Update from Squaw's CEO about the mountain

To the community,

After a beautiful spring-like January, we're excited to welcome Old Man Winter back this week with a bang. Overnight Tuesday we received 14 inches of snow on the upper mountain and it was still coming down hard (Wednesday).

Through tonight, we are expecting 2 to 4 feet by Friday morning. Forecasters are saying that the storms should taper just in time for this weekend before another set of winter weather returns early next week.

Stay tuned to the snowfall tracker and the snow report for the latest snow totals and lift openings.

In addition to the recent snow, we are also excited to announce Squaw Valley has seen significant improvements in our Net Promoter Score over the course of the season. Net Promoter Scores (NPS) are the most highly regarded customer satisfaction metric used in the hospitality industry today. Since the 2009-10 winter season, Squaw Valley's customer satisfaction scores have moved from the bottom 20 percent of North American ski resorts to the top 20 percent, based on our Net Promoter Score. Make no mistake, we still have a long way to go to meet our guest service goals, however, the improvement serves as proof that our efforts thus far are paying off.

Top among our guest service improvements this year is our award-winning lift operations team. The department's fearless leader, Dave Pierce, received a prestigious award and recognition last evening at the North Lake Tahoe Chamber annual awards dinner. Dave's passion for the mountain and his dedication to providing exceptional guest service have made

lasting impressions on our team members and loyal guests, and for this, we thank him.

Another area of the mountain that has seen significant improvements and recognition this season is grooming. In our unyielding commitment to improving our grooming, we have invested in six new, state-of-the-art snowcats this season. The new machines have allowed us to blanket the mountain in impeccable and seamless corduroy even on traditionally ungroomed pitches such as Tower 16 and the East Gully of Olympic Lady. So far our reviews have been outstanding, and we hope you've been enjoying it.

Finally, I want to congratulate Squaw Valley's Julia Mancuso on winning a silver medal in the Super-G at the Alpine World Championships in Germany last week. Way to go Julia. We know that there are many other Julia's in the making at Squaw Valley as shown by our ski team's great performance at Sugar Bowl last weekend.

This storm sure proves that California skiing and riding can't be beat. I hope to see you out there.

Warm and snow-filled regards,

Andy Wirth, Squaw Valley president and CEO

Report: California parks need more than money

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

There might be no money for state parks, but money isn't all they need.

That is the basic message in a new study released Friday by California's largest parks advocacy group.

The "Vision for Excellence" report by the nonprofit California State Parks Foundation is an acknowledgment that no financial salvation is at hand for the embattled parks, and that a new mission for an austere future may be needed.



Grover Hot Springs in Markleeville has had its hours reduced. Photo/LTN file

Gov. Jerry Brown has ordered the State Parks Department to cut $22 million from its operating budget over the next two years. Within two weeks, the department is expected to release a list of properties to close in the 278-park system to meet the cost-cutting target.

They would become the first total closures in the 150-year history of the state park system.

In this context, it might seem surprising that the new report offers few financial fixes. But in November, the foundation was unsuccessful in that arena when voters failed to approve Proposition 21, which would have imposed an $18 annual fee on vehicle registrations to fund park operations.

Read the whole story

Friends turn emails into food blog for the masses

By Kathryn Reed

Puttanesca probably wasn't on a vocabulary or spelling test when Klaire Pirtle was principal of Kingsbury Middle or Minden Elementary schools.

That's because the Italian dish is better known as "whore's style spaghetti."

The retired Douglas County School District educator helped her daughter, Amber Asbjornsen, whip up a bowl of puttanesca worthy of being posted on the Beauties and the Feast blog.



Puttanesca from Beauties and the Feast. Photo/Amber Asbjornsen

The blog's subheading is: Six beauties. One feast. One blog where we gather to dish our reviews.

Asbjornsen is one of the beauties who started the blog a couple months ago with five friends from college. The 1998 Douglas High School graduate took a home ec class there, but

is not attributing her culinary expertise to that experience.

Five of the friends live in Washington state (they all went to Western Washington University) and one is single and traveling.

The blog emerged from casual emails sent among the friends.

