Storm could upgrade already decent ski conditions

By Kathryn Reed

It's Saturday afternoon and the slopes of Heavenly Mountain Resort are noticeably lacking people – at least for this time of day in mid-February.

For those who are taking advantage of the groomers, coverage and conditions are good considering this has been the winter that Mother Nature forgot. Obstacles for the most part are adequately marked.



Chairlifts are full, but lift lines minimal at Heavenly on Feb. 11. Photos/Kathryn Reed

With people in the Bay Area being scared off by the lack of snow and not understanding the concept of snowmaking and the mechanics of grooming, it means people can be distributed throughout the mountain even though less than half of Heavenly's terrain is open.

But Monday all of this could change if forecasters are correct.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for light to moderate snow tonight and into Monday. A winter weather advisory has been issued from midnight through 4 pm Monday.

Four to 8 inches of snow could drop at lake level, with up to a foot above 7,000 feet.

It might mean tree skiing will open up. This weekend it has a bit of a different meaning by the looks of Dipper Bowl off the Comet chairlift. Tiny trees are visible on what is normally a fun run.



More snow would keep the reservoir by East Peak full.

The Monday morning commute over Sierra passes is expected to be unpleasant with slick conditions, blowing snow and chain requirements.

Forecasters say there is a chance the white stuff will stick around into Wednesday. Temperatures are expected to be in the mid-30s in the Lake Tahoe Basin for the first half of the week, with overnight lows dropping to the teens on Monday and Tuesday.

Canines welcome at black tie fundraiser

Dressed to the nines, with leash in hand. That is what Feb. 18 is all about at the Ritz Carlton in Lake Tahoe.



A Champagne celebration to people's best friends wouldn't be the same without them present, which is why the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe invites pooches and their people to the fourth annual gala.

Support the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe while enjoying a black-tie evening of dinner and dancing. Tickets are $150 for one person and one dog. Call (530) 587.5948 to purchase tickets. The event starts at 5:30pm.

Search and rescue training brings mega-helicopters to Tahoe

Don't be alarmed if you see and hear Blackhawk helicopters today. It's all in the name of training.

A big search and rescue training event is going on Sunday at

Vikingsholm where medics will be working as though there are victims on the cliff.

The public will not be allowed in the area.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Wind hampers World Cup events; neither Vonn nor Mancuso make podium

By USSA

SOLDEU-GRANDVALIRA, Andorra – Three-time Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall champion Lindsey Vonn of Vail was hit by gusts of swirling wind, yet powered to eighth in the Soldeu giant slalom on Sunday. Tessa Worely of France won to overtake the giant slalom points lead as Slovenia's Tina Maze was second to cut Vonn's still sizeable overall lead to 410 points with six weeks remaining in the season.

The women's World Cup tour now moves to Sochi, Russia, for a downhill and super combined, which will serve as test events for the 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

Wind continued to plague the weekend blowing inconsistently throughout the race and lowering the second run start by 20 seconds

Wind canceled a rescheduled giant slalom that was to take place on Feb. 10.

Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was 16th and Mikaela Shiffrin of Eagle-Vail was 26th for the first World Cup giant slalom points of her career

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S. Tahoe's Bowman makes podium in halfpipe

By USSA

SNOWBASIN, Utah – Devin Logan of West Dover, Vt., won the women's halfpipe on the Dew Tour in Snowbasin, Utah, while claiming the Dew Tour Cup. She was also named the tour's Paul Mitchell Breakout Athlete of the Year for her consistent podiums throughout the Dew Tour.

Newly named to the U.S. Freeskiing Team, Maddie Bowman of South Lake Tahoe was third, continuing her consistent podium showings.

Next up the halfpipe athletes head to Mammoth Mountain for the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix taking place Feb. 29-March 3.

Wise snags second consecutive

halfpipe victory

By USSA

SNOWBASIN, Utah – David Wise of Reno continued his winning streak at Dew Tour in Snowbasin, Utah, winning his second straight halfpipe event Saturday.

Wise's first run won the evening for him as his did his first ever 1440 in the halfpipe in his second run and couldn't get to his feet.

"I'm on a hot streak for sure. It's fun to be out here enjoying the sport. Landing runs," Wise said. "I've been around in the scene for a long time and did a lot of finals where I just didn't quite get the run the way I wanted to. So just being able to land runs and just enjoy doing what I do has been awesome. And that's honestly what's made the difference for me."

France's Kevin Rolland came in second place and won the Dew Tour Cup while 16-year-old Torin Yater-Wallace of Basalt, Colo., landed on his third straight podium. His perfectly executed double cork 1260 in his second run landed him in third.

Next up the halfpipe athletes head to Mammoth Mountain for the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix taking place Feb. 29-March 3.

