STHS artists dominate congressional art competition

South Tahoe High School art students swept the Congressional Art Competition, An Artistic Discovery, which a nationwide high school art competition.

Each congressional district submits entries. For Rep. Tom McClintock’s district, all the winners are students of STHS teacher Candi Lincoln’s.

The winning entry from STHS will be displayed for one year in the Cannon Tunnel leading to the Capitol.

STHS students placed first in the 2009 and 2010 competitions, too.

The winners are:

First: Alana Mosca (Barefoot Beauty)

Second: Gisela Renteria (Folklorica)

Third: Christopher Garrett (Falls)

Honorable mention: Nick Knowles (3 Bears), Casey Willitts (Untitled), Petr Colwell (Sun Storm).

The winners are expected to be recognized by the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board at an upcoming meeting.

Echo Summit work on hold because of weather

Caltrans has temporarily halted construction work on Highway 50 at Echo Summit. Severe weather has brought heavier than expected snow and wind that have made working conditions unsafe.

Construction crews continued to work through the night Saturday in the storm, and got slab poured at wall No. 5. Four of the seven walls now have slab in place.

The storm has brought about 6 inches of snow to the project so far. Caltrans will continue to monitor weather conditions as the day progresses and resume work as soon as conditions are safe for work to continue.

Caltrans has a website featuring a map, up-to-date information about the project, information about the alternate routes and sites to visit along the way, live traffic cameras, and answers to frequently asked questions.

The closure is part of the first stage of a safety enhancement project that will remove damaged rock walls and replace them with a barrier that meets current safety standards. The project is funded in part ($1.9 million) by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Truckee students take on

project to help other countries

Proceeds from plastic bottles or aluminum cans in Truckee will help purchase solar cookers for people in economically disadvantaged countries, thanks to the efforts of Sierra High School seniors.

Sierra High School requires all seniors to participate in a service learning project.

This year’s service learning project is a community effort that benefits Solar Cookers International. Seniors are asking local businesses, agencies and schools to participate in the program by placing recycling containers at their site. Proceeds derived from the recycling will go to SCI, which will in turn purchase solar ovens for needy countries such as Haiti, Pakistan, India, Africa.



Solar cookers help people in disadvantage countries. Photo/Provided

The SCI website explains that refugees and other displaced people frequently lack access to sufficient cooking fuels and safe drinking water. When infrastructures are in ruins and no energy or gas is available, solar cooking utilizes the sun to cook hot food. Additionally, when fuel is scarce, cooking with

the sun offers a clean, workable solution. Importantly, solar cookers fight cholera by heating water to pasteurization temperatures. And finally, using a solar cooker requires only the sun, and does not necessitate searching for other forms of fuel.

Sierra High School seniors are actively searching for businesses and public entities that have room for a 32-inch by 18-inch recycling container. Those interested in participating should call Sierra High School at (530) 582.2640.

Snow wins, Tahoe loses with cancellation of bike race

Updated: May 15, 2011, 7:27pm

By Lake Tahoe News staff

Riders' concerns played a role in the decision to cancel Stage 1 of Amgen Tour de California on Sunday.

"This morning, when there was so much snow, everyone knew we wouldn't be racing," said Alan Gallopin with Team Radio Shack. "Riders are worried about their safety in light of what happened last week (in Italy) . Nobody wants to race unsafe. We came in on Monday and experienced nice weather. Friday was good, but with today's weather, the riders didn't feel comfortable racing."



This sign at Northstar-at-Tahoe will never be crossed by Tour de California riders.

Andrew Messick, president of AEG, at a press conference May 15 said not riding was the smart move.

“Five miles of the course had substantial accumulated snow and we made the right decision. We are disappointed. You can make the right decision and still be disappointed in the outcome,” he said. “We expected from weather forecasts that it would get warmer, the roads would be clear and the conditions for racing would improve. We believed that right until the very end. It was only in the last 15 minutes that it really became clear that weather conditions were not improving and in fact were getting worse.”

Plus, during the delay when everyone thought the race would be starting in the afternoon, six photo motos crashed on their way to Northstar. No one was hurt in the incident.

Most of the concentration was on what the weather was like going down from the summits and high spots along the route that was to have gone from Stateline, around Lake Tahoe 1.5 times, and into Northstar-at-Tahoe. The afternoon route was to go from Stateline directly to Northstar in Truckee.

“We started to receive reports from our team about bad weather on the descents, with the final decent being the most critical. After two and a half hours of riding in inclement weather the cyclists are tired and cold and they don’t have the ability to apply their breaks, especially with the carbon bikes. These are elements they have to deal with,” race director Jim Birrell said. “The rain really helped us cement our decision. Had the race started, we would have had to cancel the race in the middle.”

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Updated: May 15, 2011, 2:12pm

By Lake Tahoe News staff

The weather finally won the first stage of Amgen Tour de California.

Riders are supposed to leave from Squaw Valley on Monday at 10:30am for what would have been the original start of stage two, but concerns about weather over Donner Summit still persist.

When the race was called before 1:30pm Sunday the weather had been a mix of snow and sun. Finally, though, it was decided that it was too dangerous to leave from the South Shore. This, despite the cyclists on their bikes near the start line and ready to go.