“If we tried something good, we would email it out. Then someone would say can I have this, someone would say something quirky, others would say what they did differently (with the recipe),” Asbjornsen explained.

She admits with a full time job, husband and two kids to not having much time for extra things like a book club, but thought something virtual would allow her the flexibility and fun she was looking for.

From there, Beauties and the Feast was born.

Each month one of the six posts a recipe. The others all try it and post comments on the blog. In between there might be “extra” recipes like a special cocktail for the Super Bowl.

February is Asbjornsen’s month to post a recipe.

“I knew I wanted to try puttanesca. I looked at a million recipes. Then I made up my own recipe from those and I posted a little history lesson about what it means,” Asbjornsen said.

On the blog she also gives her mom a ton of credit for the dish.

“My mom is my biggest supporter. They didn’t laugh at me when I was taking pictures of my food,” Asbjornsen said. “When we get together we do a lot of cooking.”

She considers cooking a creative outlet, and now the blog is an extension of that.

“I’ve never considered myself a chef, but I love cooking and I

love cooking for my family," Asbjornsen said. "Both of my parents stressed sitting down with our family an eating. We still do that now."

The women don't know where this will take them.

Megan Crosby is the single friend who is exploring the world.

Missy Cudworth is a mom of an 11-month-old and writer for the Delilah show.

Jolie Lucero is a stay at home mom of two.

Emily Adamson is married and does social networking for her job, so is the blogging expert. "She is the real foodie of the group," Asbjornsen said.

Rachel Strachan is married, living on several acres as sustainably as they can.

Making money off the site would be the dessert, so to speak, to the whole project. For now, though, it's all about sharing their love of food with the rest of the world.

California medical pot advocates call for statewide regulation

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Alarmed by a police backlash against pot dispensaries in some California cities, lawmakers and advocates for medical marijuana are calling for statewide regulation of medical cannabis stores and new laws to clarify rules under which they

operate.

Additionally, some medical marijuana advocates are pushing lawmakers to consider regulations – similar to those in Colorado – that would permit medical marijuana providers to operate as for-profit businesses.

Currently, under California law, dispensaries providing medical marijuana must operate as nonprofit "collectives" of registered medical marijuana patients who reimburse dispensaries for the costs of providing medicinal pot.

But medical cannabis in California has boomed into an industry generating an estimated $1.3 billion in transactions and paying hundreds of millions of dollars in salaries, rent and overhead costs.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Grizzlies headed to post-season play

By Ted Parkhill

This past weekend the Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wees (ages 11 and 12) played a double-header at home against the Cupertino Cougars. On Saturday the Grizzlies didn't know their own strength and ended up with 26 minutes of penalties.

Despite playing shorthanded for more than a third of the game, the Grizzlies dominated and won 6–2.

Reiss Jensen, No. 9 center from Reno, and Edward Parkhill, No. 7 right wing of Incline Village, had two goals each.

Janez Demsar Jr., No. 19 left wing from South Lake Tahoe, playing in his first season of organized hockey, scored his first goal of the season and his career. He was in position in the slot right where he needed to be. He buried it in the top corner of the net.

On Sunday, Tahoe set an easy pace and again it was a Grizzlies win 4-2.

Carson Bailey, No. 13 left wing from South Lake Tahoe, scored two goals and after that the Grizzlies never looked back.

With the two wins on the weekend the Grizzlies are in first place in their league and are assured of finishing with at least a third place spot in the overall standings. They still have two more regular season games – March 5 in Cupertino and March 6 in San Jose.

The Tahoe Grizzlies Squirts (ages 9 and 10) also faced the Cupertino Cougars for a doubleheader. On Saturday they played a tough match, but ended up winning 5-3. On Sunday it was a really close game. The Cougars went ahead by one goal and in the third period the Grizzlies poured it on, but ended up losing 1-0.

It is only their second regular season loss.

Following this weekend they remain in first place in their league. They still have four more regular season games (the next two are Feb. 26-27 in Oakland and San Jose, respectively).

Both teams are headed to the NORCAL playoffs in Vacaville on March 18–20.

This weekend the Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wees and the Squirts are headed to San Diego to participate in the 2011 California Winter Games.

