Quagga mussels altering fish stocking in Nevada

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada wildlife officials have finalized plans to plant more than 1.2 million trout across Nevada over the next two years – a program profoundly challenged by an invasion of exotic mussels at Lake Mead.

Closure of the Nevada Department of Wildlife's Lake Mead fish hatchery, forced in 2007 due to the discovery of quagga mussels there, forced the department to ramp up production at its Mason Valley hatchery in Yerington as well as depend on another federal hatchery in Arizona.

With the Arizona deal set to expire, the department will cease stocking Lake Mead with trout beginning next fall, said Doug Nielsen, a Las Vegas-based spokesman for NDOW.

Quagga mussels, which now number in the trillions in Lake Mead, have become a "very significant factor" in fish-stocking operations as officials seek to halt spread of the invading mollusks to other water bodies, Nielsen said.

"That's the key factor in the whole thing. We have to be able to guarantee we're not moving mussels somewhere else," Nielsen said.

Read the whole story

STMS students deal with more than routine pre-teen angst

By Kathryn Reed

“People in your life are a wing to lift you up or a weight to drag you down.”

Manny Scott said that message in several ways to South Tahoe Middle School students Jan. 14. Scott is one of the Freedom Writers – the gang members depicted in the 2007 movie by the same name.

In two sessions Friday morning he reached all the sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders in a raw but compassionate way. He threw soft questions out to start with like who likes certain music groups. They were asked to stand if they liked that artist.



Manny Scott connects with South Tahoe Middle School students. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Then the questions got more personal, more to the core of what life is like for these young people.

Almost all have heard gunshots other than on television. About 80 percent have had their utilities cut off. About two-fifths have been asked to join a gang. Almost all have had someone close to them die. About half have seen their mother be hit or beaten by a man. About a quarter have been physically abused. About 25 percent of the students have a parent who was or is addicted to drugs

“You have a lot more in common than you have differences,” Scott told the group seated on the floor of the multipurpose room.

He wasn’t there to single people out. The exercise demonstrated how people have a lot of issues going on that most people don’t know about it. It’s about understanding they are not alone.

A startling revelation is the number of people students know who have died from violence. The last student standing knows 10 people who have died a violent death. Another knows eight.

This is South Lake Tahoe. These are middle school students.

“We save lives by showing people around you they are loved,” Scott said.

At that moment, with a heavy silence having fallen over the room, Scott has everyone get up and hug someone. Students hugged students, teachers hugged students, the principal hugged teachers and students.

Scott connects with the kids because he’s been there. His stepdad is back in prison. He grew up breaking up fights between him and his mom. They were drinkers. He was in a gang.

What helped turn Scott around was a teacher named Miss G. She started having these inner city kids write in journals. To this day Scott still does, having done so the morning of his talk in South Lake Tahoe.

Hours after Scott spoke to students at South Tahoe Middle School “Freedom Writers” was on MTV.

All of the students at STMS had the opportunity to see the movie before Scott came to campus last week.

“When I help these kids my life makes sense to me,” Hilary Swank as Miss G says in the movie.

STMS teacher Cindy Cowen says essentially the same thing. She has been the catalyst to get speakers like Scott to the school, along with the help of Principal Beth Delacour and a grant from the El Dorado Community Foundation.

“I want things like this more than once a year,” Cowen told *Lake Tahoe News*. “My desire is to change the culture of the school.”

Full moon snowshoe in Truckee

Truckee River Winery is having a full moon snowshoe on the property. Winemaker Russ Jones will be the guide on the tour.

Homemade desserts, hot mulled wine and homemade apple cider will await the treksters on their return.

Snowshoe rentals are available for the walk, although reservations should be made ahead of time by calling (530) 587-4626.

Truckee River Winery is at 11467 Brockway Road, Truckee.

Bahrke seventh in aerials in Canada

By Freddy Perryman, U.S. Ski Team

MONT GABRIEL, Quebec City – Olympians Ryan St. Onge of Winter Park, Colo., and Emily Cook of Bosto were the top Americans, both finishing just off the podium in fourth, in Sunday's aerials World Cup at Mont Gabriel. St. Onge and Cook led a U.S. surge totaling five Americans inside the top 10.

Reigning World Champion St. Onge was joined in the finals by teammates Scotty Bahrke of Tahoe City and Dylan Ferguson of Amesbury, Mass.. The U.S. men's team put more athletes into Sunday's finals than any other country.

Bahrke who finished seventh and Ferguson who ended ninth, had a shared flight plan of full double full-full and double full full-full.

Aerials competition resumes Jan. 21 in Lake Placid, N.Y., at the Nature Valley Freestyle Cup. World Championships are scheduled for Feb. 2-4 at Deer Valley Resort.

