3 Tahoe residents hurt in Hwy. 28 car accident

Three Tahoe City residents were injured Tuesday in a single-vehicle accident on Highway 28.

Morgan Russell, a passenger in the Nissan Murano, was taken to Renown Medical Center in Reno with life-threatening injuries. Wesley Waterman, the driver, and Karly Findorff sustained minor injuries.

Nevada Highway Patrol troopers said Waterman might have fallen asleep, causing the vehicle to drift to the right.

“The front of the vehicle struck a roadway sign, continued in a southerly direction then struck a tree. The vehicle came to rest on the right shoulder, facing south,” troopers said in a press release.

The accident occurred March 11 at 6:27am on Highway 28 south of mile marker 10, not far from the intersection of Highway 50.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• March 12 at 7pm is the Spring String Fling Concert at South Tahoe Middle School. The free concert includes elementary and high school students.

• Placer County’s Department of Child Support Services continues to offer free monthly information sessions for those interested in learning more about the department’s programs and services. For more info, call 916.435.5706.

• Alan Heyvaert of the Desert Research Institute will present research findings and recommendations that address threats to Lake Tahoe’s aquatic near shore environment on April 3 from 5:30-7pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences in Incline Village. Cost is $5.

• Here are the El Dorado-Tahoe and Sierra roadwork schedules for this week from Caltrans.

• South Lake Tahoe resident’s Alley Tinsley’s photograph “The Three Graces” won recognition as one of the 100 best photos of 2013 from Nikon.

Heroin use up because of crackdown on prescription drugs

By Jerry Markon and Alice Crites, Washington Post

From the beginning, the U.S. government’s decade-long crackdown on prescription drug abuse has run an unsettling risk: that arresting doctors and shuttering “pill mills” would inadvertently fuel a new epidemic of heroin use.

State and federal officials have pressed their campaign against prescription drug abuse with urgency, trying to contain a scourge that kills more than 16,000 people each year. The crackdown has helped reduce the illegal use of some

medications and raised awareness of their dangers.

But at the same time that some pain medications have become less available on the street and pricier, many users have switched to cheaper heroin, since prescription pills and heroin are in the same class of drugs and provide a comparable, euphoric high.

Read the whole story

20-year sentence in vehicle manslaughter case

A chronic DUI offender was sentenced March 10 to 20 years to life in prison for gross negligence vehicle manslaughter while intoxicated, an enhancement of fleeing the scene, and felony hit and run.

Larry L. Halverson, 61, had been found guilty on those charges on Oct. 1.

Patrick Purnell, 51, was killed Sept. 4, 2011, when he was crossing Ski Run Boulevard near Forest Avenue in South Lake Tahoe. A vehicle driven by Halverson struck him. He was driving despite having his license revoked for prior DUIs.

Halverson had nine prior driving under the influence convictions, of which eight were talked about before the El Dorado County Superior Court jury last year.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Bowling night benefits Tahoe cats and dogs

ACT is sponsoring a bowling might at Tahoe Bowl to fund the spay-neuter program.

It is March 26 from 6-9pm. A portion of the proceeds will benefit ACT’s spay-neuter program and the El Dorado County Tahoe animal shelter.

There is a $5 entrance fee, and there will also be a raffle.

Teams must sign up in advance. Call (530) 400.4766.

The Animal Coalition of Tahoe is an all-volunteer nonprofit corporation that raises funds to help local residents spay and neuter their dogs.

Heavenly to host slopestyle competition

Heavenly Mountain Resort has been added as a stop for the North Face Park and Pipe Open Series.

The slopestyle competition will be in the Ante Up Park on March 13-15.

For info about registering to compete, contact Julia Jimmerson at jjimmerson@mtsports.com or 801.349.4616.

Getting schooled in science by snowshoeing



McKenna Villa, left and Braya Weaks from Zephyr Cove Elementary trek at Heavenly. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

Students at Zephyr Cove Elementary School spent a day learning via a different kind of white board – snow.

Thirty-two students in Damon Kixmiller's fifth-grade class spent a recent Thursday snowshoeing at Heavenly Mountain Resort as part of the U.S. Forest Service's Winter Trek Conservation Education program.

Kixmiller believes place-based education – like this field

trip – helps cement science concepts into the children's brain. Plus, some of the kids had never been up the gondola before.

Braya Weaks liked the gondola the best.



Volunteer Ranger Bob Sweatt talks about what can be seen from the mid-station.

"It was cool to see all the tracks beneath us. I saw some bear tracks," she said.

The entire experience is rooted in education. It starts at Explore Tahoe where the kids learn about the old style snowshoes they would be wearing. They were once handwoven by the Washoe Indians.

