Lake Tahoe ski report, March 8



Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Comments sought on how to restore Tahoe ecosystem

The Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee (LTFAC) is accepting public comment on capital projects and science themes that have been recommended for funding to help restore the Lake Tahoe Basin ecosystem, using Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 11 funds.

Twenty-one project proposals were received, addressing four federal vision focus areas: watershed and habitat improvement, forest health, air quality and transportation, and recreation and scenic.

Proposed Round 11 science themes are: forest health; watershed, water quality and habitat restoration; air quality; and integrating science.

The Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee is made up of

representatives of a broad array of constituencies concerned with the environmental andeconomic health of the Lake Tahoe region.

A list of projects can be viewed here.

The public is asked to comment on the Preliminary Recommendation Package no later than April 5. Comments may be submitted by email to: comments-pacificsouthwest-ltbmu@fs.fed.us, or by regular mail to Linda Lind, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

LTFAC will review and discuss comments at its meeting on April 5 from 1-4pm at the US Forest Service LTBMU Office at 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe.

South Tahoe a biggest carbon loser?

Hello everyone,

The Sierra Nevada Alliance has submitted a fresh, new project, â€œThe Biggest Carbon Loser,â€ to Brighter Planetâ€™s Project Fund. The fund seeks to provide motivated Americans with seed money for projects that help people fight and adapt to climate change in their own hometowns.

The Biggest Carbon Loser project is a community-wide competition that aims to encourage community members to make sustainable lifestyle choices that result in long-term carbon emission reductions. Those involved will learn easy ways to take action against global climate change and show others that we CAN do something about it.

What is The Biggest Carbon Loser?

This week-long event will involve individuals, families, and local businesses and will record their carbon-saving activities, such as riding their bike to work, buying and eating local goods and saving water and energy at home. Participants will gain â€œreduction pointsâ€ for taking action and prizes and awards await at the end of the week.

The pilot project will be in South Lake Tahoe with the goal of â€œlosingâ€ 10,000 pounds of carbon with this event. Then, the Alliance will work to bring the event to other Sierra communities, empowering people to fight climate change in ways that are easy, doable, and fun.

We need your help. Please take 90 seconds to vote and get the Alliance $3,500 in seed money for the project.

Quick and easy instructions for voting click here.

-Click on the â€œSign upâ€ link under the voting status

-Create a username (very quick process and you can opt out of emails)

-Head to your inbox and click on the confirmation link â€“ it will redirect back to â€œThe Biggest Carbon Loserâ€ voting page.

-Now vote three times.

Why is this important?

Be a part of the bigger picture:

The global climate change crisis is the most significant of our time.

Fossil fuel emissions (oil, coal and natural gas) are the driving force behind Green House Gases. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, approximately 85 percent of all energy

produced in the U.S. comes from non-renewable fossil fuels, which emit GHGs. This energy is then used to produce most electricity and power virtually all transportation with varying degrees of efficiency. Furthermore, the United States is one of the leaders in GHG emissions per capita of industrialized countries. A behavioral shift on an individual and community scale needs to occur in American towns and cities in order to address the global climate change crisis.

Most people are aware of the global climate change crisis, but few know what immediate things they can do or what actual impact those decisions and actions have. This project will help City government and residents understand the collective impact of individual actions to reduce green house gas emissions.

Thanks for your support and weâ€™ll let you know the voting results.

Reyna Yagi, Sierra Nevada Alliance (Reyna@sierranevadaalliance.org)

Nevada Small Farm Conference

The Nevada Small Farm Conference keynote speaker is Vance Corum of Farmersâ€™ Markets America in Vancouver, Wash. The conference is March 12-13 at the Fallon Convention Center.

Corum will address “The Next Generation: Farmer Innovations & Keeping Our Kids on the Farm.â€ Corum will highlight farms that have successfully transitioned to the next generation by direct marketing their products to the consumer.

The farms reviewed will span the country from Californiaâ€™s Capay Organic with its 6,000-member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, to Maineâ€™s Harris Dairy that bottles milk in glass and sells beef by the quarter and half.

Nationally recognized for his 30-plus years of work developing new marketing options for farmers, Corum has worked with 3,000 farmers during the years and has helped set up farmers markets in more than 75 communities. Corum is co-author of â€œThe New Farmersâ€™ Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers & Communities.â€

Conference coordinator Ann Louhela says a record number of farmers have registered for the conference compared to prior years. She said increasing consumer demand for locally-grown food has created greater interest in small farm production.

The conference offers a variety of sessions, including chicken and egg production, direct marketing beef, hoop house and specialty crop production, farmers market management and more.

The conference is still open for registration, including on-site. Contact Ann Louhela at (775) 351.2551.

