

Mammoth is to snowboarding what Silicon Valley is to tech

By Elliott Almond, Bay Area News Group

MAMMOTH LAKES – Three-time Olympic medalist Kelly Clark left Vermont 17 years ago to cultivate her snowboarding talent on the powdery slopes of Mammoth Mountain.

Now 34, Clark is taking her high-flying circus act to the Winter Olympics for the fifth time as a long-time Mammoth local. Four other snowboarders competing in the Pyeongchang Games call Mammoth home, including halfpipe rock stars Shaun White and Chloe Kim.

The Eastern Sierra peak has become the triple-flip launching pad of American snowboarding as the sport celebrates its 20th anniversary as an Olympic discipline. The popular snow resort that on weekends feels like an L.A. suburb has been grooming airborne talent for decades because of supreme facilities, a long season with plenty of sun and snow and an innovative spirit.

Read the whole story

Calif. wildfire risk is rising; Congress not helping

By Emily Cadei, Sacramento Bee

Washington Forestry experts have a dire warning for California: the conditions are ripe for more catastrophic fire seasons like the one last fall. And an arcane federal funding arrangement is making it a lot harder for forestry officials to do something about it.

Instead of fixing the problem, however, Congress just punted – again.

Senate leaders announced a two-year budget deal Wednesday afternoon that would lift the federal spending caps instituted under the 2011 Budget Control Act, aka “sequestration.” It is expected to pass in the Senate this week, but could face a fight in the House. Still, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer called it a “breakthrough” after months of brinkmanship. It “doesn’t have everything Democrats want, it doesn’t have everything the Republicans want, but it has a great deal of what the American people want,” Schumer said.

Read the whole story

Salt Lake City first in U.S. to seek 2030 Winter Olympic bid

By Associated Press

Salt Lake City on Wednesday became the first U.S. city to announce its intentions to bid for the 2030 Winter Olympics as this year’s games get ready to kick off in South Korea.

The city’s Olympic exploratory committee concluded after a monthslong analysis that Utah could host the Winter Games

again without losing money thanks to existing venues and the budget expertise of a team that put on the 2002 event.

Salt Lake City could face competition from Denver and Tahoe-Reno, which are considering bids. Internationally, cities weighing the move include Sion, Switzerland; Calgary, Canada; Stockholm, Sweden; and Sapporo, Japan.

Read the whole story

Study: Humans degrading rivers across the west

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Rivers are the ecological lifeblood of the western U.S. but they're taking a beating from human activity.

That's according to researchers who mapped the condition of more than 300,000 miles of river in 11 western states.

The massive undertaking researchers named Disappearing Rivers looked end-to-end at thousands of rivers and streams.

The data provides a snapshot of conditions of everything from the mighty Colorado which provides water to roughly 40 million people in seven states and two countries to Lamoille Creek, a scenic stream in Nevada's Ruby Mountains known for wild brook trout.

Read the whole story

Silver Belt ski races coming back to Sugar Bowl

The second annual Silver Belt Series returns to Sugar Bowl this month.

This three-event series is designed for skiers and snowboarders of all ages, ability levels and interests. Participants may register for just one, or all three events.

Proceeds benefit local nonprofit organizations. In partnership with the Excellence in Education Foundation, High Fives Foundation and the Sierra Avalanche Center, events will include a downhill event, a banked slalom, and an uphill touring event.

The Silver Belt Series will kick off Feb. 10 with D Money's Dozen, and will be followed up by the Banked Slalom on Feb. 24. The series will conclude on April 7 with the Quad Crusher. Registration for each event is available **online**, and will take place on-site at the resort the day of the event.

Squaw embracing Olympics with downhill celebration

Squaw Valley is going to be all about the Olympics on Saturday from 2-8pm.

Feb. 10 will begin with a parade of Squaw Valley Alpine

Meadows' future champions and past Olympians. The parade leads into the Funitel Plaza for an autograph signing with Travis Ganong and Daron Rahlves.

The two past Olympians will then host a Q&A before the live broadcast of the men's downhill on the big screen.

The night will end with a fireworks show in the base of the village.

For more info, go **online**.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board will conduct a public hearing on the Meyers Area Plan on Feb. 28. The meeting starts at 9:30am at the agency's Stateline office.
- For more than 140,000 families in communities surrounding Raley's stores, this holiday season was a more fulfilling one. This year's annual Raley's Food for Families holiday bag drive, which provides food for Northern California and Nevada families, culminated in a donation of 3,759,535 meals, representing a 29 percent increase over last year.
- Bryce Cranch is now a battalion chief at Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District.
- Alterra Mountain Company, parent of Squaw, Alpine and Mammoth, has a CEO – Rusty Gregory.
- Washoe County Sheriff's Department is reporting more vehicle burglaries at recreation site, along Mt. Rose Highway in particular.

When treating sports injuries, does the West do it best?

