

# Star gazing at Sorensen's

Join astronomers Adrienne Cool and Ron Marzke of San Francisco State University for a nighttime event and slide show, peering through telescopes to spy planets, stars, and nebulae.

All ages are welcome to the May 12 event that will start about 8pm at Sorensen's Resort in Hope Valley.

Cost is \$10 adults/\$5 kids, all proceeds (which will be matched by Sorensen's) will go to support school science programs in Alpine County.

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# Genoa Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival

Genoa Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival is April 26-29.

Take a perfect setting in a small Nevada town, add a backdrop of towering peaks and a brilliant blue sky and bring in talented cowboy poets, gifted musicians and craftsmen, horsemen, cooks and folks who love and appreciate the western lifestyle, and you have the makings for a pretty good four day party.

For more information, go online.

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# USFS burning in Kings Beach area

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations in the Kings Beach area near Speckled Avenue today.



Crews anticipate burning 1 to 3 acres per day. Operations may continue through the week and possibly through the weekend, weather and conditions permitting.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from this prescribed fire project area. The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities. Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed.

To directly receive prescribed fire updates, send an email to [pa\\_ltbmu@fs.fed.us](mailto:pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us).

Forest Service staff will post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, and update the local fire information line at (530) 543.2600, No. 6.

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## Tahoe Grizzlies qualify for state championships

By Ted Parkhill

The Pee Wee hockey team from the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association had what officials are calling an amazing weekend of playoff hockey in Oakland. They placed second overall across Northern California.



With this strong finish, the team qualified to compete at the California State Hockey Championships in San Jose April 13-15.

On March 23, the team faced the California Cougars Pee Wee team from Cupertino. The Tahoe Grizzlies came out strong and triumphed by pouncing on the Cougars 4-2. On Saturday morning, the Grizzlies faced the Fresno Monsters, losing 5-3. The Grizzlies demonstrated the depth of the team with their three goals scored by three players.

Saturday afternoon the Grizzlies stomped on the Redwood City Black Stars, 7-2. Reiss Jensen of Reno scored a hat trick and Edward Parkhill of Incline Village also had three points with one goal and two assists.

The championship game was Sunday afternoon. Again, the Grizzlies faced the Monsters. It was a hard fought game, but in the end the Monsters were hungrier than the Grizzlies. The Monsters won 3-2.

The Fresno Monsters and the Tahoe Grizzlies earned a spot at the California Amateur Hockey Association's annual state championships.

*Ted Parkhill is a member of the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association.*

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# Norah Jones

Norah Jones will perform at the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series on Aug. 12 at 8pm.

Ticket prices range from \$39.50 to \$69.50.

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## Opinion: Choices of adults make me sad

By Kathryn Reed

I looked around at the students – all sixth-graders – wondering how we got to this place. And I felt sad.

I didn't know the phrase "gateway drug" when I was their age. I could not have told a narcotics officer what drugs were dangerous. (I didn't even know what a narcotics officer was.) These kids could and did. They mentioned cocaine, meth and black tar heroin.

That, too, made me sad.

I'm not of the generation that didn't do drugs. I have my stories. I have my lessons.

I just wonder where we went wrong that life's dangers are robbing children of their youth, of their innocence, of what should be the time of their life when they shouldn't have to worry about all of these adult issues.

Maybe I'm naïve. I'm OK with that.

I just wonder how life got so out of hand that we have to have programs for sixth-graders about the dangers of drugs. I wonder how we got to the place where some of them, and even those who are younger, have felt peer pressure to try drugs.

I know life isn't easy. And I know some of these kids at 13 have experienced things I hope to never experience.

I grew up with a father who smoked cigarettes until I was in junior high. (They weren't called middle schools back then.) A friend and I took a few from his truck. I gagged. I still don't understand the allure of smoking.

I remember dad drank Manhattans. Plenty of hard alcohol was consumed on duplicate bridge nights. That was my exposure to drugs in my home.

I remember being offered pot in high school, telling one of my sisters and subsequently getting a lecture that left me scared. Big sisters are that way. They can be more convincing and threatening than parents.

Maybe at 46 I just wish the world were a little less dependent on drugs. The clean air of Tahoe, the natural beauty – they are intoxicating in their own right. There I go again – being naïve to think those things are enough.

