousand feet.

This year's trip to winter was shorter than last year's to Oregon.

Fewer repetitions of iTunes carols on the car stereo, but no less inspiration from them and the sugar-coated landscape.

From one who will celebrate Christmas with my family in a few days to more than 200 relatives, friends and colleagues – among them Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, a Hindu and several non-religious folk – I hope you enjoy the holidays that are yours as much as I enjoy creating these messages of peace and good will to you.

Eagle Creek rushes over the precipice and down to Emerald Bay in fog shrouded Lake Tahoe. El Dorado County, Tahoe National Forest.





Ice begins to cover Caples Lake. Alpine County, El Dorado National Forest.



Ski cabin at Kirkwood Mountain Resort.



Kirkwood Inn and Saloon

The original log cabin structure of Kirkwood Station, now the Kirkwood Inn and Saloon, was built by Zachary Kirkwood in 1864 as an inn, post office and restaurant, and as a stop for Pony Express and Wells Fargo stage coaches on the line from Sacramento to Virginia City and the east.

The boundaries of three California Counties – Alpine, Amador and El Dorado – converge in the center of its dining room, a geographical coincidence exploited early in its history by mounting the mahogany bar on wheels. When county officials would arrive to collect taxes on the booze, the bar was rolled into one of the two counties where they had no jurisdiction.

Today the saloon serves steak and cutthroat trout to skiers who've finished their day at Kirkwood Mountain Resort on the opposite side of Highway 88, which follows the route of the old stage line.