

Women's Amgen Bike Race

The first stage of the women's Amgen Tour of California on May 8 – 74.5 miles around Lake Tahoe – starting and ending at Heavenly Mountain Resort's California Lodge.

Academy of Dance Arts to put on 2 shows

The annual spring concerts of the Academy of Dance Arts will be at MontBleu in Stateline on May 15-16.

This year the ballet is entitled Fairies Among Us. It is a ballet based on the four elements earth, water, fire and air.

After a brief intermission, the show will continue with the jazz, hip hop, lyrical, contemporary, and tap portion of the show entitled Let's Dance.

Doors open at 5pm, the show is at 6pm. For tickets, call 800.745.3000.

Women fight to win Lake Tahoe

cycling race



The peloton makes its way through Cave Rock on May 8. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

Mother Nature teased Amgen Tour of California race officials Friday morning as temps hovered just above freezing and snow danced in the air. As the 11am start time got closer, the clouds parted to show blue sky and the requisite 45-degree

mark had been reached.

Eighty-two elite women racers left Heavenly Mountain Resort's California Lodge on May 8 on a 74.5-mile trek around Lake Tahoe, with an elevation gain of 5,300 feet. They rode through South Lake Tahoe, turned right onto Highway 89 to ride around the lake (72 miles) and then up Keller Road with its 15 percent grade, to finish at the California Lodge. (Cycling events go clockwise because it's safer to make right turns.)



Elite racing bikes easily cost five figures. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

This is the first time a women's cycling event of this caliber has been staged in the United States.

As the teams each signed in and were introduced before the start, Ali Tetrick of the Optum team said, "I think at the finish you will see a small group. You will see who wants to sprint after climbing that hill."

She was correct in her prediction.



Riders enjoy views of Lake Tahoe for much of the competition. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

“That last hill will turn riders inside out,” the announcer boomed as the pack thinned out in the last few miles. “They are all hoping they have enough gas in the tank to make it to the finish. You thought the Donner Party was bad; this is ridiculous.”

Katie Hall of team United Health Care crossed the line first with a time of 3:10.49. Rounding out the podium were Alena Amialiusik of Velocio-SRAM and Lauren Komanski with Twenty 16, both with a time of 3:10.51.



Top riders from each team on the start line. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

Sarah Storey (Pearl Izumi) started a breakaway and was followed by Allison Beveridge (Canadian national team). They pulled 1:25 minutes ahead of the peloton until they were caught at the top of Spooner Summit.

With 7 kilometers to go, all the major teams had a rider in the breakaway. One by one they started to fall back.

Earning the best young rider jersey was Hannah Barnes (UHC); Queen of the Mountain went to Storey; and the sprint leader was Beveridge.



The gear, the bike and the rider are lightweight. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

Dealing with the elements

The elevation and temperature are not issues most of these cyclists have to deal with on a regular basis.

Lauren Stephens with team Tibco said, "I'm used to riding in 100-degree heat, and 100 percent humidity." The topped ranked rider in the United States in 2014 calls Texas home.

Storey said, "We had a lot of preparation with the altitude."

The British athlete is already well decorated with Olympic cycling and swimming medals from the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta. (When she was born her left arm was entangled with the umbilical cord in the womb, which left her left hand unable to function.)



Rhae Shaw and her
BMW team scouted
the course in
March. Photo
Copyright 2015
Carolyn E. Wright

The BMW team came to Tahoe in March to check out the courses. It was beautiful weather for their weeklong training – nothing like this week's weather.

While May is always iffy weather in Lake Tahoe, it felt more like winter than spring on Friday. More snow covered Gunbarrel than has been on that ski slope in the last month. All morning clouds shrouded Mount Tallac.



Cycling is a team and individual sport. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

The cold had most of the riders covered head to toe, with only a few braving shorts.

"We know mountain weather. Anything can happen," Rhae Shaw of the BMW team told *Lake Tahoe News* before the start.

"It's very difficult to ride at this elevation," Shaw added. She said Colorado is the other area that gives cyclists a bit of a challenge when it comes to altitude.

