TERC hosting science program for youngsters

UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, together with Tahoe Expedition Academy, other community partners, and with sponsorship from the Rotary Club of Tahoe-Incline, will host the eighth annual Science Expo March 18-21 for students from the region.



The Science Expo is open to the general public on March 20 from 4-6pm for children of all ages together with their families at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences in Incline Village.

Ice cream will be provided by Susie Scoops of Incline Village. Admission is free.

The event will feature dozens of hands-on, interactive science experiments, activities and demonstrations emphasizing physical science concepts such as physical and chemical properties of matter, density, energy, electricity, magnetism, light, and sound.

Students from Kings Beach, Incline Village, Tahoe City, Truckee and South Lake Tahoe will be attending during the school days of March 18-21. High school students participating in the Youth Science Institute will facilitate science investigations with the younger students in the community. UC Davis AmeriCorps volunteers and docents will also be staffing some of the activity stations, and other volunteers and parents in the community are asked to participate. Additional volunteers are still needed.

If you are interested in volunteering at this event, contact UC Davis TERC AmeriCorps member Hannah Leigh at (775)

881.7560, ext. 7474 or hkleigh@ucdavis.edu.

Editorial: Can Obama achieve his goals?

Publisher's note: ***This editorial is from the Feb. 13, 2013, Los Angeles Times.***

In his first State of the Union address of his second term, President Obama delivered the most forceful defense of liberal values uttered on this occasion by any president since Lyndon Johnson. Obama argued for progress on the environment, common sense on guns, decency on immigration. On those issues, he has the support of the American people.

Yes, there are problems left over from his first four years: high unemployment and slow economic growth. He rightly called on Congress to close the nation's long-term budget gap by reforming entitlements and simplifying the tax code, rather than making across-the-board reductions that only chip away at the deficit. But it wasn't clear how he'd get his ideas, many of them recycled from his first term, through a polarized Congress.



President Obama

Many of the proposals Obama laid out – initiatives to promote manufacturing, shore up infrastructure, expand exports, develop clean energy technology, prepare American workers for the demands of today's job market and fix a broken immigration system – would help build a stronger foundation for economic growth. He added a new wrinkle to several of these proposals, calling for public-private partnerships in construction and education to reduce the cost to taxpayers.

The president also renewed his call to reduce carbon emissions, suggesting that he may spend some political capital on that vital issue. He endorsed sensible steps to deter gun violence, including new protections against sham sales that arm criminals. And he reconfirmed his commitment to ending the U.S. war in Afghanistan next year.

Leaders have to do more than set the right goals; they have to find ways to achieve them. There, Obama's course is unclear. In the first term, he courted Republican support and was rebuffed. With his inaugural address, he suggested a new approach: rallying the public in support of common values, transcending partisanship. This speech extended that idea, but achieving it won't be easy.

Obama did make one significant nod to the other side, announcing that he would pursue a free-trade agreement with the European Union. Although his own party may balk, it was a smart and bold move.

The president rightly argues that Washington should re-prioritize, not just cut back. Before him and Congress stand great opportunities to do just that. Pass immigration reform. Pass sensible gun laws. Work to improve the lives of average Americans regardless of which party benefits. Those are ambitions worthy of a great nation.

Avalanche dogs train with CalStar

Ski patrollers from Sierra-at-Tahoe and Heavenly Mountain Resort spent part of Wednesday working with CalStar to make sure the rescue dogs are comfortable around the helicopter.

The annual training allows for the avalanche dogs and their handlers to operate around a running helicopter in a safe and practiced environment prior to needing to respond to a real incident.

The dogs and handlers were transported into the Huckleberry area of Sierra to practice search scenarios.

CalStar and Sierra conducted the first Avalanche Dog Days in 2008. It is now an annual event.

Last summer CalStar also had a training with CARDA Dogs (California Rescue Dog Association) as part of its ongoing work with other agencies like El Dorado County Search and Rescue.

