Winter triathlon in Tahoe City

Tahoe City Golf Course is hosting a winter triathlon Dec. 28. It involves skiing, riding and running about 2 miles each.

The entry fee is $20 for per team and $15 for individuals.

The race starts at 9am, registration at 8am.

For more info, call (530) 583.1516.

Value of airline reward miles falling

By Justin Bachman, Bloomberg

The number of award miles needed to snag a seat in the premium cabin will rise dramatically next year at Delta and United — and airline mile collectors are fuming.

The biggest changes in both airlines' loyalty programs will be for international travel in first and business class, where some award levels on United will jump as much as 87 percent. To be awarded a first-class ticket now from North America to the Middle East, for example, a traveler has to spend 150,000 frequent-flyer miles. Beginning Feb. 1, that award seat will require 280,000 miles when flying on one of United's partner airlines. The same trip on United's own planes will require 180,000 miles, up from 150,000. From North America to Europe,

first class on a partner airline will rise 63 percent, from 135,000 to 220,000 miles.

Delta is introducing increases on June 1, with round-trip business class from the U.S. to Europe rising by 25,000 miles, to 125,000 miles; round-trip flights to Asia will increase 20,000 miles, to 140,000. (Delta plans smaller award level hikes from Feb. 1 to June 1.) The new award levels for coach seats are largely unchanged, with only minimal, 5,000-mile hikes on some routes.

Read the whole story

Sac County prosecutor faces DUI charge in accident involving SLT driver

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

For the second time in his career, a Sacramento County deputy district attorney faces drunken driving charges after getting into a car accident.

The El Dorado County District Attorney's Office this month filed a criminal complaint in Superior Court against Alan Scott Hengel, 58. The complaint alleges that Hengel had a blood alcohol content of 0.10, above the 0.08 legal limit in California.

Around midnight on Oct. 31, Hengel was driving approximately 70 mph west on Highway 50 near Kyburz when he failed to negotiate a curve, crossed the median and hit an oncoming truck driven by Raphael Townsend of South Lake Tahoe,

according to a report from the California Highway Patrol.

Hengel blamed the driver of the other vehicle for the accident, then refused to submit to a drunken driving test, the report states.

Read the whole story

Civil attorney running a second time for judge

By Kathryn Reed

Joe Hoffman isn't letting the bitter, nasty campaign of 2012 stop him from running again for El Dorado County Superior Court judge.

The 44-year-old is running to replace Judge Daniel Proud, who is retiring. The contentious battle of 2012 was against incumbent Curt Stracener.

"I think this time will be different than last. It's very difficult to unseat a sitting judge. I believe that was part of the challenge last time," Hoffman told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We never put out a single piece of negative mail or other medium. I'm proud of that."



Joe Hoffman

Many of the reasons remain as to why Hoffman wants to be a judge and believes he is who should be elected.

“My belief is we need people who have been practicing in the county with a broad-based legal background who want to be in that position,” Hoffman said.

Since graduating from law school in 1994 Hoffman has been a private attorney in El Dorado County. He opened his law firm in January 1995. His goal was to practice every type of law he could so he would always be learning.

He and his wife run the law practice together. For a while they narrowed their focus to family law, but have sinse broadened it again. Hoffman believes this has prepared him well to be a judge because he has a diverse background and is not afraid to learn new things.

“No doubt there will be a steep learning curve with criminal cases,” he said. “With my background and nature, I can learn a new area of law and become proficient in a short period of time.”

Hoffman has been a judge pro tem since 2001, which means he is assigned by the court to help resolve cases before they go to trial. The goals are the litigants resolve their issues and a trial is not needed. He does not get paid for this work.

One thing Hoffman wants to bring to the bench is a more

effective way to run the courtroom. Complaints are fairly consistent that the local courthouses are backed up and improvement is needed.

“I think there is a more efficient way to run the courtrooms so you don’t waste time and therefore money,” Hoffman said.

He believes his years of managing his office in a fiscally prudent and time-sensitive manner will serve him well as a judge.

Letter: CTC land deals need closer scrutiny

To the community:

The California Tahoe Conservancy (CTC) is studying for implementation Tahoe Sustainable Communities Investment Program (TSCIP).

From board meeting executive summary: “The 2012 Regional Plan promotes clustering development in the basin’s town centers to create more walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented communities. The Regional Plan also includes a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).

“TSCIP will refocus the Conservancy’s land acquisition and marketable right programs to: 1) acquire and restore aging developed properties on environmentally sensitive lands and retire or transfer the development rights to town centers; 2) sell, lease, or exchange vacant Conservancy land in these town centers; and 3) acquire the remaining private properties in several of Lake Tahoe’s roadless subdivisions to remove the

threat of development.

“Acquiring development rights: Some stakeholders have recommended that the Conservancy become more active in buying and selling development rights directly rather than acquiring them incidentally through purchases of land.

“Acquiring any developed properties: Other stakeholders have recommended that the Conservancy not limit itself to acquisitions of developed property on environmentally sensitive land, since retiring or transferring the marketable rights of any developed commercial property, particularly those outside of town centers, could help to reduce and/or cluster development.

“Acquiring residential properties: The Conservancy has also been urged to consider acquiring developed residential properties on sensitive land (in addition to commercial and tourist accommodation properties) since the floor area of these properties can also be converted into other marketable rights and transferred to town center locations.”

To completely understand this newly proposed program: Tahoe Sustainable Communities Investment Program (TSCIP) and how execution of the TRPA Code of Ordinances is implemented the CTC along with the Regional Plan Implementation Committee must sponsor a joint workshop for the public’s benefit and understanding of the complexity of the program. Many of us dug into the details and still do not completely grasp the TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) program or why the Conservancy should become a commodities broker.