Saturday's forecast is a high of 61 degrees in South Lake Tahoe.



Cyclists pause for the national anthem.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Local impact

The South Shore in 2011 tried to host the men's first stage. Mother Nature wasn't as forgiving then and the race was canceled because of snow.

Carol Chaplin, executive director of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, was hesitant to put a dollar figure on the economic impact a race of this magnitude has on the region.

"More for us it's about the awareness of the destination," Chaplin told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We have great cycling. Elite athletes like to train here."



A team Optum rider prepares for the start of the first phase. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

While the North Shore does not have a start or finish like when the men's race was here and Northstar and Squaw Valley were part of the itinerary, it is still involved.

Sandy Evans Hall, executive director of the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, was on hand for the start of Friday's race.

"They will get to see the entire lake. It showcases what we have," Hall told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We are really focused on human powered sports."



Katie Hall, center, celebrates her win May 8 with Alena Amialiusik, left, and Lauren Komanski. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Even though there isn't live television coverage of the women's races in Lake Tahoe, it is possible to stream the events. And footage from these events will be used during the men's race this coming week.

Plus, it gives locals a chance to see a professional sporting event for free. More than 100 people gathered near the Y on Friday as the cyclists made the turn onto Highway 89. Cheering crowds were in groups throughout the race as well as many more who gathered at the finish line.

Notes:

- Stage 2 for the women begins May 9 at 10:30am at Heavenly Mountain Resort's California Lodge.
 - The 49.7-mile course goes into Meyers, will be two circles, with an elevation gain of 3,300 feet.
 - Pioneer Trail will be closed from Ski Run Boulevard to Highway 50 in Meyers from 9:30am-1pm.
 - The finish at the Cal Lodge is expected to be at 12:30pm.
 - For more info, go online.
 - There are two sites where people may stream the event live. Here is the first and the second.
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Homeowners urged to get rid of junipers

Junk the Junipers is a Nevada Wildfire Awareness Month event designed to get people to rid their yards of this highly flammable plant.

The Nevada Division of Forestry is hosting Junk the Junipers on May 16 from 8am-1pm at the division's office, 885 Eastlake Blvd. in Washoe Valley. A second event will be hosted by the Bureau of Land Management and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District on May 23 at the Silver Lake Fire Station, 11525 Red Rock Road, Reno. Residents are encouraged to bring their junipers, pines, rabbitbrush, sagebrush and other woody vegetation to be chipped for free.

Vegetation chipped at the event will be used as mulch in

various locations. Materials that will not be accepted for chipping are: construction lumber, hazardous materials, lawn clippings, sod, dirt-infested vegetation and tree stumps or limbs greater than 8 inches in diameter.

For more information, contact Sonya Sistare at sistares@unce.unr.edu or 775.336.0271.

Equestrians to join Tahoe Rim Trail Challenge

Sunshine Tahoe is sponsoring the first equine team for the 2015 Tahoe Rim Trail Challenge.

The third annual Tahoe Rim Trail Challenge is open for enrollment. The challenge will take participants on an exploration around the rim on six featured outings highlighting something unique to Lake Tahoe. Depending upon the trail and season, people may hike, bike, ride horseback, ski or snowshoe to complete each challenge site all in one year.

For information about the TRT Challenge, call 775.298.4485 or email info@tahoerimtrail.org. To join the equestrian group or for questions, email sunshinetahoeriders@gmail.com.

Calif. government not planning for retirements

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

California state government continues to struggle with plans for replenishing its aging workforce, according to a new report released Monday, chiefly because departments talk a good game but largely fail to follow through.

Nearly 41 percent of state employees are age 50 or older, State Auditor Elaine Howle noted in her assessment, yet the Department of Human Resources has been slow to assess what departments are doing to plan for the next generation of employees.

And three departments first reviewed in 2009 – the Office of Emergency Services, Caltrans and the Department of Social Services – have made some progress but need to do much more.

