

State, feds to start controlled fires in basin

California State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service may continue prescribed fire operations beginning Jan. 25.

To view a map with project locations and details, go **online**.

Residual smoke may be seen in locations where operations have taken place over the last several weeks.

Before conducting prescribed fire operations, agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2816.

Nev. officials push for statewide college registration

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada higher education officials voted Friday to move forward on creating a common registration system for the state's seven public colleges.

The Nevada System of Higher Education, the governing body over the state's public schools including UNR and Truckee Meadows Community College, want students from its campuses able to access classes at other institutions.

This means students enrolled at TMCC or UNR may soon be able to log on to a registration portal and see where classes including online are offered at other schools. It does not mean the system would have a common application system.

Read the whole story

Nebelhorn Ski Resort founder dies



Harriet Erickson
Stangland

Harriet Erickson Stangland, the founder of the now defunct Nebelhorn Ski Resort atop Echo Summit, died Jan. 16. She was 91.

She and her late husband, Gordon, built the resort in the 1940s. It was one of the first ski areas in the greater Lake Tahoe area. Today it is Adventure Mountain. Part of the lodge used today is the original one from Nebelhorn.

The Stanglands met in Oregon after he had served in World War II and while she was attending Oregon State College.

They moved to Placerville in 1954 to raise their three children. In 1995 they relocated to Tonasket, Wash., to be near family. Gordon Stangland died in 2011.

NHP increasing patrols to nab impaired drivers

For the next two weeks, Northern Nevada residents can expect to see double or even triple the normal law enforcement presence. The Nevada Highway Patrol has joined forces with law enforcement agencies statewide to crack down on impaired driving.

Illegal drugs, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and lack of sleep can also impair the ability to drive safely.

Increasing law enforcement presence during these weeks supports the overall state goal of reaching zero fatalities.

Vonn breaks record for World Cup downhill victories

By Associated Press

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy – Lindsey Vonn broke Annemarie Moser-

Proell's record for most World Cup downhill victories with her 37th in skiing's marquee event on Saturday.

Vonn beat Larisa Yurkiw of Canada by 0.28 seconds on the Olympia delle Tofane course – the same site where she eclipsed Moser-Proell's overall women's record of 62 victories a year ago – with a nearly flawless run amid windy conditions.

"It's pretty awesome," Vonn said. "I was really nervous today, actually. I've won so much here, and there was just a lot of pressure. The more people talk about records the harder it is to break them.

"So I tried to stay focused on my skiing, and I thought I skied really well on the top. I went a little bit too straight on the bottom. But I was able to pull it off."

Lara Gut of Switzerland finished third, 0.67 behind, and maintained a 10-point lead on Vonn in the overall standings. Vonn has seven wins this season to Gut's four.

Moser-Proell, the Austrian great, set her record from 1971-80.

Vonn won her first downhill in 2004, and earned her first podium finish in Cortina in 2004.

"She was lucky with the wind but she deserves the record," said Austrian veteran Elisabeth Goergl, who finished 13th.

Vonn also matched Renate Goetschl, another Austrian, with a record 10th win in Cortina.

It was Vonn's 74th win across all disciplines, moving her closer to Ingemar Stenmark's all-time mark of 86.

"No, no, no. Stop talking about Ingemar," Vonn said. "I need to just focus on tomorrow, one race at a time. I can't start calculating the numbers because it just gets in my head and it makes it a lot harder than it needs to be.

“I just need to ski solid and not have any mistakes and then the results will come, and then the records will come. But you can’t put the cart before the horse.”

Vonn increased her advantage at every checkpoint and averaged 61 mph down the twisty course, one of the most challenging on the women’s circuit and recognized for the Tofane schuss – an imposing and dark chute through two walls of rock.

Vonn holds a 122-point lead over Yurkiw in the downhill standings, having won four of the five downhills.

Yurkiw, who raised her own funding for a one-person team, recorded her third consecutive podium in downhill.

Vonn can go for win No. 75 in Sunday’s super-G.

“Tomorrow,” Vonn said, “is hopefully another chance to win.”

Ganong, Sullivan lucky to finish difficult downhill

By USSA

KITZBUEHEL, Austria – Thirty racers started a fast, dark and bumpy Hahnenkamm Saturday at the Audi FIS Ski World Cup downhill, but only 24 made it to the finish line. Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) led a trio of surviving Americans.

The race, which started from a lower start position due to weather conditions, was officially canceled after bib 30 crossed the line. Italy’s Peter Fill was declared the official winner, with Switzerland’s Beat Fuez and Carlo Janka in second

and third, respectively.

Weibrecht finished 13, Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) was 18 and Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) 22.

