Summer swim league looking for participants

Tahoe Swim Club Summer League is July 5-Aug. 25 from 6-6:30pm. at the community pool in South Lake Tahoe.

Cost is $180.

The program is for ages 5 and up and swimmers should be able to swim the length of the pool with limited assistance.

The coach is Jorie Turner. Email jorieturner@gmail.com with questions or to sign up.

Truckee museum earns national award

After a national review of exemplary children’s museum efforts conducted by Metlife Foundation and Association of Children’s Museum, the KidZone Museum, a nonprofit children’s museum in Truckee, was one of the three museums to receive top honors and a $10,000 cash award.

The educational experiences at the KidZone Museum are highly interactive, creating a place where children can explore, discover and learn through play.

To earn a Promising Practice Award a children’s museum must stand out as innovating and redefining traditional museums where play is highly interactive. Museums are competitively evaluated among a jury of experts in museum design and programming.

The KidZone Museum received its Promising Practice award for the KidsReach program, which increased visitation to the Museum from low-income children and families by 500 percent in three years.

The other two museums that received top honors were the Stepping Stones Museum for Children (Norwalk, Conn.) and DuPage Children's Museum (Naperville, Ill). Three Promising Practice Honorable Mentions included: Treehouse Museum (Ogden, Utah), Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and the Bay Area Discovery Museum (Sausalito).

The KidZone Museum's current exhibit, Starfish Enterprise, features an Imagination Playground "reef" building, a research submarine, reading nook and sand play.

For additional information, go online. The Museum is dedicated to and designed for families with children up to age 7. Exhibits change periodically and focus on sparking a child's curiosity.

Pacific Crest Trail movie

The Pacific Crest Trail Association and the Tahoe Rim Trail Association are presenting the National Geographic Film "America's Wild Spaces: The Pacific Crest Trail" on June 28 at 6:30pm.

There is no charge.

This hour-long film chronicles the peaks and valleys of this epic 2,650 mile long trail that stretches from Mexico to Canada, cutting through seven national parks and 24 national forests. Each year more than 300 backpackers attempt to

complete the entirety of this grueling route, hiking through the states of California, Oregon, and Washington and experiencing elevation changes equal to that of 10 Mt. Everests.

The film will be shown at the Tahoe Environmental Research Center at Sierra Nevada College. Seating is limited. Register online for a seat.

Minor flooding along Walker River

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Rushing waters from a melting snowpack are causing some flooding problems along the Walker River, with flows expected to peak later this week, experts said Monday.

Minor to moderate flooding occurred in Mason Valley on Monday after officials were forced to release large volumes of water from Topaz and Bridgeport reservoirs. Similar flooding is expected upstream along the West Walker River Wednesday and Thursday in the Walker and Coleville, Calif., area.

No serious problems are reported due to the flooding in Mason Valley.

“There are no structures being affected. There is just a lot of water out in the fields, and the ditches are running full,” said Gary Barbato, a hydrologist with the National Weather Service in Reno.

Experts hope enough water was released from Topaz and Bridgeport reservoirs to capture peak runoff flowing from the

West Walker River Wednesday and Thursday without more releases being necessary, Barbato said.

“Hopefully, it’s as high as it’s going to get” in Mason Valley, Barbato said.

Flows are expected to be about a half-foot above flood stage in Walker and Coleville, Calif., and downstream to Topaz Lake Wednesday and Thursday.

The West Fork of the Carson River is expected to “barely touch” flood stage this week between Woodfords and Genoa, with no serious problems expected there, Barbato said.

Read the whole story

N. Shore business expo not limited to chamber members

Stop by the *Lake Tahoe News* booth during North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce’s 25th Annual Business Expo on Wednesday.

The 5-7:30pm event is at the North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 North Tahoe Blvd., Kings Beach.

This business expo is free. A mix of chamber and non-chamber members will be talking about their businesses.

More than 50 exhibitors are expected. Bona Fide Books is another South Shore-based business that will be at the June 15 expo.

For more information about the expo, call Kym Fabel at (530) 581.8764 or email kym@puretahoenorth.com.

Blasting winter away at Yosemite

By Mike Anton, Los Angeles Times

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK – It's nearly summer, and swarms of cars, buses and RVs breeze through Yosemite Valley as if on conveyor belts of asphalt. But up here at 8,400 feet, along the snowbound solitude of Tioga Road, winter is still in control.

Three members of a National Park Service avalanche control team move out from their camp near Olmsted Point. They are here to bend nature's timetable and help clear the highest automobile route across the Sierra.

From a distance, they are ephemeral figures dwarfed by the eternal landscape – a steep, treeless mountainside loaded with tons of ice and snow just waiting for a trigger.

It is shortly after 5am. The temperature is in the mid-20s, and a blue dawn signals the sun's arrival. Time is short.

Tim Esquivel and Steve Lynds stop to load their backpacks from a sled laden with supplies – explosives, a spool of detonator cord, bags of charcoal, shovels. Both are in their mid-40s with ponytails and earrings, both strong as climbing rope.

Edward Canapary, 44, has climbed above them and is whaling on the frozen snow with a pick-ax. Ching-ka! Ching-ka! Chunks skitter down the hill and into the valley below.

He works fast. Spring in the mountains is a violent alchemy of hydraulics and gravity. Snowfields benignantly frozen at night awaken to the sun's heat. This windless morning's silence will

soon be replaced by the ominous gurgle of percolating water lubricating the rock underneath.

