

Experience Truckee's Rowdy Past

Photography: Truckee Donner Historical Society



Relive the Wild West on Historical Haunted Tour

By Nicole Cheslock

The third annual Historical Haunted Tour brings guests on a journey that winds through Truckee's colorful past on Oct. 20 and 21.

Truckee's fame as a destination for ruffians, outlaws, cutthroats and their ilk was infamous. Bar room brawls and gunfights filled the town. Ladies of the night entertained men night after night. And, nasty fires consumed homes. However, there was a force that fought lawlessness and vice. This group of men, the 601s, struck terror in the heart of the evildoer and exerted a salutary influence over the rough element in town.

"Enough is enough!" read a headline in the Truckee Republican in 1911, as 26 saloons in downtown had no trouble thriving and crime filled the streets. Today, there are but a few drinking holes left in historic Truckee. Join the fun and you'll hear tales of Truckee's rowdy past and encounter the ghosts forever present by the railroad tracks.

Chelsea Walterscheid, born and bred in Truckee, is one of the masterminds behind the tales, the facts and the fiction that will delight adults during the tour. In concert with Nancy Tieken Lopez, the Artistic Director of Trails and Vistas, she has planned another frighteningly good time. Listen closely during the tour and you'll hear the never told before story of the famous Lilliputian who arrived by train, but never left town.

The tour begins at Moody's Bistro & Lounge. Arrive as early as 5:30 p.m. to enjoy a glass of wine, peruse the tantalizing raffle items and select a tour time. Tours will depart every 15 minutes from 5:45 to 7:30 p.m. Moody was the proprietor of the original Truckee Hotel, located across the street next to the train tracks. If you dare, you'll be crossing these tracks to visit the Star Hotel, built after the fire of 1885 that destroyed the entire River Street block with the exception of one building.

Saloons, dance houses, gambling houses and all species of vice flourished in the Truckee of yesteryear. Peek into a modern day drinking hole, the Tourist Club, and see who's at the bar. Stops will include Cabona's, the oldest family run business in town, Art Obsessions, and the International Order of Odd Fellows and Masonic Hall. The Masons were displaced when their building blew up and the International Order of Odd Fellows offered their own lodge to their Truckee Brothers. There was a saloon on the bottom floor that saw its share of shoot-outs and the theater upstairs amuses many folks. Insights will be gleaned about the hard work and tragic deaths that occurred while building the railroad lines when you visit the Train Depot.

There will be a costume contest each night of the tour. Prizes will be awarded for the best historic costume each evening. In addition, donations from local businesses and organizations provide treats – such

as two nights at The Richardson House, a Squeeze In gift basket, tickets to the 2012 Trails & Vistas art hike and a membership at the KidZone Museum—for the raffle (visit the tour Web site for a complete prize list or visit Moody's either night of the tour to purchase raffle tickets).

The KidZone Museum will offer Halloween Science with Professor Stickeybottom, plus dinner (pizza and veggies), for ages 5 and older from 5 to 8:30 p.m. on Oct. 20. Call (530) 587-5437 for reservations. The cost is discounted to \$20 per child and \$15 for siblings for parents attending the Historical Haunted Tour.

Fires consumed Truckee buildings many times over throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. With each fire, ghosts stirred, spirits were resurrected, and surely they'll be heard on Oct. 20 and 21. Have a frighteningly good time.

Tickets are \$30 per person and usually sell out. The Truckee Donner Historical Society and Trail and Vistas are beneficiaries of the tour. Weekend tour specials for lodging are being offered with The Richardson House (www.therichardsonhouse.com or (530) 563-6874), River Street Inn (www.riverstreetinntruckee.com or (530) 550-9290) and The Truckee Hotel (www.truckeehotel.com or (800) 659-6921). For more information on the tour, visit www.truckeehistorytour.org.



Historical Haunted Tour

Oct. 20-21, 5:45-7:30 p.m.

Moody's Bistro & Lounge, Truckee

\$30 · www.truckeehistorytour.org