EDC extends hours for Child Support Services

El Dorado County's Department of Child Support Services will extend its office hours for Placerville and South Lake Tahoe from 8am-7pm on March 10 and April 7.

This is an opportunity for working parents to visit the office in the evening and see a child support professional.

If you have questions, contact 866.901.3212.

Hate crime trial begins today in ’07 attack at El Dorado Beach

By Kathryn Reed

The trial for a former South Lake Tahoe couple charged with a federal hate crime starts today in Sacramento.

Joseph, 56, and Georgia, 52, Silva were residents of the South Shore when they were arrested in July 2007 on charges of physically assaulting and yelling racial slurs at Vishal Wadhwa and his wife, Ayesha Wadhwa.

The Bay Area victims are Indian American. The suspects are Caucasian.



El Dorado Beach in South Lake Tahoe became a crime scene in summer 2007.

The victims were in Tahoe visiting, enjoying popular El Dorado Beach when the attack occurred. All of their wounds are not completely healed, sources told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The U.S. Department of Justice in March 2009 issued a press release after the suspects were indicted. It says, "The two-count indictment alleges that on the evening of July 14, 2007, Joseph and Georgia Silva committed a bias-motivated assault on another couple at a public beach in South Lake Tahoe, Calif. The Silvas allegedly first verbally confronted the Indian-American couple using derogatory racial and ethnic slurs. The Silvas then allegedly assaulted the couple, including striking one of the victims with a shoe and tackling and striking the other repeatedly on the head. One victim suffered significant facial injuries including fractured facial bones."

The incident occurred at El Dorado Beach. At the time, the Silvas had houses in South Lake and Fairfield. They now call Fairfield home. Georgia Silva worked for Barton Memorial Hospital at the time, while her husband wasn't employed.

Charges related to their finances might be filed in the future, according to sources close to the case.

If convicted of both federal counts, the Silvas could each spend the next 20 years in prison and be fined up to a half million dollars each.

Both have already spent some time behind bars related to this case. In September 2008, Georgia Silva was sentenced to one year in El Dorado County Jail and Joseph Silva six months. They had pleaded no contest to misdemeanor assault charges.

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Kingsbury dropped the hate crime enhancement at the state level. The FBI and then Justice Department disagreed with that decision and subsequently leveled the federal charges against the Silvas.

Jury selection begins today, with testimony expected as well.

It’s possible all the witnesses could be called before the end of the week.

The prosecution has 20 witnesses – including the people who broke up the fight, witnesses to the fight, South Lake Tahoe police officers, a doctor and others.

LTCC ‘Laramie Project’ actors struggle with difficult topic

By Susan Wood

When South Shore actor Rhonda Keen considers the “Laramie Project” opening next weekend at Lake Tahoe Community College, the local production hits home on many fronts.

The stirring docu-drama to be performed at Duke Theatre from March 12-14 and March 18-21 was introduced by the New York Tectonic Theatre and writer-director Moises Kaufman as a result of 400 hours of interviews of the citizens of Laramie, Wyo. The town was scarred after Matthew Shepard was brutally tortured, tied to a fence and left to die because of his sexual orientation. It left the community struggling with its differing beliefs, questions and ultimate transformation.



Chris Taylor as Rulon

Stacey, CEO of Ivinson Hospital where Matthew Shepard was taken, at a press conference on Sheperd's condition. Photo/Pat Leonard-Heffner

The murder at the hands of two men Shepard met at a bar made national headlines 12 years ago and led to landmark hate crime legislation signed by President Obama last October. The Matthew Shepard Act is intended to provide $5 million in funding to combat hate crimes, which according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, nudged upward in 2008 to claim 9,691 victims. More than 1,700 were attributed to sexual orientation.

Ironically, the day after National Coming Out Day – which was founded to recognize gay equality a decade to the month before the horrific crime – Shepard died in a hospital in Fort Collins, Colo.

Keen was living in Fort Collins in 1998 when the hate crime occurred.

“That’s what got me about the ‘Laramie Project’,” she said.

Keen is no stranger to the type of tragedy that leads to discussions of social justice and the human condition. She grieved with the family of a friend, one of 13 who died in April 1999 during the horrendous shooting massacre at Columbine High School, her alma mater of 1993.

When she thought of Matthew Shepard's mother, Judy, dealing with such a horrible tragedy, she choked up.

"It's hell to watch a parent who's lost a child. I can't imagine what it's like to have the murder of her son enacted every night," Keen said, her voice quivering.

If she could say anything to Judy Shepard, she told *Lake Tahoe News* it would be: "We just want you to know your son was loved and is still loved, and the world and I appreciate the work he has done for the cause. It's from this cause that the faith in humanity is able to carry on."

When the gay rights activist mother was visiting South Lake Tahoe in 2005 for a gay ski week, she told this reporter in an exclusive interview that she misses Matthew immensely and gets up every morning to try to think of a new way she can tell her son's story so this does not happen again. She called on the local and global community for a united front against hate.

