Babe Ruth looking for players on South Shore

South Tahoe Babe Ruth Baseball sign-ups are Feb. 5-6 at the Kahle Park Recreation Center from 6-7pm and Feb. 7 at the South Tahoe Ice Rink from 6-7pm.

All boys and girls ages 13-15 are welcome. Players must have been born between May 1, 1997, and April 30, 2000, to participate.

The cost is $100 per player.

Anyone interested in playing, helping coach or assist the league is asked to attend one of these sign-ups.

For more information, contact, Eric Eymann (530) 721.2113 or eric@stationhouseinn.com.

DOJ helicopter used at El Dorado County football game

By Mike Luery, KCRA-TV

California taxpayers shelled out hundreds of dollars for the apparent unauthorized use of a police helicopter at a high school football game.

The helicopter incident involved a high school homecoming event that top law enforcement supervisors at the Department of Justice knew nothing about, KCRA 3 has learned.

The incident took place last November, when a DOJ helicopter

hovered over El Dorado Hills for a homecoming game at Oak Ridge High School.

In a video later uploaded to YouTube, viewers can see an agent perched precariously on the side of the chopper.

As the door opens, the DOJ agent then dropped the ball to a football player waiting on the field.

Why were DOJ agents flying over a football field?

KCRA 3 has learned the agent was dropping the football to his son, a player on the Oak Ridge team.

The agent, the pilot and the Department of Justice helicopter are all state resources, yet DOJ supervisors had no idea the football drop was taking place, KCRA 3 has learned.

“I don’t think anybody looking at that will see a legitimate public purpose in the use of that helicopter,” said Jon Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. “I think there needs to be a thorough investigation into who authorized this, how much it cost, what was the reason behind this and basically, what were they thinking.”

KCRA 3 showed the video of the helicopter incident to Larry Wallace, director of law enforcement for the Department of Justice.

“I can confirm that is a DOJ chopper, yes,” Wallace told KCRA 3.

Wallace said the launching of the helicopter cost taxpayers between $900 and $1,300 – not including personnel costs.

The helicopter is normally used for drug busts, Wallace told KCRA 3.

“It certainly doesn’t strike us that they were using that chopper to pull up marijuana plants out of the middle of the

football field," Coupal said.

KCRA 3 asked Wallace for his reaction, upon seeing the video.

"It appeared to be a misuse of state property," Wallace told KCRA 3.

Wallace would not provide details of whether anyone from the DOJ approved the ball drop, or who was involved.

However, he did say the DOJ had put new protocols into place because of the incident.

"I'm going to personally approve any authorized use of that helicopter as we move forward, and that's been put into place," Wallace said.

The Department of Justice won't reveal any details about disciplinary action, but KCRA 3 has learned independently that the special agent involved was put on leave for a substantial period of time.

Bowman continues to dominate

By USSA

PARK CITY – X Games champions Maddie Bowman (South Lake Tahoe) and David Wise (Reno) stayed on their roll Feb. 2, winning in Park City's superpipe at the Visa U.S. Freeskiing Grand Prix.

It was the third straight win for Bowman – second straight for Wise. The two were crowned U.S. champions for their results across the two U.S. Grand Prix halfpipes.

Men's and women's finals saw amazing runs with high scores for the combination FIS Freestyle World Cup and AFP Platinum level

contest.

The win gave Bowman a clean sweep of the two Grand Prix's after her win at Copper Mountain in January.

Wise's win avenged a defeat to Canadian Mike Riddle in Copper, matching his season-ending win last year in the March Mammoth Mountain contest.

Teen Torin Yater-Wallace (Aspen) was second in a men's event.

Less than a single point separated first and third with Wise taking the win by a mere two-tenths – 93.8 to 93.6 over Yater-Wallace.

U.S. Freeskiing Rookie Team skier Aaron Blunck (Crested Butte, Colo.) was fifth in just his fifth World Cup. Rookie Annalisa Drew (Andover, Mass.) was sixth.