Read the whole story

Chris Alper – 1957-2015



Christine Ann Alper

Christine Ann Alper passed gently, peacefully and with grace in her sleep in the early morning hours of May 4 following a recurrence of cancer. The disease affected her, but in no way defined her. Her husband, Charles Whitten, was by her side. She was 58 years old.

All who knew Chris were touched by her love, her kindness, her delight in family, friends, and the simple joy of everyday life. Born in Allentown, Pa., in the beautiful Lehigh Valley, she moved with her family to San Diego in 1974, where she attended college. She began her longstanding love of the beach and the ocean – a love that continued to grow all throughout her life. Since she was young, Chris had a strong interest in science, quantum physics and the metaphysical world. Though she never felt a connection to a particular organized religion, she always was deeply inspired and moved by nature and its beauty. Among her spiritual interests have been Native American studies, Eastern philosophy and the psychology of positive thought. She always had a yearning to know the mysteries of the universe and explore higher consciousness. Her quest had been to seek and learn, and then share it with others. She embraced the Buddhist philosophy of kindness and compassion for others and the Native American idea of the interconnection of all life.

Christine and her first husband, Don Schortmann, moved to the Lake Tahoe area in 1979. They brought two beautiful children, Christopher and Zack, into the world. They founded Redwood Printing. Chris worked for many years at Shehadi Toyota dealership and then Cardinale Way Toyota in South Lake Tahoe. She and her sister, Maxine, created meditation CDs. In 2013 she achieved a dream of concentrating on spiritual work and opened Rejuvenate Sauna.

She is survived by her husband, Charles Whitten; sisters Maxine Alper of South Lake Tahoe and Beverly Alper-Chaney of

Silt, Colo.; brothers Matthew Alper of Doylestown, Pa., Michael Alper of Las Vegas, Marc Alper of South Lake Tahoe; son Zack Schortmann and girlfriend Kass Green of South Lake Tahoe, son Christopher Schortmann and daughter-in-law Angela (Marielos) Schortmann of South Lake Tahoe; and her beloved grandson, Isaiah Schortmann; and numerous uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews.

As you attune to the angels that are surrounding Chris, see her filled with the presence of her true soul – radiant, nestled in the loving heart of the creator.

Thank you for your love, prayers and support. We are so blessed to be surrounded by such loving friends. We will miss her every day.

The family will be holding a vigil at 2247 Winnemucca Court (off Winnemucca Avenue) on May 8 from 6-8 pm and a final open house on May 9 from 2-8 pm with a memorial ceremony at 4pm.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Tahoe Art Project's annual spaghetti dinner fundraiser is May 14 from 5:30-7:30pm at Bert's Cafe in South Lake Tahoe. For tickets, call 530.542.3632.

• Skyland General Improvement District is having a public hearing about its 2015-16 fiscal year budget on May 21 at 3pm at the Zephyr Cove library.

• Tahoe Beach Retreat in South Lake Tahoe is promoting its

private beach on Facebook. They own it, but the reality is the public may access it from June-September. Connolly Beach, the real name of it, will be on the May 19 South Lake Tahoe City Council agenda.

- Govs. Jerry Brown and Brian Sandoval along with five other governors on May 6 signed a multi-state proclamation designating May as Wildfire Awareness Month.
 - Mammoth Mountain ski slopes close Sunday.
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STPUD board to vote on budget, rate hikes

By Kathryn Reed

The public was all but missing from Thursday night's public hearing regarding the 2015-16 South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District meeting.

Two people attended the meeting, with one person getting a tutorial in how the district works based on the one-on-staff dialogue he had.

The board is expected to approve the budget at the May 21, 2pm meeting. Water rates are slated to go up 6.5 percent and sewer rates 6 percent. Combined this would add \$14.45 to residential quarterly bills starting July 1.

Last year the board went through the Proposition 218 process that gives the public a chance to protest proposed rate increases. Not enough people protested the five-year rate increase plan that was eventually adopted. This set the maximum percentages the board may raise rates.

It was clear from the few comments that were made May 7 that the board is not in agreement about what is going on.

Board member Jim Jones would like to reopen the Proposition 218 process because he believes the rates should be raised even more in order to keep the infrastructure working.

