Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Shakespeare is returning to the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival with “Twelfth Night” next summer.

• Carmel Mooney, who often writes stories about Lake Tahoe, has launched a website called Road Trips for Couples.

• Tahoe Truckee Unified School District board had four new trustees. Kim Szczurek and Dee Dee Driller ran uncontested in November; Gaylan Larson was appointed in October; and on Dec. 8 Tahoe Vista resident Randy Hill was appointed.

• Rep. Tom McClintock has changed his district office to 8700 Auburn-Folsom Road, Ste. 100, Granite Bay, CA 95746. The phone is the same – (916) 786.5560.

• El Dorado Hill’s Tech Spec, which manufactures motorcycle accessories, has moved to Minden.

Mountain bikers solidifying voice in Tahoe region

By Kathryn Reed

Eight leaders emerged from a roomful of mountain bike enthusiasts to reignite the dormant cycling club TAMBA.

These eight are tasked with sifting through the bylaws of the Tahoe Area Mountain Bicycling Association; figuring out how to get the former board members off and new ones on documents;

whether taxes have been filed and if not, then what; the structure of the organization; and where it goes from here.

More than 30 people met at Lake Tahoe Community College this month to talk about how to get the region's mountain bike community can have one voice. Their desire is to have mountain bikers evolve out of their second-class status.



John Drum leads the December TAMBA meeting. Photo/Kathryn Reed

"We want to provide an organized, effective voice and one that represents all different riders," said John Drum who has been facilitating the meetings.

Although nothing was decided this month, some discussion was on whether membership should come with a price – even if it's nominal; the importance of having someone with financial know-how be on the board; being responsive to U.S. Forest Service requests for written input on trails and physical labor when needed; the likelihood of having several committees to deal with various interests; having a website that can be a central location for what's going on; partnering with other groups when appropriate; and working on obtaining grants as well as funding from private companies.

Because this group isn't just South Shore specific, it was noted that besides the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the

Forest Service, the group will need contact with forest managers for at least the Eldorado and Tahoe national forests, too.

State landowners will also have to be part of the process.

A representative at the meeting from Nevada State Parks said his relationship with TAMBA when it was more active about a decade ago was tremendous and he hopes for the same from those who were assembled that night.

Kevin Joell, who wants to be part of the inner workings of TAMBA, has been involved with cycling groups for 15 years. The Reno resident is interested in ensuring mountain bikers have access to trails. He has worked directly with Nevada parks in the past.

Pam Lefrancois of Kings Beach has been an advocate for cyclists for years through various clubs. She has worked on the North Shore trail management plan.

She said trails in her hometown were recently revamped and turned out great.

“We all share the same trails,” Lefrancois said after the meeting. This is one reason she wants to be involved – to make the region better for mountain bikers.

The eight individuals who will work to bring structure to TAMBA are: John Drum, Pete Fink, Ben Fish, Nils Miller, Lauren Lindley, Kevin Joell, Kevin Crifasi, and Mike Lefrancois.

They will meet in early January, with a public meeting scheduled for Jan. 26 at 6pm at LTCC in South Lake Tahoe.

Winter activity warnings

To the community,

Before venturing out onto the ice this winter, stop to consider whether it will support your weight.



If there’s any doubt, you should keep your pets, children, and yourself away from the ice.

We would also advise everyone involved in heavy snow shoveling activities to take regular breaks and drink plenty of fluids. Watch out for signs of frostbite and hypothermia and avoid any alcohol consumption when engaging in outdoor activities.

We at the city of South Lake Tahoe Fire Department want you to have a fun and safe winter season.

Sallie Ross-Filgo, SLTFD

Maverick educator wants to put students first

By Michelle Rhee, Newsweek

After my boss, Washington, D.C., mayor Adrian Fenty, lost his primary in September, I was stunned. I had never imagined he wouldn’t win the contest, given the progress that was visible throughout the city—the new recreation centers, the turnaround

of once struggling neighborhoods, and, yes, the improvements in the schools. Three and a half years ago, when I first met with Fenty about becoming chancellor of the D.C. public-school system, I had warned him that he wouldn't want to hire me. If we did the job right for the city's children, I told him, it would upset the status quo—I was sure I would be a political problem. But Fenty was adamant. He said he would back me—and my changes—100 percent. He never wavered, and I convinced myself the public would see the progress and want it to continue. But now I have no doubt this cost him the election.