Bowman claims her fourth first place finish on the 2013 AFP World Tour and overtakes Annalisa Drew in the top spot on the AFP womens Halfpipe World Ranking.

Obermeyer at 93 still a visionary in outerwear industry

By Suzanne S. Brown, Denver Post

He laughs. He yodels. He talks to everyone from the new kids just getting started to industry kingpins. At age 93, Klaus Obermeyer is a snow-sports veteran with no thoughts of

retiring.

An estimated 19,000 people will file through the Colorado Convention Center this weekend buying and selling ski parkas and snowboards, boots and poles at the annual Snow-Sports Industries America trade show, and many of them will make a point of stopping by Sport Obermeyer's showroom to show their respect.

While a brigade of sales reps shows the brand's collections, Obermeyer acts as the company's genial ambassador, greeting buyers with a hearty handshake or hug and honest interest in finding out what's on their minds. Sometimes he'll wear lederhosen or an embroidered shirt as a nod to his native Germany, where he learned to ski as a child in the Bavarian village of Oberstaufen.

Obermeyer's now-legendary story goes like this: He was teaching skiing in Aspen in 1947 when he got tired of being cold during long days on the slopes. In those days, people skied in wool coats and suits. Looking for a solution, Obermeyer cut up a down comforter his mother had insisted he bring with him when he moved to America, and fashioned part of it into a crude parka.

"I looked like the Michelin Man and had feathers in my cereal for weeks," he said with a laugh. But the jacket was warm. And one of his students paid the unheard-of sum of $250 to buy it off his back. "A new Buick was $1,250 in those days!"

Next, he had to design a better prototype and figure out how to manufacture it. Obermeyer persuaded a friend in Bavaria to do so. "But he told me I'd have to supply the zippers and knit cuffs," Obermeyer recalled.

Sixty-five years and many innovations later, the crafty German is still in business in Aspen. The privately held company sells its men's, women's and children's apparel at 600 specialty retailers in the United States and Europe, and is

moving into such markets as Russia and China.

“He’s the patriarch of the industry,” said David Ingemie, who has known Obermeyer since the 1960s. Now president of SIA, Ingemie worked in a New York retail ski shop back then and remembers Obermeyer as a friendly guy who looked out for what would be good for the industry as well as his own business.

“He was funny, always smiling and yodeling,” Ingemie said.

But beyond the joviality, Obermeyer had solid plans for his company.

“He was looking long-range,” Ingemie said. “In those days there were a bunch of egotists, but Klaus wasn’t that way. He knew the importance of making the industry grow.”

Retailers today say the same thing.

“He is one of the most forward thinkers I’ve met – he’s always thinking of the retailer and what our needs are as well as his own business,” said Linda Klein, who with her husband and son owns six Willi’s Ski and Snowboard Shops in Pennsylvania and Virginia. She has known Obermeyer since 1970.

“When you have a meeting with him,” she said, “you don’t have to feed his ego. He just wants to know what he can do to make the line better and improve business.”

That simple philosophy continues to be a driving influence in the company, according to Robert Yturri, who joined Sport Obermeyer as senior vice president for product and brand management three years ago after working for such companies as Spyder and North Face.

“Klaus just wants to get all kinds of people outdoors, which is why we fit everyone from a kids size zero to adults size XX,” Yturri said.

The company is also staying current by using eco-friendly and

sustainable fabrics, such as recycled polyester made from textiles and bottles, and Cocona, made from coconut shells. It has also instituted practices to be more environmentally conscious in its manufacturing processes, such as using water-based dyes.

Yturri describes Obermeyer as a big family and says Klaus often walks around the office with a basket of apples, which he hands out as he checks in with employees.

