Truckee man part of U.S. Standup Paddleboard Team

By Sparks Tribune

COSTA MESA – Truckee resident Jay Wild has been selected as a member of the United States Standup Paddleboard Team in the upcoming World Championship in Miraflores, Peru, Feb. 20 through 25.

This first of its kind event pits individual standup athletes together into a team event, much like the Davis Cup in tennis or golf's Ryder Cup.

Wild will compete in the standup paddle (SUP) elite race event, a 4.5-km technical slalom course around buoys placed inside the surf zone. Elite race courses are typically the most exciting for spectators because of the challenging design of the course and frequent collisions in the surf.

Joining Wild on the U.S. team is Matt Becker from Santa Barbara, Calif., who will also compete in the elite race; Rob Rojas from Dana Point, who will handle the distance race; and former World Longboard Champion Colin McPhillips from San Clemente, who will compete in the SUP surf event with Florida's Sean Poytner.

Read the whole story

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3 American women in top 9 in

downhill at Cortina

By USSA

CORTINA d’AMPEZZO, Italy – Lindsey Vonn of Vail fought gusting winds to finish second on the Olympia della Tofane downhill in Cortina today.

Stacey Cook of Mammoth was sixth and Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was ninth.

Italian Deniella Marighetti captured the first victory of her career.

Vonn now leads the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall standings by 244 points and the downhill standings by 127. Mancuso is sixth in the World Cup downhill standings, with Cook 10th.

Cook’s sixth-place finish ties for her third-best career World Cup result.

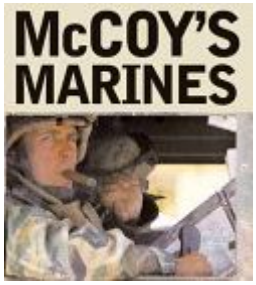
“It (the wind) was definitely was a factor, and I’m not really sure what side of it I was on. I know that I definitely had some wind over the first jump, and I wasn’t sure how I was going to pull out of it. If it was any bigger, I think it would have taken me,” Cook said. “I felt a little out of control at the bottom, which usually means you’re going fast.”

Iraq war from a journalist’s

perspective

By Kathryn Reed

It took me more than seven years to finally open “McCoy’s Marines: Darkside to Baghdad”. Then it took me a week to read the 304-page hardcover (which is in paperback now).



I couldn’t read this book by John Koopman when it came out in 2004 because I was inundated with news about the war in Iraq. And more personally, my nephew is in the Army. He served two stints in Iraq.

While the war was and is personal for so many people on a much deeper level than it is for me, I just couldn’t spend my leisure time reading about it.

Then something hit me earlier this month. It was a report on the TV news about the number of journalists killed in the Iraq conflict – about how more died in this war than any other. In large part it has to do with the number of journalists who were in the Mideast compared to other wars.

Then with the U.S. pullout from Iraq it seemed like now would be a good time to tackle the book.

(My nephew is still in the Army; now with Special Forces, so the danger continues.)

A friend and former colleague wrote the book. We worked together at the *San Francisco Examiner* (when it was a real paper) and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

“McCoy’s Marines” is about Koopman’s time spent as an embedded reporter with the Marines. I know I have a skewed view – I know the editors he writes about, I have met his wife and son. And part of me always wanted to be a war reporter, so this let

me live the experience vicariously though my friend.

Even though I have some personal connections to the book, I would still recommend it to anyone who wants to get a glimpse into the world of what it's like for a reporter traveling with a military unit during war.

Despite the title, it's Koopman's story much more than it is Lt. Gen. Bryan McCoy's. What this account does that news stories didn't do was put a human element on the war. It shows some of the fears the men and women in uniform had.

Interspersed are emails from people in the United States reaching out to Koopman in an attempt to make contact with their loved one whom he is traveling. Most of the emails are heartfelt, while some attacked Koopman. I thought including them brought a broader perspective to what goes on during war.

Koopman is still in the Bay Area, now working as a freelance writer.

LTVA attempts to lure motorcyclists with money

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Expect to see hundreds of touring motorcyclists on the South Shore in August.

The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority on Jan. 12 authorized

$15,000 for the inaugural Lake Tahoe Moto Adventure. The Tahoe-Douglas Visitors Authority is putting $5,000 toward the event.



Mike Frye, who is the events guru for LTVA, said the Street Vibrations crowd is not the demographic tourism officials want to bring to this area.

Of the touring biker crowd, he said, “They probably don’t have a six-shooter in their pocket.” This was in reference to the gunfight last year in Reno involving Street Vibrations participants.

Touring riders are in the 35- to 65-year-old group, with a household income of more than $100,000.

The touring event is tentatively set for the last weekend of August, with MontBleu being the host hotel. During the day on and off road rides would be staged throughout the area. Vendors would be set up at the casino.

“The other piece is we’d have guest speakers these guys want to hear and other activities,” Frye told the LTVA board at the Thursday meeting.