“We the riders are disappointed about not racing for the fans but we agreed it was too risky in the ever changing weather,” tour favorite Levi Leipheimer said in a Tweet. “We all hope the fans understand.”

This is the first time a stage has been canceled, but the fourth year weather



Mother Nature should top the leader board. Photos/Stephen Ward

has been factor.

“We were monitoring weather conditions up until the predicted 1:15pm start time, and we just couldn’t safely put the riders out on the course with the current forecast,” Andrew Messick, president of AEG Sports, said in a statement. “We appreciate the support of all the fans that came out to the start line in South Lake Tahoe, and we hope they understand and respect our decision, but when the safety of riders and fans is involved, there is no leeway. We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the start (Monday) in Squaw Valley.”

As the race was being canceled, three-time Tour de California champion Leipheimer addressed the crowd from the sign-in stage and said: “The riders discussed as a group and we just don’t feel comfortable riding knowing what can happen, especially in light of what happened last Monday. We still have a full week of racing ahead of us, so we want to make sure everyone is healthy. With the weather conditions the way they are, racing today is just not possible. On behalf of all the riders, we apologize and appreciate everyone’s support and understanding.”

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By Jessie Marchesseau

Riders and organizers of the 2011 Amgen Tour of California bicycle race woke up to snow this morning. The National Weather Service had predicted that up to 4 inches would fall in the Lake Tahoe area Saturday night into Sunday, and Mother Nature delivered.

With the safety of the athletes the number one concern, contingency plans in case of inclement weather were put into place earlier this week.

As a result of the winter weather conditions and the dangers that riding on snow-covered roads could pose to the riders, the official start of Stage 1 has been delayed until 1:15pm. The leg is also expected to be shortened. Originally planned to be one and a half laps around the lake, 118.7 miles, the new route from Stateline, up the west shore, ending at Northstar-At-Tahoe would be approximately 50 miles.

The race will follow the second half of the original route and feature highlights including:

- King of the Mountains (KOM) competition at Emerald Bay at approximately mile 13
- Sprint line at Tahoe City at approximately mile 31
- KOM competition at Brockway summit at approximately mile 43

The projected finish timing, which was to be between 3:15 and 4pm PT will remain unchanged.

Jim Birrell, race director, addressed the possible weather issues at last Friday's press conference, stating "Our concern is going to be what's on the road. If it's just wet, it will be all systems go. We have the brightest and most experienced individuals on our team to help render the best decision given the circumstances. We'll work with the Lake Tahoe local organizing committee to determine where there will be the most accumulation. Our partners will be able to guide us in the decision making process and we'll figure out how to negate it.

We'll look at all the variables we can to make the decision that's safest for these riders."

This statement was issued May 15 at 7:39am:

Due to current weather and road conditions, the Amgen Tour of California bicycle race will have a delayed start. The race will start at 1:15pm and will travel from the South Shore Casino corridor on Highway 50 and then turn north along Highway 89 to North Star at Tahoe. The highway closure will start at 12:45pm and is expected to be open by 1:40pm. – *Sgt. Shannon Laney of the South Lake Tahoe Police Department.*

Opinion: Imperative STHS improve athletic conditions

To the community,

As a coach of youth athletics at the elementary and middle school ages, for over 25 years, coaching Little League Baseball, Pop Warner Football, Bobby Sox Softball, Soccer and as a previous head coach of our local ski resort, Heavenly D-Team, I have had the pleasure to witness firsthand how important and instrumental athletic programs have benefited the development of the youth in our community.

As a member of several of these youth athletic organizations, board of directors and a full-time resident of South Lake Tahoe for the past 23 years, I have enjoyed watching the many benefits that these athletic programs have provided thousands of young boys and girls in our community during their very influential years.

The renovation of Viking Bowl to Viking Stadium will complement the recent additions to our local high school campus which have been completed in recent years, and those that are currently under construction today. These projects are making South Tahoe High School a world class academic facility and hopefully it will soon be considered one of the best schools in our state.

The completion of the Viking Stadium renovation plan will not only provide a much needed addition to our local high school campus, it will in turn help promote the city of South Lake Tahoe as more than just a tourist destination.

The renovation of Viking Stadium will prevent many families who may be thinking of leaving our community, because of inferior school facilities, to stay in South Lake Tahoe and allow their children to complete their high school education here as opposed to the various schools in our neighboring communities which currently offer better school and sports facilities.

I unfortunately have seen firsthand many families leave our community and move to Minden, Gardnerville, Carson City, Reno and Sacramento partly because of the condition of the athletic facilities at South Tahoe High School. This new athletic field and stadium will help prevent additional families from moving “off the hill” and also will attract new families to our city and to call South Lake Tahoe their home.

The completion of this renovation project will provide revenue for our school district, our city and in turn provide much needed income to the many small business owners who are currently struggling to stay open. The more businesses that close and the more families that leave South Lake Tahoe, the less revenue this our city obtains.

