Rotary of Truckee crab feed tickets on sale

Each year the Rotary Club of Truckee selects a local nonprofit group to run the silent auction at the annual Crab and Pasta Feed which is slated for March 19. The High Fives Foundation is this year's group.

In addition to the traditional live auction, this year's event will include a performance by comedian Rick D'elia.

High Fives will be the recipient of all proceeds raised from the live auction at the crab feed. Previously, nonprofits that have participated in this event have earned from $4,000 to $16,000 for their cause.

The event is at the Truckee Community Recreation Center.

The bar will open at 5pm, followed by a dinner buffet from 6-7pm, comedian Rick D'elia at pm and the auction will follow at 8pm.

Tickets are available for $40 for adults and $20 for children 16 and under. Tickets may be purchased through any Rotarian or by calling Steve Randall at (530) 582.7720.

Death by GPS in the desert

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

Five harrowing days after becoming stuck on a remote backcountry road in Death Valley National Park in August 2009, Alicia Sanchez lay down next to her Jeep Cherokee and prepared

to die.

Then she heard a voice.

“I called as I approached, asking if she was okay,” wrote Ranger Amber Nattrass in a park report. “She was waving frantically and screaming, ‘My baby is dead, my baby is dead.’ ”

In the SUV, Nattrass found Sanchez’s lifeless 6-year-old son Carlos on the front seat. “She told me they walked 10 miles but couldn’t find any help (and) … had run out of water and had been drinking their own urine,” Nattrass wrote.

“She turned down a wrong road,” Nattrass said in a recent interview. “She said she was following her GPS unit.”

Danger has long stalked those who venture into California’s desert in the heat of summer. But today, with more people pouring into the region, technology and tragedy are mixing in new and unexpected ways.

“It’s what I’m beginning to call death by GPS,” said Death Valley wilderness coordinator Charlie Callagan. “People are renting vehicles with GPS and they have no idea how it works and they are willing to trust the GPS to lead them into the middle of nowhere.”

The number of people visiting Death Valley in the summer, when temperatures often exceed 120 degrees, has soared from 97,000 in 1985 to 257,500 in 2009. That pattern holds at Joshua Tree as well, which recorded 128,000 visitors in the summer of 1988. Last year: 230,000.

Read the whole story

Control burn scheduled near S. Tahoe airport

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will be conducting prescribed fire operations near the Lake Tahoe Airport in South Tahoe on Feb. 14.

The project is approximately 17 acres..

Residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from prescribed fire project areas.

State and local fire management agencies may also be conducting prescribed fire work during this period.

This and other prescribed fire projects are designed to reduce wildfire risks to communities and critical resources. Smoke management is part of every prescribed fire burn plan, and efforts will be taken to reduce actual or potential smoke impacts on community areas.

Expedition: Kirkwood cranks it up a gear for riders

By Jessie Marchesseau

KIRKWOOD – It is the day after a powder day, another blue bird

day at Kirkwood. The sun is shining and not a cloud in the sky. No lift lines in sight and plenty of fresh tracks still to be had.

Untracked snow can often be found here for days after a storm. This general lack of crowds is part of Kirkwood's appeal. The terrain is the other part: the cornices, the chutes, rock drops and steeps. Kirkwood has the look and feel of a backcountry ski adventure, most of it accessible by chairlift. This is what Expedition: Kirkwood director Jon Copeland calls the "wow factor."

It was also the inspiration for the only resort-based all-mountain skill development program in the Tahoe area, aptly named Expedition: Kirkwood.

"We step out of the front door and we're 50 feet away from phenomenal terrain," Copeland said. "As far as the backcountry side, you step out of the classroom and you're immediately in avalanche terrain."



Difficult terrain like the drop into Vista at Kirkwood attracts Expedition and non-Expedition riders. Photos/Jessie

Marchesseau

Kirkwood has an open boundaries policy that allows riders access to backcountry terrain directly from the resort. Expedition: Kirkwood guide Adam Marshall explained that this policy is directly related to their programs.

“You gotta remember, with open boundaries comes responsibility,” he said. “Our job is to make sure people are going out educated and prepared.”

Now in its 10th season, Expedition: Kirkwood started as a way to provide backcountry awareness and avalanche courses to advanced skiers and snowboarders. Copeland estimates they had about 165 participants the first season, a number that has grown to between 1,200 and 1,500 in recent years.

And people come back again and again. Marshall said he has had guests return for Expedition: Kirkwood tours two, three, four times. It is in these return clients who he and the other guides often witness the greatest progression.

“We see them becoming more and more like the riders we are,” he said. “We see them having fun and exploring the mountain like we do.”

