

Squaw cancels major competitive events

Snow conditions have forced the cancellation of two competitions as Squaw Valley in March.

The ski cross and snowboardcross World Cup scheduled for March 4-8 at Squaw Valley is off the calendar as is the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association's Hole Shot NorAm and U.S. Revolution Tour ski cross and snowboardcross scheduled for March 9-13.

Even though the resort just received more than 2 feet of snow, the amount of snow needed to build the World Cup courses is significant, and the resort has chosen to allocate its resources to focus solely on the guest experience.

Grocery stores running out of organic milk

By Lydia Mulvany, Bloomberg

About once a week the phone rings at the Dill Pickle Food Co-op in Chicago's artsy Logan Square neighborhood with the same question: Got milk? Organic, to be exact.

"I'll have people call up and say, hey, I know the truck's coming on Tuesday, can you put aside three half-gallons?" said Dana Bates-Norden, 33, who works as the buyer of perishable goods for the store, which in 2014 started selling out of the glass-bottled milk it gets from Midwest organic dairies within two days. "When I first started two years ago, I felt like I ended up having to write off a lot of organic milk, and now, I

really can't keep it in stock."

Americans spent an estimated \$35 billion on organic groceries in 2014. About \$5.1 billion of that went to dairy, more than doubling from a decade earlier, data from the Nutrition Business Journal published on the U.S. Department of Agriculture website show. With retailers like Wal-Mart Stores Inc. trying to attract more organic-food shoppers while McDonald's Corp. uses the milk – which can cost almost twice as much as regular – in some McCafe coffees, producers are struggling to keep up with demand.

Even in Wisconsin, the state with the most organic dairies, stores are posting signs warning of shortages, the USDA has said. At Fresh Madison Market in the state's capital city of Madison, sales of the milk have doubled over the past year and rising demand spurred a 10-day shortage in early January, owner Jeff Maurer said by telephone Feb. 9.

Read the whole story

Dogs major players in NDOW bear program

By Guy Clifton, Reno Gazette-Journal

Carl Lackey doesn't go anywhere without his Rooster.

That includes trucks, ATVs, helicopters, ski lifts, classrooms and everywhere else Lackey's job as a bear biologist with the Nevada Department of Wildlife takes him.

Rooster is Lackey's 10-year-old Karelian Bear Dog, who – when he isn't being a slightly oversized lap dog at home – is an

integral part of the team when it comes to releasing bears captured in populated areas. Rooster, and his 10-month old daughter, Dazzle, have a job – to harass the bear by chasing it, barking in its face, and making it run away or climb a tree.

Combined with a shotgun firing rubber bullets, the idea is to make the bears not want to return. NDOW has had more success with this procedure than by relocating the bears, many of which return to the capture site within days or weeks if no aversion techniques are used.

Read the whole story

Letter: Martis Valley project reality check

To the community,

Well, there's some good news and some bad news regarding the sprawling Martis Valley West project. The good news? East West Partners currently does not plan to build 112 luxury lodges in a gated community atop an undeveloped ridgeline at Lake Tahoe. The bad? The Martis Valley West project is still atop that ridge, but now it could grow to be significantly larger than was originally proposed. How much larger? East West isn't saying.

Here's what we know: There will be more development than originally submitted on the Martis Valley (Northstar) side of the ridge – 760 units instead of 648, plus 6.6 acres of commercial. This means no net reduction in the number of units, and some kind of new development still planned for a

forested ridgeline.

Incredibly, the Tahoe area has no enforceable ridgeline standards in place from either Placer County (which oversees the non-basin portion of this project) or the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (which handles the Basin portion). So big developers are free to submit plans for new subdivisions and other developments of any size, on or off undeveloped ridgelines.

Additionally, East West's proposed area plan, which includes that ridgeline luxury community, has only been suspended, not terminated.

They can and will continue to pursue permissible uses on Tahoe lands, and the aforesaid area plan will only be terminated when permits for a viable project are approved. What this means is that they could (and probably will) be going after a change of zoning: from forest-conservation to resort recreation zoning (which, among other things, allows condominiums) for this undeveloped one-mile stretch of forestland.

East West has also recently floated the idea of building more than 800 campsites on this land, with RV parking, yurts, "eco-shelters," a clubhouse-lodge, and a pool. By comparison, Yosemite – which is over 200 square miles – has just 1,445 campground spaces. Imagine how much more population density, traffic, and noise/light pollution this size development will bring to the Tahoe area.

This is not a done deal, but East West should tell the public what they intend to do – especially with the lands inside the Tahoe basin – immediately. Projects of this size do not exist in a vacuum; they have cumulative negative environmental impacts, as well as negative effects on wildlife and every resident of the North Shore and the Martis Valley. Should they receive the approval they're seeking, Martis Valley West will

be a precedent-setting project, and no ridgeline in this area will be safe.

They cudgel East West holds over our heads is the agreement they have to “save” 6,300-plus acres in Martis Valley, land their partner (Sierra Pacific Industries, a logging firm) owns, in exchange for this huge new incursion on land where residential development is currently not allowed. East West characterizes the community’s valid concerns as a “Tahoe basin-centric focus ... which jeopardizes” this conservation agreement – which, by the way, is between East West and two conservation groups with no presence in the Basin.