Board member Randy Vogelgesang worries that any increase will adversely impact ratepayers, especially those on fixed incomes.

Board members Kelly Sheehan and Chris Cefalu were silent. Board member Duane Wallace was out sick.

Paul Hughes, chief financial officer, said if the rates are changed from what is on the table, then it will be up to staff to figure out what gets cut.

EDC leader has history of costing taxpayers

By Kathryn Reed

Pamela Knorr is proving to be a financial liability for her employers – aka the taxpayers. First it was Alpine County, now it is El Dorado County.

On July 3, 2012, Knorr signed a five-year contract to be CAO of Alpine County at a rate of pay of \$11,757 per month. She also received a \$400 a month car allowance and access to the county credit card presumably for county business. The contract said Knorr would be entitled to 18 months severance pay if she were terminated.



Pamela Knorr

She and the board agreed to this even though months earlier she believed the sheriff and county auditor were harassing her.

Knorr on April 11, 2013, filed a claim against the county alleging harassment that dated to April 2012 – three months prior to signing the long-term contract.

Knorr's claim states the Alpine County sheriff initiated a criminal investigation of Knorr in an effort to harass, retaliate and intimidate her. The claim also states that the auditor harassed and retaliated against her and that Knorr "was subjected to unwanted harassing conduct by men who harassed, attempted to coerce, threatened, intimidated, and discriminated against (her) for being a women in a leadership position."

The claim says county counsel and the Board of Supervisors in April 2012 were notified of the alleged harassment.

Alpine County and Knorr settled that dispute for \$10,000.

Her last day with Alpine was Aug. 2, 2013. She was paid \$80,145.50 on Aug. 7, 2013, and another \$80,145.50, on July 1, 2014, as severance per the contract.

Janet Dutcher, Alpine County assistant CAO, told *Lake Tahoe News* that Knorr agreed to take less than what the contract called for and to have it split in two payments.

Knorr did not return *Lake Tahoe News'* phone call.

Knorr is not done with Alpine County. A former Alpine County employee who worked for her when she was CAO has sued her. Robert Levy, former undersheriff of Alpine County, in the 19-page lawsuit alleges Knorr along with three supervisors at the time and a private citizen violated his civil rights, conspired to do so, discriminated against him based on age, failed to prevent discrimination and retaliation, violated the Public Safety Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights Act, and defamed him.

"Her theory was a younger, cheaper workforce was better," Jeanette Viduay, investigator with the Watts Law Office, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Knorr is 44 years old.

She was not unemployed for long. El Dorado County hired her in September 2013 as Human Resources director.

El Dorado County's recruitment for Knorr's position was for the shortest amount of time allowed by county policy, which is unusual for such an important job. Terri Daly was CAO at the time. Daly and Knorr share a close friend and mentor, Yolo County CAO Patrick Blacklock. Blacklock is the former CAO of Amador County. Daly and Knorr are former Amador County employees.

Daly's employment as El Dorado County CAO was terminated in November 2014. She received a \$150,000 settlement. Knorr replaced Daly as CAO at that time.

As the top official in El Dorado County, Knorr as chief administrative officer is not taking actions to remedy the budget debacle her predecessor, Daly, created. Daly went on a hiring spree, which is the same as a spending spree. Each month the county is spending \$1.3 million more than it is taking in. A \$10 million surplus has been exhausted.

The five members of the Board of Supervisors, who are Knorr's

bosses and who earlier this year gave her the one-year contract, have not mandated the spending be stopped. While it is the board's responsibility to set policy and then for Knorr and other staff to carry out the policy, there is a bit of tug-of-war over who has responsibility over the budget. Ultimately, though, it will be the electeds who vote on the budget, so it is their responsibility to OK how much is spent on what.

Brian Veerkamp, chair of the Board of Supervisors, did not return a call.

While Knorr's contract for CAO is for one year, she is also still head of the Human Resources Department. This means that anyone who has an issue with Knorr or others in her department have no recourse. This is the same HR Department that was lambasted this spring by the county grand jury.