Part of the goal is to have dogs be comfortable flying in helicopters to be able to be airlifted to a search site so they aren’t exhausted by the time they hike in and their real work begins.



CalStar works with ski patrol avalanche dogs at Sierra. Photo/Provided

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STHS girls basketball team wins first round in playoffs

In a repeat of last week's game between the South Tahoe Vikings and Truckee Wolverines, the Vikings won.



But this game on Feb. 13 had more meaning. The girls fought their way into the next round of the playoffs. The Vikings won before their home crowd, 35-28.

Next up for the girls basketball team is Elko on Feb. 15 at Wooster starting at 6:15pm.

Wednesday night's game was physical and full of fouls by both teams.

The Vikings played most of the game with nine players because Melanie Grady was sidelined in the first quarter with what is believed to be a broken nose. Bailey David was on the bench

after sustaining a concussion last week. It’s too soon to know if she will be cleared to play Friday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Author, college instructor to read at SNC



Author Laura Wetherington, part of Sierra Nevada College’s ongoing Writers in the Woods series, will read from “A Map Predetermined by Chance” on Feb. 15.

Wetherington grew up in Incline Village. She is the author of a National Poetry Series winner. She works as a professor at Sierra Nevada College in the MFA program.

The 7-9pm event reading is free. It will be at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, room 139-141. Wetherington will also put on a writing workshop (free to SNC students; $50 for community members) from 9am-noon on Feb. 16. Click here to register for the workshop.

Former Raley's executive pleads guilty to federal charges

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

A former advertising director for Raley's has pleaded guilty to his role in a complex scheme to defraud the West Sacramento-based supermarket chain of more than $2.5 million.

David John Magana, 46, of Auburn pleaded guilty Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Sacramento to conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, and to a money-laundering conspiracy.

According to court documents, Magana conspired with others to defraud Raley's through a scheme that involved kickbacks, selling Raley's paper inventory to third parties at a discount and supplying paper to Raley's at an inflated price.

Lauren Horwood, a spokeswoman for the federal Department of Justice in Sacramento, said Magana is the only person charged in the case, but the investigation is ongoing.

John Segale, a spokesman for Raley's, said Magana's employment with the company ended in September 2010.

"As far as we know, no current Raley's employees are being investigated," Segale said.

Raley's issued a written statement saying, "We greatly appreciate the efforts of the FBI and the IRS in getting this guilty plea. While we may never know what motivated his decision to commit fraud, it is clear he will pay a very steep price for his actions."

According to court documents, Magana demanded that a company that provided printing services to Raley's, Vertis Inc., and a company that provided paper supplies, Graphic Communication Holding Inc., pay a co-conspirator unnecessary commissions if they wanted to keep doing business with Raley's.

Given Magana's position as director of advertising, both firms agreed to pay Magana's co-conspirator as long as Magana made sure that Raley's reimbursed them.

Magana reimbursed the companies for the unnecessary commissions by disguising them as additional charges within their regular invoices. Magana approved payment of all the inflated invoices from the firms, and his co-conspirator paid Magana a kickback after he received money from Vertis and Graphic Communication, according to a federal Department of Justice news release.

Magana and others also worked together to sell significant quantities of Raley's paper inventory to third parties at a discounted rate, according to federal authorities. Much of that paper was stored in a warehouse managed by a logistics company, but as Raley's advertising director, Magana had access to the paper in the warehouse.

Magana and his co-conspirators advertised the discounted paper by word of mouth and through the Internet, and kept most of the proceeds, authorities said. They falsely reported to Raley's that the paper had been used in the normal course of business.

Magana and a co-conspirator used a company known as Seven Sisters Media Inc. as a shell corporation through which they laundered the proceeds, authorities said.

Magana and another co-conspirator used a company known as Advantage Paper Inc. to receive a portion of the proceeds from the fraud scheme and also used Advantage Paper to supply paper to Raley's at an inflated price.

They met periodically to determine the amount Raley's would pay for the paper. In each instance, authorities said, the inflated price included the money that Advantage Paper paid Magana as a kickback.

