Sierra Nevada College offers scholarship

Tthe approximately 8,000 graduating high school seniors who will be eligible for the Guinn Millennium Scholarships can also try for the Sierra Nevada College Millennium Plus Scholars Award.Â This is a $50,000 scholarship (four years at $12,500)

Students are awarded Guinn Millennium Scholarship recipient status upon graduating from a Nevada high school with a 3.25 gpa and completing a rigorous high school curriculum. Students interested in receiving Sierra Nevada Collegeâ€™s Millennium Plus Scholars Awardâ€”which supplements the Guinn Millennium Scholarshipâ€”will need to meet the Nevada state scholarship eligibility requirements, which are officially determined in the summer after graduation (although high school counselors can tentatively award the Millennium Plus Scholars Award based on the studentâ€™s transcript).

For more information, contact the Admissions Office at (775) 831.6223 or admissions@sierranevada.edu.

USFS wants comments on invasive species

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is seeking comments on proposed methods for treating invasive plant species on National Forest System lands, including manual and chemical treatments. The goal of the project is to eradicate, control or contain infestation of non-native

invasive plants.

Manual methods include hand pulling, pulling with tools, clipping, mulching and tarping to kill with excess shade or sunlight. Mechanical methods, such as mowing, cutting, trimming or using a weed-eater could also be applied to acres treated manually, and heat could be used as well (thermal treatment). Chemical methods involve the use of herbicides with application methods ranging from by hand to directed or limited broadcast spray. Up to a maximum of 100 acres would receive chemical treatment annually and as many acres as possible would receive manual treatment. Only herbicides approved for use by the states of California and Nevada and the California Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board will be used.

Non-native invasive plant species reduce the amount and quality of fish and wildlife habitat, increase erosion, and impair recreational access. Invasive plants can spread rapidly, especially where there are soil-disturbing activities, because their populations are not controlled by plant-eating wildife, pathogens and competitors present in their native habitat.

Manual methods are ineffective against some species, which can actually expand their range or become more dense after manual treatment because new shoots or new plants can form from any plant parts left at the site The LTBMU is currently using limited manual methods only, but private landowners, and county and state agencies are already using herbicides on lands within the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The proposed action describes the herbicides and application methods proposed for use in detail, as well as steps that would be taken to protect water quality, public health and other plants and wildlife. To view the scoping letter and proposed action, visit http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ltbmu/projects/local/terrestrial-nnpst

.shtml. Comments will be most helpful if received by Nov. 20, 2009.

For more information or to find out how to submit comments, view the scoping letter and proposed action on the website or contact Cheryl Beyer at (530) 543.2842, cbeyer@fs.fed.us.

Cefalu: Setting the record straight on Measure B

Dear Publisher,

It is truly disappointing to read the comments of the Publisher of the *Tahoe Mountain News* regarding Measure "B" and the opinions expressed in the Editorial in the latest edition. It can only be classified as a short-sighted, narrow minded viewpoint. Not only is the information distorted and exaggerated, it is simply untrue as to the motives of the many residents of this community who have come forward to pledge their effort to support the re-building of the playing fields at Rufus Allen Blvd. It is unfortunate that the *Mountain News* has not informed themselves as to the provisions of Measure "S" as it was crafted almost 10 years ago. You have chosen to rely on your inaccurate interpretation and the risk of dividing the recreation community.

Measure"S" was very specific as to the allocation of funds for bike trail maintenance to the tune of $5K per mile of newly constructed bike trails. The failure of the State of California to provide funding for new bike trails should not be a reason to hold the balance of the recreation community hostage and to now suggest that bike trail maintenance is priced at $18K per mile, is ludicrous.

This effort is not intended to only provide for the “Little Leaguers”, but as well, the soccer programs and the “T-Ball” leagues. To suggest that we do not have the youngsters to participate in these activities is an illustration of your lack of knowledge of the demographics of this community.

