Identities of twin sisters released

The twin 73-year-old sisters who were found dead in their South Lake Tahoe home last month have been identified as Patricia and Joan Miller.

A definitive cause of death has not been determined, however, foul play has been ruled out.

El Dorado County sheriff's deputies have released their names in hopes of locating next of kin.

Friends and neighbors have told deputies the sisters were entertainers in the Bay Area, regularly appearing on the weekly television show "The Hoffman Hayride" in the 1950s. They also entertained troops at several military bases. And their mother played the piano for them.

The Millers were originally from Portland. Neither ever married.

Anyone with information regarding Patricia and Joan Miller is asked to contact Detective Matt Harwood at (530) 573.3015.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Contest for students to demonstrate water efficiency

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

The Water Spots Video Contest will offer cash prizes to high school students who create the best videos encouraging outdoor water efficiency.

The contest is open to high school students from Sacramento, Placer and El Dorado counties, and the city of West Sacramento.

Winners will be announced at a Sacramento River Cats game, and winning spots will be displayed on the giant screen at Raley Field. The winning students' teachers also will earn cash prizes.

The grand prize winner's spot will become part of a Regional Water Authority's television advertisement and campaign this year promoting a new efficiency program.

Videos must show people how to use outdoor water more efficiently.

The contest is a partnership between the Regional Water Authority and *Sacramento Bee's* Media in Education program

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Reading from 'Edge'

Tahoe Writers Works will host a reading from the fifth volume of the annual literary journal "EDGE" at 88 Cups Coffee in Minden on March 10 at 1pm.

Select contributors will be on hand to sign the journal.

“EDGE” is an award-winning literary journal published each year by Tahoe Writers Works. It features provocative fiction, poetry, essays, and art, from artists both local and global.

Tahoe Writers Works is a nonprofit organization based. Each year, the group organizes events to create a stronger

literary and arts community, including Bare Bones Open Mic and Murder Mystery Theater at Valhalla.

For more information, go online.

Minden snowmobiler dies in avalanche

By Kathryn Reed

A Minden man died March 2 after his snowmobile was buried in an avalanche in the Blue Lakes area off Highway 88.

Daniel Kuhner, 35, was riding with friends when the sleds triggered the avalanche that was about 150-feet-wide.

Because of the unstable snow his body could not be recovered until the following day. Kirkwood Ski Patrol used explosives to stabilize the area, which in turn triggered a second avalanche in the vicinity of the initial slide.

“Friends snowmobiling with the victim utilized their avalanche beacons, snow probes and shovels to locate and dig out the victim from beneath 3 to 4 feet of snow. The friends rode their snowmobiles back to the Blue Lakes Snow Park to report

the incident and that the victim was obviously deceased," according to the Alpine County Sheriff's Office.

The avalanche occurred about 3:30pm March 2.

"The avalanche carried him down the slope and into trees. The slide buried the snowmobiler," according to the Sierra Avalanche Center.

This is the second avalanche death this month in the Sierra. A North Shore man died from injuries he sustained when he triggered an avalanche while skiing in the backcountry near Alpine Meadows.

California tsunami warning system may be disbanded

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Less than a year after surging waves from a Japanese earthquake battered the California coast, causing $58 million in damage and wrecking the Santa Cruz and Crescent City harbors, the Obama administration is moving to reduce funding for the nation's tsunami warning and preparedness programs.

The White House's proposed 2013 budget would cut $4.6 million from NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, for tsunami programs that were expanded after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that killed at least 230,000 people.

Among the proposed cuts: a reduction of $1 million for

America’s network of 39 high-tech buoys in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The buoys confirm if tsunamis are heading toward the

U.S. and provide crucial details such as the height of the waves and when they’ll hit land.

Some of the nation’s top tsunami scientists say the proposed cuts are too risky.

“Given how little money it is and the concerns about human life, this is a poor place to cut,” said John Orcutt, a professor of geophysics at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla.

“It’s just like large earthquakes,” he said. “The half-life of attention is measured in shorter and shorter periods of time. Our memory isn’t very long.”

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Adriana is a special little kitten. She is very friendly and energetic, and wants to be around people and other cats as much as possible.



She has very pretty blue-gray fur, and is quite playful. You would never know that Adriana is blind based on the way she gets around and likes to explore. She has been blind from birth.

She will make a very nice pet in a home where only minor accommodations are needed.

Adriana is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes.

Go to Pet Finder to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• March is National Small Press month. Celebrate by dropping into Bona Fide HQ (1069 Magua St., No. 4, Meyers) to support the area's only small press by purchasing one of their titles like "Permanent Vacation" and check out the selection of books by local authors.

• Jack Wagner, 2011 American Century Celebrity Golf Championship winner, will be back July 20-22 to defend his title. But before he returns to Lake Tahoe he will be competing in ABC's "Dancing With the Stars" this month.

• Check out this website to find out what dogs and autism have to do with one another.

• The North American Snowsports Journalist Association national conference is on the South Shore March 5-9.

• Storytime will be presented completely in Spanish at the South Lake Tahoe library at 6pm March 7, 14, 21, and 28.

Opinion: Measure B is bad for business

To the community,

The South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce opposes Measure B and the increase in taxes for any business at this time.

Measure B comes from the perspective of assessing a business greater taxes and fees based solely on the number of employees that business has. Gross receipts and number of employees are the indicators, without perspective of costs or true profit margins.

It removes the cap on business license fees, which means the more a business earns, the more it pays. While in theory that may sound attractive, there is no consideration for the expenses of paying employees a decent wage, nor does this consider the wide gap in profit margins. One large business may be paying to conform with new federal and state mandates, new local mandates, and have additional fees for upgrades to licenses, etc. A different kind of business may have a large number of employees, but none of these mandates, especially if

they use contract employees.

