Preservation of White Pines talk

On March 18 at 6pm Explore Tahoe Visitor Center will host the Sugar Pine Foundation. President John Pickett and Executive Director Maria Mircheva will present the agency's collaborative strategy to preserve the White Pines currently plagued by a non-native invasive fungus. Cones and seedlings will be available for purchase

and stewardship opportunities will be announced. This program is free and refreshments will be provided.

For more information, call (530) 542.4637.

Explore Tahoe is located in the Heavenly Village at 4114 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Sullivan places 23 in super G



Marco Sullivan of Squaw Valley finished 23rd in the super G on Feb. 19 at the Winter Olympics.

For all the results, click here.

Perez withdraws from El Dorado sheriff's race

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County has one less sheriff's candidate in the race. Stan Perez backed out today.

"The support has been overwhelming," Perez told *Lake Tahoe News* Friday afternoon of his candidacy. But the money to fund it is not there. He said in these economic times it's too difficult to ask people for money for something like this.



Stan Perez

He said if he could come up with $200,000, he would stick it out. He and his family have put about $50,000 into the campaign.

The filing deadline for the June primary is March 12. Six other candidates have indicated they want to be the county's top cop.

Perez is not backing another candidate at this time. He said he will meet with the contenders to see what they have to say and if they might adopt some of his ideas into their campaigns.

Perez had picked sheriff's Lt. Les Lovell to be undersheriff if he were to be elected. Lovell was not immediately available for comment.

Mancuso, Vonn friendship is also a rivalry



By Bill Pennington, New York Times

WHISTLER, British Columbia – Rivals since they were 12, Lindsey Vonn and Julia Mancuso have long been the yin and yang of American ski racing. They are Olympic teammates now for the third time, and little has changed since they were preteens.

Lindsey Vonn has 18 World Cup wins in the last two seasons and has become the most decorated American female racer in World Cup history.

Vonn is trying to win multiple gold medals to validate her last two years of international domination. Mancuso, a surprise gold medalist at the 2006 Turin Games, has been nearly an afterthought after two consecutive years of subpar results.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb.

19



A storm is expected to move into the Lake Tahoe region later today. For now, it’s partly cloudy. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

South Tahoe PUD gets earful about redevelopment

By Kathryn Reed

It was hard to know if the look on the faces of the South Tahoe Public Utility District board members was boredom or not really believing what was being fed to them.

South Lake Tahoe City Manger Dave Jinkens went before the board at its regular Thursday meeting to discuss the city’s proposed redevelopment plan. The district is interested because the amount of property tax dollars it receives would change if the plan were implemented.



SLT Redevelopment Manager Gene Palazzo

addresses the STPUD board Feb. 18. Photo/Kathryn Reed

For more information on the tax issue, click here.

For information about the redevelopment plan, click here.

Don Fraser, a consult hired by the city to work on various redevelopment projects, also spoke at the meeting. At one point he and John Runnels, president of Citizens Alliance, quarreled a bit.

Fraser told the board the district would get 35 percent less in property tax if the plan were approved by the City Council this spring.

It is the council that will make the ultimate decision about the redevelopment plan that encompasses 20 percent of the city. Other entities had a chance to comment on the environmental document. Meetings like this one are merely a courtesy on the part of the city.

The city used data going back to only 2002 to come up with a projected growth of 7 percent a year in property tax. It's those numbers and the 45-year plan that they are touting as good for everyone in the long run. This is because redevelopment, according to the city, is designed to spur improvements, which in turn makes a property more valuable, and therefore it would be taxed more, which then brings greater income to various entities.

However, Fraser admitted last year growth was 1 percent and it's expected to be a negative number this year.

Jinkens believes redevelopment is good for the economy and can create jobs. He said the unemployment rate in South Lake Tahoe

is nearly 17 percent.

Runnels called redevelopment “excrement financing” instead of tax increment financing. He took issue with how the city defines blight, pointed out development like the Ski Run Center and South Tahoe Refuse building occurred without a redevelopment area being declared, and called the city negligent in its duty regarding its franchise agreement with Lukins Brothers Water Co. to ensure infrastructure has been improved.

