Free family science event in Incline

UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center is hosting a family science day on Dec. 29 from 2-5pm.

Families are invited to explore the mysteries of snow and ice. Conduct scientific experiments, discover what snowflakes look like under microscopes. Learn about wind chill and why some animals hibernate, among many other activities.

It will be in rooms 139 and 141 Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village.

For details, call (775) 881.7560, ext. 7483.

The is for ages 8 and older.

It is free.

Gas prices going up, more people expected on roads this week

By Mark Glover and Darrell Smith, Sacramento Bee

Friends and relatives may be urging you to drive on down for the holidays, but prices at the gas pumps are definitely arguing for the joys of gathering around the home fires.

Regular gas in California is at $3.26 a gallon and rising. An unprecedented – for this time of year – $3 a gallon nationwide

average is still possible by Christmas.

“You know it’s ridiculous, but what can you do? You’ve got to go with it,” said Kacey Pankins of Sacramento as he filled up Friday. He paid a relatively low $3.17 a gallon at a Valero station on Franklin Boulevard and Meadowgate Drive.

Analysts link climbing gas prices to crude oil prices now flirting with $90 a barrel, driven by speculators betting that an improving world economy will increase demand.

Dan Lina, who also paid $3.17 a gallon Friday at an AM/PM station at Elk Grove Boulevard and Highway 99, said gas prices were part of his decision to stay home this year.

But for many, the lure of distant holiday festivities is too strong to be deterred.

Read the whole story

Nordic racers brave weather to compete in duathlon

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

Battling fierce winds, stinging rain, sleet and snow, about 30 skiers competed Sunday in the Sierra Nordic duathlon, skiing first around a 5-kilometer course on classic skis, and then switching to skate skis and repeating the track.

Alex Hamilton was the first man to complete the two laps, finishing in 33 minutes, 51 seconds. Tav Streit of Sacramento followed in 34 minutes and Rick Reynolds of Truckee came in third 2 seconds later.

Former Olympian Beth Reid of Palo Alto and her daughter, Joanne, who skis for the University of Colorado, were the first women finishers, crossing the line holding hands. Third was Julie Young of Truckee.

Read the whole story

Ski report: Combo of wind and snow



More snow, more wind. One day the news might change.

Enjoy the last day of fall.

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

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe

Hilda is a spectacular gray Himalayan cat with beautiful blue eyes. She is an older girl who is declawed on all four paws. She is sweet and loves attention. She was found as a stray and nobody claimed her, but she must have been well loved by

someone as she is groomed nicely and well-socialized.



Hilda is spayed, microchipped, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs, cats, and kittens who are waiting for their new homes.

Call (530) 573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. The shelter will be closed on Dec 24-25, Dec. 31 and Jan 1.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz

Mancuso 14th in super combined, Vonn dominates

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

VAL d'ISERE, France -– Olympic gold medalist Lindsey Vonn of Vail regained the overall lead over German Maria Riesch, winning the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup super combined to sweep the weekend in Val d'Isere.

Sunday marked the second day this year for a USA double victory with Olympic Champion Ted Ligety of Park City on top in the Alta Badia, Italy, giant slalom for his third straight GS win this season.

"I watched Ted's run before I raced and it definitely

motivated me," Vonn said. "He skied amazingly well. He's on an incredible roll right now and I'm really excited for him. It's a great day for the U.S. Ski Team."

Saturday, Vonn received one of the highest honors in global sport. The *Associated Press*, the world's largest news agency, announced her as its Female Athlete of the Year – the first time a skier has received the honor.

Soft snow and flat light did not stop Vonn from charging, crossing the super G finish line in 1:18.66 with a three-tenths cushion over Austria's Nicole Hosp heading into the slalom portion.

In the slalom run, times were tight making an exciting finish for the cheering crowd, where they witnessed four Americans land inside the top 30. Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was 15th, followed by World Cup rookie Laurenne Ross of Klamath Falls, Ore., in 16th and Leanne Smith of Conway, N.H., in 26th.

Vonn posted the fifth fastest slalom run, for a combined time of 2:07.80, building her lead on Hosp and the field to clinch her fourth super combined and 36th career World Cup win. Hosp finished third with Austria's Elisabeth Goergl second.

The women race slalom in Courchevel Dec. 21 before a short holiday break.

Official results, Audi FIS Alpine World Cup. Val d'Isere, France, Super Combined

1. Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 2:07.80

2. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 2:08.26

3. Nicole Hosp, Austria, 2:08.49

4. Anna Fenninger, Austria, 2:08.57

5. Maria Riesch, Germany, 2:09.05

—

15. Julia Mancuso, Squaw Valley, CA, 2:10.32

16. Laurenne Ross, Klamath Falls, OR 2:10.65

26. Leanne Smith, Conway, NH, 2:11.72

—

34. Stacey Cook, Mammoth, CA, 2:13.37

36. Megan McJames, Park City, UT, 2:15.15

S. Tahoe testing erosion compounds on city street

By Kathryn Reed

With all the moisture South Lake Tahoe is getting this season, the erosion control test project on Pasadena Avenue should provide plenty of data.