Ching-ka! Ching-ka! The minutes tick by. The sky brightens imperceptibly.

When the holes are dug, Canapary calls to the men below on his radio.

“Bring the bombs up.”

Read the whole story

Utah bill will reach to the slopes of Calif., Nev.

By Ski Racing

During its latest session, the Utah Legislature handed down a new law that will reach far beyond state borders as all U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association coaches and officials now have the legal responsibility to remove young athletes with suspected head injuries from competition and training.

The new law (Utah House Bill 204), requires coaches and officials working with under-18 athletes in all sports to adhere to its strict guidelines. Since The USSA is headquartered in Park City, Utah, all of the organization’s 450 clubs across the country are also required to comply as of May 20.

“It’s a legislation designed to protect youth athletics, particularly high school athletes form returning from a head injury too soon, which could lead to other ramifications down

the line," said USSA medical director Kyle Wilkens. "Anything we can do to protect the kids is going to be better for them in the long run."

Concussions were a hot topic during the 2011 ski racing season. Between Olympic gold medalist Lindsey Vonn's well publicized head injury complications at the 2011 World Championships and World Cup winner Marco Sullivan's season-ending concussion at the end of December, head injures and the protocols that dictate when athletes should return to activity took the center ring of the White Circus and has sparked concern down to the junior level.

Read the whole story

Opinion: What are we really telling college graduates?

By David Brooks, New York Times

Over the past few weeks, America's colleges have sent another class of graduates off into the world. These graduates possess something of inestimable value. Nearly every sensible middle-aged person would give away all their money to be able to go back to age 22 and begin adulthood anew.

But, especially this year, one is conscious of the many ways in which this year's graduating class has been ill served by their elders. They enter a bad job market, the hangover from decades of excessive borrowing. They inherit a ruinous federal debt.

More important, their lives have been perversely structured.

This year’s graduates are members of the most supervised generation in American history. Through their childhoods and teenage years, they have been monitored, tutored, coached and honed to an unprecedented degree.

Yet upon graduation they will enter a world that is unprecedentedly wide open and unstructured. Most of them will not quickly get married, buy a home and have kids, as previous generations did. Instead, they will confront amazingly diverse job markets, social landscapes and lifestyle niches. Most will spend a decade wandering from job to job and clique to clique, searching for a role.

No one would design a system of extreme supervision to prepare people for a decade of extreme openness. But this is exactly what has emerged in modern America. College students are raised in an environment that demands one set of navigational skills, and they are then cast out into a different environment requiring a different set of skills, which they have to figure out on their own.

Read the whole story

Ricky & the Redstreaks to rock El Dorado County Fair

Immortalized by Brooks and Dunn in “Just Another Neon Night” and followed by cowboys with the pro-rodeo circuit with an almost a cult-like fervor, Ricky & the Redstreaks is returning to the El Dorado County Fairgrounds for a reunion concert that promises to fill the house.



It was 1968 at the El Dorado County Fair when high school pals John Jackman, Ray Brown, Scott Thomas and Jan Volz hooked up to form a band called the Train. Part of their act was a special performance by Ricky and the Redstreaks, which later grew into popularity on its own and became the official band of the Pro Rodeo Circuit.

And the rest is history and phenomenon, according to fans and music critics who says thousands of people will show up during the closing nights of a rodeo as word-of-mouth spreads the news that the Redstreaks are in town.

Though cowboys love ‘em, the Redstreaks don’t play country music. They prefer rock ‘n’ roll. What we now call classic rock, including Jefferson Airplane, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and ZZ Top. Throw in what’s described as “cabaret corn and titillating innuendo” from Jackman, who fronts the band, and you have an evening with Ricky and the Redstreaks—part concert, part comedy show, part rip roarin’ dance-on-the-tables party.

The band attributes their four-plus decades of success to the loyalty of their fans.

They’ll perform back-to-back concerts with their original band the Train on June 17 beginning at 8pm on the Main Stage at the El Dorado County Fair.

The concert is included with the price of fair admission.

The 2011 El Dorado County Fair is June 16 to 19 in Placerville. For more information, call (530) 621.5860.

Funding far from equal among Calif. school districts

By Louis Freedberg and Stephen K. Doig, California Watch

State lawmakers have struggled for decades to bring equality to how school districts are funded, yet some districts receive thousands more per student than others, a California Watch analysis has found. And the data shows spending more provides no assurance of academic success.

Last year, California schools spent an average of $8,452 to educate each student, a figure that includes money from local, state, and federal sources, including one-time stimulus funds.

But that average masks enormous differences in spending. The Carmel Unified School District, for example, spent nearly three times as much as the Norris School District in Bakersfield. One tiny district, the Pacific Unified School District on a remote stretch of the California coast near Hearst Castle, spent close to $60,000 per student.

Figures are typically available only for how much districts, not individual schools, spend on their students. But according to the state's Legislative Analyst's Office, some of the smallest schools in the Sierra foothills, with just a handful of students, received about $200,000 per student.

Public schools consume the largest share of the state's shrinking general fund – 42 percent of the $86 billion total. How those funds are allocated is coming under increasing scrutiny by education leaders, advocacy groups, school districts and lawmakers.

In April, Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, chairwoman of the Assembly Education Committee, introduced legislation to reform education financing. Based on a plan

proposed by Gov. Jerry Brown during his gubernatorial campaign, the bill would simplify funding formulas and direct money to students with extra needs, such as those from low-income families.

Read the whole story