While Kaleb Villa was having fun, he said, "It's pretty tiring" using the long bamboo snowshoes.

On the ride up the gondola the students learned about the history of Van Sickle Ranch, which they pass over. They see the remnants of the 2002 Gondola Fire, point to where the Upper Truckee River flows into Lake Tahoe, and see Mount Rose in the distance.

Stopping at the mid-station they get out to see the sights and learn some more – like how Mount Rose, Mount Pluto and Mount Watson are old volcanoes.

They are able to answer volunteer Ranger Bob Sweatt’s question about how the area was formed – by glaciers, volcanoes and faults.

Youngsters know the trees were harvested for the silver mines in Nevada.



Emma Snipes tightens her snowshoe binding.

The learning started in the classroom before they got to the mountain and continues after. Kixmiller’s class creates a webpage and students do writing assignments related to the experience.

Volunteers help the Forest Service run the program. This has saved the agency money so it can keep offering the program to schools in the area. Some schools have had to skip the program because of financial reasons, like ones in Nevada City and Fallon.

Volunteer Ranger Tim Kosier has the kids sitting in an open space looking a their surroundings and asks them questions.

They know that the tree stump could be habitat for animals. And many of the prints they are likely to see in this area not far from the terminus of the gondola are bounders like

rabbits, squirrels and the American pine marten.

“The American pine marten is an indicator species,” Kosier tells the students as they rest in the snow. “They indicate the health of the forest. By putting up cameras and collecting fur from pine martens we see if they are healthy. We are finding that they are healthy.”

Letter: S. Tahoe event subsidies not equitable

Publisher’s note: ***The following letter was sent last week to South Lake Tahoe City Manager Nancy Kerry.***

Dear Mrs. Kerry,

I am Joby Cefalu, director of South Tahoe Basketball Academy. We rent the Recreation Center gym for two tournaments May 24-26 and June 20-22. Each of these tournaments brings over 200 youth basketball teams to our community during the shoulder season.

The Rec Center is one of 11 gyms and 15 courts we use to put on these tournaments. All of the proceeds are put back into the local youth sports, both male and female from elementary school through high school.

This year I have already reserved and paid for the use of the Recreation Center under the direction of Lauren Thomaselli and Cheryl Candiff, both of which are extremely competent and very helpful I might add.

Our tournaments have been sponsored by the LTVA with the help of [Executive Director] Carol Chaplin. Based on the numbers they provide we bring to town over $1,500,000 to the local economy.

Last year's estimates were closer to $2,000,000 as we did one more tournament that was a bit smaller.

After reading that the SnowGlobe event was going to be subsidized by the city I felt compelled to reach out. Based upon the logic used by the city and the free use of facilities and subsidy, I believe it very unfair that we are charged over $2,500 for the use of one gym. The city of South Lake Tahoe is the primary beneficiary of our event through TOT and sales tax. The other venues which include Lake Tahoe Unified, Kahle Community Center, and Douglas County School District charge a very nominal fee with really no benefit other than indirectly through the youth we serve. Lake Tahoe Community College allows us use of their facility free of charge.

With that said, I would really appreciate your consideration in waiving use fees. Last year there was a Gatorade spilled and we were told it was our responsibility to pay to have the carpets cleaned, which we did. I will be happy to provide a security deposit in case of damage. I very much appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joby Cefalu, South Tahoe Basketball Academy

Placerville house fire victims died from gunshots

The two women who died last week in a Placerville house fire had been shot to death.

“The cause of the two victims deaths has been determined as gunshot wounds, however the manner in which they received those gunshot wounds is still under investigation,” El Doardo County sheriff’s deputies said in a press release.

The victims are Carol Hague, 62, who lived at the residence and Crystal Ann Ward, 58.

The cause of the March 7 fire is still under investigation, but arson investigators are involved.

The fire was reported at 5:48am Friday in the 1600 Block of Rose Lane. The residence was mostly destroyed by the fire.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Substantive changes approved for SAT test

By Tamar Lewinmarch, New York Times

Saying its college admission exams do not focus enough on the important academic skills, the College Board announced on Wednesday a fundamental rethinking of the SAT, ending the longstanding penalty for guessing wrong, cutting obscure vocabulary words and making the essay optional.

The president of the College Board, David Coleman, criticized his own test, the SAT, and its main rival, the ACT, saying that both had “become disconnected from the work of our high schools.”

In addition, Coleman announced programs to help low-income students, who will now be given fee waivers allowing them to apply to four colleges at no charge. And even before the new exam is introduced, in spring 2016, the College Board, in partnership with Khan Academy, will offer free online practice problems and instructional videos showing how to solve them.

The changes are extensive.

Read the whole story