Magana is to be sentenced June 4 by U.S. District Judge John A. Mendez. He could face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison on the mail fraud charge and a fine of $250,000 or more, according to the news release.

The maximum sentence for the money-laundering charge is 20 years in prison and a fine of $500,000, or twice the value of the laundered property, whichever is greater.

Credit card numbers, pins stolen at S. Tahoe gas station

Anyone who has used a credit or debit card at the Safeway gas station in South Lake Tahoe may be a victim of fraud.

South Lake Tahoe police officers found a skimming device Feb. 13 at the station on Highway 50. A tip to the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office that was forwarded to the police led to the discovery.



A skimming device was found at the South Lake Tahoe Safeway gas station. Photo/LTN

“The victim’s credit card information was stolen using a skimmer. A skimmer is a device that it used to steal credit card information,” a press release from SLTPD says. “Skimming can occur when a third party card reading device is installed by an identity thief, either out¬side or inside a fuel dispenser or other card-swiping terminal. This device allows the thief to capture a customer’s credit and debit card information, including their PIN, with each card swipe.”

Officers suggest any who purchased fuel at the station this month to monitor their credit card statements. They said there is more than one victim.

If you have any information about the suspect or if have been a victim of this type of fraud, call (530) 542.6100 or Secret Witness at (530) 541.6800.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

El Dorado County website may be down during weekend

The El Dorado County website and county information technology mainframe applications may be unavailable on Feb. 16, possibly extending to Feb. 17.

PG&E will shut off power to Building B at the county Government Center for approximately 12 hours so the county can test its main electrical switchboard. County facilities staff plan to bring in a temporary generator to power the information technologies systems, according to Russ Fackrell, county facilities manager.

“If there is even a remote chance of electricity back-feeding into the electrical hub during the test, we will have to shut down the generator and with it the website and other electronic systems,” said Fackrell.

There will be no disruption to critical emergency service functions which has its own backup power supply.

If testing exceeds the holiday weekend and the website is down, the county will utilize its Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/ElDoradoCountyNews as an alternative website. In addition, email subscribers to the county’s main website will also be notified.

STHS seniors singled out for distinction



South Tahoe High School Young Women of Distinction: Morgan Kaufer, Liana Novak, Tammi Tu, and Christine Larrance.

Publisher's note: ***Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe on Feb. 13 recognized four Young Women of Distinction from South Tahoe High School. The following are comments Assistant Principal Marilyn Pawling said at the noon lunch at Harveys*****.**

By Marilyn Pawling

Liana Novak

This young woman has had two unique experiences: She went on a Panama mission trip to help orphans, and a Japan youth exchange and stayed with a host family for six weeks. This experience earned her an award for being an ambassador for the United States. Liana Novak is an AP honor scholar, and a member of the National Honor Society, receiving an award for the National Honor Society for high school scholars.

She has participated in cross country running, Nordic skiing,

and swimming. She has served on the South Tahoe Youth Commission and been president for the past two years. She is a member of Generation Green, S-Club, and is currently vice president of National Honor Society.

Influential people in her life are her family, from her grandparents who immigrated to the United States, to her parents who have pushed and encouraged her throughout her life.

In her spare time she enjoys baking, cooking, and dancing. She is a well-rounded young woman for sure.

Liana applied to schools in and out of California, but would love to go to UC Berkeley. Though no career plans are set, she is committed to excel in her major and future career.

She says, “All I hope is that I feel accomplished and happy.”

She carries a 4.33 gpa and enjoys history because she likes to learn about people’s decisions, and how their way of thinking has influenced the world.

Deb Johnston described Liana this way, “Despite her exemplary academic accomplishments, I feel that Liana Kovak’s most stellar attribute is her virtuousness. That is not a description to be taken lightly, nor is it a term that is used often. What makes Liana truly standout from her peers is her sense of righteousness – she is very true to herself and her values without waiver. I do not know how someone Liana’s age can have such a sense of purpose and compassion and selflessness, but her trip to Panama to serve is an example of such. Furthermore, I observed these qualities in my classroom everyday in her interactions with other students and with me. Liana is truly remarkable in that manner, and I am absolutely certain these qualities will assure a life of noteworthiness.”

