Winter soccer programs for South Tahoe youth

South Tahoe Soccer Association is hosting a Winter Training Program in February and March for children ages 4-11 at all of the elementary schools in Lake Tahoe Unified School District.

Flier will be given to students next week to bring home. Sessions will be after school in the multipurpose rooms at the schools.

For more information, go online or call 877.358.1207.

Demographics may alter LTUSD board elections

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District may have to change how it elects board members because of the growing student Hispanic population – which is 41 percent.

The California Voting Rights Act that was enacted in 2002 was implemented to make it easier for racial and ethnic groups to challenge at-large elections instead of contending with the federal Voting Rights Act. The theory is this gives people in all sections of a community a voice.

The irony is that even though LTUSD, like the majority of districts in California, has at-large elections, the five

members already geographically represent the district. One lives in the Tahoe Keys, one in Meyers, one in Sierra Tract, one in Al Tahoe and one near Bijou.

They are, though, all white. Three are women and two are men.

The South Shore district is waiting for March when the Census figures come out to know what the overall demographics are of the South Shore compared to the district.

LTUSD has 3,878 students. Whites make up 49 percent of the population, Hispanics 41 percent, and blacks 1.2 percent.

Ultimately, it would be up to the voters to decide which type of representation they want. That could be on a ballot as soon as November, with the decision affecting a school board election two years later.

The legal brouhaha that has ensued since the state Voting Act was put into place has cost at least one district millions of dollars to fight it. Now a cottage industry has cropped up to assess whether districts need to change how board members are elected.

It can cost upward of $30,000 to sort through the legal mess, not to mention the multitude of meetings involving the county office of education and public.

When Superintendent Jim Tarwater was asked why not skip the consultant telling the district what to do and go to the voters in November, he said the process doesn’t allow that kind of logic to be used.

Tarwater has not been given a magic number from the Census that will trigger a review of the district’s elections.

Other stats given out at the Jan. 11 meeting include: Males outnumber females by two percentage points at 51 percent.

English learners – those whose first language is something

other than English – account for 28 of the students.

The Hispanic population at Bijou is 76 percent, Mount Tallac 50 percent, Sierra House 46 percent, South Tahoe Middle School 41 percent, Tahoe Valley 37 percent, South Tahoe High 32 percent, Environmental Magnet 8 percent.

A figure stated at the Jan. 11 school board meeting that startled the board is the realization 59 percent of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch. That is up from 45 percent a year ago.

“It reflects the economic times,” Tarwater told the board.

The board momentarily discussed how if the proposed cuts by the state to social service programs are enacted, it will create more of an economic crisis for families in the district.

In other action:

• Board member Larry Green said the tutoring program between Lake Tahoe Community College, where he works, and LTUSD has been reinstated.

• CFO Deb Yates will make a formal presentation to the board Jan. 25 about the budget and what might be in store based on Gov. Jerry Brown’s proposals.

DA: Garrido hearing must be in El Dorado County

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

The prosecutor in the Jaycee Dugard kidnapping case said in a motion released Wednesday that a February hearing to determine whether Phillip Garrido is competent to stand trial must be kept in El Dorado County.

Garrido has been evaluated by three mental health experts, and reports from at least two will be the subject of his competency trial before a jury, set to begin Feb. 28.

At Garrido's last hearing on Jan. 6, his lawyer, Susan Gellman, said she had not yet decided whether she will ask the court to move the hearing to another county to ensure a fair and impartial jury will consider the question of competency.

As of Wednesday, Gellman had not filed a change-of-venue motion.

But El Dorado County District Attorney Vern Pierson said during that hearing that he filed his document opposing any proposed change just in case Gellman decides to try to move the trial outside Placerville.

Read the whole story

Obama urges Americans to unify in wake of Ariz. tragedy

By Michael A. Memoli and Michael Muskal, Los Angeles Times

TUCSON – With a plea to the nation to overcome its divisions, President Obama paid tribute to the victims and heroes of the weekend shooting spree in Arizona and sounded a call for

Americans to heal themselves.

Obama came to the University of Arizona, where he spoke to a cheering crowd of more than 26,000 – including 13,000 in an overflow area in Arizona Stadium – all seeking solace after days of tumult in the wake of the attack in Tucson that killed six and injured 13. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama earlier visited Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.), who was critically injured in the violence that shocked the nation and prompted a debate on civility in politics.