The opportunity to re-build this complex is the one opportunity this community will have to provide a facility that the community and participants can be proud of. As we travel to surrounding communities and witness the facilities that are available to their youth, we should be ashamed that we do not provide better for our young people, nothing more than a complex that is approaching 50 years old. We are not merely seeking to have all of the funding provided by “Measure S”, but a partnership to be formed with the community to match the funding that we may realize from the passage of Measure “B”. The issue of long-term maintenance money was never a concern nor were we expecting any funds to maintain this facility, it will be taken care of as it has in the past, by the City of South Lake Tahoe and volunteers of the various “team sports”. That issue is no more than a “ruse” by the opponents to make us appear as though we are “pulling a fast one”.

Measure “B” WILL NOT ALTER NOR RAISE TAXES TO ANYONE. With over $20 million of taxpayer money spent for bicyclists in recent years, it is not too much to ask that Measure “S” funds be used to up-grade an existing facility, the youth of our community deserve it. VOTE YES ON MEASURE “B”.

John N. Cefalu, South Lake Tahoe

Miner: Don’t touch bike path money

Dear Publisher:

Bike path maintenance monies should be spent on bike path maintenance, not on construction of ball fields. Personally, Iâ€™m all for ball fields, but just not with bike path maintenance monies. If you needed an initiative to allow bike path monies to be spent on other bike paths not covered by Measure S, then you could have worded Measure B to allow that.

But there must have been ball field interest groups in attendance at whatever meeting made that decision, and bicycle advocates were expressly not invited. As Ty Polastri stated in his letter, this is not a tactic that encourages collaboration, inclusiveness and trust. The bicycle community, which has the most to loose, should have been included in the discussions.

When the City was awarded the Bicycle Friendly Community Award a few years ago, Hal Cole remembered that I came before this council back in 2001 (or something like that) to suggest that we work at becoming more Bicycle Friendly. After much hard work and organization on the part of the bicycle community and the City we received that award. We now proudly display those signs on all City entrances. The sign signifies that while we may not be perfect, we are steadily working to improve our townâ€™s bicycle amenities. The award is the outwardly manifestation of an inward quality that we as a city care about attracting visitors who cycle and are committed to making commuting to work and play more pleasurable and safer for visitors and locals alike.

But that designation comes with a cost. We have to really pursue bicycle friendliness and make the hard choices to train

our police force in bicycle law enforcement, incorporate bicycle lanes on roads within the city, and yes, keep bicycle maintenance funds for maintaining bicycle paths. Or do you think you can maintain that award in name alone? If you want to make a change in how Measure S funds can be spent, make that change. Ball field advocates should go after their own funding and not steal it from bike paths when there is plenty of bike path maintenance yet to do.

I have 4 points to make about Measure B:

1. Ball field improvements are a good idea. If you have ever flown into Phoenix you can see how from the air how a city plans for its recreation with common facilities at the center of multiple fields. The question is: Where should the money come from?

2. With the award of the Bicycle Friendly Community designation a few years ago, the City has made a commitment to improving bicycle facilities. We all worked hard to get that award and it would be a shame to lose it. Bicycling is how many people get to the ball fields and other recreation opportunities in this town and bicycle facilities and bike paths should be maintained and safe.

3. The writers of Measure B had one thing in mind: Taking unused bike path maintenance monies to fund ball field improvements. They did not seek input from the bicycling community about the money they were taking, they just saw an opportunity to further their goals, and took it. Had they been a little more inclusive they could have written into their measure that some of the money would be used to repair existing bicycle paths which would have made both the ball field advocates and the bicycle advocates happy. But they wanted all the money for themselves. When is the last time any of you have ridden on the Al Tahoe bicycle path by the college? Thatâ€™s the kind of dangerous bike path that Measure S money should have been used to repair.

4. The City Council and the Measure S Committee have a higher standard to up hold. You have to ensure that all members of the community are heard and included when public monies are allocated. Both the Council and the Committee did a poor job of making sure that bicycle advocates were included in the conversation and this is where the main my problem lies. You did not do a good job of representing and hearing from all members of the community on this topic. There is some complaint that bicycle advocates never had a chance to write an opposition response to Measure B on the ballot. This type of partisanship should not be tolerated by City committees or the Council. The end may justify the means to one political group, but the City Council has a higher calling. I think you dropped the ball on this one.