Morgan Kaufer

Being a state volleyball champ last fall will no doubt be a highlight of her high school experience. Another highlight is being a member of S Club, serving as president last year. This has provided Morgan Kaufer with lots of opportunities for community service and she is proud that S Club has reached out globally, providing bikes to girls in third world countries who need a way to get to school, getting solar cookers to women to help keep them safe, donating to the Heifer project, and bringing the Invisible Children crew to South Tahoe High School to speak to our students. She has been in the National Honor Society and Key Club and joined ASB this year.

Morgan has a weighted 4.42 gpa, is an AP scholar, received the Violet Richardson Award, and selected for Girls State. She would love to do something to help humanity, the animal world, or the environment. She has applied to multiple colleges across the country hoping to play volleyball for them.

Besides loving volleyball, she boasts she "loves all things musical: like dancing, singing, and playing the piano." She also enjoys being outside in beautiful Lake Tahoe: skiing in the winter; and boating, kayaking, paddle boarding, and playing beach volleyball in the summer. When asked where she sees herself in 10 years, she answered, "All I can hope for is to be happy, healthy, having fun, and surrounded by loving people and people I love. If I accomplish that, I will be successful."

After Morgan saw a documentary on Invisible Children, an organization devoted to raise awareness about the LRA violence in central Africa, she applied and attended Fourth Estate, a four-day convention on the University of San Diego campus to learn more. She said every day was filled with so much emotion; leaving was bittersweet because she came out of the camp a whole new person.

Morgan has been influenced by her family and says, "My dad is so amazing because he has a demanding job as a firefighter,

and I admire his professionalism. But at home, he has proven that you never really have to grow up: he is like a little kid and I love that about him. He is also so athletic, which is where I get my competitive drive. My mother is always instilling bits and pieces of wisdom in me, in her calm and loving way. She never fails to support me in whatever I do, keeps me healthy, and is the teacher in my life that has taught me the most valuable lessons. And lastly, my sister; I look up to her so much and we have a really close bond. She influences me because I aspire to be like her: funny, outgoing, extremely smart, driven, and always doing what is right. She is beyond amazing, and I would absolutely be nothing like the way I am without her vivacious and magnificent soul in my life."

Janey Roeser, her S Club adviser, said of her, "Morgan is an intelligent young woman who is passionate about helping others. To this extent she has volunteered with the Invisible Children organization and brought this program to the high school so students could learn about the plight of these young children. She is determined and acts upon her beliefs to help others. Her global consciousness is to be respected and admired. Morgan is a young woman who will make a difference in our world. I look forward to seeing Morgan's positive impact on our society and I am both thankful and grateful for all her efforts."

Tammi Tu

Tammi Tu says her favorite subject is music because she enjoys the feeling that music brings and how it relieves a stressful day. Symphonic Band, Blue Ribbon Choir and Glee Club, which she is currently president of, keep music in her life. She is in the National Honor Society, the S Club, and Generation Green. She plays volleyball and has been in Track and Field on Varsity since 10th grade. She has participated in the Festival of Trees and Lights with the Blue Ribbon Choir, and National Honor Society for the Senior Center. She has been part of

Bingo Nights, Optimist Pancake Breakfasts, Polar Express, and Community Clean-up days. Tammi was a Girls State delegate, nominated for the Rotary Youth Leadership Camp, and a Golden Star Student for El Dorado County.

This multi-talented girl plays flute, some guitar, speaks Chinese fluently, sings, and loves music, art, and photography. She also likes writing, hiking, yoga, and paddleboarding.

She has a 4.09 gpa. She hopes to attend UC San Diego, and her plans for the future are to pursue a career in acupuncture/medicine or psychology/social sciences.