Expedition: Kirkwood’s offerings have also expanded over the years. The program now includes snowcat tours, private guides, women’s camps and clinics, multi-day backcountry courses, and American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education (AIARE) avalanche certification courses, among others.

“The thing we try to focus on in every one of our programs, whether it’s just a two-hour private guide in-bounds or a full-day/multi-day avalanche course is there’s a huge education component to everything,” Copeland said. “Whether it’s based on your skiing or equipment or leave-no-trace ethics and that kind of stuff, really what we try to promote is the safety education aspect in all of our programs.”

To accommodate the expanding program and growing number of participants, Kirkwood recently opened Expedition: Kirkwood Outfitters. The spacious facility located next to Bub’s Pub has a modern mountain look to it with a combination of corrugated metal and natural woods throughout. Directly across from the entrance is a conference room complete with flat-screen TVs which will be used for avalanche and backcountry awareness courses. A retail store is off to the right offering high-end ski and snowboard gear and backcountry/all-terrain equipment, and a demo center exclusively for all-terrain, and avalanche equipment is on the left. Both are fully stocked with everything from avalanche beacons and shovels to seriously fat powder skis.

Copeland said he expects Expedition: Kirkwood Outfitters will enable the resort to provide better services to guests and allow more flexibility in its programs. They can now schedule classes at the spur of the moment and accommodate more custom courses, something Copeland estimates already makes up around 25 percent of Expedition: Kirkwood’s business.

Riders will also have a place to congregate, relax and connect with fellow ski and snowboard adventurists. Since it opened in January, Copeland said he has already seen a greater comradery forming among participants. After all, they all have something in common to start with: a love for the sport and for the mountains.

Marshall describes Expedition: Kirkwood guests as people who want to “ride anywhere, anytime in any conditions.” They already had the ability to form friendships on the hill, now they have a place to gather and get to know one another off the slopes, too.



Expedition: Kirkwood Outfitters demo center offers a variety of backcountry gear.

Since the program is geared toward intermediate and advanced skiers and snowboarders, most Expedition: Kirkwood participants are Kirkwood regulars. They generally come from Tahoe, Reno and the Bay Area, and are often passholders wanting to take their skills to the next level.

“The way we explain it to a lot of people is: it’s your higher level of education. If ski school is high school and college, this is your doctorate degree or your Ph.D.,” Copeland said.

But the education opportunities and recognition of Expedition: Kirkwood do not stop with locals. The word is spreading.

“It’s definitely getting to where Expedition: Kirkwood is noticed all over, even at other mountains,” Marshall said. “If I go to Mammoth or even Colorado, people know when I say I work for Expedition: Kirkwood. It’s become more than just a brand, and it’s actually a new way for people to advance from intermediates to advanced and advanced to expert.”

So with a guide as a professor, and Kirkwood’s awe-inspiring terrain for a classroom, Expedition: Kirkwood could be well on its way to becoming one of the most sought after schools for a

Ph.D. in ski. After all, who would argue with fresh powder turns for homework?

Placerville school community healing one day at a time

To the community,

When a tragedy occurs, our community steps forward and envelopes those who have been impacted with strong, caring arms. Last week we in El Dorado County experienced such an event. When Sam LaCara died in a senseless shooting on Feb. 2, we lost a wonderful husband, father, principal, and community leader. Even though we may never understand the reasons why this occurred, we are left to deal with the aftermath and its impact.

Thankfully, our community has rallied, responding with demonstrations of love, caring, and compassion. Of course one of the first concerns we have following a school tragedy is for the children. The Schnell School personnel managed to put the children on buses for a “field trip” to the county fairgrounds, following what appeared to most children to be a safety drill. When children got off the buses to meet their parents, most had no idea of the heartbreak that had occurred.

Counselors from county Mental Health, the county Office of Education, the faith community, and other community organizations have been available to help children deal with issues. School and counseling staff understand it takes time for everyone to process what has happened. Support staff will continue to be present at Placerville District schools to assist those affected in coping with their fears and

apprehensions.

District staff members who have always worked so hard to help the children now are in need of, and will be provided, assistance of their own. While it is always difficult to lose a friend or colleague, this situation is much more difficult. The outpouring of support from crisis counselors, other caring providers, and the community has helped those impacted deal with the situation.

It may seem like a small gesture to attend a commemorative service, to contribute to a memorial fund, to say a kind word to a teacher or a child. However, when these and other loving gestures are added together, this incredible outpouring of support, care, and nurturing is helping heal the wounds that run so deep.

We thank the entire El Dorado County community for coming together to help all those devastated by this event. While a simple “thank you” may seem like a small token, it is shared from the heart of all those who knew and loved Sam LaCara.