When I choose to poison my body I do so with alcohol – usually wine. I don't have a problem with adults doing what they want as long as they don't endanger others.

Blame can be spread around as to why drugs are getting into young people's hands. But at some point we have to look in the mirror. What is our individual role in all of this? Did I drink in front of a young person when I shouldn't have? Did I laugh about a story about college that glamorized drug use? Did I unknowingly encourage dangerous, illegal behavior?

Probably. Intentionally? No.

But I'm still responsible.

We all have choices. I just don't want mine to have unintended consequences.

I'm angry that as a society we have gotten to the point where middle school and elementary students need to be taught about the dangers of drugs. We, as a society, have failed them. If it weren't for adults and our behavior, children would not be into drugs.

That, too, makes me sad.

All the programs in the world are not going to stop the drug problem. Adults need to take the blame and the responsibility.

The message of Drug Store Project is that we all have choices. As a community, especially the adults, shouldn't our choices be to allow kids to be kids, for them not to have "adult" concerns, and for each of us to lead a life that is worth emulating?

Go ahead and disagree with me. All you'll do is make me even sadder.

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# Gore-Tex competitors want a level playing field

By Mike Kessler, Outside

The biannual gathering of the gear tribes is typically a magnanimous affair. Held each winter and summer in Salt Lake City's 675,000-square-foot Salt Palace convention center, the Outdoor Retailer trade shows (OR for short) draw some 20,000 industry types—an assortment of hyperfit gear wonks who pal around, show off their wares, and tout their stuff to resellers and the press. At OR, VPs wear Keen sandals and sales guys balance on slacklines; even ambitious young marketers rarely speak ill of the competition.



That's why the banner at last summer's show was so striking. Ten feet tall and 30 feet wide, it was the first thing people saw when they walked through the convention-center doors. Next to an image of a professional climber who'd been Photoshopped to look like someone from a "Faces of Meth" poster—vacant stare, yellow pallor—was the explanation, spelled out in massive, no-nonsense type: "Endured Constant Overheating and Freezing for 12 Years." And below, the payoff: "Liberated by NeoShell." While the message would probably seem cryptic to industry outsiders, everyone here knew exactly what it meant: NeoShell is better than Gore-Tex.

Similar advertisements for NeoShell, a new waterproof-breathable material made by Polartec, the Massachusetts-based fabric manufacturer best known for popularizing synthetic fleece, were suspended throughout the Salt Palace and plastered on billboards around town. They've subsequently appeared on websites and in magazines, including this one. NeoShell, which debuted last fall in top-of-the-line jackets

from the likes of Marmot, North Face, and Mammut, is the company's first-ever waterproof-breathable product. "We did tons of research," Nate Simmons, Polartec's marketing director, told me at the company's booth. "We wouldn't have come into this space unless we were confident we could compete."

While NeoShell was Gore-Tex's most conspicuous new challenger at OR, it wasn't the only one. At the elaborate Columbia booth, staffers were just as determined to upstage Gore-Tex by touting the breathability of their own new proprietary fabric, OmniDry, which the company launched last year with a marketing video vowing to "take down Gore-Tex." Woody Blackford, Columbia's VP of global innovation, was dressed in a white lab coat for theatrical effect. He guided me to a display that looked like something out of a well-funded high school science fair, with two hot plates sitting side by side. Blackford squeezed a drop of water onto each plate, then placed a cutout from a jacket that features OmniDry, among other exclusive technologies, onto one and a swatch of a generic jacket with an ePTFE membrane, the main ingredient in Gore-Tex, onto the other. He then placed a shallow glass cup atop each swatch. Within minutes, the cup on the OmniDry sample had fogged up. The one atop the generic swatch, meanwhile, remained mostly clear. (Several minutes later it was cloudy, too.) The reason the OmniDry cup fogged up so much faster, Blackford explained, is that the fabric is better at passing moisture vapor. In other words, it's more breathable. "If you're going to be out sweating," he asked, "which one would you want to wear—the one that stays wet or the one that gets dry?"

A few years ago, this kind of brazen, taste-test marketing against Gore-Tex would have been unheard of. Over the past three decades, Gore has become one of the most powerful and recognizable brands in the world, transforming its proprietary membrane into a household name, as synonymous with waterproof-breathable as Coke is with soda. That transformation has been

very good for the outdoor industry. Some of the largest companies on the OR floor were literally built through their affiliation with the Gore-Tex brand. According to some estimates, Gore now commands more than 70 percent of a waterproof-breathable outerwear market that didn't even exist before its membrane was developed, a market that now, by some estimates, tops a billion dollars.