Despite the March 19 planned protest, first reported by *Lake Tahoe News* on Feb. 24, by hate advocates of the Westboro Baptist Church led by the Rev. Fred Phelps of Topeka, Kansas, local organizers and advocates like Keen believe the "Laramie Project" may create that united front Judy Shepard spoke of five years ago when she was here.

A counter protest by local advocates of gay rights is slated for that night.

A candlelight vigil to promote non-violence is planned at 9:30 the next night following the show.

Keen, a self-proclaimed gay rights activist for years, has witnessed the transformation of her family since her cousin underwent serious life challenges after coming out as gay.

"It's good to watch people's eyes open. And since the cast knew each other, it was neat to watch people open up to view

the different ideas," she said. "This is the type of piece that you hope to get to do as an actor, but don't always get to. This is what good theater is all about – promoting social justice," she said, calling the play a mental workout.

"I would feel drained by it, but usually got energy from it," she said of rehearsals.

The 10 actors perform 70 roles in the play, with Keen jumping from playing the town minister's wife to a friend of one of the convicted murderers, Aaron McKinney.

For the actors, rehearsals scheduled three times a week have culminated in a catharsis of crying, then healing as they've overcome some of the hateful lines being said on stage.

"(We, as actors,) have to distance ourselves (from those words)," she said. "Some of the things the minister is saying I've heard in church," she added.

From the seasoned to growing

Another local actor, Ethan Nivan, can relate somewhat to Keen's experience, though she has at least a decade of years on him.

Nivan, at age 20, had never heard of the Matthew Shepard murder, but knows all too well what it means to be a target of an incident of hate. Nivan recalled being attacked by a football team for his perceived sexual orientation as a senior at South Tahoe High School.

"It brought up and fed my own emotional strife from my past," said Nivan, who will also serve on a hate/tolerance panel at Lake Tahoe Community College following the March 14 matinee.

Not only has Nivan been affected by hate, he found it challenging to play the town's minister.

"A lot of the characters we play say words that are not even

in my vocabulary. It was rough to hear and hard for a lot of the first week (in rehearsals)," he said.

Nonetheless, Nivan considers the play a powerful growing experience.

"I've never done anything like it and probably will never do anything like it again," he said.

A coming together

Having met doing productions in college, longtime South Lake Tahoe actors Chris and Pamela Taylor noted how this experience brings a level of depth to their drama careers and life as a couple.

Pamela Taylor described the difficulty in changing an entire thought process from one role to another on a dime. Even the subtle wardrobe changes are so sudden, they occur on the stage.

She plays the mother of an officer who responded to the scene of Shepard's beating and lashing. From there, she jumps to the first lesbian to come out at the University of Wyoming where Shepard went to school.

"This production takes a great amount of concentration having to develop and enrich a character as we go along. There are more than 10 actors (playing these roles). It's a community of a whole group of people in a courtroom during the arraignment," Taylor said. "This is life. If this show does not evoke emotion in the audience members, then maybe there's no emotion in them. We live in a community with a variety of people. It's not about what your beliefs are. It's what you've done with your beliefs."

And Taylor believes the protesters working under the auspices of www.godhatesfags.com have a right to speak out, regardless of how far on the other end of the spectrum of beliefs they

fall from hers.

“Their lives must be very small – a pathetic group of people that would rather spend time traveling to hold up a sign in a protest of hate than stay home and love their families,” she said.

It’s the third time director Susan Boulanger has put on the play and believes there’s still a vital need for the message of love and tolerance of your fellow man to get out.

“It’s about what kind of community we want to be,” she said, also referring to having moved here and being touched by this town’s heartfelt parade of love and support six months ago to kidnapping survivor Jaycee Lee Dugard of South Lake Tahoe.

Boulanger said she was especially struck by Shepard’s story as a result of a violent crime.

“The men who did this were not representative of their community. The play goes into the facts of the case and includes the confessions of the killers,” she said, adding the play revolves around the New York theater company going out to Laramie to find out how the citizens coped with the tragedy.

Tickets for the Laramie Project go on sale at LTCC’s theater box office on Tuesday. They cost $7 for general admission, $5 for seniors and children, and $4 for LTCC student body cardholders. LTCC advises that mature subject matter may not be suitable for children younger than 15.

Plunge into Lake Tahoe to

support Special Olympics

On March 20, hundreds of brave souls with warm hearts will be taking the Plunge for Special Olympics.

Join Area Director Jody Filgo and others to help raise funds for the Special Olympics South Lake Tahoe athletes. It is easy to participate and there is still time to join. Register online and then email family, friend and co-workers to support you.

