Bring on the opinions – but keep it civil

Lake Tahoe News welcomes and encourages a lively, though civil, discussion as election season heats up.

Everyone's opinion is important and relevant. If you disagree with what is written, feel free to say so. But refrain from attacking the person who wrote about something you disagree with. Attack the words, not the messenger.

Plenty of decisions are going to be made by voters on the South Shore, and in California and Nevada. Be informed.

The author's name, hometown and phone number must accompany all guest columns and letters to *Lake Tahoe News*. The latter is used for verification, not publication.

The last day *LTN* will publish any letters/columns is noon Oct. 31. This gives people time to comment on whatever may be published at the last minute.

The goal is to have no political commentary published Nov. 2 – Election Day. So, please, get in your opinions prior to then.

And remember to vote.

Barton to celebrate National Philanthropy Day

Barton Health Foundation's second annual celebration of National Philanthropy Day is Nov. 5 at Riva Grill in South

Lake Tahoe.

Registration is at 11:30am, lunch and program from noon-2pm. Barton Health grants will be distributed.

Cost is $25 per person. RSVP by Nov. 1 by calling (530) 543.5909 or email foundation@bartonhealth.org.

Drug testing puts DCSD students on the sidelines

By Kathryn Reed

ZEPHYR COVE – When it comes to testing positive for drugs, students in Douglas County School District are about average.



Students in grades 9-12 participating in athletics and other extracurricular activities were subjected to random drug testing for the first time in 2009-10. The results of those tests were presented to the school board last week.

At Whittell High School 5.4 percent of the 186 tests came back positive. With 80 percent of the student body being available to be tested, many had to give multiple urine samples. The nine positive tests are not necessarily nine different students.

No seniors tested positive. Two juniors, three sophomores and four freshmen had positive tests. The two students who refused to take the test are categorized as positive.

At Douglas High, 2.3 percent of the 478 tests given came out

positive. The two ninth-grade classes at the middle schools in the Carson Valley had a total of two positive tests for a 2.2 percent ratio.

The national average is 2.3 percent for grades 9-12.

Refusing to take the test resulted in not being able to participate in the sport or activity of choice. A positive test also meant being removed from the sport. Drug counseling through Tahoe Youth & Family Services was also mandatory.

Jeff Evans, dean of students at Douglas High, said, “What isn’t in this is how many kids can use this as an out at a party.” Meaning instead of being teased for saying no to drugs by their peers, others will understand they want clean a test to keep being able to play so there won’t be bulling or ridicule.

The tests cost the district $23,500 last school year. Funding is in the current budget as well.

Halloween revelry at Bona Fide Books

October is upon us, so is the time for literary Halloween revelry. Join Bona Fide Books the evening of Oct. 30 starting at 7pm for a scary slam and costume party.



Candy, beer and Vincent Price movies will be provided.

Bring your best original or classic scary story to perform for the chance to win a fabulous prize. Dress up as your favorite literary figure – everything from Edgar Allen Poe to Lolita is fair game. The best costume will also win a prize, so get funky and creative.

Bona Fide is at 1069 Magua St., No. 4, Meyers behind The Getaway Cafe. The event is free – but donations are welcome.

South Tahoe seeks people for commissions

South Lake Tahoe is looking for people to fill its city commissions and boards.

Applications are being taken for:

» Airport Commission

» Building Board of Appeals Commission

» Delinquent Refuse Fees Hearing Board

» General Plan Advisory Committee

» Latino Affairs Commission

» Parks & Recreation Commission

» Planning Commission

» Sustainability Commission

How to apply:

Applications are available at the city clerk’s office at 1901

Airport Road, South Lake Tahoe or online.

The deadline to apply is Dec. 17.

ZCES, WHS standardized test score results a bit lackluster

By Kathryn Reed

ZEPHYR COVE – It was a mixed bag of news as principals from Zephyr Cove Elementary and Whittell High schools gave the board of education an update this month on test scores.