Michelle Rhee

The timing couldn't have been more ironic. The new movie "Waiting for Superman" – which aimed to generate public passion for school reform the way "An Inconvenient Truth" had for climate change – premiered in Washington the night after the election. The film championed the progress Fenty and I had been making in the District, and lamented the roadblocks we'd faced from the teachers' union. In the pro-reform crowd, you could feel the shock that voters had just rejected this mayor and, to some extent, the reforms in their schools.

When I started as chancellor in 2007, I never had any illusions about how tough it would be to turn around a failing system like D.C.'s; the city had gone through seven chancellors in the 10 years before me. While I had to make many structural changes—overhauling the system for evaluating teachers and principals, adopting new reading and math programs, making sure textbooks got delivered on time—I believed the hardest thing would be changing the culture. We

had to raise the expectations that people had about what was possible for our kids.

Read the whole story

EPA pledges to review chromium in water

By Michael Hawthorne, Chicago Tribune

The nation’s top environmental regulator on Tuesday promised to complete a scientific review of hexavalent chromium by summer and consider ordering cities to start testing for the toxic metal in tap water.

During a meeting with senators from Illinois and six other states, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said new research may lead to an overhaul of federal regulations limiting chromium, a metal that occurs naturally in the environment but also is discharged into water and air by steel mills and other industries.

A study released this week by the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit research and advocacy organization, found hexavalent chromium, also known as chromium-6, in tap water from 31 cities. The amount in Lake Michigan water pumped to 7 million people in Chicago and its suburbs was 0.18 parts per billion, three times higher than a safety limit proposed last year by California officials.

The EPA now limits and requires water testing only for total chromium, a standard that includes another form of the metal, chromium-3, an essential nutrient. Critics say federal rules,

last updated in 1992, need to be strengthened to reflect the latest science that links chromium-6 to stomach cancer.

Read the whole story

Bond of friendship stronger with Lou Gehrig diagnosis

By Susan Wood

When John Winkelman wakes up Christmas morning, the 1977 South Tahoe High School graduate and his class buddies will have the comfort of knowing they share the greatest gift of all – an everlasting friendship that long sustains the presence of the person.

Two years into it, Winkelman is dying of Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) – better known as Lou Gehrig's disease. The debilitating illness that attacks the spinal cord and nerve cells of one out of every 100,000 people has taken away his ability to talk. But that setback has not deterred him from communicating with his friends who gather to share good times, laughs and understanding.

"It really is a celebration when we get together," STHS grad Lynn Corey of Sacramento said.



John Winkelman skied in the 1980 Winter Games. Photos/Provided

The friends are spread out with Winkelman living in Los Altos. The Tahoe bond remains strong. The 51-year-old returns to the South Shore for the STHS homecoming every year.

This fall 65 people showed up to play bocce ball. The sport has turned into a mainstay of activity. And why wouldn't it? Winkelman was a first-class athlete in high school, playing football. He even placed 18th in downhill ski racing at the Lake Placid Winter Games in 1980.

"I remember thinking that this is a man who was always an athlete, skied in the Olympics, played hockey on three different teams. The idea this athletic person was going to be reduced to an amuscular person was devastating," said Corey, who drops what she's doing whenever the group calls.

People who know Winkelman may contribute to a website called the Caring Bridge to share thoughts on their friend

Corey stressed how when she and a handful of friends from STHS meet up, there's lots of laughing – sometimes over crazy antics when they were young. She shared classes with Winkleman.

She recalled how Winkelman was supportive, like a brother, when she took her military father's Jeep out for a joy ride with him.

After high school, time escaped until they reunited and ended up at Steamers Bar for a drink. She was troubled by watching him struggle with swallowing, a symptom of the disease. She learned about his prognosis about 10 months ago. From then on,

the friends have met at an accelerated pace.

“I just didn’t want the next time I see him to be at his funeral,” she said.

Rob Miller, another friend and fellow grade, agrees. For Miller, the experience has hit close to home. His father died of ALS in 1981, so he witnessed firsthand the wrath of the disease. Most patients die between three to five years after diagnosis, but one-fifth of them live beyond that mark.