The Plunge is not a swim. You take a quick dip at Zephyr Cove then head to the Post Plunge Party at the MontBleu Resort to celebrate with other participants.

â€œPlungeâ€ is used loosely. You can dip your big toe or your whole body, it is completely up to you. For those who donâ€™t want to get wet, you can still help. Register as a chicken and on plunge day youâ€™ll be issued a sticker that will excuse you from taking the plunge. Plunger or chicken, everyone who raises at least $100 will receive the Polar Plunge Sweatshirt and free admittance to the post plunge party.

Costumes are encouraged. At the post plunge party awards will be given for funniest costume, best theme, top fundraiser and more. But wetsuits are not allowed â€“ thatâ€™s cheating.

To join, click here.

The money raised by Team Tahoe will help to support the Special Olympics athletes who participate in the South Lake Tahoe Special Olympics program.

Schedule:

10-11:45am Registration

11:45am – Costume Parade and Contest

noon – Plunge

12:30pm – Post Plunge Party

Olympic-like sledding event at Alpine

Alpine Meadows congratulates Errol Kerr of the Jamaica Ski Team for his 9th place finish at the 2010 Winter Olympic Ski Cross competition. To welcome him home, Alpine Meadows has officially deemed Kerr the guest of honor and star judge for the Red Bull Schlittentag competition March 13.

Although Schlittentag has yet to be named an Olympic competition by the I.O.C., Kerr will incorporate Olympic standards to score contenders on each craftâ€™s artistic merit, innovation, team spirit, and race results.

German for â€œsledding dayâ€, Schlittentag is a day of fun, friends and competitive spirit where students zoom down a ski hill in homemade crafts. Wood working skills are a plus, not a must.

Schlittentag will bring together university students from all over Northern California to participate in a competitive day of fun and originality as each team brings their homemade craft in hopes of winning it all and walking away with some great prizes.

Red Bull Schlittentag turns a simple day of sledding into a creative masterpiece.

After the competition, join Kerr and his entourage of Shlittentaggers at the Alpine Meadows Last Chair Bar & Grill

for Red Bull drink specials, a disc jockey, and special blend of Jamaican homecoming cheer and aprÃ¨s-Schlittentag revelry.

When: March 13 1:03pm

Entry participants: College Students only – with a valid student ID. Pilots must be at least 18 years old. Register here.

After party with Errol Kerr: Last Chair Bar & Grill in the Alpine Meadows base lodge from starting at 4pm.

---

3 days of freestyle competition at Squaw

Squaw Valley and Jonny Moseley are set to host the nation's top mogul, aerial and halfpipe skiers for the 2010 Sprint US Freestyle Championships on March 26-28.

In addition to world-class competitions, US Freestyle Championships brings on and off-hill entertainment for all to enjoy. A Friday night party on the KT-22 Sundeck, a live hip hop pool party on top of the mountain, and a Saturday night concert at the Olympic Village Lodge are all part of the fun.

The March 26 event will kick off with the Men's and Women's Mogul Competitions on Red Dog Face. Because Squaw Valley's mogul course is located at the base of the mountain, spectators do not need lift tickets to watch.

Ladies' and Men's qualification and finals takes place all day, beginning with Ladies' Qualifications at 9:30am and Ladies' and Men's Mogul Finals from 1:15 to 2:15pm. The Mogul Awards will commence in the village at 4pm, followed by US

Freestyle Championships Opening Ceremony in the village at 5pm.

The celebration heats up Friday evening at the village at 22 Bistro & Bar. Everyone is invited to mingle with competitors and freestyle skiing greats. 22 Bistro's bartenders will step aside as freestyle skiing legends, like Brad Holmes, Moseley and JT Holmes take over as guest bartenders for the evening.

On March 27, the US Freestyle Championships move up the mountain for the Men's and Ladies' Aerials and Skier Halfpipe Competitions in the Monster Park at Riviera. Ladies' and Men's Aerial Finals run from 11:45am to 1pm, with awards immediately following. Next up, Ladies' and Men's Halfpipe kicks off with Qualifications from 1:15pm to 2:30pm and Finals from 3:30pm to 4:30pm. The Halfpipe awards will take place in the Riviera Park immediately following the competition.

The party continues Saturday afternoon at the High Camp Lagoon and Spa where Monster Energy's DJ Pool Party will go off from 3-6pm. US Ski Team athletes will be signing posters poolside from 4-5pm. In addition, Monster Energy's Rail Jam will run from 5-6pm at High Camp next to the pool.

Registration for the Monster Rail Jam is $10 per rider and will start at 3pm at the Halfpipe Finals.

The final day of competition, March 28 is Ladies' and Men's Dual Moguls on Red Dog Face. Qualifications begin at 10:15am and Finals for both Ladies and Men are from 1:30-3pm. The Dual Moguls Awards are from 4-4:30pm.