That water company that services more than 900 customers mostly along Highway 89 doesn’t have the infrastructure to fight a major fire, as was highlighted when the 2007 Angora Fire breached the district boundaries.

Jinkens said those customers should not be saddled with the entire expense to upgrade the system, but did not address the city’s role in having not made sure improvements were made through the years.

Without adequate fire capabilities, improvements at the boarded up northeast corner of the Y aren’t likely to happen, Jinkens said.

Also addressing the board for the city was Redevelopment Agency Manager Gene Palazzo. City Attorney Patrick Enright and Finance Director Christine Vuletich sat at the front table.

El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago asked about the relationship between the redevelopment area and the embattled Tahoe Valley Community Plan.

Jinkens gave a response that didn’t seem to answer the question.

The city was supposed to take its redevelopment show to Placerville earlier this month for the entire Board of Supervisors to hear, but it was canceled less than 24 hours

before show time. It has yet to be rescheduled, Santiago said.

STPUD Board member Eric Schafer asked about the cumulative compounding of the numbers and questioned what was presented.

Board member Mary Lou Mosbacher said, “I think it’s ludicrous to go 45 years out.” She was critical of the documents presented, saying they read like something that came out of the White House.

“It’s not confusing. It’s ridiculous,” she said holding the papers presented by the city. “It’s why I have a tea bag on my rearview mirror.”

Sugarland coming to Lake Tahoe

Sugarland is slated for another big country music weekend at the 2010 Lake Tahoe Summer Concert Series at Harveys Outdoor Arena on July 10.

Tickets go on sale at 10am March 22.

Sugarland – Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush – won two Grammy Awards in 2009 for Best Country Song and Best Country Performance by a Duo or Group. Two months later, the Academy of Country Music proclaimed the emergent superstars the



Sugarland

top Vocal Duo of the Year, ending Brooks & Dunn's nine-year run.

Nettles also received the Milestone Award from the ACM, presented to her by Reba McEntire. At the time, they had been performing together as a duo for five years.

In 2009, they also won the CMT Music Award for Duo Video of the Year ("All I Wanna Do") and the Country Music Association Award for Vocal Duo of the Year. Sugarland has sold over 8 million records.

This month, Sugarland released the single, "Wide Open," on iTunes for the Team USA Soundtrack for the 2010 Winter Olympics. They also appeared with many other artists on the remake of "We Are The World: 25 for Haiti," which premiered during the opening ceremonies of the Vancouver Olympics.

Tickets are through www.ticketmaster.com and www.apeconcerts.com, ranging from $59.50-$125.

Miles of trails at Northstar test leg muscles

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – Staring at a map that looks more vast than the layout of the downhill resort, I feel overwhelmed. I just want a little snowshoe.

No worries.

Short or long, green-blue-black – that's all possible at Northstar-at-Tahoe.



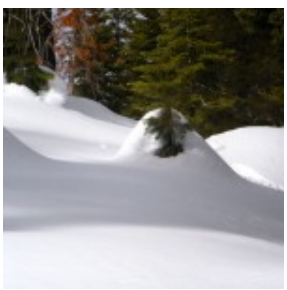
Jann Reed and Sue Wood at Northstar. Photos/Kathryn Reed

It was easy to accommodate the three of us. My sister, Jann, doesn't downhill because of bad knees. Sue and I don't downhill on the Sunday of a long holiday weekend.

With my pass I was able to skip paying the $25 fee to access the maze of trails. The resort grooms 40 kilometers for cross country tracks.

We stayed on a snowshoe-only route. However, the Sawmill Flats trail we zigged along did cross a downhill run.

Meandering through thick conifers covered in lichen had the three of us forgetting we were at a major Lake Tahoe ski resort on Presidents' Weekend. Virgin snow covered the land beyond the single-track trail we followed.



Mounds of snow along the trail.

Maps along the way are easy to read as is the paper one we each have.