The person who has influenced Tammi the most is her sister because she is the reason she continues to strive for success. She also says SHE has influenced herself because she is the reason why she doesn't give up and always challenges herself to work hard. She says, "I am my own competition and I always want to do my personal best in order to achieve happiness within myself."

Tammi says, "The first time I sang in front of an audience in 3rd grade, I knew that I would never want to stop singing. It helped me discover aspects about myself that I would have never thought I would obtain. Singing always makes me feel relief, happiness, serenity, excitement, and so many more feelings. It brought me out of my shell and made me the person I am today."

Carla Zezula, her science teacher says, "Tammi Tu is a very bright, hard working student. She has very high expectations for herself; this trait runs in her family. She likes to challenge herself academically, yet manages to be involved with choir, and sports also. Tammi has a great sense of humor and she will be valued wherever she studies."

Christine Larrance

This young woman wants to become a civil engineer. She hopes to attend San Jose State, Chico State, or Sac State to study. Christine Larrance has visions of someday working in an engineering firm to help design bridges and plan the layout of cities.

She was influenced to choose this field when her father sparked her interest while designing their house's second floor, including introducing her to house plans. Her mother has influenced her by being so supportive throughout her academic career and inspiring her to achieve. She says that her sister is the best friend she could ever have.

Christine enjoys painting on canvas, skiing and fishing. While taking a class at South Tahoe High School with Ms. Lincoln, she has discovered a love for digital art. Christine's niche at the high school is in the orchestra where she plays viola. She says she has had a position in the front row of the orchestra since fifth grade.

Christine says, "My favorite subject is computer aided drawing because it is a fun class that makes plotting floor plans easier."

Her teacher Phil Williams describes her in this way, "Christine Larrance is an outstanding student and person. She has been a top student in both architectural design and computer aided drawing. Christine has an incredible eye for the details and a very clear vision of how to accomplish goals in drawing. She is truly a gifted young lady that has been blessed with a passion that is very obvious to all around her."

LTUSD, LTCC create district boundaries, change election dates

By Kathryn Reed

A specific individual will soon represent residents in the Lake Tahoe Unified and Lake Tahoe Community College districts.

While the respective five-member boards will still be accountable to the entire community, individually a minority of the greater area will elect them. Both entities will switch to district elections in 2014. And both will have the same boundaries.



The map to the left illustrates the districts. (The yellow looking area is two districts – yellow on the left, light green on the right. Double left click on the map for a larger view.)

All of this is to meet the 2002 California Voting Rights Act regulations. The purpose of the state mandate is to ensure all ethnicities are represented and that minority groups have a realistic opportunity to be elected. Both education institutions did an analysis that determined at-large elections could open them up to a lawsuit.

LTUSD board members voted Feb. 12 for the changes, while the college board did so in January.

Another change is elections for both will be in even number years. This means all the current board members will have a year added to their terms.

For LTUSD, Wendy David and Barbara Bannar were to have their terms expire later this year. Instead, they will retain their seats until fall 2014.

David told *Lake Tahoe News* she would not be seeking re-election.

For LTCC, it means Roberta Mason, Kerry David and Molly Blann have until 2014 before their terms end.

If no candidate comes forward for a particular district, the remaining board members can appointment a person.

Before all of this becomes official, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors and the state must approve various aspects of the plan.

In other action at the Tuesday LTUSD meeting:

• The board agreed to pursue the possibility of Tahoe Valley Elementary School becoming a Performing Arts Magnet School. A new principal will need to be hired no matter the direction the district goes because Mark Romagnolo is retiring at the end of the school year.

• The board agreed to the proposals approved in January by the

South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority board for about $250,000 in field improvements. The three priorities are spending about $134,000 to upgrade the field at Sierra House Elementary, $90,000 for the softball field at South Tahoe High (though LTUSD still needs to kick in more than $40,000 for the bathrooms), and $20,000 for detailed planning to revamp the Al Tahoe fields. The money comes from voter approved Measure R.