Gore-Tex might be a cash cow for gear manufacturers, but you wouldn't have heard a lot of gratitude by surveying last summer's OR crowd. I asked dozens of industry veterans and designers about the unprecedented marketing attacks from Columbia and Polartec, and the first thing I noticed was the fear. Hardly anyone was willing to speak about Gore-Tex on the record. When I asked one manufacturer why people were being so coy, he told me, "Everybody hates Gore, everybody needs Gore, so everybody's afraid of Gore. They can make or break you." He was referring to an open secret among industry insiders: that Gore's licensees are afraid to work with non-Gore technologies, lest the market leader terminate their contracts.

Whispers about Gore's heavy-handed tactics have been circulating for years, but allegations have recently gotten serious enough that both federal and international regulatory agencies are involved. In the fall of 2010, Columbia and its Italian subsidiary, OutDry, a small company that specializes in waterproof-breathable technology, submitted a 55-page complaint to the Commission of the European Union. While the complaint is confidential, the grievances are said to be straightforward. "In order to maintain market dominance," Peter Bragdon, Columbia's lead counsel, recently told me, "W.L. Gore and Associates engages in unfair business practices, intimidating footwear and glove licensees into loyalty and violating antitrust laws by excluding the competition." In other words, Gore is being accused of systematically preventing manufacturers from gaining access to

competing products.

At almost exactly the same time, a “non-public” complaint against Gore was put forth to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. While the complainant’s name (or names) is confidential under federal law, and no one has publicly taken credit, the grievance was convincing enough for the FTC to launch a follow-up investigation last spring, a fairly uncommon response. “While antitrust complaints are filed at a rate of several hundred per year, only around 10 percent become full-scale investigations,” a former FTC lawyer, who requested anonymity, told me. “The government is picky.” In the meantime, outerwear heavyweights are waging a battle on terms unfamiliar to this crowd, and the otherwise collegial outdoor industry may never be the same again.

**Read the whole story**

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# **Timeshare       resale       scams surging**

**By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee**

Hey, buddy. Wanna sell your timeshare?

Here and nationwide, that pitch is increasingly hitting thousands of timeshare owners trying to unload their unused or unwanted properties. Frequently, they’re getting swindled, part of a recurring scam that takes \$2,000 or more in upfront fees for timeshare sales that never happen, say local, state and federal officials.

Doug and Armelita Stoddard are among them. The Yuba City

couple spent about \$15,000 for a one-bedroom, one-week timeshare in the Napa Valley years ago. They've rarely used it.

So last summer, when Doug was laid off from his home health nursing job, he started looking online for a place to sell his Napa timeshare. Stoddard figured the \$10,000 or so he'd likely get would help with the couple's bills and mortgage payments while he looked for a new job.

After searching online, he got a call from AAA Timeshare Inc., an Orlando, Fla.-based company. Within weeks, a company salesman announced he'd found a buyer but needed \$3,000 – in two cashier's checks – to cover “paperwork and processing fees.”

Stoddard sent the checks by overnight delivery. “They were so convincing,” recalls the 58-year-old nurse.

“They had an answer for every skeptical question I had.”

But as soon as the checks went out, the company essentially disappeared. The salesman stopped answering emails or calls. Repeated phone messages to the company went unreturned. The company's website was unresponsive.

**Read the whole story**

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## What would you do to change

# the drug culture in Tahoe?

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## Burger night to raise money for OPEN

OPEN's annual burger night fundraiser at Ernie's is April 11 from 5-7 pm.

The wait staff are volunteers, so tips are appreciated. For \$10 people get a burger (regular, with cheese, or veggie), fries and a soft drink.

OPEN – Ordinary People meeting Extraordinary Needs – helps support the medical needs of people on the South Shore.

Ernie's is on Emerald Bay Road in South Lake Tahoe.

Tickets cannot be purchased at the door. To purchase them, call David Kelley at (530) 577.8012 or email [coke.thesubstitute@gmail.com](mailto:coke.thesubstitute@gmail.com).