It would be possible to be out in the woods for days, but we figured a couple hours would suffice before heading to lunch at the Ritz-Carlton.

Northstar's trails are accessed via the Big Springs Express Gondola. A short snowshoe from this mid-mountain drop-off point gets you to the snowshoe-cross country center. There, rentals and lessons can be purchased.

Chairs and a fire pit beckon weary athletes. A view of the downhill area seems like a different world from the peaceful, serene wilderness we just came from.



Easy to know where to go.

A moonlight snowshoe tour is coming up Feb. 25-26, as well as March 26-27. Telemark clinics are slated for March 7 and April 4.

For more information about Northstar's snowshoe-cross country center, click here.

Ski Run on road to setting itself apart from rest of SLT



By Kathryn Reed

A buzz filled the air as more than 50 people gathered to plot a course to make Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe a destination.

Going from the lake to the mountains, the businesses and property owners on this street are eager to do whatâ€™s needed to be done to make this a place locals and visitors frequent. And ideally those people will visit by foot as they shop and eat along the way.

â€œIt was like a breath of fresh air. There were people in the room who have lived here 40 years, some who have been here a year or two. It was fresh blood, it was the old boys network, it was people not on Ski Run, people around the corner and from the marina,â€ said Shannon O'Brien who owns Shannonâ€™s Lake Tahoe Day Spa. â€œWe want to get people to utilize the street for events, but also create a community space we can call our own where families can come shop, eat and play.â€

O'Brien moved her business to Ski Run about 16 months ago and has been on the Ski Run Business Improvement District board for seven months.

A slew of city staff was on hand for the two-hour meeting that packed the upstairs at Riva Grill. Jerry Birdwell was the only councilman at the meeting. He owns the Black Bear Inn on Ski Run so he had a vested interest in attending the meeting.

The city paid Lani Lott of L.L. Consulting in Phoenix to facilitate the meeting. Although the city didnâ€™t go out for a request for proposal for her services, Lott is expected to continue to work with the city and Ski Run businesses.

The Ski Run BID was formed in 2003 to beautify the area. For now it still excludes the businesses at the marina, but that is likely to change soon. Businesses are assessed a fee that the city collects each year when business licenses are renewed. The money is used by the BID board to enhance the area.

Another thing that may change is including some of the businesses along Highway 50 that consider themselves part of the neighborhood. This will necessitate a vote of the businesses and ultimate approval by the City Council.

Meeting attendees sat at nearly a dozen tables, with each small group tasked with coming up with things theyâ€™d like to see improved and potential plans for the future.

Many of the ideas presented Wednesday were ones that have been broached in the past â€“ bringing a farmers market to Ski Run, closing off the street between the highway and Pioneer Trail for events, having music, and turning the parcel Safeway owns into a city park.

Some of the upgrades talked about include hanging decorative banners, wreaths and flowers along the street lamps. Individual businesses do some of this, but itâ€™s not a collective effort.

Itâ€™s possible the BID will morph into two entities â€“ one to include property owners who care about how the area looks and oneÂ geared toward business owners who want to market the area.

Another public meeting is planned for March 10. The time and location have yet to be determined.

The BID board plans to fine-tune its bylaws a bit. Committees will be formed. And then the work will begin to implement some of the ideas discussed this week. The plan is to set immediate, two- and five-year goals.

Already Ski Run has a Facebook page to get its message out to the masses.

Effective supervision needed to avoid another Dugard case

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Feb. 18 edition of the Reno Gazette-Journal.***

The tragedy of the Jaycee Lee Dugard kidnapping nearly 20 years ago isn't just that the young girl was stolen from her family in South Lake Tahoe, Calif., or that she was held captive for some 18 years, sexually assaulted and bore two children with her captor – as tragic as those were.

The tragedy is that law enforcement in California and Nevada had numerous opportunities to prevent and then end Dugard's terrible ordeal and failed.

Much of the blame rests with parole and probation officials in California, who inherited Phillip Garrido after he was released from prison in Nevada, where he was held for his conviction on sexual assault charges.

Read the whole story