He estimates the economic impact on the South Shore ranging from $100,000 to $500,000. The span is based on a participation guess of 200 to 500 people.

Mike Bradford, who is on the TDVA board, told his LTVA counterparts, “No one else is doing anything like this. People know this niche is not being satisfied.”

A member of the audience, who is also a motorcycle owner, questioned whether summer 2012 is logical when Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe will be torn up again, causing delays. The

board in its unanimous vote to fund the event didn't make mention of the Caltrans project. (Tom Davis was absent.)

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Calstar landed at the top of Harveys on Jan. 10 to pick up a $21,400 check from the casino company so the air ambulance operator can buy night vision equipment.

• Another point-of-view regarding SnowGlobe from someone who was there from out of town.

• *Las Vegas Review-Journal* Publisher Bob Brown and Northern Nevada consultant Neena Laxalt are leading the committee to plan Nevada's 150th birthday bash in 2014.

• Northstar is having a S'moresapalooza in the Village at Northstar on Jan. 15 at 3:30pm.

• Assemblywoman Beth Gaines, R- Roseville, received A grade from the National Federation of Independent Business, the nation's top advocate for small businesses and job creation, for her strong, pro-business voting record. Her husband, state Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, scored 100 percent from the same group.

Nevada seeks waiver from No Child Left Behind

Publisher's note: ***Nevada Department of Education is taking a survey about No Child Left Behind until Jan. 27.***

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – Nevada is joining with many other states in seeking a waiver from the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, a state panel was told this week.

If granted, the waiver being sought by the Nevada Department of Education will still require a major ongoing effort at measuring and improving student achievement, said Keith Rheault, state superintendent of public instruction. Rheault updated the waiver effort for the P-16 Advisory Council.

The waiver being offered by the U.S. Department of Education gives states flexibility on certain requirements of the law, which just saw its 10-year anniversary. The waiver is only valid for two years, however, unless Congress takes further action, Rheault said.

"The biggest complaint about No Child Left Behind right now is that if one or two students in a particular category, like special education students, fall below the proficiency, that can cause the whole school to be determined as not making adequate yearly progress," he said.

Fifty-five percent of Nevada's 680 public schools failed to meet adequate yearly progress for 2011.

“Nevada will take this opportunity to build the type of school and educator accountability system that reflects our values,” says a Nevada Education Department memo on the waiver process.

Dale Erquiaga, senior adviser to Gov. Brian Sandoval, said the governor supports seeking the waiver.

“The governor has been kept abreast of the waiver application by the superintendent and the core team that is working and he absolutely supports the direction that they are headed,” Erquiaga said. “The current system, as he has talked about for a long time, is too narrow.”

No Child Left Behind has been useful in providing a foundation for introducing accountability into Nevada’s public school system, he said.

“But we know that if we look at growth, and climate, and some of the other issues that they will address in the waiver, that we’ll be better off than we are today,” Erquiaga said.

State Sen. Barbara Cegavske, R-Las Vegas, chairwoman of the P-16 Council, said she was proud that the No Child Left Behind Act became a reality because accountability in public education is so important.

“I think it was a great start,” she said. “With education we need to continuously be moving, and re-looking, re-thinking. Sometimes it takes us longer than we wanted.”

In order to be granted the flexibility provided for by the waiver, the agency must submit an application that explains how it will create a system that includes college and career-ready expectations for all students, state-developed recognition of and accountability for schools, effective instruction and the reduction of duplication and unnecessary burdens.

Nevada plans to submit its wavier application by Feb. 21.

Rheault said the decision to seek the waiver came after discussions with Nevada's 17 school districts.

It will still require an assessment of how each school is performing, he said. Idaho is opting to use a star system with five stars identifying a top performing school, Rheault said.

Nevada plans to use a measure of individual student growth in achievement as part of the new assessment under the waiver, he said.

Eleven states sought waivers in the first round of applications, and a total of 39 states ultimately are expected to seek the waivers, Rheault said. Another 11 states say they don't want waivers, he said.

Rheault had praise for what the act helped Nevada accomplish.

"Our accountability system wouldn't be anywhere near where it's at if we didn't' get forced into moving faster through No Child Left Behind," he said. "I think it was just the designation of how it was so limited in how you defined what a good school was. That's really the focus of these waivers and that's why I thought it was important the state at least put in an application to change that."

Workshop to focus on WHS' 4-day school week

Douglas County School District is looking for input about how the four-day school week is working at Whittell High School.



The Jan. 19 6pm meeting at the Zephyr Cove school will be facilitated by Steve Mulvenon, a consultant hired to lead the project.

The 7-12 school went to four days a week starting in fall 2009. Much of the change had to do with 80 percent of the students participating in athletics, which often meant losing all day Friday out of the classroom. Many of Whittell's events require driving long distances.

At the meeting next week there will be workstations for people to visit.