Obermeyer takes it all in stride and tries not to work so hard that he forgets to enjoy the mountains. In Aspen, he skis every winter day the weather is good, and company policy is that if it snows more than 6 inches, employees can hit the slopes in the morning and come to work later in the day. Obermeyer broke his leg in an accident on Buttermilk two years ago, but with surgery and physical therapy, he was back on the slopes the next season.

He swims in the company's solar-heated pool and plays tennis in the summer, but skiing remains his first love. And you won't find him on the gentle or intermediate runs.

"The steeper, the better," he says with a hearty laugh.

Fundraiser benefits Douglas County lake schools

The annual fundraiser for Whittell and Zephyr Cove schools is Feb. 23 at 6pm at MontBleu.

It will feature a disc jockey, silent and live auctions,

cocktails, food and more.

Funds will support technology upgrades, field trips, arts, science, reading, math, and sports equipment.

Tickets are $50 per person or $90 a pair. They are available at 100 McFaul Way (behind Safeway Round Hill), Forever Dance, Studio D Salon, Lake Tahoe Yoga, Hair & Nail Salon, and both schools.

TRPA to discuss Code of Ordinances

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is putting on two workshop about the updated Code of Ordinances.

The first Feb. 11 from 6-8pm, at the the TRPA office, 128 Market St. The Feb. 12 6-8pm meeting is at the Donald W. Reynolds Community Non-Profit Center, 948 Incline Way, Incline Village.

The updated TRPA Code is scheduled to go into effect Feb. 11.

For more information, contact Shay Navarro at snavarro@trpa.org or (775) 589.5282.

Vegas ad aimed at gay

travelers getting national attention

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

A Las Vegas ad campaign unveiled in June got a second wind after a national publication called attention to the city's bid to attract gay and lesbian travelers, a lucrative market.

The *Huffington Post* ran a story about the "sizzling" Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority campaign. Several other media outlets followed.

The ads depict a conservative-looking heterosexual couple standing among a group of same-sex couples, with a tagline that reads, "Everyone's welcome … even straight people." Another similarly tagged ad uses the imagery of a station wagon parked among sports cars in a valet line.

The ads first ran in LGBT-specific magazines *Curve, Instinct, Passport, Metrosource* and *Out*.

The *Post* reported that photos of the campaign are making the rounds on online sites Buzzfeed, Towleroad and New Now Next, among others.

The LVCVA has worked for seven years to attract the gay market to Southern Nevada. Same-sex partners generally have higher travel budgets and spend more freely than their straight counterparts. The LVCVA even has a staffer dedicated to diversity marketing, which includes efforts to attract gay travelers.

In 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 10 percent of the nation's population is gay. At the time, there were 15 million gay adults in the United States, with a median age of 45. They had buying power of $690 million, and their average

household income was $82,000 a year. About 35 percent made more than $100,000 a year.

Sixty-four percent are college graduates, compared with the national average of 29 percent, and 85 percent take annual vacations, compared with 64 percent of their straight counterparts.

Surveys have found that Las Vegas is one of the best cities at marketing to gay travelers. The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association perennially ranks Las Vegas among the top five domestic markets for gay travelers. The city competes with New York, San Francisco and Key West, Fla., for the top spot.

Ski report: Groundhog says early spring is coming

It’s Ground Hog Day! Punxsutawney Phil did not see his shadow and that means an early spring. But he’s only been right less than 40 percent of the time.

Surface condition are turning spring like and softening on southern exposures with recent daytime temperatures. There’s still pockets of chalky skier-rider packed powder in some north facing slopes and bowls.

Kirkwood is hosting the Rahlves’ Bonzai Tour today with finals tomorrow.

Here is the Feb. 2 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

History: Railroads diminished as lumber harvest faded

Publisher's note: ***This is reprinted with permission from the March-April 1990 Lake Tahoe Historical Society Newsletter.***

By Lyn Landauer

The era of railroads within the Lake Tahoe Basin was short and no trains now run in any portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Every summer, beginning in the 1860s, engines, track-layers, and loggers labored to cut timber and move it to the lake, haul it to Glenbrook and thence to the Comstock Mines. The last of the railroads ran from Tahoe City to Truckee from 1899 until 1942. This was the only one that carried more passengers than lumber. All of these lines were narrow gauge except Matthew Gardner's standard gauge near what is now Camp Richardson.

