Wind doesn’t stop pilots at South Tahoe air show

By Kathryn Reed

Gusts of 40mph did not stop the annual Lake in the Sky Air Show, but it did prevent some planes from landing.

The show at Lake Tahoe Airport wraps up Aug. 28 at 3:30pm with closing ceremonies.

Stunt pilots are defying Mother Nature, what with her high winds and sprinkles, as they race straight up, seem to stall, float down tail first and level themselves as though it’s no big deal.



Planes of various sizes are at Lake Tahoe Aiport for the air show. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Various sizes of military planes and helicopters arrived at the South Shore airport late this week for the event. Many are accessible to the public to climb into.

Air Force pilot Steve Cochran was showing Jimmy Donnelly, 4,

of Hayward which throttle makes the plane go fast.

“It’s the best office in the world,” Cochran said from the cockpit.

Navy Sgt. Matt Vasquez strapped Scott Vernon, 30, of Portland into a hook-up that would prevent him from falling out of the helicopter while operating a 50-caliber machine gun. That’s exactly what this bird has been used for in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Some planes date to World War II, while others are used now.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)

Blackwood Canyon work to resume by USFS next week

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will resume restoration work at Blackwood Canyon beginning next week and continuing through mid-October. The project involves construction activities with heavy equipment and dump trucks that will affect public use of the area.

This final phase of the project will include river floodplain excavation and restoration. Work will take place near the OHV staging area and near the old shooting range. Vehicles, bicyclists and other users should use caution when using these areas and Barker Pass Road due to the presence of trucks and heavy machinery. Brief delays may occur and work trucks will be required to observe a 20mph. The Forest Service will post caution signs and station personnel along the road to maintain public safety.

Information on construction activities will be posted at the entrance to Blackwood Canyon and at the job site. More information about the project is available at http://fs.usda.gov/goto/ltbm/BlackwoodCreekRestoration. The restoration at Blackwood Creek is funded through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act as part of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program.

Miner found in Tahoe National Forest

By Matt Kawahara, Sacramento Bee

The Placer County Sheriff's Department has found a gold miner reported missing since Sunday in the Sailor Flat area of Tahoe National Forest.

Gary Davis, 65, of Sacramento entered the mountainous region at the north fork of the American River on Aug. 20, looking for gold, said Sgt. Troy Minton-Sander, a Sheriff's Department spokesman.

Davis parked his car at a trailhead and walked into the mountainous area, Minton-Sander said.

He was last seen Sunday by another hiker, who noticed that Davis didn't have much water or food left, Minton-Sander said.

Read the whole story

Snow at 8,500 feet, record cold expected Sunday

By Victor Calderon, Reno Gazette-Journal

Reno might be known for hot August nights, but the month will end on a cold note this weekend, with showers and thunderstorms possible and even an inch or two of snow in the upper elevations of the Sierra, weather forecasters said.

After high temperatures in the upper 90s in Reno earlier in the week, a low-pressure system coming from the Gulf of Alaska will lead to a cold front, with highs in the 60s and a chance of showers and thunderstorms beginning Saturday.

In the Lake Tahoe basin, forecasters expect scattered snow showers above 8,500 feet with up to an inch or two of snow possible Sunday morning.

Read the whole story

---

2 Tahoe area juniors in top 11 at ski cross championships

By U.S. Ski Team

CARDRONA, New Zealand – Morganne Murphy (Truckee) led the United States today, finishing fifth in the FIS Junior World Freestyle Championships ski cross in Cardrona. Ethan Fortney (Tenino, Wash.) was seventh in the men's event. It was the second time ski cross has been on the program for the Junior World Championships.

Norway's Didrik Bastian Juell won the men's, while Fanny Smith of Switzerland took the women's gold. Kyle Smaine (South Lake Tahoe) just missed the top 10, finishing 11th, while Penn Lukens (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) was 19th.

A crash in the semi-finals was all the kept Murphy out of the finals. She didn't let it happen again, winning the small finals to take fifth.

"I was bummed about the run," said Murphy. "I crashed in the semi finals which put me in the small finals. But I made the best pass of my life and am so stoked about finishing fifth."

Fortney was also pleased with his showing. "It was awesome competing in my first international ski cross event," he said. "It was a non-stop, fun battle the whole time."

The championships wrap-up Sunday with ski halfpipe.

---

7 people to be interviewed for SLT police chief

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe expects to have a police chief on the force in October. Interviews for the seven candidates vying for the top cop job in the city are Sept. 13.

One of the seven is local, with the rest from outside the basin. Martin Hewlett, captain and acting chief of the department, is not the local candidate. He took over when Terry Daniels retired at the end of 2009.

“Hopefully, I will have the challenge of picking between a couple really good people,” City Manager Tony O’Rourke said.

Although the decision is ultimately O’Rourke’s, he is convening a slew of panels on that day to interview the people. Sworn and non-sworn officers, and department heads are a couple of the panels.

A citizens group has also been called. It is comprised of at least one person from the South Lake Tahoe Women’s Center (not Leanne Wagoner who is married to Officer Ryan Wagoner and daughter-in-law to Mayor Kathay Lovell), B Gorman from the Nevada-based chamber, David Kelly from the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled, a rep from the Latino community and perhaps others.