By Nate Newman, The Conversation

Every two years, billions of people watch athletes at the Olympics compete to be crowned world champion.

What the viewer doesn't see are the athletes' behind-the-scenes preparation, which includes trying to figure out new ways to give them an edge in the biggest event of their career.

Different treatment methods that may provide an edge always seem to be en vogue. During the Beijing Summer Olympics, volleyballer Kerri Walsh-Jennings introduced viewers to kinesio tape – sticky strips applied to the body that may improve blood flow. At Rio, the large purple dots on the shoulders of swimmer Michael Phelps had fans Googling cupping, an ancient Chinese healing therapy.

Both examples indicate a willingness among athletes to incorporate Eastern treatments with traditional Western training and treatment methods.

As an athletic trainer who has worked with college athletes, I've used many Western training techniques to aid injured athletes. But during my 15 years of practice, I've started to wonder if many of the techniques I've used are truly effective.

With this year's Winter Olympics taking place in PyeongChang,

South Korea, it wouldn't be surprising to see athletes talking about other Eastern treatment methods – acupuncture, herbal treatments and Chuna manual therapy – that have become increasingly popular around the world.

Going after the pain

In Western cultures, athletic trainers and therapists who treat injuries have traditionally focused on controlling pain and inflammation.

A common treatment for acute injuries is the RICE method: rest, ice, compression and elevation. The RICE method works by preventing the development of inflammation. With less inflammation present, less pain is felt and less swelling develops, and the athlete will return to normal function more quickly.

Ice, of course, has been used for decades. It is one of the most commonly prescribed treatment methods for acute and chronic injuries in the United States. But the use of frigid temperatures to treat injuries now includes whole body cryotherapy – chambers that expose the entire body to temperatures ranging from minus 100 to 140 degrees Celsius, with the idea that treating pain and swelling throughout the entire body works better than paying attention to a localized spot.

But even though most Americans probably use ice as their go-to method for controlling pain and swelling, current research doesn't fully back its effectiveness.

Evidence is often mixed or lacking for many other common Western sports medicine treatments. Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) is a form of electrical stimulation therapy that can help reduce pain following an injury. In this treatment, currents are used to stimulate nerves and decrease pain. While some research suggests that it's effective, it, too, needs additional support to truly strengthen this

conclusion. Meanwhile, therapeutic ultrasound uses sound waves to generate heat, which is supposed to quicken healing. But again, the research on its effectiveness is inconclusive.

Create more pain?

Korean athletic trainers, on the other hand, tend to utilize traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), though they'll also incorporate treatments from their own culture and from Western medicine.

Unlike ice treatments, most Eastern techniques involve stimulating the body's normal responses to injuries in order to promote natural healing. For example, traditional Chinese acupuncture is based on the idea of stimulating the body's "qi," or energy, to restore balance within the body (what's called the "yin and yang"). Studies have shown that following the insertion of a needle, neurotransmitters do get activated that help alleviate pain.

Meanwhile, cupping therapy – a practice that may be 3,000 years old – involves placing heated cups on the skin, which creates a strong suction force that leads to bruising. The increased blood flow to the affected areas is thought to stimulate healing and muscle relaxation.

Only in the 1990s did researchers start to evaluate the effectiveness of South Korean sports medicine treatments. However, as with studies of Western treatments, their reviews didn't arrive at any definitive conclusions.

This was the dilemma I faced many times in my own practice. The field of sports medicine often incorporates emerging treatments that aren't proven to work. But the fact that Olympic athletes are willing to try them shows that they're willing to tinker with their bodies and take risks that could give them the slightest advantage, physical or mental.

As for the larger question of which treatments – Eastern or

Western – are most effective, the research might not be crystal clear, but the medal counts might offer some clues.

Nate Newman is an associate professor of athletic training, director of the masters in Athletic Training Program, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at Drake University.

Truckee hiker falls to death in Granite Chief Wilderness

By Sarah Heise, KCRA-TV

A Truckee man who was hiking with two other men at night near Squaw Valley fell more than 100 feet down a cliff and died, Placer County sheriff's officials said Thursday morning.

The trio was hiking Wednesday night in the area of Granite Chief, just west of Squaw Valley, when search and rescue crews were called to the area about 10pm for a fallen hiker.

[Read the whole story](#)

Tour of California bike course announced

Cyclists in the annual Amgen Tour of California will have to pedal over some of the region's most iconic passes to win the race.

The women's stage 2 starts and ends at Heavenly Mountain Resort. They will repeat the Luther Pass, Carson Valley, Kingsbury Grade route. This is basically what they did last year. The course in the valley will be different.

In three stages the women will cover 187 miles from May 17-19.

The men will arrive in South Lake Tahoe from Folsom via Carson and Luther passes. This is a similar route that they took in 2016. In all they will climb 16,000 feet in this 123-mile stage 6.

The seven-stage men's event is May 13-19, from Long Beach to Sacramento.

Both Tahoe events will be May 18.