Lake Tahoe ski report, April 13



The sun has returned to the skies of Lake Tahoe. Note that some resorts like Homewood and Diamond Peak are closed for the season. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

TAP fundraiser at Bert’s

Bert’s Spaghetti Night, a benefit for Tahoe Arts Project, is April 22 from 5:30-7:30pm.

Bert’s Cafe is at 1146 Emerald Bay Road in South Lake Tahoe.

Cost is $10 per person.

Call Tahoe Arts Project for tickets – (530) 542.3632.

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2 Fallen Leaf Lake board members threatened with

recall

By Susan Wood

Although a contract for a new concessionaire at the Fallen Leaf Lake store and marina was sealed last weekend, some want two community service board members to be recalled.

Two notices obtained by *Lake Tahoe News* target CSD board members Mike Kraft, the president, and Eric Thaden. “Unresponsiveness to (their constituencies)” is the grounds for the filing.

The other two board members, Teri Thomas and Jennifer Thornton, appear to be safe.

The fifth seat, vacated by Dana Clark, is due to be filled in an August election. The former president left amid the turmoil plaguing the quiet mountain village over former concessionaires John and Ruth Rich.

Hundreds came out in protest last fall when it became apparent the board would not continue to have the Riches run the store and marina operation. Resident Betsy Wheeler came armed at one meeting with a petition and legal threat insisting the board reconsider its direction to change operators.

This latest petition takes issue with Kraft and Thaden’s conduct, implying mismanagement and negligence at a time of dire financial circumstances for the district.

“It is very disappointing that there are some people in the community that cannot allow the healing to begin,” Kraft said in response to the recall petition intent signed by 10

proponents.

Calls made to half the petitioner supporters went unanswered Monday.

“It appears the constituency is very angry with those two directors,” Thornton said to the news.

An intent to recall must be filed with El Dorado County Elections Department. None had been as of Monday. Once it has, the directors have a week to respond; then the county must approve the action. To make it to the ballot, the petition requires 30 percent of the registered voters of the Fallen Leaf district to sign the petition. As of March 15, the district had 155 registered voters.

Tahoe Rim Trail 3-day leadership workshop

Join the Tahoe Rim Trail Association and partners for the 5th Annual Trails and Outdoor Leadership Workshop at Washoe County’s Galena Creek Park May 14-16.

Each year, local trails organizations and agencies gather to train trail crews and volunteers in the art and science of trails at our nationally recognized workshop.

The weekend kicks off with a trail design and layout workshop, followed by two days of construction seminars. Courses available include; basic trail building, advanced trail seminar, trail design & layout, and crew leadership. The weekend is a way to network with local trail volunteers and professionals and learn how trails are planned, constructed

and maintained. Training is supported through the Nevada State Parks Recreational Trails Program, and participants pay $85 (3 days) or $70 (2 days) to cover instruction, park lodging, food, training materials and transportation to class sites.

To participate, register online. Call (775) 298.0012 for more information.

Participants will be sent a gear list and must bring long-sleeved shirts, long pants, boots and work gloves. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association will provide hard hats and all trail building and maintenance tools.

Concessionaire has 6 weeks to get Fallen Leaf Lake ready

By Susan Wood

The community services district managing Fallen Leaf Lake operations put to bed months of ambiguity by awarding its concessionaire contract to Rob and Sandy Wirth, who run a South Shore electrical company with ties to the mountain haven.

The Fallen Leaf CSD board voted 4-0 Saturday in a special meeting at Lake Tahoe Airport for the Wirths to take over the store and marina business. Now the clock ticks for the duo to get the operation going by summer’s kickoff on Memorial Day weekend.



For the first time in 14 years, Fallen Leaf Lake's operations are in different hands. Photo/Susan Wood

Sandy Wirth told *Lake Tahoe News* she's well aware of the task before them. They have pledged a number of improvements during the upcoming months and years, plan to conduct community outreach and offer an enhanced experience at the popular gateway to the Desolation Wilderness outside South Lake Tahoe.

"It's going to be exciting," she said.

Wirth has supported her husband's dream of expanding the options at the store and café – with a little help from qualified friends. He spent seven years working at Stanford Sierra Camp as the electrician for the university's lake retreat. They will continue to own and run Innovative Electric.

"We feel we can keep the electrician part going while running the marina and store," she said.

Their desire is to stay grounded on what can be delivered immediately. The couple would like to offer lakeside dining, but that idea may come to fruition down the road. The Wirths expect their background in business and desire to please the

community to be their recipe for success.

CSD President Mike Kraft said Monday he was in full support of their plans.

“Rob has a great reputation with our community for being an outstanding person with good business ethics. This is a win-win situation for the board and the Wirths. Not only is the minimum payment (to the district) much higher, we have also negotiated a completely open-book contract. This will allow the transparency required to be able to work together as a team,” Kraft told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The final contract includes $110,000 to be paid by the Wirths to the board for rent and access to the store, café and marina operation for six years. The Wirths agreed to put up a $20,000 security deposit.

Kraft had major issues with some of the business practices that helped lead to a breakdown in talks with former concessionaires John and Ruth Rich. An impasse with the Riches, who ran the operation for 14 years, led to shouting matches, legal threats and a divided community for almost a year. (See *Lake Tahoe News’* article on the intent to recall two board members.)

