TOCCATA in South Tahoe

Baroque Brassy is Classy is the program being brought to St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe by TOCCATA on Aug. 23 at 7:30pm.

Mark Lord, Robert Nagel, William van Meter and Joe Savage on the trumpets will perform Baroque Concerti for 1,2, and 3 trumpets and strings. Also included in the program will be the Handel Organ Concerto OP 4 No. 2 and the Bach Cantata. Also featured are Toni Healy, flute; Marianne Maytan, oboe; Darrell Moore clarinet; Ben Benson, bassoon; and Bruce Kanzelmayer, French horn.

For more information, visit www.ToccataTahoe.com.

Tickets are $20 for adults, $15 seniors age 62 and up, and $5 for students.

Monopolies allow hospitals to get price they want

By Peter Waldman, Bloomberg

After Mark Logsdon tore a ligament in his knee skiing at Lake Tahoe in March, he returned home to suburban Sacramento and had an MRI scan at Sutter Davis Hospital.

Sutter’s price for the knee scan was $1,271, payable by Logsdon and his insurer. Exactly the same MRI at one of the local imaging centers owned by Radiological Associates of Sacramento would have cost $696 – 45 percent less.



Patrick Fry

It turns out that Logsdon didn’t know something that his insurance company does: Sutter Health Co., the nonprofit that owns Sutter Davis, has market power that commands prices 40 to 70 percent higher than its rivals per typical procedure – and pacts with insurers that keep those prices secret.

Sutter can charge these prices because it has acquired more than a third of the market in the San Francisco-to-Sacramento region through more than 20 hospital takeovers in the last 30 years, according to executives of Aetna Inc., Health Net Inc. and Blue Shield of California, who asked not to be named because their agreements with Sutter ban disclosure of prices.

Sutter operates in a competitive market, Chief Executive Officer Patrick Fry, 53, said in an interview. “I don’t see Sutter Health as having market power, given the choices that employers can make,” Fry said. “The market has a lot of room to make a lot of decisions.”

Read the whole story

Curtzwiler fundraiser

Dale and Donna Rise, long-time locals and owners of Aloha Ice Cream, are having a fund-raising event to honor the memory of Kaleb James Martin Curtzwiler, who passed away recently.

Curtzwiler was a U.S. Navy veteran who served in Afghanistan, a South Tahoe native, and son of Ken and Pam Curtzwiler.

Donna Rise observed, “Kaleb was a true American hero and will remain in the hearts of our community forever.This event will help the Curtzwiler family in their time of need.”

The fund-raising benefit will be Aug. 25 from 5-10pm at Aloha Ice Cream located in the Lakeview Building at 3330 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Community members are urged to stop by, purchase an ice cream treat, and enjoy the lake view in the company of other local families. In addition, there will be a silent auction and opportunities to donate to the cause. All proceeds will benefit the Curtzwiler family.

For additional information or to donate silent auction items, contact Dale or Donna Rise at (775) 781.4777 or (775) 781.2777.

Fundraiser for Curtzwiler family

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Multi-day mountain bike fest at Kirkwood

The 10-day Kirkwood Mountain Bike Festival starts Aug. 20. The first of its kind in Tahoe provides an action packed calendar the entire family can enjoy through Aug. 29.

There are races and events for mountain bikers of all ages and abilities, clinics for those looking to improve their skills, rec rides, and crazy events including a Huffy Toss and Wheelie Contest.

Get details on the Fat Tire Fiesta’s full schedule by clicking here.

LTCC hires interim president for 1-year contract

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Community College is getting an interim president who likes to fix things and has experience with the accreditation process.

The brief special board meeting this morning was all about hiring someone for this coming school year. On a 5-0 vote, Steve Maradian was voted in. He will start Aug. 31. The contract is to expire no later than June 30, 2011. His rate of pay is equivalent to $160,000 a year.



Steve Maradian

“He has indicated his interest is fixing things,” board President Kerry David said just after the 7:45am vote on Aug. 20.