I strongly urge that all community members read the entire proposal.

Additionally the CTC has a program not highly publicized called “Asset Lands Program” that merits communities’ attention.

What are potential asset lands?

Potential asset lands are properties that can be considered for possible sale or trade at some point in the future consistent with the Conservancy's adopted Asset Lands Program Guidelines. They are not restricted from sale by law or Conservancy board policy.

What types of properties does the Conservancy own that may be considered potential asset lands?

Potential asset lands fit into several broad categories:

• Easement Protected Lands (4): Lands where Conservancy ownership of a conservation easement would be more cost-effective than full fee title ownership.

• Area Plan Asset Lands (17): Developable parcels in highly urbanized areas that could support sustainable compact development consistent with local area plans.

• Highway 50 Right of Way Lands (85): Developable parcels along the former Highway 50 right of way that could be used to support the South Tahoe Greenway bike trail or be sold or leased to help fund the trail.

• Bulk Acquisition Lands (73): Developable lands acquired as part of "bulk acquisition" of conservation and developable lands from a single seller.

• Residential Land Coverage Parcels (154): Developable lands purchased to acquire land coverage for mitigation purposes or for bike trails or other development projects.

How many Conservancy properties could be considered potential asset lands?

Three hundred thirty-three of the over 4,800 properties fall into the categories above, but only six have been selected by the Conservancy for consideration for sale. Of these six

properties, only two have been listed for sale. For a current list of properties for sale go here.

Ellie Waller, TIMBY: Tahoe is my Backyard, my home is in Tahoe Vista

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Study: Eat nuts while pregnant to reduce child's allergy risk

By Nicole Ostrow, Bloomberg

Children whose mothers ate more peanuts and tree nuts while pregnant are less likely to develop allergies to those foods, according to a study that reverses previous doctor recommendations.

The study from Boston Children's Hospital found that the children of moms not allergic to peanuts and tree nuts who ate five or more servings a week of the foods had a reduced risk of allergies than kids whose mothers ate less than one serving a month. The study is published this week in JAMA Pediatrics.

Previous guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2000 recommended avoiding these nuts during pregnancy yet the prevalence of allergies to these foods still tripled from 1997 to 2010, said Michael Young, a senior study author. Studies examining the link were inconsistent, causing the academy to rescind those recommendations in 2008.

Read the whole story

One-time problem gambler now helping others

By Chris Sieroty, Las Vegas Business Press

Carol O’Hare discovered the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling in 1991, about the same time she sought help for her own gambling addiction by attending Gamblers Anonymous meetings.

Today, O’Hare’s problems are behind her, but as the nonprofit’s executive director, she remains passionate about educating the public about problem gambling’s impact on Nevada and about what the council has to offer.

The council’s mission matters – 6.4 percent of the state’s population is categorized as problem or pathological gamblers, a year 2000 study funded by the state of Nevada found. A similar study found 2.2 percent of Nevada’s adolescents were classified as problem gamblers and another 9.9 percent were “at risk.”

Read the whole story

Food traditions dominate during holidays

By Eliza Barclay and Jessica Pupovac, NPR

Around Thanksgiving, the Race Card Project brought us the story of a woman who grew up in a Filipino family but desperately wanted to be anything but Filipino. When Melanie Vanderlipe Ramil was a child, she shied away from her family's traditional meals, including the rice that's a staple in Filipino cooking.

But recently, she's become committed to keeping those food traditions alive.

Ramil's story got us thinking about people who cherish special dishes – specifically, holiday dishes – that have been passed down through generations as a tribute to their heritage and ancestors.

One person who wrote in was Mary Young in Bowling Green, Ky. She had just decided to start making her Norwegian grandmother's Christmas cookies again. They're called krumkake (pronounced krim-caca), and they look like small waffle cones.

Read the whole story

Tech investor wants to divide Calif. in sixths

By Peter Delevett, San Jose Mercury News

Lots of folks believe California is ungovernable. Venture capitalist Tim Draper has a solution: Six Californias, including one called Silicon Valley.

Draper, a maverick tech investor who once poured $20 million into a statewide school voucher initiative, on Monday laid out his case for a proposed ballot measure that, if passed by voters, would demand Congress slice and dice the nation's most populous state.

"We're simply too big and bloated," Draper declared in a news conference from Draper University of Heroes, the San Mateo school for aspiring startup CEOs he opened earlier this year.

Veteran political observers were quick and unanimous in assessing the plan's odds of success at zero. At the same time, they said Draper's modest proposal could spark discussion about how to fix the state's manifold problems, such as bursting prisons and jockeying over water rights.

Read the whole story

Olympian to relive history at Tahoe ski museum

The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics in partnership with Granlibakken Resort will present living history with Joe Pete Wilson from Dec. 26-Jan. 3 from noon to 4pm each day.



Joe Pete Wilson

Wilson was a member of the 1960 U.S. cross country team that competed in the VIII Olympic Winter Games at Squaw Valley. Wilson raced against international skiing stars in the 30km race near Tahoma. Later he was a member of the two- and four-man U.S. Olympic bobsled teams, winning a bronze medal in 1964 during World Cup competition.

He coached the USA biathlon team and co-founded the first commercial cross country ski area in the United States at the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, Vt.

The Museum of Sierra Ski History and 1960 Winter Olympics is located at the Boatworks Mall, 760 North Lake Blvd., No. 2, Tahoe City. The museum exhibits artifacts from early 20th century skiing, memorabilia from the early years of Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows ski areas, Bill Briner Olympic photo collection, and artifacts and memorabilia from the 1960 Winter Olympics. The museum is open daily 10am to 6pm through the holiday season and weekends and holidays during the ski season. Admission is free.