

STHS probationary accreditation appeal denied

Updated 10:30am

By Kathryn Reed

With South Tahoe High School losing its appeal regarding probationary accreditation, it likely means the school will have a new principal in the fall.

Last spring the Western Association of Schools and Colleges put the school on a two-year probationary status. Evaluators cited several deficiencies, including not implementing enough sections of Common Core.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District didn't agree with much of the report so an appeal was made. Three WASC members came back **last fall** – two newbies, one from the original team. This time they met with the superintendent, something that was supposed to happen the first time.

Their decision to deny **the appeal** came last month. *Lake Tahoe News* requested a copy of the letter from the district office, but has yet to receive it.

Sources tell *Lake Tahoe News* the response from WASC did not delve into specifics this time. While the evaluation team looks at hard data, members also do a series of interviews. They try to get a feel for the atmosphere on the campus. They care about a lot more than athletics, which some people believe has been a growing priority at STHS to the detriment of academics.

STHS is effectively completing the first of two years of probationary accreditation. The school is accredited and this will not impact graduating seniors.

The WASC team will return in spring 2018 to begin a brand new evaluation process.

In previous evaluations STHS has received a six-year accreditation.

The process is time consuming. Internally, it will begin next school. What remains to be seen is who will be principal.

All LTUSD principals have a year-to-year contract. Unlike other staff members, principals do not have to be notified by March 15 that they will not have a job in the fall. However, LTUSD historically has listed principal positions on April 1.

STHS Principal Chad Houck deferred comment to Superintendent Jim Tarwater. Tarwater is not available because he is recovering from leg surgery, an injury sustained skiing. Only board member Bonnie Turnbull responded to *LTN*. She said to speak to board President Barbara Bannar.

At the Feb. 14 school board meeting teachers and parents spoke highly of Houck. They said he has been telling people he won't be back as principal because he doesn't get paid enough. He makes more than \$100,000 a year.

Contractually, if the district were to ask him to step down, Houck would not have to be offered a teaching position because he did not start here as a teacher. If the board accepts his resignation, which some people have said could be on the March 14 agenda, Houck will be looking for a new job and the district for a new principal. Houck started at STHS in August 2014.

The board is expected to be updated on the accreditation issue at the March 14 or March 28 meeting – the agendas are not out yet.

Letter: Questioning Squaw Valley's policies

To the community,

Here is a chronological list of events concerning Squaw Valleys' refusal to grant any type of credit to us regarding the 2013-14 ski season. We have contacted them every year since their refusal to no avail.

We purchased our season tickets in September of 2013. In October of 2013, Sue was diagnosed with a debilitating spinal condition that would require extensive surgery and rehabilitation and would require care giving by myself as her condition needed constant attention and help in her daily activities. We contacted Squaw Valley in November 2013 and told them of the situation and asked what should we do. We were told that we needed to document all medical procedures and submit them with a letter from our primary doctor and invoices from the performing surgeon and hospital.

We followed these instructions to a tee and delivered them personally to a staff member at Squaw. Our season passes were never activated, nor did we ask for a refund, only a credit toward the 2014-15 season. After contacting them to see the status of our account, we were told that they would not be willing to do anything for us in any form, even though we followed their written instructions.

We then began in 2014, a series of letters stating our case to their director of services and also to CEO Andy Wirth. No responses were received.

At this time I had a conversation with a friend and told him

of our dilemma and our dissatisfaction with Squaw's decision. He told me of a friend of his who had basically the same situation as ours and he had received a full credit minus a \$50 fee. That really sent my blood pressure through the roof. We had resigned our selves to the fact that corporate greed was more important than good customer service and satisfaction. I honestly felt that their stance was that "we've got your money and we aren't willing to offer any relief."

We were just frustrated and irritated by their arrogance and attitude and threw our hands in the air. We've never been one to give in, so in 2016, we sent a registered letter to CEO Andy Wirth thinking that he never saw any of our previous correspondence and he would do the right thing. We were wrong. He never responded.

At this point we just decided to call it a day and resigned ourselves to the fact that we would not ski Squaw or Alpine again. Then we **read the rant** about Squaw's attitude about their employees, customers, and future plans to develop and then sell the resorts without regard to the people that live and recreate here, and we decided that we had a story to tell about Squaw Valley to the area residents and visitors. Instead of doing the right thing, they choose the low road and did nothing.

Pete and Sue High, Tahoma

STMS students honored for

writing

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra celebrated 14 writers from South Tahoe Middle School at the 10th annual Writing Festival.

Each grade, directed by their language arts teachers, had a prompt that they wrote to. Sixth-grade students wrote a persuasive essay on “Should Teachers Assign Homework.”.The winners were Hayden Cannon, Stella Devine, Toby Paul and Brock Cox.

Seventh-graders Zamany Loyola, Sage Smith, Lea Merrifield, Leif Ferrier and Skylar Strosky all won after writing about “Reality TV, Beneficial or Detrimental.”

Eighth grade essay winners wrote to the prompt “Whom Would you Nominate for the First Woman President?” They were Diego Uribe, Alexia Jacquez, Juan Negrete, Brody Cox and Giovana De Loia.

Awards were presented to first, second and third place in each grade, first place to honors class participants in each grade and first place in seventh and eighth grade flex classes. Each first place winner received \$75, second place \$50, and third place \$25.

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra promotes literacy for students in many ways. The Writing Festival is one example of encouraging middle school students to compete in the writing festival and to be recognized for their exemplary writing skills. Soroptimist has also been providing new books every June to all students K-8 for more than a decade.