The turmoil resulted in one of the board’s earlier choices to run the operation to resign after less than a month of accepting the job. At Saturday’s meeting, the board approved canceling the contract with caterer Rick Firkins.

Tahoe teens among NIAA's top 10 student-athletes

By Scott Oxarart, Reno Gazette-Journal

This year's group of NIAA Top 10 Student-Athletes of the Year includes students from Eureka to Incline Village.

They are once again leaders in their schools – as team captains and student body officers, as volunteers and tutors. And they were selected from one of the largest applicant pools in the 15-year history of the event.

The Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (or NIAA), in conjunction with Farmers Insurance, Lifetouch Photograph and the Reno Gazette-Journal, will present five boys and five girls with their awards on May 25. Each will also receive a $1,500 college scholarship courtesy of Lifetouch Photography and Farmers Insurance.

Bryce Baker of Fernley, Steven Carlson of Bishop Manogue, Michael Ceragioli of Incline Village, Aaron Greenblat of Reed and Sam Harris of Whittell will be the North's boys honorees.

The northern girls winners are Delayni DeWitt of Eureka, Skylar Estes of Lowry, Morgan Hines of Elko, Katie McFarren of Carson and Kelsey Smith of South Tahoe.

Read the whole story

Contest winners to win a stay at Granlibakken

Granlibakken Conference Center & Lodge in Tahoe City invites the public to be victorious by creatively naming the resort's three Viking Ambassadors.

Tahoe's original ski resort recently selected three Vikings to represent Granlibakken and is hosting an online contest to give them proper names by May 5. Contestants can enter here for a chance to win a free trip to Lake Tahoe for four, including lodging, breakfast, dinner and a private cocktail party with one of the Vikings.

Why Vikings? Granlibakken – Norwegian for "hillside sheltered by fir trees" – was founded by Scandinavian ski jumpers. The Viking Ambassadors will demonstrate the property's desirable amenities for families and vacationers, such as a delicious daily breakfast buffet, free Wi-Fi, and outdoor resort activities on 74 wooded acres just a mile from downtown Tahoe City.

Explorer talks about what's in Lake Tahoe

When we are asked, "What do you see under there?" the most common response by divers with the Tahoe Divers Conservancy is "not much." Swimming among beautiful waves of granite boulders the size of houses, bright reflections of light from mica studded sandy lake bottom and a generally stark but surreal crystal environment. TDC often describes diving in Lake Tahoe

as “Zen Diving”.

But today the underwater world of Lake Tahoe is disturbingly full of strange, new life.

In just a few years, vast sandy areas that for centuries covered the bottom of Lake Tahoe have disappeared under a carpet of invasive plants. The change is not merely cosmetic. Invasive species will upend the ecology of Lake Tahoe, shifting distribution of species and starving familiar fish of their usual food supply. Eurasian watermilfoil, Curlyleaf pondweed and the Asian clam are all found in Lake Tahoe now. It is not just invasive plants. In summer 2009 scores of brown bullhead catfish were found in Emerald Bay. Once confined to the Tahoe Keys and Taylor Marsh, non-native fish are propagating all over Lake Tahoe.

Phil Caterino has spent the last 40 years working to protect Lake Tahoe. He was the founder of Alpengroup, the Sierra Avalanche Center, the Nevada Conservation League, the Tahoe Divers Conservancy, and the Thunderbird Lodge Preservation Society. He is a strong advocate for grass-roots activism to engage the public in meaningful projects committed to the preservation of Lake Tahoe.

Presentation by Phil Caterino, Tahoe Divers Conservancy

Date: May 13

Time: 6:30pm no-host bar/door opens; 7pm program

Cost: $10. No-Host Bar.

Location: Assembly Rooms 139 & 141, Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 Country Club Drive, Incline Village, Nevada (on the campus of Sierra Nevada College)

Program is presented by Squaw Valley Institute and UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

Bank robber strikes in Carson City



The fedora-wearing bank robber struck again. This time it was the Bank of the West in Carson City on Monday about 4pm.

The suspect, who authorities believe to be the same person, has hit Bank of the West branches in Grass Valley on Dec. 22 and March 31, South Lake Tahoe on Feb. 18 and Kings Beach on March 8.

The suspect is described as a white male, about 6-foot-1, short gray hair, fake beard, and wearing a fedora.

He has brandished a silver handgun in more than one of the robberies.

Authorities are asking anyone with information to call one of the following agencies: FBI in Sacramento (916) 481.9110, South Lake Tahoe Police Department (530) 542.6100, Placer County Sheriff's Department (530) 581.6330, or Grass Valley Police Department (530) 477.4600.

Ex-priest in Vatican

pedophile case lived in Truckee

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

A defrocked Catholic priest now at the center of a Vatican pedophilia scandal is a former Truckee resident who in 2002 was investigated for possible connections to the 1988 disappearance of Amber Swartz – for whom Amber Alerts are named – and to the 1991 abduction of South Lake Tahoe resident Jaycee Lee Dugard.

In March 2002, police with cadaver dogs, backhoes and ground-penetrating sonar twice searched the Truckee vacation property of Stephen Kiesle and found nothing to connect him to the two young girls.

Those two cases have been closed and aren’t related to the ex-priest, but in 2004 Kiesle pleaded no contest to a felony for molesting a young girl in his Truckee home in 1995 and was sentenced to six years in state prison.

Read the whole story