Soroptimist looking for artists

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe is looking for an artist to design the 2014 wine tasting poster.

Artists have until July 1 to submit an original piece of art or photograph. The theme is Tahoe and Wine Tasting.

The winner receives $500.

For more info, call (530) 867.4586.

White pulls out of slopestyle at Olympics

By USSA and Wire Reports

ROSA KHUTOR, Russia – Olympic champion Shaun White, who rides for Northstar, announced late Wednesday Sochi time that he was withdrawing from slopestyle to keep his focus on winning an unprecedented third straight gold in halfpipe.

White fell and jammed his left wrist in a training run on the slopestyle course. Afterward he called the course “a little intimidating.”

Torstein Horgmo of Norway, who was one of the favorites coming into the Olympics, broke his collarbone on a training ride.

After White got hurt, Marika Enne of Finland had to be taken off the course in a stretcher because she fell hard and sustained a concussion.

Slopestyle snowboarding will make its Olympic debut with qualification runs Thursday and the men's finals opening the Games on Saturday.

"After much deliberation with my team, I have made the decision to focus solely on trying to bring home the third straight gold medal in halfpipe for Team USA. The difficult decision to forgo slopestyle is not one I take lightly as I know how much effort everyone has put into holding the slopestyle event for the first time in Olympic history, a history I had planned on being part of," White said.

Halfpipe snowboarding competition is set for Tuesday at the Rosa Khutor Extreme Park.

White is the two-time defending champion in halfpipe. Training begins Saturday for Tuesday's men's halfpipe finals.

Tentative paid parking compromise for S. Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

If the South Lake Tahoe City Council rescinds the paid parking ordinance, the Tahoe 4 Tahoe group is likely to back off from going forward with its initiative.

While much of the Feb. 4 council meeting centered on the paid

parking controversy, the discussion did not end there. That night Bruce Grego, representing Tahoe 4 Tahoe, and Hal Cole and Brooke Laine from the council met to see if they could come to an agreement.

During the public meeting Laine's solution to the paid parking strife was for the city to put a legally solid question on the ballot for South Lake Tahoe residents to choose if they want paid parking or not.

There are some in the group who agree something like that could work.

"There is a win-win out there. It is up to the city reps and committee to see if they can reach that agreement to start over," Dave Jinkens, who has been working with the anti-paid parking advocates, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The proposal that came out of Tuesday night's powwow is largely what Laine proposed at the council meeting. If the Tahoe 4 Tahoe group agrees to this idea, it could come back to the council on the Feb. 10 agenda when the electeds meet to discuss fiscal matters. Grego told *Lake Tahoe News* it's possible the current parking ordinance could be turned into the ballot question.

The negotiators now must seek approval from the larger bodies they represent.

Legal questions

At issue is the Tahoe 4 Tahoe group has an initiative that qualifies for the ballot. The problem is case law and the state Vehicle Code say the referendum process, not initiative is the way to deal with parking meters.

Even though the courts and California Vehicle Code have stated the initiative process cannot change parking meter law, the Tahoe 4 Tahoe group wants a judge to tell them that and not

rely on what is already written. They believe if they don't exhaust all of their options, they will have let down the 1,422 people who signed the petition to get the question on the ballot.

The city's hands are somewhat tied in that it must follow the law even if this initiative could be legally challenged. It is most apt to be challenged once it is on the ballot or if voters approve it.

And while both sides profess to want to compromise, a lack of trust may prevent that from happening. Plus, there has been no vote by the council to scrap the ordinance.

Financial conundrum

Per Elections Code, the council had to act Tuesday on receiving the certificate that states enough valid signatures were gathered for the initiative to move forward. The law states the council must do so at the first regular meeting after the county certifies the signatures.

This then triggered another Elections Code rule where the council had three options:

• Adopt the initiative as is to be the new city code;

• Put the initiative on the ballot;

• Order a fiscal report.

The council unanimously agreed to the last option. The contract with Urban Futures Inc. out of Walnut Creek is based on the number of hours the consultants work, not a flat fee. The amount is to not exceed $25,000. They have 30 days per Elections Code to complete the report.

But it's possible if a compromise were reached in the next week, the fiscal report could be scrapped. In turn, this means not much money would have been spent by the city. This is

because the city will be tasked with gathering the documents requested by Urban Futures, so it’s city time that will have been wasted, not money spent. Urban Futures earns the bulk of its money from its analysis and final report.

The report is designed to show voters the financial impacts if they approve the initiative. It’s written in such a manner that it would tie the city’s hands when it comes to parking rules elsewhere, including at Campground by the Lake; it would also mean money from parking kiosks that is designated for maintenance would be missing from the city budget.

The Feb. 4 City Council meeting was dominated by paid parking. It’s going to take up the bulk of the Feb. 18 meeting too, which is going to consist of a morning and evening session involving the topic. At those sessions the current parking program will be discussed and likely revised.

In other action:

• The fire department’s new ladder truck should arrive Feb. 15. The old one has already been taken out of commission.

• The fiscal workshop on Feb. 10 has been moved to 3pm.

• The council refused to write a blank check for council members to travel as was requested by Councilwoman Angela Swanson. She is on a couple committees for the League of California Cities. But those are optional beyond regular council assignments. Instead of having to get each item approved the compromise was for her to bring back projected expenses for the remainder of her tenure, which expires when her term is up in December.