Nevada hires audit team to track cigarette taxes

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – The Nevada Legislature's Interim Finance Committee approved a request from the Department of Taxation for $260,000 to hire a team of auditors to track cigarette sales to protect a $40 million a year payment to Nevada from the nation's major tobacco companies.

"The reason for the request is that Nevada is involved in a nationwide arbitration with a group of tobacco companies over the Master Settlement Agreement," said William Chisel, director of the Tax Department. "The stakes of the arbitration are high. Nevada's potential liability is up to $40 million for calendar year 2003. Nevada is also potentially liable for each subsequent year to the current totaling about $360 million."

Chisel said it is important for the state to monitor the sales of cigarettes by the smaller tobacco companies that are not part of the MSA. The MSA has resulted in payments to Nevada and most other states since the agreement was finalized in 1998.

As part of the MSA, there is a requirement that these smaller companies set aside a portion of their tobacco sales in an escrow account in an amount proportionate to the payments made to the state by the major tobacco companies. The MSA provides for a reduction of the required annual payments by the major tobacco companies to any state which fails to adequately enforce these laws in a particular calendar year.

Chisel said the team will work to protect the payments that have already been made to the state.

The tobacco payments help fund the Gov. Kenny Guinn Millennium Scholarship for eligible Nevada high school graduates, among other programs.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Eight wineries of the El Dorado Winery Association will be pouring Syrahs on Feb. 16 from 5:30-7:30pm at the El Dorado Hills California Welcome Center, 2085 Vine St., Ste. 105, El Dorado Hills.

• North Lake Tahoe Realtor Alison Elder was awarded 2011 Realtor of the Year by Chase International.

• Unity at the Lake's silent meditation is each Tuesday and Friday at noon at 1195 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe (across from the rec center). Meet in the small chapel in the Annex.

• Another reason to be a vegetarian: Beef prices are expected to climb 10 percent in the next two years because the U.S. has the smallest cattle herd since the 1950s. According to the USDA, a pound of hamburger sold for $2.38 on average in December 2010 compared to $2.92 a year later – an increase of 23 percent.

• Carson City was named the country's No. 3 Family Destination for its old west heritage, special events and value by away.com.

Nevada updating historical markers before centennial celebration

The Nevada Historical Marker Program is taking on a new look with the adoption of updated texts for the roughly 260 signs that interpret the history of the state. Amended texts have been placed online and the actual markers in the field will be changed as funding allows.

The Nevada Historical Marker Program began as part of the celebration of the Nevada Centennial in 1964. The Nevada State Historic Preservation Office manages the markers, but most funding for the program was eliminated during the recent economic downturn.

In anticipation of the celebration for Nevada's 150th birthday in 2014, the Historic Preservation Office has completed a review of all marker texts.

Most markers date to the 1960s and 1970s.

The Historic Preservation Office said that nearly 80 markers are in need of replacement. Each plate costs approximately $1,000, meaning that about $80,000 will be needed to replace the markers that need updated language. The Nevada Department of Transportation provides support to maintain existing markers, but there is no means to change marker texts or to install new markers.

In order to present the best possible information to Nevada's

residents and tourists, the Nevada Foundation for Cultural Affairs is accepting donations from individuals and businesses wishing to donate money for the updated markers.

Contact Ron James at (775) 684.3440 or email rjames@shpo.nv.gov for more information.

Opinion: Climate-change solutions depend on open dialogue

By Thomas Hayden

Katharine Hayhoe is a busy woman. As an atmospheric scientist at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, she studies the regional impact of climate change. As a Christian, she volunteers, sharing her science with church and public groups. And as the mother of a young child – well, enough said.

So it's not surprising she was frustrated when a chapter about climate science she wrote for an upcoming Newt Gingrich book was casually dumped by the Republican presidential primary candidate in the lead up to the Iowa caucuses. "Nice to hear that Gingrich is tossing my #climate chapter in the trash," she wrote in a message to her Twitter followers on Dec. 30. "100+ unpaid hrs I cd've spent playing w my baby."

What happened? The 2012 Republican primary season happened, that's what. In a year when contenders could be leading in the polls one week and down in single digits the next, the list of policy positions candidates can't afford not to hold has grown. To the traditional litany of taxes (no way), guns

(absolutely) and abortion (never), add a new Republican litmus test: climate change (not even if the science says it’s so).

Throughout the Great Winnowing, Republican primary candidates have been rushing to distance themselves from the scientific consensus on climate change – that it’s happening, it’s a problem, and humans are the cause. They’re not simply rejecting specific climate policies. Just acknowledging the vast, well-documented evidence that humans are changing the planet’s climate has apparently become forbidden.

That has any number of prominent Republicans worrying their party has become antiscience. But it also raises a deeper question: If we can’t even agree on observable, verifiable facts, how are we supposed to govern ourselves in a democracy?

Thomas Hayden teaches science communication and environmental sustainability at Stanford University. He is a trained scientist and has worked as a journalist for Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report and other publications.

Read the whole story