Just making it across the finish line was a victory for 24 racers today, as the story of the day was the challenging conditions that saw overall World Cup leader Aksel Lund Svindal or Norway, and three members of the Austrian team crash in spectacular fashion. Svindal, however, did walk away after his crash and appeared OK.

"It's been a wild ride watching this today," said Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah), who also went down, but was fine. "Hannes (Reichelt) going down, (Georg) Streitberger going down – Austria has lost five guys on this course this week. So I'm glad to just be in one piece."

Nyman, who was fifth on the Hahnenkamm last year, was well on his way to what may have been a podium finish.

"I was five-tenths ahead when I went out – by far ahead in first place ... it's a bummer," Nyman said. "But you have to risk it, and sometimes it doesn't pay off."

As for the rest of the American's, they battled the weather conditions and slowly deteriorating track conditions to make it across the line.

"I'm happy to be at the finish," Sullivan said. "Even though we're the best racers in the world, it's still stressful to run this thing. It's scary every time you kick out of the start, especially when you see guys like Aksel and Reichelt crash – those guys never crash."

"Tough conditions today – super dark, super bumpy and lots of wind, just really dangerous with the conditions," Ganong added. "I'm not satisfied at all, I have higher expectations, and I know that I am capable of a lot more. But I'm just happy

that I'm alive, I'm here and moving on."

Father of missing skier wonders if better technology could have helped rescue effort

By Richard Chang, Sacramento Bee

A day after the search for his missing son was called off at Sugar Bowl Ski Resort, Mike May put on his skis and headed back up the hill.

May and a few family members huddled together Wednesday amid cold temperatures to "celebrate Carson and the place where he loved so much – the mountains and the ski slopes," Mike May said during an interview Thursday at his Davis home.

Carson May, a 23-year-old Sugar Bowl ski instructor, disappeared Jan. 14. An exhaustive search spanning several days turned up few clues, and Placer County authorities canceled the operation Tuesday because it was unlikely Carson would be found alive.

May, 62, wonders whether better technology could have helped rescuers precisely locate his son. Authorities pinged Carson's cell phone, but that provided only a general area of where he may have been located. May said the Find My Phone app could have given searchers a GPS coordinate. However, he said, existing privacy laws make it difficult to gain access to that information from the cellular companies unless the app was

previously enabled.

Read the whole story

Treating pain with integrative medicine

By Erin Jones

Did you know that more than 30 percent of adults use health care approaches outside of mainstream Western or conventional medicine? You may have heard the terms complementary, alternative, and integrative medicine—but what do they really mean?

Integrative medicine brings conventional and complementary approaches together and takes the whole person into account: body, mind, and spirit, with the goal of improved health and wellness.



Erin Jones

This marrying of concepts can include supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, and probiotics), acupuncture, mind-body medicine, and physical manipulations like chiropractic and massage therapy.

Pain management is one area in which integrative medicine is often used. The most common conditions targeted are back pain, neck pain, joint pain, and arthritis. In my practice, I consider both conventional and alternative therapies valuable and appropriate options.

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health is the federal government's lead agency in defining the usefulness and safety of complementary health interventions based on scientific research. Some alternative methods are still in the early research stages, though many methods have been studied and are proven to be beneficial.

Recent research suggests that chronic pain can affect the brain's anatomy. Pain can impair central nerve pathways, leading to a "negative feedback loop" in which people experience more pain and subsequent problems with emotions and reasoning.

Mind-body practices such as meditation, relaxation, and yoga are safe and helpful treatments for chronic pain and other conditions like depression and anxiety. Studies suggest that mind-body practices could help reverse brain changes associated with chronic pain and may have protective effects on the brain.

If you're taking any supplements, be sure to let your doctors know. Supplements can play a role in your treatment, but they also can interfere with other medications or your underlying medical conditions.

Erin Jones is a family physician, specializing in integrative medicine, at Barton Family Medicine. She was born and raised in South Lake Tahoe and recently returned after attending medical school at USC and serving her residency at Kaiser Permanente Woodland Hills.

Feinstein water plan would fund recycling, desalination and storage

By Sarah D. Wire, Los Angeles Times

California's congressional delegation continued to wrangle over how to respond to the Golden State's water crisis Thursday when Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif. , released what she called a "discussion draft" of proposed legislation.

Feinstein said in a statement that the bill addresses long-term and short-term water concerns.

"In my 23 years in the Senate, this has been the most difficult bill to put together. The maxim that whiskey's for drinking and water's for fighting is alive and well in California," she said.

The bill does not mandate how much water should be pumped from the Central Valley Project or the State Water Project, which move water from Northern California to farms and cities to the south. Those decisions would be left in the hands of state and federal officials.

Read the whole story

Opinion: El Dorado County survey a joke

By Larry Weitzman

Money is so tight in El Dorado County that CAO Larry Combs recently decided that no general fund money will be used for roads in El Dorado County. But that didn't stop our Board of Supervisors from conducting a Citizens Engagement Survey at a reported cost of \$15,000 to "help" with determining a county strategic plan.