So in short, it sounds like our worries are far from over. The only way to stop the madness is for TRPA and Placer County to immediately institute enforceable ridgeline protections; public pressure is the only way to make them listen. Go online to find out who to write to.

Coral Amende, Incline Village

Brush with Kindness looking for homes to work on

A Brush with Kindness program is available for qualified low income homeowners in South Lake Tahoe.

Volunteers work to improve the condition of homes by painting, landscaping and providing minor exterior repairs at a minimum charge or no cost to homeowners who would be unable to complete the work on their own.

Applications are being accepted for summer projects.

Interested homeowners who may meet the income criteria should contact April Stinson at 530.544.2620 or 916.955.8231 for more information and an application packet.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- On March 12 at 3pm there will be a public hearing before the South Lake Tahoe Planning Commission regarding Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care's new headquarters to be built on Al Tahoe Boulevard near Pioneer Trail. The meeting is at Lake Tahoe Airport. Comments on the negative mitigation declaration are being taken until March 10 at 4pm.
 - Truckee River Winery's 2012 Malbec and 2011 Garys' Vineyard Pinot Noir received silver awards at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition.
 - Truckee Donner Land Trust is celebrating 25 years.
 - Rubicon Trail is closed because of effects from the recent storm.
 - Lake Tahoe Blue defenseman Wesley Callens has committed to North Dakota College at Bottineau.
-

FBI director: U.S. at crossroads on race relations

By Eric Tucker, AP

WASHINGTON — The United States is at a crossroads on matters of race relations and law enforcement, presenting “hard truths” that its citizens and police must confront, FBI Director James Comey said Thursday.

Comey used a speech at Georgetown University to offer his most expansive take on a debate that has roiled in the country in recent months about police use of force and interactions with minority communities.



James Comey

The deaths at the hands of white police officers of Michael Brown in Missouri and Eric Garner in New York, as well as the more recent slayings of two New York police officers, have raised difficult issues on both sides of the debate, he said.

One is that police officers who work in neighborhoods where most street crime is committed by young black men may hold unconscious biases and be tempted to take what he called a “mental shortcut” in dealing with suspicious situations.

“The two young black men on one side of the street look like so many others the officer has locked up,” Comey said. “Two young white men on the other side of the street — even in the

same clothes – do not. The officer does not make the same sinister association about the two white guys, whether that officer is white or black.”

But another truth is that minorities in poor neighborhoods too often inherit a “legacy of crime and prison,” a cycle he said must be broken to improve race relations with police.

Comey joined Attorney General Eric Holder in calling for better data about how often police use force. Such information is needed to make sound policy decisions, Comey said.

NHP going after drivers using handheld devices

Between now and Feb. 23, Nevada’s Joining Forces law enforcement team will be cracking down on distracted drivers throughout the state.

Nevada’s ban on handheld devices while driving went into effect three years ago and still law enforcement continues to spot and cite offenders every day. The law was enacted because of the more than 3,500 distraction-related crashes every year in the state.

Surfing the Internet, using a GPS or changing the song on your mp3 player are all illegal distractions taking motorists’ eyes off the road and causing crashes.

Distracted driving facts:

- Research has found that using a cell phone behind the wheel makes a driver four times more likely to get into a crash serious enough to cause injury.

- When sending or receiving text messaging behind the wheel, a driver's eyes are off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, equivalent to driving the length of a football field at 65 miles per hours.
- The likelihood of crashes dramatically rise when your actions require a combination of visual, manual and cognitive attention

Mardi Gras fundraiser for Austin's House

The seventh annual Cowboy Mardi Gras fundraiser benefitting Austin's House is Feb. 27 at the Carson Valley Inn from 6-10pm.

The party atmosphere will be like Bourbon Street in New Orleans on Fat Tuesday. Carson City Toyota Scion donated \$4,000 to sponsor the fundraiser.

The Cowboy Mardi Gras starts at 6pm with a cocktail hour. Then there will be a barbecue buffet.

Tickets are \$60; call 775-.267.6711.

WyGant indicted on 6 federal counts

A federal grand jury on Feb. 12 indicted former South Lake Tahoe fire Capt. Mark WyGant on six counts regarding child pornography.

The 44-year-old faces charges of sexual exploitation and attempted sexual exploitation of minors.



Mark WyGant

WyGant remains in custody in Sacramento where he has been since being arrested Jan. 29.

According to court documents, WyGant filmed a child on numerous occasions using a hidden cell telephone and hidden “spy cameras” that he had purchased for that purpose.

A thumb drive with 5,000 child pornography images and 50 videos of child porn was found in a locker at the fire station. It was turned over to the police, who figured out who they believed the owner was and then the FBI was brought in.

WyGant, who lived in Chico with his wife and stepchildren when not on duty in Tahoe, is scheduled to be arraigned Feb. 13 in federal court.

WyGant faces 30 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count if he is found guilty. Each count carries a minimum of 15 years in prison.

He resigned from the department Feb. 4.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*