A business in the city of South Lake Tahoe pays a business license fee, a county DBA fee, and must advertise at their expense to announce this DBA. They may have to pay an additional home occupation fee. If they also work in the county, there is a business license fee. If they sell or work with anyone who sells or gives away even ice, there are environmental reports to be filed. If they buy and resell items, there is a resell license fee. They pay liability and D O insurance. If they plan an event to promote their business, they pay the city for a permit. If they are a store front business, they have all the above expenses in addition to rent or property taxes if they own the building in which their business operates.

Some business owners pay original and renewable licensing or credential fees, as in Realtors, contractors, food handlers, health clearances, and often have to pay to take classes to stay current. Larger businesses pay benefit costs for their employees and state and federal taxes, including disability and social security. Many are also facing increased mandates by the state and federal governments.

All businesses in the city of South Lake Tahoe were hit this past year by the stated intent to enforce the sign ordinance. The council also enacted a new ordinance, the snow removal ordinance, which also adds to the cost of doing business in the city of South Lake Tahoe. It is also our concern that this does not create an attractive environment for large business to come to, or stay in, South Lake Tahoe.

It stands to reason that an increase in taxes and fees will either cause the business to close it’s doors, pull out of Tahoe, lay off or cut hours for more employees, or raise the rates to the consumers in South Lake Tahoe. More unemployed people or people with hours that have been cut mean less money to be spent in the smaller businesses in South Lake Tahoe.

Locals keep some of these businesses alive in the shoulder seasons; where will that disposable income be if their hours are cut?

It is our belief that if the taxes and license fees are raised on these large businesses, more employees will lose their jobs. It also removes the cap on the fees, which in our estimation would result in higher fees for many businesses. Rate increases for consumers may also be a result.

Government must stop going to business to fund excessive expenditures. Please join the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and vote no on Measure B.

JoAnn Conner — **President**
David Kelly — **Executive director**
Danny Freeman — **Past president**
Dick Van Buskirk — **Board member at large**

Casino group fighting gaming tax increase

By Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

CARSON CITY – The Nevada Resort Association, a group of major casino owners, says an initiative petition to raise gaming taxes is confusing and fails to tell the voter the full story.

The petition doesn’t provide any insight into how much money will be generated or who will pay the fees.

The association, represented by attorney Matt Griffin, filed papers on Wednesday in District Court to support its lawsuit arguing that the petition should be declared defective.

Las Vegas businessman Monte Miller filed the initiative petition with the secretary of states office on Feb. 7 to boost the gambling tax on big casinos from 6 percent to 9 percent on gross revenue.

Attorney Maggie McLetchie, a spokeswoman for Miller, said she was “not surprised” and expected the Resort Association would “do all they could to keep this out of the hands of the voters.”

Read the whole story

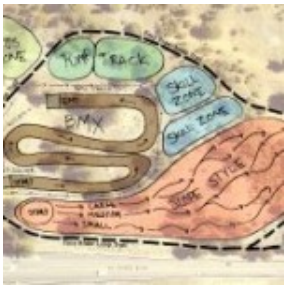
South Tahoe pedaling toward creating mountain bike park

By Kathryn Reed

Strap on a helmet and skip the wilderness, Bijou Community Park may be the place to mountain bike.

About 4 acres of this South Lake Tahoe park off Al Tahoe Boulevard may become home of the Bijou Bike Park. Proponents would like to build the pump track and kids skill zone this summer, with relocation of the BMX track coming in 2013, and a slope style course built in 2014.

The South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Commission discussed the ideas at its meeting last week, with the City Council expected to vote on the idea at the March 20 meeting.



Proposed components of Bijou Bike Park. Rendering/Design Workshop

“It could be a great thing for the community and no cost to the city,” Community Services Director Stan Sherer told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said with adventure sports growing, the facility would provide an opportunity to draw events that would lure tourists to the area while at the same providing locals with a place to play.

Other than the land and possibly some maintenance and in-kind labor, the city will not put money out for the project.

To-date, conceptual plans have been put together by Design Workshop. South Lake Tahoe BMX and TAMBA, the local mountain biking club, are spearheading the movement.

When TAMBA was resurrected last year many people talked about creating a pump track on the South Shore.

According to Bikes and Berms, “A pump track is a continuous loop that can be ridden on a bike without pedaling. Tracks consist of a series of rolling bumps (rollers) and banked corners (berms) that allow the rider to gain momentum and reach speeds of up to 20 mph. Basic pump tracks are an oval shape with a berm at each end and rollers in between to make the straights. More advanced pump tracks will be irregular

shapes with lots of different lines and sections with several berms in a row or even rollers that can be jumped over."

Having the BMX track in the same area would make for a natural complement for cyclists. Plus, Lake Tahoe Unified School District officials want to have that land back.

"I can tell you that the land where the BMX track sits is identified as part of expanding track and field amenities, specifically a discus course. However, there is no time line set for the move as of now. The BMX Association will continue to operate hosting races and practices on a weekly basis in 2012," Lauren Thomaselli, president of South Lake Tahoe BMX, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This is the 11th year the track has been open. And it's the only sanctioned BMX track in the country on public school property.

"The BMX track would consist of a series of earth berms, jumps and table tops with a mechanized starting gate and some form of bleachers for spectator seating. The mountain bike skills park would be comprised of more 'built' features that are obviously design[ed] and engineered," according to material supplied by the cycling groups. "The focus of the bike park is to provide skill graded progression for beginner to expert riders by helping to develop a wide range of bike skills including balancing, bike handling and jumping."

The only things likely to be disturbed in Bijou Park are a couple exercise stations.

Sherer said the cost of the bike park is unknown. But he also said it could be a revenue source for the city if it were to be built.