Expedition:Kirkwood enters 10th season

Expedition:Kirkwood, now in its 10th season, offers an educational adventure program for people who desire to develop skills beyond personal and resort boundaries.

Expedition:Kirkwood offers a collection of clinics, camps and programs including free monthly beacon training clinics, women's clinics for novices to experts, and avalanche awareness and certification courses.

For more information about any of the programs, go to www.kirkwood.com or call (209) 258.7360.

Invasive clams to be before Lahontan board

Updated as of 9:15am Jan. 4: *The February meeting has been canceled. The next meeting is March 10-11 in Victorville.*

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is expected to discuss invasive clams at its February meeting.

Comments are being sought on a proposal for Lake Tahoe.

Click on clams to get more information.

Squaw – from a rope tow to Olympic mountain



By Kathryn Reed

Alex Cushing left his East Coast law practice to move to Squaw Valley in the 1940s, soon convinced PanAm pilot Wayne Poulson to sell him 600 acres in what is now Olympic Valley and then spent $100,000 to build a ski lodge near what is KT-22.

By 1954, Cushing was entertaining the notion of Squaw hosting the 1960 Olympics.

Lake Placid officials were furious he won the U.S. Olympic Committeeâ€™s approval. He went on to beat out Innsbruck, St. Moritz and Garmishe-Partenkirchen. (Innsbruck was selected four years later and again in 1976. Lake Placid hosted the game in 1932 and 1980.)

In 1955, when the International Olympic Committee chose Squaw, the North Shore resort had one chairlift, a rope tow and a 50-room lodge.

Construction on Olympic-quality facilities started the next year – $8 million worth. This set an Olympic record. (By contrast, the Vancouver Olympic Committee says the expense of this yearâ€™s Games is in the billions of dollars.)

The abundance of snow in Lake Tahoe was one of Cushingâ€™s selling points. The problem in 1960 was the snow was sparse. There was talk of trucking in snow or moving the events to Slide Mountain (now part of Mt. Rose ski resort).

But Mother Nature cooperated; with the snow seeming to fall by the bucket load that February just as the Games were to begin.

So much fell that Walt Disney â€“ who was putting on the opening ceremonies â€“ feared all of the white stuff and nasty weather would ruin his festivities. (Disney helped found Sugar Bowl ski resort 70 years ago.)

Richard Nixon, then vice president and one-time congressman from California, was 90 minutes late because of the storm. The 15,000 people in attendance had to wait for his arrival.

With 10 inches falling in the valley and even more on the mountain, the menâ€™s downhill was pushed to the first Monday.

Seven hundred athletes from 33 countries competed in 27 events in 1960. The bobsled event was canceled because there wasnâ€™t enough money to finish building the route, though officials at the time said it was because not enough countries wanted to participate.

Leading up to the Games, Buddy Werner was one of the countryâ€™s potential medalists in skiing, but he had broken his leg earlier in the season. If that name sounds familiar, youth ski programs now carry his name.

Jean Vuarnet stunned the world by winning the menâ€™s downhill on metal skis â€“ the first time metal skis had been used. The French also didnâ€™t wax their skis.

It wasnâ€™t just the slopes that were catching peopleâ€™s attention. These VIII Winter Olympics were the first time any skating event was contested inside and therefore the first on manmade ice. Ponds of frozen ice were the norm before Squaw.

However, the speed skating was outdoors on a 400-meter oval.

They were also the Games to usher in electronic timing.

The Squaw Games were the first to have daily television

coverage. Walter Cronkite was the voice of those Games for CBS.

About 300 people worked security at Squaw. This pales in comparison to the number Vancouver is employing – 15,000 police, private security and military personnel at a cost of nearly $1 billion.

Other than the Olympic flame and those famous five rings at the entrance to Squaw off Highway 89, relics of 50 years ago are hard to find.

The roof of Blyth Arena â€“ the ice rink â€“ collapsed in the 1980s. Condos near Red Dog replaced the torch tower and podium. The ski jump sat unused for a couple decades until it, too, was removed. The Nevada Visitors Center is now the Far East Center and the California Visitors Center serves as the members' locker building.

Although most of the structures are long gone, the memories of those 1960 Games at Squaw seem to burn as bright as the Olympic flame.