– Wendy David, Youth Enrichment and Scholarship Committee co-chair Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra

Nev. health exchange focused on reaching more people in need

By Adam Candee, Las Vegas Sun

First, a reassuring word from the woman in charge of the state's Affordable Care Act program to the 89,061 Nevadans who signed up for coverage this year: You're good.

"There isn't any concern about 2017," said Heather Korbulic, executive director of the Silver State Health Insurance Exchange.

That island of relative certainty amid the swirling sea of questions about the ACA's future under a hostile Congress and presidential administration stands as rare encouraging news for Nevadans accessing health insurance through the public marketplace. Republican pledges to repeal and replace the ACA hovered over the program's open enrollment period, tasking Korbulic and her team with considerable myth-busting.

Read the whole story

Calif. storms: Wettest water

year in 122 years

By Mark Gomez, Bay Area News Group

The first five months of California's water year are the wettest in 122 years of record keeping, according to federal scientists.

Between October 2016 and February 2017, California averaged 27.81 inches of precipitation, the highest average since 1895, according to data released Wednesday by the National Centers for Environmental Information, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

This current water season slightly outpaced 1968-69 (27.34 inches average), when a series of powerful storms in January and February resulted in widespread flooding in Central and Southern California, resulting in at least 60 deaths, according to a federal report. The third wettest October-February occurred in 1997-1998, according to the data.

Read the whole story

911 cell phone access out in various locations

AT&T customers throughout much of the United States cannot call 911 from their cell phones.

In South Lake Tahoe people are being told to call 530.542.6100 if they have an emergency. In El Dorado County, call 530.573.3300 and in Douglas County 775.782.5126.

Placer County Sheriff's Department is not reporting an issue.

AT&T is aware of the issue, but doesn't know how many states are affected or when the issue will be fixed. The problem started in the early evening of March 8.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Senate rolls back rule on public lands

By Gary Martin, Las Vegas Review-Journal

WASHINGTON – The Senate voted mostly along party lines Tuesday to kill a federal rule that gives a voice to the American public on the use of public lands in Western states – including 47.5 million acres in Nevada.

Republicans sought the rollback of the planning rule imposed by the Obama administration, arguing that it shifted the decision-making of use of lands in the West to bureaucrats in Washington.

Conservationists and Democrats argued it protected those lands from commercial interests.

Read the whole story

Series of caregiver support classes in SLT

The Family Caregiver Support Program of the El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency is putting on a free aging and caregiver educational series in South Lake Tahoe.

It will be weekly on Mondays beginning April 17 and ending May 22, 1-3pm at the Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel in South Lake Tahoe.

The series will provide instruction and support for people who care for or plan to care for a family member or friend aged 60 years or older. The series will feature a different topic each week:

- April 17: Caring for the Caregiver: Mindful Self Care – Learn how to “take time” and find respite when it feels there is no time. This presentation will explore various resources for finding solace and respite.
- April 24: Welcome to Planet Alzheimer’s – Learn how to successfully communicate with the person in your life who has Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia.
- May 1: Disaster Preparedness Planning for Family Caregivers – Learn how caregivers can identify potential challenges and take steps necessary to prepare for disasters.
- May 8: Difficult Conversations – Learn helpful tips to handle difficult conversations with family members, including deciding when to stop driving, making legal and financial plans, and going to the doctor.
- May 15: Financial Power of Attorney and Advanced Health Care Directives – Learn the legal rights and responsibilities of a health care and/or financial agent, including many other responsibilities associated with the health and well-being of your loved one.
- May 22: Do I Really Need all These Medications? This

presentation will focus on the most common prescriptions and possible interactions that may occur, as well as the need to review and/or adjust medications on a regular basis.

Participants may attend one or all of the classes. The classes are free; donations are accepted. Light refreshments will be served.

Advanced registration is requested, but not required. Call 530.621.6151 to register for one or more classes, or for questions.

Letter: Heavenly helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Heavenly Mountain Resort skier services crew members spend their time making sure Heavenly guests and skiers enjoy a wonderful experience on the mountain. On Feb. 27, skier services Adopt A Day sponsor crew members Ingrid Heinig, Kelsey Carapia, Jack Pippin, Megan Madrid and Amy Rice provided the same dedication to ensure that Bread & Broth's Monday meal guests had a wonderful dining experience.

"Heavenly and the Vail family cherish the opportunity to give back to the community," said Rice.

She and her fellow crew members were a real treat for the B&B volunteers.

These five skier services volunteers were fun and very helpful with the meal's setup, serving and cleanup. B&B volunteers always know they are going to get a good sponsor crew when one of the Tahoe Vail Resorts hosts a dinner.

Thanks to the funds provided by the Vail Epic Promise Grant program, Heavenly and Kirkwood mountain resorts alternate months hosting AAD sponsorships.

It is a real testament to the Tahoe Vail Resorts' commitment to community involvement for them to sponsor 12 Adopt A Days every year and send their wonderful employees to help at the dinner.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Casino industry worried about ACA changes

The casino industry is worried that gambling disorders will no longer be considered a health issue.

Leaders of the American Gaming Association, Indian Gaming Association, National Council on Problem Gambling and Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers on March 7 sent a letter to Congress to keep the language that is in the Affordable Care Act.

In part the letter says, "Today, gambling disorders are recognized under the ACA's essential health benefits. We believe this recognition, which did not exist prior to the passage of ACA, is critical not only to enable adequate funding for research, but also to ensure necessary resources

and treatment facilities are available.”

Problem gambling is listed with other addictive disorders in the ACA.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*