Letter: Verbal abuse at TRPA meeting unjustified

To TRPA, local jurisdiction members and the community,

I attended the January TRPA Governing Board meeting (as I attend most) and was astounded at the verbal accosting of a member of the public and the general treatment of this person by TRPA and local jurisdiction staff and associated consultants, and other members of the planning team. This all took place before the public hearing on an upcoming area plan presentation.

This is outrageous and unacceptable.

We, the public at-large, are entitled by legal right to speak our mind about any subject matter on an agenda and should not feel threatened or intimated into not stating how we feel on that particular matter.

I hope to never see this type of shameful treatment again.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista

S. Lake Tahoe working on Tahoe Valley plan

South Lake Tahoe is hosting a public workshop on the Tahoe Valley Area Plan on Feb. 27 from 6-7:30pm at Lake Tahoe Airport.

The Tahoe Valley Area Plan upon completion and adoption by the

city and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency will provide planning and land use guidance for the area known as the Y.

Contact John Hitchcock at jhitchcock@cityofslt.us or (530) 542.7472 for more information.

Locals to test dancing ability in public for charity

Dancing with the Tahoe Stars returns to MontBleu in Stateline on March 8.

The benefit for Tahoe Arts Project pairs locals with professional dancers. The contestants are Liz Niven, Amy Thompson, Roberta Benvenuto, Jodi Stewart, Frances Caro, Tom Davis, Eric Taxer, Klaus Utecht, Sean Sweeney and Chris Proctor.

The performance is at 6:30pm.

Tickets are $10, $15 and $22, plus fees. Call 888.829.7630 for tickets. Tickets go on sale Feb. 5.

Judges are Marcia Sarosik, Pat Ronan and Paul Middlebrook.

For more info, call (530) 542.3632.

Mental health patients are increasingly younger

By Jocelyn Wiener and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

In recent years, Dr. Jason Bynum has seen the churn: teens in crisis cycling through his south Sacramento psychiatric hospital, admitted, released, and just a few months down the road, back with another breakdown. Increasingly, he lives with a deathly fear that his young patients are going to commit suicide after he sends them home. He worries even more about the ones who are violent toward others.

“One of these kids that I’m discharging is going to go home and kill somebody,” said Bynum, a psychiatrist at Sierra Vista Hospital who is also president-elect of the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society.

A majority of the children and adolescents he treats are suicidal or self-harming – the rest are violent, homicidal or deeply delusional. He sometimes holds onto the sickest of them for weeks or months, trying to keep them safe while he searches for intensive follow-up services.

Around the state, the picture is much the same: Mental health hospitalizations of California’s youngest residents – those 21 and under – increased 38 percent between 2007 and 2012, jumping from 34,000 to 47,000, according to an analysis of state data by The Sacramento Bee and the Center for Health Reporting. Child hospitalizations also rose nationally, but not as quickly as in California, federal data show.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Sno-Flake Drive-in in South Lake Tahoe is on the market. “We are just starting our 10th year and we always said we would put it on the market then and go to our next adventure,” owner Duncan Sennott told *Lake Tahoe News*.

• Gary Romano, author of “Why I Farm”, which was published by Bona Fide Books in Meyers, will talk about the challenges of small farming in the 21st century at Book Passage in the San Francisco Ferry Building on Feb. 11 at 6pm. Romano will also be at the Nevada Small Farm Conference Feb. 20-22 in Sparks.

• Reservations are being taken for the March 3-26 Placer County Sheriff’s Office Community Awareness Academy. For more info or to register, contact Kim Rivera at (530) 889.6922 or krivera@placer.ca.gov.

• The meeting about the near shore for the North Shore has been rescheduled to Feb. 7 from 2:30-4pm at Tahoe City Public Utility Office board room, 221 Fairway Drive, Tahoe City.

North Shore ad campaign targets unplugging, outdoors

By Tanya Irwin, Marketing Daily

The North Lake Tahoe tourism group is urging vacationers to leave their gadgets behind and let their feet succumb to gravity.

The campaign, which includes TV and out-of home, is intended to “condone” time off for an extended weekend getaway to North Lake Tahoe’s skiing and snowboarding resorts.

The North Lake Tahoe Marketing Cooperative enlisted San Francisco-based School of Thought to create the effort, which aims not to lift ticket sales, but hotel stays.

“The big hurdle for us is not getting San Franciscans here, but getting them out of their homes,” said Andy Chapman, chief marketing officer, North Lake Tahoe Marketing Cooperative.

Read the whole story

Colleges contending with shift in demographics

By Eric Hoover, Chronicle of Higher Education

Demographic projections have inspired doomsayers and daydreamers alike. The sky-is-falling contingent says the declining number of white, affluent high-school graduates will sink many tuition-dependent colleges. Meanwhile, optimistic observers predict that population shifts will compel institutions to transform themselves by embracing underrepresented students like never before.

As any admissions officer could tell you, the number of high school graduates in several Midwestern and Northeastern states will drop sharply over the next decade, according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

Nationally, the number of black and white students will decline, and the number of Hispanic and Asian-American

graduates will increase significantly. The nation’s already seeing a sharp rise in first-generation and low-income graduates—the very students whom selective four-year institutions have long struggled to serve.

Read the whole story