Ted Parkhill is with the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey

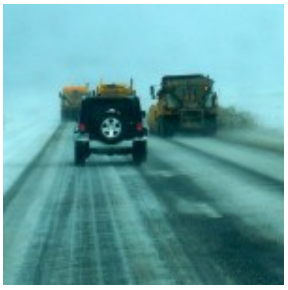
Association.

Weather related traffic accidents keep NHP hopping

With falling and blowing snow throughout Northern Nevada earlier today, troopers from the Nevada Highway Patrol were kept busy by responding to several calls for service.

In a six-hour time frame between 4-10am, 19 motor vehicle accidents were investigated, 17 slides-offs or spin-outs were reported and the Department of Public Safety-Communications Center fielded 298 phone calls. The crashes and spin-outs outs were observed throughout the entire region of Northern Command. Only a couple of the accidents had injuries reported and those were either self-reported or only minor in nature, according to officers.

Speed too fast for conditions was the lead contributing factor in those events, Trooper Chuck Allen said.



Snowplows Feb. 16 along Highway 395 in the Washoe Valley.

Photo/Provided

“With another band of winter-like weather forecasted for our region this week, motorists can greatly minimize the chance of an unplanned event by adjusting their driving habits and allowing more time to accomplish their commute,” Allen said in a statement. “In an effort to maximize your visibility, remove all snow from the windshield, side mirrors, rear window both tail lights and rear license plate before starting your journey.”

Commuters who observe a stranded motorist or other roadway emergency are encouraged to dial *NHP from a cell phone so the closed trooper will be dispatched.

Shredtacular Rail Jam

The Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation’s Shredtacular Rail Jam event at the American Legion in South Lake Tahoe is Feb. 18 from 4:30-10pm.

Open to skiers and snowboarders of all ages, the Shredtacular will be on a feature built by Rob Giustina of On Course Events. Entry is $20 and includes a raffle ticket for a chance to win tons of prizes.

The Shredtacular Rail Jam is a fundraiser for the Heavenly Snowboard Team’s trip to USASA Nationals in Copper Mountain, Colo., in April. The team expects to send 15 athletes to compete in the national event representing South Lake Tahoe.

Registration will be at the American Legion beginning at 4:30pm and is $20. Practice begins at 5pm. Divisions include male and female, skier and snowboarder, 12 and under, 13 to

17, and 18 and over. There will also be a Money Jam open to all participants for an additional $10; winner takes half the pot.

Truckee man gets 25 to life under 3 strikes law

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A Truckee man with a long criminal history, including manslaughter, has been sent to prison under the state's "three-strikes" law.

Douglas Harold Doyle, 51, whose past crimes including an alcohol-related vehicular manslaughter conviction in which a Tahoe City schoolteacher was killed, was sent to prison for 25 years to life, according to a news release from the Placer County District Attorney's Office.

He pleaded guilty to a charge of drunken driving and was sentenced Feb. 2 by Placer County Superior Court Judge Colleen Nichols.

Read the whole story

National Trails Day

National Trails Day – with events all over the country.

Click here for more information.

Slow food movement dinner

Dragonfly Restaurant and Sushi Bar is partnering with Slow Food Lake Tahoe to host a twist on the community supported agriculture box. It’s slated for March 2 at 6pm in downtown Truckee.

Attendees will get to solve the mysteries contained in CSA veggie boxes by visiting food demo stations, trying their hand at rolling rice paper spring rolls and sampling food and wine pairings.

Representatives from Mountain Bounty Farms in Nevada City and Sobon Winery in Plymouth will be on hand to talk about what it’s like to be a local producer. Meats provided by Thompson Valley Ranch in Quincy will round out the evening’s menu options.

Slow Food is a global grassroots movement that links the pleasures of food with a commitment to community and the environment.

Dinner for the Slow Food CSA Box event will cost $42 for Slow Food members and $47 for non-members. Call (530) 587.0557 to make reservations.

Dragonfly Restaurant and Sushi Bar is located upstairs at 10118 Donner Pass Road. Dinner is served from 5-9:30pm.