This facility when completed will attract families and students who participate in other sports programs in

neighboring towns. It will allow for other high schools, colleges and possibly professional sports team to come to South Lake Tahoe and use this facility for high altitude training. The stadium could be rented for many different types of sports programs, activities and other events, and in turn bring much needed revenue to the many restaurants, motels and other businesses in our town who are struggling to stay afloat.

Athletics and academics go hand in hand. Athletics promote school and community spirit. For those that attended one of our two “Friday Night Lights” football games last fall, you already know the huge success this was for our high school and for the community of South Lake Tahoe.

If temporary lights on a field mostly covered in mud, without bathrooms in the near vicinity for its spectators, a proper snack bar, bleachers that are rotting and are a safety hazard and without simple access for the disabled, can attract the type of numbers that those two games did, the possibilities that this project when completed could do for our city and our community are incredible.

Over the past few months, many business owners and families have provided financial contributions to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District to assist with the completion of this project.

We have done so as we realize the wonderful impact that this sports facility will have on thousands of youth in the city of South Lake Tahoe for years to come. Creating a place where the students of South Tahoe High School can be proud, a place where the younger boys and girls in our town will look forward to playing sports as they grow up and to provide a school that they look forward to attending, will have immeasurable impact on them, their families and our entire community.

It is mine, the many families and children of South Lake Tahoe

who currently play youth sports and the current and future student body of South Tahoe High School sincere hope, that the city of South Lake Tahoe considers this proposal and helps fund and become a part of a project that is certain to benefit all of us who call South Lake Tahoe our home.

Tony Gooding, South Lake Tahoe coach, parent, business owner

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2 El Dorado County vintners to showcase wine in D.C.

By Chris Macias, Sacramento Bee

The nation's capital will soon get a taste of some wines from the Sacramento area. Two El Dorado County wineries, Crystal Basin Cellars and Holly's Hill, are among the vintners being featured at a sustainable seafood symposium set for June 7-10 at the Smithsonian.

Billed as "sustainable, biodynamic American Rhônes," the sold-out event features two dozen wineries from across the country. The bulk come from California, especially Paso Robles and the Central Coast, though El Dorado County's reputation continues to grow as a sweet spot for Rhône varietals, like a bit of southern France in the Sierra Foothills.



Grapes from El

Dorado County vines will be showcased at a Washington, D.C., food symposium. Photo/LTN file

While Holly's Hill specializes in syrah, Crystal Basin Cellars will pour its 2008 Roumanier ($20), an equal-parts blend of roussanne, viognier and marsanne. Crystal Basin will also feature its 2008 Mourvèdre ($27), which nabbed a "best of class" award at the 2010 California State Fair Commercial Wine Competition.

There's just one slight snag in this trip to Washington, D.C. Crystal Basin founder Mike Owen can't make the trip.

When he's not running the winery, Owen works as the chief fiscal officer of health services for El Dorado County. Budget meetings in early June will keep Owen close to home, so his wife, Melissa, a co-owner and tasting room manager, will make the trip on behalf of the winery.

Read the whole story

2011 Tour de California route called toughest yet

By John Schumacher, Sacramento Bee

The consensus among riders ready to test the sixth annual Tour de California: This is the toughest course in the event's

history.

The addition of two mountaintop finishes – one on Sierra Road in San Jose in Stage 4 and the other a climb up Mount Baldy to end Stage 7 – has caught cyclists' attention.

"This is the hardest condition for the Amgen Tour of California in the six years," said Levi Leipheimer, a three-time winner who has ridden in all five Amgen races.

"When I rode (Mount Baldy), I thought, 'Wow, this is worthy of the Tour de France.' This edition is definitely a mini-Tour de France. I don't think we could ask for anything more."

The eight-day stage race covers nearly 800 miles. But it's the climbs that have toughened up this year's event.

Read the whole story

Meeting to learn about Yelp

Darnell Holloway, head of Business Outreach from Yelp, will be the guest speaker June 16 from noon-2pm at Harveys Convention Center.

Holloway will discuss the ins and the outs of the Yelp website to help business' understand how to best capitalize on Yelp postings.

The lunch is $25 for members of the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, $35 for non-members. Tickets may be bought by calling (775) 588.1728.

Tickets on sale for Rundgren at MontBleu

Todd Rundgren comes to MontBleu in Stateline on July 14 for a one-night concert.

His landmark albums have included such classics as “Bang the Drum”, “I Saw The Light”, “Hello It’s Me” and “Can We Still Be Friends.”

Rundgren’s production projects include albums by Patti Smith, Cheap Trick, Psychedelic Furs, Meatloaf, XTC, Grand Funk Railroad, and Hall And Oates.

This spring he released “Todd Rundgren’s Johnson” a fresh batch of songs in a tribute to early bluesman Robert Johnson.

Doors open at 8pm; show begins at 9pm. Tickets are $35/$50/$95, plus fees.

Historic train route begins excursions Memorial Day weekend

The Virginia and Truckee Railroad’s 2011 season begins May 28 with roundtrip and one-way excursions along the historic 14-mile Comstock route between Carson City and Virginia City.

Tickets are on sale with rides departing Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Oct. 30.

The routes include scenic vistas of the Sierra Nevada and Carson River.

For more information, go online.