Thank you.

Vicki Barber, superintendent El Dorado County Office of Education

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U.S. women sweep halfpipe at Winter Dew

By Lindsey Sine, U.S. Ski Team

OGDEN, Utah o— Brita Sigourney of Carmel, Devin Logan of Dover, Vt., and Jen Hudak of Salt Lake City went one, two,

three for a U.S. women's sweep of the halfpipe skiing podium at the Winter Dew Tour on Saturday at Snowbasin in Ogden. Reno's David Wise led for U.S. men, finishing fourth.

"It feels awesome to win," said Sigourney. "It's the last stop for me and to go out with a win is just a really good feeling."

Sigourney won thanks to a run that included a 900, a 540, an alley-oop 540 and a 720.

In a heated men's competition, the day's halfpipe wasn't just about a win, but an overall Dew Tour title as well. France's Kevin Rolland and Simon Dumont (Bethel, ME) had gone back and forth throughout the year for the leader's position, but it was Roland who ultimately took not only the title, but the win for the day as well.

Official results, 2011 Winter Dew Tour, Ogden, Halfpipe Skiing

Men

1. Kevin Rolland, France, 96.50

2. Benoit Valentin, France, 90.25

3. Byron Wells, New Zealand, 84.25

—

4. David Wise, Reno, NV, 83.00

6. Simon Dumont, Bethel, ME, 81.00

9. Duncan Adams, Breckenridge, CO, 76.00

10. Tucker Perkins, North Hampton, NH, 75.25

Women

1. Brita Sigourney, Carmel, CA, 92.00

2. Devin Logan, Dover, VT, 91.00

3. Jen Hudak, Salt Lake City, 90.00

—

4. Maddie Bowman, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 85.75

# # #

Tahoe area athletes don’t make podium in snowboardcross

By Lindsey Sine, U.S. Snowboarding

PARK CITY -— Lindsey Jacobellis of Stratton Mountain, Vt., and home mountain rider Jonathan Cheever of Saugus, Mass., took charge of a technical snowboardcross course Saturday, landing a pair of U.S. Championship titles at the Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix at Park City’s Canyons Resort.

Cheever and Jacobellis were presented the ceremonial Green Jacket, a tradition that awards the annual U.S. Champion with a forest green dinner jacket that says “I’m the winner” in a way befitting of the best SBX athlete in America.

Jacobellis, who nailed herself a fourpeat gold medal at the X Games exactly two weeks ago, was in top form, leading the way through the women’s heats for the win, as well as the U.S. Championship title. Jacobellis’ championship crown adds to the list of her titles, the most recent of which she locked down in 2009. Now, the green jacket and the title of best in the U.S. are both back in her hands.

In a stacked men’s field, Cheever kept it consistent pushing his way from round to round in front of a home mountain crowd that included his parents. With a facial scrape sustained in the prior day’s qualifications, Cheever was happy to take second and, as the top U.S. athlete, the U.S. crown.

For Cheever, the win was equally as huge due to the depth of the competitors he was up against, as well as the technicality of the course.

Official results, Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix at Canyons Resort, Park City, Snowboardcross

Men

1. Kevin Hill, Canada

2. Jonathan Cheever, Saugus, MA

3. Markus Schairer, Austria

4. Tony Ramoin, France

—

5. Jayson Hale, Sierraville, CA

6. Kevin Leahy, Yarmouth, ME

7. Mick Dierdroff, Steamboat Springs, CO

8. Graham Watanabe, Sun Valley, ID

Women

1. Lindsey Jacobellis, Stratton Mountain, VT

2. Deborah Anthonioz, France

3. Faye Gulini, Salt Lake City

4. Chloe Banning

—

5. Callan Chythlook-Sifsof, Girdwood, AK

7. Jenna Feldman, Linwood, NJ

8. Kristen Harvey, Truckee, CA

James Tilley – 1940-2011

James Henry Tilley Jr., supportive and loving father, amazing and fun husband, fan of 40s music and the Chicago Bears, died in his Zephyr Heights home on Feb. 8, 2011. He was 70.

Jim was born to Louise and James Tilley Sr. on April 13, 1040, in the kitchen of their central Illinois home. He was raised with great love and pride, taking trumpet lessons at 5 years old and attending White Hall, Ill., schools. The trumpet lessons led to gigs in local bands, pit band playing for musicals and on the Admiral Steamboat in St. Louis, Mo.

He graduated Illinois College in 1962, taught for more than 40 years in Downers Grove and Aurora, Ill. He was a Science Department chairman and an excellent physics teacher, mentoring many students and new teachers.

