USFS burning piles in Angora Fire area

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will continue prescribed fire operations in the Angora Fire area near Mule Deer Circle today.

Crews will be burning piles of logs left from the mechanical thinning operation last year. Operations will continue through the end of the week and through the weekend, weather and conditions permitting.

Residents and visitors can expect to see smoke from this prescribed fire project area and smoke may be visible on Lake Tahoe Blvd. 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.

Vonn, Mancuso on top overall in super G points

By USSA

SCHLADMING, Austria -– Adding to her already historic season, Lindsey Vonn of Vail captured her 16th career Audi FIS Alpine World Cup title with a sixth place finish in Thursday’s super

G.

Teammate Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was second on the day behind German Viktoria Rebensburg to lock the number two spot in the season-long super G standings and jump to fourth in the overall.

Leanne Smith of North Conway, N.H., was fifth for a career best super G as three Americans finished in the top six.

Vonn now has 1,948 World Cup points, edging her closer to the single-season record of 2,000, held by Austrian Hermann Maier with two races remaining.

Vonn scrubbed a 1.22 second lead after her speed carried her too low into a turn near the bottom of the course.

German Viktoria Rebensburg won from bib five for the first super G victory of her career.

Fire – a reason to visit a bar or restaurant

By Susan Wood

In terms of warmth and ambiance, Lake Tahoe's best fireplace, aka woodstove, sits in my house. There's something about plunking down on a cushy sofa with clinking glasses of wine in dim light and watching the dancing wood fire through the glass while the house stays at a toasty temperature. After all, fireplace is Latin for hotbed.

When I’m out, nothing annoys me more about paying for a meal or overinflated drink (see hot drinks in *Lake Tahoe News*) than feeling as though I need to wear my jacket inside.

From Stateline to the Y, I found many South Shore restaurant and bar fireplaces (most use gas) emit limited heat – adding fuel to the debate whether they’re more of a mood enhancer than heat source. The same debate could be made for the more than 32 million fireplaces in U.S. households, according to the Census Bureau.



Fire pits at the Village at Northstar overlook the ice rink. Photo/Kathryn Reed

But back to business – I would say the fire pits in the Northstar Village in Truckee rate high on my list as the most desired experience in front of a fire. Kae and I had just finished skiing on a glorious sunny day, ordered a few hot drinks and collapsed on the comfy sofas about a foot away from the ornate fire pit. The fire radiated enough heat that I took off a layer and my boots to curl my feet under me. We weren’t alone. A yard sale of sorts could be found on the other sofas. A few bars flanked the village area surrounding the ice rink, where we enjoyed entertainment for our R&R.

All the right elements for a good time – yes, the North Shore

has it down. And on another Northstar note, check out the Ritz Carlton bar at mid-mountain. They have a few fireplaces with cushy chairs I could easily spend the night on.

On the South Shore, the Blue Angel Café on Ski Run Boulevard does a lot of things right, including food, service and atmosphere. The fireplace is an extra amenity. If you're lucky enough to get a front row seat on the sofa at the fireplace, you'll definitely know why it's busy in a bad economy.

A block down from the restaurant, the Black Bear Inn has the kind of fireplace to sit in front of for hours. If you're ordering dinner there, you'll be treated to a grand-scale fireplace that is the closest to resembling my all-time favorite – the one in the main lobby of the luxurious, historic Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite National Park. If you think the Black Bear's lobby fireplace makes you warm and fuzzy inside, try staying at the Snowshoe Thompson cabin where the dual-sided fireplace provides the utmost in heat and ambiance.

As bars go, one table in front of the fireplace at the Riva Grill at the Ski Run Marina offers an ideal backdrop two ways. Out the window you get a view of Lake Tahoe. Inside, a large hearth measuring at least 4-feet across sets a relaxing mood. I backed my chair next to the fire for full-scale warmth. Otherwise, other tables would seem to provide a basic experience.

For view, ambiance and a little extra warmth, Edgewood Tahoe's Brook's Bar in Stateline has the best-kept secret for those who usually believe the golf course is for summer use only. The bar is now open in winter, and this means staff may light at least one of the outdoor fire pits on the deck and put chairs around them. I recently went there for lunch and witnessed a few women enjoying standing in the sun next to the pits with glasses of Champagne in hand. That's decadence.

On the North Shore, nothing comes close to the fire pits – yes, on the beach – at the Hyatt's Lone Eagle Bar and Grill in Incline Village. When there's a nip in the air, nothing beats sitting in the large Adirondack chairs with a beverage in hand watching boats soar by on Lake Tahoe.

The fire pits at the Fire and Ice restaurant and bar in Heavenly Village get a crowd surrounding them, but the chairs are not comfortable.