ZCES Principal Nancy Cauley didn't have concrete reasons to give why her K-6 school went from being classified as "high achieving" to being on the "watch" list.

Board member Cindy Trigg questioned whether the death of a student just before the December holidays could have had a lasting impact on students' ability to learn or stay focused during the mandatory state and federal tests.

Cauley said counseling resumed for students, teachers and parents after the break.

"There was a cluster of students who could not move forward," Cauley said at the Oct. 12 meeting. "It was probably last April for three children before they were no longer breaking down. It was a difficult time. I do think we are stronger for it. We sent a message to the kids that that choice is not

acceptable.”

The death was a suicide.

To address the academic issue, flexible math groupings have been expanded from the primary grades to the whole school. Teachers will be receiving professional development in Math Investigations.

Districtwide fifth-graders are having difficulty mastering the curriculum, Cauley said, not just at her school.

She wants a more blended teaching strategy to take place so it’s not just 50 minutes of reading, 50 minutes of math, 50 minutes of science. Cauley told the board it would be better for students to have those components integrated throughout the curriculum, throughout the day.

Crespin Esquivel had the unenviable task of presenting stats to the board from tests when he was not an employee of the district. He took over as principal of Whittell this school year.

Although many of the test areas saw arrows reflecting a decrease in percentages from the prior year, Whittell High remains a high achieving school. With it being a 7-12 school, the would-be middle school grades came in at adequate.

Better addressing the needs of students whose first language is not English is being looked at.

Both principals pointed to the transient rate as contributing to problems for some students who come mid-year.

Esquivel also said he will be looking at the master schedule to see how best to meet the needs of his students.

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra meeting

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra meets every Thursday at 7am at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center (3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd.).

All are invited; breakfast and coffee served.

Oct 28 the agenda is a “holiday surprise: followed by a trip to view South Tahoe’s recycling center.

Assistant DA speaks to Soroptimist

Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra meets every Thursday at 7am at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center (3050 Lake Tahoe Blvd.).

All are invited; breakfast and coffee served.

Oct 21 the speaker will be Lisa Serafini, assistant district attorney with El Dorado County.

Winemaking class at Lava Cap

Lava Cap Winery hosts Rick Kushman of the *Sacramento Bee* on Nov. 6 at 1pm.

Learn about harvesting grapes and how all those grapes become such good wine.

In Harvest & Winemaking 101, Kushman will focus on the process of harvesting wine grapes. He will begin the class in the vineyard and then move to the crush pad, where the grapes are harvested. He will discuss how the winemaker improves the wine quality through particular harvesting techniques. The class will finish in the winery's barrel room with wine tastings.

Lava Cap's red and white wines will be featured and sampled, including new releases.

The class will last 90 minutes.

Contact Lava Cap Winery for tickets and information (530) 621.0175 or online. The Placerville winery is at 2221 Fruitridge Road.

Douglas County SO trains officers from other agencies

Eleven law enforcement officers from five Nevada law enforcement agencies graduated from a 40-hour Field Training Officer (FTO) program taught at the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

This Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) approved

course, required by most Nevada law enforcement agencies for veteran officers to train rookie officers, is key for educating and preparing FTOs for their new role as a law enforcement trainer.

Students received instruction on topics such as:

Elements of a successful FTO program

Duties and Responsibilities of Trainers

Effective Communication and Teaching Methods

Fundamentals of Learning

Effective Supervision

Ethical Leadership/Role Modeling

Standardized Evaluation Guidelines and Evaluation Process

Practical Exercises.

Graduates of the class included:

Douglas County Sheriff’s Office:

Deputies Bill Coleman, Bethany Love, Doug Midkiff, Stuart Shipley and Steve Velez

Elko County Sheriff’s Office:

Deputies David Hicks, Valerie Steinfeld and Lenwood VanNatter

Storey County Sheriff’s Office:

Senior Deputy Frank Valdez

Winnemucca Police Department:

Officer Matthew Haylett

Reno/Tahoe Airport Authority:

Officer Keith Bobko