Publisher's note: *Read about potential Olympian Elena Hight on Jan. 5.*

Comments sought on eliminating plastic bags in SLT

South Lake Tahoe Sustainability Commission is in the initial stages of drafting a policy recommendation with the goal of significantly reducing or eliminating polystyrene and one-time

use plastic bags in South Lake Tahoe.

The public is invited to attend the commissionâ€™s meeting Feb. 3 at 4pm to comment on the proposed pathways to the goal. The meeting is at Lake Tahoe Airport.

USDA food distribution in Douglas County

The 2010 USDA food distribution schedule at the Tahoe Douglas Senior Center, 885 Highway 50, Zephyr Cove is from 9-10am on Jan. 28, March 25, May 27, July 29, Sept. 30 and Nov. 18.

The eligibility requirements are: having Nevada ID, reading the â€œself-declaration assurance” form and signing it to the certify that household income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

The types of commodities expected to be available are canned juices, canned fruits and vegetables, canned and frozen meats, dry beans, peanut butter, dry milk and pastas. There will be approximately eight commodities per distribution per person in household.

There are other Douglas County distribution locations as well as one in Carson City. The food distribution program is administered through the state â€“ (775) 688.2828.

Kirkwood powers up all lifts

Updated Jan. 3 at 4:54pm.

By Kathryn Reed

Kirkwood Mountain Resort ran chairs 11 and 2 today because the electrical connection to the rest of the chairs was not working. Resort officials say that problem has been solved.

Kirkwood anticipates all lifts being in operation on Jan. 4.

“The lifts are not reacting well with the power. This is a lift electrical problem,” Tim Cohee, vice president of the ski resort, said Sunday before there was juice to all lifts.

Power had been restored to all other parts of Kirkwood on Saturday and today after a fire at the power plant on New Year’s Day knocked out the electricity to thousands and forced the ski resort to close a couple hours early that day and not to operate Saturday.

For more details about the fire at the resort that is about 40 miles south of South Lake Tahoe, click here.

Map and compass class

Improve your navigation skills with a course where you will learn to read map contour lines and translate them to the actual terrain. With your compass you’ll learn about magnetic north, true north and declination. Then we’ll put it all together to pinpoint your location and plan your route. Map,

compass, snowshoes, gaiters and trekking poles provided.

* Location: Donner Summit Sno Park (permit required and available at REI)

* Cost:$50 for REI members, $75 for non-members

* Registration required. Call (775) 828.9090.

REI-Kirkwood Winter Trails Day

REI and Kirkwood host the annual national Winter Trails Day event at Kirkwood Cross Country Ski Area and Snowshoe Center on Jan. 9.

Snowshoe vendors, including MSR, Tubbs and Atlas, will offer free snowshoe demos from 10am-3pm and REI Outdoor School instructors will provide guided snowshoe hikes on designated trails at Kirkwood.

REI employees and other organizations such as El Dorado Nordic Ski Patrol and Mountain Adventure Seminars, will be on hand to answer questions about winter recreation and safety in the backcountry.

Kirkwood will offer free mini ski lessons from 10am-2pm. Daily trail users can also enjoy a $6 discount on Kirkwood Trail Passes.

For more information, call (209) 258.7248.

Women Entrepreneurs meeting

Women Entrepreneurs meet Jan. 7 from 11:30am-1pm at Passeretti's Restaurant at 1181 Highway 50, South Lake Tahoe.

Lunch is $13 for members or advance registration; $15 for non-members or at the door.

RSVP to jctahoewriter@hotmail.com or go to www.weoftheworld.com and click on the Tahoe Chapter to RSVP or pay online with a credit card.

Kittens need foster families



El Dorado County Animal Services is looking for individuals who would like to provide foster care in their homes for abandoned and adoptable animals.

Animal foster families serve as volunteers who offer temporary, loving care in their homes while a permanent home is being sought for the animals. The commitment to care for the animals usually lasts for two to three weeks. Animal Services provides all of the supplies needed for the animals during the foster care stay, and staff are available for consultation.

For more information call (530) 621.7639 in Placerville or (530) 573.7925 in South Lake Tahoe.