It's true – location, location, location is key. Another example where picking the table will make an experience can be found at the Fresh Ketch at the Tahoe Keys Marina. The Fresh Ketch bar often lures me to the high tables to play Backgammon. However, I sometimes fantasize about grabbing the table in front of the fireplace. It's a nice touch situated within inches from the hearth.

The proximity from table to small fireplace is what I liked once about the Brewery on Highway 50, but getting that table may demonstrate it's easier to win the lottery.

Lake Tahoe Pizza's bar west of the Y could get the table-to-fireplace location hint. We actually moved the high table two feet over to the gas unit. This fireplace left me baffled because it was chilly one minute and warmed up another. It gets points though for a touch of decor. With the two large fireplace tools to the side, it became obvious that the insert was placed in a very large wood fireplace space.

It's also an added plus Zephyr Cove Resort's restaurant has a built-in fireplace unit, but the open-air environment and bar forcing patrons to face the other way misses the mark on the experience.

Kae and I agree bar patrons over the restaurant crowd are more apt to enjoy a fireplace based on the level of comfort. Let's face it. You're not going to take your shoes off, slouch in your chair and turn your body slightly away from your dinner

companion. Nonetheless, the fireplace gets a few marks for having a mantel much like you would at home.

The National Association of Home Builders rates a fireplace as one of 12 factors that significantly raise the value of a home.

The homey feature started with the cave dwellers and has been used by some form of culture for cooking and heat in the last million years. Cave men and women dug holes in the ground until fireplaces evolved into wall units in the 1100s. They rose to second floors of homes in the 1500s and became more of a design feature 100 years later in England. In 1678, designers raised the grate to improve airflow, thus fueling the fire.

One notable inventor, Benjamin Franklin, came up with his namesake stove that sat in the middle of the room in Philadelphia in the 1740s. The idea caught on and woodstoves joined fireplaces as household words.

Evening at Dragonfly raises money for KidZone Museum

Everyone is invited to Big Night Out – Disco on April 28 at Dragonfly restaurant in Truckee from 5:30-11pm to raise money for KidZone Museum.

Tickets cost $40 per person in advance and $45 at the door. They include three complimentary drinks (beer and wine), dinner, dance music by disc jockey Brian Hess, a silent and live auction and raffle.

Go online for tickets.

KidZone Museum is a nationally recognized children’s museum that is striving to see some big dreams come true in 2012. One vision is to broaden the museum’s reach and extend its programs to more children and their families in the Truckee-Lake Tahoe region.

Community colleges looking at ways to trim budgets

Publisher's note: ***A spokeswoman for Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe said the elimination of summer school is not being considered as a way to deal with a shrinking budget.***

By Richard Bammer, Vacaville Reporter

Seeking to relieve some fiscal pressure before the start of fall classes, Solano Community College leaders canceled the summer session at its four campuses, shaving $1 million from the 2012-13 budget.

"It's painful to have to do this," Jowel Laguerre, the Fairfield-based college's superintendent-president, said shortly after issuing a press release.

Alluding to the prospect of getting rosier financial reports from the state Department of Finance, he said, "The thinking was it's going to get better and it hasn't."

The decision, which top college staff members made late Thursday before making it public Friday, accomplishes several things, Laguerre noted.

Besides the budget reduction, it will allow the college to keep a mostly full schedule of classes in the fall and spring semesters; protect more faculty and staff jobs; provide a financial cushion if voters reject Gov. Jerry Brown's November tax initiative; and brings expenses and revenues into a closer balance, he said.

"We have run classes for 500 to 600 more students than the state pays us for," Laguerre said. He noted the decision not to offer summer classes gives SCC "a more secure financial

base.”

Expressing a note of caution, he said that if Brown’s tax initiative – the Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act of 2012 – fails, then the college faces an additional $2.2 million cut in January, he said.

“We have to plan in a way that the potential for the revenues not to be there is real,” said Laguerre, who oversees 9,100 students, and 160 full-time and 400 part-time faculty.

Read the whole story

TAP – 25 years of bringing performing arts to students

By Kathryn Reed

Performing arts is more like a disappearing act for many small communities – especially for the schools in those towns.

Not so on the South Shore.

With an annual budget of $100,000, Tahoe Arts Project is able to bring three to four shows a year to more than 5,000 children from Alpine County to Lake Tahoe Unified to Douglas County.

Peggy Thompson, executive director of the nonprofit, has been with the organization for nearly 20 of the 25 years it has been around.

Asked how TAP has been successful for a quarter century, she told *Lake Tahoe News*, "I think a lot of it is people realize the importance of providing these programs to children who otherwise would not be able to experience any type of live performing arts."