After several months of meetings, which included hundreds of hours of time of highly paid county officials, a 98-page detailed report of the survey results were released about three weeks ago. I happened to be on one of the committees, the Good Governance Committee, that tried to help work on the strategic plan's other aspects. At the several meetings including the initial meeting for good governance I made the point that only six words were necessary to define good governance, not the government speak that is so often seen which consists of flowery politically correct whatever. Those six words are: "Absolute Honesty, Pristine Ethics and Complete Transparency." As to strategic planning, I said probably 95 percent of the county populace wants three things: public safety, good roads and good land use planning. Those points were made directly to Laree Kiely, whose Kiely Group was hired to perform and administer this survey.



Larry Weitzman

The survey is replete with its own issues ranging from poorly designed questions to biased sampling. For such a survey, the sample of participants must be chosen randomly. During a university statistics course the one thing I remembered was for a survey to be valid it should be taken randomly and consist of a sampling of at least 1,256 participants. And that is where the problems begin.

El Dorado County has a population of 183,087. Survey takers totaled 2,228, with 2,119 living in EDC. Forty-nine are here part time and 53 claimed to be non-residents. That's about a 1 percent participation rate. Of that sample 62 percent of the respondents were female. Almost 70 percent were older than 50.

At least two emails from an EDC official were sent to all other EDC county employees encouraging them to participate with a direct link to the survey. The result was that 20 percent of the survey respondents said they worked for the government, giving them a biased self-interest. On top of that, 187 of the respondents said they were educators – more government. That means these people were over represented by 250 percent based on population and people in private industry were under represented by about 65 percent.

El Dorado Hills, with a population of 42,000, had a total of just 300 respondents, where Placerville with a population of 10,000 had 393 respondents, weighting the Placerville respondents' answers by more 500 percent over that of El Dorado Hills respondents. One of the other more important facts skewing the results is that you could take the survey more than once. I did. So did several other people.

Of the 98 pages, there were more than 50 pages of comments from respondents that also showed even more bias. A lot of the comments were from limited and no "growthers." Another conundrum was the desire for higher paying jobs, yet the growth industries wanted from a preponderance of the comments were recreation, ag, tourism, telecommuting and "responsible"

retail, or mostly low paying jobs.

Many respondents wanted a rural environment, some with no cars or at best electric cars, but this highlighted pull quote from page 15 perhaps sums up the dozens of similar comments: "Please work with the small county farmers in creating easier ways to have home based agricultural businesses such as raising chickens, selling eggs, organic animal raising, selling and consumption of those meats, as well as growing produce and selling that produce and products at small local markets." Can you say Walden Pond? More high paying jobs? All of the above demonstrates why the data from the survey is basically bogus. But there is a surprise.

While the most important question of ranking county functions in order of importance was poorly written – 12 choices were given, but you were not allowed to give any or all of them a zero, which skewed the results. The question should have had the 12 choices individually ranked from 0-10, so you could rank them if you wanted three 10s and nine zeros). Notwithstanding, the top three in order of importance were public safety, roads and land use. Perhaps they should have paid me for my advice. Unfortunately, most people look at free advice worth exactly that, nothing.

The respondents also commented extensively that government needs to be honest and transparent.

Comments also demonstrated that the county should be their mother and father and provide all kinds of free service, health care, cheap housing, lots of public transportation, more bicycles (great with all our hilly terrain), cheap, healthy (organic) food and other items, none of which even should be a county issue. One interesting incongruity was when asked: "What county services most impact the quality of your life?" The top answer was the library and by a large margin, yet it ranked eight out of 12 in importance of county services.

So what was the real purpose of the survey? It looks like an attempt to justify the expansion of government. It could also be an attempt to create a diversion from how bad a job the BOS and its administration are doing. The survey has little, if any, scientific value. But notwithstanding, the survey as “unbalanced” as the respondents were, validated that the No. 2 job of the county is take care of the roads to which the CAO, Larry Combs, (which the BOS approved) said that’s one item for which no general fund dollars will be used. What’s the purpose of the survey then, biased or not? But making matters worse is our expanding county government employees making more money than ever in salary and benefit. To hell with the roads.

News flash: Confirmed by Combs, he advised his staff a few days ago that he was going to hire his loyal friend for the position of assistant CAO. Shawne Corley, who is currently ACOA of Sutter County, is where Combs spent about 25 years. This is exactly what I said in my last column in the last paragraph, Combs will hire his friends and play the game of government musical chairs, the game where government employees never lose. Sounds just like Terry Daly hiring Kim Kerr and our continuing feckless BOS. How history doth repeat itself.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.