A report is likely to be made to the school board at the April 10 3:30pm meeting in Zephyr Cove. A decision could be made that Tuesday as to whether the four-day week is continued next school year.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Public input changes USFS Fallen Leaf Lake plans

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – People are cycling and walking on what's commonly referred to as the Camp Rich bike trail. A red-tail hawk soars overhead. Fallen Leaf Lake is glassy, almost inviting to water ski on. An embankment at Taylor Creek along a user-created trail exposes tree roots. The bridge at the dam

is accessible only to the able bodied and to those who get off their bikes.

The U.S. Forest Service has big plans for these 13,000 acres on the South Shore that encompass more than 40 miles of trails.



This section of Taylor Creek may no longer be an equestrian crossing. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Based on comments received regarding the Fallen Leaf Lake Trail Access and Travel Management Proposal, changes are already in the works. Comments for this scoping segment of the project ended Jan. 13.

The 285-foot long dam/bridge at Fallen Leaf Lake-Taylor Creek needs to be replaced to accommodate modern day uses and meet current access standards.

“This was never intended for public access,” Garrett Villanueva, forest engineer with the Forest Service, said while standing on the bridge.

A significant portion of the nearly 50 comments received mentioned the federal agency’s idea to expand the bridge to accommodate equestrian use. And people didn’t favor the

original idea.

Now the USFS is considering a 6-foot-wide bridge, which would meet its minimum requirements and likely better satisfy those who have said a bridge twice that wide would have changed the character of the area.

It’s about 3-feet-wide now. It was built in 1934 with Anita Baldwin’s money.

The concrete spillway would remain. No changes are slated for the dam. Just the bridge will be altered. A cut out is likely to be incorporated into the design so people could stop to look at the scenery without impeding the flow of people.

Equestrians currently cross Taylor Creek about one-third of a mile from the bridge. While this location is also a popular swimming area, especially for people from the Fallen Leaf Lake campground, it’s not where USFS officials want horses.

Looking at the tree roots exposed near the creek, Forest Service engineer Mike Gabor, says, “It’s not natural. It’s an indication of how much sediment is going in the creek.”

Bare soil is in abundance here.

“We are not trying to stop people from swimming, but how they get to and from there is the challenging part,” Gabor told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The plan is to move the equestrian crossing closer to the bridge.

Protecting resources and providing recreation are the two main reasons to create what is essentially a master plan for the area. While talk about doing much of what is proposed first started in the 1980s, a comprehensive plan never got off the ground.

With an average of 1,600 people using the paved bike trail at

Camp Richardson during peak season, this area is among the most popular and heaviest used areas in the Lake Tahoe Basin. It is also part of the National Trail System.

The paved area would be brought up to AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) standards – so 10-feet wide, shoulders 2-feet wide, and a grade of no more than 5 percent.

Many of the trails on both sides of Highway 89 were user created – not ones developed or maintained by the Forest Service. These types of trails have been created since the beginning of time, and even more recently by people with the last names of Gilmore, Price and Baldwin.

The problem is trampling on so much land compromises vegetation and habitat. It's also a safety concern because land managers may not travel those routes and therefore not find someone who is injured.

Some people, though, are concerned the trail closest to the creek by the bridge will be removed. With the embankment eroding, Forest Service trail gurus say it has to go or at least be moved back.

Another concern is a heavily used trail traverses two private parcels at the far end of Fallen Leaf Lake. Those are Forest Service managed trails that have existed for 100 years. But without permission by the owners, which has not been granted yet, those routes could be off limits.

More information about the proposed project, including maps, is online.

A public workshop will be conducted in the next few months. The public will be able to comment again when the draft environmental assessment comes out, which is likely to be late spring/early summer.

The Camp Richardson project ties into the Fallen Leaf Lake plans. The environmental assessment is done, with comments regarding Jameson Road still being worked on. A written finding on that project could be released in a matter of weeks.

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RAOK: Recognizing workers at the Backdoor Pantry

Bill Yale wins the daily Random Acts of Kindness prize for writing in about all the good deeds everyone does at Saint Theresa's Backdoor Pantry.



The Black Bear Inn is today's business donating the prize. Bill will be receiving a cookbook from area bed and breakfasts as well as two coffee mugs from the Black Bear.

Random Acts of Kindness is *Lake Tahoe News'* promotion to spread kindness. We are encouraging people to do acts of kindness, then write about it, as well as write about ones they see and receive. This is going on all month.

Each day a story is posted. They are all listed under the Random Acts of Kindness category.

For more details about Random Acts of Kindness and the few rules associated with it, check out this story.

Truckee hires police chief from San Joaquin Valley

Adam McGill, 39, has been hired as Truckee's police chief. He will be sworn in Feb. 22 at 4pm.

He was the police chief in Newman, a small town in the Central Valley. For the last 18 months, McGill has worked for the U.S. State Department in Iraq as a senior police adviser.



Adam McGill

McGill has a master's degree in emergency services and 20 years of experience in law enforcement.

McGill's wife and two children will join him at the end of the school year.

He replaces Nicholas Sensley who retired in November.