After annual trips to the Rocky Mountains with family to camp and hike, Jim was convinced to retire out West. Tahoe was a real draw – casinos, mountains, fishing, music, shows and steakhouses. A smaller true community became an unexpected bonus. Here on the South Shore, he took art classes at LTCC, met many friends through South Lake Tahoe Senior Center bridge (and Edgewood Ladies Bridge), served as president of the Tahoe Douglas Senior Center and participated in Relay for Life.

His leadership skills, love of fun and friends and his organizing talents served his Illinois and Nevada communities through his career and 10 years of retirement.

We have all benefited from Jim’s 70 short years.

The greatest joys Jim had were his daughters Kate and Anna, wife Maryon and grandchildren Arthur, Jack and Alex. His one great heartache was the loss of his son Jimmie (James Robert in 1982. Jimmie is memorialized on the log at Wildwood Avenue Park. Jim recovered to enjoy life and family and traveling to the fullest.

Jim died looking at the snow-capped Sierra from his River Room which is decorated in a fly fishing motif.

We love you and miss you Dad, Hubby, great friend and talented teacher.

Two memorials will be at later dates in the Tahoe area and the Chicago area.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Jim’s memory to:

• Tahoe Douglas Senior Center, P.O. Box 1771, Zephyr Cove, NV 89448

• South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, P.O. Box 17962, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151

• Barton Home Health, 2092 Lake Tahoe Blvd., CA 96150.

Bahrke 8th in aerials in Moscow

By Freddy Perryman, U.S. Ski Team

MOSCOW -– Olympic veteran Emily Cook of Belmont, Mass., returned to the scene of her only previous World Cup win using experience and strategy to win again Saturday in downtown Moscow.

Scotty Bahrke of Tahoe City led the U.S. men in eighth as World Championship bronze medalist Anton Kushnir of Belarus won.

“I was pretty psyched. It was a great day,” exclaimed Cook. “I am pretty happy to be back on top of the podium.”

Saturday’s contest was a little unconventional. The jump, which was constructed of scaffolding near downtown Moscow, was not ideal and a strong headwind compounded to make for very sketchy jumping conditions, forcing both the men and the women to back off on the degree of difficulty. To address safety concerns the finals consisted of a single jump rather than the normal two.

Overcoming the challenges presented by the conditions, Cook continued to find good fortune in Russia. Her only other World Cup victory, back on Jan. 3, 2008, was here in Moscow.

“The biggest thing is that we stuck with the plan,” explained the experienced Cook. “It was our plan to lead out with the full double full and despite the weather challenges we did it anyways.”

In what turned out to be a one run final, Cook was the only competitor to attempt a jump with such a high level of difficulty in the first round. She was rewarded, scoring

nearly eight points above World Championship bronze medalist Olga Volkova of Ukraine who was second.

The U.S. men, severely hampered by the wind and lack of speed, lowered their degree of difficulty to maintain safety. Bahrke, who finished eighth, was joined in the finals by Dylan Ferguson of Amesbury, Mass., finishing 13th. Matthew DePeters of Hamburg, N.Y., was 24th.

Official results, World Cup, Moscow, Aerials

Men

1. Anton Kushnir, Belarus, 119.91

2. Stanislav Kravchuk, Ukraine, 102.57

3. Guangpu Qi, China, 102.57

—

8. Scotty Bahrke Tahoe City, CA. 95.35

13. Dylan Ferguson Amesbury, MA. 92.17

24. Matthew DePeters, Hamburg, NY. 61.15

Women

1. Emily Cook, Belmont, MA. 93.06

2. Olga Volkova, Ukraine, 85.83

3. Xin Zhang, China, 84.10

—

DNS: Ashley Caldwell, Charleston, SC

Up tick in sales of high-priced houses

By Robert Lewis, Sacramento Bee

In what might be a sign that the recession ended for the rich faster than the rest of us, new real estate figures show mansion sales increased in 2010 across California even as total home sales fell.

Last year, 22,529 California homes sold for $1 million or more – a 21 percent increase from 2009, according to figures released Friday by DataQuick Information Systems, a La-Jolla based research company.

That contrasts with a 9 percent year-over-year drop in total home sales statewide from 2009 to 2010.

Some notable increases in the four-county Sacramento region: In Tahoe City, $1 million-plus sales increased more than 133 percent from the prior year, to 28. Truckee had 42, a 10.5 percent increase. Granite Bay had a modest 7.4 percent increase, with 29 such sales in 2010.

Many of the buyers are tracking unique homes that were once worth $2 million now on sale for, say, $1.2 million and have decided it’s a good time to hunt for a bargain, said Kris Vogt, president of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage’s Sacramento-Tahoe region.

Read the whole story