It is possible Maradian could throw his hat in the ring to be considered for the permanent job.

Susan Middleton has been acting president this summer and will preside over at least one more meeting before retiring from the college. She took over for Paul Killpatrick, the third president of the 35-year-old two-year institution in South Lake Tahoe, who quit after serving two years of his three-year contract.

All candidates for the interim job had to submit a writing

sample.

“He was incredibly sharp,” David said of Maradian.

With LTCC going through the accreditation process, which involves a self-study this year before the team of officials visits in 2011-12, Maradian’s two-year stint as vice president of policy and research for the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges is deemed an incredible asset.

Prior to that, Maradian was president of Los Angeles City College from 2005-08.

Join Lake Tahoe News at Sample the Sierra

Lake Tahoe News and a slew of other local businesses will be at Saturday’s Sample the Sierra event on Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

The event is about blending regional food, wine and art – which combine to make local news.

Come meet some of the people behind *Lake Tahoe News* – Tahoe’s only daily news source. We’ll be giving away T-shirts every 15 minutes, signing people up for free subscriptions, entering businesses in a drawing for three months of free advertising (ad creation not included) and talking about the news of the day.

Click here for more information about Sample the Sierra.

California Assembly passes ski helmet bill

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

Ted Gaines and Roger Niello, two Republican assemblymen who are special election rivals for the late Sen. Dave Cox's seat, clashed on the Assembly floor Thursday over a bill that would require kids to wear helmets while skiing or snowboarding.

The 1st Senate District in which they are running contains the largest single concentration of the state's ski slopes and the ski industry has endorsed the measure, Senate Bill 880, which would require helmets for those 17 years old and younger.



Whistler mountain guides, like Susan Sommer, wear helmets on the job. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Gaines, of Roseville, spoke for and joined most Democrats in voting for the measure, Senate Bill 880, while Niello, of Fair Oaks, denounced and joined other Republicans in voting against

it. The final vote was 41-20, returning the measure, authored by Democratic Sen. Leland Yee of San Francisco, to the Senate for final action.

Read the whole story

‘Blindsight’ captures struggles of life in darkness

By Kathryn Reed

So much of life is about the journey, not the destination.



This was pointed out in the movie “Blindsight” that tells the story of six blind Tibetan teenagers attempting to climb Lhakpa Ri. This 23,000-foot mountain is to the north of Mount Everest.

These youngsters live in a part of the world where blindness is akin to leprosy. Families disown them, villages spurn them – many end up on the street.

But it doesn’t have to be that way.

Sabriye Tenberken and Paul Kronenberg are changing how Tibetans define blindness. They created the first school for the blind in Tibet as well as the organization Braille Without Borders.

This film could easily fit many genres – documentary, history, adventure. Like most films shot in the Himalayas, the scenery is stunning. But it’s the stories of these children and their

blind hiking guides that is inspirational.

Erik Weihenmayer leads the expedition. In 2001, he became the first blind man to reach the summit of Mount Everest. He knows what these youngsters are facing as they ascend the ice fields and cross crevasses that could swallow them alive.

The film delves into the lives of the teens, the adults and struggles they each have and what they have overcome.

It's a movie about testing oneself and defining accomplishments by the journey involved.

The movie came out in 2006, is 1 hour 44 minutes and available on Netflix.

Yosemite in store for massive tree thinning project

By Mark Grossi, Fresno Bee

Yosemite Valley visitors don't generally gaze at El Capitan from the spot where Carleton E. Watkins took an 1868 photograph of the soaring cliff – you can't see much now through a tangle of trees.

It's one of many iconic vistas in Yosemite National Park blocked by trees and brush. Indeed, officials say there are only a few places left with a view of both upper and lower Yosemite Falls, the tallest waterfalls in North America.

Park officials are planning to restore historic views of Yosemite landmarks over the next several years by cutting trees and burning brush.

Read the whole story