Rep. Gabby Giffords opened her eyes for the first time Wednesday after being shot Saturday.

Most of his speech paid tribute to the victims, especially to 9-year-old Christina Taylor Green, the youngest of the slain. Christina has become a symbol for those, including her parents, who have called for an end to such violence. She had gone to a Safeway shopping center to meet Giffords, who was holding a meeting there with constituents Saturday morning when the attack began.

Read the whole story

History presentation at Camp Rich

Lake Tahoe Historical Society will have its Winter Program at Camp Richardson's rustic lodge on Highway 89 on Jan. 18 at 7pm.

Frank Tortorich, Amador County educator, Emigrant Trail researcher and guide, author, and longtime member of Oregon California Trails Association, will portray a young man who joined the Mormon Battalion in the 1840s. The drama will describe the trail from Sacramento Valley through Sly Park area, up Carson Pass into Hope Valley and beyond, and the experiences he and the Battalion had along the way.

Members, friends, and guests are invited; light refreshments will be served.

For further information, call (530) 577.7415.

Immigration film '9500 Liberty' coming to LTCC

Illegal. Racist. Immigration. Freedom. Profiling.

These words are swirled into the movie "9500 Liberty" that will be shown Jan. 22 at 6pm at Duke Theatre on the Lake Tahoe Community College campus in South Lake Tahoe.

The feature-length film was initially shot in segments that were uploaded to YouTube. It’s about a county in Virginia that passed a restrictive immigration law before Arizona passed its version. The Virginia law has since been overturned.

The movie is in English with Spanish subtitles.

Donations are being accepted on behalf of the college’s HOPE Club, which will use the money for scholarships.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Emerald Bay Towing in South Tahoe became a satellite Hertz car rental office last year.

• AARP lists Sugar Bowl and Homewood as two of the top 10 resorts for older skiers.

• The Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society in Lake Tahoe is one of 13 nonprofits to receive grants from the Hearst Foundations in New York. It was awarded $35,000 for general operations.

• South Tahoe Middle School seventh-grader Sarah Gott’s poster made the final cut for the 2011 Safe & Wise Water Ways contest. Finalists’ artwork will be displayed on the poster contest website and also at the California State Capitol during National Safe Boating Week in May.

• The South Tahoe High School CTE, ORG, and Joint-Use projects will receive an Award of Excellence for their educational programs and facilities design at the annual California Coalition for Adequate School Housing Conference in Sacramento on Feb. 22.

• Heavenly Mountain Resort is partnering with *Tahoe Quarterly* magazine to offer a three-month free digital subscription to the publication.

Ski report: Traces of fresh snow



Mostly cloudy skies and a little snow are in the forecast. Most resorts are reporting a minimal amount of fresh snow.

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

St. Theresa School crab dinner

St. Theresa School’s crab dinner is Feb. 4.

The dinner and auction are the South Lake Tahoe school’s major

fundraiser.

Doors open at 6pm with a cash-only bar. The sit-down dinner is served at 7pm. In addition to crab served two ways, pasta, salad and veggies are on the menu.

There will also be silent and live auctions.

Childcare is available if arranged ahead of time.

Tickets are $40. The event sells out every year. Tickets may be bought at the school (1081 Lyons Ave.) or by calling (530) 544.8944. Drink tickets may also be bought in advance.

To donate cash, goods or services, contact Kelly Shanahan at crabdinnerkelly@hotmail.com or call the number above.

Palin issues statement about Ariz. shooting

By Mark Memmott, NPR

Saying that "after this shocking tragedy, I listened at first puzzled, then with concern, and now with sadness, to the irresponsible statements from people attempting to apportion blame for this terrible event," former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin has issued her first lengthy statement about the shootings in Tucson on Saturday and the debate afterward about whether the harsh tone of American politics – and things she has said and done in recent years – played any role.

You can read her statement here. The video is here.

Palin has come under the most criticism for putting Rep.

Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., who was critically injured on Saturday, and 19 other members of Congress on a list of those whom conservatives would target in last year's elections – and putting crosshairs (a Palin aide has subsequently claimed they were surveyor's markings) on a map of the nation showing the lawmaker's districts.

Read the whole story