Jeff Miner, South Lake Tahoe

KTHO – Ask the TRPA



Call in to KTHO 590-AM (530.544.8255) this morning starting at 10:15 when Lake Tahoe News Publisher Kathryn Reed moderates the Ask the TRPA radio show. Or listen online at www.kthoradio.com.

Charter raising cable TV prices

Charter Communications is raising its rates â€“ which will be noticed by cable payers on the December bill.

In an email to Charter on Oct. 21, South Lake Tahoe City Manager Dave Jinkens said, â€œRaising your costs by almost 25% on Basic Cable service in these tough economic times undoubtedly impacts lower income people more heavily than others and this change concerns us. I cannot say that I understand the reason for the large increase and would ask for further clarification to inform elected leadership in our community and the public at large.

â€œI know these are challenging financial times for our community and operators and owners of businesses and every increase in cost impacts them.â€

Charter is raising the monthly fee for basic cable service from $19.99 to $24.99. The expanded basic cable service is decreasing by $3 month, becoming $31.

In an email the city received from Franny Buffa, government relations administrator with Charter, she said the increase reflects the â€œincreased programming fees from our suppliers, as well as the overall cost of doing business.â€

Buffa may be reached at (775) 850.1267.

Harrah’s Dingman files countersuit

By Michael Hasch, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

The director of hotel operations at the resort where a Nevada casino worker contends that she was sexually assaulted by Ben Roethlisberger filed a countersuit Tuesday against the woman.

Stacy Dingman, an employee at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe Hotel and Casino and one-time friend and confidant of the alleged victim, filed a counterclaim seeking in excess of $10,000 in damages.

Read the whole story

Voting by mail saves county money



By Kathryn Reed

Some voters in El Dorado County are sharpening their pencils for the first time because their polling place has been eliminated and they must vote by mail for candidates/issues on the Nov. 3 ballot.

The 14 precincts on the South Shore have been consolidated to

four â€“ two in South Lake Tahoe and two in the county. The people who donâ€™t have a physical place to go to should have received their ballot in the mail already with a letter explaining what is going on.

Bill Schultz, county registrar of voters, said this is a way for his department to save money. It costs more than $1,000 to open a precinct.

He doesnâ€™t expect this type of consolidation to occur when itâ€™s a primary or general election. But Schultz said for small elections like this one the vote by mail method has been used before.

â€œWe get a higher turnout by mail, than at the polls,â€ he said.

Nonetheless, Schultz is predicting a 23-27 percent voter turnout.

Even though not many items are on the ballot for the lake side of El Dorado County, Schultz said since the ballots still have to be transported to Placerville instead of being sent electronically like was allowed years ago, the results are not likely to come in faster than usual.

If you have not received your voter information, call (530) 621.7480.

Placer County farmer's produce a hit in Santa Monica

David Karp, NW32 TV

Jeff Rieger's commute each week to the Santa Monica farmers market from his farm in Placer County– 924 miles round trip – is probably the longest regularly undertaken by any vendor at a Southern California certified market. He is driven by a passion to grow and market rare and high-quality fruits, all the more remarkable since he got into farming almost by accident.

It was the mandarins that hooked him. For 23 years he had lived near Lake Tahoe, first skiing, then painting houses, then building them on speculation. When Rieger and his girlfriend at the time bought a 4.3-acre property in Penryn, in the Sierra foothills northeast of Sacramento, in November 2002, he intended to fix up the house and flip it for a profit. But the owner had left the crop of satsuma mandarins on the trees, and Rieger started picking them and bringing them to a local store. Soon he split with the girlfriend and fell in love with the farm, which he named Penryn Orchard Specialties.

Read the whole story

LA or Tahoe? Both can feel like home

By Steve Lopez, Los Angeles Times

Do you ever think about other places you might move to if you could, or if you had to?

A few years ago, my wife and I drove up to the beautiful Central California coast thinking the area might be a great place to live in 10 years or so, when our daughter goes to

college and we have to decide between downsizing and robbing banks.

In the end, though, we came to the conclusion we always do when we think about living someplace else: Sure, we'd enjoy the slower pace, the natural beauty and the slightly less insane real estate market. But the grass is greener here, even when it's brown.

Read the whole story