“It’s hard because I know what lies ahead for him. As a group, we try to do all we can,” he said.

Since Winkelman wants his home remodeled and is unable to perform the work, Miller is bringing a contractor over to help.

“I knew John would be needing help,” he said.

The men played football together in high school, but Miller was adamant that they’re closer now.

“His attitude is strong, and he still has his wit,” Miller said.

It’s as though Winkelman is helping his friends discover what’s important in life. And along the way, Winkelman has had his own epiphanies about the true meaning of success and living a life as a good person. The husband and father of two admits to being “overwhelmed” by the show of support from friends.

“Having a good reliable friend is like oxygen to me. I have to have it. All fires start small in your fireplace. With some work, you get it to where you want it, then enjoy it. I am now enjoying the warmth of my good, reliable friends,” he said via email. “It feels great. May the STHS Viking spirit live on!”

He said he doesn’t want to be remembered as a good athlete,

but much more.

“I was gifted to be good at whatever sport I played. How I want to be remembered is summed up in a poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson. It has nothing to do with trophies, medals or places. It measures success,” he said.

The poem called “Success” reads:

“To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics and to endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one’s self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived – this is to have succeeded.”

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Genoa Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival

Organizers of the Genoa Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival are putting the final touches on the lineup for the event’s second year – May 5-8.

Headliners committed to appear include award-winning poet Paul Zarzyski and multiple entertainer of the year winner Dave Stamey, along with Belinda Gail, Wylie & the Wild West, David John & the Comstock Cowboys, Doris Daley, Sourdough Slim and

more favorites.

Alongside the entertainers, attendees will find a packed schedule of workshops and several galleries of fine western art, a Native American Center, cowboy dinners and dances and opportunities to shop for Western clothing, collectibles, jewelry and tack. There’s even a Trail Ride, with its own barbecue dinner and concert on Saturday and a special Mother’s Day Brunch and Concert offering on Sunday.

The Genoa Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival is a blend of setting, heritage and Western culture and entertainment.

Nestled at the base of the Sierra Nevada in Northern Nevada’s Carson Valley, historic Genoa, Nevada’s oldest settlement, is the site of the first ranch in Nevada and still has working cattle ranches literally steps from the town. From its 19th century beginnings, cowboys and ranching have shared work, words and music here.

Find all the festival information online.

New owners making changes to David Walley’s Resort

The historic David Walley’s Resort in Genoa is getting a much needed face lift, according to the new owners.

Summerwinds Resorts Services, based in Branson, Mo., has recently purchased the time share-hot springs and is renovating the resort.

The founders of Summerwinds Resorts, Joseph and Dawn Joyce are no strangers to the resort industry. Joined by partners Darren

Abbott and Rich Dowdell, they collectively have more than 75 years of experience and success in the resort industry.

Pat Joyce, in a press release, said, “We made this purchase to restore a historic icon in the Carson Valley community, and bring back what David and Harriet Walley envisioned years ago.”

The purchase included the restaurant and spa, which are open while improvements are made. The 1862 David Walley’s Restaurant and Saloon renovations include maple wood floors, leather seating, and equipment throughout the restaurant and bar.

Writing Escape Workshop

Writing Escape Workshop: A three-hour workshop on a weekend from 10am to 1pm in downtown Truckee.

Play with language and meaning in several writing prompts, generate new material, explore craft, and inspire ourselves to develop a consistent writing practice. Each workshop is different and involves much writing.

For all levels of experience and any genre.

It costs $35 each or $60 for two. The workshops are Jan. 23, March 13 and May 14.

For more info and to sign up, contact Karen Terrey at tangledrootswriting@gmail.com or (530) 386.3901.

Monday Night Writing Workshop

Monday Night Writing Workshop: A fun supportive and committed writing group that meets for six Monday nights from 6:30-8pm in downtown Truckee.

Generate new material, explore craft techniques to develop work, provide feedback, learn ways to inspire ourselves to write consistently and playfully, and write a lot.

This workshop will help you develop work in progress as well as create new work. Productive for all levels of experience and any genre. $90.

Next six-week session: Jan. 10-Feb. 14.

For more info and to sign up, contact Karen Terrey at tangledrootswriting@gmail.com or call (530) 386.3901.