A peer review of people from the basin will ask candidates questions, too. Lt. Les Lovell of the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department is not on the panel.

“I’m not going to these groups to see who they would hire. I want to know what they see as strengths and weaknesses in the candidates,” O’Rourke said. “I would hope after going through the gauntlet of interviews there would be some consistency, but there might be an aberration to look at.”

He wants someone who has strong managerial and strong community skills.

O’Rourke plans to interview all the candidates before the panels do.

After the September interviews, the hope is two finalists will emerge. Further background checks on them will be done, with possible secondary interviews to follow.

O’Rourke wants to have a chief by early October.

Opinion: Expanding vision will save Lake Tahoe

Publisher's note: ***The TRPA sent this guest column to media in the Bay Area. This ran Aug. 25, 2010, in the San Jose Mercury News.***

By Joanne Marchetta

Because it is one of the world's most beloved natural settings, people come from all over the planet just to catch a glimpse of Lake Tahoe. Residents of the Bay Area, however, are fortunate to have it right in their backyard. To these more frequent visitors, Lake Tahoe's beauty may seem a constant: Crest Echo Summit, and there it is, in all of its cobalt blue glory, the perfect getaway.

From a distance, the lake may appear as spectacular as ever. But Lake Tahoe is locked in an epic battle for its future. Decisions we make over the next 18 months as we develop an updated plan for Tahoe's future will determine whether its communities, economy and environment thrive. If current initiatives are not successful, the pristine Lake Tahoe we envision for future generations could be lost.



Joanne Marchetta at

the Aug. 17 environmental Summit. Photo/Kathryn Reed

At the 14th annual Lake Summit last week, the core discussion among elected officials, policymakers and other stakeholders was that the economy and the environment at Lake Tahoe are inextricably linked. By expanding our vision, we see that careful economic development can boost environmental conditions.

The story of how we landed here has 40 years of history. In the late 1960s, uncontrolled growth threatened the Lake Tahoe Basin. Tahoe's legendary water clarity fell into decline as streams, meadows and wetlands were paved over. There was talk of building a metropolis the size of San Francisco and of erecting a bridge across the mouth of Emerald Bay.

Read the whole story

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Fewer flights make connections difficult when bumped

By Dan Reed, USA Today

Lots of luck catching another flight if you've been bumped or

miss a connection.



Commercial airlines in the USA have never been as full. Seven of them – Delta, American, United, Continental, US Airways, AirTran and Alaska – reported filling at least 87 percent of their seats in July.

Even Southwest, always the industry's laggard in load factor, beat the industry's average over the previous six Julys of 84.6 percent by filling 84.9 percent of its seats.

At Reno-Tahoe International Airport, load factor data for June – the most recent available – showed was 80.7 percent across all airlines. The fullest flights were Delta Airlines, with a total load factor of 90.1 percent for the month of June, followed by American Airlines at 89.6 percent. The lowest load factor was by Southwest, at 67.3 percent.

Read the whole story

Warning: Phone scam targets Douglas County

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office advises citizens to be aware of a new "local" version of a telephone scam.

The scammer calls the victim claiming to be a volunteer or employee of the Douglas County Senior Citizens Center. The scammer claims he/she is soliciting funds on behalf of the Senior Center to donate to the American Cancer Society.

The scammer tells the victim that if they would like to donate

to the fund, they can provide their credit card or debit card information to the employee/volunteer, and the donation will be automatically deducted from their account.

There has been only one reported successful incident of this nature in Douglas County; but citizens – particularly senior citizens who are the typical targets of these scams – are advised to be cautious of such incidents.

Travis Lee, director of Douglas County Senior Services, advises that his staff does not solicit credit card or debit card information from people, and would never solicit seniors for donations of any sort.

This fund-raising scam is just the latest of ongoing identity theft/monetary theft scams where suspects use the telephone, mail or computer to try to get people to reveal their personal or financial information.

It doesn't matter why the suspects are calling. The reasons are just different variants of the same scam – to get personal identification or bank account/credit card information for fraudulent purposes.

Protecting yourself is simple: Never give this type of information out when you receive such a telephone call, mail or online contact. If you would like to donate to a charitable organization, do so by contacting that organization directly.

Mental Health meeting in El Dorado County

A public hearing, hosted by the El Dorado County Mental Health

Commission, will be on Sept. 7 from noon-1pm to receive input on the El Dorado County 2010-11 Mental Health Services Act Plan Update.

The hearing will be conducted via teleconference at two locations:

El Dorado County EMS Agency, 415 Placerville Drive, Ste. K, Placerville and El Dorado County Public Health, 1360 Johnson Blvd, No. 103, South Lake Tahoe.

The draft plans include updated information on proposed MHSA program activities and budgets for this year. Plans under review include: Community Services and Supports, Workforce Education and Training, and Prevention and Early Intervention. The draft plans are posted on the El Dorado County Health Services Department, Mental Health Division's website at www.edcgov.us/mentalhealth/mhsa.html.

Copies may be obtained by contacting Stephanie Carlson at (530) 621.6315. Comments may be emailed to mhsa@edcgov.us.