During the past construction season three types of erosion treatments were installed to find out which works the best. Part of the street in the Al Tahoe neighborhood is paved with pervious asphalt, part with pervious concrete paving stones, and part with pervious concrete. Each is a couple blocks long.



Pasadena Avenue in South Tahoe is test street for erosion. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“We are monitoring to see which holds up best to the snowplows,” John Greenhut, director of Public Works, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He said it’s too early to render a verdict. That won’t come until late spring or early summer.

The idea is if the city deems at least one of the compounds usable, it’s possible future projects would incorporate the product. Like all things, this would also be dependent on funding.

A different type of pervious concrete was used on gutters in another part of the city, but it did not hold up well.

The erosion control project was mostly funded with federal recovery dollars, though money from the California Tahoe Conservancy and Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act were also used.

Included in the overall project was installation of a huge filtration system near the end of Lakeview Avenue. Greenhut said all runoff now goes through this system instead of flowing directly into the lake.

Donations keep LTN writers working

Lake Tahoe News is free. It intends to stay that way for the foreseeable future.

Like all businesses, it takes money to put out a product. *LTN* makes it money from advertisers and donations. Without them, there would be no *Lake Tahoe News*.

When people have sent a donation, often times they say it's their "subscription" payment – even though *LTN* doesn't charge for subscriptions. But we acknowledge the gesture with a standing ovation. You'll have to take our word on that.

Donations may be sent to Lake Tahoe News, P.O. Box 13406, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96151 or made via credit card through PayPal on the website at the bottom right of the home page.

Thank you in advance.

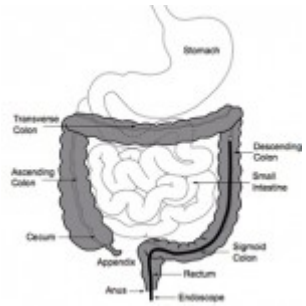
Colonoscopies – a necessary cleansing

By Kathryn Reed

Am I experiencing any pain?

Well, technically no – especially when they are hunger pangs

and not hunger pain. And the gagging had stopped. And the baby wipes, as suggested, were not needed.



Oh, the joys of having a colonoscopy.

As Dr. Dan Norman said to me when he walked into the room, “So, we have your Dad to thank for you being here.”

Yes, Dad’s bout with colon cancer way back when is the reason I have colonoscopies before the recommended age of 50. As much as they are not on my list of Top 10 things I enjoy, it was early detection that saved my Dad and had him with us for years after the last chemo treatment.

As unpleasant as the prep is for this procedure, I will gladly endure all that it entails if it means finding something early that can be treated, instead of the alternative – which could be a nasty death.

My Dad never had symptoms. It was through his regular colonoscopy that a cancerous polyp was detected. Fortunately, I have not had polyps in the two colonoscopies I’ve had. My sister, Tami, has – all non-cancerous. They are removed immediately.

It’s just one of those exams to add to the list of preventive health care measures – like regular mammograms and pap smears for women, and prostate exams for men.

Yes, it’s hard to sometimes justify the money for these “elective” procedures when finances are tight. But think about what would happen if you were diagnosed with a serious illness in its advanced stage. What would your family do without you? Is it less expensive for the test today, than the treatment

down the road?

Nothing about a colonoscopy is fun except for telling stories with other people who have had one. It's drinking the liquid the night before that is the worst. It's designed to clean out the intestinal system – and boy does it.

Other than the large bruise and bump from where the IV needle was put in my arm, there is no memory of the actual colonoscopy. I barely remember getting dressed. (The first time I had to ask my driver if I was dressed when she showed up because I didn't remember how my clothes got back on.)

Anesthetics throw me for a loop, so I was out all night. But I slept knowing, as my sister in the oncology field says, knowing I'm a perfect ——-.

Opinion: Clearing trees along rivers is not the answer

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 12, 2010, Fresno Bee.*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is expected to soon decide whether to enact a draconian policy of tree cutting along river levees nationwide. The policy is a misdirected reaction to the Hurricane Katrina flooding of New Orleans, which exposed federal government to unprecedented liability.

Seventeen members of the California congressional delegation urged the Corps to reconsider this levee vegetation policy, for both economic and environmental reasons.

Trees in the wrong place undoubtedly pose a threat to levee

integrity. Yet instead of taking a selective approach, the Corps following Katrina proposed a rigid ban on woody vegetation within 15 feet of levees and flood walls.

If enforced nationwide, flood districts could be forced to take chain saws to thousands of miles of riparian forest.

The Corps has a variance option, and recently granted one for 42 miles of levees in Natomas under repair by the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency. Yet SAFCA had to spend a large sum to obtain the variance and meet Corps directives relating to vegetation.

Read the whole story