Usually it's new groups that come to the schools, but in honor of this being the silver anniversary, Thompson and her board decided to bring back three favorites. The Standards – an a capella of five brothers – were in town in September; the comedic-juggling Gizmo Guys played in January; and Manding Jata – music and dance of West Africa – will be here next week.

Besides the performance these professionals put on, they all come with an educational component. For example, The Standards for the younger grade levels talked about nutrition, exercise and health, while the middle and high school students heard an anti-bullying message.

In addition to the week of school assemblies, each act puts on a show for the public. This year MontBleu in Stateline has donated its show room for those performances.

Each year the Missoula Children's Theater comes in the fall and summer. This allows youngsters who have never acted a chance to try the craft.

Thompson says the most difficult part is negotiating a contract because TAP has such a limited budget.

Revenue for the nonprofit comes from various fundraisers including the July fine arts festival, service clubs and donations from the public. Grants used to be a larger component of the budget, but those are drying up.

It was Harriet Goldman who founded TAP in 1987. She had moved to Tahoe from the Bay Area with her two kids and was appalled to find the schools had no performing arts, Thompson said.

With volunteers and the support of Lake Tahoe Unified, the program started in a couple schools and grew from there.

In some ways things have not changed. The schools could not bring this caliber of performing arts on their own.

“Through the programming committee and the board we work hard in the selection process. We bring in a variety,” Thompson said. Talks are under way now with performers who will come in the 2012-13 school year.

“In the next 25 years or before I leave I would like to see a performing arts center. I think we could do more if we had a space,” Thompson said.

———

Info to know:

• TAP is online, with a new website coming soon.

• Manding Jata public show is March 23, 7pm at MontBleu. Tickets are $12 for adults, youth and seniors $8. Call (530) 542.3632 or buy them at the door.

Driving class for new, young drivers

Start Smart is aimed at helping newly licensed and future licensed teenage drivers become aware of the responsibilities that accompany the privilege of being a licensed California driver.

The program was created in an effort to preemptively reduce the incidence of teen injuries and deaths resulting from motor vehicle collisions.

Teen drivers and their parents/guardians are invited to attend and participate in a Start Smart class March 19 from 6-8pm at South Tahoe High School library.

All classes are free. To reserve a space, call (530) 577.1001.

El Dorado County political candidates' forum

The Tea Party Patriots of El Dorado Hills are hosting a candidates forum March 21 at 7pm.

Those expected to attend are Superior Court judge candidates Stephen Valentine, Joseph Hoffman and Warren Stracener, and supervisor candidates John Knight (District 1 incumbent) and challenger Ron Mikulaco, and Ray Nutting (District 2 incumbent) and challenger George Turnboo.

The forum will be at the Holiday Inn Express, 4360 Town Center Blvd., El Dorado Hills.

U.S. women win team downhill competition

By USSA

SCHLADMING, Austria -– After the points were tallied from Wednesday's season ending Audi FIS Alpine World Cup downhill, the women's U.S. Ski Team won the nations' downhill standings by a 636 point margin over Austria.

Lindsey Vonn of Vail, Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley, Stacey Cook of Mammoth Mountain, Alice McKennis of Glenwood Springs, Colo., Laurenne Ross of Bend, Ore., and Leanne Smith of North Conway, N.H., combined for 1,417 points to defend the title they had first secured in 2011.

It was the second consecutive season that the U.S. Ski Team had won the women's downhill standings.

Vonn won the individual downhill title for a record fifth straight season.

Mancuso was fifth in the standings, Cook 10th, McKennis 20, Ross 22 and Smith 25.

All six athletes posted top 10 finishes this season with McKennis, Ross and Smith landing career bests in downhill.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Even though the lease has not been signed between TJ Maxx and owners of the building at the Y in South Lake Tahoe, the clothing store's sign is made and permits are in place for tenant improvements.

• Sierra Nevada College ski and snowboard team members will take flight against fellow SNC students in a big air contest and dual slalom exhibition on March 24 at Diamond Peak Ski Resort from noon-4:30pm.

• Local attorney and Judge Pro Tem Joseph Hoffman has announced his candidacy for El Dorado County Superior Court Judge, Office 7.

• Most of the bonds for South Lake Tahoe's recreation measure have been converted to taxable to appease the IRS regulations so a private entity can operate the taxpayer-funded ice rink.

• South Lake Tahoe passed an ordinance making it illegal to possess spice or bath salts.

• The first planning meeting for the 2012 Festival of Trees & Lights is March 21 at 5:30pm. For details, call Natalie at (530) 543.5909.