Official results, FIS Freestyle World Cup, Mont Gabriel, Aerials

Men

1. Anton Kushnir, Belarus. 247.60

2. Guangpu Qi, China. 240.97

3. Stanislav Kravchuk, Ukraine. 234.60

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4. Ryan St. Onge, Winter Park, CO. 233.22

7. Scotty Bahrke Tahoe City, CA. 227.13

9. Dylan Ferguson Amesbury, MA. 225.63

23. Nevin Brown, Streetsboro, OH, 88.69

30. Matthew DePeters, Hamburg, NY, 81.64

35. Jonathon Lillis, Rochester, NY 71.73

Women

1. Mengtao Xu, China. 192.28

2. Alla Tsuper, Belarus. 187.00

3. Shuang Cheng, China. 186.00

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4. Emily Cook Boston, MA. 174.60

10. Ashley Caldwell Charleston, SC. 157.78

CalFire budget cuts would reduce staffing on engines

By Greg Welter, Chico Enterprise Record

SACRAMENTO – CalFire, the state's firefighting agency, is facing a budget cut in excess of $30 million for fiscal year 2011-12, and will trim staffing on engines from four down to three to cover most of it.

Starting in 2003, former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger issued an annual executive order bumping engine crews to four throughout

the state, to meet the demands of approaching fire seasons.

H.D. Palmer, with the California State Budget Office, said studies since 2003 have shown that the wildfire containment rate in California has remained about the same using three-person crews versus four.

Read the whole story

STPUD workshop on rate increases

South Tahoe Public Utility District is having a workshop about rate increases on Jan. 20 from 12:30-2pm in the board room at 1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

HDR Consultants will present Water Rates 101.

No action will be taken.

Ski report: Remember it’s a holiday weekend



Skies will be mostly gray today, but the temps could hit 50. It might be time to find an Adirondack chair and sip a cocktail.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

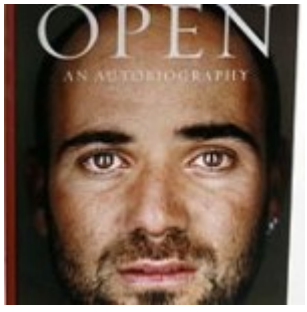
Agassi aces account of his life with ‘Open’

By Kathryn Reed

Apparently Andre Agassi didn’t get the message that what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.

His autobiography is all about life in Las Vegas, the hazards of growing up under the tyranny of a father who makes the phrase “Little League parent” seem like a compliment, the struggles of losing ones hair, life on the tennis circuit, and love.

As a tennis fan and player who followed Agassi’s career through the years, reading his book “Open” added a depth to this champion’s life that I didn’t know about.



I was living in Las Vegas when he played in the 1995 Davis Cup match against Sweden. Reading about what he was going through at that time helped explain the arrogance he exhibited on the court and in the pressroom.

Reading about all the people who wanted to look like him, especially during his longhair days, made me smile. It brought back memories of the guy at my old tennis club who was a dead ringer for Agassi. And Agassi's comments about Michael Chang rang true based on the little I saw of him at the tennis club we both belonged to.

The book also delves into Agassi's insights about other players on the tour – notably his rival Pete Sampras.

Unfortunately when the book came out in 2009 most of the reviews latched on to the revelation Agassi had used crystal meth. Yes, it was part of his life. Yes, he wrote about it. But it's such a small part of the book and his life that it taints the bigger picture.

One must remember that this illegal drug isn't a performance enhancer – quite the opposite. He doesn't glorify the use. He just acknowledges the depths of despair his life had spiraled to and what it took to get straight.

What I was left with after reading the nearly 400-page hardback book is how normal Agassi seems after the turmoil he went through to get to the world stage. When he first hooked up with Stefanie (that's what she prefers to be called) Graf, I thought it odd. But in reading the book it seems so natural and perhaps a bit fated.

Besides enduring a childhood that was filled with more time spent opposing a ball machine than playing with friends, Agassi dropped out of school. For a man who did not graduate from high school, he has committed himself through his namesake academy to provide an education for those less fortunate.

"Open" is just that – an open account of the life of Andre Agassi until he retired from the tour.

Tennis fans won't be disappointed.

Murderer with ties to El Dorado County wants out of prison

By Sacramento Bee

A convicted murderer of an Olivehurst man wants out from behind bars – this time legally, according to the State Board of Parole Hearings.

Troy Alexander Temple, now 50, is serving 15 years to life for killing Kenneth D. Cossey, 50, of Olivehurst in 1989. He also is under a nearly 32-year sentence for an escape from the Yuba County jail after he was convicted in 1991.

The escape sentence will start when and if Temple is paroled from the murder conviction, records indicate.

Temple also has a criminal history in Nevada and El Dorado counties, records indicate.

Read the whole story

Runners give back to land manager

The Kokanee Salmon Festival at Taylor Creek Visitor Center each October is possible because of support from local groups

like the Kokanee Trail Runs and the U.S. Forest Service’s nonprofit organization Tahoe Heritage Foundation.



Joe Tillson, Renee and Mark Gorevin, Jean Norman

The Kokanee Trail Runs recently donated $4,000 to the Forest Service’s nonprofit to go toward the Kokanee Salmon Festival 2011.