In 1884, George Chubbuck built a narrow gauge railroad running from Taylor's Landing (near Bijou) up into the hills south of the lake. At first the wooden narrow gauge track headed southwest from the lake shore, across the meadow, Heavenly Valley, Trout, and Cold creeks. It passed Chubbuck's headquarters at Sierra House and ended about four miles from the lake. As was the custom with lumber railroads, the line was extended as it was needed. As soon as a stand of trees was logged, track was

laid to the next section. Eventually the Lake Valley Railroad line ran as far as Meyers and sent lumber on contract to the Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Company of Glenbrook.

Chubbuck's first steam engine had a saddle tank on top to supply the water. Logs were stacked on flat cars pulled by the engine which had a diamond shaped stack, oil-burning headlight, and wheels that drove furiously to move its load of logs to the lake. The engineer stopped the cars next to a ramp and the logs would be rolled off into the lake by lumbermen. This slow, heavy monstrosity of an engine was distorting the wooden track so it was relegated to use as a donkey engine. A new engine, new track and other changes were then made.

Chubbuck's operation was slow to fulfill this contract in good time and William Bliss, son of Duane Bliss of Glenbrook, was sent to manage the laying of new 35 pound narrow gauge steel track, extend the line to Meyers and building of the trestle pier into the lake. When the latter was in place, the train ran out onto the pier and logs could then be dumped directly into the lake ready for the tug that would tow them to Glenbrook. In operation by this time were a ten-ton locomotive called the Santa Cruz and fifteen flat cars. Other engines were barged over from the Glenbrook line when necessary. The engineer drove the cars out onto the pier, off-loaded the logs and then moved to the other end of the cab where a headlight faced the rear of the train. He then made the return trip in reverse, with engine and empty flat cars backing into the timber forest.

At its height, the Lake Valley Railroad had eleven miles of track but the operation became unprofitable as lumber reserves diminished. In 1899, along with the other Bliss enterprises, the LVRR moved to Tahoe City. All that was left in Lake Valley was a sagging round house at Bijou and miles of lumber slashings, bark stumps, and sawdust alongside the rotting lumber chutes. A portion of the right-of-way can still be seen just off Al Tahoe Boulevard, as can pieces of track, ties, and

other artifacts in various places in the woods. The track was taken up in some places and left where it was or buried in others. Several miles of it were deposited with the Historical Society in the 1970s.

The Lake Valley line was an important part of the history of Lake Tahoe – but it is no more. Only the echoes remain in traces of the the-of-way and in the remaining worn steel ices of track at the museum. They are a tangible vestige of the days of the railroads in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Letter: Thanks from Saint Joseph Community Land Trust

To the community,

Saint Joseph Community Land Trust wants to thank the St. Theresa Catholic Church Knights of Columbus for hosting its 10-year anniversary celebration with a free spaghetti dinner in Grace Hall. The excellent food and ambiance was appreciated by the board of directors and the many community land trust members in attendance.

Thanks also to Interstate Realty Management (IRM) who organized a free raffle for the event. IRM manages sierra Garden Apartments in South Lake Tahoe, one of the properties owned by Saint Joseph. America and Edher Sanchez, managers for Sierra Garden Apartments, obtained raffle prizes from the following local businesses: Starbucks, Key’s Cafe, Jalisco Grill, Taqueria Jalisco, 7-Eleven, and Big Daddy’s Burger. IRM also donated a free turkey for the event.

Saint Joseph Community Land Trust is a democratically-controlled nonprofit organization founded in 2002 to address affordable housing and life skills training needs for residents in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Lyn Barnett, president Saint Joseph Community Land Trust